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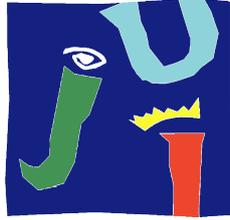
UNIVERSITAT
JAUME·**I**

ACCULTURATION AND ACQUISITION OF PRAGMATIC ROUTINES IN THE STUDY ABROAD CONTEXT

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Castellón de la Plana, May 2017

Dedicated to my parents and sister.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AH	At-Home
CoP	Community of Practice
DCT	Discourse Completion Task
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
ID	Individual Difference
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics
ILS	Intercultural Language Socialization
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LST	Language Socialization Theory
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
RQ	Research Question
SA	Study Abroad
SBU	Situation-Bound Utterance
SCAS	Sociocultural Adaptation Scale
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLS	Second Language Socialization
T1	Time 1
T2	Time 2
TL	Target Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
US	United States
VKS	Vocabulary Knowledge Scale

x

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"I feel like… I get kind of stressed in specific situations here in America. It's when I have to order things. And talk to people that speak fast, and when you have to say like… how do you call them?... it's like fixed sentences that you are not familiarized with. So I get like… wuoh… super stressed cause sometimes they are not really nice, and they are like expecting you to know what you have to say, and you don't know, so they are like making faces, and I really hate when you don't know how to say… and I hate that…." (Emma).

"I was at the library, and I wanted to return books. And they told me many times and very fast 'take them in? take them out? check them out?' or something like that. And I just said, 'I want to return my books' and I don't know, I felt very stupid, I felt that I should have known what to say…" (Emma).

"Some expressions I know from the movies, like 'What's up?' but I learned…..ehm… for example 'potato heads'… I'm not really sure about the meaning but I think I know, and… 'thanks for the heads up'… like… when… I'm, I'm giving for these people some information but I really don't have to give so much, but I give them so they say thanks for the heads up' (Jeff).

The reader of this dissertation may be familiar with experiences such as Emma's and Jeff's. As participants in Study Abroad (SA) programs, particularly in the United States (US), they faced different kinds of trouble dealing with "fixed sentences that they were not familiarized with." Emma, a proficient English as a Second Language (ESL) learner from Spain, experienced some frustration derived from her lack of pragmatic knowledge in a particular situation such as going to a library. Jeff, a student from Brazil, claims to have learnt the expression *thanks for the heads up* during the SA sojourn, and is aware that although he is able to recognize *potato heads*, he has not learnt its meaning yet.

This type of language, fixed expressions that native speakers (NSs) use frequently in everyday situations, is known as *pragmatic routines*, and represents the core of the present study. Pragmatic routines have been defined by Coulmas (1981) as implicit agreements

shared by the members of a community with each reasonable co-member. According to this author, these linguistic elements reflect the way of speaking of a society, and are essential to deal with everyday situations. Indeed, pragmatic routines are excellent socialization tools for students of a second language (L2) participating in SA programs, as their use facilitates communication with NSs and consequently eases integration in the new community.

Examples of pragmatic routines used in the US, the learning context of this study, include *for here or to go?* an expression commonly used before ordering in a restaurant that offers the option of take-away food; *hello?* when picking up the phone; or *no thanks, I'm full* when someone is asked to eat more when they does not want to. The native-like expressions Emma and Jeff point out in their narratives, *check them out? What's up? potato head*, and *thanks for the heads up* are potential candidates to be considered as pragmatic routines, after an analysis of their frequency of use by NSs in given contexts.

The acquisition of pragmatic routines by non-native speakers (NNSs) of a language is addressed in Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) research. ILP studies have examined L2 learners' recognition and production of routines, and their pragmatic performance has commonly been compared with that of students in the Foreign Language (FL) setting; that is, in the instructional context in their home country. Overall, research findings have underlined the advantage of SA learners in acquiring pragmatic routines, and have observed that students have less difficulty in recognition than in production of these expressions, since receptive ability requires less cognitive processing. Nevertheless, with the exception of Barron (2003) and Taguchi, Li and Xiao (2013), there is no evidence of actual changes in knowledge of pragmatic routines which take place during a sojourn. Moreover, these two studies have only accounted for productive ability. The present study addresses the evident need to document SA learners' development of recognition and of production of routines from a longitudinal

4

perspective; that is, examining actual pragmatic changes over time.

The question is, how are pragmatic routines learned in the SA context? ILP scholars have investigated how different factors influence the acquisition of routines. The main focus has been on the variables of length of stay, intensity of interaction with NSs, and learners' proficiency level, with studies revealing that amount and nature of interaction particularly determine pragmatic acquisition. (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). With this in mind, the present study adopts an ambitious perspective to examine how learners' experiences of adaptation to the target language (TL) setting influence their gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines. More specifically, the term *acculturation* is used to account for the ability to go beyond the heritage culture and work with individuals from different cultural and linguistic origins (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007).

To operationalize acculturation, Schumann's Acculturation Model (1978) is used as the reference framework. According to Schumann, the degree to which an individual acculturates to the TL society will determine their acquisition of an L2. Moreover, in the process of adaptation in a new environment, different social variables (e.g. integration strategies, attitude towards the target culture) and affective factors (e.g. language shock, ego permeability) are at play. Accordingly, this investigation explores learners' development of their sociocultural and psychological adaptation, and how these determine pragmatic gains. While Schumann's (1978) acculturation model has commonly been used in the general field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), this investigation is innovative in its application to the explanation of the acquisition of pragmatic competence. In particular, the present study addresses the gap that exists between works on acculturation and research on the acquisition of routines during SA programs.

ILP researchers have also observed that the acquisition of pragmatic routines varies

across learners of different linguistic and cultural origins. Indeed, a main trait of routines is their cultural-bound nature; that is, their use is particular to different societies. Hence, variance across cultures in the use of routines is more evident than with other pragmatic elements. In this sense, research findings have pointed out that cultural congruity enhances the acquisition of pragmatic routines (Taguchi *et al.*, 2013). Bearing these ideas in mind, the present study explores how learners' cultural background influences their gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines and their acculturation experiences. In particular, the analysis is focused on 5 groups of learners: Brazilians, Chinese, Saudi Arabian, Thai, and Turkish students.

Furthermore, the present investigation is framed within the wider field of SA research. SA scholars have acknowledged the fact that over the course of the globalization of education, the importance of SA programs has grown tremendously. In fact, during the academic year 2015/2016, the number of international students in the US reached a record high of 1,043,839 students, which constitutes an increase of 7.1% from the previous academic year and an increase of 80% since 2000/2001 (Institute for International Education, 2016). Currently, the traditional view that SA programs are the optimal learning context is being challenged by research findings which indicate that international students are not developing their language abilities to the expected extent, and are not adapting to the TL setting successfully. This is not surprising if one considers that participants in these programs not only have to focus on improving their L2 proficiency, but also have to face the multiple challenges involved in the process of adapting to a whole unknown context and everything that implies. Given the increasing popularity of SA programs and the mixed findings in the SA research field, studies on L2 learning development and on acculturation experiences by different international students seem to be in need of additional focus.

In light of the aforesaid, the purpose of the present project is to analyse the influence of acculturation on the development of knowledge of pragmatic routines by students of diverse origins participating in SA programs in the US. More specifically, the objectives of the investigation are:

1) To determine whether learners with different cultural backgrounds develop their recognition and production of pragmatic routines during SA.

2) To determine whether learners with different cultural backgrounds develop their degree of acculturation in the SA context.

3) To explore whether acculturation has an effect on the acquisition of pragmatic routines across cultural groups.

By addressing these purposes and objectives, the current study contributes to the field of ILP in four notable ways. Firstly, it is a longitudinal investigation that explores pragmatic change over time. Secondly, it accounts for both recognition and production of pragmatic routines. Thirdly, it explores the influence of acculturation on reported gains. Finally, it considers how learners' cultural backgrounds influence their acculturation and the development of their pragmatic competence. In addition to this, the study makes a significant contribution to the SA research field as it not only reports on learners' pragmatic learning, but also presents an in-depth account of their sociocultural adaptation to US culture, their psychological adjustment, and the common difficulties international students encounter in college and universities campuses. Therefore, the resulting research findings will be particularly useful for ILP and SA scholars, language instructors, and SA program directors and coordinators.

This dissertation is structured in two main parts. The first part reviews the theoretical background of the study, and consists of three chapters. The second part presents the

empirical research carried out, including the method, the results, the discussion of findings and the conclusions.

To begin, chapter 1 presents a literature review concerning the concept of pragmatics, specifically the theories of pragmatic learning that inform the current study, and consequently frames the investigation within the field of ILP. Section 1.1 discusses the notion of pragmatic competence as an element of a wider communicative ability. Next, section 1.2 defines the concept of pragmatic competence, and section 1.3 reviews its two main constituents, namely sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic abilities. Section 1.4 addresses the theoretical framework in which this investigation is framed. In particular, this section reviews main ideas from the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1978, 1986) (section 1.4.1), Intercultural Language Socialization theory (Shi, 2007) (section 1.4.2), Sociocultural theory, (section 1.4.3), and Second Language Socialization theory (section 1.4.4). Following this, section 1.5 frames the present investigation within the research field of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP). This section includes a conceptualization of ILP and of the more specific area of acquisitional pragmatics (section 1.5.1). Moreover, it presents the main topics addressed in acquisitional pragmatics (section 1.5.2), namely the development of pragmatic aspects (section 1.5.2.1), and the influence of different factors on this development (section 1.5.2.2). Section 1.6 concludes the chapter with a summary of main ideas covered.

Chapter 2 deals with the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the SA context. First, section 2.1 presents the main ideas about SA programs as contexts for learning pragmatics. The chapter then addresses the factors that affect pragmatic learning in the SA context, with a focus on the variable of acculturation. Section 2.2 reviews previous studies on the effect of external variables – in particular, length of stay and intensity of interaction – on the acquisition of pragmatics. While section 2.3 includes the effect of internal factors, namely

proficiency, socialization, personality, identity, motivation, and cultural background. Following this, section 2.4 focuses on the variable of acculturation. More specifically, it presents what the process of acculturation involves (section 2.4.1), how international students are likely to develop their acculturation during SA programs (section 2.4.2), the two main aspects of acculturation, sociocultural and psychological adaptation (section 2.4.3), and how acculturation determines pragmatic learning (section 2.4.4). Finally, section 2.5 concludes the chapter with a summary.

Chapter 3 addresses the main pragmatic aspect of the study: pragmatic routines. Section 3.1 introduces the notion of pragmatic routines (section 3.1.1), explains their role as facilitators of communication between TL users (section 3.1.2), and discusses the different categorizations of routines that have already been proposed (section 3.1.3). Then, section 3.2 presents previous research on how L2 learners acquire pragmatic routines in the SA context. In particular, it reviews early works on the development of pragmatic routines in the SA context (section 3.2.1), investigations into the effect of the SA context on routines (section 3.2.2), and studies on the role of individual differences in learning routines (section 3.2.3). Subsequently, section 3.3 addresses the role of culture on pragmatic routines, given that the study considers learners' cultural background as a potential influence on pragmatic gains. Finally, section 3.4 closes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas presented.

Chapter 4 presents the research gaps and questions that motivate the study. In particular, section 4.1 explains the motivation for conducting the study, and section 4.2 outlines the 3 research questions with their corresponding hypotheses, which guide the presentation of the findings in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 reviews the mixed-method approach followed in order to conduct the study. More specifically, section 5.1 presents the SA setting where the investigation took place; that

is, three universities in the Appalachian region of the US. Then, section 5.2 addresses the participants of the study: 122 international students participating in SA programs in the universities where the study was conducted. Section 5.3 reviews the instruments used to carry out the study. These included 3 quantitative instruments (section 5.3.1) – a background questionnaire (section 5.3.1.1), a Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (section 5.3.1.2), and a pragmatic routines test (section 5.3.1.3) – and qualitative one (section 5.3.2), which was a set of semi-structured interviews conducted with a subset of 10 participants (section 5.3.2.1). Following this, section 5.4 presents the data collection procedure followed over two semesters – spring and autumn, 2014. Section 5.5 provides an explanation of how the data were coded and analysed. Finally, section 5.6 offers a summary of the chapter.

Chapters 6 through 8 illustrate and discuss the study findings. Each of the chapters addresses one of the research questions presented in chapter 4. The three chapters follow a similar structure: quantitative results, qualitative results, discussion of findings, and summary of the chapter. To begin, chapter 6 presents the results and discussion related to research question 1 (RQ1). The quantitative findings, included in section 6.1, reveal learners' gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines (sections 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3), and explore these gains across cultural groups (section 6.2.1). Then, section 6.2 presents the qualitative results which complement the quantitative ones. In particular, the qualitative analysis explores the reasons behind individual pragmatic learning trajectories of the 10 participants (section 6.2.1). Results related to RQ1 are discussed in section 6.3, and the chapter is summarized in section 6.4.

Chapter 7 presents the results related to research question 2 (RQ2), which addresses L2 learners' acculturation development. Firstly, section 7.1 presents the quantitative findings regarding students' sociocultural adaptation gains during a semester of study (section 7.1.1),

and about how different cultural groups develop their sociocultural adaptation (section 7.1.2). Then, section 7.2 illustrates the qualitative analysis, which attempts to provide details on the results reported in section 7.1. In particular, the qualitative findings include learners' comments about their sociocultural adaptation experiences (section 7.2.1), and about their psychological adaptation throughout the semester (section 7.2.2). Both quantitative and qualitative results are discussed in section 7.3, and summarized in section 7.4.

Chapter 8 addresses the findings related to research question 3 (RQ3) of the study. RQ3 explores whether acculturation exerts an influence on learning pragmatic routines, and, as such, chapter 8 constitutes the bulk of the present investigation. Firstly, section 8.1 presents the quantitative findings. Given that there are differences across cultural groups both in terms of pragmatic learning and acculturation, the quantitative analysis in relation to RQ8 is twofold: the effect of acculturation on gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines by the Brazilian group (section 8.1.1) and by the Chinese group (section 8.1.2). These results were complemented with qualitative findings from learners' reports in the semi-structured interviews, illustrated in section 8.2. In particular, the qualitative exploration aims to trace the reasons for the influence of acculturation on the acquisition of pragmatic routines (section 8.2.1). Finally, section 8.4 concludes chapter 8 with a summary of the main ideas addressed.

Chapter 9 closes the present study. The chapter begins with section 9.1 which summarizes the main findings relating to each of the 3 research questions and their corresponding hypotheses . Then, the originality of the study is illustrated in section 9.2. Section 9.3 discusses the pedagogical implications of the study, which involve an enhancement of instruction in pragmatic routines and in intercultural competence prior to the SA programs, during the sojourn, and upon the students' return. Finally, section 9.3 addresses main limitations of the study and provides suggestions for further research.

PART I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 1

PRAGMATICS AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Chapter 1 aims to frame the current study within the general field of Pragmatics and the research subfield of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), and to explore the theories of pragmatic learning that inform this investigation. Section 1.1 is an overview of the concept of pragmatic competence and its role in different communicative models. The following section, 1.2, addresses the task of defining the concept of pragmatic competence. Next, 1.3 presents the two main constituents of pragmatic competence: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. In 1.4, the theories of pragmatic learning that inform the study are explained. Section 1.5 introduces the main research fields of pragmatic competence, and focuses on the area to which this study makes the greatest contribution, namely ILP. Finally, section 1.6 provides a summary of the main ideas addressed throughout the chapter.

1.1. Pragmatic competence as an element of communicative competence

Over the last four decades, an interest in pragmatic competence has grown progressively in the field of SLA, as a result of awareness by researchers and language teachers of the need for something more than just words to teach and learn a language. With the shift from a formalist view of language to a more communicative one, different approaches to set the concept of pragmatic competence within communicative models emerged. Hymes (1972) was the first to coin the term *communicative competence* as knowledge of both grammar rules and the language-use rules of a given sociocultural context. This scholar proposed that linguistic competence needs to include not only linguistic aspects but also communicative ability, or the ability to use language appropriately according to determined social rules. Canale (1983) – in work expanded from Canale and Swain (1980) – viewed communicative competence as integrating four sub-competencies: grammatical,

sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse ability. In his model, pragmatic competence coincides with sociolinguistic competence to refer to knowledge of language in use that is contextually appropriate. This view of language, namely, language in use, presented new foci of analysis in SLA research such as social context, interaction among language users and speakers' communicative intention.

Early models of communicative competence, however, did not distinguish between sociolinguistic and pragmatic ability *per se*. Bachman (1990) was the first to directly refer to the notion of pragmatic competence on its own, and to regard it as a main element of communicative ability. In his model, communicative competence consists of three main aspects: language competence, strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. Language competence integrates pragmatic competence and organizational competence, that is, grammatical and textual elements. Moreover, pragmatic ability involves 2 aspects: knowledge of the linguistic elements necessary to produce speech acts, and knowledge of the context, necessary to produce appropriate language functions.

Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, Zoltan and Thurrell (1995), drawing from Bachman (1990), distinguished five interrelated subcomponents of communicative competence: linguistic, sociocultural, strategic, discourse and actional competencies. Discourse competence is placed as the central element. It involves the selection and organization of the elements that constitute a written or oral text, namely cohesion, deixis, coherence, formal structure and conversational structure. This competence affects and at the same time is affected by linguistic, sociocultural and actional competences. Actional competence – which is parallel to pragmatic competence – entails the ability to convey and understand the intended communicative message by producing and interpreting speech acts. These four competencies, at the same time, are influenced by strategic competence; in other words, knowledge and use of communication strategies such as the negotiation of meaning.

16

Taking Celce-Murcia *et al*. (1995) as a base, Alcón's (2000) model of communicative competence includes three main frameworks that are interrelated and mutually influential: discourse competence, psychomotor skills and competencies, and strategic competence. Discourse competence, thus, still has a central role and is constituted by linguistic competence, textual competence and pragmatic competence. These are at the same time affected by the psychomotor skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. Ultimately, knowledge of communication and learning strategies is needed to master psychomotor competencies.

More recent communicative competence frameworks consider intercultural competence as an integral part of the ability to communicate. These include Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2006) and Vilar-Beltrán's (2013) models. The framework proposed by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) is presented in Figure 1.1.
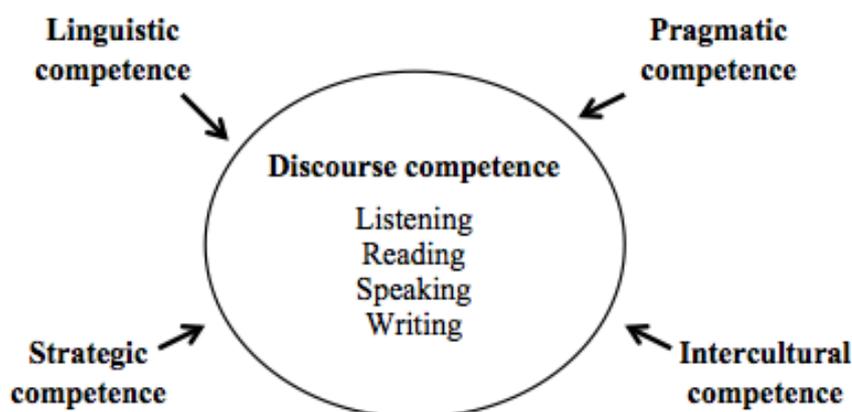
Figure 1.1. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's communicative competence model

(adapted from Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006, p. 16)

As can be seen in the figure, the authors draw from Celce-Murcia *et al*. (1995) in placing discourse competence as a central element necessary to achieve communicative

ability. In Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2006) model, the 4 abilities that enhance discourse competence – strategic, linguistic, pragmatic and intercultural competences - hold the same importance. In particular, pragmatic competence is operationalized as knowledge of the illocutionary force of an utterance and of the contextual factors in which it is produced. In addition, by intercultural competence these authors refer to knowledge of the sociocultural rules necessary for the interpretation and production of discourse in a given context and situation.

In Vilar-Beltrán's (2013) framework, however, intercultural competence plays a more relevant role in shaping the ability to communicate. This author's model is based in from 2 main premises. Firstly, English is a lingua franca, and as such it develops according to its users and the context in which it is spoken. Secondly, English language users are from a wide range of cultures and use the language according to their own sociocultural norms. Because of this, intercultural competence is viewed as an essential component of communicative ability. Figure 1.2 illustrates the Vilar-Beltrán's (2013) model of communicative competence.
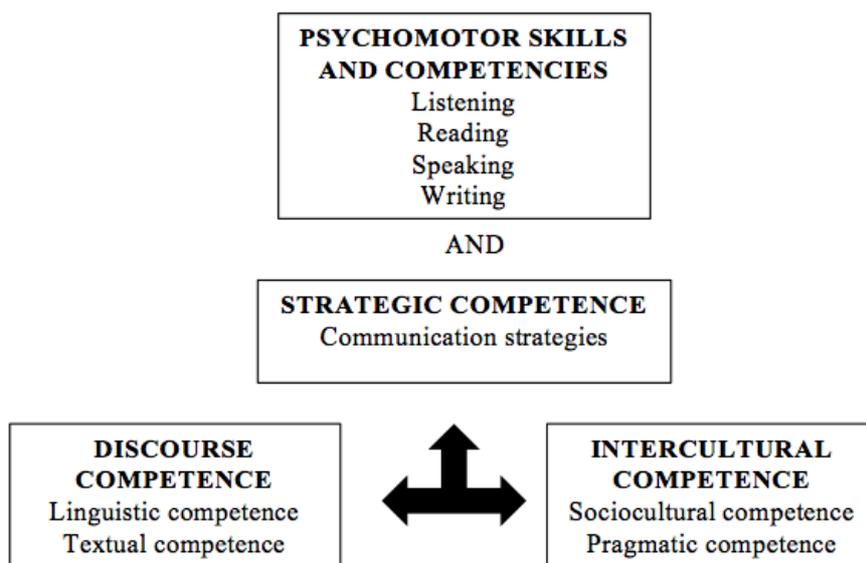
Figure 1.2. Vilar-Beltrán's communicative competence model (adapted from Vilar-Beltrán, 2013, p. 116)

As we can see in Figure 1.2, intercultural competence is integrated by sociocultural and pragmatic abilities. Moreover, Vilar-Beltrán (2013) considers that sociocultural competence involves not only TL speakers' culture but also learners' heritage culture. The framework presented in Figure 1.2 implies that communicative competence constitutes four main, interrelated aspects. These aspects are: intercultural competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and psychomotor skills; namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Hence, the concept of communicative competence involves different interrelated fields. The present investigation mainly draws from Vilar-Beltrán's (2013) model of communicative competence, since it considers intercultural competence as a main aspect in the ability to communicate. In line with the author, we view pragmatic and sociocultural competences as part of intercultural competence. Taking the above into account, this study addresses whether an increase in sociocultural adaptation determines an increase in pragmatic competence.

1.2. Defining pragmatic competence

Now that the concept of pragmatic competence has been framed within previous models of communicative competence, it is time to provide a more finely-grained definition. Since its origin in the 1970s, numerous scholars have defined and attributed features to this new area of linguistics known as pragmatics. In doing so the importance of context as a determiner of the interpretation of utterances was always acknowledged.

Thus, scholars seem to agree that context is a central element in pragmatics. An early definition of pragmatics, which emphasizes the relevance of context, is Levinson's (1983), according to whom pragmatics is "the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate" (p. 24). More simply put, LoCastro

(2003) refers to pragmatics as "the study of how utterances have meaning in the context of situations" (p. 12). In a similar vein, Archer and Grundy (2011) explain that pragmatics includes the rules of language use associated with the given context. According to these authors, pragmatics is "the study of language use in contextualized communication and the usage principles associated with it" (Archer & Grundy, 2011, p. 488). Finally, Taguchi (2012) adds that the study involves both the production and the interpretation of meaning in context. The author defines pragmatics as "the ability to convey and interpret meaning appropriately in a social situation" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 6).

Other pragmaticians have focused on language users and the main role of interaction among them as core elements of pragmatic competence. Thomas (1995), for example, points out the relevance of interaction in the notion of pragmatics by defining it as meaning in interaction. Furthermore, this author distinguishes two dimensions of pragmatics: the cognitive and the social one. The former deals with utterance meaning expressed by the speaker, while the latter involves the meaning a speaker conveys. Leech (1983), similarly, underlines the interpersonal nature of pragmatics by defining it as the study of how individuals accomplish goals by attending to their interpersonal relationships with other participants while using language. More recently, Alcón (2013) refers to pragmatics as being concerned with the use of language in specific social contexts and with the factors associated with a given context that affect the way interlocutors communicate. According to this author, pragmatics deals with both the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation of the message. In a similar vein, LoCastro (2003) views pragmatics as a form of social action between language users by defining it as "the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities" (LoCastro, 2003, p. 15).

The importance of context, the focus on language users and the relevance of

interaction between speakers and hearers are therefore the three main features of pragmatic competence which underline its social nature. The interrelationship among these elements implies that pragmatics accounts for how meaning is expressed in interaction by means of the interlocutors' choice of linguistic devices and their knowledge of non-linguistic aspects related to the setting. From these ideas, three definitions are particularly relevant due to their adequacy to SLA and to the present study.

The first working definition, extensively accepted due to its detailed nature, is from David Crystal(1997), who states 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, 1997, p. 301)

The second definition is from Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008), who view pragmatic competence as "learners' ability to employ different linguistic formulae in an appropriate way when interacting in a particular social and cultural context" (p. 254). Their conceptualization of pragmatics is important for this investigation which is focused on how L2 students develop their knowledge of formulaic language that they need to interact with L2 users.

Finally, Barron (2003) points out that pragmatics involves knowledge of three main elements, namely the linguistic resources of a language needed to produce certain illocutions, the sequential aspects of speech acts, and the appropriate use of those linguistic resources according to the context. Barron's definition particularly suits the nature of the present study, since the focus is on the linguistic resources – namely, pragmatic routines – used to perform specific situations, and on the factors – acculturation and intensity of interaction – that affect the ability to recognize routines and to use the appropriate forms according to the given context and situation.

From these definitions, we may establish the following claim: pragmatic competence

is a complex concept. In order for L2 learners to acquire the necessary tools to properly learn the TL and use it accordingly in context, they need to master different aspects related to the linguistic code, the setting, and the interlocutor's social behavior. In this vein, García (1989) expressed that "L2 speakers need to learn the rules of language use that govern the TL, that is *when* and *where* to say something, *what* to say, [and] to *whom* to say it in a given social and linguistic context" (p. 314). The present study integrates these elements – namely code, setting, and social rules – in an attempt to understand how pragmatic competence is acquired. To that end, the study explores how the setting – in this case, the SA context – influences learning the linguistic code, namely pragmatic routines. More particularly, this investigation addresses the importance of sociocultural aspects such as interaction among language users, their use of the code, and their behavior in the given context to acquire pragmatic routines.

1.3. Components of pragmatic competence: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics

The complexity mentioned above is reflected in the two main components of pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983): pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Leech (1983) refers to pragmatics in general terms as dealing with linguistic communication that is shaped by sets of conversational principles. Within this framework, pragmalinguistics includes the linguistic resources that allow language users to convey communicative acts and interpersonal meanings. This idea implies that in order to express the desired meaning and to engage in communication, L2 learners need to acquire the ability to choose the appropriate linguistic resources available in the TL. These resources include elements such as directness and indirectness strategies, different modification devices, and, what constitutes the core of the present study: *pragmatic routines*. On the other hand, sociopragmatics involves knowledge of the cultural and social factors that surround the TL and influence the appropriate use of linguistic forms. More specifically, appropriate use of a linguistic form

depends on the particular context or situation in which it is produced, the participants' roles in that context or situation, and politeness aspects related to social distance (or familiarity) between the participants, social status, and degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The sociopragmatics/pragmalinguistics dichotomy has been widely accepted since it was firstly suggested by Thomas (1983) and Leech (1983), although scholars may use different terminology. For instance, as previously mentioned, Bachman (1990) distinguished between illocutionary competence (pragmalinguistics) and sociolinguistic competence (sociopragmatics). Aside from the definitions explored in the previous section, a number of researchers have defined pragmatic competence in terms of its two main constituents. An example is Rose's (1999) definition as "the ability to use available linguistic resources (pragmalinguistics) in a contextually appropriate fashion (sociopragmatics), that is, how to do things appropriately with words" (p. 173). Similarly, Martínez-Flor (2004) refers to pragmatic competence as learners' ability to employ their linguistic resources and sociocultural knowledge in an appropriate way for a given context. Kasper and Roever (2005) also define pragmatics according to this distinction as "the process of establishing sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence and the increasing ability to understand and produce sociopragmatic meanings with pragmalinguistic conventions" (p. 318).

Pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are therefore two interrelated sub-competencies of pragmatics. This interrelation was for instance illustrated by Safont (2005), who pointed out that learners who do not have sociolinguistic and sociocultural (therefore sociopragmatic) information about how to perform politeness are likely to have difficulty in using the TL appropriately in a given situation. Hence, the study of pragmatics needs to address both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects since they shape knowledge of the linguistic resources and the sociocultural conventions of the TL, both of which are needed to produce appropriate linguistic behavior in accordance with the situation.

1.4. Theoretical approaches to pragmatic learning

At this point, another question arises: how are pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects learned? Before going into empirical evidence of how pragmatic competence is acquired, it is paramount to make reference to the theoretical frameworks that guide the different research lines in the field. As such, this section reviews the theoretical approaches that inform the present study. Kasper and Rose (2002) note the relevance of conducting research by drawing on corresponding theories. According to these authors, a central concern is that most investigations on how L2 pragmatics develops have not been previously informed by the frameworks that explain L2 acquisition. Rather, they refer to L2 learning theories as a post-hoc argument to support their findings.

As previously mentioned, the nature of pragmatic competence encompasses a focus on language users and their interaction with others, shaped by a given context. From these ideas, SLA scholars have adopted two main perspectives on how pragmatic competence is acquired: as a cognitive process, and as a socially-oriented activity. On one hand, some researchers view pragmatic learning as a cognitive activity, an individual mental process. Thus, it is an activity that takes place independently from the learning context. On the other hand, a large number of researchers view pragmatic learning as a socially-oriented activity, which implies that learning occurs through social interaction. Hence, the focus is on the process of language acquisition, which is analysed by observing language use between interlocutors, taking into account the social and the cultural settings surrounding the communicative act. Hence, socially-oriented theories understand pragmatic learning as an activity that depends on the context, the culture, and the interactions between novices and more experienced L2 users.

Although pragmatic learning seems to be more a social activity, rather than a cognitive one, Kasper and Rose (2002) remind us that any type of learning, including L2

pragmatics, "also involves individual learners' minds and brains" (p. 60). Following this idea, Alcón (2008) argues for an incorporation of both cognitive and socially-oriented theoretical frameworks. This opens the debate of the complementarity of approaches. While some researchers view pragmatic development from only one perspective, Kasper and Rose (2002) and Alcón (2008) suggest integrating aspects from both, so as to achieve a richer understanding of the process.

Drawing on Kasper and Rose (2002) and Alcón (2008), the present study adopts a holistic view of pragmatic learning, involving both cognitive and social aspects, to analyse how pragmatic competence is developed in the SL context. In particular, this study is mainly grounded in the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1978), and Intercultural Language Socialization (ILS) theory (Shi, 2007). While ILS is particularly socially oriented, the Acculturation Model considers both cognitive and sociocultural aspects of L2 development. In what follows, an overview of the Acculturation Model and of ILS theory is presented since these are the main theoretical approaches to pragmatic learning that inform the present investigation. Additionally, since ILS is mainly grounded in two earlier frameworks, namely Sociocultural theory and Second Language Socialization theory, the main ideas from each are also reviewed in this section.

1.4.1. The Acculturation Model

The notion of *acculturation* was first suggested by Schumann (1978) in reference to the process of adaptation to a new culture. It has traditionally been studied from a cognitive and sociocultural perspective to describe and analyse the causes, the development and the effects of the migratory process by which individuals adapt to a new place and to a different culture. However, since the origins of the concept, this author has consistently pointed out the relationship between acculturation and the acquisition of a second language, establishing the Theory of Acculturation. According to Schumann (1978), the degree to which an L2 learner

acculturates to the new sociocultural community will influence the extent to which they learn the TL. Moreover, the theory posits that acculturation, rather than being a direct cause of SLA is the first in a list of factors that determine the acquisition of an L2. In this sense, the author holds that:

> Acculturation as a remote cause brings the learner into contact with TL-speakers and verbal interaction with those speakers as a proximate cause brings about the negotiation of appropriate input which then operates as the immediate cause of language acquisition (Schumann, 1986, p. 385).

A main point of Schumann's theory is that acculturation is determined by how close the individual is to the TL group, in terms of social and psychological distance. Social distance refers to the degree to which a language learner achieves contact with the TL group and becomes part of it, while psychological distance involves the degree to which a learner is comfortable with the learning task and forms a personal dimension rather than a group one. In other words, social distance involves variables concerned with language learning by groups, while psychological distance refers to language learning by individuals. This implies that the degree of success in the L2 is determined by the degree to which the learner succeeds in acculturating to the TL group in terms of both the social and the psychological dimensions.

In order to determine the amount of acculturation with regards to these two distances, Schumann (1986), distinguishes two sets of factors that assess the level of social distance and the level of psychological distance that learners experience. Firstly, seven social factors that affect the quantity and quality of the contact with the L2 group were proposed:

1) Social dominance. The L2 learner group and the TL group should be roughly equal in terms of political, cultural, technical and economic status. If the learner group is either superior or inferior, there would be social distance between the groups and learners will tend to avoid learning the language.

2) Integration strategy. The integration factor involves the notions of assimilation,

preservation and adaptation. In order to avoid social distance and acquire the L2 more successfully, the L2 learner group should assimilate; that is, adopt the lifestyle and values of the TL community and give up their own values. If the sojourners preserve or maintain their own lifestyles and values, then social distance is increased and SLA is more unlikely to take place. But if the learner group adapts the host culture lifestyle and values to its own (while still preserving them), different degrees of SLA can be experienced. Consequently, assimilation is the optimal acculturation strategy that would most successfully enhance SLA, preservation is the least successful strategy, and adaptation taking an intermediate position.

3) Enclosure. Enclosure takes into account how much and how often local centers, such as churches, schools, and work related areas, are commonly used between the L2 learners and the TL group. Low levels of enclosure indicate that these facilities are being shared, and thus the contact between the two groups increases.

4) Cohesiveness and size. When the L2 learner group is quite cohesive, they are less likely to branch out and intermingle with the TL community. A high level of cohesiveness amongst the L2 learners and also the TL group will thus hinder intragroup contact. In addition to this, the size of the L2 students group can affect how cohesive the group is likely to be. SLA is unlikely to occur when members of the sojourning group can achieve a reasonable standard of living without 'leaving' their cultural group.

5) Cultural congruence. Cultural congruence refers to cultural similarity. When the two cultures share similarities regarding religion, general social practice, and other beliefs, there is a heightened chance of contact between the group of L2 learners and the TL group. If the two communities are not culturally congruent, they are more likely to remain separate and contact will continue to be minimal.

6) Attitude. Second language acquisition and intercultural contact is easier to obtain when the two cultures have a positive attitude towards each other.

7) Intended length of residence. The group of L2 learners has a higher chance of developing contact when they choose to reside in the TL country for an extended period of time. The length of residence will also affect how many close relationships members of the L2 learners will acquire with members of the TL community.

Secondly, Schumann distinguished four psychological factors:

1) Language shock. This involves the fear by L2 learners of appearing silly or idiotic to members of the host community when speaking the TL.

2) Cultural shock. Culture shock refers to feelings of rejection, anxiety, stress, and disorientation by the sojourners while living amongst members of the TL. These feelings can cause a person to reject and dislike the TL group, which will make the person less receptive to input from the TL.

3) Motivation. Two motivational orientations have been developed by researchers: integrative and instrumental. Both of these motives affect how learners will reason with themselves with regards to SLA. An integrative learner wishes to learn the language for social reasons, such as to integrate into the TL group. An instrumental learner, conversely, is not as interested in the people of the TL group but instead in learning the L2 for professional or academic advancement. This type of motivation will trigger the achievement of instrumental goals, while an integrative learner will normally attempt to surpass those expectations and acquire a level of proficiency closer to that of a native speaker.

4) Ego-permeability. Ego-permeability, or inhibition, refers to the extent to which the learner's identity can be permeated by input from the TL. If the learner can objectify

the TL and allow their "language ego" to be influenced from input, then SLA will occur. The "language ego," however, can become "thick", so to speak, as time passes, which makes it necessary for the learner to lower their guard.

According to Schumann (1986), the degree to which an individual adheres to the positive aspects of these factors should then correlate to their ability to advance in the TL. This author describes advancement in terms of a one-to-one relationship, where if one factor is positive, one degree of acculturation occurs. Schumann recognizes that this relationship is not that simple, and that acculturation in general assists in SLA since it initiates the process.

A few studies have drawn on Schumann's (1978) assertion that the degree to which individuals acculturate will determine the degree to which they learn the TL. Most of them suggest that SLA, especially at the oral level, is benefited by the students' process of acculturation (Hansen, 1995; Lybeck, 2002). In the field of pragmatics, Schmidt's (1983) and Dörnyei, Durow and Zahran's (2004) investigations are the only ones, to the best of our knowledge, that have applied Schumann's Model to explain pragmatic development. Ellis (1994) referred to the scarce empirical support that Schumman's theory has received. Not much has changed since then, as psychologists, and particularly linguists have focused on other aspects to describe learners' experiences abroad, such as length of stay, language socialization and interaction with L2 users. Scholars have also qualitatively analysed acculturation aspects, without a theoretical base behind the analysis. In addition to this, researchers have also focused on isolated variables of acculturation (e.g. identity, motivation), which do not allow a holistic view of the phenomenon of integrating in a new culture to be obtained.

The present study addresses this research gap by adopting Schumann's Model to conceptualize the process of adapting to a new culture. As such, acculturation to the TL society, in this case the US, is analysed in terms of the cognitive and socially-oriented factors

involved in the process of adapting to US society.

1.4.2. Intercultural Language Socialization theory

Intercultural Language Socialization (ILS) theory was proposed by Shi (2007). This framework particularly applies to the context of SA programs, where learners from diverse cultural backgrounds live together and interact with each other and with NSs. The ILS theory stems from the idea that in the process of socializing, students also experience some changes in their cultural disposition – changes in their view of the TL society, changes in their personality, culture shock, etc. – that may also determine their language and pragmatic learning. Such a socialization practice takes place in intercultural communication encounters, during which interlocutors share the same linguistic code, but each use their own culturally-based communicative strategies and pragmalinguistic resources.

From this general description of ILS, Shi (2007) summarizes the main assumptions of the framework:

1. Language learning and enculturation are part of the same process.
2. Language, as a sociocultural and contextualized phenomenon, is acquired through interactive practices and socializing routines.
3. In second language socialization, congruency or incongruency between home and target language culture can impact the L2 learners' learning processes and learning outcomes in very influential ways.
4. On their way to accomplishing second language socialization, L2 learners are very likely to confront gatekeeping forces and unequal power relations.
5. With dynamic agencies, L2 learners tend to take multi-layered actions and reactions in their process of second language socialization.
6. In second language socialization processes, L2 learners will naturally and necessarily go through intercultural transformation (Shi, 2007, p. 231).

Underlying these 6 tenets, two ideas are worth mentioning. Firstly, from Shi's first point one may infer that Acculturation theory, as proposed by Schumann (1978), is embedded within ILS. According to Schumann (1978), the extent to which an individual acculturates will determine their acquisition of the second language. One of the variables at play during the process of acculturation and consequent SLA is cultural congruence, which is also implied in Shi's third point. Both authors suggest that individuals with a cultural background

that is more similar to that of the TL will have less difficulty in learning the TL. A further acculturation factor is social dominance, which involves the idea that SLA presents more difficulty when one of the cultures at play is dominant or subordinate in terms of politics, economic status, culture, or technology; this idea can be also be deduced from Shi's fourth point. Similarly, Schumann (1978) proposes that ego permeability will also enhance SLA, an aspect implied in Shi's sixth point.

A second idea to be mentioned about ILS regards the second point. In this framework, acquiring knowledge of pragmatic routines has a key role. According to Shi (2007), routines are the most successful communication strategy to engage in intercultural encounters. Given their culturally-bound nature, learning routines will also facilitate learning about the sociocultural norms of the TL, and therefore enhance language proficiency. This was illustrated in Li's (2000) case study on language socialization in the workplace by a Chinese immigrant woman. By engaging in intercultural encounters with higher-proficient learners, she gained knowledge of TL sociocultural norms and improved her repertoire of request routines to communicate more successfully with her co-workers.

In addition to this, ILS involves main ideas from two earlier theories that have been used to explain pragmatic learning: Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and Second Language Socialization (SLS) theory. Both of which we will now review.

1.4.3. Sociocultural theory

The main assumption of the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is that learning is a mediated process: it is shaped by the self (private speech) and/or by other interlocutors (through interaction). Additionally, learning can be mediated or assisted by external artifacts, namely extra practice or online activities. SCT is mainly grounded in Vygotsky (1978), who developed the *zone of proximal development* as a concept to describe the path from social, collaborative interaction to autonomous learning. According to this author, social mediation

is best maximized when interaction is between a novice learner and an expert. Thus, the learning process from a sociocultural view is as follows: firstly, learners practice the L2 in meaningful sociocultural situations; then, they internalize what they have learnt through their own mental processes; once the language they acquired socially is internalized, they are prepared to be autonomous users.

Some studies carried out in the SA context are based on the SCT. These studies have pointed out the benefits of having opportunities to interact in the SA context, especially with NS interlocutors. Shea's (1994) work is an example. The author analysed authentic conversations between Japanese ESL learners and NSs English speakers, and also among NNSs in the contexts of a North-American university. Although the different types of interactions revealed individual developmental paths of conversational ability, overall findings pointed out the paramount role of the NSs comments and feedback for the construction of the learners' discourse.

The present study adopts a main tenet from SCT: the idea that pragmatic learning is mediated through external social agents, and that it is maximized by interacting with higher-proficiency-level individuals. In Shea's (1994) study, pragmatic learning was enhanced through interaction with NSs. In the present study, learners' experiences with NSs will be examined with the aim of observing whether those experiences enhance learners' adaptation to the TL setting, and ultimately their pragmatic learning.

1.4.4. Second Language Socialization theory

Second Language Socialization (SLS) theory also views social interaction as a crucial element in language acquisition. The difference with the Sociocultural perspective is that the relationship of socialization and language is bidirectional: socialization leads to language use, and language use enhances socialization. In other words, language is both the means and the goal of socializing. While SCT focuses on the mediated process of language learning, SLS

explores how language and culture are integrated in the learning process (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). It entails that both the quality and the amount of interaction with L2 speakers, and the learners' identities and integration into the TL culture determine their acquisition of the L2.

That said, SLS departs from the premise that students learn an L2 within a particular society. Language socialization leads to acquiring a new language, so it is more effective in the second language (SL) context, given that language learning is directly related to operating in its sociocultural setting. Moreover, language socialization involves 3 main components that are interdependent: language, culture and cognition (Vickers, 2007, as cited in Wang, 2010). From these ideas, Duff (2007) provides the following definition of language socialization:

> [The] process by which novices or newcomers in a community or culture gain communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy in the group. It is a process that is mediated by language and whose goal is the mastery of linguistic conventions, pragmatics, the adoption of appropriate identities, stances (e.g. epistemic or empathetic) or ideologies, and other behaviors associated with the target group and its normative practices (Duff, 2007, p. 310).

From this definition one may deduce that SLS is a complex phenomenon that encompasses both internal aspects associated to the individual learner, and external factors related to the setting. In this sense, DuFon (2008) accounted for the ambitious SLS scope as follows: "with a holistic view, greater emphasis is placed on the human being as a social, emotional, mental and spiritual being embodied in a physical form, and the sociocultural, political, economic and educational environment in which they live" (p. 26). The traditional idea that the SA context enhances language acquisition is challenged by SLS, on the basis of the numerous reports of students not acquiring the L2 successfully (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1991; Díaz-Campos, 2004; Rodríguez, 2001). It is evident that the SA context offers innumerable opportunities for TL exposure, to interact with L2 users, and to directly learn their cultural values. However, learners need to be willing to participate actively in the TL community and look for opportunities to practice the language, since living abroad *in*

itself may not facilitate pragmatic learning (Taguchi, 2008). It could even be the case that NS interlocutors do not accommodate to foreign students' talk, and thus produce frustration for language learners, who may get overwhelmed with the amount, the complexity and speed of the messages. Additionally, foreign students may feel excluded by the TL group and distance themselves from L2 learning. In this context, Lave and Wenger (1991) presented their *community of practice* theory, which describes common socialization instances in SA contexts as follows: "newcomers (learners) participate in social activities with old timers (NS), and these newcomers need to negotiate legitimacy to participate in these activities" (Diao, 2011, p. 1). In the SA context, the main communities of practice are the classroom, student residences, university clubs, and even online communities. Efforts to integrate in these contexts, and subsequent linguistic gains have been addressed empirically by analyzing the variables that play a role within the SA context.

The role of formulaic language and particularly of pragmatic routines is crucial in language learning from the SLS perspective. As previously suggested, a main tenet of SLS is that social integration can be achieved through participation the choice of appropriate linguistic forms (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Learning formulaic language is different from learning other linguistic competencies: given its social and context-dependent nature, the learner has to integrate in the TL culture in order to learn the formulaic language used there (Dörnyei *et al*., 2004). Hence, it greatly depends on the opportunities available for the student to interact with the community, learners' attitudes, their disposition towards the target language and culture, and their willingness to participate socially. Similarly, Kasper and Rose (2002) point out the importance of pragmatic routines in the SLS approach to pragmatic learning. Pragmatic routines, as a subfield of formulaic language, are utterances used recurrently in given situational contexts, and which carry a strong cultural component. A main benefit of using routines is that their use enhances interactional competence, and

consequently facilitates participation in the TL community.

With this in mind, it is believed that ILS provides a theoretical base to address the research purpose of the present study: to explain pragmatic learning – conceptualized as the acquisition of pragmatic routines – in a SA context, by observing how the variable of acculturation influences pragmatic development across different cultures. Additionally, the study is strongly informed by the SLS paradigm, SCT, and the Acculturation Model.

So far, the concept of pragmatic competence, as a subfield of communicative ability, has been defined and its two main constituents have been addressed. Moreover, we have examined different approaches relevant to the present study. In what follows, the study is framed within a research scope: Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), and particularly acquisitional pragmatics.

1.5. Interlanguage pragmatics and acquisitional pragmatics

Recent approaches have distinguished 5 main interrelated subfields of pragmatics: *historical pragmatics, variational pragmatics*, *cross-cultural pragmatics*, *intercultural pragmatics,* and *interlanguage pragmatics* (Placencia & García, 2012). More specifically, the study of pragmatics across cultures, and thus, across languages, encompasses the three last subareas. Cross-cultural pragmatics focuses on how different pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects are addressed in different cultures and languages. Intercultural pragmatics addresses the pragmatic performance at play during intercultural encounters. This involves communication in a common language among speakers with different first languages (L1s) and cultural backgrounds (see Kecskes, 2014, for more details). Lastly, Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), implies the study of the development of pragmatic competence by L2 learners, and constitutes the research area where the present study makes its main contribution.

It should be noted that, as these pragmatic subfields are interrelated and frequently overlap, the distinction among them is not completely clear. For example, intercultural pragmatics may be considered a subfield of ILP if the goal is to examine the interlanguage of L2 learners of diverse cultural origins, while they communicate with NSs and other L2 speakers. In the present study, pragmatic gains by learners with varied cultural backgrounds are examined. Although the study is mainly framed within ILP, it is also informed by cross-cultural and by intercultural endeavors.

Studies in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics acknowledge that the same pragmatic features are performed differently across cultures. The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (Cohen, 1996) includes an extensive and comprehensive collection of studies on speech acts in different languages, performed by NSs and by NNSs. These studies point out that learners and NSs use different strategies to perform speech acts, and that an approximation to NSs pragmatic performance requires knowledge of the sociocultural norms of their community. For instance, in a study of indirect complaints (that is, objections about people other than the self) by Japanese ESL learners and by NSs from the US revealed significant differences in the conception of the speech act (Boxer, 1993, cited in Jung, 2002). While US interlocutors use indirect complaints as a positive communication strategy, to establish contact and maintain interaction, Japanese learners view the use of indirect complaints as face-threatening.

Intercultural pragmatics is a recent and still emerging research field. It entails aspects from cross-cultural pragmatics and insights from research on English as a Lingua Franca by NNSs of varied cultural origins. According to Kecskes (2014), when speakers from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact, they look for a common ground. In an attempt to achieve mutual intelligibility, they use certain strategies. These are evident, for instance, in the use of formulaic language. NSs tend to reduce the level of formulaicity when

communicating with NNSs. NNSs, at the same time, increase their amount of formulaic and conventional expressions when interacting with NSs, in an attempt to imitate their pragmatic performance. Nevertheless, in interactions among NNSs the amount of formulas is reduced, as a strategy to ensure understanding.

Since the present study examines gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines across cultures, we have provided some ideas from cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics. Nevertheless, this investigation differs from cross-cultural pragmatics in that rather than being contrastive, the focus is acquisitional. Moreover, since it explores the development of L2 learners' interlanguage, instead of analyzing given conversations, it is not fully framed within intercultural pragmatics.

1.5.1. Defining interlanguage pragmatics and acquisitional pragmatics

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) originated as a discipline when pragmatics was investigated within a SLA framework (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Interest in the acquisition of pragmatic competence started in the 1990s, with an article by Kasper (1992) on pragmatic transfer, and it emerged along with a shift in the field of SLA; from a focus on forms to attention to language as discourse – rather than sentences – and to language use viewed as the interpretation and production of pragmatic meaning to achieve communication in the L2 (LoCastro, 2012).

Early definitions of ILP made scant reference to the study of the learners' – NNSs' – language, which was termed *interlanguage* by Selinker (1972). As the term itself indicates, it is a developing linguistic system bridging two languages: the L1 and the TL. Consequently, it includes constructs from both systems. An interlanguage may be shaped by three main aspects: pragmatic transfer, pragmatic overgeneralization and teaching-induced errors (Barron, 2003). Regarding the nature of an interlanguage, it is a dynamic and evolving system whose development depends on the learners themselves and on numerous other

factors such as the learning context, instruction or the critical period of language acquisition; that is, before the age of 11 to 13. In fact, it has been suggested that there are different stages in the development of an interlanguage, as the definition of Koike (1996) indicates. According to the author, it is "a system that represents dynamic stages in the learning process and that are subject to continual change and modification" (Koike, 1996, p. 257)

Drawing from these ideas, Kasper and Dahl (1991) provided one of the first definitions of ILP as referring to NNSs' performance and acquisition of speech acts. According to these authors, ILP accounts for "non-native speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired" (p. 215). Moreover, it includes aspects such as discourse organization, conversational management, or choice or address terms. Other early definitions of ILP also refer to the use and comprehension of L2 pragmatic knowledge by NNSs. For instance, Kasper (1998) conceptualizes pragmatics as "the study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or, put briefly, ILP investigates `how to do things with words' (Austin) in a second language" (p. 184).

According to Taguchi (2012), that initial view of ILP which encompassed the study of pragmatic knowledge, mainly of speech acts, has been expanded over the subsequent two decades to include further elements such as the performance of language functions, additional pragmalinguistic aspects, and the knowledge of socially adequate language use. Therefore, current revised approaches to ILP define it as a more complex research field where context plays a key role. Some recent definitions include the following:

> "Analogous to interlanguage grammar or interlanguage lexicon, [ILP] is a branch of study in second language acquisition (SLA) that focuses on second language learners' knowledge, use and development in performance of sociocultural functions in context." (Taguchi, 2012, p. 1)

> "The study of how language learners use their developing abilities in the TL to communicate successfully despite gaps in knowledge about the linguistic systems and about the sociopragmatics of the L2. […] It seeks to identify gaps in the knowledge of L2

in the learner language." (LoCastro, 2012, p. 113-115)

As one may read, according to Taguchi (2012), ILP involves the study of how learners' interlanguage is used and developed in a given context. LoCastro's (2012) definition, moreover, implies that ILP addresses communication breakdowns resulting from the development of an interlanguage.

A main implication from the definitions laid out above is that ILP accounts for both, use and acquisition of the L2 pragmatic competence. As mentioned earlier, in its beginnings the 90s – the field of ILP focused on the study of the interlanguage itself, so it was characterized by a predominance of studies on NNSs' use of pragmatic knowledge, rather than on pragmatic learning or acquisition (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). The majority of these works were thus comparative studies that were mainly concerned with comparing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge between groups of NSs and NNSs, or among NNSs of diverse cultural origins.

Nevertheless, Bardovi-Harlig (1999), in line with earlier scholars such as Kasper (1992), Kasper and Schmidt (1996), Kasper and Rose (2002), and Schmidt (1983), underlined the scarcity of developmental studies in ILP, and the need to fill in this research gap. Bardovi-Harlig (1999) coined the term *acquisitional pragmatics*, which was shortened to *L2 pragmatics*, to refer to ILP research that focuses on the development of the L2 pragmatic competence. Before Bardovi-Harlig's call, research mainly focused on language use, and the author attempted to shift the focus of ILP research towards investigating developmental pragmatics. According to this author, "the expansion of interlanguage pragmatics to include acquisition is not in conflict with continuing the practice of interlanguage pragmatics research as we know it. What I am advocating is a broadening of the field of inquiry" (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, p. 706). This research gap has been addressed since then, with a proliferation of longitudinal ILP studies.

ILP research has typically been classified according to two main types of work: cross-sectional studies – dealing with the comparison of learners at different stages of development – and longitudinal studies – examining pragmatic development of one group of participants over a period of time. On one hand, cross-sectional studies contribute to the study of NSs and NNSs' production and comprehension of pragmatic features, and among different groups of NNs. In this sense, it has been observed that NSs and NNSs use different speech acts, or the same speech act in a situation but in a different form (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002). Moreover, cross-sectional ILP investigations have commonly compared pragmatic performance by L2 students at home versus L2 learners abroad, showing that the latter generally outperform the former in terms of the production of different pragmatic features: awareness, production of speech acts, acquisition of routines and development of informal style (Alcón, 2013). Consequently, both FL (in class) and SL (abroad) learning settings have been the contexts of analysis in cross-sectional studies.

On the other hand, longitudinal ILP studies have typically been carried out in SL contexts, with a focus on the effects of the learning environment, and with learners at early developmental stages of pragmatic knowledge. In contrast to cross-sectional works, which are generally limited to speech acts, longitudinal studies cover the analysis of more pragmatic features: discourse markers, conversational skills and pragmatic routines among others. Moreover, while for both cross-sectional and longitudinal research English has been the most investigated L2, Japanese as an L2 has been widely examined in developmental studies.

Comparing both design types, although the amount of longitudinal studies in ILP has increased recently, they are still rather scarce (Shively, 2013), and thus in need of additional development.

Different scholars (Alcón 2014; Taguchi, 2010, 2012) agree that given the sociocultural nature of pragmatic competence, developmental studies are the most suitable to

observe pragmatic gains since acquisition is a long-term process that involves certain complexities. In addition, as longitudinal works include more qualitative information, they provide more detailed analyses of how individual differences and other factors may determine pragmatic gains. With this idea in mind, Taguchi (2010) reviewed 21 longitudinal studies that have represented a remarkable improvement in the field (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, Xiao (2015) presented the most up-to-date review of relevant longitudinal ILP studies.

In summary, ILP is a field within pragmatics that is concerned with the use and acquisition of pragmatic competence by learners of an L2. It entails both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of the interlanguage. Furthermore, developmental studies within the ILP scope are embraced under the term acquisitional pragmatics, which includes both cross-sectional and longitudinal investigations. The present study is a longitudinal research, framed within the field of acquisitional pragmatics, which traces the development of pragmatic competence by NNSs during a semester abroad.

The next section offers a detailed account of what has been achieved in the field of acquisitional pragmatics and points out some research gaps still to be covered in this area, which provide the motivation for the present investigation.

1.5.2. Issues addressed in acquisitional pragmatics

Acquisitional pragmatics covers two main lines of research: acquisition of the L2 pragmatic system, and factors that influence that acquisition. The former involves the development of L2 learners' comprehension and production of different pragmatic features, while the latter accounts for potential variables that exert an influence on that development.

1.5.2.1. Acquisition of pragmatic features

ILP research has been concerned with the use and development of different pragmalinguistic features at different proficiency stages, and in different settings. Typically,

the extent to which the way these linguistic forms deviate from the ones used by NSs determines learners' level of pragmatic ability, and consequently their level of pragmatic development. It should however be noted, as has been observed by a number of scholars (Barron, 2003), that it is nearly impossible for NNSs to fully approximate NSs' use of the language, and to attain perfect native-like proficiency.

The main pragmatic aspects that have been central in acquisitional pragmatics include speech acts, implicatures, discourse functions, and pragmatic routines. Nevertheless, ILP has mostly been concerned with the first element, namely speech acts. In particular, ILP studies have explored the ability to use and interpret speech acts appropriately according to the context and to the interlocutor's characteristics. The large body of research on the realization of different speech acts – requests, refusals, complaints, apologies, greetings, leave-takings, and compliments – mainly observes differences between L2 learners and NSs. Bardovi-Harlig (2001), for instance, illustrates differences in the production of speech acts: the actual speech acts produced, the choice of semantic formulas used to produce the speech act, the content of those formulas and the form of the realizations. In addition to this, it has been suggested that there are particular speech acts that develop at a slower rate; this is the case regarding refusals and complaints (Bardovi-Harlig, 2003; House, 1996; Trosborg, 1995).

A current concern in ILP research is that there has traditionally been a focus on analyzing different speech acts, disregarding other pragmatic elements. Authors such as Kasper and Dahl (1991) have indeed identified the whole area of ILP with speech acts. According to these authors, ILP is "the investigation of non-native speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts" (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 215). An illustration of the preponderance of speech act research in ILP was provided by Bardovi-Harlig (2010). In a state of the art, the author reviews 152 ILP studies between 1979 and 2008. Out of the sample, 99 of them (65.4%) deal with speech acts. Bardovi-Harlig (2010) concludes the

article with a clear call: there is a dominant field within ILP research, that of speech acts, and contributions regarding other pragmatic aspects are needed in order to operationalize pragmatic competence as its fullest.

A second area of scholarly interest in ILP has been implicatures; that is, the ability to convey and interpret non-literal meaning. Implied meaning refers to the bridge between sentence meaning and speaker-intended meaning. Research findings (Bouton, 1992, 1994, cited in Taguchi, 2011b; Taguchi 2008) point to conventionality as the main factor fostering comprehension of pragmatic meaning, as it helps with processing speed and L1 transferability. Indeed, there seems to exist a developmental order in the comprehension of pragmatic functions: conventional implicature (which is more semantically transparent) presents less difficulty in interpretation because it requires less processing load and it allows inference by relying on the L1 pragmatic system. In contrast, meanings that are more contextually and culturally specific (such as in the case of indirect implicatures and pragmatic routines) are harder to comprehend since they have to be newly learned, their meaning cannot be inferred from the L1, and their comprehension requires knowledge of the TL sociocultural norms.

Conventionality also influences production of speech acts, an activity that implies knowledge of both sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. Empirical evidence indicates that production is more challenging than recognition since it does not allow inferring, so it conveys a higher processing load (Taguchi, 2012). Drawing from the main longitudinal studies on pragmatic production (Bardovi-Harlig & Hatford, 1993; Barron 2003; DuFon, 2000; Hassall, 2006), Taguchi (2012) explains that developmental stages have not been observed in production. However, some trends may be traced: earlier stages seem to be characterized by the production of a limited range of pragmalinguistic forms, especially of formulaic language, and without a great variety of functions. Learners then expand their

repertoire, but the process is slow, and can be fastened by correction, feedback and modeling.

The importance of conventionality in recognizing and producing pragmatic aspects leads to a current and proliferating area of investigation in ILP: the role of formulaic language in L2 pragmatic acquisition. Formulaic language refers to prefabricated sequences that often have a non-literal meaning, and serve to perform different pragmatic functions. These include idioms (e.g. *to pull someone's leg*), fixed-expressions (e.g. t*o tell you the truth*), and phrasal verbs (e.g. *to put up with*), among others. Formulaic language is of particular relevance to pragmatics given its social and cultural nature. Ellis (1992) and Schmidt (1983), among others, point out that knowledge of formulaic language determines to a great extent pragmatic development. Since degree of conventionalization highly determines the acquisition of formulaic language – e.g. more conventional formulas are easier to process – this language is also a key aspect in the development of pragmatic competence.

A corpus of studies has underlined the important role of pragmatic routines (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 2002), which are a subfield of the wider area of formulaic language. Routines are different from other formulas as they are contextually and culturally specific, and they are performed routinely in common situations. Scholars have observed that the role of routines in early stages of development (e.g. for low-proficient learners) can be crucial, since they are easily processed and produced as complete utterances; that is, as "chunks." As a result, the use of routines enhances learners' pragmatic and oral fluency. In addition to this, it has been widely argued that having extended knowledge of routines facilitates coping with communicative social situations (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Bearing these ideas in mind, there is a body of acquisitional research on both comprehension and production of routine formulas, with influential works such as Bardovi-Harlig (2008) Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011), Barron (2003), and Taguchi (2011a, 2013a). These studies have underlined different factors that affect the acquisition of pragmatic routines in the SA

context, such as length of stay, interaction with NSs, and L2 proficiency level.

1.5.1.2. Factors that influence pragmatic acquisition

While some ILP studies have simply described pragmatic use and observed pragmatic development, most empirical works in L2 pragmatics have analysed how different factors interfere with the acquisition of various pragmatic features. Factors related to the learning context, to individual differences and to instruction have been main foci of research. The present study addresses the first two variables, namely learning context and individual differences, since it examines the role of acculturation to the TL context by L2 learners of varied origins.

With respect to learning context, a main tenet is that the type of input learners receive greatly determines pragmatic outcomes (see Taguchi, 2015, for a review on pragmatic development across contexts). This input is different according to the context it takes place in. Two main contexts are typically distinguished: the FL context, which involves L2 learners receiving instruction in a classroom in their home country, and the SL context, which is the setting where the L2 is used. Additionally, two more settings have recently attracted the attention of scholars: the workplace, and the online context. These contexts offer different input and learning opportunities. In the FL setting, teacher and learners, often unconsciously, use speech acts on a daily basis to perform functions related to the academic context. A body of ILP research already exists on how to teach and learn pragmatics in the foreign language classroom (see Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2008, for a review). Regarding the workplace setting, it allows for the acquisition of pragmatic aspects related to interaction with co-workers with different social status, and particularly to the small talk resulting from those interactions (Yates & Major, 2015). The online context, furthermore, affords a wide range of opportunities to acquire pragmatic competence through authentic input, real-time interaction and intercultural communication. In this case, communication takes place virtually in

different settings such as social networks, telecollaboration, email correspondence, blogs, games and on mobile-phones (Taguchi, 2015).

Nevertheless, ILP has been more concerned with analyzing pragmatic development in the SL setting, given the social and interactional nature of pragmatics (Taguchi, 2015). Learning pragmatic ability in SL contexts involves learning about the sociocultural norms implied in the TL community, acquiring the linguistic aspects of the TL, and applying them appropriately according to different situations or communicative contexts. The most typical SL context is SA programs. Other SL settings include immersion programs, workplace areas, and service encounters.

During SA programs, learners have rich exposure to the TL outside of class and a plethora of opportunities to use the language in diverse social situations, with different interlocutors and for real-life purposes (Pérez-Vidal, 2014). Moreover, they are continuously witnessing NSs interactions, which provide them with valuable input. Therefore, SA programs seem to result in an optimal context for the acquisition of different pragmatic aspects (Barron, 2003; Bataller, 2010; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Kinginger, 2008; Matsumura, 2007; Schauer, 2006; Taguchi, 2008; Ren, 2015). In addition, these studies have reported some conclusions about the developmental process of pragmatic competence in the SA context: 1) learning most pragmatic aspects is more obvious at the earlier stages of staying abroad, when participants are first exposed to sociopragmatic norms; 2) after the sojourn they tend to lose the pragmatic knowledge acquired, due to the intersection of L1 sociopragmatic norms; 3) there is variation in the pace and amount of development due to individual trajectories and experiences; and 4) exposure to TL sociopragmatic norms seems to be one of the most positive factors for the development of pragmatic awareness. In this regard, some scholars agree that pragmatic learning in the SA context is variable and non-linear, and to what extent pragmatic competence develops during SA programs is not backed up with

conclusive empirical evidence. Framed as a SA investigation, the present study explores pragmatic gains during a semester abroad, and learners' acculturation experiences throughout the stay.

In addition to the learning context, ILP research examines the role of individual differences, and this is also addressed in the present study. The influence of social and psychological factors on pragmatic competence has been observed since Schumann published his 1986 paper "Research on the Acculturation Model for Second Language Acquisition," which presented his Theory of Acculturation and applied it to language learning (see section 1.3). Since then, affect (including language shock and anxiety), social distance towards the TL language and culture, age, gender, language aptitude, motivation, personality, and learning style have been found to exert influence on pragmatic learning (Schmidt, 1983).

The individual difference that has attracted the most attention among ILP scholars is proficiency (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Pinto, 2005; Taguchi, 2011b). In fact, the effect of different levels of proficiency on L2 pragmatic development is one of the most investigated topics in ILP (Li, 2014). Research findings in this sense point out several tenets. Firstly, having certain proficiency level seems to enhance pragmatic learning (Li, 2014). Advanced learners have been observed to produce more complex requests (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012), have more pragmatic awareness, use more indirect strategies (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007), be more successful in appropriateness and speech rate (Taguchi, 2011b), and use a wider repertoire of request-making strategies (Wen, 2014). However, advanced proficiency learners do not always outperform lower-level ones (Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2002). For instance, low level students perform pragmatic functions as well as advanced learners in low demanding social situations; for example, when performing simple requests (Taguchi, 2006). Additionally, higher levels of proficiency do not guarantee native-like performance (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Taguchi,

2011b). Achieving native-like pragmatic performance is a quite impossible task even for the most advanced learners, who still exhibit L1 transfer and lack of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Taguchi, 2006, 2011b).

In addition to proficiency, other individual differences that have been widely analysed in ILP are motivation, and attitude towards learning; two factors that are at times interrelated. For instance, Takahashi (2001) analysed Japanese EFL students' motivation to learn English, and their awareness of pragmalinguistic aspects. The author observed that learners who were more intrinsically motivated noticed a higher amount of pragmatic features. Nevertheless, it has also been noted that motivational/attitudinal behaviors may also enhance conscious resistance to acquire L2 pragmatic aspects, as shown in DuFon's (1999) study on Indonesian politeness, and Barron's (2003) investigation on requests, offers and refusals to offers.

The present investigation focuses on the individual variable of acculturation, which accounts for the sociocultural and psychological adaptation of sojourners into the new community. In doing so, this study represents a notable contribution to the ILP field, since, to the best of our knowledge, ILP studies considering acculturation are rather scarce, with Schmidt's (1983) providing the only empirical evidence of how Schumann's Acculturation Model may be applied to explain pragmatic development.

That said, one can infer that there is still a lot of more research needed in ILP and particularly in acquisitional pragmatics. The current mixed findings on factors which influence pragmatic acquisition indicate that there is still a lack of understanding of how pragmatic competence is developed. For instance, Barron and Warga's (2007) special issue encourages developmental research which addresses existing gaps in ILP studies. Among the different research gaps that these authors mention, the present study is focused on explaining pragmatic development rather than describing pragmatic use. Secondly, contrary to interventional studies that have dominated ILP, the present study examines unconscious and

natural learning of pragmatics during SA. Thirdly, it explores the effect of different factors, namely acculturation to the TL context and learners' cultural background. Finally, the study involves a mixed-method approach which combines quantitative and qualitative data analysis, with the aim of obtaining a broad picture of how SA experiences influence pragmatic learning.

1.6. Summary of the chapter

The aim of chapter 1 was to situate the present study within the relevant theoretical framework. Firstly, the field of pragmatics was introduced. Pragmatic competence is a subfield of communicative competence, and as such, its main function is to provide individuals with the ability to interact. Three main aspects characterize pragmatic competence: the importance of context, the language users, and the interaction among them. Hence, acquiring pragmatic ability entails knowledge of two main components: pragmalinguistics (linguistic resources) and sociopragmatics (sociocultural norms and values specific to the context).

Pragmatic learning has been studied according to two main theoretical approaches: a cognitive-oriented perspective which views learning as an individual mental process, and a socially-oriented perspective which sees pragmatic learning as a mediated activity that takes places through social interaction. Bridging the gap between both approaches, the present study views pragmatic learning as determined by the socialization of the learners into a new sociocultural community. This assumption is implied in Intercultural Language Socialization (ILS) theory, which represents the main theoretical framework of this study. This approach puts forward that during intercultural communication encounters – thus during socialization – L2 students experience some changes in their cultural disposition that might determine their language and pragmatic learning. The present study, additionally, includes the main tenets

from Sociocultural Theory (SCT), Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model, and from the Second Language Socialization (SLS) approach, since it explores how acculturation to the TL environment will determine pragmatic learning across different cultures.

This investigation is also framed within the research field of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), which explores L2 learners' development of their interlanguage. This implies the development of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of the L2. The study is a longitudinal investigation that tracks the pragmatic development of a group of NNSs during a semester abroad. Given its developmental focus, it is framed within acquisitional pragmatics.

ILP, and in particular acquisitional pragmatic studies, focuses on the development of different pragmatic aspects, mainly speech acts, discourse markers, implicatures, and pragmatic routines. This development may be determined by various factors, related to the learning environment, to instruction, and to individual differences (e.g. proficiency, motivation, attitude). The present study examines one particular learning environment, namely the SA context, and its impact on gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines. Furthermore, it explores how acculturation influences the acquisition of pragmatic routines. Moreover, the analysis considers whether learners' cultural background makes a difference in pragmatic development. Therefore, this study will not only contribute to the field of ILP, but it will also inform cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics research.

In the following chapter we will be dealing with the SA setting as a context where pragmatic competence is learned.

CHAPTER 2

PRAGMATICS IN THE STUDY ABROAD CONTEXT

Chapter 2 addresses the context in which the present investigation takes place: SA programs. In particular, it presents previous research on factors that affect learners' pragmatic development while studying abroad, with a particular focus on acculturation. Since the learning setting highly determines pragmatic acquisition (as outlined in section 1.4.2), a review of the nature of SA programs and the opportunities for input and for output available within the context is necessary for us to gain understanding on how pragmatic routines and pragmatic competence in general are learned by L2 students. Firstly, section 2.1 describes SA programs as special contexts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Section 2.2 reviews previous findings on external factors associated with SA (length of stay, and intensity of interaction) and their role in pragmatic learning, while 2.3 focuses on internal factors, such as proficiency, identity, socialization and motivation. Section 2.4 is devoted to acculturation, since it is the main factor under investigation in this study. In particular, 2.4 presents the concept of acculturation, and reviews the main studies that have analysed the influence of adaptation to the TL culture on pragmatic development. Finally, the main ideas presented in chapter 2 are summarized in section 2.5.

2.1. Study abroad programs as a context for learning pragmatics

Learning a language in a second language (SL) context versus learning it in a foreign language (FL) context differ because the former implies acquiring the L2 unconsciously and in a natural setting – that is, implicitly – while the latter involves learning the L2 consciously in an instructional environment – that is, explicitly – (see Pérez-Vidal, 2014, for a discussion on differences between FL and SL as learning contexts). At the intersection between SL and

FL contexts, one can place SA programs.

SA programs are temporary stays in a country in which students not only have the opportunity to acquire the language of the community but also to learn about its sociocultural values. Their particularity lies in the fact that the TL is acquired both from instruction in an educational environment, and from interactions with TL users outside of class. Different definitions of a SA program that include these particularities have been proposed (Collentine, 2009; Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2008). For example, Taguchi (2015) defines it as "a temporary, pre-scheduled educational stay in a country where the target language is spoken among community members" (p. 4). Pérez-Vidal (2014), moreover, provides a complete account on the nature of SA programs as particular SLA contexts. In particular, the author refers to the SA context as:

> A naturalistic learning context in which language learners are immersed in the target language and culture with potentially massive amounts of input, output and interaction opportunities available to them. Under those circumstances, learners will be able to engage in specific cognitive mechanisms, which will allow their linguistic development to make substantial progress (Pérez-Vidal, 2014, p. 23)

Pérez-Vidal (2014), hence, emphasizes the ideas of immersion in the culture, opportunities for input and output, and the development of cognitive ability as main elements in the SA learning context. Altogether, there seems to be scholarly agreement that the main features that characterize a SA program are: 1) its limited time frame, 2) its educational goal, 3) the opportunities it offers for out-of-class exposure, and 4) immersion in a community where the TL is used. With respect to the limited time frame, SA programs typically range from short-term stays (as short as 6-8 weeks long) to year-abroad programs, with semester-long programs having been widely investigated. Regarding the educational goal, it may imply exclusively learning the L2 or also integrating content learning. While the main purpose of SA programs is for students to improve their L2 abilities, intermediate to advanced learners

may also spend time in the TL country with the principal aim of continuing their university studies while learning the language of the community.

In addition to this, the purpose of studying abroad is broader, not limited to improving proficiency in an L2. The Global Opportunities Office at Ohio University, for instance, points out four different goals for studying abroad: 1) academic/intellectual, 2) professional, 3) personal, and 4) intercultural. The definition of SA programs proposed above by Pérez-Vidal (2014) makes particular emphasis on the fourth aim (to enhance intercultural competence), which implies the ability to understand, manage, and assimilate differences between the TL culture and their own[1]. Indeed, the purpose of SA programs is not only to acquire the TL but also to learn about the sociocultural values of the community.

In this sense, research on SA programs tends to focus on linguistic outcomes, particularly on speaking, but the reported linguistic benefits have often overshadowed the cultural gains. While it is acknowledged that attaining intercultural competence is a precursor of attaining an optimal level in a TL (Alonso-Marks, 2013; see also section 1.1), the number of investigations measuring learners' development of acculturation while studying abroad is still limited (Martinsen, 2008; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004). Recent research has emphasized the need to focus not only on linguistic but also on non-linguistic outcomes of SA (Pérez-Vidal, 2014).

Nonetheless, SA programs have typically been referred to as the optimal context for language learning (for a review, see Collentine & Freed, 2004; DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Kinginger, 2013). This is not surprising, given the vast amount of opportunities the context offers to sojourners for interaction with L2 users in different situations, the continuous

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[1] *Intercultural competence* is synonym of *cross-cultural competence*. Bennett (1993: 24) refers to the process of acquiring CCS as "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development."

exposure to authentic input and the opportunities learners have for producing output (Pérez-Vidal, 2014). The advantage of SA, as opposed to learning in the FL setting, is even more evident when considering the development of pragmatic competence, since it implies knowledge of not only pragmalinguistic aspects but also sociopragmatic elements related to the TL culture and society. Learning pragmatic ability abroad involves learning about the sociocultural norms implied in the TL community, acquiring the linguistic aspects of the TL, and applying them appropriately to different situations or communicative contexts. While abroad, learners have rich exposure to the TL outside class, and plenty of opportunities to use the language in diverse social situations, with different interlocutors and for real-life purposes. Moreover, they continuously witness NSs interactions that provide them with valuable and authentic input. Drawing from these ideas, Kasper and Schmidt (1996) point out the advantage of the SA context for pragmatic learning as follows:

> Because pragmatic knowledge, by definition, is highly sensitive to social and cultural features of context, one would expect input that is richer in qualitative and quantitative terms to result in better learning outcomes. A second language environment is more likely to provide learners with the diverse and frequent input they need for pragmatic development than a foreign language learning context, especially if the instruction is precommunicative or noncommunicative (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 159-160).

In this sense, Taguchi (2015) summarizes the main aspects concerning why the SA contexts is potentially optimal for pragmatic learning. According to this author, SA as a learning context involves:

> (1) Opportunities to observe local norms of interaction, (2) situated pragmatic practice and feedback on that practice, (3) real-life consequences of pragmatic behavior, and (4) exposure to variation in styles and communicative situations (Taguchi, 2015, p. 4).

Research on the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the SA context has generated relevant contributions (Barron, 2003; Kinginger, 2008; Schauer, 2009; Taguchi, 2015; Ren, 2015). Despite the apparent advantage of the SA context for pragmatic learning, the reality is

that research literature on SA is characterized by inconsistent and inconclusive findings (Wang, 2010).

Firstly, numerous studies have pointed out the benefits of the SA context for the development of different pragmatic aspects. Among these aspects, the most researched fields are speech acts, and particularly requests (Alcón, 2014; Barron, 2003; Bataller, 2010; Bella, 2012; Schauer, 2006; Taguchi, 2013b) and apologies (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Shardakova, 2005). Other speech acts that have been observed to develop during SA are refusals (Barron, 2003; Bella, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004, 2013) suggestions (Koike, 1996), offers (Barron, 2003), opinions (Taguchi, 2013b) and complaints (Trosborg, 1995). Pragmatic features other than speech acts that are likely to develop in the SA setting include meta-pragmatic awareness (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004); comprehension of implicature (Bouton, 1992, 1994, cited in Taguchi, 2011b; Taguchi, 2008, 2011b), directness and politeness (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; DuFon, 1999; Han, 2005, cited in Eslami & Jin Ahn, 2014), and pragmatic routines (Barron, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999; Shively, 2011). Examples of studies pointing to the beneficial role of SA for pragmatic acquisition abound, and they are reviewed throughout this chapter. An example is Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's study (1998) focused on pragmatic awareness in requests, apologies, suggestions and refusals. They found that SA learners and teachers had a higher level of pragmatic awareness, since they identified a higher amount of pragmatic errors, and perceived them as being more serious. In contrast, at-home (AH) students and instructors reported grammatical errors as being more serious.

Pragmatic development during SA is nonetheless non-linear. It has been found that certain pragmatic features are acquired more quickly, while the development of others is somewhat slow. This is the case of greetings and leave-takings, and of terms of address (e.g.

tu vs. *vous*) (Hassall, 2006), which seem to be increased at earlier stages of immersion. In contrast, appropriate use of requests, refusals and invitations is acquired at a slower rate, and is thus more common of later stages of SA. Félix-Brasdefer (2004), for instance, provided evidence that refusals and invitations are acquired at the end of the stay abroad, while Barron (2003) observed that the development of refusals is slower than other speech acts such as requests and offers. One main reason for this differential acquisition is the role of transfer from the L1 and heritage culture. In Barron's (2003) study, Irish and German cultures certainly differed in their refusal strategies. A further reason for the slow development of some aspects may be that L2 learners tend to overgeneralize TL pragmatic norms. For instance, Bataller (2010) examined the production of requests by US learners of Spanish in a SA program in Valencia (Spain). Results from this investigation showed that at the end of the semester US learners preferred using more direct requests strategies in situations where NSs Spanish use indirect ones (in US culture, requests as well as other speech acts are produced more indirectly than in Spanish culture).

In spite of the substantial evidence that pragmatic competence develops successfully during a sojourn abroad, there are also examples of certain features not being acquired successfully during the stay, or SA students not outperforming AH ones in terms of pragmatic ability (Hoffmann-Hicks, 1999; Rodríguez, 2001). For instance, in Rodríguez' (2001) study SA and AH students showed similar levels of recognition of pragmatic routines for requests in Spanish, suggesting that the SA context was not particularly beneficial for the development of these pragmatic aspects. Similarly, Hoffmann-Kicks (1999) examined the acquisition of pragmatic competence in L2 French by US students. Findings in this study revealed that while the SA students in France outperformed those in the FL setting in their ability to perform greetings and leave-takings, they showed similar acquisition to the FL

group in terms of compliments.

Further studies that have not revealed a clear benefit of the SA context over the FL context in terms of acquiring pragmatic competence include Niezgoda and Roever (2001), Taguchi (2008), and Ren (2013). Niezgoda and Roever (2001) focused on awareness of pragmatic errors in English by Czech students, and observed that EFL learners in the Czech Republic identified more pragmatic, as well as grammatical, errors than ESL students in the US. Taguchi (2008) addressed the development of comprehension of indirect refusals by Japanese ESL learners during a 7-week immersion in the US, reporting that the SA learners made a significant improvement on comprehension speed but the AH group (in Japan) outperformed SA students in accuracy of comprehension. Similarly, Ren (2013) compared internal modifications in refusals by a SA group in the US and their AH peers in China. In this longitudinal investigation, the author observed that the SA group produced more appropriate types of internal modifications, but there were no significant differences between the groups in terms of frequency of modifications.

Inconsistent findings revealed by research on the development of pragmatic aspects during SA programs point out two facts: 1) there is actually an advantage of the FL setting over the SA context on certain pragmatic aspects, and 2) the research design of some studies has not been accurate enough to address the complexity of the SA context.

In relation to the first aspect mentioned above, on the one hand, some studies have found that learning a FL in the classroom in the home country enhances the development of explicit knowledge (see DeKeyser, 2007). Indeed, explicit (that is, declarative) knowledge seems to be particularly advantageous in learning pragmalinguistic forms. On the other hand, learning an L2 in the SA context is more beneficial in improving sociopragmatic knowledge, given that the context provides more opportunities to practice the language with L2 users in

57

daily situations, and to automatize acquired L2 pragmatic skills (DeKeyser, 2007).

With regards to the second aspect mentioned above, given that within SA programs different internal and external variables are at play and have been observed to exert an influence on pragmatic development, investigations that explore the process of pragmatic development rather than those looking at learning outcomes may be more reliable (see Taguchi, 2015). Previous investigations on SA have focused on two main strands of research: outcomes, especially linguistic outcomes (that is, the "product" of the SA), and the factors that affect those results (that is, the "processes" involved in SA). The first line includes studies that have compared outcomes of SA programs by a group of SA students with those of a group of learners in the FL setting (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Roever, 2005; Schauer, 2006). Taguchi (2015) refers to this bulk of studies as a "black box" (p. 5), since they do not provide details on what is going on during the SA experience (for example, the factors that may have affected the reported outcomes). In contrast, what this author refers to as the "glass box" is the body of research that has explored factors that potentially play a role in pragmatic development during SA. Given the complexity of the context, and the inconsistent findings on whether pragmatic competence develops in the SA context, scholars such as Wilkinson (1998) or Taguchi (2015) have expressed the importance of focusing on the process rather than on the product of SA. In line with these authors, the present study adopts a "glass box" perspective and examines the influence of factors that determine the development of pragmatic competence in the SA setting.

In this sense, Pérez-Vidal (2014) proposes that there are 3 types of factors at play which must be considered when analyzing the effect of the SA context on language learning. These are illustrated in Figure 2.1. This author groups SA factors into three main categories: macro-level factors (that is, contextual factors), micro-level variables (that is, individual

58

differences), and aspects related to the design of the exchange program.
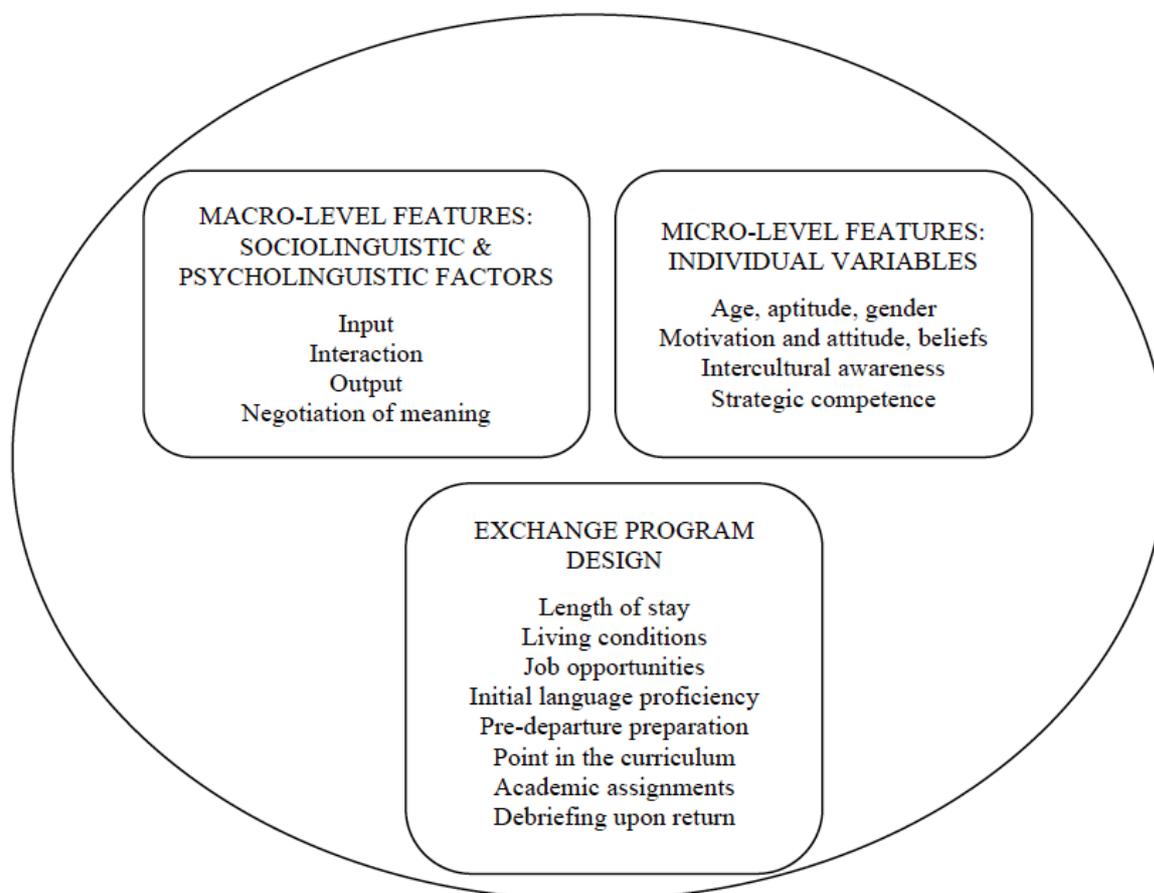
Figure 2.1. Macro and micro-level features of specific learning contexts (adapted from Pérez-

Vidal, 2014, p. 22)

Acknowledging the potential influence of the numerous factors at play during SA that

may affect SLA, research into their impact on pragmatic acquisition has focused on certain

variables. To provide explanations for success in pragmatic acquisition or for the slow

development of certain aspects, scholars have commonly classified predictors of pragmatic

learning into two main categories: external factors and internal factors. On one hand, external

factors related to the SA environment include language contact, length of stay, instruction,

intensity of interaction, and input. On the other hand, internal variables involve individual

differences such as motivation, personality, attitude towards the L2, age, nationality, and L1.

The following two sections include a general overview on how external and internal factors influence pragmatic competence during SA.

2.2. The role of external factors

Investigations on how the SA context influences pragmatic acquisition have mainly focused on the role of two variables: length of stay (days/months spent in the TL context; also referred to in the literature as length of residence) and intensity of interaction (amount of hours per day/week spent using the TL with L2 speakers; also referred to as language contact and amount of exposure). Overall, research findings have indicated that amount of interaction is a better predictor of pragmatic development than length of stay. In other words, spending more time in the TL setting is not enough on its own to fully develop pragmatic competence. It seems that L2 learners need to be willing to take advantage of the opportunities to interact offered by the context. In what follows, attention will be paid to these two variables: length of stay and intensity of interaction.

Length of stay

Although duration of stay seems to have a smaller impact on pragmatic development than intensity of interaction, there is evidence that this impact is generally positive. Cross-sectional studies have corroborated the positive role of length of stay by comparing the pragmatic performance of a group of SA students with their AH peers (House, 1996; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; also see section 2.1). Moreover, longitudinal investigations have pointed out that increased exposure to the TL environment has an overall positive effect on pragmatic acquisition, although length of stay alone is not enough to explain pragmatic development. For example, Schauer (2006) observed that length of stay significantly determined awareness of pragmatic errors and production of request modifiers. The author

compared pragmatic gains by a group of SA students in England with a control group of AH learners in Germany, finding that the SA group demonstrably improved their awareness of pragmatic errors. Nevertheless, qualitative data revealed that learners exhibited individual learning trajectories, suggesting that length of stay alone does not seem to explain pragmatic development.

A number of studies have compared the influence of length of stay together with additional variables, finding that length of stay has a smaller impact on pragmatic development compared to other factors (Alcón, 2014; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Shardakova, 2005; Xu, Case & Wang, 2009). Alcón (2014), for instance, analysed the effect of teachability and length of residence in the TL setting on students' (60 Spanish ESL learners in the UK for one year) ability to mitigate requests in communication with their teachers through emails. Thirty of the participants had received instruction in requesting in emails, and they produced more request mitigators. This points to a direct positive influence of instruction. However, this ability was not maintained during the year abroad, so the effect of instruction was reduced after a longer stay, and it became imperceptible at the end of the year abroad. Consequently, length of stay and instructional treatment seem to interact and influence the development of pragmatic awareness. In other words, length of stay alone would not have enhanced learners' ability to produce more polite requests in emails.

Xu, *et al*. (2009) focused on the influence of length of stay and proficiency on pragmatic awareness (that is, awareness of pragmatic and grammatical errors). The participants, ESL learners in the US, were divided into four groups: 1) students with extended length of stay (more than one year) and a high proficiency level, 2) students with extended length of stay and low proficiency, 3) students with short length of stay (one year or less) and high proficiency, and 4) students with short length of stay and a low proficiency level.

Results showed that proficiency had a higher impact on pragmatic awareness, since students with higher proficiency levels (groups 1 and 3) identified more pragmatic errors.

Notwithstanding these findings, some scholars have not found a significant effect of length of stay on the development of certain pragmatic aspects. For instance, Vilar-Beltrán (2014) investigated the effect of length of stay on awareness and production of requests and of request modifiers. Findings revealed that length of residence was unrelated to production of requests, it exerted a negative effect on awareness of requests, and it was positively related with use of request act modifiers. Participants of the study, 104 ESL learners from different nationalities participating in SA programs of diverse durations, showed higher levels of awareness of requests at early stages (first 6 months). Moreover, they increased their repertoire of request act modifiers at later stages (up to 16 years). Nevertheless, they did not significantly improve their ability to produce requests during the different length stays.

To sum up, investigations that have explored the role of length of stay on pragmatic development have yielded inconclusive results. Given those findings, the present study focuses only on learners' first semester of immersion in the SA context, and explores further variables whose influence on pragmatic learning have been underlined in previous studies, as is the case of intensity of interaction.

Intensity of interaction

Drawing from the findings mentioned above on the role of length of stay, researchers seem to agree that rather than duration of stay in the SA context, it is amount of interaction which best accounts for pragmatic development. Learners enrolled in SA programs of the same nature (that is, of a similar duration, educational goal, amount of instruction, or living arrangement) may benefit from the opportunities the context offers to different extents depending on aspects such as their personality, their willingness to communicate in the TL,

the actual opportunities to practice outside of class they find, or their enrollment in activities within the TL speech community. As a consequence, students present individual pragmatic learning trajectories. While individual differences play a relevant role, the amount of interaction they have with L2 speakers has been observed to determine pragmatic acquisition. In fact, as Dietrich, Klein and Noyau (1995, p. 227) state, "duration of stay is an uninteresting variable. What matters is intensity, not length of interaction."

Some of the studies which have found a stronger influence of intensity of interaction than length of stay include Bella (2011, 2012) and Taguchi (2008). Bella (2011, 2012) compared the effect of length of residence and intensity of interaction upon Greek learners' use of politeness strategies and mitigation devices; to refuse invitations (Bella, 2011) and to make requests (Bella, 2012). Participants belonged to two groups: one with a longer length of stay (around 4.5 years) but limited opportunities for interaction (around 15 weekly hours), and one with less extended length of stay (around 2 years) but more frequent interactions (around 40 weekly hours). Findings showed that the former group, the one with more interaction and less duration of stay, used more native-like speech acts appropriately according to NSs norms of politeness.

Taguchi (2008) examined the role of intensity of interaction (referred to as language contact) and of cognitive processing ability on comprehension of pragmatic meaning, which she measured in terms of speed and accuracy. To analyse amount of contact, 44 ESL learners completed a language contact survey that asked them to report hours of speaking and reading in the L2 outside of class 3 times during a semester. Results showed that learners improved their speed but not their accuracy of comprehension. Overall, length of stay did not play a significant role in comprehension of implicatures, since learners still had difficulty at the end of the semester. This author argues that the duration of the stay may have been too short. In

addition to this, intensity of interaction and cognitive ability significantly correlated with gains in comprehension speed, but not with accuracy. Taguchi explains findings from the study by arguing that intensity of interaction implies incidental L2 exposure and frequent processing practice, which seemed to have particularly enhanced learners' ability to comprehend implied meaning that is not difficult to infer.

In summary, a focus on the influence of external factors on pragmatic acquisition during SA does not seem to be enough. Internal factors associated with the individual learners often interfere with the influence of external variables. Evidence of this fact is provided, for example, by Eslami and Jin Ahn (2014), who explored how pragmatic development is influenced by two external factors (length of stay and amount of L2 contact) and one internal variable (motivation). They administered a discourse completion task (DCT) to measure production of compliment responses by 50 Korean students of ESL participating in SA programs in the US. Results revealed that only motivation had a positive impact on pragmatic development, while length of stay and amount of interaction were unrelated variables.

While the studies mentioned above have reported some influence of length of stay, and intensity of interaction, they have also pointed out the relevance of tracing individual trajectories to analyse the role of individual differences. The next section reviews the role of individual variables (that is, internal factors associated to the individual learners) on the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

2.3. The role of internal factors

Research in the SA context has focused on how different variables related to L2 learners influence their acquisition of pragmatic competence. These factors include students'

proficiency level, their identity, ability to socialize, motivation, cognitive abilities, and cultural background. This section presents some relevant findings regarding the factors that are analysed in the present study. In particular, proficiency is examined as a control variable in this study, while socialization, personality, identity and motivation are explored under the wider variable of acculturation. Additionally, learners' cultural background is examined as a potential individual difference affecting pragmatic development.

Proficiency

Firstly, proficiency has been found to play a relevant role in pragmatic acquisition, and there are mixed findings on whether higher levels of proficiency are associated with more advanced pragmatic proficiency. In chapter 1 (see section 1.5.1.2) it was argued that most studies have observed that advanced learners outperform lower-proficiency students in different pragmatic features (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Taguchi, 2011a), although this is not always the case (Taguchi, 2006). For instance, Taguchi (2006) observed that lower-level students' pragmatic performance in less demanding social situations is similar to that of higher-proficient learners.

Socialization

In addition to proficiency and social status, studies have observed that learners' ability to socialize and their willingness to engage in interaction also influences pragmatic learning (Diao, 2011; DuFon, 1999; Ishida, 2009; Kinginger, 2008, 2013; Kinginger & Blatner, 2008; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Shively, 2008, 2011; Taguchi, 2011b). Socialization is determined by the nature of the program (for example, living arrangement, hours of instruction) and by individual differences such as personality, desire to maintain identity, motivation to enroll in a SA program, and culture shock. Hence, qualitative approaches and case studies have mostly been conducted to explore the relationship between socialization

practices and pragmatics (Diao, 2011; Ishida, 2009; Kinginger, 2008, 2013; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Shively, 2011; Taguchi, 2011b). Some of these observations point out that L2 learners SA socialization experiences have an effect on the acquisition of French address terms (Kinginger, 2008, 2013; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004), on the expression of politeness (Shively, 2008, 2011, 2013), on turn-taking ability (Diao, 2011), and on the performance of different speech acts, including requests and opinions (Taguchi, 2011b).

Kinginger and Farrell (2004) examined the role of socialization on awareness of address forms in L2 French (forml *tu* vs. informal *vous*). The participants, 8 US learners of French, completed a pre-test and a post-test pragmatic awareness questionnaire, and participated in oral interviews. These authors reported that learners improved their perception of address-form competence, and this improvement was determined by language socialization. Students with a wider social network of NSs and other speakers of the TL showed greater gains in this pragmatic aspect. The students who performed best developed friendships across various contexts, while the other students limited their interactions in French to the classroom or to basic service needs.

Kinginger (2008) further explored the acquisition of L2 French pragmatic variation forms (address forms, colloquial expressions, questions, and leave-takings) by 24 US learners. In line with Kinginger and Farrell's (2004) findings, this author observed that learners improved their pragmatic awareness during a semester, although qualitative interviews revealed individual trajectories. Students who were motivated to engage in the TL community and who developed a larger social network showed greater pragmatic gains. That was the case, for instance of Louis, whose social network of NSs developed thanks to participating in events with L2 speakers and in class projects with NSs. In contrast, participants who limited their interactions with their US peers, preferring to communicate

with friends from home via the Internet, presented rather weak pragmatic development.

Shively's (2008) longitudinal study has also been widely cited given the extensive descriptions of learners' SA experiences it presents. The study explored SA experiences and the acquisition of politeness forms (requests, openings and discourse markers) during service encounters in L2 Spanish by a group of 7 US students participating in a semester-long program in Spain. Results revealed important individual learning trajectories, although general findings pointed to an improvement in the students' pragmatic ability. For instance, the positive effect of learners' willingness to interact on pragmatic development was evident in the case of Greta. She did not live with a host family, and hence put great effort in practicing her Spanish in service encounters. Greta made significant gains in her ability to express politeness according to the NSs norms, in comparison with the other participants. Further aspects observed in the students' experiences that influenced pragmatic development were perception of the attitude of the interlocutor, and sharing a similar perspective on a topic. Some participants avoided interactions with "unfriendly" workers, or with interlocutors who had different views on a topic of conversation. In addition, some of the learners expressed feeling uncomfortable in specific service encounters because of their insecurity in speaking Spanish. However, Shively did not find any association between language anxiety and pragmatic competence. Finally, there was a certain cultural background effect on the acquisition of native-like pragmatic forms. Some participants expected politeness behaviors similar to their L1 culture, such as "service with a smile" or "the customer is always right," which they did not find in Spain.

Diao (2011) examined how interactions outside of class influenced the turn-taking ability of Bill, a US student of L2 Chinese on a 7-month SA program in China. Bill completed a language contact profile and a series of qualitative instruments (5 audio-recorded

semi-structured interviews, and journal entries). At the beginning of the program, Bill reported using less Chinese than his peers in an immersion program at home (US). His interactions were limited to teachers. Then, since he was a highly motivated student, he tried to distance himself from his US peers and integrate in the host community. Although he reported that it was a difficult task, he managed to actively interact with his roommate and with strangers, participate in a range of social activities (such as teaching English), and engage in communication with service personnel. Furthermore, Bill continued using the L2 after his return by looking for Chinese communities at home. As a result of his socialization success, Bill improved his turn-taking ability, evident in a wider use of strategies at the end of the semester and in the delayed post-test one month upon his arrival in the US.

Finally, Taguchi (2011b) conducted mixed-method research that revealed group-level pragmatic development and individual learning trajectories. Taguchi (2011b) extracted two participants from the larger sample of Japanese ESL students, and examined how their SA experiences shaped their acquisition of requests and opinions. Shoko acquired the TL pragmalinguistic forms abruptly thanks to explicit feedback from her instructors, which enhanced noticing, and also her interest in observing NSs' pragmatic behavior (that is, politeness and formality). Tomoyo, however, developed her pragmatic knowledge thanks to actively engaging in the TL community, presenting a clear example of the positive role of socialization in pragmatic development.

Personality

As one may assume, the ability to socialize is highly determined by personality traits. To the best of our knowledge, two studies have focused on the effect of learners' personality on pragmatic acquisition (Shimura, 2003; Taguchi, 2014). Shimura (2003) operationalized personality as an introverted vs. an extroverted nature, and pragmatics in terms of ability to

give advice in formal situations by Japanese ESL learners. Results showed that personality directly affected type of advice-giving expression, as introverted students produced significantly more direct expressions, while extroverted ones used more indirect forms of advice. Taguchi (2014), however, did not find an association between extroverted vs. introverted personality on pragmatic learning. The participants, Japanese ESL learners in an English-medium university in Japan, completed Keirsey's (1998, cited in Taguchi, 2014) personality scale and a speaking test to measure ability to produce requests and opinions. Rather than the condition of introverted vs. extroverted, the feeling-thinking dimension was found to exert a relevant role. In other words, "thinking" students, the more rational and objective learners, showed greater gains in their pragmatic productive ability than "feeling" learners, those more subjective students who value interpersonal relationships.

Identity

Identity refers to how learners perceive themselves as different from or similar to the TL community, as well as to their own culture. Gao, Zhao and Zhou (2007, cited in Wang, 2010), for instance, define self-identity as "how the learner perceives him- or her-self in terms of linguistic and cultural groups that he or she belongs to, as well as the learners' values, communication styles, abilities and worthiness" (p. 57).

In this respect, Barron (2003) found that L2 students (Irish learners of German) resisted using native-like pragmatic routines in an attempt to maintain their identity. In particular, Irish learners avoided the directness in some German expressions in an attempt to maintain their Irish politeness. In a similar vein, Iino (2006) and Siegal (1995) addressed the direct relationship between identity – specifically a desire to maintain identity – and pragmatic competence. Siegal's study is reviewed in depth for its relevance to the present study, which examines learners' desire to maintain identity as an element of acculturation.

69

Siegal's (1995) case studies of Mary and Arina are examples of the influence of identity on the selection of appropriate social terms. In the study, the construction of identity and the resistance to adopting NSs sociopragmatic norms affects pragmatic development, operationalized as politeness in L2 Japanese, which includes the use of honorific language and other polite strategies (such as auxiliaries and modal verbs). This author analysed the pragmatic development of two participants over 18 months: Mary, 45, a Japanese high school teacher and master's degree candidate from New Zealand, and Arina, 25, Literature student from Hungary. Field notes during a conversation between Mary and a professor, and in different interactional encounters by Arina (for example, a cultural exchange) allowed the author to observe how they dealt with conflicting roles in the use of socially-appropriate terms. Both participants were aware that in order to be polite in Japanese, they had to use honorific language. However, they avoided the use of high-level honorifics and preferred more standard forms of politeness, as a way to show resistance to adapting to NSs norms. In particular, they struggled in adjusting the Japanese identity as women and as students. Students, for instance have a lower status than professors. To present themselves as competent students, they attempted to achieve equal status with their interlocutors (a professor, in the case of Mary) by avoiding the use of honorifics and using more standard forms (auxiliaries). The main difference between Mary's and Arina's pragmatic trajectories is that while Mary did not develop her use of honorifics, Arina incorporated more honorifics and formulaic routines into her pragmalinguistic repertoire as a result of encountering more public interactions. While she openly resisted NSs norms by avoiding high-level honorifics at the beginning of her immersion, she progressively understood the value and the importance of using honorific language in Japan.

70

Motivation

The role of motivation in SLA has been widely examined, and particularly its effect on development of oral proficiency (Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006). In pragmatics, some studies have addressed how motivation determines pragmatic acquisition in the EFL setting, finding that more highly motivated learners develop a higher level of pragmatic awareness (Takahashi, 2005). Nevertheless, only one study, to the best of our knowledge, has explored how motivation influences pragmatic development by L2 learners during SA programs.

Eslami and Jin Ahn (2014) (previously mentioned in section 2.2) examined the influence of three variables, namely motivation to learn the L2, intensity of interaction and length of stay, on pragmatic production. The participants, 50 Korean ESL students in the US, completed Gardner's (1987, cited in Eslami & Jin Ahn, 2014) test battery to measure their motivation and attitude. Motivation included 5 subscales: integrativeness, attitude, motivational, instrumental, and anxiety. Results revealed a significant effect of motivation, but no influence of amount of interaction or length of residence. In particular, pragmatic competence was most determined by the motivation subscale, followed by the anxiety one.

Cultural background

Culture is a broad term that has been addressed in different fields of scientific research. Within the field of linguistics, a main assumption is that culture and language are closely interrelated phenomena. Indeed, linguists seem to agree that speaking of an individual's cultural background is the same as referring to their language background. Hence, learning an L2 implicitly involves learning about a new society's cultural norms, values and behaviors (Barron, 2003). Drawing from these ideas, Brown (1994) claimed that

acquiring an L2 is acquiring a second culture. The author explained the relationship between language and culture as follows:

> A language is a part of a culture and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition, is also the acquisition of a second culture (p. 165).

In addition to this, the a relationship seems to be stronger in the field of pragmatics, where scholars have claimed that learning L2 pragmatic competence is learning the L2 culture (Alcón & Safont, 2008). Therefore, one may find studies addressing the influence of the on pragmatic acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig, Rose & Nickels, 2008), and works referring to the effect of cultural background (Rafieyan, Sharafi-Nejad, Khavari, Damavand & Eng, 2014), both lines of research involving the same variable.

For example, Rafieyan, *et al*. (2014) examined the impact of cultural distance on pragmatic comprehension. They compared two groups of university ESL students, learning the L2 in their home countries: one with less cultural distance, and one with greater cultural distance. The first group consisted of 30 German students, whose culture was considered to be similar to British sociocultural aspects. The second sample, with a more distant culture in this respect, comprised 30 South Korean students. Their findings pointed to the relevant role of cultural distance, as German students performed substantially higher in a test that measured their comprehension of implicatures specific to the British culture.

With this in mind, and picking up the idea at the beginning of this subsection (*cultural background*) that learning an L2 implies learning a new cultural system, an exploration of the process of learning about the corresponding culture seems imperative. The present study explores learners' process of acculturation to US society. Therefore, an in-depth section about this concept will now be provided.

2.4. The role of acculturation

2.4.1. The notion of acculturation

Different definitions have been provided to the process of integrating in a new, mainstream community by adopting their sociocultural values while maintaining heritage values. The notion of *acculturation*[2] was first suggested by US anthropologists Redfield, Linton and Herskovitz (1936), who defined it as:

> Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either groups (Redfield *et al.,* 1936, p. 149).

This definition, which has been widely used up to today, has two main implications. Firstly, "continuous first-hand contact" accounts for the fact that acculturation is long-term and takes place over time. This is particularly evident when considering the acculturation process of immigrants or newcomers moving to a new country. However, as for language learners in short-term or semester-long SA programs, acculturation is more intense. Indeed, previous research has indicated that short-term contact (as short as 6 weeks) with a host culture can indeed result in acculturation gains (Martinsen, 2008; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004).

Secondly, the idea that acculturation involves "subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either groups" accounts for the bidirectional nature of the phenomenon-Acculturation is a two-way process in which students develop their own trajectories towards understanding and adopting sociocultural values of the TL community, while maintaining those of the heritage culture (Berry, 1997). Thus, in the process of acculturation, sojourners

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[2] Acculturation has been operationalised, measured and interpreted in different ways (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Other terms that have been used as synonyms or similar concepts include *cross-cultural adaptation*, *sojourner adjustment*, *integration* (see Beom, 2002, for a discussion on specific differences among the terms).

find themselves in what Kramsch (1998) calls "a third place," somewhere between their own familiar culture and that of the the host country, which has not yet been discovered.

A third core aspect of the process of acculturation is that it is shaped by both the environment and individual identities. Regarding the environment, amount of instruction and living arrangement may determine sojourners' adaptation. With respect to individual differences, variables such as personality, language shock or attitude towards the L2 should be taken into account. It has been argued in this sense that in the process of acculturation, learners individual differences are of particular relevance. According to Miller and Ginsberg (1995), during SA programs it is the learners' views that most matter, as those views will determine their choice of making the most out of the learning opportunities outside the classroom. What determines degree of acculturation is not how well individuals "fit in" with the new society, but how well they *feel* they fit in, learner self-perception in relation to their culture and to that of the TL.

Acculturation is, furthermore, related to *adaptation* and *assimilation*. Although the concepts are different, they are embedded within the same wider phenomenon. Essentially, acculturation is the process, adaptation is its outcome (Berry & Sam, 1997), and assimilation refers to successful adaptation – which is likely to never take place (Trimble, 2003, cited in Mahmood, 2014). To provide further precision on the difference between adaptation and assimilation, some definitions by previous scholars will now be mentioned. These definitions point to the unidirectional nature of assimilation. Berry (1997), for instance, defines assimilation as "giving up one's heritage culture and becoming part of the larger society" (p. 12). Ogden, Ogden and Schau (2004) add that in that process, however, heritage values are not completely lost. According to these authors:

> While assimilation occurs when an immigrant fully adopts mainstream values and gives up his/her cultural heritage, acculturation can occur when some elements of the mainstream

culture are added without abandoning the native culture (Ogden, *et al.,* 2004, p. 3).

Regarding adaptation and acculturation, they have been defined drawing on their bidimensional nature. Berry (1997) explains that adaptation involves those changes in individuals and groups that take place according to the contextual demands. Those changes may be immediate (short-term adaptation) or delayed (long-term adaptation). For instance, adaptation is evident when a sojourner is observed to "fit in" with a new environment, or, in contrast, when there is internal conflict and subsequent increase of acculturation stress.

While acknowledging the particularities of the terms acculturation, adaptation, and assimilation, the first two are used interchangeably in the present study. Since one should not expect students to completely abandon their identity and sociocultural values, nor fully adopt those of the host culture, the present study contemplates the idea that different adaptation levels will shape the process of acculturation.

2.4.2. Development of Acculturation

Once the notion of acculturation is presented, the next question arises: how do sojourners acculturate? Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) identify 5 main strands of research which address this question:

1) The development of interpersonal and intergroup networks, and the associated patterns of intra- and intercultural interactions.

2) Problems typically experienced by international students.

3) The intercultural classroom, academic objectives and goals.

4) Longitudinal studies of international students' adaptation

5) The re-entry process.

The present study focuses on the fourth line of research. As such, it explores the development of acculturation and it investigates the reasons for the resulting acculturation

changes. This section includes empirical evidence of longitudinal studies of SA learners' adaptation, including changes in their adaptation during the stay, and factors that play a role in acculturation.

Firstly, some scholars agree that acculturation follows a U-curve development, and have provided different models to explain that process (Brown, 1980; Ling & Lei, 2014; Padilla, 1980). Oberg (1960), for instance, identifies 4 stages a sojourner will tend to go through. The first stage is labeled "the honeymoon," and it refers to the fact that upon arrival, the individual experiences superficial acculturation through first contact with the new society. In this first phase, sojourners meet new people, discover a new lifestyle, explore the area, and are, overall, excited to embark on this new adventure. The second phase is referred to as "rejection," and it implies negative and aggressive views of the host culture. Learning about the new society involves making comparisons with the heritage culture, and this may bring such pessimistic perspectives. Rejection is followed by "tolerance," and it manifests in an acceptance of cultural skills and increased contact with the host community. The final stage is "integration," and it entails an adoption of the new lifestyle with confidence. In the same vein, more recent models suggest a simpler view of acculturation that consists of 3 phases: the honeymoon high, the bottoming out, and the climbing up (Ling & Lei, 2014).

In order to provide more details on the process of acculturation, studies have widely used Berry and colleagues' framework (Berry 1980; Berry, Kim, Powers, Young & Bujaki 1989; see Berry 1997 for a review). According Berry (1997), incoming sojourners have to confront two main issues when immersing themselves in a new environment: whether to maintain their cultural heritage and identity, and whether to actively involve in the new culture and establish contact with other groups. In order to confront those decisions, certain acculturation strategies may be adopted. Berry (1997) distinguishes 4 strategies or

76

"acculturation orientations": integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. *Integration* implies a positive attitude towards the host culture, and an interest in both, maintaining the heritage cultural identity and that of the host society, as well as a desire to interact with other groups. *Assimilation* refers to a disposition to maintain only the host culture identity; hence, it is evident when a sojourner does not desire to maintain the original identity and looks for opportunities to interact with other cultures. *Separation* is the opposite of assimilation; it entails an interest in maintaining only the original culture and identity, and avoiding contact with other groups. Finally, *marginalization* is opposite to integration, and it implies not having interest in maintaining the heritage identity, and avoiding contact with other cultures.

Berry's (1997) framework has been received with some skepticism mainly since these are strategies available to the individual at a micro-scale, but the macro-scale (that is, both heritage and host societies) may influence the performance of those strategies. As previously mentioned, acculturation involves both internal and external variables. For instance, if an individual is pressured to acculturate but has no desire to do so, the environment (family, funding, school requirements) would demand him/her to adopt the integration orientation. A further example is when the sojourner is willing to acculturate and establish contact with the host community, but he/she is not welcome by this society. The ideal situation is hence mutual accommodation between the two cultures. For this reason, it is important to analyse factors related to both, the individual and the cultural groups at play, in order to successfully examine acculturation development.

Different factors have indeed been found to exert an influence on the process of acculturation. Some of these are related to the SA experience, and include college-related stress (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007, cited in O'Reilly, Ryan & Hickey, 2010), social support

and loneliness (Abdullah, Adebayo & Talib, 2015), financial issues (Butcher & McGrath, 2004, cited in O'Reilly *et al.* 2010), and accommodation, with studies focused on the advantages and disadvantages of homestay settings (Di Silvio, Donovan & Malone, 2014). For instance, Abdullah *et al.*, (2015) explored the influence of different demographic traits and of social support on sociocultural adaptation by 150 international students in a Malaysian university. To measure demographic variables the authors used a background questionnaire, to determine social support they administered the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support questionnaire (MSPSS) – a scale developed by Zimet, Dahlem, and Farley (1988) (cited in Abdullah *et al.*, 2015), – and for sociocultural adjustment they used the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), designed by Ward and Kennedy (1999). Abdullah *et al.*'s (2015) findings revealed a strong influence of social support from family, friends and significant others on students' sociocultural adaptation, while demographic factors did not play a significant role.

In addition to this, pre-departure variables also largely determine post-arrival adaptation. For instance, Ying and Liese (1990) examined the effect of pre-departure variables on post-arrival adaptation by 172 Taiwanese students in the US. Those variables included pre-departure depression, personality, expectations and self-assessed language proficiency. These authors found that pre-departure depression exerted the strongest effect on post-arrival acculturation; as students improved their psychological mood (that is, their depression levels decreased), they also showed less sociocultural adaptation difficulties.

The influence of cultural background on acculturation has also received some attention. In this sense, Ward and Kennedy (1999) observed that different cultures present distinct acculturation levels and developmental paths. The authors conducted a series of cross-cultural and longitudinal studies, and reached a relevant conclusion: acculturation was

78

determined by cultural and ethnic similarity, and the characteristics of both the host community and the sojourning group had an effect on the reported adaptation. Regarding cultural similarity, the Chinese group in Singapore showed the greatest gains, compared with non-Chinese sojourners (British, Americans and New Zealand individuals) in Singapore. Similarly, Malaysian migrants had less difficulty acculturating in Singapore than in New Zealand. The influence of the host community was evident in the fact that higher acculturation levels were reported in environments with good resources (what the authors call "comfortable environments") such as Singapore, in comparison with Nepal. With respect to the characteristics of the sojourning group, the Singaporean community showed the least difficulty acculturating in the destinations, and the same cultural group experiences similar acculturation in different settings. For instance, there was not a significant difference between British in China and British in Singapore. Finally, the different ethnic groups developed distinct acculturation progress. While all of them increased their acculturation during the first semester of immersion, and continued this increase, Malaysians and Singaporeans in New Zealand decreased their adaptation significantly during the second half of the year. Ward and Kenedy's (1999) study presents evidence that when different cultures come into play, the nature of the groups, as well as the characteristics of the SA setting should be taken into consideration.

Finally, scholars have realized that there are different levels of acculturation, since not all acculturation attitudes and behaviors are equally relevant to acculturate. For instance, one may speculate that personality is more relevant than intended length of residence in order for an individual to integrate in the new environment and establish contact with the community. In this sense, Marin (1992) proposes that acculturation takes place at 3 different levels: superficial, intermediate, and significant. Positive conditions in factors such as learning

historical facts, traditions, or getting used to new eating habits only lead to superficial acculturation. An intermediate level of acculturation is determined by attitudes and behaviors such as language use, interaction with L2 users, and preference for using the media in the TL. Ultimately, a significant level of acculturation is only attained when the individual has the optimal conditions in terms of beliefs, values and acceptance of norms.

Acknowledging Marin's (1992) suggestion of taking into account different levels of acculturation, Stephenson (2000) examined acculturation at the superficial and intermediate levels across 5 cultural groups immersed in the US. Furthermore, the groups belonged to 4 different generations: African Americans, Americans with African descent, Asian Americans, European Americans and Hispanic Americans. Hence, the author considered age (generation) of migrants, culture and acculturation level. Results revealed that participants in the 1st and 2nd generations acculturated at the superficial level, while 3rd and 4th generations of immigrants acculturate at the intermediate level. In addition to this, acculturation was different for 4th generation minorities (African Americans) and 4th generation non-minorities (European Americans), who had less difficulty adapting. This author concludes by encouraging further research on the 4th generation of immigrants across ethnic groups.

To sum up, previous research has observed that the development of acculturation seems to follow a U-curve, although numerous factors are at play in this process. During acculturation, individuals may choose to maintain their cultural heritage or/and to approximate that of the host culture. A sojourner may decide to fully integrate in the host culture and at the same time maintain their cultural heritage, they may marginalize from both cultures, or they might adopt an intermediate position between assimilating and separating from the host culture. In addition to this, different levels of acculturation exist. One may adapt only at a superficial level, at an intermediate one, or reach a substantial level of

acculturation. What is more, the acculturation process is influenced by different factors, such as gender, academic pressure, characteristics of the heritage and the host cultures (minority vs. non-minority), financial issues, social support or accommodation.

2.4.3. Sociocultural and psychological adaptation

Researchers addressing acculturation also agree that it is a two-fold phenomenon; it involves both psychological (emotional/affective) and sociocultural (behavioral) changes. This dichotomy was suggested by Ward and colleagues (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), drawing from Schumann (1978). Whilst these two aspects of acculturation are interrelated, they involve different processes. Psychological adaptation refers to emotional well-being and personal satisfaction. Hence, it regards factors such as personality, ways of coping with situations in the new environment, social support from family and friends, and changes in lifestyle. Sociocultural adaptation, on the other hand, relates to how an individual acquires cultural values and social skills from the new context and is able to apply them in day-to-day situations. Thus, it implies variables such as knowledge of the TL culture, amount of contact with L2 speakers, cultural distance, fluency in speaking the L2, and social strategies. Sociocultural acculturation, therefore, greatly depends on the communicative and social skills an individual needs in order to perform day-to-day tasks.

Research on students' sociocultural and psychological adaptation over time has revealed that both aspects are likely to increase during the first 3 to 4 months of immersion, and to show different developmental patterns after that period. O'Reilly, *et al.* (2010) focused on one semester of immersion (a 12-week-long program) to examine sociocultural and psychological adaptation by 124 international students in an Irish university. Participants completed different quantitative scales, including a Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Kessler *et al.*, 2002, cited in O'Reilly *et*

al., 2010) which analysed psychological aspects. These authors also focused on students' social support, stress, and loneliness in order to observe how these aspects relate with sociocultural and psychological acculturation. Results revealed that levels of both sociocultural and psychological adaptation were low through the sojourn, despite the fact that students had a great deal of social support and presented low levels of stress and loneliness. Nevertheless, the authors observed that the students experienced an overall significant increase in both sociocultural and psychological acculturation. In particular, sociocultural adaptation increased significantly from time 2 (6th week of SA) to time 3 (12th week of SA), and changes in psychological well-being were significantly positive from pre-arrival to time 3.

In a more lengthy investigation, Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) explored sociocultural and psychological adaptation gains during a year-long SA program by Japanese students in New Zealand. Their study is corroborated by O'Reilly *et al.*'s (2010) findings that students' acculturation difficulties decrease over one semester of immersion (3-4 months). However, this is likely to change afterwards. Figure 2. 2 illustrates the sociocultural and psychological adaptation paths experienced by participants in Ward *et al.*'s (1998) study.

SOCIOCULTURAL ADAPTATION   **PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION**

Entry   4 months   6 months   12 months   Entry   4 months   6 months   12 months
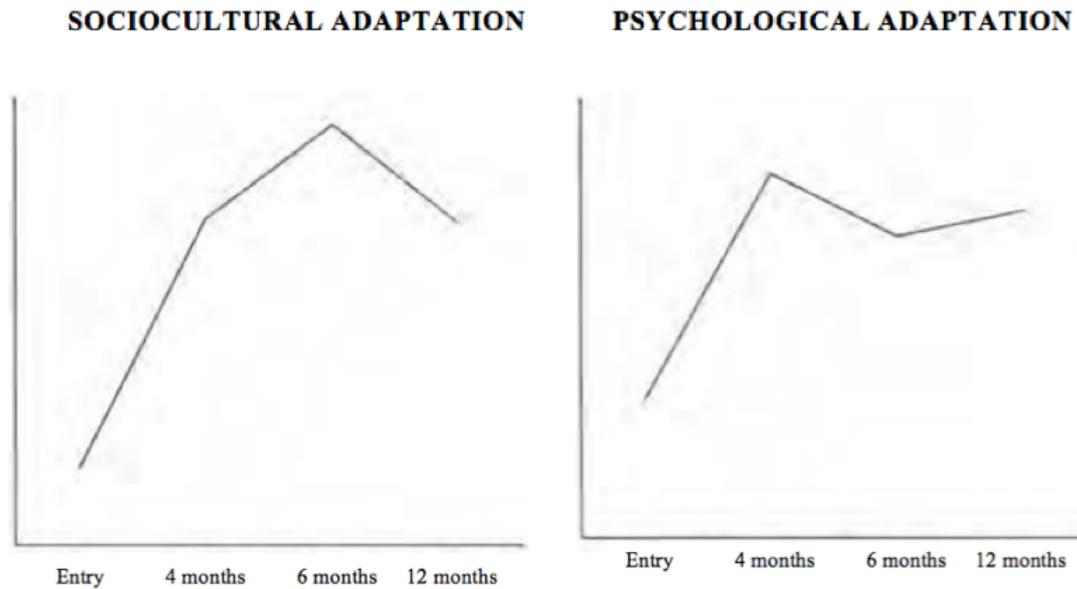
Figure 2.2. Sociocultural and psychological adaptation by international students (adapted

from Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001, p. 161-162)

It can be observed in Figure 2.2 that both sociocultural and psychological adaptations

increase rapidly during the first 4 months. Then, while sociocultural adjustment is likely to

improve from the 4th to the 6th month, learners' psychological well-being is likely to decrease.

Interestingly, in the second semester (from the 6th to the 12th month) students decreased their

sociocultural adaptation, while they slightly increased their psychological acculturation.

In addition to the distinction between sociocultural and psychological acculturation,

recent scholars have examined sociocultural acculturation as a two-fold variable that includes

behavioral factors (for example, going shopping, using the transport system, and dealing with

bureaucracy) and cognitive ones (for example, understanding cultural differences, and seeing

things from the host culture perspective). These studies have used the SCAS (Ward &

Kennedy, 1999), a Likert-scale that includes 29 items, 7 of which related to cognitive

adaptation, and 23 to behavioral adjustment. Addressing the two aspects, Ward, *et al.* (2001)

explain that both behavioral and cognitive adaptation are likely to improve abroad, although

they follow a different developmental path: behavioral adaptation is expected to follow a U-curve path, and cognitive acculturation, which is associated with social and cultural identity, is more likely to steadily increase, indicating that the sojourners tend to embrace the values of the host culture.

Apart from Ward *et al.*'s (2001) study, which compared behavioral and cognitive sociocultural adaptation over time, there are some recent studies which have analysed the two subdomains of sociocultural acculturation cross-sectionally (as a one-time measure). These studies have revealed mixed findings. Podrug, Kristo and Kovac (2014), for example, revealed higher levels of behavioral adjustment than cognitive ones. Their participants were 34 Croatian expatriates, university students who had been abroad for a minimum of 12 months. In contrast, Abdullah *et al.* (2015) found a low behavioral adjustment level, and a moderate cognitive one. Overall, they reported that learners, 150 postgraduate international students in a Malaysian university, only showed moderate acculturation levels.

2.4.4. Acculturation and pragmatic learning

Different acculturation models have been proposed in an attempt to explore the influence of sociocultural adaptation on the acquisition of an L2. Graham and Brown (1996), for instance, identify three major frameworks: the Inter-group Model by Giles and colleagues (Beebe & Giles, 1984), the Socio- Educational Model by Gardner (Gardner, Lalonde & Pierson, 1983), and the Acculturation Model by Schumann (1978, 1986) (see Ellis, 1994, for a review of each). The present study takes Schumann's (1978) Model as a reference to understand the process of adaptation to a new culture, since it provides some empirical support for its role in pragmatic learning.

Schumann's theory was introduced in section 1.4.1. As already mentioned, the main idea of his Acculturation Model for SLA (1978) is that the degree to which an L2 learner

acculturates to the new sociocultural community will influence the extent to which they learn the TL. Indeed, acculturation is one of the different causes that determine the acquisition of an L2. A few studies have drawn on Schumann's (1978) model to explain the acquisition of an L2, pointing out that SLA, especially at the oral level, is benefited by the students' process of acculturation (Hansen, 1995; Lybeck, 2002). In the field of pragmatics, Schmidt's (1983) and Dörnyei *et al.* (2004) investigations are the only ones, to the best of our knowledge, that have applied Schumann's Model to explain pragmatic development.

Schmidt (1983) conducted a case study of Wes, a 33-year-old Japanese male who immigrated to the US (Hawaii) without having previous formal instruction in English. The author tested the Acculturation Model upon English proficiency, which he divided into 4 areas (following Canale's, 1983, model of communicative competence): grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. Wes had the optimal personality attributes and social aptitudes, as measured in terms of the 7 acculturation variables. With respect to pragmatic competence (referred to as sociolinguistic ability in Canale's model), Schmidt focused on directives, which includes speech acts used to get the interlocutor do something; that is, orders, requests, and suggestions. To operationalise directives, he looked at politeness and appropriateness of forms to the situations. Wes completed Scarcella's (1979) DCT, which is similar to the production of routines test used in the present study. The instrument prompted the participant to use formulaic expressions and other pragmatic aspects such as hedges (e.g. *maybe*). An evident progress was seen during the 3 years of observations. At earlier stages of pragmatic development, Wes' use of directedness was characterized by a reliance on a small number of speech formulas that he only used in specific situations (for example, *shall we go?*). Apart from formulas, he also relied on lexical cues such as *maybe* and *please,* and his pragmatic ability was characterised by transfer from

85

Japanese sociopragmatic norms (particularly with respect to complaints). The participant was highly motivated to interact and communicate, which resulted in his sociolinguistic competence developing enormously. He improved the appropriateness of meanings, pragmatic transfer from the L1 was reduced, he became aware of the differences between languages, and he developed significant control of formulaic language, especially of the formulas used in social interactions. For instance, the initial *shall we go?* became *shall we maybe go out for a coffee now, or you want later?* Notwithstanding the substantial pragmatic improvement, Wes did not seem to develop his grammatical competence. Therefore, Schmidt's study partly confirmed the acculturation model hypothesis that acculturation leads to SLA, since although it fostered pragmatic ability, it did not enhance all language competencies.

Dörnyei *et al.* (2004) firstly (Schmitt, Dörnyei, Adolphs & Durrow, 2004) analysed quantitatively how acculturation[3] (measured with semi-structured interviews) affected formulaic language learning. They focused on formulaic language in general, on 20 expressions selected according to 4 criteria: their appearance in the literature, appearance in CELE materials, frequency, and instructors' intuitions of usefulness. Nevertheless, the authors soon realized that sociocultural integration was a complex phenomenon that demanded a qualitative in-depth analysis. From the variables that the concept of acculturation entails, as proposed by Schumann, they focused on 3 aspects: 1) culture shock and cultural adaptation, 2) language attitudes and motivation (how initial attitudes and motivation change over time), and 3) social networks and enclosures. The study is a longitudinal case of 7 international students in a UK university for 7 months. Three of the participants were not

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[3] Dörnyei, Durrow and Zahran (2004) take Schumann's (1978) acculturation theory as a base, but they focus on the social aspects of this process. They define acculturation as "the extent to which learners succeeded in settling in and engaging with the host community, thereby taking advantage of the social contact opportunities available" (p. 88).

successful in the formulaic language tests, while the other 4 showed gains. Research findings indicated a strong relationship between acculturation and pragmatic learning. In particular, acquisition of formulaic language was influenced by 3 aspects: language aptitude, motivation and sociocultural adaptation. These authors further attribute a central role to social networks and enclosure factors in the acculturation process. In this sense, most of the participants found it extremely hard to have meaningful contact with the TL speakers outside of class. Successful learning of formulaic language depended on whether they can "beat the odds" and come out of the "international ghetto." This was evident in two of the participants that scored higher in the formulaic language test. The other two successful students had extraordinary motivation and language aptitude.

In addition to the investigations mentioned above, a few other studies already mentioned in this chapter (see section 2.3) have addressed the effect of specific acculturation aspects on pragmatic competence: identity (Siegal, 1995), personality (Taguchi, 2014), motivation (Eslami & Ahn, 2014), and sociocultural distance (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 2008; Rafieyan *et al.*, 2014).

That said, the present study takes Schumann's Model to conceptualize the process of adapting to a new culture. Drawing from Schmidt (1983) and Dörnyei *et al.* (2004), the current investigation attempts to carry out an in-depth acculturation portrait. As such, acculturation to the TL society, in this case the United States, is analysed in terms of the cognitive and the socially-oriented factors involved in the process of adapting to US society.

2.5. Summary of the chapter

Chapter 2 has presented an overview of how pragmatic competence is learned in the SA context. While most investigations have supported the beneficial role of studying abroad

for L2 learners to acquire different pragmatic features, the majority of studies point out that the process of learning pragmatics abroad is non-linear. It seems to be slower in some areas than in others, and it is definitely influenced by various factors.

Regarding external factors, studies have found that intensity of interaction determines pragmatic learning to a greater extent than length of stay in the SA context. With respect to internal variables, research has found that certain influential factors include: proficiency, learners' cultural background, and different aspects related to the phenomenon of acculturation, such as socialization, identity, personality and motivation. Nevertheless, to what extent pragmatic competence develops during SA programs is not baked up by conclusive empirical evidence, and more research is needed in this field (Barron, 2003; Taguchi, 2015).

The present study investigates the role of acculturation on the acquisition of pragmatic routines. Hence, acculturation has been a central variable in this chapter. Acculturation is a complex concept, as it involves both the individual and the wider society, both external and internal variables. Acculturation is the process of integrating to a new community by adopting their sociocultural values and language, while at the same time maintaining the heritage identity. While different models of acculturation exist, Schumann's (1978) acculturation model of SLA is taken as a reference in the present study. According to Schumann, the degree to which an individual acculturates will determine their acquisition of an L2. Moreover, this process of acculturation will involve different social and psychological factors.

With this in mind, the current investigation explores acculturation in terms of both sociocultural and psychological adaptation, by L2 students of diverse cultural origins, and how this process affects their gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines during a semester of

study abroad. In what follows, chapter 3 focuses on the target pragmatic feature of the study, namely pragmatic routines. Definitions of the term, its functions, implications, and research that has been carried out will be covered throughout the section. In addition, the chapter reviews previous studies on how pragmatic routines are acquired in the SA context.

CHAPTER 3

PRAGMATIC ROUTINES AND THE STUDY ABROAD CONTEXT

Chapter 3 presents the notion of pragmatic routines, and reviews previous studies that have addressed research on pragmatic routines from an acquisitional perspective. Section 3.1 introduces the main features of pragmatic routines, the role their use plays for L2 learners, and how they have been categorized according to their form and function. Then, section 3.2 deals with previous studies that have examined the acquisition of pragmatic routines by L2 learners. In particular, a report of the main factors that influence development of routines is provided. Finally, section 3.3 presents some findings on the use of pragmatic routines across different cultures. The chapter ends with section 3.4, which summarizes the main ideas addressed.

3.1. Conceptualizing pragmatic routines

3.1.1. Definition of pragmatic routines

It does not seem easy to use a specific term to refer to pragmatic routines, since different terminology has been used to describe the same phenomenon. Wray (2002) pointed out 47 different terms to refer to this notion. Some such terms are *constructions*, *collocations*, *formulaic language*, *holistics*, *routines*, *formulas, chunks, prefabs*, and *formulaic sequences* among other denominations. These concepts are embraced under the umbrella term *formulaic language*, which includes a wide range of fixed expressions, prefabricated in nature, and which are characteristic of NSs' speech (see Wood, 2015, for a recent review of formulaic language research and theory). Celce-Murcia (2007), for instance, defines formulaic language as "fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions" (p. 47).

The study of formulaic language within the field of pragmatics has been referred to as *pragmatic routines* (Barron, 2003), *conventional expressions* (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008) or *situation-bound utterances* (SBUs) (Kecskes, 2003). These terms refer to almost the same concept, and differ from other formulas such as idioms or collocations in three ways: they are used recurrently, they are situation-bound (used in particular situations), and are also culture-bound (their use is specific to speech communities, and hence they have a strong cultural distinctiveness). Bearing this in mind, different definitions have been provided for the notion of *pragmatic routine*, either using this terminology or equivalent terms. Some conceptualizations refer to the form of routines (Erman & Warren, 2000; Moreno Teva, 2006; Wray, 2000), while others focus on their functions (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Coulmas, 1981).

Erman and Warren (2000), who use the word *prefabs*, explain that these expressions include at least two words which native speakers prefer over other expressions with a similar meaning. According to the authors, "a prefab is a combination of at least two words favored by native speakers in preference to an alternative combination which could have been equivalent had there been no conventionalization" (p. 31).

Wray (2000) also emphasizes the prefabricated nature of routines by explaining that the particularity of these expressions lays in that they are stored in the speaker's memory rather than created on the basis of linguistic and grammatical rules. The author chooses the term *formulaic sequence* and provides the following definition, which has been widely cited:

> A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray, 2000, p. 465).

Furthermore, in a more recent definition, Wray (2013) highlights the fact that given their prefabricated nature, routines cannot be predicted, implying that their meaning has to be learned somehow:

> Formulaic language refers to sequences of words that are in some regard not entirely predictable, whether on account of a meaning that is wildly or subtly different from the words they contain, a function that is only achieved with the whole expression, or features of structure such as morphology or word order that are non-canonical (Wray, 2013, p. 317).

Moreno Teva (2006) also points out the fixed or semifixed nature or formulaic language and claims that they are part of not only the NSs' but also the learners' language repertoire. The author defines a *formulaic sequence* as

> A sequence, fixed or semifixed, which is phonologically coherent, is perceived as a lexical unit and has a conventionalized illocutionary strength, or which functions as formulaic sequence for the L2 learners, even if it is perceived as not idiomatic by the native speakers (Moreno Teva, 2006, p. 4). [1]

Hence, the initial view of routines as being constituted by one or two words (Erman & Warren, 2000) has also been revised to include a more flexible internal structure.

As regards the function of pragmatic routines, Coulmas (1981) emphasizes their purpose of facilitating social communication by stating that:

> Conversational routines are tacit agreements, which the members of a community presume to be shared by every reasonable co-member. In embodying societal knowledge they are essential in the handling of day-to-day situations (Coulmas, 1981, p. 4).

Since pragmatic routines are shared by members of a community, they reflect cultural uniqueness and group identity. Ferguson (1976, cited in Wray, 1999), in this sense, points out that "all human speech communities have such formulas, although their character and the incidence of their use may vary enormously from one society to another*"* (p. 137).

In addition to this, a distinctive trait of pragmatic routines is that they are used recurrently in situations of everyday life. This is embedded in Bardovi-Harlig's (2009)

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[1] *una secuencia, fija o semifija, formada por dos palabras o morfemas libres como mínimo, que es fonológicamente coherente, es percibida como una unidad léxica y tiene una fuerza ilocutiva convencionalizada, o que funciona como SF para los aprendices de L2, aunque sea percibida como no idiomática por los hablantes nativos.* (Moreno Teva 2006, p. 4)

widely cited definition of conventional expressions as "sequences that are used frequently by speakers in certain prescribed social situations" (p. 757).

Finally, recent definitions of routines include a reference to both their form and their functions. For instance, Taguchi (2011a) defines pragmatic routines as expressions with a fixed or semi-fixed formal structure, and whose meaning is bound to a specific situation and to a certain communicative function. Similarly, Yang (2016) refers to conventional expressions as "any expression with a stable form that is commonly repeated in the routinized social interactions of a given culture" (p. 29).

Considering these characterizations of pragmatic routines, the present study suggests the following definition: pragmatic routines are semi-fixed expressions used recurrently by a speech community in specific situations of everyday life. They are culturally specific, and their use by non-native speakers brings them closer to the native-like production of the language. This definition intends to highlight 4 main traits of routines: their prefabricated nature, their systematic use in common situations, their role in facilitating communication, and their cultural distinctiveness.

With this in mind, following the terminology choice of recent scholars (Barron, 2003; Hassall, 2012), the current study adopts the term *pragmatic routine* as it emphasizes the pragmatic constitution of the language and its recurrent use in specific social situations.

3.1.2. The role of pragmatic routines

The importance of pragmatic routines, not only in pragmatics but also in language learning in general, has been emphasized by a number of linguists. In fact, according to Ellis (2012), learning a language – both an L1 and an L2 – is essentially learning formulas and interpreting them. In this sense, House (1996) explains that it is important to learn pragmatic routines at any phase of language learning because they reflect the societal knowledge of a

community and thus are essential in everyday life. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) further claim

that formulas constitute a considerable part of NSs' pragmatic competence, and they

underline the need for language learners to acquire a range of pragmatic routines in order to

efficiently perform recurrent social functions. Similarly, Wray (2002, 2012) refers to

formulaic language as an essential linguistic tool to deal with the problem of promoting our

survival interests. According to the author:

> Humans, being psychologically and socially complex, are unable fully to meet their
> emotional, mental, and physical needs without involving others. One effective tool for
> drawing others into behaviors beneficial to us is to employ wordstrings that are in current
> use in our community. They enable us socially to align ourselves with others (I am like
> you because I talk like you, so you will want to help me), and as a way of minimizing the
> risk of misunderstanding, since wordstrings or partly lexicalized frames that have their
> own semantic entry require less decoding (Wray, 2012, pp. 231-232).

With this in mind, it might be inferred that knowledge and use of pragmatic routines

have one main advantage: their role as facilitators of communication. More specifically,

several benefits of using routines have been pointed out. Firstly, the mastery of routines

makes a language learner sound native-like (Yorio, 1980). Furthermore, it helps acquire

fluency and reduce processing load (Weinert, 1995). Using pragmatic routines also saves

planning time, since their production does not require thinking about grammatical structures

(Peters, 1983). In addition, it helps students, especially lower-level ones, gain confidence and

reliability as they feel that they are more clearly understood in recurrent situations by NSs;

indeed, this is why routines are often called "islands of reliability" (Dechert, 1983, p. 183).

Within the SL context, the use of pragmatic routines helps learners participating in SA

programs develop their interactional skills and communicate not only with NSs but also with

other language users, thus allowing them to fit into the TL community to a greater extent

(Roever, 2011; Wray, 2000). In addition to this, knowledge of routines enhances SA

students' understanding of a foreign culture, as they reflect cultural distinctiveness (Barron,

2003).

Ultimately, the use of pragmatic routines is beneficial for both interlocutors, the speaker and the listener. Wray (2000) presents a diagram that illustrates the benefits of formulaic language (see Figure 3.1). According to this author, the use of formulaic sequences enhances speaker's L2 production and hearer's comprehension.
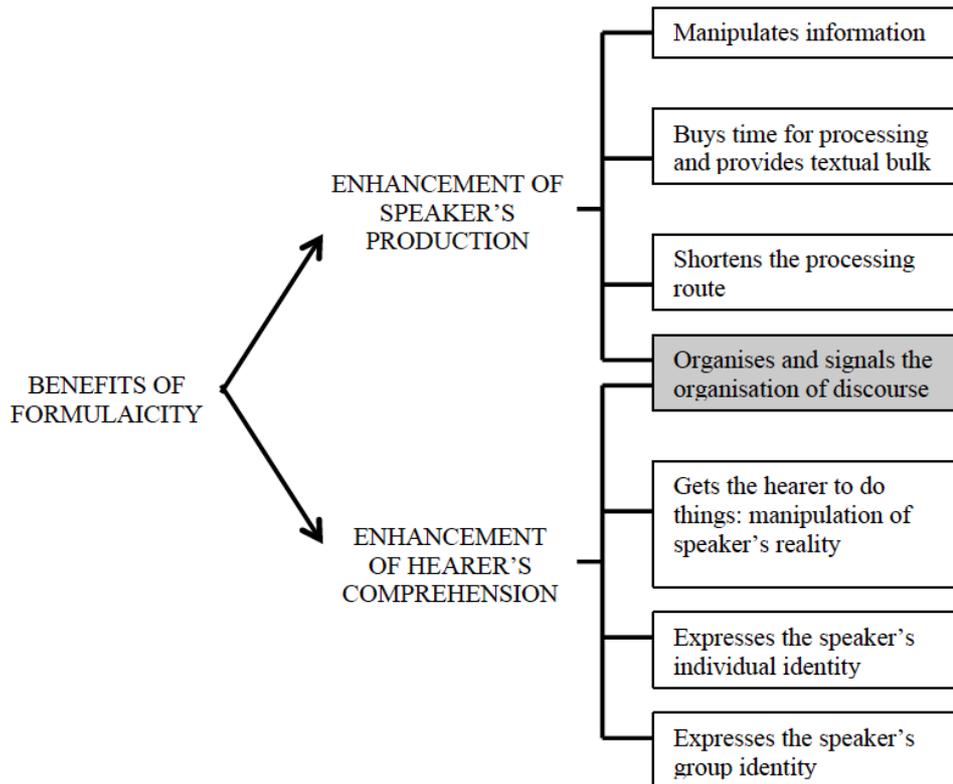
Figure 3.1. Benefits of formulaic sequences for the speaker and the hearer (adapted from Wray, 2000, p. 478)

3.1.3. Categorization of pragmatic routines

Pragmatic routines have been categorised according to their form, and to their meaning and function. Despite their highly conventional nature, variability in the internal structure and in the degree to which their meaning is situation-bound are defining traits of routines. With respect to form — that is, internal structure — pragmatic routines have been classified in

"chunks," and "patterns" (Wray, 1999). On one hand, "chunks" have a fixed and prefabricated form that allows for little variability, such as in *For here or to go?, Thank you*, or *no problem*. On the other hand, routines can be more flexible expressions that include one or more missing gaps, as it is the case in *Would you mind…? Can I….?* or a structure such as *NP is/looks really ADJ.*

Regarding meaning and function, Roever (2005, after Coulmas, 1981) classifies pragmatic routines according to the extent to which their meaning is more loosely or tightly linked to specific situations. In this sense, the author distinguishes between "functional" and "situational" pragmatic routines. A functional routine implies a literal significance (*Can I help you?*). It has a more flexible form (*Do you mind if…? Would you mind if…?*), and it may be used in different settings. Therefore, deducing the meaning of functional routines presents less difficulty, as inferential reasoning is not necessary. In contrast, a situational routine has a situationally-bound meaning, which only makes sense in a particular context (*Help yourself*). Additionally, situational routines have a more fixed and invariable internal structure. An example is *What brings you here?,* asked by a doctor to a patient at the beginning of a medical interview (Roever, 2005). Hence, the significance of a situational routine may be difficult to discern without contextual clues. Roever (2005) explored learners' production of functional and situational routines by means of an investigation involving 2 groups of learners: German ESL students in the US and EFL learners in Germany. The author observed that in the two cases, learners' production of routines in a discourse-completion task (DCT) revealed a higher use of functional routines than situational ones.

Alcón and Sánchez-Hernández (Forthcoming) explored the effect of proficiency and type of routine on learners' gains in recognition and production of pragmatic routines. These authors categorised recognition routines following Roever's (2005) classification into

functional and situational, and production routines according to prototypicality; that is, NSs' agreement in routine production. Participants, 122 international students enrolled in SA programs in the US, completed a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) that tested their recognition of routines, and a DCT that measured their pragmatic production. Results showed that rather than proficiency, it was type of routine that determined pragmatic gains over a semester of immersion. In particular, students experienced higher gains in the recognition of situational routines, and in the production of highly-prototypical routines. Those findings underline the importance of exposure to relevant contexts for the acquisition of routines.

Pragmatic routines have also been classified within the wider field of formulaic language according to their conventional nature. In this regard, Kecskes (2003) suggests that pragmatic routines, rather than representing different categories, are placed in a continuum of formulaicity depending on whether they convey a more literal meaning (and hence are less conventional) or a more idiomatic significance (and thus are more conventional). Table 3.1 illustrates Kecskes' (2003) framework. The author makes a first distinction between semantic idioms and pragmatic idioms. Semantic idioms (*to kick the bucket*) are retrieved as a whole, while pragmatic idioms are mostly distinguished for their socio-cultural nature. Additionally, there are two types of pragmatic idioms: conversational routines (*you know, I see, no problem*), and situation-bound utterances (SBUs) (*I'll talk to you later*). The main difference between conversational routines and SBU is that the first are function-bound and the second situation-bound. Consequently, SBUs are also embedded within the wider notion of conversational routines. Contextualising this to the current study, *pragmatic routines* are a synonym of Kecskes' notion of SBUs. As such, their degree of conventionality varies according to their boundness to situations. This continuum implies, for example, that a routine may lose its strength or even status of routine if the expression is not highly bound to

a particular context.

Table 3.1. *Formulaic continuum* (adapted from Kecskes, 2007, p. 3)

Grammatical units	Fixed semantic units	Phrasal verbs	Speech formulas	Situation-bound utterances	Idioms
Be going to	As a matter of fact	Put up with	Going shopping	Welcome abroad	Kick the bucket
Have to	Suffice it to say	Get along with	Not bad	Help yourself	Spill the beans

Kecskes (2000) analysed learners' ability to recognize and to produce pragmatic routines with a literal meaning versus formulas with figurative language such as *Piece of Cake* ("easy") or *Shoot* ("go ahead"). Three tasks that included routines were presented to 88 international students at a US university: a DCT, a dialogue-comprehension task and a problem-solving task. In line with Roever (2005), findings provided evidence that the degree of conventionality of formulas determined their acquisition, since students recognized and produced literal and grammatically correct formulas more easily than figurative ones.

Taguchi (2011a, 2013a) also addresses conventionality as a determiner of acquisition of routines, and provides further evidence of learners being more successful at recognising and producing routines with a more literal meaning. Firstly, the author (2011a) investigated the comprehension of conventional and non-conventional implicatures, including pragmatic routines by 64 Japanese ESL learners. Results pointed out that recognition of routines was more difficult and took more time than comprehension of indirect implicatures, a finding in line with Kecskes (2000). Moving on to production, participants in Taguchi's (2013a) study completed an oral DCT with four situations that elicited routines. Production was measured in terms of appropriateness, planning time and speech rate. In line with Kecskes (2000) and Roever (2005), learners produced functional routines rather than situational ones within the same context. Taguchi (2008, 2011a, 2013a) argues that the conventional nature of pragmatic

routines particularly facilitates the recognition of these. This is put down to the fact that more conventional formulas such as routines are easier to process as less inferential processing is needed to comprehend them.

Considering the different proposals for classifying pragmatic routines according to their form and function, the present study includes pragmatic routines that are both situational and functional, and hence involve different degrees of conventionality. Whether this aspect determines SA students' acquisition of routines will be taken into account.

3.2. Previous studies of pragmatic routines in L2 pragmatics

Research on formulaic language has been a focus of growing interest across different disciplines especially since the 90s: psycholinguistics, phraseology, functional linguistics, computational linguistics, clinical linguistics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, cognitive linguistics, historical linguistics, grammar, L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition, among others (Ellis, 2012; Wray, 2012). In particular, formulaic language is highly relevant in the field of pragmatics since it represents the linguistic means used to express pragmatic functions. Granger (1998), in this sense, states that "the formulaic nature of many pragmalinguistic rules has necessarily contributed to bringing the study of prefabs to the fore" (p. 145). In the area of SLA, pragmatic routines are particularly important in relation to what Pawley and Syder (1983) call "the puzzle of native-like selection" (p. 199), which refers to the ability of NSs to select and use pragmatic routines from among different grammatically correct formulations. According to these authors, it is important for L2 students to learn how to distinguish native-like sentences from those that are unnatural. What seems to be agreed on is that pragmatic routines, as components of pragmatic competence, have gained the attention of researchers and emerged as a salient field: "how pragmatic routines are acquired has to be addressed as a

research issue in its own right" (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 164).

It should also be noted that the study of pragmatic routines is particularly relevant in the field of SA. This is because the process of learning pragmatic routines, unlike other pragmatic aspects, requires a higher level of integration into the TL community, given their sociocultural essence. Consequently, the SA setting – as opposed to the FL context – is particularly beneficial for their acquisition. Indeed, Dörnyei *et al.* (2004) claim that learning formulaic language is different from learning other linguistic competencies, since the learner has to integrate into the TL culture in order to learn the formulaic language used there. Therefore, acquisition of routines seems to greatly depend on the opportunities available for the student to interact with the community, learners' attitudes towards the target language and culture, and their willingness to participate in the TL society.

ILP studies that have addressed pragmatic routines have consequently focused on two main lines of research: L2 learners' acquisition of pragmatic routines in the SA context (their performance being commonly compared with that of a control group in the FL context), and the factors that influence that acquisition. In what follows, previous research on the acquisition of routines in the SA context is reviewed. In particular, previous research is divided into three sections: early research (section 3.2.1), SA exposure and pragmatic routines (section 3.2.2.) – that is, the role of external factors – and individual differences and pragmatic routines (section 3.2.3) – that is, the role of internal factors.

3.2.1. Early studies

The interest in the study of pragmatic routines in SLA – that is, from an acquisitional perspective – started in the 1970s. Most early works were unrelated to each other and focused on the structure of forms, arguing that formulas are acquired as units of lexical processing. Although research in this field was not fully acquisitional in its beginnings, some works are

worth mentioning, as they laid the foundations of a prolific field of research. Scarcella's (1979) is one of the studies that analysed the production of pragmatic routines. Results from that study pointed out 15 expressions such as *Watch out, Come in, Happy birthday* and *I'm sorry* and to conclude that adult L2 learners have certain difficulty in acquiring this type of language. Other early researchers who noticed the importance of pragmatic routines were Hakuta (1974) and Wong-Fillmore (1976). The former suggested that the basis of L2 development is constituted by routinized chunks, which were analysed increasingly for generative purposes. The work by Wong-Fillmore (1976) also merits attention as he demonstrated that children learning L2s use formulaic language to compensate for low proficiency. Interestingly, he observed how children with an eager ability to socialize acquired English formulas to a greater extent. An additional early study is Raupach's (1984), which compared formulae production by NSs and German learners of L2 French. This author pointed out the nature of routines like *je ne sais pas* or *je ne crois que* by referring to them as "islands of reliability," since they help NNSs acquire fluency and reduce planning time. Weinert's (1995) paper on the role of formulaic language in second language acquisition was also highly relevant at the time for providing insightful definitions and extended discussion on the formulas in L2 acquisition. Lastly, Myles, Hooper and Mitchell (1998) elaborated on how the use of formulas (what they called "rote-learned wordstrings") fosters secondary school learners' ability to express themselves in an L2.

In addition to this, an early line of research revealed that L2 learners significantly differ from NSs in their use of pragmatic routines. More particularly, findings indicated that learners often underuse routines in instances where NSs do employ them. Blum-Kulka (1991, cited in Barron, 2003), for instance, observed that NNSs tend to use more words to express a meaning NSs would convey through the use of a routine. In a similar vein, Edmondson and

House (1991, cited in Barron, 2003) found that students rely on supportive moves such as giving more excuses, or using more gratitude words to compensate for their lack of knowledge of appropriate routines.

In summary, early studies on pragmatic routines had a descriptive rather than acquisitional focus, and study purposes as well as research findings were broad and varied. Nevertheless, this initial work on routines revealed their importance for the acquisition of L2s, and set the ground for a fruitful field of research. Relevant contributions were made in terms of methodology used to measure routines, of acknowledging the benefits of using them as facilitators of communication, and of pointing out differences in the use of routines by NSs and NNSs.

3.2.2. Study abroad exposure and pragmatic routines

It was in the early 2000s when the study of pragmatic routines, and of formulaic language in general saw a revival in SLA research. One general point of agreement was reached by most studies: pragmatic routines are best learned in the SL context. This is evidenced by a great number of both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, which have typically compared a group of students abroad (the SA group) with a control group learning the L2 at home (the AH group). Some of the first works that focused on pragmatic routines and observed the advantage of the SL context over the FL one are Marriott (1995), House (1996), and Hoffman-Hicks (1999).

Marriott (1995) focused on the development of politeness – in terms of the use of "routine formulae" and of honorifics – by 8 low proficiency Australian learners of L2 Japanese in a SA program in Japan for one year. Results revealed a clear acquisition of routines after a year abroad. However, learners did not acquire addressee honorifics (thus, they deviated from the NS forms). This failure to master addressee honorifics was explained

by the lack of feedback either from interlocutors or in formal instruction. Marriott's (1995) general conclusion highlighted the intercession of two variables on the development of routines abroad: amount and type of input, and opportunities to interact (participants did not have relevant input and output opportunities). Similarly, House (1996) analysed pragmatic acquisition in terms of routines and metapragmatic awareness, confirming the positive role of the SL context. Participants of the study were a group of learners in a pragmatics course focused on routines, and students who had been abroad before or after the course outperformed those who did not spend time abroad.

Hoffman-Hicks (1999) analysed the use of routines of greetings, leave-takings and compliments by 14 US learners of L2 French in SA programs in France. The author's study is particularly relevant for the purpose of the present investigation, since, to the best of our knowledge, Hoffman-Hicks' is the first longitudinal study with an acquisitional focus. As such, this author measured gains in pragmatic competence by administering a production questionnaire at 3 different points over 16 months. Moreover, performance by the SA group was compared with data from a group of students that remained at home. Results revealed that SA students showed significantly more pragmatic gains than AH ones. This was evident in a more native-like use of routines particularly of greetings and leave-takings. After Hoffman-Hicks' (1999) longitudinal study only a few investigations have traced the development of L2 learners' pragmatic competence longitudinally (Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2006, Woodfield, 2012; see Xiao, 2015, for a review on longitudinal studies of pragmatic development), and even fewer studies have focused on pragmatic routines (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.,* 2013). These investigations report the benefits of SA for the acquisition of pragmatic routines.

Rodríguez (2001) is, to the best of our knowledge, the only study that has found that

SA learners do not outperform AH students in terms of knowledge of pragmatic routines. This author compared recognition of routines by a group of L2 learners in a semester-long SA program in Spain, with a group that stayed in the FL setting. Knowledge of pragmatic routines was measured by means of a judgment task and recall of request formulas such as negative interrogatives (*¿No puedes traerme un vaso de agua?*). Since Rodríguez (2001) focused on pragmatic routines in L2 Spanish, results may suggest that acquisition of Spanish routines presents more difficulty than L2 English routines. Drawing from these findings, several scholars have claimed that there is a need for instruction in the SA context (Bataller, 2010; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Ohlstain & Blum-Kulka, 1985).

In addition to studies that have investigated the role of SA exposure by comparing a group of SA learners with a group of AH students, some investigations have focused on the effects of length of stay and intensity of interaction on the acquisition of routines. These studies have reported mixed findings on the influence of length of stay. In particular, conclusions have been reached in 3 areas: studies that have revealed a significant effect of length of stay on the acquisition of routines (Roever, 2005, 2011; Roever, Wang & Brophy, 2014), studies that have reported no significant effect of amount of time spent abroad on pragmatic acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Kecskes, 2000), and studies that have observed some positive effect, although they have claimed that length of stay does not determine reaching full native-like pragmatic performance (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013). In the three cases, intensity of interaction, understood as quantity and quality of interactions with L2 users, had a positive influence on the acquisition of pragmatic routines.

Roever (2005, 2011) and Roever *et al.* (2014) found a positive effect of length of stay on recognition of pragmatic routines. As mentioned above, Roever (2005) first examined the influence of proficiency and length of stay on the interpretation of pragmatic routines in

appropriate contexts. The participants, 316 international students with varied L1s, completed a web-based test of ESL pragmatics, the pragmatic routine section including a multiple-choice DCT that measures the interpretation of routines in appropriate contexts. Pragmatic performance by learners in SA programs was compared with that of students who had never experienced this type of stays and who were thus studying English in the FL setting. Results pointed out that length of stay had a positive influence on acquisition of routines during SA, and proficiency had a small positive effect on recognition of routines. Regarding length of stay, findings showed that even short-term exposure, as short as 2 or 3 months, leads to students abroad outperforming those at home in the test.

In a later study, Roever (2011) investigated the role of exposure and length of residence on learners' recognition of pragmatic routines in English at the written level. The participants were 262 ESL and EFL students learning English in Germany, the US, Australia and Japan. Findings also revealed a significant influence of length of stay on recognition of routines, but they pointed out that intensity of interaction, which the author refers to as "residence," plays a more relevant role. As the author emphasizes, residence does not only refer to being present in the foreign country but also to interacting with native speakers in a variety of situations. Roever's (2011) results further suggest that length of residence in the foreign setting does determine the recognition of this language, but also that the SA context is not the only place where formulaic language can be learnt. Some pragmatic routines can, indeed, be learnt in a classroom by means of videos, role-plays, or simply by integrating them in assessment. However, the number of routines learnt in the SA context doubles around the end of the second month, and constantly increases after the third month of exposure to the TL culture. According to Roever (2011), rather than longer stays, it is the variation of situations, social spheres and settings what leads to increase the acquisition of routine formulae:

the more learners are exposed to L2 discourse or these specific usage contexts, the more likely they are to learn routine formulae in the process of being socialized into participantship. Learners may not actually know the meaning of the individual component words of a routine formula, but learn their functions and their meaning in context (Roever, 2011, p. 2).

Roever *et al.* (2014) investigated the influence of length of stay and of three learner background factors − proficiency, multilingualism and gender − on comprehension of implicature, recognition of pragmatic routines, and production of speech acts by 229 ESL and EFL students. Findings pointed out that only length of stay and proficiency significantly determined recognition of routines. However, this impact was not as strong as in the case of the other pragmatic aspects (implicatures and production of speech acts).

However, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) found no significant effect of length of stay on either recognition or production of pragmatic routines. These authors examined the effects of proficiency, length of stay and intensity of interaction on knowledge of routines by administering an aural recognition task and an oral DCT to 123 ESL learners. Results, in line with Roever (2011), confirmed that both proficiency and interaction had a significant influence on the production of routines, and intensity of interaction had a particular effect on recognition. Nevertheless, length of stay was unrelated to knowledge of routines. In other words, students that had been abroad for longer stays did not necessarily outperform those with shorter exposure. In contrast, learners that reported (in a background questionnaire) spending a greater amount of hours speaking or listening to the L2, obtained better results in the pragmatic tests, and particularly in recognition of routines.

In a similar vein, Kecskes (2000) found no positive correlation between length of exposure and recognition and production of pragmatic routines. In an investigation into L2 learners' interpretation and use of pragmatic routines, this author observed three developmental stages. The first one (the first months of immersion) is characterized by a

strong L1 transfer, the second one (upon a year of immersion) by false generalizations, and the third one is when students seem to use formulas more appropriately. While it may be expected that students acquire a good mastery of routines with time, in reality this is not always the case. Even advanced students and learners with extensive exposure have difficulty with both comprehension and interpretation of routines since L1 transfer and the influence of individual differences is still strong.

A third group of studies that have addressed the influence of length of stay on the acquisition of pragmatic routines includes two longitudinal investigations that have observed certain positive effects of length of stay on productive ability (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.,* 2013). However, they also revealed that amount of time spent abroad does not influence reaching full native-like pragmatic performance.

Barron (2003) observed that L2 learners do increase their ability to produce appropriate pragmatic routines over time in the SA context. Nevertheless, the learning process is non-linear; that is, influenced by external factors, and length of stay does not ensure native-like performance. The participants in the study were 33 Irish students of L2 German on a 10-month study abroad program in Germany. The scope of the study was wide-ranging, as it attempted to explain the development of pragmatic competence abroad. To do so, the author focused on requests, offers and refusals to offers, and analysed them in terms of discourse structure, pragmatic routines and internal modification. The instruments used were production questionnaires, and different metapragmatic instruments. Overall findings pointed to the beneficial but imperfect nature of the SA setting for pragmatic competence development. According to Barron (2003), abroad learners continuously hear routines, and progressively learn about their functionality and effectiveness. Moreover, as they have more output opportunities, their confidence increases. Additionally, with time they prefer to use

pragmatic routines, which are "off-the-book refusal strategies" (p. 194) over other pragmalinguistic aspects. However, mere exposure is not enough; frequency and saliency of input were determinant factors. Ultimately, results confirm that despite staying abroad, learners do not fully acquire native-like performance. Rather, they are on their way to the puzzle of native-like selection (Pawley & Syder, 1983). In other words, during SA programs, L2 learners start to identify pragmatic routines out of a range of grammatically-correct formulations, and begin to decrease their use of non-L2-like routines. Barron (2003) also confirmed the benefits of acquiring pragmatic routines as facilitators of communication and integration into the TL community: "…use of these routines leads to an increase in L2 fluency, opens up membership to a particular speech community and leads to an increased efficiency in communication" (p. 239). However, attempts at creativity, false overgeneralizations and lack of sociopragmatic knowledge also occurred, interfering in the use of routines This finding reveals the non-linear and imperfect development of pragmatic routines.

Taguchi *et al.* (2013) also examined the development of production of pragmatic routines over a SA program. They focused on gains in the use of routines (measured in terms of appropriateness and planning time) in L2 Chinese by 31 US students on a semester-long SA program in China. Following a pre-test/post-test design, participants took a speaking test with 24 situations that prompted the use of formulas. Additionally, they completed a survey about their perception of the frequency of encountering the presented situations. Research findings revealed that learners showed significant gains in production of routines, hence pointing to a positive effect of length of stay. Additionally, although some students made gains towards the use of TL formulas, most of the participants produced more non-target-like grammatical routines in the post-test. These authors claim that it seems that learners place

more importance on conveying meaning rather than on producing accurate forms. Consequently, production of routines during the SA seems to develop towards the use of functional pragmatic routines

In summary, findings on the role of SA exposure on the acquisition of pragmatic routines suggest two ideas. Firstly, rather than length of stay it is the opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions that mostly determine pragmatic learning. As different scholars have claimed, "duration of stay is an uninteresting variable. What matters is intensity, not length of interaction" (Dietrich, Klein & Noyau, 1995, p. 227). Secondly, in addition to the SA setting, students' individual differences (IDs), as well as their willingness to integrate may determine pragmatic learning in more detail.

3.2.3. Individual differences and pragmatic routines

Variables related to learners' IDs include proficiency, affect, social distance, age, gender, aptitude, motivation, personality, and learning style among others. While research on how IDs determine different aspects of pragmatic competence has been prolific (see section 2.3), studies have seldom focused on pragmatic routines. Moreover, these have been limited to the effect of proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bardovi-Harlig *et al*., 2008; Kecskes, 2003; Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2011a, 2013a), and to the role of attitude towards the L2 on the development of routines (Barron, 2003; Davis, 2007).

As previously mentioned (see section 3. 1), factors related to SA exposure have a strong impact on the acquisition of pragmatic routines. This is not surprising, given that the main role and benefit of using routines is that it allows L2 learners to socialize and immerse themselves in the TL speech community. Although most studies have observed that individuals' L2 proficiency level has some impact on their development and knowledge of

routines, such an effect is not as evident as the role of external factors (Roever *et al.* 2014). Still, the finding that L2 proficiency positively correlates with knowledge of pragmatic routines has been observed by Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2009, 2010), Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011), Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008), Roever (2005), and Taguchi (2011a, 2013a). These scholars have observed that higher-proficiency learners tend to use routines more appropriately than lower-proficiency students.

Bardovi-Harlig and colleagues' work (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bardovi-Harlig, *et al.*, 2008) is of particular relevance in the field of pragmatic routines since it compares recognition and production ability at the oral level, providing evidence that they are separate skills acquired to different extents. In one of the first works on ILP research on pragmatic routines, Bardovi-Harlig (2008) investigated the recognition and the production of routines by 122 international students in a US university, showing that learners got higher results on the comprehension task than on the production one. Students were divided into 4 groups according to their proficiency, and although the author observed certain trends across the groups, results were still preliminary and laid the ground for subsequent studies. In addition, Bardovi-Harlig (2008) emphasized the need for further refinement of the tasks used, which included a recognition task (with de-contextualized expressions), a context identification task, a written DCT, and a modified Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). Later on, Bardovi-Harlig (2009) tested knowledge of routines at the oral level, and introduced the analysis of the proficiency factor. Findings from this study suggested that more proficient learners outperform less proficient ones; thus suggesting the positive effect of proficiency on routines acquisition. Moreover, the analysis revealed that low-proficiency learners may be successful in producing routines orally, but they may not be grammatically correct (as indicated in the 2008 study). Bardovi-Harlig

(2009) also explored the reasons for the low production of routines, finding that these included "lack of familiarity with some expressions, overuse of some familiar expressions which subsequently reduces the opportunity to use more target-like expressions, level of development, and sociopragmatic knowledge" (p. 782).

In a further investigation, Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008) analysed the influence of first language and of level of development (proficiency) in the use of pragmatic routines of thanking, apologizing and refusing. Findings indicated that students used more routines at higher levels. Bardovi-Harlig (2010) also examined adults' recognition of pragmatic routines in contrast to non-conventional and grammatically-correct ones. As learners acquired proficiency in L2 English, their acceptance of conventional expressions increased and their acceptance of modified ones decreased. From these results, this author coincides with Barron (2003) that learners were in a process of native-like selection (Pawley & Syder, 1983).

Taguchi's (2011a, 2013a) work also provided significant insights into how pragmatic routines are learned by L2 learners abroad. With respect to proficiency, this author analysed its role in recognition and in production of routines. Firstly, Taguchi (2011a) compared pragmatic comprehension in terms of 4 aspects (routines, indirect refusals, accuracy and speed) by 64 Japanese learners of English in a US university, focusing on the effect of proficiency and of studying abroad on recognition of these aspects. Participants were divided into 3 groups: group 1 was composed of low proficiency students without SA experience in an English-speaking country, group 2 included high proficiency without SA experience, and group 3 had high proficiency students with SA experience. Findings suggest that the SA experience has a direct impact on comprehension accuracy of routines, and proficiency played a more relevant role on comprehension speed of routines. Moving on to productive ability, Taguchi (2013a) explored how the same factors, proficiency and the SA context,

affected production of routines, in terms of appropriateness, planning time and speech rate. This author distributed a computer-delivered DCT among the same participants as in the 2011a study, who were also divided into three groups according to proficiency. Results revealed the positive correlation of proficiency on speech rates, and of the SA experience on production appropriateness. Finally, Taguchi (2013a) emphasizes the fact that L2 learners, even at high proficiency levels, and with extensive exposure, do not reach native-like levels of production of routines, given the numerous factors that intercede; a finding that has also been observed by other scholars (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Barron, 2003).

In spite of findings on the positive influence of proficiency on knowledge of pragmatic routines, some studies have found that routines are more typical of beginner learners. Like some pragmatic aspects – for example, greetings and leave-takings (see section 1.4.2), – pragmatic routines may be acquired at earlier stages of development, where they function as "islands of reliability." In other words, some studies have observed that routines are more characteristic of beginner learners' linguistic repertoire, as they may use them to compensate for a lack of overall proficiency in the L2. This was illustrated in Ortactepe's (2011) study. This author observed that less proficient students in the SA context overuse the formulaic expressions they learn, while more advanced students prefer to create their own language. For lower learners, formulaic expressions can be "survival phrases that achieve basic socio-interactional functions" (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 23).

Regarding the influence of the individual difference attitude towards the L2 on pragmatic competence, there is a bulk of studies that have observed a positive effect of these variables on the acquisition of different pragmalinguistic aspects (see section 3.3). Nevertheless, only one study, to the best of our knowledge, has addressed the direct relationship between attitude towards the L2 and pragmatic routines during SA: Davis

(2007). Davis analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively how 20 Korean learners'
preference for a particular variety of English – North American or Australian – determines
their acquisition of English routines while participating in a SA program in Australia. These
learners were instructed in the US variety of English in their FL setting, and therefore they
might be reluctant to learning a new variety. Findings from the study indicated a significant
preference for American English over Australian English by Korean ESL learners, pointing
out that attitude influenced their choice to resist using Australian routines. Davis' (2007)
findings also point out learners' resistance to using native-like routines in an attempt to
maintain their heritage identity. Participants in the study were aware of L2 pragmatic usage,
but consciously preferred to maintain the pragmatic style they had learned previously .

That said, research on the influence of individual factors on the acquisition of
pragmatic routines reveals two research gaps. Firstly, most studies have focused on the effect
of proficiency on knowledge of routines, with mixed findings on whether higher proficiency
levels suppose higher knowledge of routines. Secondly, there is a lack of studies addressing
how development of pragmatic routines is influenced by individual factors other than
proficiency. The present study addresses this concern by examining the role of acculturation
on gains in recognition and in production of routines.

3.3. The role of culture on pragmatic routines

As previously suggested (see section 2.3), there is scholarly agreement on the close
relationship between pragmatics and culture. For instance, Alcón and Safont (2008) claim
that "second language pragmatics learning is also L2 culture learning" (p. 197). This implies
that while L2 learners are in the process of acquiring aspects of the TL, they will inevitably
also experience changes in their attitude towards the TL and its culture, and in their views of

their own culture. In the case of pragmatic routines that relationship seems to be stronger, given that cultural boundness is a main trait of this pragmalinguistic feature (see section 3.1). Indeed, since routines are highly culture-specific, one may hypothesize that differences across cultures in the use of routines are particularly striking in comparison with other aspects of pragmatic competence. For example, one culture may use routines in contexts that would not require formulaic expressions in another culture; that is, freely-generated speech is preferred instead.

Despite that evidence, the reality is that ILP research on how SA students of different cultural origins acquire pragmatic routines is still in its infancy. To the best of our knowledge, only one study, Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008), has addressed this concern. These authors analysed the influence of linguistic-cultural background and proficiency in the use of pragmatic routines of thanking, apologizing and refusing by 123 ESL learners. Overall, they observed that learners did not show significant differences in rate of production of pragmatic routines according to the L1 (Arabic, Japanese, Chinese and Korean) although the authors noted a few deviations. In particular, there was a significant effect of learners' L1 in two of the 8 routines examined. The Arabic group used the expressions *Thank you for* (in a situation named "busy teacher") and *Sorry I'm late* (in the context of being 5 minutes late) less than NSs and the other NNSs groups. For example, their production of routines differed from the rest as they tended to deeply apologize in thanking scenarios instead of using native-like routines of gratitude.

Further studies that have explored the role of L2 learners' cultural background on the acquisition of pragmatic routines have employed a conversation analysis methodology (Kecskes, 2000, 2003; Ortactepe, 2011). This last group of studies has explored how NNSs differ among each other or with respect to NSs in their use of pragmatic routines during

naturally-occurring interactions, which are recorded and transcribed. Although these studies do not have an acquisitional focus, they have reported relevant findings for the purpose of the present study, since they contribute to our understanding of how students of diverse origins acculturate in the US and learn pragmatic routines.

Some studies have indicated that differences between NSs and NNSs use of pragmatic routines are likely to be due to cultural differences, and that cultural similarity enhances pragmatic learning. Kecskes (2000, 2003), in this sense, provided empirical support to illustrate how ESL learners with varied cultural backgrounds use English pragmatic routines from the US context.

Kecskes (2000) investigated the ability to recognize and produce pragmatic routines by 88 ESL learners of diverse origins from a conversation analysis perspective, and reported some examples of pragmatic misunderstandings derived from learners' ability to use routines with NSs. For instance, some students did not understand the greeting function of the routine *How are you doing?* Instead, they processed its literal meaning and responded with explanations about their actual feelings at that moment. A further example is the use of false generalisations by advanced ESL learners when interacting with a professor. American culture is more relaxed in terms of addressing speakers of a higher status. Aware of this, some NNSs greeted professors with informal expressions such as *Hi, [name of professor]* or *How are you, [name of professor]?*, a type of behavior which comes across as impolite.

Furthermore, Kecskes (2007) explored the use of formulaic language by NNSs with different L1s during interactions in English with NSs and other L2 users. The language vehicle in use in the conversations was English as a lingua franca. The participants were 12 adult intermediate ESL learners from Spain, China, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Korea and Russia. They held 30-minute conversations that were recorded for subsequent

116

transcription and analysis. Results revealed significant differences between NSs and NNSs' use of pragmatic routines in communication. In particular, learners used a significantly larger amount of routines when speaking with NSs than during conversations with other L2 learners. These students expressed through think aloud protocols that when interacting with other learners they avoid using formulas because they are worried that their interlocutors would not understand them. Hence, a strategy used by speakers of English as a lingua franca is to stick to the linguistic code, and try to be transparent so as to ensure mutual intelligibility among people from varied sociocultural backgrounds. Accordingly, communication among NNSs seems to be characterized by a lack of pragmatic routines, and when NSs participate in the game the use of those pragmalinguistic aspect drastically increases.

Further evidence of the role of cultural similarity on the acquisition of routines is provided by studies that have pointed out significant differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Regarding differences between Chinese and US cultures and pragmatic performance, two studies have addressed the acquisition of FL Chinese pragmatic routines by US learners (Taguchi *et al.,* 2013; Yang, 2016). Both studies revealed that US learners had the most difficulty in producing appropriate routines in leave-taking situations such as leaving a friends' home or leaving a party early. The two situations, which were compared in Taguchi *et al.*'s (2013) study, have different connotations in Chinese, since leaving a party early requires a more abrupt expression as it is a less natural behavior (leaving a friend's home is expected, but leaving a party early is not that natural). In English, however, those connotations do not exist. Yang (2016) observed relevant differences in the use of pragmatic routines by Korean – a culture more similar to Chinese – and American learners of Chinese as a FL. In that study, language background had a significant effect on both production and recognition of pragmatic routines, as more similar cultures (Korean in this case) have an

advantage. Korean and US learners significantly differed in their production of routines in the "leaving the friends' home" situation. In these cases, Chinese used a particular formula to express their intention to leave and to reject having the host accompany the guest to the door. Leave-taking situations like that one are also common in Korea, so the Korean students easily produced the corresponding routine. However, English speakers, instead of understanding the setting as a leave-taking situation, used routines to express refusal and gratitude.

Differences between Turkish and US learners' use of pragmatic routines have also been reported. Ortactepe (2011) analysed naturally-occurring interactions between Turkish college students and US NSs to explore the strategies Turkish students use to socialize. They observed that learners overused pragmatic routines of gratitude – such as *nice to see you*, *how are you doing* or *that'd be great* – with the aim of establishing rapport with NSs. In contrast, NSs used a higher amount of idioms, phrasal verbs or other freely-generated utterances. Overuse of pragmatic routines of gratitude is therefore a sign of L1 and culture transfer, since Turkish culture tends to be more grateful when establishing rapport with other interlocutors.

In addition to differences between Western and Eastern cultures, the use of routines also varies according to the distinction between tradition-oriented cultures and future-oriented cultures (Kecskes, 2014). Pragmatic performance by tradition oriented-cultures such as Turkish, Arabic, Japanese or Chinese is characterized by the use of *pragmatic rituals* (referred to by Kecskes, 2014, as *situation-bound rituals*). These, according to Tannen and Oztek (1981, cited in Kecskes, 2014) are often related to religion or to the power of words instead of to human behavior. An example is the Turkish expression *Allah kolaylik versin* which means 'May God give ease,' which has no equivalent routine in English. In contrast, future-oriented cultures such as American prefer the use of pragmatic routines such as *See you soon*, or *I'll talk to you later*. In Turkish and Arabic cultures, which are tradition-

oriented, aspects related to the future are mostly expressed through God's will, because only he knows what will happen in the future (Zaharna, 1995, cited in Kecskes, 2014).

In summary, it seems that L2 learners with varied cultural backgrounds may acquire pragmatic routines to different extents. In this sense, cultural similarity enhances the performance of pragmatic routines, as has been observed in conversation analysis studies. Despite the fact that studies have reported findings on L2 learners' difficulties in using routines in the TL, there is still an important research gap to cover, since, with the exception of Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008), ILP acquisitional studies have disregarded the role of culture in the acquisition of routines. The present study addresses this concern by exploring how learners with diverse cultural backgrounds develop their ability to recognize and to produce pragmatic routines during SA programs.

3.4. Summary of the chapter

Chapter 3 has reviewed the conceptualization of and the research conducted on the core pragmatic feature of the present study: pragmatic routines. Routines are semi-fixed expressions used recurrently by a speech community in specific situations of everyday life. They are culturally specific, and their use by non-native speakers brings them closer to native-like production of the TL. The acquisition of routines, moreover, has one main advantage: facilitating communication. As such, the use of routines seems to benefit L2 learners in different ways: it helps them sound more native-like, it allows them acquire fluency and confidence, it enhances understanding of a foreign culture, and ultimately assists L2 learners in fitting into the TL society. Moreover, pragmatic routines have been categorised according to their form and to their meaning and function. Classifications by different scholars (Alcón & Sánchez-Hernández, forthcoming; Kecskes, 2000; Roever, 2005; Taguchi,

2011a, 2013a) have considered that pragmatic routines vary in their degree of conventionality and in their boundness to particular situations.

Studies dealing with pragmatic routines in ILP and SLA have been more prolific in the 21st century, and most research has been carried out around the fact that the SA context seems to be the most advantageous for the use and development of routines. Drawing from this idea, numerous authors have observed which factors may play a role in pragmatic acquisition. Regarding external factors, length of stay seems unrelated to the acquisition of routines; rather, it is intensity of interaction with L2 speakers that determines pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Among individual differences related to the learners, the effect of proficiency on acquisition of routines has been widely investigated, with most studies pointing to a slightly positive influence on recognition and on production of routines (Taguchi, 2011a, 2013a). Attitude towards the L2 pragmatic norm, however, does exert a significant influence on learning routines, although this has only been supported in one study (Davis, 2007). The present investigation contributes to this field by examining the factors that affect the acquisition of routines by introducing a new variable, namely acculturation.

Additionally, this study also considers L2 learners' cultural background as a potential influence on pragmatic development, thus covering an important research gap. In this sense, only one ILP study has observed similarities between recognition and production of routines among L2 learners with varied L1s (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 2008). The current investigation will also take into account differences in the use of routines by cultures that are distant in terms of shared sociocultural values (Kecskes, 2003; Ortactepe, 2011).

Part I of this study, which includes the first three chapters, has consolidated our knowledge of the relevant research in how pragmatic competence, and in particular pragmatic

routines, are acquired in the SA context. Now we are ready to move on to Part II, which includes the empirical study itself, beginning with an overview of the research questions and hypotheses that motivated this investigation, which is the focus of the following chapter.

PART II: THE STUDY

CHAPTER 4

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

4.1. Rationale for the study

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 have presented previous research on how pragmatic competence, and in particular pragmatic routines, is learned in the SA context. Moreover, the different factors influencing pragmatic learning during SA have been reviewed, with a focus on the variables of acculturation and cultural background. With this in mind, the current study attempts to contribute to the existing literature in 5 ways:

1. ILP focus: a longitudinal study. Although it has been argued that longitudinal studies are the best approaches to address pragmatic development within SL contexts, only a few investigations have traced the development of learners' L2 pragmatic competence employing longitudinal data (Alcón, 2014; Barron, 2003; Ren, 2013, 2015; Schauer, 2009; Taguchi, 2008; Woodfield, 2012). Acquisitional ILP studies address changes within L2 pragmatic aspects, and how these changes are influenced by diverse factors. The majority of these studies are cross-sectional, and determine pragmatic change by comparing groups of learners, either at different proficiency levels, with different lengths of stay, or contrasting the performance of learners in SA versus their peers' learning a FL at home. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of longitudinal ILP studies that have examined pragmatic learning trajectories by the same group of L2 learners. This concern was first pointed out by Kasper (1992) and later emphasized by Kasper and Schmidt (1996). According to these authors:

> Unlike other areas of second language study, which are primarily concerned with acquisitional patterns of interlanguage knowledge over time, the great majority of studies in ILP has not been developmental. Rather, focus is given to the ways NNSs' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge differs from that of native speakers (NSs) and among learners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To date, ILP has thus been primarily a study of second language use rather than second language learning (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 150).

125

To be more precise, Taguchi (2010) proposes a list of characteristics that are desired for ideal longitudinal ILP studies:

1) they examine pragmatic development over a period of time,

2) they focus on specific pragmatic features,

3) they collect data about development in a chronologically and systematic manner (e.g. pre- and post-tests, linguistic analysis) to observe changes and gains,

4) they do not involve instructional intervention,

5) they focus on participants of secondary or post-secondary school age.

Unfortunately, there are still seldom studies that meet these requirements. In fact, the need for more ILP longitudinal studies has been emphasized by recent scholars such as Ren (2015) and Xiao (2015). In a review of ILP longitudinal studies, Xiao (2015) identifies 26 investigations from 1992 to 2011 addressing different pragmatic aspects. The present study contributes to the existing call for further longitudinal studies that trace pragmatic development over time by examining the factors that shape the acquisitional process. As a longitudinal ILP study, it 1) examines pragmatic development over a semester, 2) it focuses on pragmatic routines, 3) it follows a pre-test/post-test research design to observe gains, 4) it does not involve instructional intervention, and 5) it involves adult participants pursuing a university degree.

2. Target pragmatic feature: pragmatic routines. The core of this study moves beyond the traditional focus on speech acts that has long characterized the field of ILP research, as has been pointed out by scholars such as Barron (2003) or Taguchi (2008). Pragmatic routines, a subarea of formulaic language, are the target pragmatic feature analysed in the present study. Despite the fact that pragmatics researchers have acknowledged the benefits of acquiring routines for L2 learners to develop their communicative competence and their ability to "fit-

in" into the TL community, the field of pragmatic routines is still in its infancy. Moreover, studies have focused either on production (Barron, 2003; Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2013a) or on recognition of routines (Taguchi, 2011a), with only a few (Bardovi-Harlig; 2008, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Kecskes, 2000) accounting for both skills.

In addition to this, to the best of our knowledge, only two investigations have considered the acquisition of pragmatic routines by L2 learners over time; that is, from a longitudinal perspective: Barron (2003) and Taguchi *et al.* (2013), both of which have focused on production. Barron (2003) examined how 33 Irish learners of German produced German pragmatic routines during a year abroad. Production was measured at 3 times during the year. The author examined transfer from L1 (English) routines. Moreover, Taguchi *et al.* (2013) addressed production of Chinese routines by US learners of L2 Chinese, in a pre-test/post-test investigation.

With this in mind, it seems that further exploration of how L2 learners acquire pragmatic routines is in need of further study in order to generalize research findings. The present study addresses this concern and represents a notable contribution to the field of pragmatic routines, as it investigates the acquisition of both production and recognition of routines over time (over a semester-long SA program). Particularly, pragmatic learning is examined from a socially-oriented pragmatic approach that also includes cognitive aspects, implying thus an analysis of how routines are learned by L2 students during SA programs, a complex setting in which numerous interrelated factors are at play.

3. SA factors: acculturation and cultural background. Scholars have mainly analysed the influence of proficiency, length of stay abroad, intensity of interaction, and instruction on the acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA. Our investigation addresses how degree of acculturation in the TL community affects the learning of pragmatic routines, considering

whether participants' cultural background intercedes pragmatic and acculturation developmental paths. To date, only one early study has observed the influence of acculturation, conceptualized from Schumann's (1978) Model of Acculturation, on the acquisition of pragmatic routines: Schmidt's (1983) case study of Wes, pointed out a positive influence of degree of adaptation on pragmatic gains. However, since it is a case study of one participant with a wide scope (to explore the development of communicative competence), and since no further study has addressed this a relationship, findings may not be generalized to the area of pragmatic routines.

Furthermore, students' cultural and language background has been found to play a role in their acquisition of pragmatic routines. Given the culture-specific nature of routines, L2 students need to learn about the particular use of this pragmalinguistic aspect by the TL community. In this learning process, students may resort to their L1 knowledge and sociocultural norms, producing transfer that shapes the acquisition of L2 routines. In this regard, studies have observed that L2 learners with varied cultural backgrounds acquire pragmatic routines to different extents (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.,* 2008; Kecskes, 2014; Ortactepe, 2011; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013). This association, moreover, seems to be marked by cultural distance between the sojourning group and the TL community. In particular, one study has focused on accounting for differences in acquisition of routines by Chinese/Japanese and US participants (Taguchi *et al.,* 2013). The present study contributes to this body of research by exploring the acquisition of ESL routines by 5 cultural groups: Brazilian, Chinese, Thai, Turkish, and Saudi Arabian.

In addition to the lack of studies addressing the role of acculturation and cultural background on knowledge of routines, the difficulty of comparing the influence of factors affecting pragmatic gains, such as proficiency, length of stay or amount of interaction, lies in

the fact that there are no fully reliable research methods to explore the acquisition of routines. Outcomes have been measured with different instruments, research designs, and with different types of participants (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Indeed, numerous studies analyzing language learners abroad have included a small number of participants, with the largest typically ranging from 24 to 44. These two ideas motivated the following contributions of the present study.

4. Sample: 122 participants. As mentioned, the existing body of research on pragmatic routines does includes few large-scale studies. There are exceptions nonetheless, like Bardovi-Harlig's (2008, 2009) work with 122 international students in a US university, or Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos' (2011) study with 123 learners. The current study addresses the need for more large-scale work by analysing the acquisition of routines by 122 international students with different cultural backgrounds participating in SA programs in the US.

5. Study design: mixed method. This study involves a mixed-method approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative data. Research in ILP has not typically combined both approaches, although the benefits of a mixed method approach, and the relevance of data triangulation, are increasingly being emphasized (Alcón, 2014). As a result, recent scholars such as Taguchi (2011b) have examined pragmatic competence quantitatively at the group-level as well as qualitatively at the individual level by interviewing a subset of participants from the larger sample. The present investigation represents not only a large-scale group study with 122 participants who completed a series of questionnaires, but it also involves detailed individual case studies of 10 learners who provided their personal accounts about SA learning and acculturation experiences through semi-structured interviews.

In summary, there exist a number of research gaps to cover within the ILP field, which the present study attempts to cover: 1) there is a need for more longitudinal studies; 2)

pragmatic features other than speech acts should be considered, and studies focused on pragmatic routines should address both recognition and production; 3) more studies on the factors potentially affecting pragmatic development are needed; 4) further investigations should be conducted with a large number of participants, and 5) these studies need to follow a mixed-method research design. The present study contributes to our understanding of how pragmatic competence, and particularly routines, is acquired during SA programs, and it assists in moving forward the state of the field in ILP and SA by addressing the research gaps mentioned above.

4.2. Research questions and hypotheses

The aim of the present research project is to analyse the influence of acculturation on learning pragmatic routines in the SA context by students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Considering the existing literature (discussed in chapters 1, 2 and 3) and the research gaps mentioned above, three main research questions and their hypotheses are outlined below.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): *does study abroad make a difference in learning pragmatic routines, in terms of both recognition and production?*

Previous research on the development of pragmatic routines in the SA context suggests that learners do improve their knowledge of routines. In particular, numerous reports point to the beneficial role of SA programs for students in learning this pragmatic aspect (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009, 2010; Barron, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999; House, 1996; Kecskes, 2000; Marriott, 1995; Roever, 2005, 2011; Taguchi, 2011a, 2013a; Taguchi *et al.,* 2013). However, only two studies have examined development of knowledge of pragmatic routines from a longitudinal perspective (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013). These studies, however, have only addressed productive ability. Drawing from these investigations,

Hypothesis 1 is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): there will be differences in both learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during the SA experience (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013).

Within H1, we will explore whether students experience greater gains in recognition or in production of pragmatic routines. To the best of our knowledge, no study has compared both aspects from a developmental perspective.

Additionally, the current study explores whether pragmatic gains are different across cultural groups. In this respect, only one study has compared the acquisition of pragmatic routines across L2 learners from different cultural backgrounds (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 2008). These authors pointed out that there are no significant differences in pragmatic learning across cultures. Considering the findings from this investigation, hypothesis 2 states that:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): production and recognition of pragmatic routines will not be different across cultures (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 2008).

Next, the study concerns how learners' experiences abroad determine the extent to which they acquire pragmatic routines. In particular, an exploration of the degree to which they acculturate to the SA context is central in this investigation. Research question 2, together with hypotheses 3 and 4, refer to participants' development of acculturation. As explained in chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), acculturation is two-fold, as it involves sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Bearing this idea in mind, research question 2 was formulated as follows:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): *does study abroad make a difference in learners' acculturation development?*

The process of adapting to a new culture is a broad and abstract phenomenon. Studies

that have addressed the extent to which language learners adapt to the TL community during SA programs have yielded inconclusive results: while some students have wonderful experiences abroad, the reality is that a large number of international students report not acculturating successfully in different aspects. These accounts include isolation from NSs, not finding enough opportunities to interact, and feeling like tourists or foreigners, and as such viewing the TL culture from an outsider perspective rather than immersing in it and understanding it. In order to explore acculturation development, the present study draws from Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model, which posits that the degree to which an individual acculturates will partly determine the extent to which he/she acquires the L2. Acculturation, according to the author, involves different social as well as psychological factors. The majority of research based on Schumann's model that explains acculturation development has focused on experiences of immigrants moving to a new environment (Schmidt, 1983). However, there are few studies of acculturation experiences by L2 learners participating in SA programs that have considered Schumann's model.

Investigations that have explored sociocultural adaptation by L2 learners in the SA context have yielded mixed findings on the acculturation process. For instance, O'Reilly *et al.* (2010) focused on international learners at an Irish university, and observed that sociocultural development follows a U-curve progress in which there is a certain decrease around weeks 6 to 12. Moreover, Abdullah *et al.* (2015), found that international students in Malaysia only showed moderate sociocultural adaptation gains. Drawing from these findings, which overall pointed to a certain positive acculturation progress, hypothesis 3 states that:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): there would be a difference in the participants' sociocultural adaptation during the SA experience (Abduhllah *et al.*, 2015; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010).

In addition to this, some studies have observed that acculturation, and particularly

sociocultural adaptation, is determined by cultural and ethnic similarity (Stephenson, 2000; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). In other words, sojourners with different cultural backgrounds adapt to the TL community differently, with more similar cultures experiencing less difficulty in acculturating. The present study considers how L2 learners of varied origins (Brazil, Turkey, China, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia) develop their sociocultural adaptation during a semester-long SA program. Accordingly, hypothesis 4 addresses this idea:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): sociocultural adaptation development will be different across cultures (Stephenson, 2000; Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

Once the effects of the SA context on the acquisition of routines and on the development of acculturation have been analysed, the present study examines how degree of acculturation influences the reported gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines during SA by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds. Research questions 3, outlined below, addresses this aim:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): *is there any relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA?*

To date, to the best of our knowledge, only one study has analysed the direct influence of acculturation – understood within Schumann's (1978) acculturation paradigm – on pragmatic gains: Schmidt's (1983) case study of Wes, a 33-year-old Japanese man emigrating to the US (Hawaii). Schmidt examined how the different variables integrated within the acculturation model affected acquisition of communicative competence, as measured partly in terms of routines. Low social distance, positive attitudes toward the L2 community and high integrative motivation were the factors that exerted a higher impact on learning routines to a greater extent. Thus, psychological factors, rather than behavioral ones, predicted failure in using routines. In addition to Schmidt (1983), there are studies that have

examined how different aspects of acculturation affect the acquisition of varied pragmatic aspects. These investigations focus on how pragmatic competence is determined by socialization (Diao, 2011; Kinginger, 2008; Shively, 2008; Taguchi, 2011b), identity (Siegal, 1995), motivation (Eslami & Ahn, 2014), and personality (Taguchi, 2014) (see section 3.3). Findings from these studies, and particularly Schmidt's (1983) work provided the base for hypothesis 5:

> **Hypothesis 5 (H5):** there will be a positive influence of degree of acculturation on learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during SA (Schmidt, 1983).

At this point, the present study has considered the exploration of acquisition of pragmatic routines across cultures, as well as acculturation development by learners of varied cultural origins. It was hypothesized (H2, and H4) that cultural background would play a role in both pragmatic development and acculturation progress. Consequently, hypothesis 6 predicts that the effect of adaptation in the TL context on the acquisition of routines would also be determined by learners' heritage culture.

> **Hypothesis 6 (H6):** the relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines will be different across cultures.

To sum up, chapter 4 has presented the purpose of the present study, the research gaps it addresses, and the 3 research questions together with their 6 corresponding hypotheses. In what follows, chapter 5 provides a detailed account of the method used in this investigation.

CHAPTER 5

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to analyse the effects of acculturation on the development of knowledge (recognition and production) of English pragmatic routines by learners of diverse cultural origins, in the context of SA programs in the US. Following the previous three chapters which addressed the related literature review, and the purpose and research questions of the current study presented in chapter 4, chapter 5 reports the method that was used to carry out the investigation. In particular, this chapter provides a detailed description of the setting (section 5.1), the participants (section 5.2), the research design and instruments (section 5.3), the procedure carried out to collect data (section 5.4), and the coding and data analysis (section 5.5).

5.1. The Study Abroad setting

Data were collected from two public universities in the United States which participate in SA programs in countries all over the world. The reasons for choosing these two higher institutions are familiarity and accessibility to the data. Moreover, they are in close geographical proximity, within the Appalachian region of the US. This was an important factor to take into account to make sure the institutions shared the same cultural, societal and linguistic values, and especially to ensure that the NSs used the same pragmatic routines. Figure 5.1 illustrates the Appalachian area of the US, and the subregions within it. The research sites of this study are situated in the North Central area of Appalachia, one university in the state of Ohio, and the other one in West Virginia.
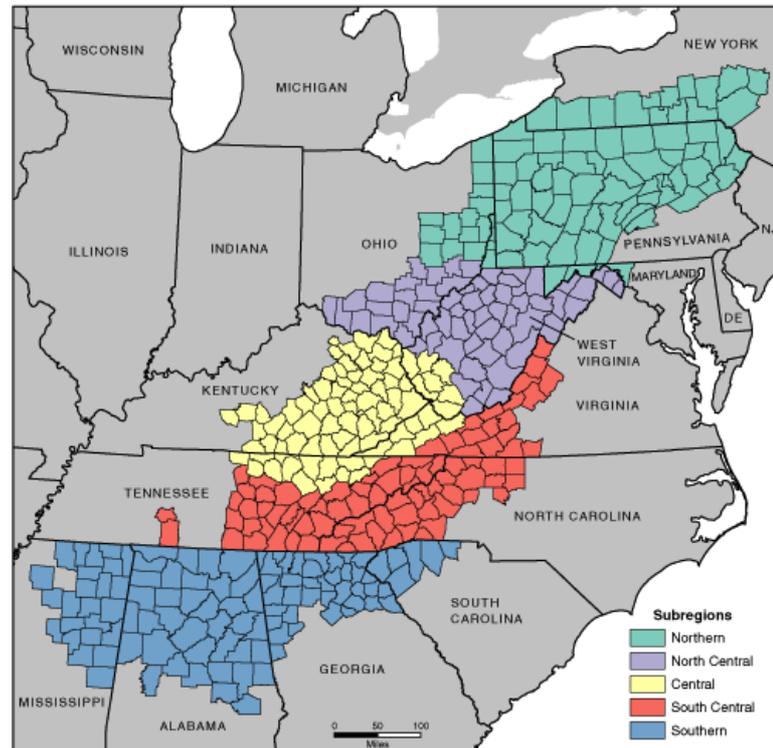
Figure 5.1. The study abroad setting (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009)

The two universities embrace international students from different countries each semester, both at undergraduate and graduate levels. For students who want to or need to study English, the institutions have similar ESL programs that aim at helping international students learn English and preparing them to live and study in the US. Students may enroll in full-time, part-time, or occasional ESL classes with other international students, depending on their proficiency level and initial entrance-exam Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) score. Hence, lower-proficiency learners typically take more L2 classes while higher-proficiency ones enroll in less ESL lessons. Additionally, students with a high level of English, particularly graduate students, whose purpose is more content-focused rather than language-focused may not receive ESL instruction during the sojourn.

In addition to ESL classes, the international offices of both universities offer opportunities to enhance newly-arrived students' integration into the TL community and their socialization with other international students and with NSs. For instance, the two institutions

have a conversation-partner program in which international students are paired up with NSs so that they can learn about each others' language and culture. The universities also organize cultural and social events aimed not only at enhancing linguistic improvement but also at having students learn about US culture. For instance, they organise off-campus field trips, game nights, bowling, picnics, and even what they call 'international weeks'. In addition, they have clubs that integrate both American and international students, such as the international Student Book club, theatre clubs, baking clubs and creative arts clubs.

5.2. Participants

International students from different countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Europe were asked to participate in the project. The nonprobability sampling method was used to select subjects for the study on the basis of convenience and accessibility. This type of sampling was also convenient given that the main goal of the study is to explore relationships that may exist and to draw conclusions that benefit the analysis of the effects of acculturation on the acquisition of pragmatic routines. In particular, students were asked to participate in the study during welcome meetings and at their ESL classes. The principal researcher contacted meeting organizers and ESL instructors about the possibility of asking newly arrived students to take part in the project and complete the study instruments during class or meeting sessions. After participants were informed about potential risks, benefits, and confidentiality issues, they had the option of signing a consent form (see Appendix A) and voluntarily completing the questionnaires. At the end of the semester, program organizers and ESL teachers were contacted again to arrange a session for administration of the post-test instruments.

By means of this recruitment procedure, a sample of 122 learners was gathered. The

group consisted of 61% males (*n* = 75) and 34% females (*n* = 47), and their ages range from 18 to 42 (average 23.3 years old). Their nationalities are diverse (mainly Brazilian, Chinese, Thai, Saudi Arabian and Turkish), which also implies a diverse range of L1s. Furthermore, 39% (*n* = 48) have knowledge of languages other than English and their L1. The sample includes students with different initial proficiency levels, which allowed them to be classified into three main groups: beginners (*n* = 20), intermediate (*n* = 63) and proficient learners (*n* = 39) levels. This classification was based on self-reports and on TOEFL scores. Students provided self-reported information about their initial English level in a background questionnaire (see Appendix B); additionally, they completed a TOEFL test previously to their arrival in the US. Previous experience in the US and length of stay were two aspects taken into account and controlled for. The initial sample included students that had been in the US before for different purposes (typically tourism, or SA programs at colleges or high schools). Those who had previous relevant experience; that is, students who had participated in SA programs before, or had lived in the US for an extended length of time, were excluded from the sample. Regarding length of stay, although the SA programs in which students participate differ in nature and in length of duration, the analysis only considered the first semester (four months) of immersion and disregarded later experiences. Finally, participants' living arrangements during the SA programs were varied: 8 reported living by themselves, 58 living with other L2 speakers, and 38 living with English speakers.

The distributions of the participants according to the information mentioned above are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. *Demographic information about participants*

Variable	Values	*n*	*%*
Gender	Male	75	61.5
	Female	47	38.5
Age	18 to 24	72	59
	24 to 30	45	37
	30 to 42	5	4
Country	China	36	29.5
	Brazil	32	26.2
	Thailand	10	8.2
	Saudi Arabia	9	7.4
	Turkey	7	5.7
	Spain	5	4
	Vietnam	4	3.3
	Indonesia	3	2.5
	South Korea	3	2.5
	Japan	2	1.6
	Pakistan	2	1.6
	Austria	1	0.8
	Congolese	1	0.8
	Germany	1	0.8
	Ghana	1	0.8
	Russia	1	0.8
	Senegal	1	0.8
	Syria	1	0.8
	Tajikistan	1	0.8
	Uzbekistan	1	0.8
L1	Chinese	37	30.3
	Portuguese	32	26.2
	Arabic	10	8.2
	Thai	10	8.2
	Turkish	7	5.7
	Spanish	5	4
	Vietnamese	4	3.3
	Indonesian and Indonesian dialects (Bahan and Bahasa)	3	2.5
	Korean	3	2.5
	German	2	1.6
	Japanese	2	1.6
	English (Ghanaian variety)	1	0.8
	Hazargi (from Pakistan)	1	0.8
	Kituba (Congolese)	1	0.8
	Serer (Senegal)	1	0.8
	Tajik	1	0.8
	Urdu	1	0.8

	Uzbek	1	0.8
English level	Beginner	20	16.4
	Intermediate	63	51.6
	Advanced	39	32
Linguistic background	Only English and their L1	74	60.6
	With knowledge of other languages	48	39.4
Previous (non-relevant) experience in the US	Yes	27	22.2
	No	95	77.8
Living situation	Alone	8	6.5
	With English speakers	38	31
	With non-English speakers	58	47.5
	Change: with NSs to with NNSs	10	8.2
	Change: with NNSs to with NSs	5	4
	Change: with NSs to alone	3	2.5

From the 122 subjects, a subset of 10, representing 8% of the sample, voluntarily participated as informants for the qualitative analysis. They were asked to participate in interviews upon completion of the pre-test instruments. While the initial subset of case studies included 16 students, the final 10 subjects were chosen on the basis of maximum variation sampling. This is, the principal researcher aimed at gathering a subsample that represented the most varied cases from the overall sample in terms of not only pragmatic performance but also further demographic factors. Hence, a first look at their performance in the pragmatic routines test at the beginning of the semester allowed the establishment of a diverse sample of case studies. Table 5.2 illustrates this performance, and reveals that 3 of the participants scored below the means in recognition, production and overall knowledge of routines (Sean, David and Mark), 4 of them showed average performance (Michelle, William, Jeff and Lisa), and 3 of them obtained a high score ratio (Mike, Ethan and Emma).

Table 5.2. *Performance in pragmatic routines pre-test by case-study informants*

Participant	Recognition	Production	Total
Michelle	21	11	32
William	21	14	35
Mike	24	16	40
Sean	11	8	19
David	11	6	17
Mark	15	10	25
Jeff	23	12	35
Ethan	26	23	49
Emma	26	20	46
Lisa	21	14	35
AVERAGE	18.5	10.4	28.8

In addition, diversity regarding further demographic aspects was taken into account. Table 5.3 displays demographic information about the 10 informants. As the table indicates, the sample includes 7 males and 3 females, from 20 to 29 years old with an average age of 24.5. Their nationalities are Spanish ($n = 3$), Brazilian ($n = 4$) and Turkish ($n = 3$). One of them is a beginner learner of English, 3 have an intermediate proficiency level, and 6 are advanced learners. Moreover, 5 of them know languages other than English and their mother tongue, and 2 have had previous experience in the US.

Table 5.3. *Demographic information about case-study informants*

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Nationality	English level	Linguistic background	Previous stay	Living situation
Michelle	29	F	Turkish	B2		NO	With NSs
William	22	M	Brazilian	C1		NO	With NNSs
Mike	20	M	Brazilian	C1		NO	With NNSs
Sean	25	M	Turkish	C1		NO	Change:NSs to NNSs
David	23	M	Brazilian	A2		NO	With NNSs
Mark	27	M	Turkish	B2	Chinese (A1)	NO	With NSs
Jeff	20	M	Brazilian	C1	Spanish (B1)	NO	With NNSs
Ethan	29	M	Spanish	C2	Catalan (C2), French (A2)	YES	With NSs
Emma	26	F	Spanish	C2	French (B2)	YES	With NNSs
Lisa	24	F	Spanish	B2	French (A1)	NO	With NNSs

5.3. Research instruments

The present study employs a mixed-method design: it gathers quantitative data that is supplemented by qualitative information. Given the different types of information needed, and the various instruments used, triangulation of data was a necessity. Triangulation implies the use of different sources of data to complement each other and avoid potential bias from only using one source. More specifically, *triangulation* has been defined as follows:

> Intentionally using more than one method of data collection and analysis when studying a social phenomenon so as to seek convergence and corroboration between the results obtained from different methods, thereby eliminating the bias inherent in the use of a single method (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p. 144).

The advantages of triangulation have been pointed out by many researchers. Kasper (1998), for instance, emphasizes two benefits: triangulation increases the level of objectivity of the results since it helps to avoid any possible task-bias, and it gives the instruments a higher level of reliability. However, one should be careful when conducting triangulation.

The traditional view that it involves using different instruments to add up validity has been criticized by some scholars (Barron, 2003; Riazi & Candlin, 2014). This view is implied in Denzin's (1998, cited in Barron, 2003) description of triangulation as "the use of multiple methods in an investigation so as to overcome the weaknesses or biases of a single method." Instead, relevance of the instruments and the relationships among them should be considered.

To shed more light on what employing a mixed-method approach implies, Riazi and Candlin (2014) propose a list of 5 purposes: 1) triangulation purposes, 2) complementarity, 3) development, 4) initiation, and 5) expansion. Therefore, triangulation is only one of the purposes that leads a researcher to employ a mixed-method approach. Scholars may also use mixed methods with different data sources that can be used and mingled in an attempt to complement each other. Moreover, mixed methods may be used with only one data source to develop results revealed from the main source of data. A fourth purpose is to use a mixed-method approach to initiate further analysis when initial results reveal a contradiction. Finally, this approach can also be used to obtain expanded results on a topic; for instance, when both quantitative and qualitative data are collected separately on a single aspect such as the outcome and the process of SA. With this in mind, the present study uses mixed methods mainly for purposes of triangulation and complementarity of data.

More particularly, this investigation follows Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann and Hanson's (2003) proposal of different types of mixed-method approaches, and adopts a mixed method with a sequential explanatory design. This approach is characterized by an initial collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the gathering and interpretation of qualitative data. Although quantitative information has a priority in this approach, the two types of data are integrated during the interpretation of results. The procedure for data collection in a sequential explanatory design method is illustrated in

Figure 5.2. As such, in the present study, two main instruments (a Sociocultural Adaptation Scale and a pragmatic routines test, as indicated below) are used to collect data for quantitative analysis, and these are complemented by qualitative instruments (background questionnaire and semi-structured interviews).

QUANTITATIVE ⟶ Qualitative

QUANT Data collection	QUANT Data analysis	Qualitative Data analysis	Qualitative Data collection	Interpretation of entire analysis
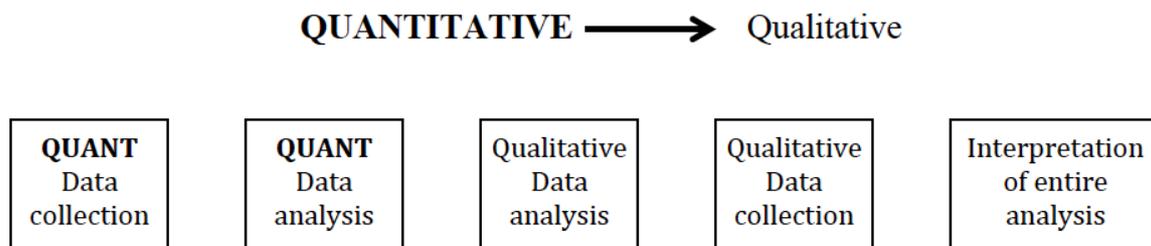
Figure 5.2. Sequential explanatory design (adapted from Creswell *et al.*, 2003, p. 180)

This being said, the two main types of data needed in the present study are information about the participants' level of acculturation to the US society, and their knowledge (recognition and production) of pragmatic routines. Data for the first type of information was obtained by means of Wilson's (2013) revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS). Data for the second one; that is, information about knowledge of pragmatic routines, was collected through two tests: a recognition test and a production test, which were specifically designed for the purpose of this study, drawn from instruments used by Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2009), Roever (2005), and Wesche and Paribakht (1996). Quantitative measures of the two types of information were complemented by qualitative information from semi-structured interviews by 10% of the total sample of participants that lasted approximately 30 minutes each, and were conducted at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Moreover, further information that could have an effect on the results was collected via a background questionnaire. The instruments were given to the participants in paper format during face-to-face sessions, and the interviews took place orally and individually,

and were digitally recorded.

5.3.1. Quantitative instruments

5.3.1.1. Background questionnaire. The background questionnaire collected data about different aspects of the students' background, with the aim of controlling factors that could influence the results. First, students were asked to provide demographic information such as name, age, gender, nationality and native language. Then, they were asked to indicate their proficiency level in English and in other languages they may know, their options being beginner (A1), elementary (A2), low-intermediate (B1), upper-intermediate (B2), advanced (C1) or proficient level (C2). Finally, they were requested to provide information about possible previous experience in the US, such as length of stay and the purpose of the trip. The questionnaire included both checklist and open-ended items in order for the data to be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively (see Appendix B).

For the purpose of respecting the ethical principle of accurate disclosure, a consent letter was presented to the participants before they completed the questionnaire. The consent letter informed the participants about the purpose of the study, the purpose of the instruments, accurate disclosure issues, anonymity, confidentiality, honesty and data protection. In order for them to agree to the presented information, the consent form also asked for the signature of the participants and the date. The instrument is available in Appendix A.

5.3.1.2. Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS). The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), designed by Ward and Kennedy (1999) and revised by Wilson (2013), is a self-report instrument that measures the extent to which respondents experience difficulty in different areas of the mainstream (in this case, US) culture. Specifically, the scale assesses both psychological and sociocultural dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment, thus allowing for the measurement of two aspects: participants' behavioral adaptation difficulty with 22

items (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 28), and their cognitive-adaptation difficulty with 7 items (items 5, 8, 10, 18, 23, 26, and 29). Average scores for the 29 items were used to measure the overall socio-cultural adaptation level. In terms of structure and content, it is a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the original instrument high scores are associated with higher levels of difficulty (less degree of acculturation). However, drawing on Simic-Yamashita and Tanaka (2010), and in order to ease statistical analysis, scores were reversed on the items, so that higher scores stand for higher levels of acculturation and identification with the host culture. Participants were asked to use this scale to respond to 29 items such as "making friends," "seeing things from an American point of view," "finding food that you enjoy" and "the pace of life."

With regard to reliability, internal consistency and validity of the SCAS, these aspects were initially analysed and corroborated by Ward and Kennedy (1999). They designed the scale by testing it across a wide range of culturally diverse groups of sojourning students and adults. Specifically, internal consistency measures ranged from 0.75 to 0.91 ($M = 0.85$), and construct validity was seconded by results of contemporary research on social skills acquisition (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). In this study, Cronbach alphas were calculated for the overall instrument scale and for behavioral adaptation and cognitive adaptation subscales, the three ratios indicating a strong reliability for overall sociocultural adaptation ($\langle = 0.937$), for behavioral adaptation ($\langle = 0.910$), and for cognitive adaptation ($\langle = 0.989$).

Celenk and Van de Vijver (2011), in their study about an overview of the publicly available measures of acculturation, found that the SCAS has a great number of strengths; for example, it has good psychometric properties and it covers multiple domains. Regarding weaknesses of the SCAS, the authors report that it only covers sociocultural outcomes (and disregards psychological ones), and that it uses a unidimensional framework (rather than a

bidirectional one that accounts for both the heritage and the host cultures). Nevertheless, these two aspects did not represent deficiencies in the instrument for the purpose of the present study, since psychological adaptation is measured qualitatively, and only adjustment to the mainstream culture is relevant for the analysis.

The SCAS was piloted with 22 NNSs who met the profile of the participants. These were international college students, students of English as a foreign language who have been exposed to American culture. The purpose of the pilot was to check if the process of completing the instrument was easily understood, to check for consistency in the analysis and the results, and to discern any possible further problems it may have. However, no further revision was necessary after the pilot since participants completed it with no difficulty.

Finally, the SCAS was administered to the participants twice: the first time was in the second week of their SA program, and the second time was two weeks before finishing the program. This time lapse permitted the principal researcher to observe trends in the process of acculturation. The instrument is included as Appendix C.

5.3.1.3. Pragmatic routines test. For the purpose of testing the students' level of recognition and production of pragmatic routines, the present study adapts two measures used in previous studies: the multilevel Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS, Wesche & Paribakht, 1996), and a written DCT. To assess recognition, a modified version of the VKS was designed, and to evaluate production of pragmatic routines a DCT task was created from works of Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2009, 2011) and Roever (2005). Both instruments were pieced together to measure the participants' knowledge of pragmatic routines.

In order to design the test, several steps were followed: 1) literature review, 2) establishment of a list of pragmatic routines, 3) checking for frequency, 4) VKS and DCT scenario construction (instrument design), 5) checking for community-wide use of the

147

expressions, 6) piloting with NNSs, and 7) further revision and construction. As far as the first step is concerned, Bardovi-Harlig (2008) emphasizes the importance of applying formulas that have been used in previous studies. In particular, this instrument takes into account works by Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2009), Roever (2005), and Taguchi *et al.* (2013), since the pragmatic routines they use are most suitable for the purpose of the present study, which focuses on social formulas rather than formulaic language in general. From their research, a list of expressions was written and their frequency of occurrence was then checked. In order to check for frequency in written discourse, Fosberg (2006) suggests the use of Google, a tool by means of which an expression can be checked for frequency by tying it between quotation marks and the number of cases in which it appears can be obtained immediately. More specifically, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) suggest that in order to consider a pragmatic routine to be frequent in a register, it has to occur 10 times per one million words. Later on, Biber, Conrad and Cortes (2004) established that a formula needed to occur 40 times per million words in order for it to be frequent in a register. Given the strong cultural and community-wide nature of the elicited expressions, frequency was checked for the mere purpose of assuring that the routines are actually used frequently, but a high frequency ratio was not expected in all of the expressions. Once a more definite list of expressions was established, the scenarios for the production part (the DCT) were put together, as well as the VKS for the recognition part.

Regarding the recognition of pragmatic routines section, the test is based on Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) multilevel VKS, an instrument which combines self-report and performance items with the aim of identifying both self-perceived and demonstrated knowledge of certain words. The instrument has previously been used by Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2014) to measure recognition of pragmatic routines. In the present study, the VKS was

148

modified by reducing the possible answers from 5 to 3 and changing their wording. The

possible answers in the original VKS are as follows:

> I. I have never seen this word.
> II. I have seen this word before, but I don't remember what it means.
> III. I have seen this word, and I think it means _____. (synonym or
>   translation)
> IV. I know this word. It means _____. (synonym or translation)
> V. I can use this word in a sentence: _____. (if you do this
>   section, please also do IV)
> (Paribahkt & Wesche, 1993, p. 15)

Example 1 shows the format used in the present study and the modification to 3

possible answers by means of an extract taken from part one of the pragmatic routines test

itself.

> *Example 1.* Recognition and production of pragmatic routines test, part 1.
>
> Instructions: Circle the letter a, b or c of the most appropriate option for each
> expression according to whether you have never seen or heard the expression,
> you have seen or heard it but do not remember what it means, or you know the
> expression and are able to explain, translate or provide a synonym for it.
> 1. I gotta go
>   a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.
>   b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it
>   means.
>   c) I know this expression. It means _____
>   (translation, synonym or explanation)

The purpose of this modification was to simplify the statistical analysis of the data so

as to obtain more detailed results. The task displays 13 decontextualized expressions. The

decontextualization of the expressions is relevant for the purpose of this study since the aim

of this test is observing learners' pragmalinguistic knowledge, disregarding their

sociopragmatic ability, which is measured in the production test.

In order to assess the production of pragmatic routines, a DCT was designed on the

basis of works by Roever (2005, 2011) and Bardovi-Harlig (2008, 2009). It requested

participants to express what they would say in each of 20 scenarios presented to them. An instance of part 2 of the pragmatic routines test is provided as Example 2.

> *Example 2.* Recognition and production of pragmatic routines test, part 2.
>
> Instructions: Please fill in the blank with what you would say in the situation. Write down the first thing you think of.
> 1. Your friend invites you to have dinner with his parents. His mom offers you more food but you couldn't possibly eat more. You say: _____

Bearing in mind that written DCTs do not trigger natural conversational data, using this test was particularly suitable for the present study for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a low-cost and easy-to-administer instrument, and thus it represents the best option for collecting large amounts of data on learners' production of pragmalinguistic features, as was the case in this study. Secondly, DCTs have been useful tools to assess pragmalinguistic knowledge, and ability to produce conversational formulas in particular. Thirdly, completing a written DCT allows learners time to think, to consider their metapragmatic knowledge, as well as to express actual productive ability, as opposed to other instruments such as role plays, in which learners may not feel relaxed enough or may not perceive the role-play situations as authentic enough to show actual pragmatic performance. Finally, earlier research has pointed out that written DCTs are beneficial to make comparisons between NSs and NNSs pragmatic knowledge, and across learners of diverse cultural origins, which is one of the purposes of this study (Blum-Kulka, Kasper & House, 1989).

Once the VKS and the DCT were designed, the instruments were piloted with 92 NSs in order to check for community-wide use of the routines. This step played a key role in the design of the test of pragmatic routines given their culture- and situation-bound nature. In the present study pragmatic routines are defined as semi-fixed expressions used recurrently by a speech community in specific situations of everyday life. They are culturally specific, and

their use by non-native speakers brings them closer to the native-like production of the language. Hence, dependence on a situation and on the culture, and NSs – as representatives of the speech community – agreement are main traits of a routine. In order to maintain the nature of pragmatic routines, prototypicality, understood as high degrees of NS agreement in specific situations, was the main aspect to consider in order to elicit routines for the test. In particular, 100% NSs agreement was obtained for recognition, and 50% for production. In other words, all 92 NSs recognized the presented expressions, and at least 46 NSs produced them. Additionally, pragmatic routines that showed at least 15% of NSs production agreement were taken into consideration as low-prototypical routines. This cut-off served three purposes: 1) it was an indicator of the validity of the instrument by showing NS agreement, 2) it provided the limitations of variability in the participants' answers, and 3) it was used to codify the routines produced in the DCT. Table 5.4 shows NSs recognition of pragmatic routines, and table 5.5 displays NSs production of routines. In table 5.5, the words between brackets and curly brackets designate variability. Brackets indicate that the routine may not include any of the embedded words, while curly brackets mean that one of the embedded words is necessary.

Table 5.4. *Recognition of pragmatic routines by NSs*

ID	Expression	NS N = 92	
		%	(n)
R1	I gotta go	100	(92)
R2	I was wondering...	100	(92)
R3	Do you have the time?	100	(92)
R4	My bad	100	(92)
R5	Thanks for coming	100	(92)
R6	Thanks for your time	100	(92)
R7	That works for me	100	(92)
R8	Do you think you could make it?	100	(92)
R9	Could you do me a favor?	100	(92)
R10	Would you mind...?	100	(92)
R11	Do you want to come to my place?	100	(92)
R12	Help yourself	100	(92)
R13	Can I get you anything else?	100	(92)

Table 5.5. *Production of pragmatic routines by NSs*

ID	Context	Expression	NS N = 92	
			%	(n)
P1	No more food	No, thank you	47	(43)
		I'm full	33	(30)
P2	Introduction	Nice to meet you	75	(69)
P3	Restaurant	For here or to go?	57	(52)
P4	Puddle	Watch out	72	(66)
P5	Have a nice day	{Thanks/thank you/-} you too.	89	(82)
P6	Late	Sorry {I'm/I am/for being/I was} late	78	(72)
P7	Phone	Hello?	90	(83)
P8	Borrow pen	{Could/Can/May} I borrow…?	74	(68)
P9	Store	I'm just looking (around)	54	(50)
		I'm just browsing	20	(18)
P10	Decease	(I'm) Sorry (for/about/to hear about) your loss	50	(46)
		I'm (so) sorry	32	(29)
P11	Messy house	{Sorry for/sorry about/excuse/ignore/pardon/don't mind} the mess	58	(53)
		{my place/my house/it} is {a mess/messy}	25	(23)
P12	Piece of paper	Here you go	65	(60)
P13	Careful driving	Be careful	85	(78)

Once a version of the test was established and correctly completed by NSs, the instrument was piloted with international college students who were studying ESL. The aim of piloting the VKS and the DCT with NNSs was to discern the type of wrong answers that could be expected, and any possible difficulties in completing the test. Since the pilot participants did not experience any unexpected trouble completing the test, the final version was produced with 13 expressions elicited for recognition, and 13 situations that elicit the use of routines. The final version of the pragmatic routine test is included as Appendix D.

Finally, in order to avoid familiarity with the instrument in the post-test, two versions of the VKS and the DCT were designed by modifying the order of the items presented. This modified version of the test was provided to the students two weeks before the end of the semester. The post-test version of the pragmatic routine test is included as Appendix E.

5.3.2. Qualitative instruments

In addition to quantitative data, the study gathered qualitative data aimed at providing details about the nature of the participants' sociocultural and psychological experiences. Qualitative data involved one source: semi-structured interviews with a group of 10 participants.

5.3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews. A subset of 10 students participated in case studies by means of 2 semi-structured interviews. The first interview took place 2 days after the administration of the pre-tests (the background questionnaire, SCAS, and pragmatic routines test), and the second one was conducted 2 days after the post-tests (SCAS and pragmatic routines test). Reasons for individual trajectories during the SA program were detailed by means of this analysis. The interviews were conducted in the principal researcher's office and had duration of 30 to 40 minutes. They were semi-structured so as to

include flexibility in the pre-selected themes. The following themes were considered in the pre-test interviews:

1) Educational background and English experience at home

2) Goal of SA program and expectations

3) Sociocultural adjustment

4) English use (interaction with English speakers)

5) Linguistic awareness

6) Metapragmatic awareness

7) Acculturation / English use/ Views on pragmatic routines Test

Furthermore, the themes covered in the post-test interviews, at the end of the abroad experience were:

1) Outcomes of the SA program

2) Sociocultural adjustment: academically and socially

3) English use (interaction with English speakers)

4) Influence of instruction

5) Linguistic awareness

6) Metapragmatic awareness

7) Acculturation / English use/ Views on pragmatic routines test

Details on the questions that were asked for each item during the pre-test interviews are included in Appendix F, and the guideline for the interviews used in the post-test is included as Appendix G.

5.4. Data collection procedure

This study employed a longitudinal pre-test/post-test design, in which results from the

pre-test and post-test were complemented by qualitative details on SA experiences in between. The process of collecting the data needed by means of the instruments mentioned above took two semesters (spring semester of 2014 and fall semester of 2014). During this time, the international students in the two universities described at the beginning of the chapter were participating in diverse SA programs. Additionally, a pilot study with 38 international students was conducted prior to the main study (in fall semester 2013) to determine the practical feasibility of the inquiry and to ensure clarity of the instruments.

For the pre-test, a day and time were established during the second week of each SA semester (during the second half of January 2014 and of August 2014), in which participants were asked to complete the paper-format instruments. Specifically, two days and times were established, one for each of the universities that participated in the study. In order to recruit participants for the study, SA program organizers and ESL teachers were asked by email to collaborate. They asked students to voluntarily attend a session to complete some instruments for a research project. To achieve a high rate of participation, food and sodas were offered. Sessions lasted for approximately forty minutes, in which participants read and signed the consent letter (5 minutes), and completed the background questionnaire (5 minutes), the SCAS (10 minutes), and the pragmatic routine test (20 minutes). At the meeting, the principal researcher helped with questions and potential technical problems. Students were given hard copies of the questionnaires and tests. Upon completion, they were expected to hand them in to the researcher. The reason for choosing the face-to-face delivery of the instruments, rather than a computer-based one, was to increase the rate of participation, and to avoid students consulting information in extra materials, or asking for help with their answers. At the end of the session, students were asked to voluntarily participate in interviews about their SA experience. A total of 10 participants were interviewed for 30 to 40 minutes each. The

interviews took place at the principal researcher's' office, and, with previous written consent from the participants, they were recorded through the Audacity computer program.

For the post-test, during the week before the end of the semester (in mid-April 2014 and early-December 2014), one more session was established following the same protocol used for the pre-test. Students who participated in the first meeting were asked to participate in the second one via email. To motivate participation, refreshments and food were served again. This time, participants completed only two of the instruments: the SCAS (10 minutes), and the pragmatic routines test (20 minutes). This meeting lasted for approximately 35 minutes. The researcher was also present, and the delivery method was the same as before – face to face. With regard to the semi-structured interviews at the end of the semester, they took place during the second-to-last week before the end of the SA programs, and hence before the administration of the post-test instruments. Participants were asked via email to be present at the principal researcher's office, and the interviews were recorded again using Audacity.

A summary of the data collection procedure is included in Figure 5.3.
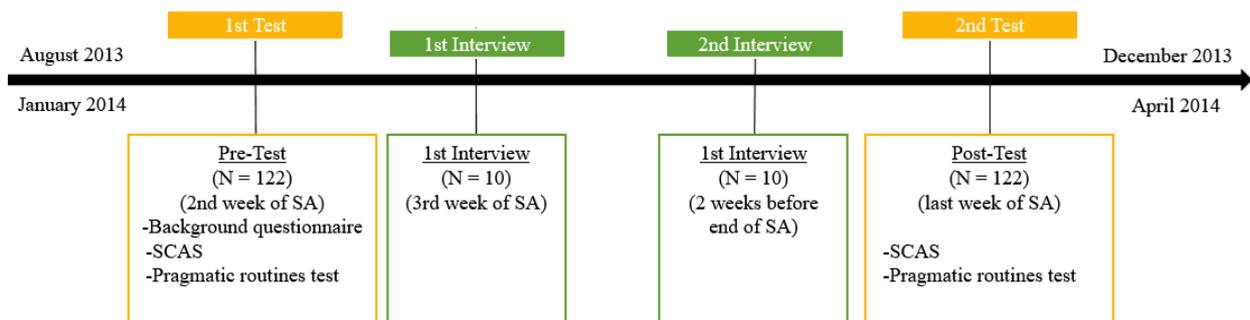
Figure 5.3. Data collection procedure

5.5. Data coding and analysis

A first analysis was carried out by means of the background questionnaire. It was a descriptive analysis with the purpose of creating a demographic profile for each of the participants and classifying them according to different variables: age, nationality, gender, level of proficiency in English and previous experience and contact with US culture. The data was obtained with the possibility of using it to explore different variables. In particular, students were categorised according to their proficiency level – into beginner, intermediate and proficient learners – and according to their cultural background – Chinese, Brazilian, Thai, Saudi Arabian and Turkish.

A next step was to score data from the SCAS, that is, information about learners' degree of acculturation. As previously mentioned, the instrument is a questionnaire based on a Likert scale from 1 (= extreme difficulty in acculturating) to 5 (= no difficulty in acculturating), the points received in each item of the questionnaire were added together and divided by 29 (reflecting the number of items in the survey). The higher figures obtained, ranging from 1 to 5, indicated greater adaptation to the SA environment. A further coding procedure was established by analyzing cognitive adaptation and behavioral adaptation subscales. To score cognitive adaptation, the average score in items 5, 8, 10, 18, 23, 26, and 29 was calculated, and to score behavioral adaptation the average score in items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 28 was calculated. Hence, the two subscales returned a number between 1 and 5.

Coding of recognition and of production of pragmatic routines data was the next phase. Firstly, learners' recognition of routines was coded in terms of familiarity with the expressions. To obtain recognition scores, each response in the VKS test received a point

value: 0 points were given to the response "I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before," 1 point to "I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means," 1 point was also given to "I know this expression. It means (incorrect answer)," and 2 points to "I know this expression. It means (correct answer)." Correct answers – definitions, synonyms or explanations – were determined by the meaning provided by the NSs. Since the main characteristic of pragmatic routines is that they are used by particular speech communities, only the prototypical meaning, that is, the meaning reported by 100% of the NSs when piloting the instrument, was considered as correct. For each participant, scores were added and divided by 13 (number of items in the test), to obtain the average recognition score on a scale of 0 to 2 that indicates how frequently learners hear or see the expressions presented to them.

Next, the ability to produce pragmatic routines was scored on a scale of 0 to 2, in terms of prototypicality. In line with Bardovi-Harlig (2009) and Taguchi (2013a), routines produced in the DCT were classified according to percentage of NSs agreement in each particular situation. Hence, only expressions previously produced by a sample of NSs were taken into account in the analysis. Routines with a NSs agreement of 50% or more were considered highly prototypical, while expressions produced by between 15% and 50% of NSs were coded as low prototypical routines. Two points were ascribed to a response with a high-prototypical routine, 1 point to an answer to a situation with a low-prototypical routine, and 0 points were given to incorrect responses, or to answers with non-prototypical expressions. In order to obtain a more in-depth analysis, coding of the production of routines was also calculated by the number of participants producing each prototypical expression. For each situation in the DCT, the number of learners that produced each prototypical expression – including both highly prototypical and low prototypical – was determined for the pre-test and

158

the post-test and compared with NSs' performance. Comparison with NSs' production also allowed the establishing of the limits of variability. Correct responses were measured as fitting within the limits of variation. That is, routines may exhibit variability, which can take many forms (lexical, morphological or syntactic) (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Schmitt & Carter, 2004). For example, *Nice to meet you, Nice meeting you, Good to see you* and *Great seeing you*, or *For here or to go* and *Is this for here or to go?* as well as contractions or lack of copula, such as *I'm sorry, I am sorry* or *Sorry*.

To ensure consistency in coding pragmatic routines data, the main researcher and a research colleague who is an expert in pragmatic routines independently coded 30% of the data from the main study, both from the VKS and the DCT. The agreement rate was 92% for recognition of routines (the VKS) and 86% for production (the DCT).

In order to code qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, different themes were elicited. Since the present study explores gains in acculturation and pragmatic competence, the approach is longitudinal, and hence the coding of the qualitative data was based on the comparison of learners' comments in the first interview and their answers in the second one. The first analysis aimed at observing the reasons for pragmatic development. Answers to why they think they have or have not learned everyday English were considered for this analysis. Next, their reasons for individual trajectories of sociocultural and of psychological development were categorized following Schumann's (1978) proposal of 7 social variables and 4 affective factors (see section 1.4.1.), to which two further variables were added: academic pressure and social support.

Finally, in order to explore relationships among the variables at play, statistical analysis by means of t-tests, Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1988), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and linear regression analysis were conducted. Series of t-tests and Cohen's *d* were used to

examine differences between pre- and post-tests, as well as the effect size between them. These allowed for the determination of gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines as well as gains in sociocultural adjustment experienced by the participants. ANOVA was used to explore pragmatic development and sociocultural adjustment across cultures. In other words, ANOVA allowed the examination of how different cultures differ in their gains in pragmatic competence and in acculturation, and hence revealed the effect of cultural background on pragmatic development. Additionally, a series of linear regression analyses were conducted to determine what factors have a significant effect on learners' production and recognition of routines. The dependent variables of the regression analyses were production, recognition and overall knowledge of pragmatic routines. The independent variables were behavioral adaptation, cognitive adaptation, and overall sociocultural adaptation gains. Moreover, all statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18. Table 5.8 displays a summary of data analysis conducted in each research question.

Table 5.6. *Summary of data analysis in each research question*

RQ	Hypotheses	Statistical analysis	Comments
RQ1. Does study abroad make a difference in learning pragmatic routines, in terms of both recognition and production?	**H1.** There will be differences in both learners' recognition and production of routines upon SA	T-tests Cohen's *d*	- The t-test analyses whether differences between pre-test and post-test are significant. - Cohen's *d* determines the effect size of such difference
	H2. Production and recognition of routines will not be different across cultures	ANOVA	The test examines differences in pragmatic performance by Chinese, Brazilians, Turkish, Thai, and Saudi Arabian students
RQ2. Does study abroad make a difference in learners' acculturation development?	**H3.** There will be a difference in learners' sociocultural adaptation after SA	T-tests Cohen's *d*	
	H4. Sociocultural adaptation development will be different across cultures	ANOVA	The test examines differences in sociocultural adaptation by Chinese, Brazilians, Turkish, Thai, and Saudi Arabian students
RQ3. Is there any relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA?	**H5.** There will be a positive relationship between degree of acculturation and learners' recognition and production of routines after SA	Linear regression analysis	- Analysis focused on 2 cultural groups: Brazilians and Chinese. - Dependent variables: gains in recognition and in production of routines - Independent variables: behavioral, cognitive, and overall sociocultural adaptation gains
	H6. The relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines will be different across cultures	Descriptive statistics*	Comparison of results from previous hypothesis (H7), on Brazilian and Chinese students

* Non-statistical (qualitative analysis)

5.6. Summary of the chapter

Chapter 5 has presented the methodology used to carry out the present study. It is a longitudinal mixed-method study in which participants, 122 international students with diverse cultural backgrounds participating in SA programs in the US, completed two main quantitative instruments, a SCAS and a pragmatic routines test. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with a subset of 10 informants were conducted, providing qualitative data to complement the quantitative data. Hence, the mixed-method approach used has an exploratory sequential design, in which quantitative data is collected first and has a priority over qualitative data.

In what follows, chapters 6, 7 and 8 will present and discuss the results of the present study.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Chapter 6 presents the results obtained by the analysis of the data regarding the first research question of the study and its corresponding hypotheses, laid out in chapter 4. Previous research suggests that learners increase their knowledge of pragmatic routines while participating in SA programs (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009, 2010; Barron, 2003; Roever, 2005, 2011; Taguchi, 2011b, 2013a). To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have analysed gains in knowledge of routines acquired during SA, and they have focused solely on production (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.* 2013). To date, no claim has been made on whether recognition or production of pragmatic routines develops to a greater extent over time while studying abroad. The present study addresses this research gap by analyzing gains in comprehension and production of pragmatic routines during a semester of SA. Additionally, it explores whether pragmatic gains are different across cultures. Following these ideas, research question one and hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were formulated as follows:

RQ1: ***does study abroad make a difference in learning pragmatic routines, in terms of both recognition and production?***

- H1: there will be differences in both learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during the SA experience (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al.,* 2013).

- H2: production and recognition of pragmatic routines will not be different across cultures (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.,* 2008).

Chapter 6 is divided into 3 sections. Section 6.1 presents the quantitative results in relation to RQ1 and its 2 hypotheses. A quantitative analysis of the VKS and the DCT designed for the purpose of this study is presented, and followed by inferential statistical analysis. Additionally, a detailed analysis of the data was carried out in order to address

concerns such as what particular expressions present more difficulty for learners to recognize and to produce, which ones they seem to learn during the semester, and in what social contexts students have trouble or are more successful in using routines. In addition to this, differences in recognition and production of pragmatic routines across cultures are pointed out. In 6.2, complementary to the quantitative results, qualitative results are also presented. A subset of 10 participants were interviewed focusing on their awareness of pragmatic routines, and on eliciting further routines that were not included in the tests but that learners might have acquired.

6.1. Quantitative results

The first step in the quantitative analysis was to carry out a descriptive analysis of the data. This analysis served to examine data distributions and check for underlying assumptions of normality and linearity. Table 6.1 illustrates the descriptive analysis of knowledge of pragmatic routines.

Table 6.1. *Descriptive statistics of knowledge of pragmatic routines*

		Time 1				Time 2			
	n	**Mean**	*SD*	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	*SD*	**Min**	**Max**
Recognition	122	18.52	4.993	3	26	20.01	4.504	4	26
Production	122	10.36	4.696	0	21	11.73	4.481	0	22
Overall knowledge of routines	122	28.88	8.461	6	47	31.75	7.652	10	47

In order to test the normality of the data, a Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$) was conducted, showing that recognition, production and overall gain ratios were normally distributed, with a skewness of -0.845 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of 0.479 ($SE = 0.435$) for recognition in the pre-test, a skewness of -1.207 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of 0.84 ($SE = 0.435$) for recognition in the post-test, a skewness of 0.185 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -

0.437 (*SE* = 0.435) for production in the pre-test and a skewness of 0.205 (*SE* = 2.19) and a kurtosis of -0.224 (*SE* = 0.435) for production in the post-test. As can be seen, variation in the reported knowledge of routines was moderate, as evident in the low standard deviations. Since data was normally distributed, statistical parametric tests were used. Parametric tests are considered to provide more significant results than non-parametric ones, allowing for stronger assumptions to be made.

In what follows, sections 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 present the results related to hypothesis 1 of the study. Then, section 6.1.4 reports findings on hypothesis 2.

6.1.1. Acquisition of pragmatic routines in the SA context

In order to determine differences between pre-test and post-test pragmatic performance, paired-samples *t*-tests were conducted for recognition, for production, and for overall knowledge of routines, understood as the sum of both, and an effect size was calculated using Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1998[1]). Table 6.2 displays pre-test (Time 1; henceforth T1) and post-test (Time 2; henceforth T2) means, standard deviations, and differences – which indicate gains – for each of the three aspects. Maximum recognition and production scores are 26 points (2 points for each of the 12 routines in the VKS, and the 13 situations in the DCT). Overall scores are the sum of recognition and production ratios, hence the maximum score a learner can achieve in overall knowledge of routines is 52 points.

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[1] See Cohen (1998) for an explanation on effect size in regression analysis. A small effect size is indicated by an R^2 of .02 (meaning that X explains 2% of the variance of Y). R^2 of .15 accounts for a medium-size effect, and R^2 of .35 indicates a large effect size.

Table 6.2. *Pre-test/Post-test means, standard deviations, and differences in knowledge of pragmatic routines*

	n	Time 1		Time 2		Difference	Difference (%)	t	df
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*				
Recognition	122	18.52	4.993	20.01	4.504	1.49*	6.15	-4,360	121
Production	122	10.36	4.696	11.73	4.481	1.37*	5.27	-3,417	121
Overall	122	28.88	8.461	31.75	7.652	2.87*	5.52	-5,208	121

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes from the pre-test to the post-test. *p < .001 (paired-samples T-test).

The inferential statistical analysis indicates that changes between pre- and post-test means are statistically significant for recognition [$t(121)$= -4.360, p < .001, d = -0.313], for production [$t(121)$= -3.417, p < .001, d = -0.298] and for overall knowledge [$t(121)$= -5.208, p < .001, d = -0.356], suggesting that a semester abroad can afford significant pragmatic gains in both comprehension and use of pragmatic routines.

Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 illustrate results from Table 6.1; that is, performance and changes in recognition and production of pragmatic routines during the SA program.
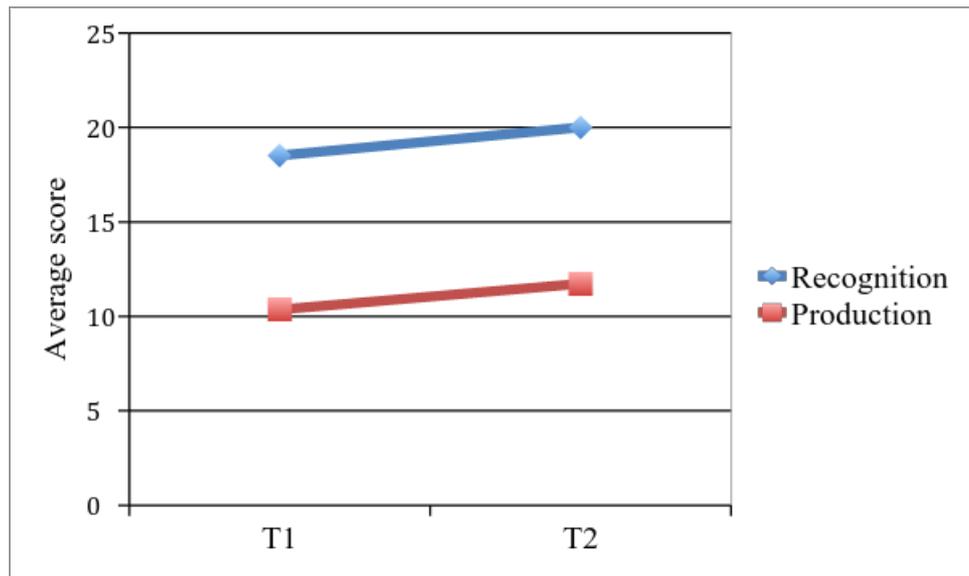
Figure 6.1. Average pre-test and post-test scores for recognition and production of pragmatic

routines

In figure 6.1, one can observe that learners scored higher on recognition than on production, both in the pre-test (recognition $M = 18.52$, $SD = 4.99$; production $M = 10.36$, $SD = 4.69$) and in the post-test (recognition $M = 20.01$; production $M = 11.73$). This means that learners seemed to have more difficulty in producing routines than in recognising them, both at the beginning and at the end of the sojourn.

Figure 6.2 displays differences between pre- and post-test performance in recognition and in production of routines. The Y axis is expressed in percentages, although only up to 10% is reflected in the table, so as to allow a more in-depth observation.
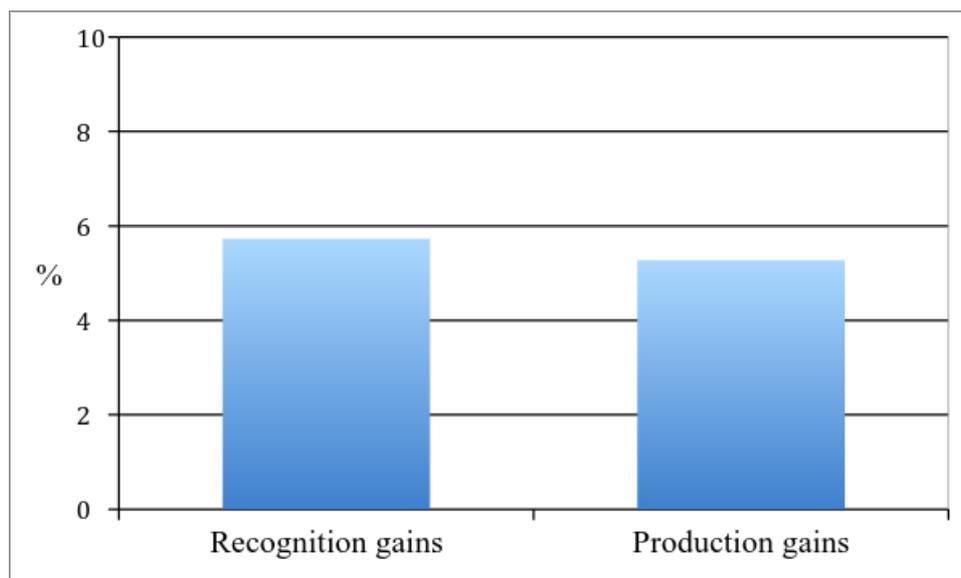
Figure 6.2. Gain percentages in recognition and production of pragmatic routines

As shown in Figure 6.2, gains in recognition (1.49 points, 5.73%) are slightly higher than those in production (1.37 points, 5.27%). In other words, the study abroad setting seems to be slightly more beneficial for recognition than for production of pragmatic routines. These findings suggest that learners not only have more difficulty in using routines, but they also show smaller gains in production, as compared with recognition. Since the difference between recognition gains and production gains is small (0.46%), rather than implying a generalisation, this finding indicates a trend towards higher recognition gains.

Learners' English proficiency level was measured as a control variable. Given that research has suggested that proficiency may play a role in recognition and in production of routines (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Taguchi *et al.,* 2013), its effect on the reported pragmatic performance was examined. Participants were divided into 3 groups: beginner ($n = 20$), intermediate ($n = 63$), and advanced learners ($n = 39$). Results from a one-way ANOVA indicated that proficiency is positively associated with pre-test and post-test scores. What is implied from these results is that higher proficient learners seem to

recognise more pragmatic routines and to produce them more appropriately than lower-proficiency learners. Nevertheless, proficiency is not associated with gains in recognition [$F(2,119) = 1.792$; $p = .71$], in production [$F(2,119) = 0.195$; $p = .82$] or in overall knowledge of pragmatic routines [$F(2,119) = 1.327$; $p = .27$]. The analysis showed that the three groups did not show significant differences in their learning of pragmatic routines. This means that more proficient learners did not necessarily show greater gains, since a beginner student may show higher or similar gains to an advanced one.

Next, recognition and production of pragmatic routines were examined taking proficiency levels into account. Table 6.3 shows descriptive statistics of recognition, production, and overall knowledge of routines of the 3 groups of learners according to proficiency level. Numbers indicate average scores in the recognition test (a VKS), the production test (a DCT), and the sum of both which indicates overall knowledge of pragmatic routines, by each proficiency group in the pre-test and post-test. The maximum average score for recognition and for production is 26, and the maximum average score for overall knowledge of routines is 52 (the sum of recognition and production).

Table 6.3. *Descriptive statistics of recognition, production and knowledge of pragmatic routines by proficiency level*

		Beginners (*n* = 20)		Intermediate (*n* = 63)		Advanced (*n* = 39)	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Recognition	T1	14.2	5.28	18.22	4.75	21.21	3.35
	T2	16.85	5.02	19.90	4.23	21.82	3.75
Production	T1	8.15	5.39	10.11	4.35	11.90	4.44
	T2	9.30	2.99	11.70	4.35	13.03	4.87
Overall	T1	22.35	8.77	28.33	7.76	33.10	7.07
	T2	26.15	7.31	31.60	7.12	34.85	7.12

As indicated in table 6.3, scores increase with proficiency in all cases: pre-test and post-test in recognition, pre-test and post-test in production, and pre-test and post-test in overall knowledge of routines. Increases in proficiency can be observed by comparing beginners, intermediate and advanced average scores for each of these aspects. The reported differences, that is, increases, among proficiency group are statistically significant. This is indicated by an ANOVA test, for recognition in the pre-test $[F(2,119) = 15,749; p = .000]$, recognition in the post-test $[F(2,119) = 9,462; p = .000]$, production in the pre-test $[F(2,119) = 4,870; p = .009]$, production in the post-test $[F(2,119) = 4,548; p = .012]$, overall knowledge of routines in the pre-test $[F(2,119) = 12,967; p = .000]$, and overall knowledge of routines in the post-test $[F(2,119) = 9,946; p = .000]$. These findings support previous research reporting a positive effect of proficiency on recognition and on production of pragmatic routines (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Taguchi, 2013a). Hence, our study supports the claim that more L2 proficient students tend to have a greater knowledge of routines.

Up to this point, research findings point to a substantial pragmatic improvement in knowledge of routines during a semester abroad, especially in terms of recognition as compared to production. In order to gain further insights into these findings, results on detailed performance in the routine tests are presented in 6.1.2 below.

6.1.2. Recognition of pragmatic routines

Table 6.4 presents the results on learners' recognition for each of the 13 expressions contained in the modified VKS. The instrument measured recognition of pragmatic routines in terms of familiarity with the expression. Participants reported whether they "don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before" (which was given 0 points), they "have

seen or heard this expression before but (they) don't know what it means" (1 point), or they "know this expression" and can explain what it means or provide an example (1 point for inaccurate explanations or examples, and 2 points for accurate ones). Correct definitions, explanations or examples for option "I know this expression" were determined by the explanation provided by NSs when piloting the instrument. Hence, although some expressions (e.g. *Do you have the time?* or *Do you think you can make it?*) may entail two meanings, only the prototypical sense was considered in order to make sure students understand how routines are used in a particular speech community. Descriptive statistics including pre-test and post-test average scores reported in the recognition test, as well as gains expressed in rate and in percentage, are presented in table 6.4.

Table 6.4. *Recognition of pragmatic routines*

		Pre-test	Post-test	Gains	
	Pragmatic routine	**Score**	**Score**	**Score**	**%**
R1	I gotta go	1.61	1.66	0.05	2.67
R2	I was wondering…	1.32	1.39	0.07	3.52
R3	Do you have the time?	1.69	1.65	-0.04	-1.93
R4	My bad	1.30	1.58	0.28	14.25
R5	Thanks for coming	1.66	1.85	0.19	9.30
R6	Thanks for your time	1.66	1.80	0.14	7.21
R7	That works for me	1.16	1.38	0.22	11.21
R8	Do you think you could make it?	0.96	1.09	0.13	6.56
R9	Could you do me a favor?	1.66	1.70	0.04	1.80
R10	Would you mind...?	1.35	1.47	0.12	5.88
R11	Do you want to come to my place?	1.49	1.67	0.18	8.91
R12	Help yourself	1.23	1.28	0.05	2.52
R13	Can I get you anything else?	1.42	1.51	0.09	4.60

Visual information about pre-test and post-test scores for each routine is displayed in Appendix H. Average recognition scores range from 0.96 points (in the pre-test of *Do you think you could make it?)* to 1.85 points (in the post-test of *Thanks for coming*), with an average score of 1.48. In the pre-test, *Do you have the time?* (1.69 points) is the pragmatic routine that learners reported being most familiar with, closely followed by *Thanks for coming*, *Thanks for your time*, and *Could you do me a favour?* (with an average score of 1.66 points in each). In contrast, they were less familiar with the prototypical meaning of *Do you think you could make it?* (0.96 points). Coinciding with pre-test average scores, the most recognized routine in the post-test is *Thanks for coming* (1.85 points), and the least familiar one is *Do you think you could make it?* (1.09 points).

Overall, some routines presented less difficulty for learners to recognize, as indicated by average comprehension scores above the means (*M* = 1.48), both in the pre-test and post-test. These are: *Do you have the time?* (pre-test score = 1.69; post-test score = 1.65), *Thanks for coming* (pre: 1.66; post: 1.85), *Thanks for your time* (pre: 1.66; post: 1.80), *Could you do me a favor?* (pre: 1.66; post: 1.70), *I gotta go* (pre: 1.61; post: 1.66), and *Do you want to come to my place?* (pre: 1.49; post: 1.67). Hence, L2 learners reported being most familiar with the meaning of these routines.

In contrast, students reported difficulty in recognizing *Do you think you could make it?* (pre: 0.96; post: 1.09), *Would you mind...?* (pre: 1.35; post: 1.47), *Help yourself* (pre: 1.23; post: 1.28), *That works for me* (pre: 1.16; post: 1.38), and *I was wondering...* (pre: 1.32; post: 1.39). This may imply that learners were not familiar with the expressions at the beginning of the semester, and their comprehension was not strongly enhanced during the semester. Low recognition scores could also be due to the fact that the daily situations where some of these routines are typically heard might not be highly common in the given SA context. A further

explanation could be that the meaning of these pragmatic routines is difficult to infer without contextual information. The low degree of familiarity of *Do you think you could make it?* is reflected in the fact that participants were inaccurate in explaining what it means. Rather than choosing options *a* ("I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before") or *b* ("I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means"), they widely responded that "They know this expression" (option *c*), but they failed to provide the correct explanation or example. Most of the learners understood *Do you think you could make it?* as a request to perform an activity, as the literal meaning of the verb "make" indicates, rather than perceiving it as a verb of movement.

Regarding gains in recognition of pragmatic routines, Figure 6.3 shows changes over the semester in the recognition of each routine. Gains are expressed in percentages, although only a scale of -5% to 15% is represented by the Y axis.
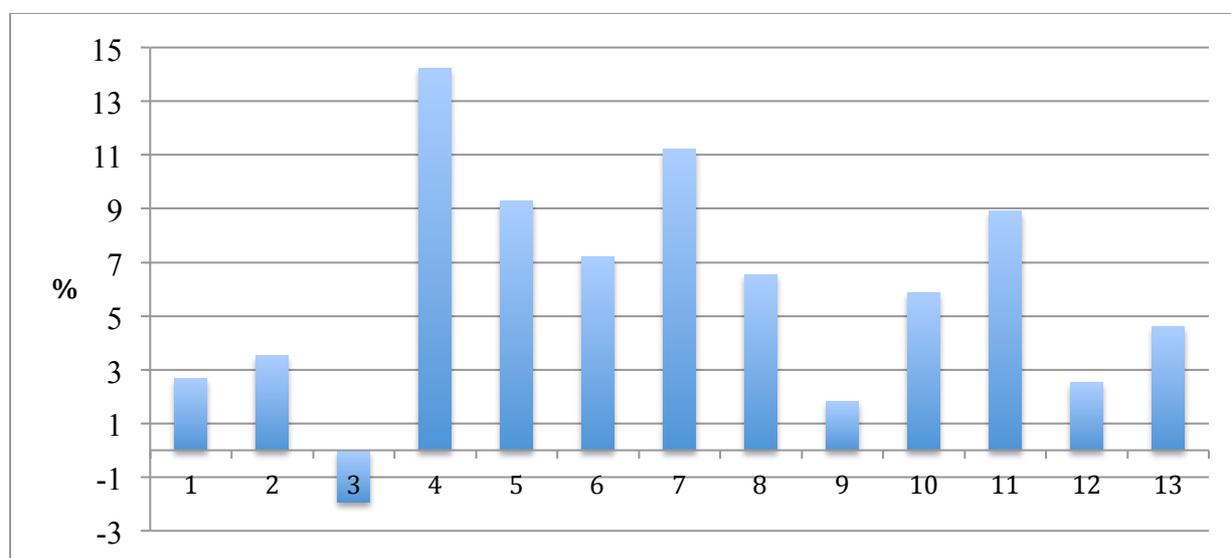
Figure 6.3. Gain percentages in recognition of pragmatic routines

173

Gain percentages range from -1.93% to 14.25%, with an average of 5.88%. Learners showed improvement in recognition of all of the expressions except for R3 *Do you have the time?* (-1.93%). The fact of not having contextual keys to facilitate the recognition of routines could have played a role in the reported negative gains for *Do you have the time?* as learners could have interpreted it as a request for availability instead of an inquiry about time.

Additionally, pragmatic gains were limited in some expressions – with a gain percentage below the means, – including R9 *Could you do me a favor?* (1.80%), R12 *Help yourself* (2.52%), R1 *I gotta go* (2.67%), R2 *I was wondering...* (3.52%) and R13 *Can I get you anything else?* (4.60%). These results may imply a "ceiling effect" (Schmitt, Dörnyei, Adolphs & Durrow, 2004): participants already knew these routines; hence, they did not show greater improvement in their awareness of the expressions.

In contrast, R4 *My bad* was the routine with the highest percentage of gains (14.25%). This could be explained by the fact that the expression may be highly socially dependent. The speech community may use this routine recurrently, while other communities might use a different expression of apology, such as *Sorry, it was my fault.* Thus, it is suggested that students acquired *My bad* thanks to high exposure to input containing the expression. Hence, this particular routine exemplifies the culture-specific nature of pragmatic routines. R7 *That works for me* is the routine with the second highest percentage of gains (11.21%), and it is followed by R5 *Thanks for coming* (9.30%), R11 *Do you want to come to my place?* (8.91%), R6 *Thanks for your time* (7.21%), and R8 *Do you think you could make it?* (6.56%).

6.1.3. Production of pragmatic routines

In order to observe learners' production of routines, a descriptive analysis was carried out on the number of L2 learners that produced each routine in the pre-test and post-test, as well as gains in each of the total of 20 produced routines. The purpose of this descriptive

analysis is to examine which pragmatic routines are easier or more difficult for learners to use, and which ones they learn to a greater extent during the SA. Table 6.5 presents the results on learners' production of prototypical routines, including NSs' performance as baseline data. To calculate production ratios, the number of participants that produced each prototypical expression – including both highly prototypical (produced by 50% or more of the NS sample) and low prototypical (between 15% and 50% of NS agreement) – was determined for the pre-test and the post-test. Each of the 13 situations included in the DCT elicited one high-prototypical pragmatic routine; these are coded with a P and a number from 1 to 13. Additionally, in some scenarios (in particular, S1, S3, S8, S9, S10, and S11) native speakers produced low-prototypical routines, and these are also coded with letters *a* and *b*. Overall, responses to the DCT elicited 21 prototypical pragmatic routines: 13 high-prototypical, and 8 low-prototypical ones. The sample involved 122 learners and 92 NSs. To facilitate comparisons, percentages expressing number of participants producing each expression, as well as gain percentages were included in the table.

Table 6.5. *Production of pragmatic routines*

Situation	Expression		NNS Pre-test (*N=122*)		NNS Post-test (*N=122*)		Gains		NSs (*N=92*)	
			(*n*)	%	(*n*)	%	(*n*)	%	(*n*)	%
S1 No more food	P1	No thanks, I'm full	45	36.89	53	43.44	8	6.56	45	48.91
	P1.a	No, thank you	13	10.66	3	2.46	-10	-8.20	31	33.70
	P1.b	I'm stuffed	1	0.82	3	2.46	2	1.64	14	15.22
S2 Introduction	P2	Nice to meet you	85	69.67	89	72.95	4	3.28	71	77.17
S3 Restaurant	P3	For here or to go?	28	22.95	41	33.61	13	10.66	55	59.78
	P3.a	How can I help you?	21	17.21	8	6.56	-13	-10.66	15	16.30
S4 Puddle	P4	Watch out	28	22.95	34	27.87	6	4.92	67	72.83
S5 Have a nice day	P5	{Thanks/thank you/-} You too	75	61.48	106	86.89	31	25.41	84	91.30
S6 Late	P6	Sorry I am late	58	47.54	56	45.90	-2	-1.64	73	79.35
S7 Phone	P7	Hello?	65	53.28	81	66.39	16	13.11	86	93.48
S8 Borrow pen	P8	{Could/Can/May} I borrow a pen?	34	27.87	37	30.33	3	2.46	68	73.91
	P8.a	Do you have (a/an extra) pen I [could/can] borrow?	7	5.74	7	5.74	0	0.00	19	20.65
S9 Store	P9	No thanks, I'm just looking	33	27.05	34	27.87	1	0.82	52	56.52
	P9.a	(No, thanks) I'm just browsing	1	0.82	2	1.64	1	0.82	18	19.57
S10 Decease	P10	I am sorry for your loss	14	11.48	19	15.57	5	4.10	47	51.09
	P10.a	I am (so) sorry	26	21.31	28	22.95	2	1.64	28	30.43
	P10.b	(I'm) Sorry to hear that	30	24.59	35	28.69	5	4.10	15	16.30
S11 Messy house	P11	Sorry for the mess	22	18.03	28	22.95	6	4.92	66	71.74
	P11.a	Sorry my {place/house} is a mess	7	5.74	3	2.46	-4	-3.28	14	15.22
S12 Piece of paper	P12	Here you go	9	7.38	16	13.11	7	5.74	64	69.57
S13 Careful driving	P13	Be careful	70	57.38	70	57.38	0	0.00	75	81.52

From Table 6.5, one can observe that not all pragmatic routines presented the same degree of difficulty for L2 learners. Appendix I includes visual information on production ratios in the pre-test and in the post-test; that is, information from the NNSs pre-test and NNSs post-test columns from Table 6.5. Production ratios (determined as number of learners producing each expression) ranged from 1 to 106 learners, the average being 33.93. On the one hand, the most commonly used routines were P2 *Nice to meet you* (85 students used it in the pre-test, and 89 in the post-test versions of the DCT), and P5 *{Thanks/thank you/-} You too* (pre: 75; post: 106). These are closely followed by *Hello?* (pre: 65; post: 81), *Be careful* (pre: 70; 70). In other words, students seemed to have less difficulty relying on these routines.

On the other hand, learners produced to a lesser extent P9.a. *(No, thanks) I'm just browsing* (pre: 1; post: 2) and P1.b. *I'm stuffed* (pre: 1; post: 3). Other routines that learners did not produce as frequently were P1.a. *No, thank you* (pre: 13; post: 3), P8.a. *Do you have (a/an extra) pen I [could/can] borrow?* (pre: 7; post: 7), and P11.a. *Sorry my {place/house} is a mess* (pre: 7; post: 3). While all of these are low-prototypical routines, when looking at high-prototypical routines, learners seemed to have the most trouble producing P10 *I am sorry for your loss* (pre: 14; post: 19), and P12 *Here you go* (pre: 9; post: 16). Similarly to participants' recognition of routines, low production ratios in the pre-test may indicate that students did not know the expressions at the beginning of the semester, and low use ratios at the end could imply that learners did not learn to use them during the sojourn.

Regarding production gains, a semester abroad seems to facilitate the use of certain pragmatic routines. This is reflected in Figure 6.4, which displays production gains, expressed in percentages, in the 21 elicited routines. Percentage gains ranged from -10.66% in P3.a. *How can I help you?* to 25.41% in P5 *{Thanks/thank you/-} You too*, the average

gains being 3.16%.
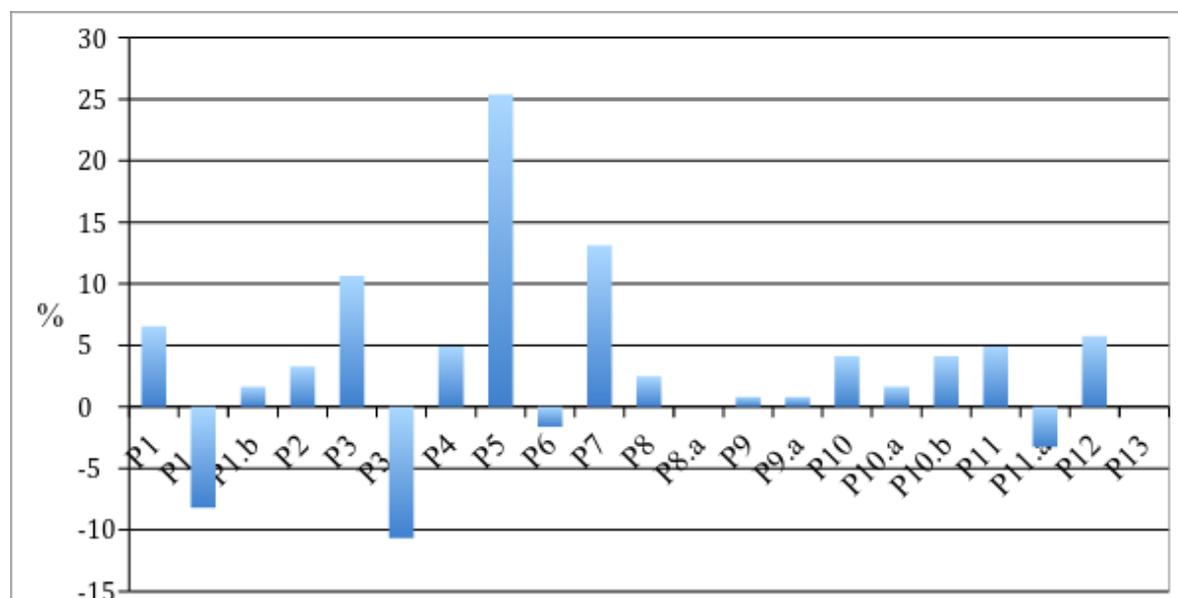
Figure 6.4. Gain percentages in production of pragmatic routines

Learners showed the greatest gains in P5 *{Thanks/thank you/-} You too* (25.41%), followed by P7 *Hello?* (13.11%), and P3 *For here or to go?* (10.66%). Other routines where students reported production gains above the means (3.16%) were *No thanks, I'm full* (6.56%), *Here you go* (5.74%), *Watch out* (4.92%), *Sorry for the mess* (4.92%), *I am sorry for your loss* (4.10%), (I'm) *Sorry to hear that* (4.10%), and *Nice to meet you* (3.28%). In other words, the SA context seems to be beneficial for the acquisition of these expressions.

Taking a closer look at each of the 13 presented situations, learners clearly achieved the greatest gains in S5 "Have a nice day," with a 25.41% improvement ratio. Appendix J includes a visual display of gains in production of routines reported in each situation. Other situations where participants experienced higher gains were S7 "Phone" (13.11%), and S10 "Decease" (9.84%, which is the sum of production ratios of the three produced routines in the scenario), although gain ratios are still far from the 25.41% reported in S5. Hence, scenarios

178

S5, S7 and S10 could be highly recurrent in the given context, so students encountering these situations are most likely to improve their use of pragmatic routines. An example is the situation "Have a nice day" (S5), which was presented in the DCT as follows:

"You go to the bank and after you are done talking to the banker she tells you "Have a nice day!" You respond to her: (…)."

Students may have been presented with a situation like "Have a nice day" in an academic setting, or they may have never experienced it in previous sociocultural contexts. However, in this particular SA context within the Appalachian region of the US it may be common to listen a bank clerk or in other service encounters saying *Have a nice day*.

In contrast, students decreased their use of P3.a. *How can I help you?* (-10.66%), P1.a. *No, thank you* (-8.20%), P11.a. *Sorry my {place/house} is a mess* (-3.28%) and P6 *Sorry I am late* (-1.64%). Moreover, no gains were reported in the production of P8.a. *Do you have (a/an extra) pen I [could/can] borrow?* or P13 *Be careful*. Finally, small gains were showed in *No thanks, I'm just looking* (0.82%), and *(No, thanks) I'm just browsing* (0.82%). Other routines with small gains; that is, below the average, are P8 {*Could/Can/May} I borrow a pen?* (2.46%), P1.b. *I'm stuffed* (1.64%), and P10.a. *I am (so) sorry* (1.64%).

Overall, there is only one situation where students decreased in their production of routines; namely, S6 "Late," (-1.64). This situation was presented as follows:

"You have an appointment with one of your teachers, but you are ten minutes late. After she tells you 'Good morning, come on in' you answer: (…)."

In the same vein, other situations where participants experienced limited gains were S9 "Store" (1.64%), and S13 "Careful Driving" (0%). This finding suggests two hypotheses: students may have already encountered these scenarios before and hence did not improve their use of routines, or they did not encounter these situations frequently enough to learn

how to produce the appropriate prototypical routines.

From these findings, a trend can be observed: it seems that production of pragmatic routines is influenced by prototypicality. Learners appear to increase their use of high-prototypical routines (with 50% or more of NSs agreement) and decrease the use of low-prototypical ones (produced by between 15% and 50% of the NSs sample), hence revealing a tendency to approximate a native-speaker use of routines. This finding can be observed in the fact that most reported negative gains correspond with low-prototypical routines (except for *Sorry I am late*), while learners increasingly relied on high-prototypical routines, as reflected in positive gain percentages. The most evident examples of this process of approximation to NSs' performance are S3 "Restaurant" and S11 "Messy house." Figure 6.5 illustrates learners' production in pre-test and in post-test, together with NSs use of routines in S3, while Figure 6.6 displays the same information for S11. A complete picture of performance by learners in the pre-test and in the post-test, and NSs' scores by situation is included in Appendix K.
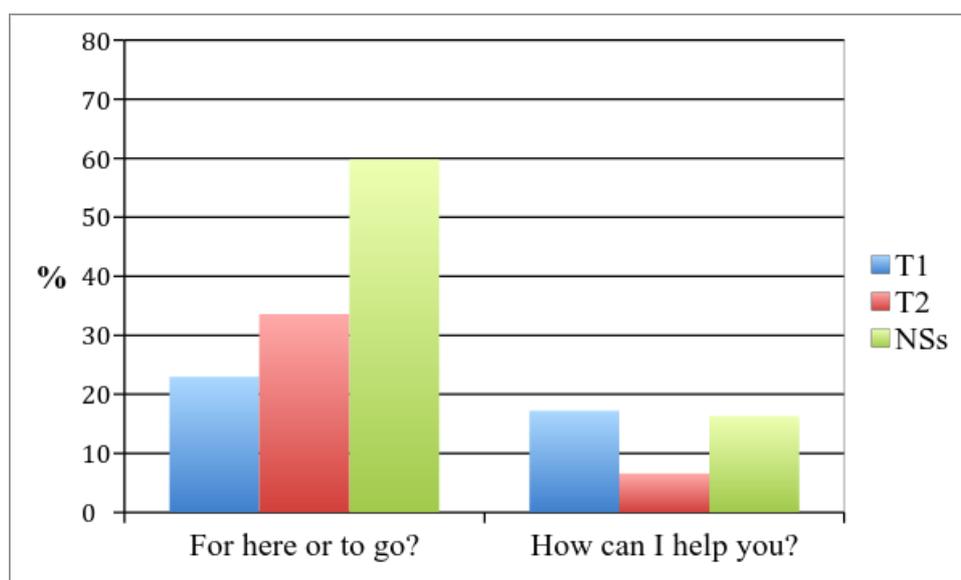
Figure 6.5. Learners' and NSs' production of routines in the "Restaurant" situation

With respect to Figure 6.5 (and S3), the DCT asked the students what they would say in the following situation:

> "You work in a fast food restaurant which serves food which customers can eat seated in the restaurant or can take home with them. Before a customer starts ordering, you ask him/her: (…)."

This situation triggers the high-prototypical routine P3 *For here or to go?* where learners reported positive production gains (10.66%), and the low-prototypical one P3.a. *How can I help you?* which students stopped using during the semester, as evident in the reported negative use gains (-10.66%). If we compare these findings with NSs production, positive gains coincide with higher NSs agreement.
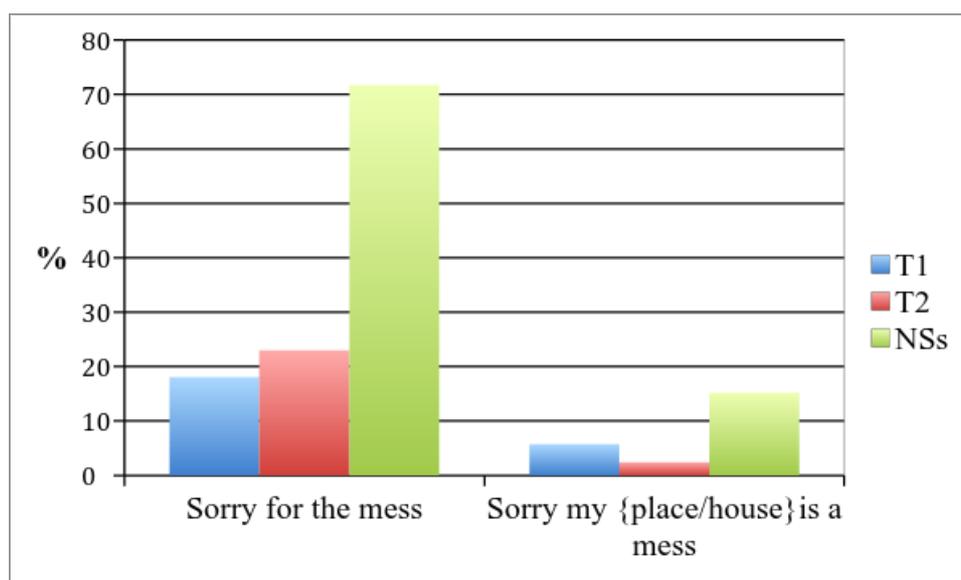
Figure 6.6. Learners' and NSs' production of routines in the "Messy house" situation

Similarly, the scenario in S11 was presented as follows:

> "A friend you just made comes to your home, and you did not clean, did not do the dishes and your clothes are everywhere. As he comes in, you tell him: (…)."

In this case, students increased their use of the high-prototypical routine P11 *Sorry for*

the mess, as indicated in positive production gains (4.92%), while they decreased their production of the low-prototypical routine P11.a. *Sorry my {place/house} is a mess*, as evident in the reported negative gains (-3.28%). Therefore, one could suggest that increases and decreases in the use of pragmatic routines are explainable by the prototypicality factor, as evident in students decreasing their production of less prototypical routines in favour of more prototypical ones.

To sum up, the results presented above support hypothesis 1 of the study. H1 predicted that there would be differences in both learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines upon the SA experience. Furthermore, these results add to the existing literature the finding that learners show greater gains in production than in recognition of pragmatic routines upon the SA experience. Consequently, the given SA setting was found to be beneficial in terms of improving L2 learners' knowledge of routines, and particularly their productive ability.

6.1.4. Acquisition of pragmatic routines across cultures

This section addresses hypothesis 2 of the study, which predicted that production and recognition of pragmatic routines would not be different across cultures (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 2008). Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008) focused on similarities in production of routines by Arabic, Korean, Chinese and Japanese learners, finding that the different groups commonly use similar routines to express apologies, refusals and gratitude. The present study adopts a developmental approach by exploring how different cultures make progress in their recognition and production of pragmatic routines. Hence, this section addresses the following more general question: do different cultures show the same pragmatic development upon a semester abroad?

As indicated in chapter 5, the international students that constitute the sample of the

present study are of varied cultural origins. To carry out a quantitative analysis, the most representative nationalities (which represented more than 5% of the total sample) were selected: Chinese students (n = 36; 29% of the total sample of 122 participants), Brazilians (n = 32; 26.2%), Thai (n = 10; 8.2%), Saudi Arabian (n = 9; 7.4%), and Turkish students (n = 7; 5.7%). Table 6.6 includes the descriptive data of average gains experienced by each cultural group in recognition, in production, and in overall knowledge of pragmatic routines.

Table 6.6. *Descriptive statistics of recognition, production and overall knowledge of pragmatic routines by culture.*

Group	Nationality	n	Recognition		Production		Overall	
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1	Chinese	36	1.19	2.69	0.39	3.84	1.58	4.69
2	Brazilian	32	2.33	2.45	3.37	3.09	5.70	4.66
3	Thai	10	1.20	2.49	-0.80	3.93	0.40	4.40
4	Saudi Arabian	9	1.44	5.94	1.11	6.86	2.56	9.23
5	Turkish	7	-0.71	7.54	1.00	2.71	0.29	8.07
	Total/Average	94	1.62	4.08	1.33	4.22	2.95	6.22

Figure 6.7 further illustrates descriptive findings from Table 6.6.
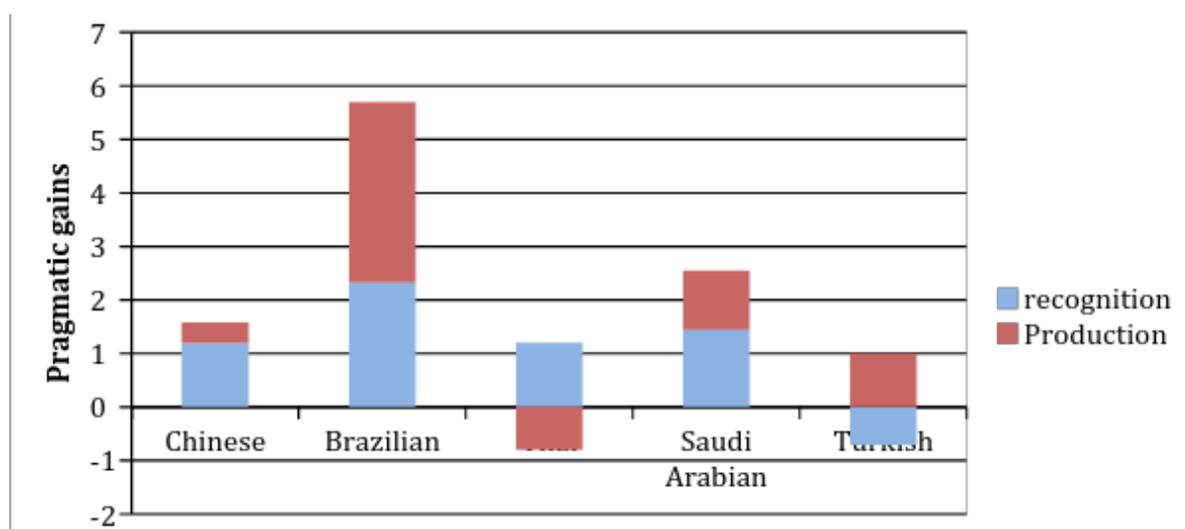
Figure 6.7. Gains in recognition and production of pragmatic routines across cultures

By observing Table 6.6 and Figure 6.7, one may discern differences in the development of recognition and production of pragmatic routines across groups. While the Brazilian group outperformed the other cultural groups in gains in both comprehension (M = 2.33) and production (M = 3.37), the Turkish group decreased their ability to recognize routines (M = -0.71), and the Thai group made negative gains in their production of prototypical routines (M = -0.80).

In order to provide further support to the descriptive report on pragmatic development across cultures, a statistical analysis by means of ANOVA was conducted. The test revealed significant differences among at least two of the groups in overall knowledge of routines [$F(4,89)$ = 2.557; p = .044], and more specifically in production [$F(4,89)$ = 2.882; p = .027]. Nevertheless, learners across cultures did not differ in their recognition gains [$F(4,89)$ = 0.876; p = .482]. This means that while different cultures show group trajectories in their development of their use of routines during a semester abroad, all cultures show similar learning trajectories in their ability to recognise routines.

More particularly, a post-hoc Tuckey multiple-comparison test revealed that the Brazilian students significantly differed in their gains in production of routines with the Chinese students (mean difference = 2.799; p = .043), and with the Thai students (mean difference = 3.988; p = .059). Figure 6.8 illustrates production gains by each cultural group.
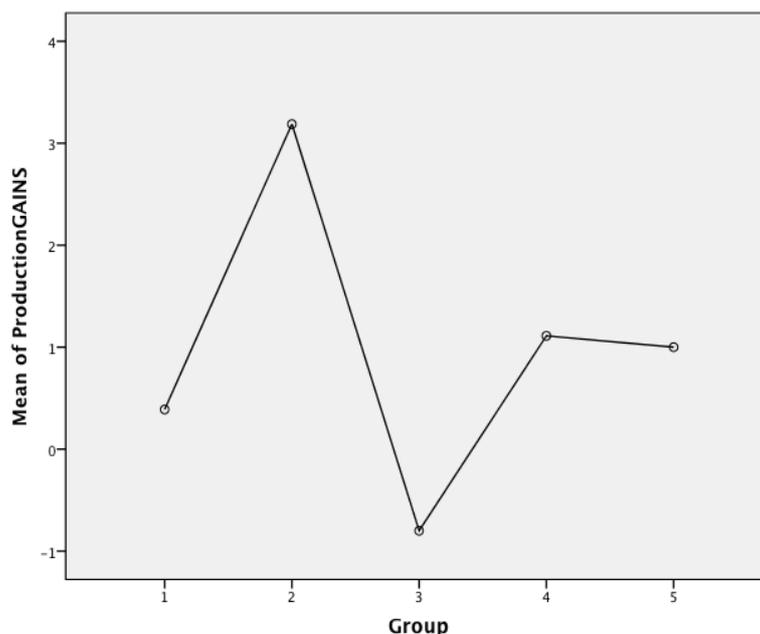
Figure 6.8. Gains in production of pragmatic routines across cultures

The graph reveals that learners show different pragmatic development across cultures. In particular, the Brazilian students made the greatest gains in production of pragmatic routines. Hence, they were the students who most benefited from the SA sojourn in the US in terms of learning to use routines. In contrast, the Thai students decreased their ability to produce routines upon a semester abroad. Reasons explaining such a decrease may be found through an exploration of factors affecting pragmatic gains. In addition, the Chinese learners made limited gains in their production of routines, this development significantly differs from the progress made by the Brazilians. Finally, the Saudi Arabian and Turkish students showed an average improvement in their ability to produce routines. With respect to recognition, although certain trends may be observed; that is, Brazilian students showing the highest gains, and Turkish students decreasing their receptive skills, differences among the cultural groups were not significant, indicating similar developmental paths.

6.2. Qualitative results

This section provides qualitative insights that complement the quantitative findings presented above. As the quantitative analysis revealed, the participants in this study significantly improved their knowledge of pragmatic routines during a semester of study in the US, particularly in terms of production. Moreover, this increase was different across cultures. From the sample of 122 international students, a subset of 10 learners was interviewed (see section 5.2. for a description of the participants and section 5.3.2.1 for an overview of the semi-structured interviews). Part of the interviews addressed learners' perspectives on their pragmatic learning. More specifically, they were asked about whether they felt they had learnt routines[2] and everyday English in general, and whether they could recall particular recurrent expressions or vocabulary they had learnt during the semester. This discussion was also aimed at identifying factors that shaped the different individual trajectories.

Table 6.7 includes descriptive data on the 10 participants' knowledge and gains in recognition and production of pragmatic routines. Their cultural background information is also included in the table since this variable was found to play a role in students' pragmatic development. The average row is the mean of gains by the total sample of 122 participants.

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[2] The term "pragmatic routine" was not explicitly mentioned in the interview. Instead, similar terms such as "everyday expressions" followed by an example were employed.

Table 6.7. *Nationality, and gains in recognition, production and overall knowledge of pragmatic routines by 10 informants.*

	Participant	Nationality	Recognition gains		Production gains		Overall gains	
			Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
Gainers	William	Brazilian	2	7.7	1	3.8	3	5.8
	Mike	Brazilian	1	3.8	5	19.2	6	11.5
	David	Brazilian	9	34.6	4	15.4	13	25
	Jeff	Brazilian	0	0	4	15.4	4	7.8
	Sean	Turkish	4	15.4	2	7.7	6	11.5
	Emma	Spanish	3	11.5	5	19.2	8	15.4
	Lisa	Spanish	2	7.7	3	11.5	5	9.6
Non-gainers	Michelle	Turkish	-11	-42.3	0	0	-11	-21.1
	Mark	Turkish	0	0	-7	-26.9	-7	-13.5
	Ethan	Spanish	-1	-3.8	-3	-11.5	-3	-5.8
		AVERAGE	1.50	5.8	1.37	5.3	2.87	5.5

In the table, some trends can be observed. Seven of the informants are "gainers" while three of them are "non-gainers," according to whether they experienced average gains in knowledge or pragmatic routines upon the stay abroad. Among the gainers, David, a Brazilian student, showed the highest overall gains (25%), followed by a Spanish learner, Emma (15.4%). At the other end of the scale, Michelle, a Turkish girl, had the highest negative gains (-21.1%), and this decrease was particularly evident in her recognition ability. She is followed by Mark, a Turkish student, whose negative gains were observed in productive ability (-13.5%).

When asked about whether they felt they had learned pragmatic routines or colloquial expressions, most of the informants were highly aware of their increase or lack of it. Six of the participants (William, David, Jeff, Sean, Emma and Lisa) explained in the first interview that they still had not learned many everyday expressions, but their comments in the final

interview showed a more positive awareness of their pragmatic acquisition. For instance, in the first interview William was aware of having learned some expressions he did not know before, such as *what's up*. But he felt he did not improve much yet, since he found many daily situations difficult to face. In particular, he expresses that ordering food at restaurants presented a big difficulty for him. Nevertheless, when interviewed at the end of the semester he strongly felt that he had acquired a large amount of expressions during the semester, particularly at the comprehension level, and now he is trying to use them. Similarly, David was not aware of having learned particular recurrent expressions when interviewed at the beginning of the semester. At the end of the stay, nevertheless, he was excited to explain that he had learned a vast amount of English expressions, and that had helped him gain confidence with his L2 use; now he really feels comfortable communicating in English. He claims to have learned many expressions, and mentions *For here or to go?* as an example. Emma and Lisa, two Spanish girls with a high initial proficiency level, since they studied an English major in their home country, were also aware of having learned a vast amount of everyday expressions. At the beginning of the semester Emma explained that she was not learning any English because of a lack of interaction with native speakers. The Spanish group is rather cohesive, and she used to limit her interactions to them. This situation, according to her, drastically changed over the course of the stay, and that enabled her to acquire expressions she did not know before. Similarly, Lisa was surprised by how much everyday language she learned during the semester. According to her, in Spain she was only exposed to the British variety of English. Thus, at the beginning of the semester she was somewhat confused in certain situations. She provides the example of *For here or to go?* an expression she learnt during the semester, which corresponds to the British *To have here* or *To take away?* which she expected when ordering food. According to Lisa, a similar case was the

routine *I'm stuffed*, which she is aware of having learned in the US, and which she would have never used in England or speaking English in Spain.

Interestingly, some participants revealed learning some recurrent expressions that could potentially be considered pragmatic routines. Ethan, for instance, explains in the first interview that he learned the expression *To bum a cigarette* by frequent exposure to a particular situation: smoking between classes. At the end of the semester, William claims to have learned *What's up*, Mark says he has learned *What's going on?* because his roommates used it frequently, and Sean explains that "Americans say *you guys* and *awesome* all the time." Jeff, moreover, mentions the expressions *heads up* and *potato head*, although at the beginning of the semester he was not fully aware of the meaning of the latter. According to him in the first interview:

> "Some expressions I know from the movies, like `What's up?´ but I learned…..ehm… for example `potato heads'… I'm not really sure about the meaning but I think I know, and… `thanks for the heads up'… like… when… I'm, I'm giving for these people some information but I really don't have to give so much, but I give them so they say thanks for the heads up."

Michelle, Mark, Mike and Ethan, however, expressed that they did not feel they had learnt routines either in the first or in the final interview. Michelle, for instance, a Turkish girl who showed negative gains in their knowledge of routines, explains that she only learned the language and expressions her teachers used. She says that she has only learnt academic English, which was actually her primary purpose for studying abroad. When asked about her improvement in English in the second interview, she claims that she felt she had not improved enough, and still does not find English easy to understand. Her Turkish peer, Mark, blamed his lack of pragmatic improvement on academic pressure. At the end of the semester he had to take a TOEFL exam, the results of which would determine his stay in the program. According to Mark, his main concern was passing the test at the end of the first semester, and

then to start focusing on integrating into the culture and learning the language. When asked about whether he had learned any daily or common expressions he regretted that he had not really learned any. The only expressions he had learned are those his American roommates normally used, such as *you're welcome* or *what's going on?* but they were already familiar to him. In a different vein, both Mike and Ethan claimed that they feel they did not improve their knowledge of routines since they already had a high knowledge of them at the beginning of the semester. Hence, we may hypothesize that they have acquired some routines implicitly (in the case of Mike, a gainer), or that they have indeed not learned any routine (in the case of Michelle and Ethan, non-gainers).

To sum up, most of the participants in the case studies were aware of their pragmatic learning, and showed their perspectives on reasons for learning or for not making progress. The main factor that enhanced learning routines seems to be frequent exposure to them in conversations with native speakers. In contrast, some limitations of pragmatic development are academic pressure, instrumental motivation, or already possessing a high proficiency level. This result complements the quantitative analysis presented in section 6.1. Additionally, the qualitative report elicited some expressions that students reported learning by frequent exposure to them: *to bum a cigarette, what's up? Heads up, what's going on? you guys, awesome,* and *potato head.* These routines could be considered for further analysis as expressions common to the given context and culture.

6.3. Discussion of findings

Research question 1 examined whether SA makes a difference in learning pragmatic routines, as regards recognition and production. Previous research has provided evidence that L2 learners increase their knowledge of pragmatic routines while participating in SA

programs (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009, 2010; Barron, 2003; Roever, 2005, 2011; Taguchi, 2011b, 2013a). Firstly, hypothesis 1 stated that there would be increases in both learners' recognition and production of routines upon the SA experience. Moreover, the study examined whether learners showed greater gains in recognition or in production upon the SA experience. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies that have previously compared gains in recognition and production of routines during SA programs. Secondly, hypothesis 2 investigated whether gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines were different across cultures. This aspect has only been addressed by Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (2008), who found a non-significant influence of L1 on the ability to produce pragmatic routines in a SA context.

Results from the quantitative analysis showed that 1) students improve their recognition and production of routines during a semester abroad, 2) they are more successful in recognition of routines, 3) they show more pragmatic gains in comprehension than in production, 4) production of routines seems to be influenced by prototypicality, indicating an approximation to NSs pragmatic production, and 5) gains in production of routines are different across cultures. Additionally, quantitative findings were complemented with qualitative insights on learners' perspectives about their pragmatic learning and on the reasons behind their individual trajectories.

As previously mentioned, the first hypothesis of the study was supported, since results showed significant differences in both learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines upon the SA experience. Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) pointed out a lack of comparable studies addressing both recognition and production of pragmatic routines. The current study directly addresses this research gap, and supports previous findings that L2 learners have more difficulty in producing routines than in recognizing them (Bardovi-Harlig,

2008; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Taguchi, 2013a). Additionally, it complements existing research with the finding that the SA setting seems to be more beneficial in terms of recognizing routines than producing them, at least during the first semester of immersion (first 4 months). Indeed, a main innovation of this study is that it accounts for pragmatic gains, rather than for pragmatic knowledge. In this process of pragmatic acquisition, recognition and production develop to similar extents, although students showed slightly greater gains in recognition.

In an attempt to provide an explanation as to why production of pragmatic routines presents more difficulties than recognition, the distinction between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of pragmatic competence must be considered. While recognition involves knowledge of pragmalinguistic aspects, production implies mastery of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic abilities. To determine recognition, students completed a modified VKS with 13 decontextualized routines, and reported their level of familiarity with each, without the aid of contextual cues to infer the meanings. In this case, students were significantly successful in the recognition task. The production test was a DCT with 13 specific recurrent situations, such as asking a classmate for a pen, or stepping in a puddle. In order to respond with what they would say in each situation, an understanding of the sociocultural norms of particular contexts is required. Knowledge of which particular routines are more appropriate to the situations – out of a range of more or less conventional expressions – further complicates the ability of using routines. A further complexity is the production of exact pragmalinguistic forms that are phonetically and grammatically correct. In the present study, formal accuracy was not a relevant aspect to consider when evaluating use of routines, given that despite the written format, the DCT was aimed at obtaining conversational data.

Previous scholars have also explained why production of routines presents difficulties for L2 learners. For instance, a series of studies by Bardovi-Harlig (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011) sought to provide an account for ESL learners' low scores in production, as compared with comprehension. The author found 4 sources of low use of routines: "lack of familiarity with some expressions, overuse of some familiar expressions which subsequently reduces the opportunity to use more target-like expressions, level of development, and sociopragmatic knowledge" (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011, p. 351). Additionally, Taguchi *et al.* (2013) explained that production of routines presents more difficulty since it involves more complex cognitive processes. According to these authors, precise use of routines is more demanding as it requires a more accurate syntactic and lexical analysis. Moreover, they point out that imprecise production could lead to misunderstandings (e.g. when using "Do you have time?" instead of "Do you have *the* time?"). In contrast, comprehension does not require exact linguistic analysis, since meaning of routines may be inferred from contextual keys.

Indeed, without contextual keys, comprehension of routines may be limited. This may explain the negative gains revealed in the recognition of *Do you have the time?* Native speakers recognized it as an inquiry about time in terms of hours and minutes. However, this routine may also imply a request about availability, when formulated without the definite article (that is, "Do you have time?"), or in a context such as "I need someone to help me out move this couch. Do you have the time?" Learners may actually know both meanings of the expression, and this could create confusion about which is the right one to write down in the test. Possibly, a number of participants chose option *b* ("I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means") to respond to how familiar they are with the expression. With this in mind, research on both the formal (pragmalinguistic) and the social

(sociopragmatic) nature of pragmatic routines seems to be necessary in order to understand how they are learned in the SA context.

Results related to the first hypothesis also showed that although both recognition and production of pragmatic routines seem to improve during a semester abroad, L2 learners experience slightly greater gains in recognition. Despite the fact that there are no previous studies comparing both abilities, results from the present study echo Vilar-Beltrán's (2014) findings on requests and request act modifiers. In an investigation of international students in the UK, this author found that earlier stages of SA; that is, the first 6 months of immersion, were decisive for developing pragmatic awareness. It was at later stages when learners developed their productive skills, evident in the use of a wider repertoire of request act modifiers. Our findings are in line with Vilar-Beltrán (2014) in that recognition is more evident during the first semester of immersion. Drawing from this author's findings, we propose the tentative hypothesis that production of routines would develop at later stages, while recognition will develop earlier.

In addition to the general trend of positive pragmatic gains both in recognition and in production of routines, learners also experienced negative gains in certain expressions. More particularly, they decreased their production of (i) *How can I help you?* (ii) *No, thank you*, (iii) *Sorry my {place/house} is a mess*, and (iv) *Sorry I am late*. Decreases in the comprehension of *Do you have the time?* may be explained by the fact that learners were familiar with the non-prototypical meaning of the expression, which in this case is an inquiry about whether the interlocutor has time to do something with the speaker. Such meaning was not expressed by the majority of NSs, who understand the routine as a question about actual time (as in hours and minutes).

Regarding production, negative gains may be justified by a prototypicality factor,

determined by rate of NS agreement, as evident in students decreasing their use of less prototypical routines (which are more distinctive of L2 learners' linguistic repertoire), in favour of more prototypical (target-like) ones. This finding on a non-linear pragmatic development is in line with previous studies that have observed deviations from NS' pragmatic norms. Barron (2003), for instance, observed that a group of Irish students of L2 German generally increased their use of target-like pragmatic routines during a 10-month SA program in Germany, although negative gains were also reported. According to this author, decreases in the use of L2-like pragmatic routines might be explained by the fact that learners used language in a creative way, and to overgeneralizations; that is, use of routines in situations where they are not appropriate.

Three other aspects characterize the pragmatic development observed in the study: degree of conventionality, influence of community boundness, and approximation to NSs performance. Firstly, changes in the ability to recognize pragmatic routines, that is, recognition gains, seem to be influenced by degree of conventionality. In the case of pragmatic routines, conventionality is shaped by situation boundness and by formal transparency. Roever (2005, after Coulmas, 1981), in this sense, distinguishes between functional and situational routines. Situational routines have a more fixed form and their meaning is more tightly bound to a given situation (e.g. *what brings you here?* asked by a doctor to a patient at the beginning of a medical interview). In contrast, functional routines have a more flexible structure, and one expression may be used in different situations. Thus, discerning their meaning is easier, as inferential reasoning is not necessary (e.g. *Do you mind if...?*). Previous studies have suggested that L2 learners have less difficulty in recognizing functional routines, which have a more literal meaning, as compared with situational routines, whose meaning is determined by a particular situational (Kecskes, 2000; Roever, 2005). In

the present study, learners reported the highest recognition gains in routines that are more conventional, and probably classified within the situational category: *My bad*, and *That works for me*. In contrast, the lowest gains were reported for routines that could be functional, since they are less conventional and have a more flexible internal structure, like *Could you do me a favor?* This finding reveals a tentative hypothesis: increases in the ability to comprehend may be associated with degree of conventionality. Thus, the SA context may be beneficial for learning more conventional routines that are associated with particular situations, given that students have recurrent opportunities to encounter them in daily contexts.

Secondly, the term *community-boundness* is proposed in this study, and it is suggested that the extent to which routines are more loosely or tightly bound to the TL speech community may have influenced the reported pragmatic gains. In the present study, certain routines seem to be characteristic of the particular speech community located in the Appalachian region of the US. An example is the expression *my bad*, which was elicited for recognition. Learners showed significantly higher recognition gains in *my bad*, compared to other expressions. This routine is an expression of apology widely used in the US. Nevertheless, and to the best of our knowledge, in other English speaking countries different pragmalinguistic resources are used to express apology, e.g. *I am sorry* or *sorry, it was my fault*. At the beginning of the semester (pre-test), learners reported recognition scores below the means in *my bad*; however, they seem to have acquired sociopragmatic knowledge during the time abroad, as evident in their reported recognition scored above the means in the post-test.

A similar case is found in learners' production gains in the routine *For here or to go*, which was elicited in the "Restaurant" situation (You work in a fast food restaurant which serves food that customers can eat seated in the restaurant or can take home with them.

196

Before a customer starts ordering, you ask him/her). Students showed gains above the means in their use of *For here or to go*. Such pragmatic improvement might be explained by the fact that at the beginning of the semester, learners may have been familiar with counterpart routines used in other speech communities, such as *For here or to take away* (used in Australia), or *To eat here or to take away* (in the UK).

Findings related to hypothesis 1 also indicate that the reported pragmatic development is characterised by learners' approximation to NSs use of routines. Indeed, results on the analysis of gains in production of pragmatic routines revealed that students seemed to be on a process of "nativelike selection" (Pawler & Syder, 1983). This was evident in the fact that at the end of the semester, students showed an increased use of pragmatic routines commonly used by NSs; that is, high-prototypical routines, and a decreased use of low prototypical routines, more distinctive of NNSs' pragmalinguistic repertoire. Pawler and Syder (1983) coined the term "puzzle of nativelike selection" to refer to the ability of NSs to select and use formulaic expressions from among different grammatically correct formulations. The authors make reference to the importance for language students to learn how to distinguish native-like sentences from those that are unnatural as a step towards L2 pragmatic acquisition.

These findings are in line with previous studies that have discerned a process of "nativelike selection" in learners' acquisition of pragmatic routines in the SA context (Bardovi-Harlig, 2010; Barron, 2003; Taguchi, 2013a). According to these scholars, although the examined L2 learners do not achieve a native proficiency level, the SA experience is beneficial for the development of routines, as evident in more proficient learners outperforming less proficient ones. The present study particularly echoes Barron's (2003) findings that learners decreased their use of non-target-like forms (low-prototypical routines) and increased their reliance on L2-like routines (high-prototypical ones). An example from

the present study is the situation "Restaurant" included in the DCT, where students were

asked what they would say in the following situation:

> "You work in a fast food restaurant which serves food which customers can eat
> seated down in the restaurant or can take home with them. Before a customer
> starts ordering, you ask him/her…"

This context prompts the high-prototypical routine *For here or to go?* where learners

reported positive production gains, while they decreased their use of the low-prototypical one

How can I help you? whose use decreased during the semester. Nevertheless, given the

limited number of studies addressing how pragmatic performance moves towards the L2

norm, more research is encouraged on analyzing native-like selection processes in the

learning of pragmatic routines by L2 learners.

In addition to quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis on students' perspectives

and awareness of their pragmatic development supported our quantitative results, since

students reported being aware of their increase (or lack of it) in knowledge of pragmatic

routines. Additionally, learners' comments revealed some of their views on their acquisition

of pragmatic routines. On one hand, students who were aware that they had increased their

knowledge of routines mainly attributed their improvement to interaction with NSs – Emma

being the most evident case. A second factor that fostered pragmatic development was the

acquisition of sociocultural awareness (e.g. Lisa). In addition, students who were aware of

their pragmatic improvement claimed that acquiring knowledge of routines enhanced their

speaking fluency and ability to communicate in English (e.g. William and David). In contrast,

participants who did not show significant gains in their knowledge of routines, and were

aware of that fact, blamed it on three main factors: academic pressure (e.g. Mark), too much

focus on academics (e.g. Michelle), and already being familiar with the expressions (e.g.

Ethan and Mike). Students' perspectives on the reasons for a lack of pragmatic development

reveal a necessity to explore the potential negative impact of designing SA programs with a strong academic focus.

In addition to this, qualitative reports elicited some routines that students reported hearing frequently from NSs: *to bum a cigarette, what's up? What's going on?, You guys, awesome, heads up*, and *potato head*. An exploration of whether they represent pragmatic routines would require reference to previous studies on the characterisation of routines (see section 3.1.1).

Moving on to hypothesis 2, which stated that students' L1 would not exert an influence in their ability to use routines (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* 2008). The present analysis revealed an influence of L1 and cultural background on the reported gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines, thus rejecting the second hypothesis of the study. In other words, L2 learners showed different pragmatic developmental paths across cultures. More specifically, Brazilian students showed significantly greater gains in production of routines than Chinese and Thai students. In fact, Thai learners decreased their ability to use routines upon the semester-long SA program in the US.

With a few exceptions, most ILP studies include only one L1; that is, participants of the same cultural origin. Only one investigation, to the best of our knowledge, has examined pragmatic production during SA across groups with different L1s (Bardovi-Harlig *et al*., 2008). Bardovi-Harlig *et al*. (2008) observed that rate of use of routines is not significantly determined by ESL learners' cultural background, although they found a few deviations (e.g. the Arabic group significantly differed from NSs' and other NNSs' pragmatic performance in their production of routines in thanking situations).

One possible explanation to our findings related to hypothesis 2 is that cultural similarity may enhance pragmatic learning. In the present study, the Brazilian group, which

shares the most sociocultural values with the US, outperformed the rest of cultural groups. Their performance was significantly different from Thai and Chinese students', who experienced the most limited gains in production of pragmatic routines. These findings are in line with studies that have pointed out significant differences in the use of routines between Eastern and Western cultures (Kesckes, 2000; Ortactepe, 2008; Taguchi *et al*., 2013). For instance, Taguchi *et al*.'s (2008) findings may inform the present results.

6.4. Summary of the chapter

In summary, research question 1 addressed whether studying abroad makes a difference in learning pragmatic routines, as regards both recognition and production. Findings from the present study show that learners improve their recognition and production of pragmatic routines during a semester abroad, and thus hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Results from the study also revealed that the SA context seems to be more beneficial for comprehension than for production of routines. Regarding recognition gains, increases and decreases in the comprehension of routines may be explained by the conventional nature of the elicited expressions. Students increased the recognition of more conventional routines, rather than less conventional ones. Moreover, production gains seemed to be influenced by prototypicality, given that learners increasingly relied on high-prototypical expressions, and decreased their use of low-prototypical ones. This finding indicates a learning path towards native-like pragmatic production. Finally, hypothesis 2 was not confirmed in the present study, since significant differences in recognition and production gains were observed across cultural groups.

To sum up, results reported in chapter 6 expand ILP research by pointing out that recognition and production of pragmatic routines develop to different extents in the SA

context. In particular, learners showed slightly higher gains in their receptive ability. Moreover, the observed pragmatic development is determined by students' heritage culture.

In addition, we are interested in how the learning of pragmatic routines is influenced by learners' acculturation in the SA context. This aspect is explored in next chapter, which relates to research question 2.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

After reviewing the pragmatic development experienced by learners in the present study, chapter 7 presents results relating to their acculturation gains, in terms of both sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Earlier studies have reported that L2 learners seem to improve their sociocultural adaptation during SA programs (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010; Podrug *et al.*, 2014), although, as reported in chapter 2, that research remains inconclusive. Regarding psychological adjustment by SA students, the body of research is even smaller. To address these concerns, the present study explores the development of sociocultural and psychological adaptation by students of diverse origins participating in SA programs in the US. Chapter 7 presents the results of this analysis, which draws from the second research question of the study and its corresponding hypotheses, formulated as follows:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): *does study abroad make a difference in learners' acculturation development?*

This question triggered two hypotheses, which will lead the presentation of the findings:

- H3: there would be a difference in the participants' sociocultural adaptation during the SA experience (Abduhllah *et al.*, 2015; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010).

- H4: sociocultural adaptation development will be different across cultures (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Stephenson, 2000).

RQ2, together with H3, and H4 are addressed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Section 7.1 includes a quantitative analysis of sociocultural development, which was conducted with data from the SCAS. Qualitative information is presented in section 7.2 with a twofold aim: to provide reasons behind sociocultural trajectories, and to present a

report of learners' psychological adaptation development.

7.1. Quantitative results

Firstly, a descriptive analysis on sociocultural adaptation gains is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. *Descriptive statistics of sociocultural adaptation*

		Time 1				Time 2			
	N	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Behavioral adaptation	122	3.75	0.506	2.45	5	3.91	0.557	2.36	4.95
Cognitive adaptation	122	3.66	0.617	2.14	5	3.92	0.606	1.86	5
Overall sociocultural adaptation	122	3.73	0.503	2.48	5	3.91	0.550	2.24	4.96

With respect to normality of the data, a Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$) showed that behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adaptation scores were normally distributed. Behavioral adaptation in the pre-test showed a skewness of 0.008 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -0.269 ($SE = 0.435$), and in the post-test a skewness of -0.667 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -0.129 ($SE = 0.435$); cognitive adaptation had a skewness of -0.39 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -0.442 ($SE = 0.435$) in the pre-test, and a skewness of -0.626 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of 0.386 ($SE = 0.435$) in the post-test; while overall sociocultural adaptation scored revealed a skewness of -0.69 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -0.111 ($SE = 0.458$) in the pre-test, and a skewness of 0.008 ($SE = 2.19$) and a kurtosis of -0.269 ($SE = 0.435$) in the post-test. In addition to this, variation in the reported sociocultural adaptation was moderate, as indicated by the low standard deviations.

7.1.1. Sociocultural adaptation during SA

This section addresses hypothesis 3, which predicted that there would be a difference in the participants' sociocultural adaptation after the SA experience. Results of the

204

quantitative analysis are presented using a top-down approach, beginning with the most general information and moving on to the most specific findings. Hence, first, whether students increase their sociocultural adaptation, in terms of both cognitive and behavioral acculturation is addressed. Then, an explanation of acculturation difficulties reported by students in each of the 29 daily situations included in the SCAS is provided.

To determine differences between pre-test and post-test means, which indicate learners' level of sociocultural adaptation, a series of paired-samples *t*-tests were conducted for overall acculturation, and for the two subscales: behavioral and cognitive adaptation. Moreover, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*. Table 7.2 shows pre-test and post-test means, standard deviations, and differences (gains) for each of the three aspects.

Table 7.2. *Pre-test/post-test means, standard deviations, and differences in sociocultural adaptation*

	N	Time 1		Time 2		Difference			
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	**Ratio**	**%**	*t*	*df*
Behavioral	122	3.75	0.506	3.91	0.557	0.154***	3.08	-3.091	121
Cognitive	122	3.66	0.617	3.92	0.606	0.253*	5.06	-4.176	121
Overall sociocultural adaptation	122	3.73	0.503	3.91	0.550	0.178**	3.56	-3.556	121

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes from the pre-test to the post-test. *$p < .005$, **$p = .001$, ***$p < .001$ (paired-samples T-test).

The inferential statistics revealed that changes between pre- and post-test were statistically significant for behavioral adaptation [$t(121) = -3.091$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.301$], for cognitive adaptation [$t(121) = -4.176$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.425$], and for overall sociocultural adaptation [$t(121) = -3.556$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.341$]. These results suggest that the SA context is beneficial for the improvement of students' acculturation level, in terms of both behavioral

and cognitive adaptation.

In addition to this, a correlation test was carried out between gains in both cognitive and behavioral adaptation scores. Results indicated that both types of adaptation were positively correlated [r (122) = .778, p = .000]. In other words, learners who improved their behavioral adaptation (e.g. going shopping) tended to improve their cognitive adaptation too (e.g. having an American perspective on the culture), and vice versa.

Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 illustrate results from Table 7.2 on the comparison between learners' behavioral and cognitive adaptation. Firstly, Figure 7.1 addresses learners' reported acculturation levels in the pre-test and post-test.
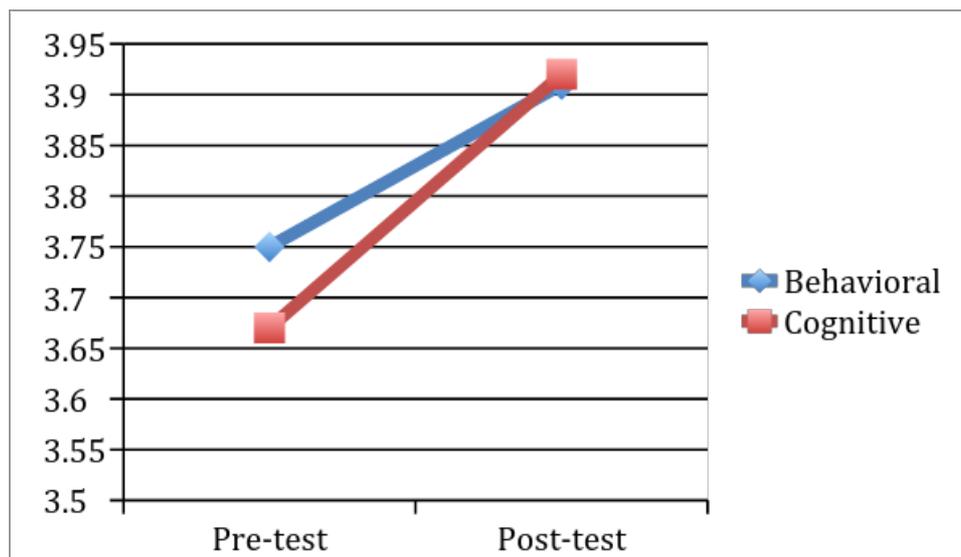
Figure 7.1. Behavioral and cognitive adaptation

As can be observed, students showed higher behavioral adaptation scores (M = 3.75; SD = 0.51) and lower cognitive acculturation (M = 3.76; SD = 0.62) at the beginning of the semester. This result indicates that when students first arrive in the TL context, in this case the US, they have more difficulty understanding American values and cultural differences,

but they manage to deal with daily situations such as using the transport system or finding food they enjoy to a greater extent. Nevertheless, after 4 months of immersion, they improve their cognitive adaptation (M = 3.92; SD = 0.60) to nearly the same ratio as their behavioral adaption (M = 3.91; SD = 0.56).

Changes over time (from pre-test to post-test) in behavioral and in cognitive acculturation are displayed in Figure 7.2.
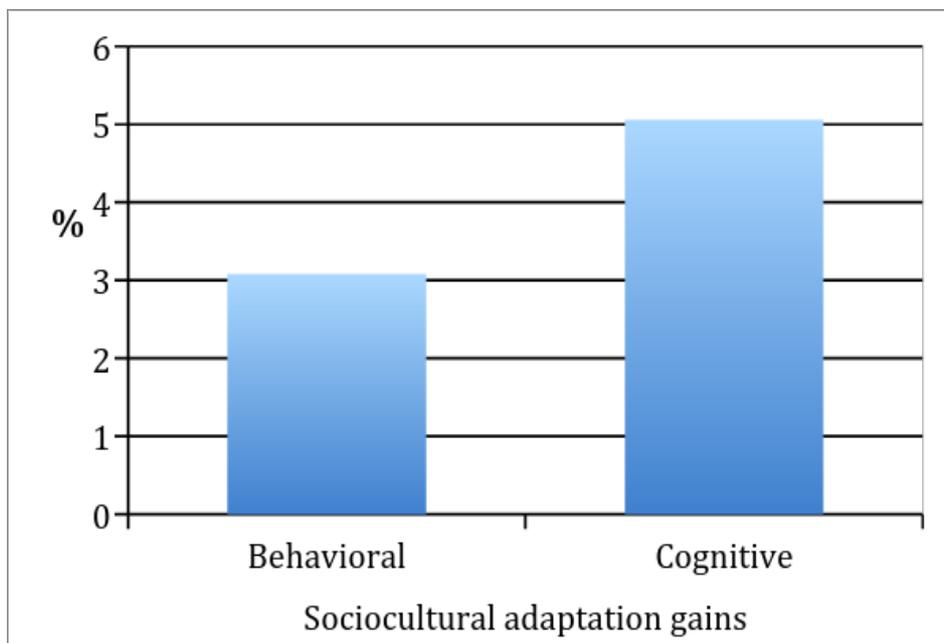
Figure 7.2. Gains in behavioral and cognitive adaptation

In Table 7.2 it can be observed that overall sociocultural adaptation increased by 3.56%. More specifically, and as observed in Figure 7.2, while students' behavioral adaptation improved by 3.08%, their cognitive development ratio was higher by 5.06%. Consequently, results reveal that the SA context particularly enhances cognitive acculturation, which implies adaptation in terms of understanding the values and customs of the TL society.

In order to gain more insights into what particular aspects of US culture presented more difficulty for learners over the semester, and which ones they seemed to have increasingly enjoyed or understood, a descriptive analysis was carried out for each of the everyday social situations included in the SCAS. Table 7.3 presents pre-test and post-test average scores, and differences (gains) for the 29 items.

Table 7.3. *Sociocultural adaptation by item*

	Situation	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score	Gains Score	%
1	Making friends	3.65	3.81	0.16	3.3
2	Finding food that you enjoy	3.12	3.05	-0.07	-1.5
3	Following rules and regulations	4.31	4.42	0.11	2.1
4	Dealing with people in authority	3.99	4.06	0.07	1.3
5	Taking an American perspective on the culture	3.52	3.86	0.34	6.9
6	Using the transport system	3.66	3.76	0.10	2
7	Dealing with bureaucracy	3.54	3.73	0.19	3.8
8	Understanding the American value system	3.68	3.97	0.29	5.7
9	Making yourself understood	3.67	4.06	0.39	7.7
10	Seeing things from an American point of view	3.66	3.71	0.05	1
11	Going shopping	3.99	4.19	0.20	3.9
12	Dealing with someone who is unpleasant	3.28	3.5	0.22	4.4
13	Understanding jokes and humor	3.31	3.47	0.16	3.1
14	Accommodation	4.02	4.10	0.07	1.3
15	Going to social gatherings	3.61	3.85	0.25	4.9
16	Dealing with people staring at you	3.74	3.83	0.09	1.8
17	Communicating with people of a different ethnic group	3.72	4.07	0.34	6.9
18	Understanding ethnic or cultural differences	3.72	4.10	0.38	7.5
19	Dealing with unsatisfactory service	3.53	3.70	0.17	3.4
20	Worshipping	3.66	4.00	0.34	6.9
21	Relating to members of the opposite sex	3.94	4.13	0.19	3.8
22	Finding your way around	4.02	4.20	0.18	3.6
23	Understanding the American political system	3.50	3.79	0.30	5.9
24	Talking about yourself with others	3.98	4.14	0.16	3.1
25	Dealing with the climate.	3.69	3.66	-0.03	-0.7
26	Understanding the American world view	3.67	3.93	0.25	5.1
27	Family relationships	4.11	4.13	0.02	0.3
28	The pace of life	4.00	4.16	0.16	3.3
29	Being able to see two sides of an inter-cultural issue	3.90	4.06	0.16	3.1
	AVERAGE	3.73	3.91	0.18	3.6

Visual information from Table 7.3 about pre-test and post-test sociocultural adaptation average scores is displayed in Appendix L. Some daily situations in the SA context were reported to be easier for students to address, as indicated by average scores above the means (3.73) both in pre- and post-test. In particular, the highest acculturation average score was reported for item #3 "following rules and regulations" both in pre- ($M =$ 4.31) and post-test ($M = 4.42$). Overall, situations with scores above the means both in pre- and post-test – which hence seemed easy for students to confront – are: dealing with people in authority, going shopping, accommodation, relating to members of the opposite sex, finding their way around, talking about themselves with others, family relationships, the pace of life, and being able to see two sides of an inter-cultural issue. Consistent with the findings presented above, most of the situations in which learners, on average, reported having no difficulty correspond with behavioral adaptation. Only one item is related with cognitive acculturation (being able to see two sides of an inter-cultural issue). In contrast, item 2, "finding food that you enjoy" obtained the lowest score, both in pre- ($M = 3.12$) and post-tests ($M = 3.05$). Other difficulties the participants experienced were: seeing things from an American point of view, dealing with someone who is unpleasant, understanding jokes and humor, dealing with people staring at them, dealing with unsatisfactory service, and dealing with the climate. These findings provide an account on main difficulties that the US context of the study presents for international students through a semester-long SA program.

With respect to the development of particular aspects of sociocultural adaptation over time, Figure 7.3 displays the descriptive data indicated in the "gains" score and percentage columns in Table 7.3. The average gain score was 0.18 (3.6%).
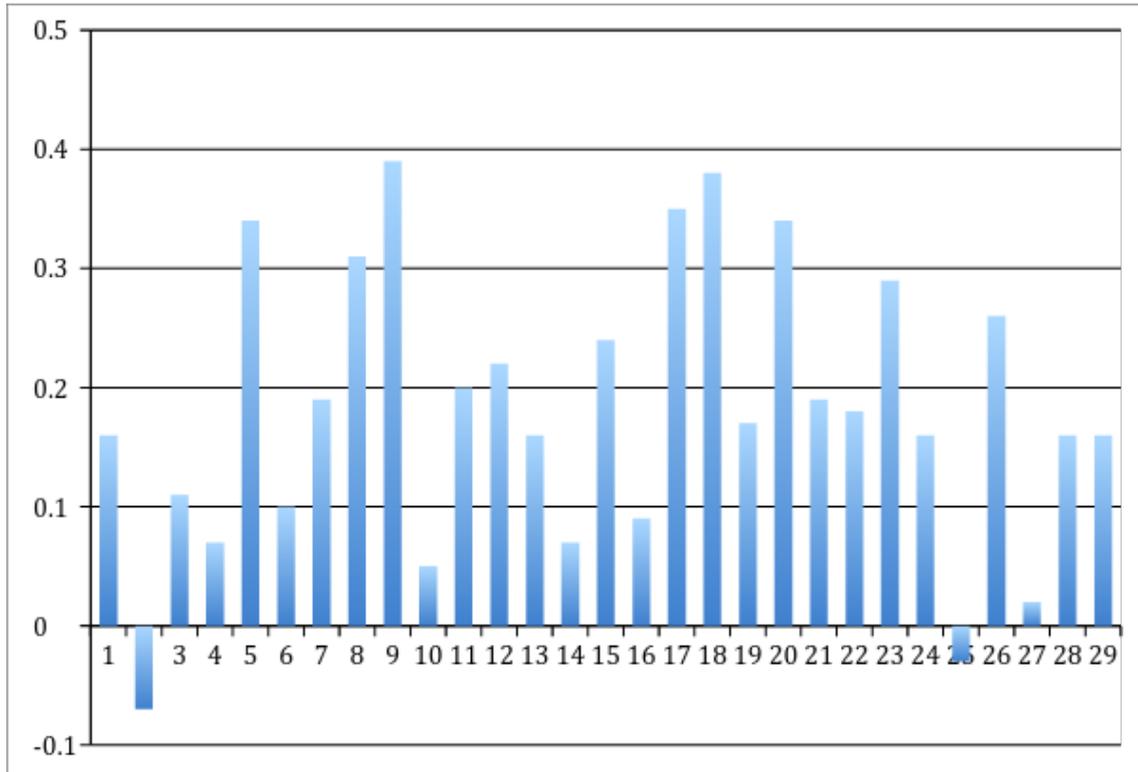
Figure 7.3. Gains in each sociocultural adaptation item

As indicated in Table 7.3 and Figure 7.3, students showed the greatest gains over the semester in item 9, "making yourself understood" (0.39 points, 7.7%), closely followed by item 18 "Understanding ethnic or cultural differences" (0.38 points, 7.5%), and by items 5 Taking an American perspective on the culture (0.34 points, 6.9%), 17 Communicating with people of a different ethnic group (0.34 points, 6.9%), and 20 Worshipping (0.34, 6.9%). This finding implies that immersion in the particular SA context, which involves the US culture around the universities under investigation, enhances sociocultural adaptation of incoming international students in these particular daily situations, attitudes and beliefs. Interestingly, the sociocultural aspects participants developed to a greater extent are related to communication skills (items #9 and #17), and cognitive adaptation (items #18 and #5). The fact that the SA context seems to enhance the ability to communicate and to be understood

raises the possibility that learning pragmatic routines may play a role in the development of acculturation. This is because mastering pragmatic routines is a key tool in the ability to communicate.

On the opposite side, there are other situations where learners experienced limited changes: dealing with people in authority (1.3%), seeing things from an American point of view (1%), accommodation (1.3%), dealing with people staring at them (1.8%), and family relationships (0.3%). In these situations the average acculturation gains were below the means. This may suggest that they were already used to confronting the situations, or that they face similar experiences in their home culture, and hence those situations did not suppose any cultural shock or difference for them. It may also imply that their low adaptation in these situations remained low during their time abroad, as is the case of item #10, "Seeing things from an American point of view," where students reported scores below the means in the pre-test ($M = 3.66$) and post-test ($M = 3.71$), and low acculturation gains ($M = 0.05$, 1%).

Finally, students experienced negative sociocultural adaptation gains in two particular situations: item #2, "finding food that they enjoy," (-0.07 points, -1.5%), and #25, "dealing with the climate" (-0.03 points, -0.7%). Hence, on average, learners who seemed to not especially enjoy being in the US also reported not enjoying American food, or the Midwest weather.

In conclusion, a quantitative analysis of learners' self-reported rating of difficulty experienced in 29 everyday situations in the TL context indicated that, although they decreased their adaptation in 2 situations (finding food they enjoy and dealing with the climate), they show an overall improvement in their sociocultural adaptation over a semester of study in the US. Hypothesis 3 of the study, which expected a positive gain in the participants' sociocultural adaptation, is therefore partially confirmed. More specifically,

although cognitive acculturation (e.g. seeing things from an American point of view) seems to present more difficulties at the beginning of the sojourn, students show greater gains in this respect than in comparison with behavioral adaptation.

A question that arises from the reported sociocultural development is whether it was influenced by any specific factor. For instance, students decreased their adaptation to food and to the weather. Could this result be attributed to the characteristics of the different origins of the international students? A quantitative analysis on the influence of cultural background on sociocultural development is presented in the next section, 7.1.2.

7.1.2. Sociocultural adaptation across cultures

This section addresses hypothesis 4 of the study, which predicted that development of sociocultural adaptation would be different across cultures. Following the analysis carried out in chapter 6.2.4 on the development of pragmatic routines across cultures, the 5 most representative nationalities were included in the analysis: Chinese, Brazilians, Thai, Saudi Arabian and Turkish. Table 7.4 includes the descriptive statistics of average acculturation gains experienced by each group, in terms of both behavioral and cognitive adaptation.

Table 7.4. *Descriptive statistics of behavioral, cognitive and sociocultural adaptation gains by nationality*

Group	Nationality	*n*	Behavioral		Cognitive		Overall	
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1	Chinese	36	0.08	0.64	0.21	0.73	0.11	0.64
2	Brazilian	32	0.43	0.41	0.59	0.55	0.47	0.42
3	Thai	10	0.02	0.38	0.10	0.56	0.04	0.40
4	Saudi Arabian	9	-0.18	0.81	-0.06	0.84	-0.15	0.80
5	Turkish	7	0.04	0.54	-0.12	0.32	0	0.43
Total		94	0.17	0.59	0.28	0.68	0.20	0.59

As we can observe, the Brazilian group reported the highest average gains in the three aspects, behavioral ($M = 0.46$), cognitive ($M = 0.59$) and overall sociocultural acculturation ($M = 0.49$). In contrast, the Saudi Arabian group experienced negative gains in the two domains and in average sociocultural adaptation (M behavioral $= -0.18$; M cognitive $= -0.06$; M average $= -0.15$), indicating that they decreased their level of sociocultural adaptation from the beginning to the end of the semester abroad. Furthermore, the Turkish group experienced negative gains only in cognitive adaptation ($M = -0.12$), which implies that although the SA context enhanced their behavioral acculturation, it did not help them understand the US culture and/or sociocultural differences between their heritage culture and the host one.

Figure 7.4 illustrates overall sociocultural gains experienced by each nationality.
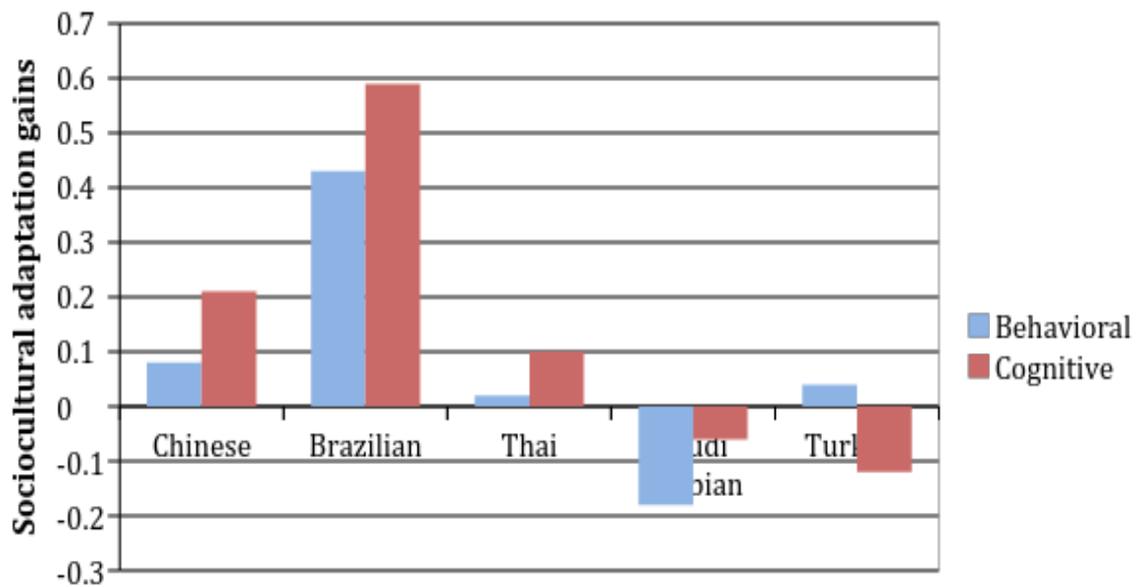
Figure 7.4. Behavioral and cognitive adaptation gains across cultures

Observing the graph, a clear trend is revealed: the Brazilian students had the lowest sociocultural difficulties to adapt in the elicited US study abroad programs, while the Saudi

Arabians had the highest level of difficulty. In order to test whether there are significant differences among the groups, the means of each group were compared using an ANOVA test. This inferential analysis confirmed that there were significant differences in sociocultural adaptation gains among at least two of the groups in behavioral [$F(4,89)$ = 3.451; p = .011], in cognitive [$F(4,89)$ = 3.516; p = .01], and in overall sociocultural adaption gains [$F(4,89)$ = 3.725; p = .008]. A post-hoc Tuckey multiple-comparison test revealed further details on which nationalities experienced significantly different sociocultural gains. These results are illustrated in Figure 7.5.
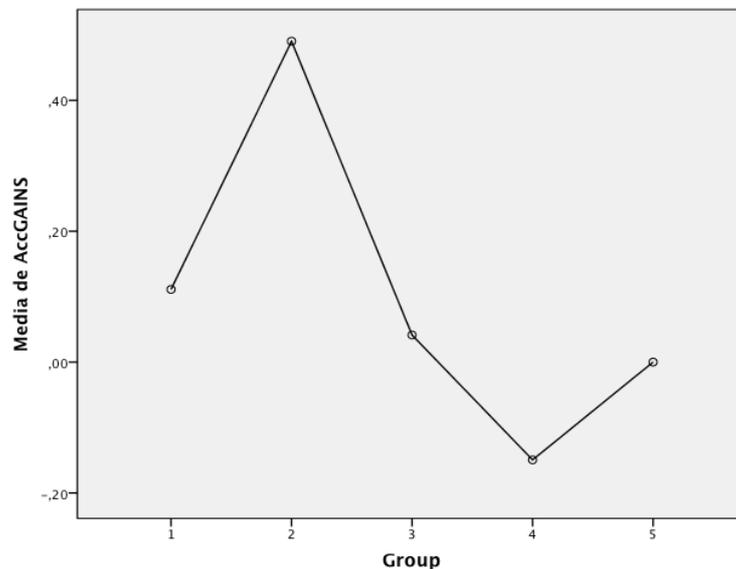
Figure 7.5. Sociocultural adaptation gains across cultures

More specifically, the post-hoc analysis revealed significant differences in overall sociocultural development between the Brazilians (Group 2) and the Chinese (Group 1) (mean difference = +/- 0.640; p = .025), and between the Brazilians and the Saudi Arabians (Group 4) (mean difference = +/- 0.38; p = .047). Appendix B includes visual information about behavioral and cognitive acculturation gains by group. Regarding the differences in

acculturation progress between the Brazilians and the Chinese, these were particularly salient in terms of behavioral adaptation (mean difference = +/- 0.376; p = .57). In other words, Brazilian and Chinese students experienced different ways of coping with daily situations in the SA contexts in the US. While the the Brazilian group managed to successfully confront aspects such as going shopping, finding food they enjoy, or dealing with bureaucracy, and even increased this ability, the Chinese group experienced rather different, and less successful, ways of addressing these daily situations. With respect to the difference between the Brazilians and the Saudi Arabians, it is more significant in cognitive adaptation (mean difference = +/- 0.657; p = .62). This implies that the two groups developed a different understanding of US values and culture, and of differences between their heritage culture and US culture. While the Brazilians seemed to have gained this knowledge, the Saudi Arabians, on average, decreased their level of cognitive adaptation to US values and cross-cultural understanding.

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that cultural background is a predictor of sociocultural adaptation development, in terms of both behavioral and cognitive acculturation. More specifically, the Brazilians developed a significantly different acculturation experience compared to the Chinese in terms of behavioral adaptation, and compared to the Saudi Arabians in terms of cognitive adaptation. Hypothesis 3 of the study, which predicted that sociocultural adaptation development would be influenced by nationality, is therefore confirmed. The next section provides qualitative insights into the results reported in sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2, and also presents results relating to learners' psychological adaptation development.

7.2. Qualitative results

The process of acculturation is twofold; it involves sociocultural and psychological adaptation (see section 2.4.3). Section 7.1 of this chapter has presented the quantitative analysis of sociocultural adaptation at the group level. Results showed that sociocultural adaptation by 122 international students increases over a semester of study in the US, particularly in terms of cognitive acculturation. Moreover, findings pointed out that cultural background plays a role in this development, since different sojourning groups showed varied sociocultural development paths. This section, 7.2, addresses sociocultural and psychological adaptation in a case-study research design, by presenting acculturation individual trajectories. More specifically, 7.2.1 includes learners' perspectives on their sociocultural adaptation, and 7.2.2 is an account of their psychological development.

In order to achieve a complete understanding on the development of acculturation during SA, Schumann's Acculturation Model of SLA (1978) was considered to establish a coding scheme. Schumann's framework was chosen since it covers both sociocultural and psychological variables in detail (see section 2.4). Moreover, the model has previously been applied to explain pragmatic development (Schmidt, 1983), which is the ultimate focus of the present study. Schumann's (1978) theory, however, has been criticized because it has seldom been tested in empirical investigations. The present study addresses this concern by exploring whether the different variables proposed by the author explain pragmatic development. Schumann's (1978) acculturation approach has also been criticized because it does not include variables that have been observed to be relevant in the process of acculturation – e.g. culture, L1, academic pressure, etc. In the current analysis, two more psychological adjustment variables were added, namely academic pressure and social support by L1 peers, given that previous research has found that they play a significant role in students' process of

acculturation (Abdullah *et al.*, 2015; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010).

Schumann (1978) distinguished 7 social variables. Among them, only two, namely integration strategy and attitude towards the TL, are considered in the present analysis as determiners of sociocultural development, since they depend on the individual learner. The other five sociocultural factors – social dominance, social congruence, enclosure, cohesiveness and size of the group, and intended length of residence – are traits particular to the cultural group, and hence are not of assistance in observing acculturation progress. Regarding psychological adaptation, the 4 variables of the model were examined: culture shock, language shock, ego permeability, and motivation. In addition to these, changes in academic pressure and social support were included in the analysis.

7.2.1. Sociocultural adaptation during SA: learners' perspectives

This section presents a qualitative analysis that complements quantitative results related to hypotheses 3 and 4. An analysis of the participants' comments in the interviews allowed for the eliciting of difficulties students face during a stay abroad, and aspects that enhance their adaptation. Firstly, some information about the 10 informants is presented. Table 7.5 includes descriptive data about their cultural background and their gains in behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adjustment.

Table 7.5. *Nationality and gains in sociocultural adaptation by 10 informants*

Participant	Nationality	Behavioral gains		Cognitive gains		Overall gains	
		Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
David	Brazilian	0.77	15.4	1.57	31.4	0.96	19.2
Emma	Spanish	1	0.2	0.57	11.4	0.9	18
Jeff	Brazilian	0.27	5.4	0.86	17.2	0.41	8.2
Sean	Turkish	0.55	11	-0.14	-2.8	0.38	7.6
Ethan	Spanish	0.23	4.6	-0.43	-8.6	0.07	1.4
Lisa	Spanish	0.05	1	0.14	2.8	0.07	1.4
Michelle	Turkish	0.14	2.8	-0.29	-5.8	0.03	0.6
Mike	Brazilian	0	0	-0.14	-2.8	-0.03	-0.6
William	Brazilian	0.09	1.8	-0.43	-8.6	-0.17	-3.4
Mark	Turkish	-0.32	-6.4	-0.14	-2.8	-0.27	-5.4
AVERAGE		0.15	3.08	0.25	5.06	0.18	3.56

As shown in Table 7.5, the case studies constituted a varied sample in terms of sociocultural adaptation. Some participants experienced substantial increases in their acculturation in terms of both behavioral and cognitive adaptation; this is the case of David and Emma. Jeff and Lisa also made progress in both sociocultural aspects, although his gain ratio was still far from David and Emma. Sean, Ethan and Michelle are also "gainers" when considering overall sociocultural adaptation; however, the three of them experienced a decrease in their cognitive adaptation. In contrast, Mark showed the most negative acculturation gains in the two aspects of sociocultural adaptation. Mike and William are also "non-gainers," since their overall sociocultural adaptation did not increase, although William did make some improvement in his behavioral adaptation.

In what follows, learners' perspectives on their sociocultural adaptation are exposed. Interview data was coded into two main themes: changes in integration strategies and

changes in attitude towards US culture and society. Integration strategies involve assimilation, preservation and adaptation. Assimilation of the TL sociocultural values is the optimal acculturation strategy, and it would most successfully enhance SLA; preservation of the heritage culture, values and identity is the least desired strategy; and adaptation takes an intermediate position. Moreover, positive attitudes between the sojourning and the host cultures are expected to enhance acculturation.

A first sign of sociocultural development was making close friends from the US. This is an assimilation strategy observed in the case of David, Mike and Lisa. At the beginning of the semester, David explained that he had only made friends with international students and did not know anyone from the US. However, by the end of the semester, he had made a few NS friends and had a girlfriend from the US. According to him, although he had mostly made friends from other cultures, he was very close to the four or five American friends he had, and he reported learning a lot about US culture thanks to them and to his girlfriend. For instance, he met his girlfriend's' family and friends, and spent Thanksgiving with them. Moreover, he often spent time with his close US friends, mostly practicing sports, watching movies, and going out. Lisa, for instance, had 3 roommates from the US, and they got along very well. In order to integrate into the TL community, she also triedto spend most of her time with them. For instance, they normally watchedTV together every evening, they frequently played board games, and they liked going out to the bars as a group.

A second assimilation strategy learners consciously used was engaging in clubs or other organizations with the aim of immersing themselves in the TL community. That was the strategy that most helped Jeff and Emma improve their sociocultural adaptation. At the beginning of the semester, Jeff complained that he did not find any opportunities to interact with US students. He tried to change his living situation – he lived with 2 Brazilian

roommates – but was not able to. He also had a conversation partner[1], but they only met 3 times, since she was not very helpful and they only maintained "the typical superficial conversations." Hence, he decided to join a club with the aim of making friends. He joined the "theatre club," and he made good friends there. Differences in Jeff's perspectives in the first and in the second interview are particularly interesting, as they clearly show sociocultural adaptation improvement. While at the beginning he had no friends from the US and claimed that it was hard to meet people other than international students, at the end of the semester he had many more US friends, and that was thanks to the theatre club. According to Jeff:

> "American people are more similar to Brazilian people, so it's easier to be friends with them than with Chinese, for example."

Similarly, Emma assimilated US sociocultural values because she took part in clubs, and that allowed her to make close friends from the US. At the beginning of the semester Emma was not in contact with any English speakers. Since she was very eager to make US friends – her motivation was highly integrative – she joined a band as the lead singer, and also participated in a volunteering program. According to her, she learned a lot about US culture and society from the friends she made in these two activities. In particular, she made two really good friends; apart from the Bluegrass band she joined, she started playing in "open mics" at bars with one of the members of the band, and they met very often to rehearse. Moreover, she made a very good friend in the volunteering program with whom she went on a trip in Thanksgiving break. In Emmas' words:

> "You know, I feel I'm really lucky in contrast to the other Spanish students because I have met real Americans, and they have showed me their culture. I think it's because I wanted to play bluegrass music… you know… hillbilly music… we

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[1] Conversation partner is a service the university offers, in which a non-English-speaker international student exchanges conversations with an English-speaker student from the US with the aim of both students learning each other's' language and culture.

don't have bluegrass in Spain… so I was really immersed in the deep America, and I met people who never were in contact with other nationalities."

Nevertheless, most informants (70%) reported having many friends, but that these were international students, and good friends from their L1 group. Because of this, many of the informants did not fully assimilate the TL sociocultural values, and instead adopted positions of adaptation or of preservation of their own values. The three cultural groups the informants belonged to, Brazilian, Turkish and Spanish, are rather cohesive and numerous. David, Jeff and Emma consciously tried to get out of their L1 groups and integrate into the US community. In contrast, other informants limited their contact to their L1 group, and hence preserved their own sociocultural values. David, for instance, provides a clear explanation of the strong cohesion of the Brazilian group:

> "The problem is that the university has isolated us. Where we live I call it 'the Brazilian paradise.´ It's basically a hotel where Brazilians live; it's impossible to convince them all to speak in English.[…] Since our government pays for accommodation we cannot escape the Brazilian paradise."

David, however, explains that his experience abroad was great because he had made really good Brazilian (L1 peers) friends that he will maintain forever. Additionally, he points out that unlike his Brazilian colleagues, he made some friends from the US, and that is how he got to engage in some events with only American people. Interestingly, he explains that he was able to "get out of the Brazilian group" because he had a good level of English and could interact with NSs. Some of his friends, according to him, were afraid of interacting with US people. In Table 7.5, it can be seen that Mike did not make any improvement in his behavioral adaptation. According to him, he did not learn much from the culture and did not have any adaptation difficulty because he was already highly familiar with the US culture from movies and reading.

William, another Brazilian student, however, claimed to not have made any friends from the US. William considered the Brazilian group his "Brazilian family," and they made his stay abroad a great experience. He was not bothered by not making any friends from the US, and had no interest in participating in social events. Overall, William maintained his distance from the TL community during the semester. In fact, he explains that he improved his English by talking with his Brazilian friends. When asked about whether he felt he had improved his level of English over the semester, he expressed the following:

> "Yes, with Brazilian friends sometimes we talk in English. In some cases we can learn with each other. For instance if I say `why am I saying this wrong?´ he correct me, I correct them."

Moreover, at the end of the semester, he only makes superficial comments about the US, a fact which reveals he did not make any sociocultural improvement. To the question "has your perspective on American culture changed during the semester?" he replied:

> "Yes, because when I came here, before I came here, people used to talk to me, you know, that Americans are restricted, you know, they don't talk a lot, or they are not friends or something, but here it's different… they are really good. So yeah, they just say "good morning", "good afternoon", so it's really good, it seems like Brazil."

Likewise, the Spanish informants Ethan and Lisa made limited sociocultural gains since they were not as successful as Emma in "getting out" of the Spanish group, which is as cohesive as the Brazilian group, although less numerous. Both Ethan and Lisa had Spanish roommates and classmates, and spent most of their time with them. In fact, when asked at the end of the semester, Ethan felt he had notably decreased his interactions with English speakers. According to him, at the beginning of the semester he interacted more, he made very close Spanish friends and did not try to be social with people from the US. Ethan also explains that they have opportunities to interact with NSs everyday, but in short

conversations. In his words, "the kind of conversations that make you improve are long ones."

Preservation strategies were also particularly evident in the case of the three Turkish students, Sean, Mark and Michelle, who were actively involved in a Turkish club. In this club, they celebrate Turkish traditions, Turkish religious holidays, cook Turkish food, and engage activities with other Turkish students. The three informants explained that they love the Turkish club. However, when asked about involvement in clubs with NSs, Sean and Mark explained that they would love to engage in university clubs, but they had a priority, that is, passing their TOFL test at the end of their first semester, and hence they did not have time for other clubs or organizations. Mark, for instance, explains that in Turkey he is in many clubs – mountain club, hiking club, and athletics club. He loves these organizations, and wishes he had more free time to join clubs in the US.

In addition to this, some informants were willing to integrate into the US society by looking for opportunities to interact, but were not successful. This is the case of Mark. Mark explains that the best option for students to interact is having American roommates. He lived with two students from the US; however, he still (during the semester) had not talked with them because they were always very busy. According to Mark, "when they talk, it's only short conversations." Then, he enrolled in the conversation partner program, but he only met his US peer once. Consequently, Mark decided to pay 10$/hour to a US student to talk to him for one hour each week. In total, they had 7 or 8 hours of conversation, and after the 7th or 8th session, the American student quit because he had exams. Overall, during the semester-long stay, Mark only recalls one opportunity to interact with NSs, when he was invited by a classmate to eat pizza at his home.

In addition to integration strategies, gains in sociocultural adaptation were also

determined by changes in learners' attitudes towards US sociocultural values, people and the environment. Overall, most of the informants had a positive attitude towards the US and American people at the end of the semester. Lisa, for instance, explains in the final interview that she is aware that her opinion towards Americans is much better than at the beginning of the program. She feels people in the US are much nicer than Spanish people, and that they are always willing to help. Ethan also showed a more positive attitude towards US culture and society at the end of the semester. Previously to sojourning in the US, he was already passionate about American culture because he had learned about it from TV, movies, videogames and music. According to him, once immersed in the society, the more time he spent witnessing what he had seen in movies, and learning even more about it, the more he enjoyed the stay. In addition to this, some participants (Jeff, Emma, David) expressed in the first interview that it was difficult to make friends from the US since they were not open to making friends with international students. Nevertheless, they had changed that opinion at the end of the semester, since they made good NSs friends.

Only one of the informants, Sean, notably changed his attitude towards a more negative view of the US sociocultural values during the semester, which was also evident in the negative quantitative gains in cognitive adaptation. At the beginning of the semester, Sean was certainly excited to interact with NSs, and to improve his communicative ability. He did not know much about the US culture, and wanted to learn about it. When asked about his knowledge of the US culture at the beginning of the semester, he explained that:

> "Before coming, I haven't… no, no idea of American culture. Maybe if we study English class or movies we see some American culture, but I don't know anything. I want to make friends and learn culture."

Then, he was asked about his first impressions of the stay abroad, and explained that American people were "very polite and nice; everybody wants to help," and that he loved the

225

town because it is small and had beautiful natural surroundings. Moreover, he felt that he would learn a lot of English because it seemed that interacting with US students was easy. However, he experienced some cultural shock during the semester that may have triggered a change in his attitude and view of US culture. In the final interview, he explained that at the beginning of the semester everything was great, but then he became aware of relevant cultural differences. The following is an excerpt from the post-interview with Sean:

> "Not only the dog, the culture… there are a lot of differences inside the culture: the religion, the history. Religion, we are Muslims, is very different. And history, if we see American history, our history is much longer in the past. So there are some differences. Some American students, like my first American friends, are very polite, but another are different. […] American people I think are very individual. They go to their room and maybe they watch their series and maybe do their homework, but I don't know."

Having learned about the reasons behind the informants' individual sociocultural developmental trajectories, the next section addresses their psychological adjustment.

7.2.2. Psychological adaptation during SA: learners' perspectives

This section presents the results on learners' psychological adaptation gains by the 10 case-study informants. A qualitative analysis of the participants' comments in the interviews at the beginning and at the end of the semester revealed different individual trajectories. Table 7.6 includes the participants' increases and decreases in both sociocultural and psychological adjustment, with the aim of displaying preliminary findings on whether the two aspects develop correspondingly.

Table 7.6. *Sociocultural and psychological gains by 10 informants*

Participant	Behavioral adaptation	Cogninitve adaptation	Sociocultural adaptation	Psychological adaptation
David	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase
Emma	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase
Jeff	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase
Sean	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
Ethan	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
Michelle	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
Lisa	Decrease	Increase	Increase	Increase
Mike	No gains	Decrease	Decrease	Increase
William	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Increase
Mark	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease

Table 7.6 shows that 6 of the participants increased their level of psychological adjustment, while 4 of them decreased it. There are only 4 informants that developed their sociocultural and psychological adjustment to a similar extent: David, Emma and Jeff increased both aspects, while Mark decreased in both sociocultural and psychological acculturation. The rest of informants made different progress in the two respects. In what follows, a report on learners' perspectives and experiences on psychological adjustment are exposed, considering changes in the 4 psychological factors in Schumann's theory; that is, culture shock, language shock, ego permeability and motivation, plus two more, namely academic pressure and social support. It should be pointed out that psychological orientations are more difficult to assess objectively. Hence, findings in these case studies are in some cases disposed to subjective judgments based on the participants' behavior during the interviews, on their reported responses and discussion, and on their non-verbal reactions.

Culture shock refers to the anxiety, stress, and disorientation the sojourners may

experience while living in the TL community. Overall, culture shock seemed to not increase or decrease in informants with cultures more congruent to US culture, namely Brazilian and Spanish, most of whom point out similarities between their own and the host cultures. Overall, some aspects regarding the culture that informants did not expect and that surprised them were the parties, and some aspects of the pace of life. For instance, William expresses that:

> "I was shocked by the parties! I didn't believe everybody welcomes you in all the parties. I think it's dangerous. In Brazil everything would get stolen."

Regarding the pace of life, Jeff explained that at the beginning of the semester he had some difficulties:

> "For example, everything here is on time, so I missed the bus everyday. I arrived in the bus station 2 minutes late and it was gone."

Nevertheless, there is one case of marked increase in cultural shock: Sean. At the beginning of the semester, Sean was enjoying his stay so far, and was excited about interacting with his two American roommates. However, in the interview, he expressed that there was one aspect that bothered him about US culture: keeping dogs inside of the home. When asked about whether there was anything that shocked him about the culture he replied:

> "Yeah, people use their shoes in house, it's… and people… in Turkey some people have their pets in house, but generally we don't put our dogs in house. We put our pets outsides. It's shocked. And my roommates having their dogs inside it's… I'm not scared, I have 2 dogs in my village in Turkey, but outside. Inside is different for our culture. But yeah… his hair is everywhere!"

In the final interview, he explained he had some trouble with American roommates, because they keep their dogs inside, and because they use their shoes inside the apartment. In fact, he had some arguments with his roommates because of this, and changed his living situation twice. The following is an excerpt illustrating Sean's cultural shock:

228

"When I started in the (apartment name), I had 2 American roommates, but our culture is different. So, they were good person, but one of them brought his dog, and… so, in Turkey in our culture, we like dogs outside. So I said `I don't accept,' so I changed my room. I again stayed with 2 Americans, but they are very different. They are dirty, we cannot *conversate* and we cannot agree with each other, so we argued. We couldn't agree, so I changed my room again, and I stayed with a Turkish and a South Korean friend. With South Korean we speak English, I improved my English; with the Turkish, we speak in Turkish, I improved my Turkish (haha). So it's good."

Language shock, understood as the stress and fear of appearing silly or idiotic when speaking the TL, was probably one of the aspects that most highly determined students' psychological adjustment. Some participants reported low levels of language shock both at the beginning and at the end of the semester: Mike, David, Jeff and Ethan. Other informants, William, Sean, Emma and Lisa, successfully reduced their levels of language shock, since in the final interview they reported being much more comfortable and confident in using English with NSs than at the beginning. Emma, for instance, at the beginning of the semester had a high level of language shock, as evident in the following excerpt:

"I feel like… I get kind of stressed in specific situations here in America. It's when I have to order things. And talk to people that speak fast, and when you have to say like… how do you call them?... fixed sentences that you are not familiarized with. So I get like… wuoh… super stressed cause sometimes they are not really nice, and they are like expecting you to know what you have to say, and you don't know, so they are like making faces, and I really hate when you don't know how to say… and I hate that…. and also sometimes that makes me feel like I'm very boring"

Furthermore, she also explains feeling idiotic at the library in one occasion because of her language shock:

"I was at the library, and I wanted to return books. And they told me many times and very fast "take them in? take them out? check them out?" or something like that. And I just said, "I want to return my books" and I don't know, I felt very stupid, I felt that I should have known what to say… take them out!"

However, she improved her sociocultural adaptation during the semester, and

according to her, those feelings completely disappeared upon the end of the stay, since she became completely comfortable in using her English. In contrast, Michelle and Mark increased their language shock during the semester. For instance, at the beginning of the semester Michelle could not understand people and was afraid of speaking. According to her, although teachers speak more clearly, she still had difficulty understanding English, and felt uncomfortable speaking in English because other students speak very well. At the end of the semester, her language shock was still strong, as evident in the following comment from her final interview, where she expresses that using English is more difficult than what she had expected:

> "In my class, many students can speak very rapid and good, and I felt very bad in the class, and… it's very problem. But I feel more relaxed than at the beginning in August, but still not comfortable. I make very basic grammar mistakes, and it is a big problem. First time I felt English is not difficult, but now it is difficult."

While Michelle seemed to maintain high levels of language shock through the semester, Mark notably increased his stress in using English. At the beginning of the semester, he felt he was comfortable in using the language because he had American co-workers in his workplace in Turkey, with whom he frequently interacted. Nevertheless, during the semester he did not have opportunities to interact and practice the language, and the final interview revealed a high level of language shock. As shown in the following excerpt, Mark wondered why sometimes he could speak very good English, but other times he felt very bad when using the L2:

> "Sometimes I can speak very fastly, very fluently… Some times, I can't speak anything. Yeah, I cannot make any sentences. I don't know why some times I can speak well and sometimes I can speak very badly. I wonder it, it's very interesting. Some times I feel very bad myself. I can't understand why."

A third aspect that determines psychological adaptation is ego permeability, or inhibition, which is the ability of the learner's identity to be permeated by input from the TL.

Ego permeability is most evident in learners' personality type, since extroverted sojourners are more likely to integrate within the TL group and be influenced by their views. In this sense, Mike and Michelle's cases sharply contrast. Mike explains that he is extroverted, social, and likes interacting with both international students and Americans. At the end of the sojourn he was excited to say that he had greatly improved his social life. According to Mike, what he most enjoyed about the stay was his social life, and making long-lasting American friends. In contrast, Michelle is aware that she is shy, and she strongly believes that this is her main problem for not quite being able to acculturate during the sojourn. According to her in the pre-interview: "I try to be social, but I thinks it's a problem for me." Similarly, in the post- interview she explains:

> "I think you have many opportunities and activities where you can talk and
> interact with people, but I think I have a problem; I am shy, and maybe I can't use
> these opportunities."

It should however be noted that ego permeability is not always determined by personality. William, for instance, is a social person who enjoys friendship, but his social network was limited to a cohesive group of Brazilians. He did not make any friends from the US during the semester, and hence, his ego-permeability remained low.

Regarding motivation, integrative motivation (a desire to learn the L2 for social reasons) is associated with higher levels of well-being and of integration into the TL community, while instrumental motivation (learning the L2 for professional purposes) is related to the fulfillment of academic goals. From the semi-structured interviews, some changes in informants' motivation indicated a development in psychological adaptation. More specifically, William changed from having an initial instrumental and integrative motivation to only being concerned about his integrative goals. Williams' initial motivation to study in the US was to grow academically, socially and personally. At the end of the

semester, however, he explained that he was not interested in taking English classes anymore, and that he was excited because the next semester he would not have English class anymore. He explicitly said he did not like English classes, since he preferred natural and informal learning.

In contrast, Sean and Mark initially had a desire both to integrate in the TL community and to improve their academic skills, but a lack of integration and academic pressure made them only concerned about their instrumental motivation at the end of the semester. Both informants were highly motivated to learn English outside of class, but they were disappointed because it was not like they expected. In Sean's case, he found it hard to integrate with the US community, given the problems he had with his US roommates. For Mark, in addition to the difficulty he found in making US friends, he had a high level of academic pressure.

Other informants did not undergo any changes in their initial motivation, and hence did not show psychological progress in this sense. Mike, David, Jeff and Lisa had both instrumental and integrative motivation at the beginning as well as at the end of the semester, Emma only had integrative motivation all through the stay, and Ethan and Michelle maintained only an instrumental motivation. For instance, Michelle explained in the first interview that she is not social, so she decided to study abroad only for academic purposes. Her main goal was to learn English to improve her job opportunities in her home country, and to have access to more research articles. At the end of the semester she was still only interested in learning English, and did not show any regret about not making any social progress or learning any informal English.

The role of academic pressure in shaping learners' psychological adaptation was particularly evident in the Turkish students, Sean, Michelle and Mark, since the three of them

were the only informants who pointed it out as a major challenge during the SA program. The rest of informants; that is, the Brazilian and Spanish learners, commented on the same main difference between education in their home countries and US education: course content is easier in the US, but there is a substantially higher homework load. Despite this, none of the Brazilian or Spanish students mentioned having trouble in completing the assignments or in keeping up with the homework load. According to Sean, for instance, "education in the US is good for lazy students; teachers give a lot of facilities for them." Taking all of the informants' comments into account, most of the participants preferred education in the US over education in their home countries.

Michelle and Sean's decrease in psychological adjustment, however, was partly attributed to academic pressure, while this was the main and foremost reason why Mark's psychological adaptation diminished through the semester. Turkish and Brazilian international students in the given programs have a year-long or two-year-long SA scholarship from their governments that covers most of their expenses. Nevertheless, students are required to pass a TOEFL test at the end of the first semester, which will determine their continuation in the program. Failing would mean a cease in the scholarship and returning to their home countries. Michelle, Sean and Mark were worried about this requirement, and spent most of their time during their first semester of immersion studying English through books. Sean explained that he even taught himself pronunciation through a book. He also mentioned making great efforts regarding listening to music and watching TV in English everyday. Sean said he had not made many friends so far, but he had studied hard and improved his English thanks to a listening book, reading, practicing vocabulary, writing a lot, and going to pronunciation and the writing labs. He is glad that the university offered international students many opportunities to improve their TOEFL scores.

Mark's SA experience was even more bounded by academic pressure. At the beginning of the semester, his main motivation for studying abroad was integrative, mainly to make US friends and to learn about their culture, although also to learn English in order to have better job opportunities in the future. When asked in the final interview about whether he was enrolled in any university clubs other than the Turkish association, his answer was the following:

> "No, I haven't signed yet. Because, we need TOEFL score, we have no more time, and so, as you know, we are in OPIE class, and they give a lot of homework. Our government wants us take TOEFL score and start a master degree, so we have no time. If I had time, I will attend to a lot of clubs and groups. When I was in my university in Turkey, I had attended mountain club, hiking club. The difference here is that I have no time. If I have time I would attend."

Mark was particularly concerned with his comprehension skills, so he started watching BBC and FOX news for one hour a day, and he felt his listening skills were improving because of that. He explained that he had changed his learning styles. At the beginning of the semester he only studied grammar and vocabulary, but he felt he was not improving enough to pass the TOEFL. Then he tried to include one hour a day of listening input, one hour of reading, speaking (he paid for private speaking sessions once a week), and daily study of pronunciation by checking the phonetics of words in the dictionary.

In a similar vein, social support from L1 peers also shaped learners' gains in psychological adaptation, and it was different across cultures: it was a principal factor for all of the Brazilian informants, it was partly determinant in the case of the Spanish informants, and there was no evidence of social support for the Turkish informants – or they did not give it importance. For instance, according to both William and Mike, what they enjoyed the most out of the semester was "their Brazilian family." Overall, the four Brazilian students explain they have made great Brazilian friends with whom they will be in contact after the SA program. William also explains that at the beginning of the semester the Brazilian students

234

did not know each other, so interactions were more superficial. However, as the semester went by, his feeling of well-being increased, and he was able to truly be the person he is, a positive, outgoing and warm person.

In summary, 6 of the 10 informants seemed to increase their psychological adaptation during the SA program, while 4 of them appeared to decrease it. Therefore, the qualitative analysis presented above points towards an increase in learners' psychological adaptation during SA. We propose the tentative hypothesis that during SA programs students experience positive gains in their psychological well being, which needs to be further explored in future studies.

Establishing a coding scheme based on Schumann's model allowed the observation of the different reasons for individual psychological adaptation trajectories. In particular, gains in psychological adaptation were determined by learners' changes in culture shock, language shock, ego permeability, motivation, academic pressure and social support. Moreover, psychological gains also seemed to be influenced by culture, as evident in the development of some traits, such as academic pressure and social support, which were diverse across cultural groups. Table 7.7 summarizes the aspects that were more salient in students' comments in their SA experiences, and which either enhanced or limited acculturation development.

Table 7.7. *Most salient acculturation aspects by case study participant*

	Sociocultural adaptation	**Psychological adaptation**
David	Integration strategy (assimilation): making close friends	Social support
Jeff	Integration strategy (assimilation): engaging in clubs	Social support
Emma	Integration strategy (assimilation): engaging in clubs	Language shock
Lisa	Integration strategy (assimilation): making close friends	Social support
Mark	Integration strategy (preservation)	Academic pressure
Michelle	Integration strategy (preservation)	Ego permeability
William	Integration strategy (preservation)	Social support
Mike	Integration strategy (preservation)	Social support
Ethan	Attitude	Ego permeability
Sean	Integration strategy (adaptation)	Culture shock

7.3. Discussion of findings

Research question 2 explored whether studying abroad makes a difference in learners' acculturation development, in terms of sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Since previous studies have observed a positive sociocultural development by SA students (Abduhllah *et al.*, 2015; O'Reily *et al.*, 2010), hypothesis 2 predicted that the participants in this study would increase their overall sociocultural adjustment during a semester-long SA program. In addition to this, hypothesis 3 stated that sociocultural adaptation development would be different across cultures.

The approach adopted to address RQ2 was to explore students' changes in different aspects of acculturation: sociocultural, psychological, behavioral and cognitive adaptation. Research findings showed that learners improve their acculturation during a semester-long SA program. Nevertheless, there were also instances of failure in acculturating across cultural groups and individuals. Previous studies have described acculturation development as a U-

Curve path that involves 3 or 4 stages. For instance, Ling and Lei (2014) distinguished a first phase of honeymoon high, a second one of bottoming out and a final phase of climbing up. If one hypothesizes that students may have already gone through stage 2 and are in stage 3, then a U-curve progress could have been experienced. Nevertheless, it may also be the case that learners just progressively increased their acculturation. The current study suggests that rather than describing acculturation as a U-Curve path, the different aspects involved in this complex process should be examined.

A first analysis of acculturation development was focused on learners' gains in sociocultural adaptation. In this sense, hypothesis 3 of the study suggested that there would be an increase in their sociocultural adaptation during the SA experience. This hypothesis was supported in the present study, since results revealed a general trend towards positive sociocultural adaptation gains. These findings are in line with previous studies that have reported that, despite the challenges found in immersing oneself in a new community, SA learners tend to integrate and assimilate its sociocultural values (Abduhllah *et al.*, 2015; O'Reily *et al.*, 2010; Podrug *et al.*, 2014; Ward *et al.*, 1998). Moreover, sociocultural acculturation was measured in terms of two subareas: behavioral and cognitive adaptation, with findings indicating that students make an improvement in both aspects. Nevertheless, the results related to hypothesis 3 also pointed to deviations from the general trend across cultures, individuals, and particular situations.

In what follows, a discussion of the results related to hypothesis 3 is presented, addressing the observed behavioral and cognitive gains, learners' sociocultural adaptation in particular situations, and sociocultural adaptation across cultural groups. Firstly, results revealed that learners increased both their behavioral and cognitive adaptation, but they showed higher cognitive than behavioral gains. Consequently, findings suggest that SA

programs are particularly beneficial in enhancing L2 students' ability to understand the TL sociocultural values and perceive cultural differences. In this sense, this study is in line with previous scholars who have emphasized that although cognitive and behavioral aspects are likely to improve abroad, they show different developmental paths. For instance, Podrug *et al.* (2014) observed that after 12 months of immersion, students obtained higher behavioral scores and lower cognitive scores. Since the present study does not include information about the participants' acculturation during 12 months, it is difficult to compare our results with those reported by Podrug *et al.* (2014). However, considering their findings, the participants in the present study are likely to continue developing their sociocultural adaptation, an issue worth exploring in future research. Similarly, further studies should examine whether SA programs facilitate an enhancement of intercultural understanding[2], an aspect that is more difficult to learn in the FL setting. Intercultural understanding does not only imply sharing the values, behavior and way of thinking of the TL community. It also entails being able to see things from both the perspective of the heritage culture and the perspective of the host culture, and hence an understanding of cultural and social differences.

Moreover, the participants' sociocultural adjustment revealed specific situations that presented difficulty for learners' acculturation, as well as contexts in which they coped with less difficulty at the end of the sojourn. A detailed exploration of students' changes in the 29 scenarios included in the SCAS provided further support for the general trend observed that SA was particularly beneficial for sociocultural adaptation. Indeed, higher gains in sociocultural adaptation were associated with cognitive aspects, such as cross-cultural sensitivity: understanding ethnic or cultural differences, and taking an American perspective

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[2] *Intercultural understanding*, synonym of *cross-cultural understanding*, refers to learners' ability to understand, manage, and assimilate differences between the TL culture and their own. Bennett (1993: 24) defines intercultural understanding as "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development."

on the culture. In addition, students also improved their adaptation in situations related to the ability to communicate with other cultures, such as making themselves understood, and communicating with people of a different ethnic group. In contrast, negative sociocultural gains were associated to behavioral aspects, namely finding food that they enjoyed, and dealing with the climate.

A possible explanation for the limited and even negative progress in behavioral adaptation aspects is that some students may have acculturated at an intermediate level, while the majority of learners acculturated to a substantial extent. According to Marin (1992), there are 3 different levels of acculturation – superficial, intermediate and substantial – and that cognitive adaptation corresponds with the substantial level, while behavioral adaptation is associated with intermediate acculturation. According to Marin (1992), the superficial adaptation level involves aspects such as learning about the history and tradition of the TL culture, and getting used to new eating habits. The intermediate level is determined by an improvement in behavioral factors such as language use, interaction with L2 users, and preference of L2 media. Finally, a significant level of acculturation is achieved when the sojourner has the most positive beliefs about the TL culture and values and has assimilated the L2 sociocultural norms, hence corresponding with cognitive acculturation. Taking into account findings related to hypothesis 3, it seems that learners tend to improve their cognitive adaptation, pointing to a substantial sociocultural adaptation development during the SA experience.

The results reported above related to hypothesis 3 were supported by a qualitative exploration of the reasons why learners increased or decreased their levels of sociocultural adaptation. Schumann's (1978, 1986) model was adopted to interview a subset of 10 participants. As reported in chapter 1 (see section 1.4), the author distinguishes 7 social

variables that determined acculturation: social dominance, integration strategy, enclosure, cohesiveness and size, cultural congruence, attitude, and intended length of residence. Learners' comments indicated that higher acculturation gains were mainly related to the social integration strategy adopted by each student. This was evident in the case of David, Jeff, Emma and Lisa, who were willing to assimilate the TL sociocultural values, and made a conscious effort to integrate into the TL community. On the other hand, limited and negative sociocultural gains were attributed to the tendency to adopt a preservation integration strategy, as did Mark, Michelle, William and Mike. Drawing from these qualitative findings, it is possible that SA learners' adopted integration strategy (assimilation, preservation and adaptation) had an impact on their acculturation development.

In addition to this, the qualitative analysis revealed patterns of psychological adaptation. To explore changes in students' psychological well-being, Schumann's (1978, 1986) distinction of 4 affective factors was adopted. These include language shock, culture shock, ego permeability, and motivation. Additionally, the role of social support and academic pressure was analysed following recent studies on international students acculturation (O'Reily *et al.*, 2010). Results suggested that 6 participants increased their psychological adaptation throughout the semester, while 4 of them showed lower levels of well-being at the end of the stay. Positive psychological adaptation gains were related to social support from L1 peers. This was evident in the case of David, Jeff, Lisa, William and Mike. For instance, Mike and William explicitly expressed having a wonderful semester in the US thanks to the friendship they developed with their L1 peers. Furthermore, limited and negative gains in psychological adaptation acculturation were attributed to a lack of ego permeability (Michelle and Ethan), academic pressure (Mark), and culture shock (Sean).

While the present study points to an influence of social support and academic pressure

on SA students' acculturation gains, previous studies have reported mixed findings on this association. For instance, our findings are in line with those reported by Abdullah *et al.* (2015), who observed a strong influence of social support from family, friends and significant others on sociocultural adaptation by international students in Malaysian university. In contrast, the present results are not in line with O'Reilly *et al.*'s (2010) study of sociocultural and psychological adaptation by 124 international students in an Irish university. These authors did not observe a significant effect of social support and academic pressure on acculturation. The participants in their study had a high level of social support and low levels of college-related stress, but still showed low sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Results from a qualitative analysis in the present study are thus not in line with those reported by O'Reilly *et al.* (2010), since a relevant influence of social support and academic pressure on acculturation has been observed. It is difficult to compare research outcomes given that O'Reilly *et al.* (2010) explored the influence of social support and academic pressure on acculturation quantitatively, while the present analysis of social support and academic stress is qualitative. Nevertheless, results from this study provide additional insights to the relationship between social support, academic pressure and acculturation, indicating that the development of the two aspects over time is likely to exert an influence on students' adaptation progress.

A further possible explanation for the differences between our findings and O'Reilly *et al.*'s (2010) is that there may be a third variable at play influencing acculturation progress, that is, duration of stay. While the present study explores acculturation gains over time, O'Reilly et al (2010) analyse the relationship among different adaptation aspects at particular points in time. Therefore, social support and academic pressure may not have a significant role at particular points in the sojourn (as implied in O'Reilly *et al.*'s, 2010, study), but they

may be important to consider when analyzing acculturation gains over time (as the present study results suggest). With this in mind, we propose that there is a need for further exploration on the role of academic pressure and social support in shaping students' process of acculturation abroad.

In addition to social support and academic pressure, in the present study ego permeability; that is, the ability of the learner's identity to be permeated by input from the TL identity, was associated with psychological acculturation. Results indicated that identification with L1 peers was related to higher psychological adaptation gains. The positive effect of identity with co-nationals and adaptation in a new environment was pointed out by Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001), who emphasize the importance of maintaining contact with the heritage culture while being abroad, a fact which tends to be disregarded by SA program organizers and by the students themselves. In this sense, the present results challenge the traditional view that interaction with L1 peers during SA programs should be avoided. It is possible that maintaining contact with L1 culture may reduce L2 learners' anxiety. In fact, learners like Mark and Michelle were disappointed with their lack of interactions with NSs.

Finally, a comparison between sociocultural and psychological adaptation was addressed. Qualitative findings indicated that although both sociocultural and psychological adaptation seem to increase, they develop to different extents. In fact, some learners experienced gains in psychological adaptation but not sociocultural adaptation (as was the case of Mike and William), and vice-versa (Sean, Ethan and Michelle). Other students showed an increase in both sociocultural and psychological adaptation (David, Emma, Jeff and Lisa), while one participant decreased his levels in both respects (Mark).

The reported findings are in line with previous research that has revealed that during the first semester of immersion (4 months) students are likely to improve both their

sociocultural and their psychological adaptation (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010; Ward *et al.*, 1998), although at later stages the two aspects show different developmental paths. The present study is in line with O'Reilly *et al.*'s (2010) exploration of sociocultural and psychological adaptation by international students during 3 months of immersion in Ireland. Similarly to our findings, these authors, although observed low levels of sociocultural and psychological adaptation, reported an increase in terms of both aspects. Our findings are also in line with Ward *et al.*'s (1998) longitudinal investigation on the adaptation of Japanese students in New Zealand, as they observed a significant increase in both sociocultural and psychological adjustment during the first 4 months of immersion. After those first 4 months, psychological adaptation decreases, to then show a steady increase after the 6th month of immersion. Sociocultural adaptation, however, seems to decrease from month 6 to month 12. Thus, it is likely that length of study abroad plays a role in learners' sociocultural and psychological adaptation, and constitutes an issue to be further explored.

Moving on to hypothesis 4, research findings revealed that the development of sociocultural adjustment was different across cultural groups, therefore providing support for the hypothesis. In this sense, cultural similarity seemed to play a key role in learners' gains in adaptation to the US context. More specifically, Brazilian students – who shared the most similar sociocultural values with the US community – experienced significantly higher levels of acculturation in comparison with other groups, particularly with Saudi Arabian students, who decreased their acculturation level upon the SA program. Turkish students, moreover, did not show any overall acculturation gains, as they slightly improved their behavioral adaptation, and slightly decreased their cognitive adaptation. Regarding the Chinese and Thai groups, they experienced some improvement, but still significantly lower than the Brazilian group. This being said, the idea that US and Brazilian cultures share the most similarities was

supported in the qualitative analysis by comments from the participants of the study. Jeff, for instance, commented on the similarity between US and Brazilian cultures, and explained that he did not experience any cultural shock because of this resemblance.

The positive influence of cultural similarity on acculturation reported in the present investigation supports previous studies that have also found that SA students' willingness to establish meaningful contact with members of the TL community and to acculturate is determined by cultural distance (Stephenson, 2000; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward *et al.*, 2001). For instance, our study is in line with Ward and Kennedy (1999), who noticed that cultural similarity determined acculturation by different groups of international students in Singapore and in New Zealand. More specifically, the authors observed that Chinese students had less difficulty acculturating in Singapore than British, US and New Zealand students. Similarly, in the context of New Zealand, Malaysians and Singaporeans had less difficulty acculturating than the Chinese. The present study reports findings parallel to Ward and Kennedy's (1999), since Brazilians – the cultural group that shares most sociocultural values with US society – showed the greatest acculturation gains in the context of SA programs in the US, as opposed to Turkish, Chinese, Thai and Saudi Arabian students.

To sum up, results on the development of acculturation revealed valuable insights into general trends of adaptation in a SA context, as well as individual and group-level trajectories. These findings provide evidence that acculturation is a complex phenomenon, shaped by both environmental and individual variables (Schumann, 1986).

7.4. Summary of the chapter

Chapter 7 addressed whether studying abroad would make a difference in L2 learners' process of acculturation. Firstly, research findings showed that students improved their

sociocultural adaptation. Thus, the results confirmed hypothesis 2 of the study. Nevertheless, decreases were observed across cultures, situations and learners. More specifically, students increased their level of cognitive acculturation, which involves an understanding of cross-cultural differences, and their ability to communicate. However, despite overall trends, students decreased their adaptation to 2 particular situations: getting used to new food and dealing with the climate. Additionally, the qualitative analysis suggests that sociocultural adaptation was particularly determined by learners' integration strategy.

The qualitative analysis also allowed for an exploration of learners' psychological adaptation during the semester, indicating that 6 of the 10 interviewed participants experienced positive psychological gains. Moreover, learners' comments revealed that psychological acculturation development was determined by social support, academic pressure, ego permeability and culture shock.

In addition, hypothesis 3, which predicted that sociocultural adaptation would be different across cultures, was supported. In this sense, findings showed that the Brazilian group of students experienced significantly higher gains than Chinese (mainly), and Thai, Saudi Arabian and Turkish learners.

In conclusion, the results presented in chapter 7 add new insights into the study abroad research field by reporting how students with different cultural backgrounds develop their sociocultural and psychological adaptation during a semester-long program. More specifically, this study focuses on two sub-aspects of sociocultural adaptation, cognitive and behavioral adaptation, thus providing an in-depth acculturation account.

Having presented these findings, the interest lays now on how acculturation determines learners' pragmatic development. The next chapter addresses this issue by presenting the results of the influence of learners' acculturation progress on their acquisition

of pragmatic routines across cultures.

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Pragmatic routines are particularly relevant in the field of intercultural pragmatics, since they represent language use by particular speech communities, which either constitute a culture group or are embedded within a culture. Consequently, it may be predicted that the more successfully an individual integrates into a given culture, the more he/she will learn to comprehend and use routines. Despite this assumption, research on the relationship between concepts such as acculturation, integration or adaptation, and pragmatic learning is rather scarce. The few investigations that have addressed this association (Schmidt, 1983) have found some connection between acculturation and pragmatic learning (see section 3.4.5), although these have been limited to case studies (Schmidt, 1983), and to particular aspects of the wide phenomenon of acculturation (Eslami & Jin Ahn, 2014; Kinginger, 2008; Siegal, 1995). Bearing in mind the existing findings, the present study seeks to answer a third research question, which investigates the relationship between acculturation and learning pragmatic routines during SA programs. Chapter 8 presents the results and a discussion of findings from the data analysis regarding RQ3 and its corresponding hypotheses, which were formulated as follows:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): *Is there any relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA?*

- H5: there will be a positive influence of degree of acculturation on learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during SA (Schmidt, 1983).

- H6: the relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines will be different across cultures.

To answer RQ3, section 8.1 addresses quantitative findings, which compare data

from the SCAS (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), and results from the pragmatic routines test. Section 8.2 presents the qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews which pose psychological and sociocultural adjustment questions to 10 participants. The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to support the quantitative results with details on how sociocultural adaptation determines acquisition of pragmatic routines. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis includes information about the effect of psychological acculturation, which is not revealed by the quantitative analysis.

8.1. Quantitative results

8.1.1. Sociocultural adaptation and acquisition of pragmatic routines

Chapter 6 presented two relevant findings. Firstly, L2 learners improve their ability to recognize and to produce routines during a semester-long SA program. Secondly, different cultures presented significantly varied learning trajectories. More specifically, Brazilian students showed the greatest pragmatic gains, while Chinese students showed the most limited gains. In addition to this, chapter 7 included the findings that participants of the study also increased their sociocultural adaptation upon the semester, particularly in terms of cognitive acculturation – gains in behavioral adaptation were relatively smaller. Likewise, acculturation development was different across cultures. Once again, Brazilian students showed the highest gains in sociocultural adaptation, and, in this regard, significantly differed from Saudi Arabian and Chinese students.

Bearing these results in mind, the analysis on the relationship between sociocultural adaptation and pragmatic learning focuses on two cultural groups: Brazilian ($n = 32$) and Chinese ($n = 36$). These groups were selected for analysis for two reasons. Firstly, they are the most representative groups, since they include the highest number of participants, as

compared with other cultures. Secondly, differences in terms of both sociocultural adaptation and acquisition of routines were significantly more evident between these two groups. Hence, the Brazilian and Chinese groups are optimal representatives to achieve a valuable and complete understanding on how sociocultural adaptation determines gains in pragmatic routines across cultures.

Section 8.1.1.1 presents the results on the influence of sociocultural adaptation gains on acquisition of pragmatic routines by the Brazilian group, and section 8.1.1.2 displays the same analysis for the Chinese group. Both sections follow a similar structure: firstly, the influence of behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adaptation on gains in recognition of pragmatic routines is presented. Secondly, the analysis is centered on production gains as the dependent variable. These relationships are examined with a series of linear regression analyses, which in this case are the most suitable statistical tools to investigate cause-effect relationships among the given variables.

8.1.1.1. The case of the Brazilian group

The Brazilian group comprises 32 learners (26.2% of the total sample of participants in the study), 13 females and 19 males, whose ages range from 19 to 23 years (average: 21.09 years). Regarding their English proficiency, 3 are beginners, 17 intermediate learners, and 12 have an advanced level of English.

Brazilian students showed the highest gains in both recognition and production of pragmatic routines, as compared with the rest of the cultural groups (see section 6.1). They also displayed the highest improvement in sociocultural adaptation in terms of behavioral and of cognitive acculturation (see section 7.1). Table 1 presents the descriptive data on the Brazilian students' gains in sociocultural adaptation – as regards behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural level – and their gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines –

recognition, production, and overall pragmatic routines.

Table 8.1. *Gain means and standard deviations in sociocultural adaptation and in acquisition of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students*

	M	*SD*
SOCIOCULTURAL ADAPTATION		
Behavioral gains	0.427	0.404
Cognitive gains	0.595	0.549
Overall gains	0.469	0.418
PRAGMATIC ROUTINES		
Recognition gains	2.33	2.454
Production gains	3.37	3.090
Overall gains	5.70	4.662

In Table 8.1, it can be observed that regarding sociocultural adaptation, the development experienced by the Brazilian group followed the general trend revealed in chapter 7.1; that is, they improved their cognitive acculturation more than their behavioral adaptation. This means that they particularly increased their understanding of US values and cultural differences upon a semester abroad. With respect to acquisition of pragmatic routines, however, they showed higher gains in production, while the analysis with the sample of 122 international students pointed to a higher recognition gains ratio. The SA program was thus more beneficial for the Brazilian students in terms of improving their use of appropriate pragmatic routines.

In what follows, results on the influence of behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adaptation development on the acquisition of pragmatic routines is presented.

Effects of sociocultural adaptation on gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students

In order to examine the influence of sociocultural adaptation gains on improvement in the ability to recognize pragmatic routines by Brazilian students, a linear regression analysis was performed, with overall sociocultural adaptation and the 2 subscales – namely, behavioral and cognitive acculturation – as the independent variables, and recognition gains as the dependent factor. Figure 8.1 illustrates these results in a graph.
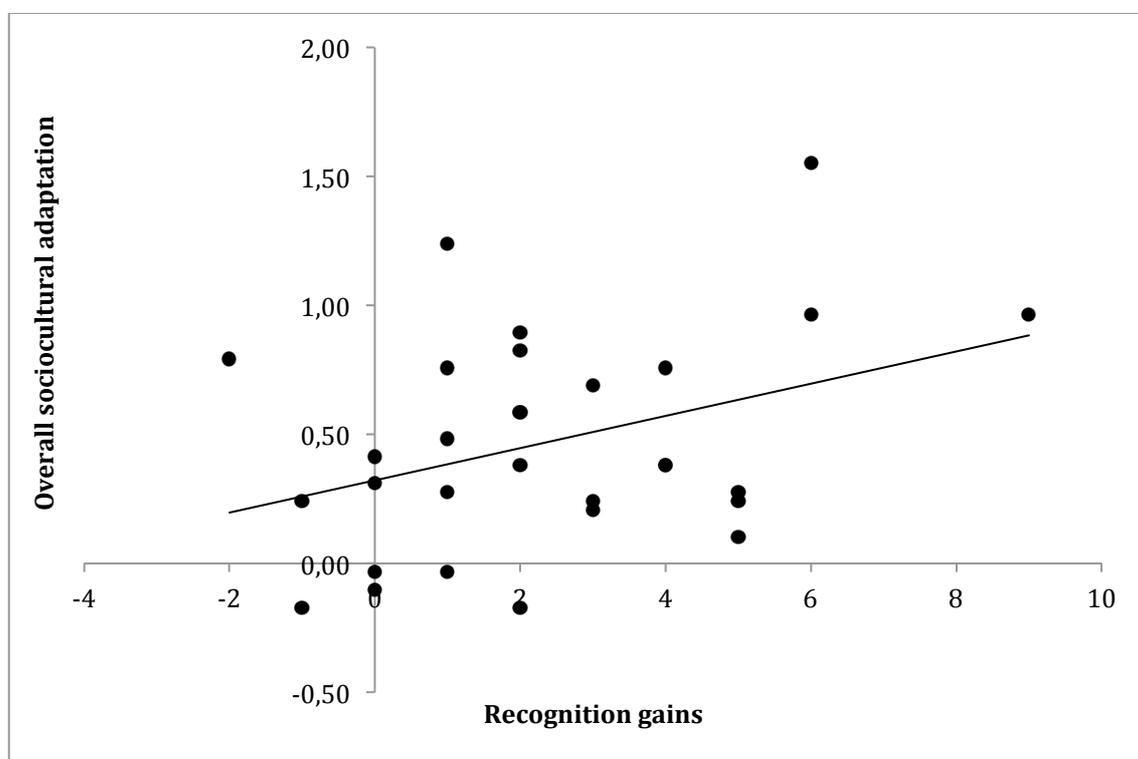
Figure 8.1. Linear regression between sociocultural adaptation and gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students.

From Figure 8.1, it can be ascertained that the regression analysis yielded a positive association between sociocultural adaptation gains and improvement in recognition of

pragmatic routines. Results from a first simple linear regression indicated that sociocultural adjustment significantly predicted gains in recognition of pragmatic routines (β = .368; p = .045). Moreover, the effect size of the influence was medium, since the predictor variable, in this case sociocultural adjustment, accounts for the 10% of the variance of the dependent variable, namely recognition gains (adjusted R^2 = .105) (Cohen, 1998).[1]

A second regression analysis was conducted with two predictor variables, namely behavioral and cognitive adaptation, in an attempt to obtain a more detailed account of the influence of sociocultural adaptation on recognition gains. Figure 8.2 illustrates this multivariate regression analysis.
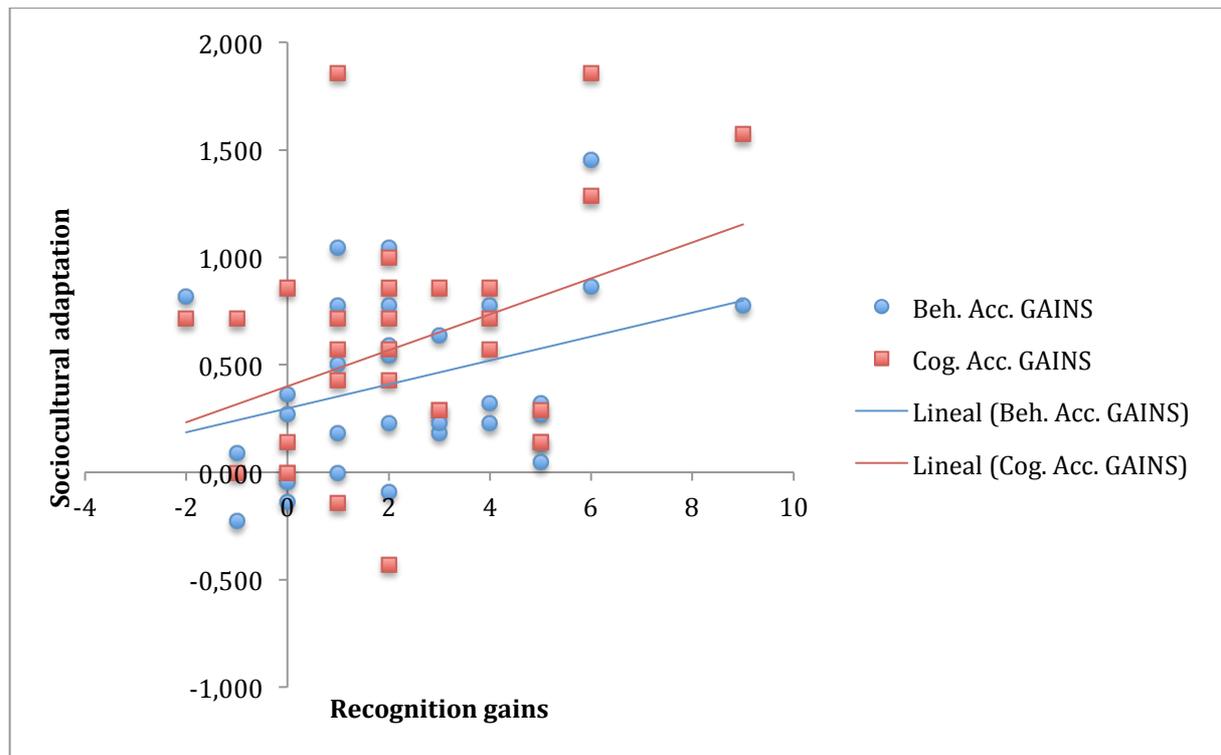

Figure 8.2. Linear regression between behavioral adaptation, cognitive adaptation, and gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students.

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[1] See Cohen (1998) for an explanation on size effects in regression analysis. A small effect size is indicated by an R² of .02 (meaning that X explains 2% of the variance of Y). R² of .15 accounts for a medium-size effect, and R² of .35 indicates a large effect size.

In Figure 8.2, one can observe a positive association between behavioral and cognitive acculturation, and gains in recognition of pragmatic routines. The statistical analysis confirmed this association. Recognition gains were significantly positively influenced by behavioral adaptation (β = .338; p = .067), and by cognitive adaptation (β = .375; p = .041). In particular, behavioral and cognitive adaptation combined accounted for 8% of the variance, with a small effect size (adjusted R^2 = .083; p = .091).

To sum up, results on the influence of sociocultural adaptation on gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students point to a significant positive effect. This implies that Brazilian students who successfully improved their ability to adapt to the social and cultural norms in the US tended to improve their ability to recognize pragmatic routines upon a semester abroad. In addition to this, the two aspects of sociocultural adaptation – namely behavioral and cognitive adaptation – were examined, with results pointing to a significant positive effect of both. In other words, a tendency was observed regarding students who improved their behavioral adaptation; that is, their acquisition of social skills and ability to deal with common situations such as going shopping or dealing with bureaucracy, also showing gains in recognition of pragmatic routines. Likewise, learners who improved their cognitive adaptation, that is, understanding US sociocultural values, being aware of cultural differences, and seeing things from the US perspective, also tended to show progress in their pragmatic recognition. Hence, it seems that for Brazilian students development of recognition of routines is associated with facing common daily situations in the SA environment, and with understanding the sociocultural values of the US community.

Effects of sociocultural adaptation in gains in production of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students

Further linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship of sociocultural adjustment, in terms of behavioral and cognitive adaptation, on gains in production of routines. Figure 8.3 illustrates the regression line on how overall sociocultural adaptation as the predictor variable determines improvement in production of pragmatic routines.
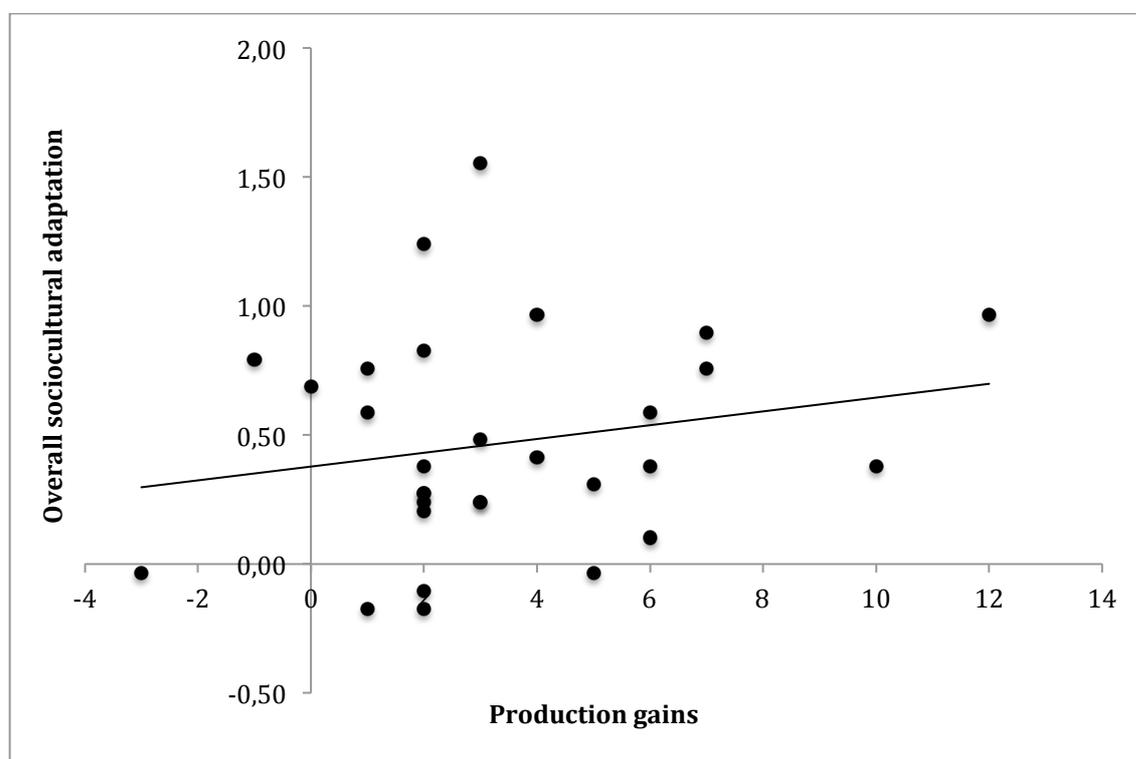

Figure 8.3. Linear regression between sociocultural adaptation and gains in production of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students.

Although a trend may be observed in Figure 8.3, results from the regression analysis indicated that sociocultural adaptation does not exert a significant influence on production gains ($\beta = .199$; $p = .292$). Hence, gains in production of routines by Brazilian students

seems unrelated to their gains in sociocultural adaptation. To gain more details on the sociocultural adaptation as a predictor variable, its two subscales – behavioral and cognitive acculturation – were examined as independent variables in a multivariate regression analysis. Figure 8.4 displays the regression slopes of behavioral and cognitive adaptation as determiners of production gains.
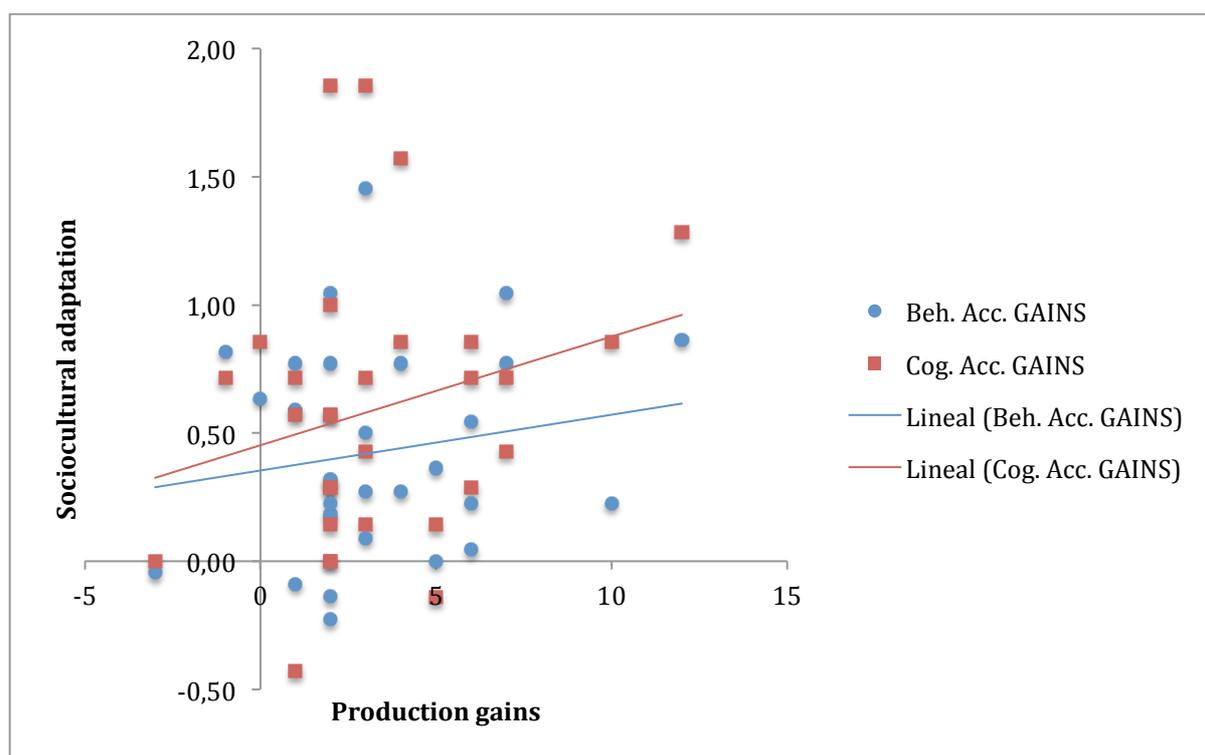

Figure 8.4. Linear regression between behavioral adaptation, cognitive adaptation, and gains in production of pragmatic routines by Brazilian students.

In Figure 8.4 one may observe a tendency of Brazilian students who improve their production of routines also to show gains in their behavioral adaptation, and even higher gains in their cognitive adjustment. Nevertheless, results from a multivariate regression indicated that these trends are not statistically significant. No significant effects on production gains were observed of either behavioral adaptation ($\beta = .167$; $p = .379$), or

cognitive adjustment (β = .240; p = .202). Hence, improvement in sociocultural adaptation by Brazilian students seems unrelated to gains in their ability to produce routines.

In conclusion, a quantitative analysis of the effect of sociocultural adjustment on gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines experienced by the Brazilian group of students pointed to a significant positive influence of sociocultural adaptation alone on gains in recognition of routines. Furthermore, both behavioral and cognitive adaptation had a significant impact on recognition gains. Regarding gains in production, they were not significantly influenced by either sociocultural adaptation or by behavioral or cognitive adaptation. Therefore, quantitative results on the influence of sociocultural adaptation on gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines by the Brazilian group reveal that sociocultural adjustment only predicted recognition gains, and that they improved their production ability independently from their adaptation to the TL community. In what follows, the same analysis is replicated with the Chinese group, in an attempt to gain an intercultural understanding of the examined cause-effect relationship.

8.1.1.2. The case of the Chinese group

The Chinese sample includes 36 students, representing the 29.5% of the total sample. There are 11 females and 25 males, whose age ranges from 18 to 25 years (average: 22.52 years). Regarding their proficiency, the group has 7 beginners, 22 intermediate, and 7 advanced learners of English.

Chinese students showed the lowest gains in both recognition and production of pragmatic routines, as compared with the other cultural groups, and particularly in comparison with the Brazilian group. They also displayed a lower improvement in sociocultural adaptation than the Brazilian students, although the ratio was higher than the

Turkish, Saudi Arabian and Thai students' sociocultural adaptation gains. Table 8.2 presents descriptive data on gains experienced by the Chinese group in sociocultural adaptation – behavioral, cognitive and overall gains – and their improvement in knowledge of pragmatic routines – in terms of recognition, production, and overall routines.

Table 8.2. *Gain means and standard deviations in sociocultural adaptation and acquisition of pragmatic routines by Chinese students*

	M	*SD*
SOCIOCULTURAL ADAPTATION		
Behavioral gains	0.014	0.408
Cognitive gains	0.245	0.644
Overall gains	0.110	0.644
PRAGMATIC ROUTINES		
Recognition	1.19	2.692
Production	0.39	3.842
Overall	1.58	4.693

Table 8.2 reveals that, similarly to Brazilian students, Chinese students followed the general trend of improving their cognitive adaptation to a greater extent than their behavioral adaptation (see section 7.1). Indeed, cognitive gains are particularly higher than behavioral ones by this culture group (*M* cognitive gains = 0.245; *M* behavioral gains = 0.014). This means that the SA experience was particularly beneficial for Chinese students in terms of improving their understanding of US sociocultural values, as well as their understanding of cross-cultural differences. Regarding gains in pragmatic routines, interestingly, they showed very low production gains (*M* = 0.39) and substantially higher recognition gains (*M* = 1.19), implying that learning to produce routines seems to present certain difficulties for the Chinese group, while the general trend was to show slightly

257

higher gains in recognition over the examined semester (see section 6.1).

Bearing in mind these descriptive findings, statistical results on the influence of behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adaptation development on the acquisition of pragmatic routines are now presented.

Effects of sociocultural adaptation in gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Chinese students

A first linear regression analysis was carried out to examine the influence of sociocultural adaptation on gains in the ability to recognize pragmatic routines by Chinese students. The predictor variable was overall sociocultural adaptation, and pragmatic routines recognition gains was the dependent variable. Figure 8.5 graphically illustrates that association.
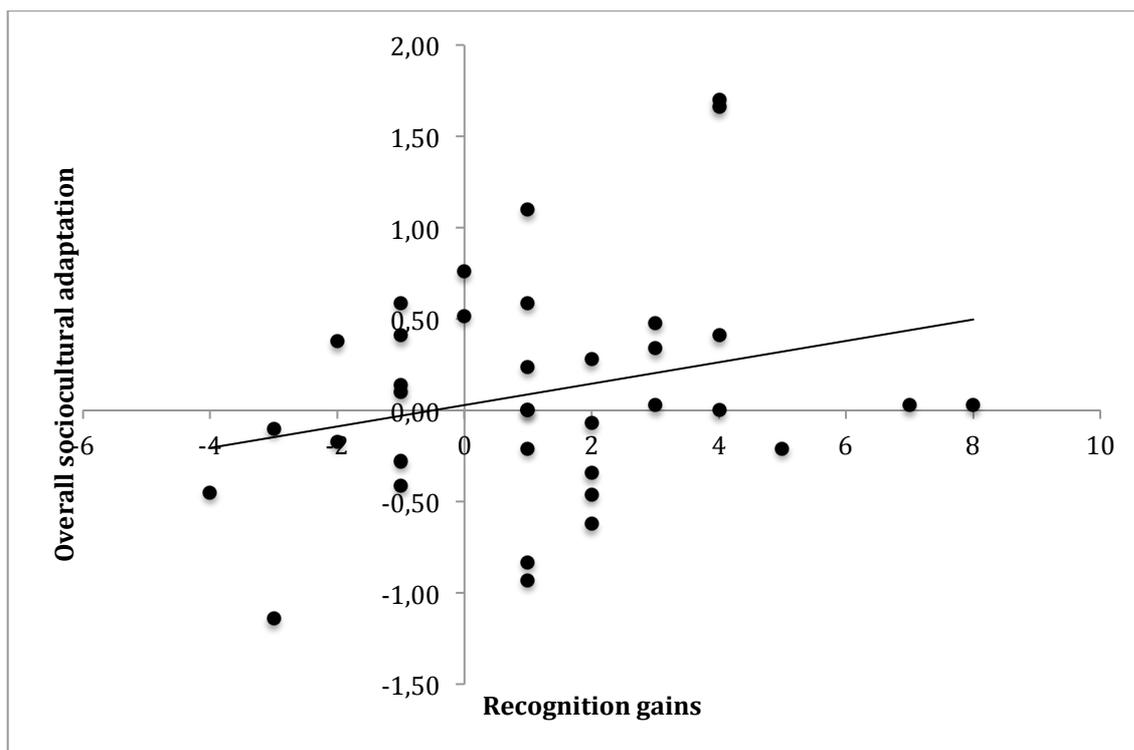
Figure 8.5. Linear regression between sociocultural adaptation and gains in recognition of

pragmatic routines by Chinese students.

Although a trend may be observed in Figure 8.5; that is, recognition of routines

seems to improve as sociocultural adaptation progresses, the regression analysis indicated

that this association was not significant (β = .264; p = .12). Therefore, sociocultural

adaptation gains and recognition gains seem to be unrelated in the case of Chinese students

learning ESL in the US. This finding implies that Chinese students who improve their

sociocultural adaptation upon a semester of study abroad do not necessarily make similar

progress in their ability to recognize pragmatic routines. Nevertheless, a more precise

analysis of sociocultural adaptation as a predictor variable was carried out by exploring the

impact of behavioral and of cognitive adaptation on gains in recognition showed by the

Chinese group of students. Figure 8.6 displays the regression analysis slopes of this analysis.
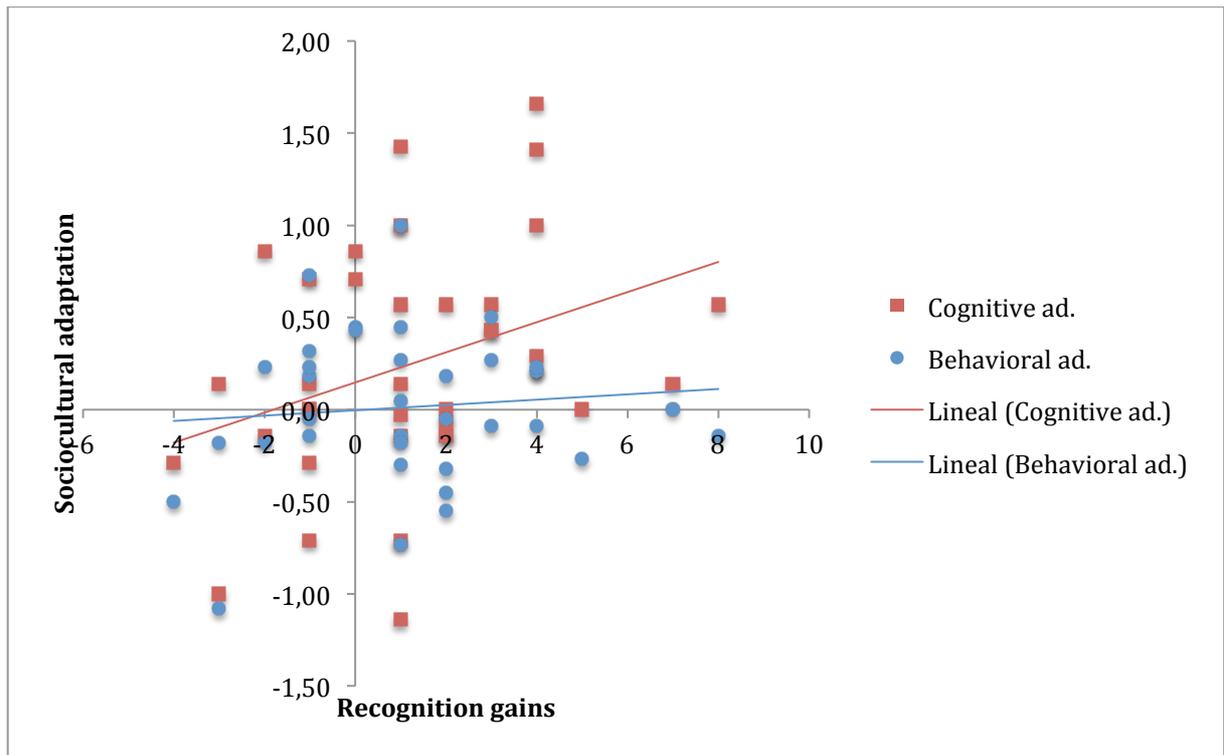
Figure 8.6. Linear regression between behavioral adaptation, cognitive adaptation, and gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Chinese students.

In Figure 8.6, it may be ascertained that cognitive adaptation is a better predictor of gains in the recognition of pragmatic routines than behavioral adaptation. Indeed, the regression analysis revealed a significant effect of cognitive adaptation on recognition gains ($\beta = .342$; $p = .041$), and a non-statistically significant influence of behavioral adaptation ($\beta = .217$; $p = .204$). More specifically, cognitive adaptation accounts for 9% of the variance in gains in recognition of routines (adjusted $R^2 = .09$), which indicates a small-to-medium effect size. These results indicate that Chinese students who improved their understanding of the sociocultural values in the US, and who became aware of cross-cultural differences were those more likely to improve their ability to recognize pragmatic routines upon the semester. Nonetheless, making progress in their ability to successfully cope with common

daily situations was unrelated to their recognition gains.

The tenet that recognition improvement is significantly predicted by cognitive adaptation gains is particularly interesting when considering the performance of the Chinese group presented in Table 8.2. Chinese students made substantially greater gains in their recognition of routines, in comparison to the progress in their production ability. Likewise, they improved their cognitive adaptation to a much greater extent than their behavioral adjustment. Consequently, we may hypothesize that their high cognitive adaptation was what enhanced improvement in Chinese group's recognition of routines.

Effects of sociocultural adaptation in gains in production of pragmatic routines by Chinese students

Figure 8.7 illustrates the regression analysis of the influence of sociocultural adjustment on gains in production of routines by the Chinese group of students.
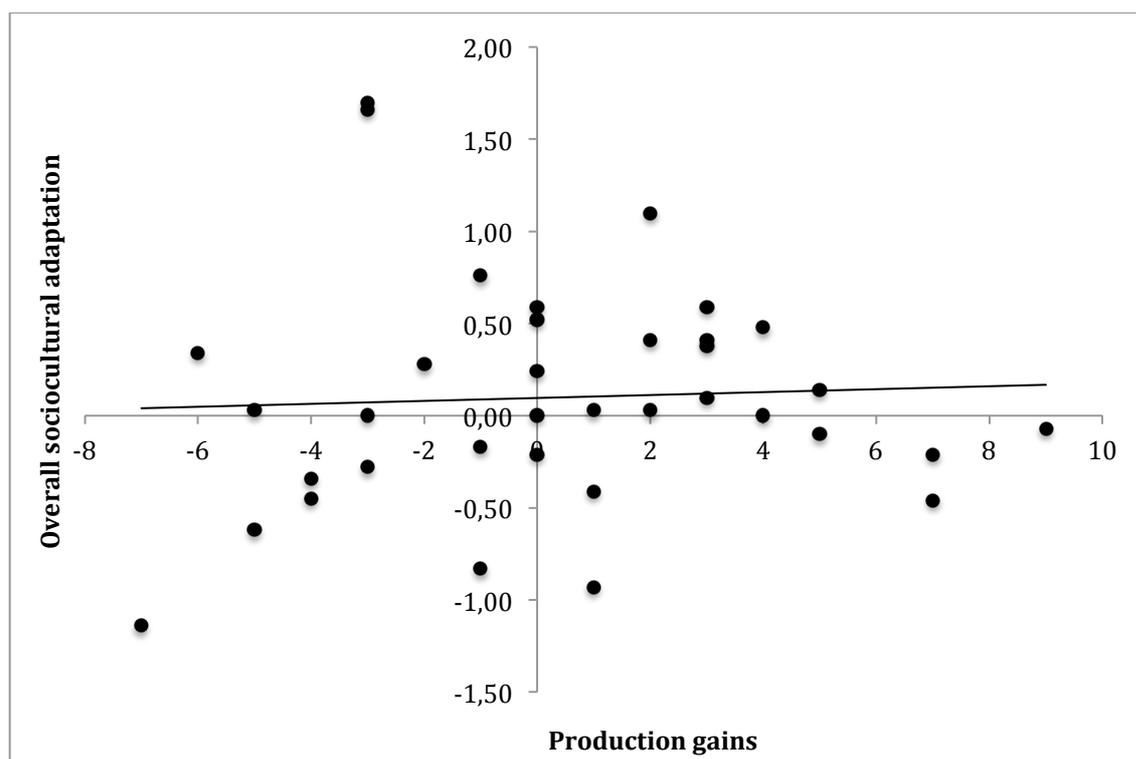
Figure 8.7. Linear regression between sociocultural adaptation and gains in production of

pragmatic routines by Chinese students.

From Figure 8.7 it may be predicted that gains in production of routines are not substantially predicted by sociocultural adjustment development. A linear regression analysis revealed that, indeed, this effect was not statistically significant (β = .032; p = .854). Consequently, we may hypothesize that those learners that made progress in their sociocultural adaptation during the semester abroad did not necessarily show an improvement in their pragmatic production. In order to gain more insights into the role of sociocultural adaptation on pragmatic gains, the influence of behavioral and cognitive adaptation on gains in production of routines was examined. Figure 8 provides visual information about this influence.
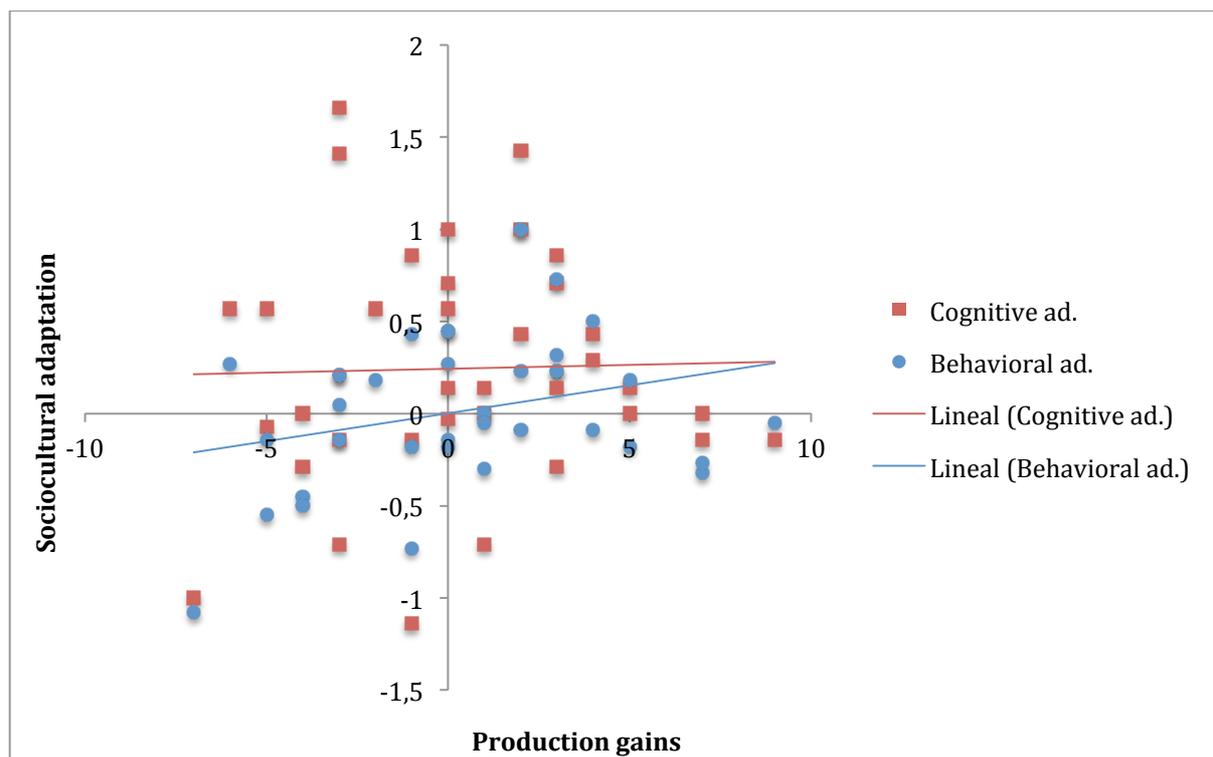
Figure 8.8. Linear regression between behavioral adaptation, cognitive adaptation, and gains in recognition of pragmatic routines by Chinese students.

Figure 8.8 shows that behavioral adaptation may be a better predictor of gains in production of routines than cognitive adjustment. In Table 8.2, we observed that in comparison with recognition, the Chinese group did not experience high gains in production of routines, and their behavioral gains were not very positive either. The means of production gains ($M = 0.39$; $SD = 3.84$) as well as the means of behavioral gains ($M = 0.01$; $SD = 0.41$) were relatively low compared to other ratios and with data from the Brazilian group. Bearing these ideas in mind, a linear regression analysis between behavioral adaptation and cognitive adaptation, and changes in production of routines revealed a significant impact of behavioral adaptation, and a non-significant effect of cognitive adjustment. The slope of the regression line of behavioral adaptation was ($\beta = .285$; $p =$

.092), although the relationship was relatively small (adjusted R^2 = .054). In other words, the predictor of behavioral adaptation explained 5% of the variance in production gains. Cognitive adaptation, in contrast, was not significantly associated with production gains (β = .025; p = .884). These results parallel findings on the impact of sociocultural adaptation on recognition gains by the Chinese group, since high recognition gains are predicted by high levels of cognitive adaptation, and low production gains significantly coincide with low gains in behavioral adaptation. Consequently, we may hypothesize that although Chinese students showed limited gains in production of pragmatic routines, those students that actually made some progress in their pragmatic production also increased their behavioral adaptation in the SA environment.

To sum up, results from a series of linear regression analyses revealed that recognition gains are influenced by sociocultural adaptation development in the case of Chinese learners, while production gains are unrelated to sociocultural development. In particular, cognitive adaptation seems to enhance their ability to recognize routines. Gains in production of pragmatic routines were relatively low compared to recognition, but they were predicted by improvement in behavioral adaptation. That said, we may predict that Chinese students who improve their cognitive adaptation over a semester abroad would also tend to improve their recognition of routines. Likewise, Chinese students that make progress in their behavioral adaptation would tend to show gains in production of pragmatic routines.

Brazilian and Chinese students presented different pragmatic learning trajectories, which were determined by sociocultural adaptation changes at different extents. In the case of the Brazilian students, only their gains in recognition of pragmatic routines were significantly determined by gains in sociocultural adaptation, both in terms of behavioral and cognitive adjustment. Nevertheless, their progress in pragmatic production was

unrelated to sociocultural adaptation. Regarding the Chinese students, the effect of sociocultural adaptation gains on the development of their knowledge of routines was rather weak, although some influence was observed between gains in cognitive adaptation and recognition gains, and their gains in production of routines were influenced by behavioral adaptation gains.

Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 are thus partially supported in the present study, since only gains in sociocultural adaptation are observed. In what follows a qualitative analysis will complement the quantitative results on general patterns of influences on pragmatic gains in order to add information on the influence of psychological adjustment progress. This will allow for obtaining details about students' perspectives on pragmatic learning and on their sociocultural and psychological adaptation experiences in the SA environment.

8.2. Qualitative results

Following a similar procedure as in the qualitative analyses presented in sections 6.2 and 7.2, this exploration focuses on the 10 informants that voluntarily participated in interviews at the beginning and at the end of their SA programs. Their reasons behind their sociocultural and psychological development are coded drawing from Schumann's (1978) proposal of 7 social and 4 psychological variables included in the process of acculturation, plus two additional variables: academic pressure and social support from L1 peers.

Before discussing the qualitative results, a summary of pragmatic learning and acculturation gains by the 10 informants is presented. Table 8.3 includes descriptive data about their cultural background, their gains in recognition, production and knowledge of overall pragmatic routines, their gains in behavioral, cognitive and overall sociocultural adjustment, and their increase or decrease in psychological adaptation. The order of

participants is hierarchical running from greatest positive gains in overall pragmatic routines to greatest negative gains.

Table 8.3. *Nationality, and percentage of gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines and in acculturation by 10 informants.*

Participant	Nationality	Recog.	Prod.	Overall routines	Behav	Cogn.	Overall sociocult.	Psychological
David	Brazilian	34.6	15.4	25	15.4	31.4	19.2	Increase
Emma	Spanish	22.5	19.2	15.4	0.2	11.4	18	Increase
Mike	Brazilian	3.8	19.2	11.5	0	-2.8	-0.6	Increase
Sean	Turkish	15.4	7.7	11.5	5.4	-2.8	7.6	Decrease
Lisa	Spanish	7.7	11.5	9.6	1	2.8	1.4	Increase
Jeff	Brazilian	0	15.4	7.8	5.4	17.2	8.2	Increase
William	Brazilian	7.7	3.8	5.8	1.8	-8.6	-3.4	Increase
Ethan	Spanish	-3.8	-11.5	-5.8	4.6	-8.6	1.4	Decrease
Mark	Turkish	0	-26.9	-13.5	-6.4	-2.8	-5.4	Decrease
Michelle	Turkish	-42.3	0	-21.1	2.8	-5.8	0.6	Decrease
AVERAGE		5.8	5.3	5.5	3.08	5.06	3.56	Increase

Table 8.3 shows that there are diverse individual trajectories in the different aspects analysed. Taking all the trajectories into account, 3 patterns can be observed, which will guide the presentation of the qualitative findings in this section. Pattern 1 includes informants whose gains – either positive or negative – in recognition and production of pragmatic routines correspond with their gains in both overall sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Pattern 2 refers to participants whose pragmatic gains only correspond with their psychological adjustment gains. Finally, pattern 3 includes one informant whose gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines only correspond with his gains in sociocultural adaptation.

266

Pattern 1: influence of sociocultural and psychological adaptation on pragmatic gains

The first category includes informants who have shown either positive or negative gains in all of the aspects of knowledge of pragmatic routines and acculturation. David, Jeff, Emma and Lisa are gainers in this respect, while Mark and Michelle are non-gainers.

On one hand, David, Jeff, Emma and Lisa showed similar developmental paths in the three general aspects: gains in pragmatic routines, gains in sociocultural adaptation, and gains in psychological adaptation. Regarding sociocultural adaptation, they were the only three that consciously tried to interact beyond their L1 cohesive group and successfully assimilate US sociocultural values. David's substantial progress can be largely attributed to the fact that he became well integrated into the US community thanks to making a few close American friends and finding a girlfriend from the US. While Jeff and Emma's positive pragmatic development was mainly due to their enrollment in clubs (theatre club in the case of Jeff, and a music band and volunteering program by Emma). Lisa lived with US roommates who, in fact, became her best friends during the stay. At the same time, the four improved their psychological adaptation thanks to social support from their L1 peers. In this sense, both David and Jeff expressed that living with their "Brazilian family" is what made the experience great. Similarly, Lisa expressed that although she tried to spend most of her time with her US roommates in order to integrate into the community, she also felt she had a Spanish family, and that all of the Spanish students became close friends with each other. In the case of Emma, apart from social support, her improvement in psychological adaptation was primarily attributed to a reduction of language shock, which was consequence of her integration into the TL community.

On the other hand, Mark and Michelle experienced negative gains in knowledge of

pragmatic routines, as well as in sociocultural and psychological adaptation. In both cases, Mark and Michelle were not able to integrate into the TL society, and instead preserved their sociocultural values over the stay. This unsuccessful integration may be due to two main reasons: academic pressure in the case of Mark, and ego permeability in the case of Michelle. Mark had a strong motivation to integrate into the society, and practice his English by enrolling in university clubs and getting in contact with NSs; nevertheless, he openly complained about having a lot of pressure to pass the TOEFL test at the end of the semester so as to be able to continue in the SA program. In the case of Michelle, she was aware that she was a shy person, and according to her, her introverted personality prevented her from interacting with English speakers and from learning about their culture. As a consequence, both informants substantially increased their language shock and at the end of the semester reported being scared or ashamed of using their English at times. Their consequent strong language shock may have been what limited their acquisition of pragmatic knowledge.

Pattern 2: influence of psychological adaptation on pragmatic gains

The second case involves participants whose pragmatic gains correspond with their psychological gains, but not with their sociocultural gains. William and Mike experienced positive gains in knowledge of routines and in psychological adaptation, while Ethan showed negative pragmatic development and a decrease in his psychological adjustment.

William and Mike's improvement in their knowledge of pragmatic routines may be attributed to their positive gains in psychological adaptation. The two participants experienced similar sociocultural and psychological adaptation paths. They reported having a phenomenal semester thanks to the Brazilian friends they made. Therefore, social support

from their L1 peers enhanced their well-being and their psychological adjustment. Nevertheless, limiting their contact to Brazilians made their sociocultural adaptation decrease. This situation was more striking in William's case, who openly admitted not making contacts outside his Brazilian peer group. William however claimed that he learned a great deal of English since sometimes Brazilians spoke in English among themselves, so he attributes his language improvement to the metatalk resulting from correcting L1 peers among each other. Mike, in contrast, did integrate more into the TL community, and apart from Brazilian colleagues, he made some friends from other cultures, mainly international students.

Unlike William and Mike, Ethan did show gains in his sociocultural adaptation, mainly due to a progress towards a more positive attitude regarding US culture and society. Nevertheless, Ethan experienced negative gains in his knowledge of pragmatic routines as well as in his psychological adaptation. His decrease in psychological adjustment was mainly due to his lack of ego permeability. Ethan described himself as an introverted person whose preferred plan for a Saturday evening during the stay abroad was to play videogames with a Spanish peer, who became his best friend. He also admitted not trying very hard to integrate with Americans since his main motivation in the program was to improve academically, not socially or personally.

Pattern 3: influence of sociocultural adaptation on pragmatic gains

Finally, the third category includes one student whose pragmatic gains correspond to his sociocultural adaptation gains, but not to his psychological gains. This is the case of Sean, whose psychological adaptation decreased over the semester because his culture shock increased. His inability to cope with some cultural differences – particularly with the US

custom of keeping dogs indoors and not removing shoes inside the house – led him to have arguments with his American roommates and change his living arrangements. Sean finally felt well adapted to the setting when, by the end of the semester, he changed from having two US roommates to living with two international students, one from Saudi Arabia and one from Thailand. He particularly felt his English improved more when sharing accommodation with international students since they interacted frequently. Sean's sociocultural adaptation improved during the semester abroad, which was mainly due to the fact that he felt more integrated into the TL community once he had made real friends. Even if his friends were from other nationalities, going out with them gave him confidence to get closer to NSs.

With this in mind, a qualitative exploration of individual trajectories seems to indicate that gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines are influenced by acculturation gains, as revealed in the developmental paths of David, Jeff, Emma, Lisa, Mark and Michelle. More particularly, we may hypothesize that psychological adjustment during the semester determines pragmatic gains more than sociocultural adjustment, since only in one case (Sean) sociocultural gains corresponded with pragmatic gains, as opposed to the 3 cases in which the former coincided with the latter (William, Mike and Ethan). We acknowledge that these findings cannot be generalized to group-scale conclusions, and they will need to be further explored in future studies.

8.3. Discussion of findings

Chapter 8 has presented results related to research question 3, which addressed the relationship between acculturation and development of pragmatic routines in the SA context. The question was formulated drawing from Schmidt's (1983) case study of Wes,

which indicated that acculturation development would enhance the acquisition of L2 pragmatic routines. Therefore, hypothesis 6 stated that there would be a positive association between degree of acculturation and learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines after SA. In addition to this, learners' cultural backgrounds needed to be taken into account to provide an answer to RQ3. Chapter 5 revealed that both recognition and production of routines was different across groups of L2 learners with varied L1s – Brazilian, Thai, Chinese, Turkish, and Arabic. Similarly, chapter 7 pointed out that these different cultural groups also developed their acculturation to different extents. Consequently, hypothesis 6 was formulated considering that cultural background would also play a role on the extent to which acculturation determined pragmatic learning.

To explore the influence of acculturation on the acquisition of routines, the analysis focused on two groups of learners, Brazilian and Chinese, given the significant differences in their pragmatic and acculturation experiences reported in previous chapters. Firstly, research findings partially supported hypothesis 5, since sociocultural adaptation especially determined recognition of routines, while it was unrelated to production gains. Nevertheless, this association was different in the case of Brazilian and Chinese students. Therefore, results provided support for hypothesis 6. In particular, sociocultural adaptation positively correlated with recognition gains by Brazilian students, and did not affect their productive ability. With respect to Chinese students, overall sociocultural adaptation did not significantly influence either recognition or production. However, an analysis of the role of the two acculturation subscales on pragmatic gains revealed that recognition was determined by development of cognitive acculturation, and that production gains were related slightly to behavioral adaptation.

Additionally, a qualitative analysis of interviews with a subset of 10 participants was

conducted to complement quantitative findings, to address the association of psychological adaptation and pragmatic gains, and to uncover learners' reasons behind individual trajectories of acculturation and pragmatic development. The analysis revealed that psychological acculturation seemed to exert a stronger effect on learning routines than sociocultural adaptation. In other words, students who improved their psychological well being during the semester were more likely to also improve their recognition and production of pragmatic routines. In particular, 3 patterns were observed: 1) influence of sociocultural and psychological adaptation on pragmatic gains (David, Jeff, Emma, Lisa, Mark and Michelle), 2) influence of psychological adaptation on pragmatic gains (William, Mike and Ethan), and 3) influence of sociocultural adaptation on pragmatic gains (Sean). Consequently, the qualitative results also partially support hypothesis 5 of the study, and they confirm hypothesis 6.

In what follows, a discussion of the reported research findings is presented in relation to hypotheses 5 and 6.

Results related to hypothesis 5 point to an association between sociocultural adaptation and pragmatic competence. Indeed, this study suggests that both sociocultural and pragmatic competence are key aspects of communication during SA programs. These findings provide further support to Vilar-Beltrán's (2013) model of communicative competence (see section 1.1). According to this author, one of the 4 main elements shaping the ability to communicate is intercultural competence, which includes sociocultural and pragmatic abilities. This implies that in order to improve intercultural competence L2 learners need to focus on developing their sociocultural adaptation (which includes cognitive and behavioral acculturation) to the TL environment, and their pragmatic skills. To this end, findings from the present study indicate that an increase in sociocultural

adaptation will enhance pragmatic ability. Moreover, results have revealed that a semester (4 months) of study abroad is beneficial for the development of both acculturation and knowledge of pragmatic routines, underlying the advantage of this learning context for the enhancement of intercultural competence.

The main finding in the present study is that learners' acculturation progress significantly affects the development of pragmatic routines. This investigation is, to the best of our knowledge, the first one that has addressed the direct effect of acculturation on acquisition of routines, the idea was previously proposed by Schmidt (1983). Schmidt (1983) observed that Wes, a Japanese immigrant in the US, had the optimal acculturation orientations – as measured in terms of Schumann's (1978) social and psychological variables – and during the time frame of analysis he improved his pragmatic competence, but he did not show an advance in grammatical ability. In particular, his pragmatic progress was evident in an increasingly more appropriate and complex use of pragmatic routines. The present study provides further support of Schmidt's findings, and it makes two further remarks. Firstly, this study makes a distinction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation, corresponding with Schumann's two types of variables, and a further refinement is made between behavioral and cognitive sociocultural adaptation. Secondly, acculturation aspects and their effect on pragmatic development are analysed across cultural groups. The differentiations across cultures allowed for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of acculturation during SA programs both at the group level and at the individual level.

As mentioned before (see section 1.3 and 2.4.4), when presenting his theory of acculturation, Schumann (1986) argued that acculturation, rather than being a direct cause of second language acquisition is the first of a list of factors that lead to SLA. Hence, acculturation does not guarantee language learning, as it is just one of the factors leading to

it. Findings from this study revealed an influence of both acculturation and cultural background on gains in knowledge of routines. In addition, factors not addressed by Schumann – e.g.: social support and academic pressure – also seem to affect pragmatic learning. Therefore, the present study provides further evidence that acculturation, rather than being a direct cause of pragmatic learning, is a relevant but not unique predictor.

In addition to the effect of acculturation and cultural background, the present study has revealed the role of different individual variables related to the SA learner on the acquisition of pragmatic routines. Firstly, results indicate that an increase in the recognition and production of routines is unrelated to proficiency progress. In other words, those learners who improved their proficiency in the L2 did not necessarily show a positive pragmatic development. This finding is in line with previous studies that have found no correlation between proficiency and other pragmatic features (Taguchi, 2006). Rather than by proficiency, gains in knowledge of routines were determined by a number of further internal variables, which are elements of the broader acculturation phenomenon: socialization, identity, personality, motivation, social support, academic pressure, and cultural distance.

The ability to socialize was strongly associated with recognition and production of pragmatic routines. The process of learning routines, unlike other pragmatic features, requires a higher level of integration into the TL community (Dörnyei *et al.*, 2004). Lave and Wenger (1991) describe the common socialization practice during SA programs in their *community of practice* (CoP) theory as a process in which newly arrived students participate in social activities with native speakers, and during this practice newcomers need to negotiate legitimacy to take part in the different activities. In this study, some participants (David, Jeff and Emma) were particularly successful in integrating in the TL community by

means of conscious efforts to socialize, and they correspondingly showed positive pragmatic gains. In these 3 cases, socialization was strongly tied to personality, as the students were social and outgoing. As such, David made close NS friends and found a girlfriend from the US, Jeff enrolled in the theatre club, and Emma joined a music band and participated in volunteering projects with NSs. These findings echo case study investigations that have explored the association of pragmatic gains with SA students' socializing practices (Diao, 2011; Kinginger, 2008; Shively, 2008; Taguchi, 2011b), as well as with their personalities (Shimura, 2003; Taguchi, 2014), finding a positive influence of both variables on pragmatic learning. For example, in Kinginger and Farrell's (2004) study on pragmatic acquisition by 8 US learners of French in France, two of the study participants showed different learning paths according to their SA experience. One participant, Bill, decided to live with a host family, and consciously avoided interaction with his US peers. He actively engaged in the French community, and as a result he showed great gains in pragmatic awareness. In contrast, the other participant, Brianna, lived with US roommates and limited her interactions to classmates and service encounters, her SA experiences resulting in a slow acquisition of L2 address terms.

Participants' identity, that is, the desire to maintain their heritage identity or adopt that of the TL society, also seemed to influence pragmatic gains in the present study. As revealed in this investigation, as well as by previous scholars (Barron, 2003), it is notably difficult for L2 learners to achieve native-like pragmatic performance. Rather, they are on a process of native-like selection (Pawler & Syder, 1983); that is to say, they are learning to select and use appropriate routines out of a range of grammatically-correct and non-native-like expressions. By the same token, sojourners are in a process of shaping their identities. In this path, they may consciously or unconsciously resist adopting TL community

pragmatic norms in an attempt to maintain their heritage identity and sociocultural values. For instance, Barron (2003) observed that Irish learners of L2 German avoided using German directness so as to maintain their Irish politeness. In line with these findings, in the present investigation William, a Brazilian student, commented that people in the US are more polite than in Brazil. According to him, they "say thanks and I'm sorry all the time." Although William showed positive gains in knowledge of routines, there were rather limited, and below the means in production. Therefore, one may hypothesize that resistance to adopt US politeness could have influenced his ability to produce routines.

In addition to socialization and identity, the present study revealed that learning pragmatic routines during SA programs may be linked to academic pressure, motivation, and attitudes towards the L2. For example, Mark, a participant in this study, struggled to integrate into the TL culture since he was highly concerned about passing an English exam at the end of the semester. This pressure, according to him, prevented him from making friends, enrolling in clubs, and from learning informal English. The relevance of these factors was previously pointed out by Pérez-Vidal (2014) (see section 2.1). According to this author, research has found that motivation and attitudes towards the TL and its culture are the most influential individual differences in SLA. Moreover, elements of academic pressure, such as amount of assignments, also play a determinant role in the acquisition of a new language in the SA context.

With this in mind, the present study emphasizes the need to focus on the process rather than the product of SA. Indeed, while results on acculturation and gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines were obtained at a macro-scale, an analysis at a micro-scale showed different developmental paths across cultural groups and across individual learners. Outcomes of studying abroad were varied and determined by the numerous variables

reviewed, which are related to both the context and the individual. The idea of focusing on the process rather than on the outcomes of SA has been suggested by previous scholars. Taguchi (2015), for instance, distinguishes two categories of SA studies: "black box" and "glass box" investigations. The black box category includes investigations that have only focused on the product of SA, typically comparing outcomes by a group of learners in the SL context and their counterparts in the FL setting. The glass box category involves studies that have examined the different variables at play during SA, and their influence on the observed outcomes. Framed within the "glass box" category, the present study reveals that although pragmatic learning is likely to improve over a semester-long SA program, it is a complex process, as it is predicted by multiple factors.

Moving on to hypothesis 6 of the present study, which stated that the relationship between acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines would be different across cultures. This hypothesis was supported in the present findings, since learners' cultural backgrounds interfered in the association between acculturation and the development of pragmatic routines. In other words, although a tendency was observed that L2 learners who acculturate also experience gains in recognition and production of routines, this tendency was different across cultural groups. In the case of the Brazilian group, sociocultural adaptation influenced recognition of routines, but it was unrelated to production gains. Moreover, those Brazilian students who increased their psychological acculturation over the semester (David, Jeff, Mike and William) also showed positive gains in knowledge of routines. Regarding the Chinese group, the influence of sociocultural adaptation on pragmatic gains was rather weak. Recognition gains were only determined by cognitive adaptation, and production development was predicted slightly by behavioral acculturation.

The relationship among acculturation, cultural background and acquisition of

pragmatic routines has not been addressed in previous studies. Nevertheless, this association particularly echoes the tenets of Intercultural Language Socialization (ILS) theory (see section 1.3). Firstly, Shi (2007) suggests that during the process of learning an L2, individuals naturally experience some changes in their intercultural competence. This was evident in the general positive changes in sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Secondly, the ILS approach posits that congruence or incongruence between the heritage and the host cultures is likely to determine the learning process and outcomes, a fact illustrated in this study by the significant differences found between cultural groups in their pragmatic and adaptation progress. Thirdly, Shi (2007) claims that acculturation and language learning are part of the same process. Indeed, the main finding of this investigation highlights the significant relationship between these two aspects, since degree of acculturation seems to determine the extent to which learners acquire knowledge of pragmatic routines.

8.4. Summary of the Chapter

To sum up, research findings show that degree of acculturation exerts an influence on the acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA. In particular, sociocultural adaptation predicted gains in recognition of pragmatic routines, as both Brazilian and Chinese learners seemed to increase their behavioral and cognitive adaptation as they increased their recognition of routines. Nevertheless, production gains were only determined by cognitive adaptation progress in the case of Chinese students. Consequently, it seems that acculturation greatly influences recognition of routines, but has a moderate effect on production.

That said, the findings of the study confirm hypothesis 6, which stated that the

relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of routines would be different across cultures. This study suggests learners' cultural background plays a key role in learning pragmatic routines during SA, since different cultures adapt to the TL context and learn pragmatic competence to different extents.

In what follows, chapter 9 presents final conclusions of the investigation, including a summary of findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to analyse the influence of acculturation on learning pragmatic routines in the SA context by students of diverse cultural backgrounds. In particular, 122 international students participating in SA programs in the US completed a SCAS and a pragmatic routines test at the beginning and end of the semester abroad. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 10 learners in order to obtain details about their individual pragmatic learning and acculturation trajectories. Data elicited were analysed to answer three main research questions and their corresponding hypotheses:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): does study abroad make a difference in learning pragmatic routines, in terms of both recognition and production?

H1: there will be differences in both learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during the SA experience (Barron, 2003; Taguchi *et al*., 2013).

H2: production and recognition of pragmatic routines will not be different across cultures (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.,* 2008).

Research Question 2 (RQ2): does study abroad make a difference in learners' acculturation development?

H3: there would be a difference in the participants' sociocultural adaptation during the SA experience (Abduhllah *et al*., 2015; O'Reilly *et al*., 2010).

H4: sociocultural adaptation development will be different across cultures (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Stephenson, 2000).

Research Question 3 (RQ3): is there any relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA?

H5: there will be a positive influence of degree of acculturation on learners' recognition and production of pragmatic routines during SA (Schmidt, 1983).

H6: the relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines will be different across cultures.

Chapter 9 first puts forward and explains the originality of this investigation (section 9.1). Then, it summarizes the main findings from the study in relation to research question 1 (subsection 9.2.1), research question 2 (subsection 9.2.2) and research question 3 (subsection 9.2.3). Additionally, section 9.3 presents some practical implications to be considered. Finally, in section 9.4, the main limitations of the study are reviewed, and some directions for further research are presented.

9.1. Originality of the study

The originality of the present investigation can be put down to three factors. Firstly, it is the first study addressing a direct relationship between acculturation development and learning of pragmatic routines in the SA context. What is more, it has explored the role of acculturation in terms of its subscales – psychological, sociocultural, behavioral and cognitive – and of the internal and external factors involved in this process – personality, identity, socialization, academic pressure, etc. Overall, results point to a relevant influence of sociocultural adaptation, more particularly of cognitive adaptation, on gains in knowledge of routines.

Secondly, this study reports on the difference between development of recognition

and of production pragmatic abilities. This investigation represents, to the best of our knowledge, the first longitudinal analysis that has compared L2 learners' gains in comprehension and in use of pragmatic routines over a period of time. Previous works have pointed out that recognition and production of routines are separate skills, recognition presenting less difficulty than production for L2 students (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). This was also acknowledged by scholars who have analysed the two abilities in separate investigations (Taguchi, 2011b, on recognition; Taguchi, 2013a, on production). This study adds two further ideas that provide evidence of the fact that recognition and production are learned to different extents in the SA context. Firstly, learners showed slightly higher gains in their comprehension ability, suggesting that the SA context is particularly beneficial to develop the receptive skill. Moreover, different developmental paths of recognition and production of routines were observed across cultures (see Table 6.5). A second finding that illustrates the divergence between development of recognition and of production of routines is the fact that acculturation exerts a different impact on the two abilities, since it determines recognition to a greater extent.

Thirdly, the study reveals a web of associations among pragmatic competence, acculturation and cultural background that lay foundations for further research. These foundations are particularly relevant for pragmatic researchers, and specifically for scholars in the field of ILP, cross-cultural pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics. A general overview of the interplay among the three components analysed in this study is illustrated in Figure 9.1.
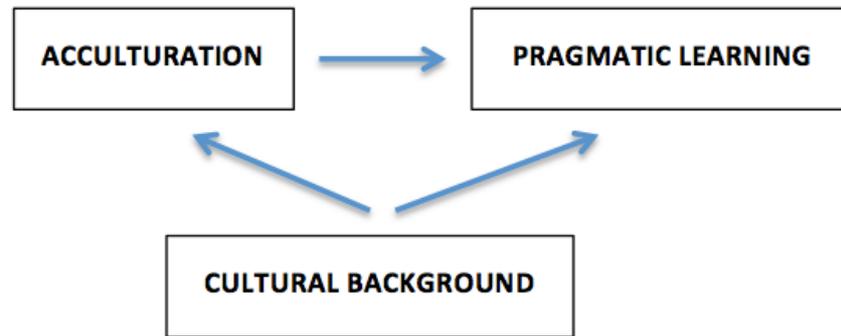
Figure 9.1. Relationships among pragmatic development, acculturation and cultural

background

As we can see in Figure 9.1, findings from this study revealed that acculturation plays a role on the learning pragmatic routines during a stay abroad. In addition to this, students' background culture determined both their adaptation in the SA context and their pragmatic gains.

9.2. Major findings

9.2.1. Research question 1

Does study abroad make a difference in learning pragmatic routines, in terms of both recognition and production?

General findings revealed an increase in both recognition and production of pragmatic routines over a semester-long SA program. In particular, L2 learners increased their receptive ability to a greater extent. This result suggests that the SA context, at least the first semester of immersion (the first 4 months), is beneficial in terms of the development of knowledge of routines, and especially the ability to recognize them.

Gains in recognition of pragmatic routines were determined by the conventional

nature of the expressions. That is, learners reported the highest recognition gains in more conventional and situationally-bound routines such as *My bad*, and *That works for me*, while the lowest gains were reported for less conventional routines like *Could you do me a favor?* Routines that are more conventional typically have a meaning bound to a particular situation, and hence are more difficult to learn outside of the context in which they are used. These findings point to the importance of exposure to relevant settings within the SA context in order to learn to recognize routines used in particular situations.

Results also show that gains in production of appropriate pragmatic routines were determined by prototypicality. During the semester, learners decreased their use of less prototypical routines such as *No thanks, I'm just browsing*, in favour of more prototypical ones like *No thanks, I'm just looking* in the context of going to a store. High-prototypical routines are more target-like, as they are used more frequently by NSs, while low-prototypical routines have less NSs agreement and are more distinctive of L2 learners' linguistic repertoire. This development of productive ability illustrates a path towards native-like pragmatic performance. In line with previous findings (Barron, 2003), the present study acknowledges that full native-like proficiency is hardly ever achieved.

Despite these general trends, developmental differences were observed both across cultural groups and at the individual level. Firstly, gains in recognition and in production of routines across cultural groups seemed to be influenced by culture congruity. Learners with heritage sociocultural values more related to those of the TL community are expected to have less difficulty in acquiring the TL pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. Accordingly, in the present study, Brazilian students were seen to have a significant advantage in learning pragmatic routines over the other groups of students – Chinese, Turkish, Thai and Saudi Arabian. Chinese and Saudi Arabian students experienced limited although positive

pragmatic gains, while Thai students decreased their productive ability, and Turkish students showed negative gains in their recognition of routines.

L2 learners also experienced different individual trajectories of pragmatic learning. Interviews with 10 participants revealed that students seemed to be aware of their pragmatic learning. On one hand, participants who were aware that they had increased their knowledge of routines mainly attributed their improvement to interaction with NSs. On the other hand, students who did not show significant gains in their knowledge of routines were aware of this decrease, and pointed out academic pressure, academic (that is, instrumental) motivation, and already being familiar with the routines as the main impediments to their pragmatic learning.

In conclusion, the findings related to research question 1 underline the importance of SA programs in the acquisition of pragmatic routines, and suggest that exposure to routines in relevant contexts enhances pragmatic development.

9.2.2. Research question 2

Does study abroad make a difference in learners' acculturation development?

Findings related to RQ2 indicate an improvement in L2 learners' acculturation over a semester of SA, both in terms of sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Moreover, 2 subfields were identified within sociocultural adaptation: cognitive and behavioral. In the present study, learners experienced higher gains in their cognitive adaptation, suggesting that the SA program was particularly beneficial in terms of the development of the ability to understand TL sociocultural values and perceive cultural differences.

Despite results showing general trends of sociocultural adaptation, acculturation experiences were different across cultures. Like the development of pragmatic knowledge, sociocultural adaptation by different cultural groups was determined by cultural similarity.

Brazilians were the group which shared most similarities with the US community in terms of sociocultural values, and it was this group which experienced the most evident sociocultural adaptation gains. Thai and Chinese students showed positive gains, but still significantly less than Brazilian students. Turkish and Saudi Arabian students, however, experienced negative gains in their sociocultural adaptation.

Additionally, a qualitative analysis revealed individual trajectories of both sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Indeed, some learners experienced gains in psychological adaptation but not sociocultural adaptation. Sociocultural adaptation was measured in terms of 7 variables, drawing from Schumann (1978): social dominance, integration strategy, enclosure, cohesiveness and size, cultural congruence, attitude, and intended length of residence. Findings from interviews with 10 participants suggested that sociocultural adaptation was mainly determined by the integration strategy adopted by the individual learners. Students who were willing to assimilate the TL sociocultural values experienced a higher sociocultural improvement, while limited gains and decreases in sociocultural adaptation were attributed to a preference to preserve the heritage identity and values.

In addition, psychological adaptation was operationalized in terms of Schumann's affective factors – language shock, culture shock, ego permeability, and motivation – with the addition of academic pressure and social support. Qualitative findings suggest that learners improved psychological acculcation to a greater extent than sociocultural adaptation. Although this finding is at the individual level, it represents a relevant preliminary result. Students seemed to increase their well-being during the sojourn, although different individual developmental paths were observed, as various factors were at play. On one hand, higher psychological adaptation gains were related to social support from L1 peers. That is, students

who developed a significant network with their heritage companions showed high levels of well-being and positive attitudes towards the SA experience over the semester. On the other hand, limited or negative progress in psychological adaptation was mainly due to academic pressure, and secondarily to a lack of ego permeability, the learner's personality and culture shock. This finding particularly emphasizes the importance of maintaining contact with the heritage culture while abroad, and the need to focus on enhancing positive SA experiences in an attempt to avoid academic pressure.

That said, results on research question 2 indicate that L2 learners are likely to increase their acculturation during a semester of study abroad in the US, particularly their understanding of TL sociocultural values and cross-cultural differences. Moreover, the present study suggests that numerous aspects of acculturation play a significant role. In particular, learners' cultural background, the integration strategies each individual adopts, academic pressure and social support by L1 peers seemed to be relevant aspects to consider.

9.2.3. Research question 3

Is there any relationship between degree of acculturation and acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA?

An analysis focused on two cultural groups of learners, namely Brazilians and Chinese, revealed that acculturation exerts an influence on the development of pragmatic routines during SA, particularly on the receptive ability. In the case of the Brazilian group, recognition gains were determined by sociocultural adaptation, but gains in production were unrelated to acculturation. As for the Chinese group, recognition gains were determined by learners' development of cognitive acculturation, and production development was influenced slightly by behavioral adaptation.

In addition to this, a qualitative analysis pointed out that one aspect of sociocultural adaptation seems to particularly enhance the development of knowledge of routines, namely socialization. Learners were aware that their willingness to integrate into the TL speech community and their social skills benefited their acquisition of everyday expressions that NSs frequently use; that is, pragmatic routines.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis indicated that the development of psychological adaptation was also associated with pragmatic gains. In particular, their ego permeability, an aspect related to both individual personality and identity, played a role in students' acquisition of pragmatic routines. The desire to maintain their heritage identity or to allow the TL values permeate also seemed to influence their willingness to adopt the NSs pragmatic performance.

Findings from the present investigation may be explained within Schumann's (1978) Acculturation theory. According to this author, acculturation, rather than being a direct cause of SLA, is one of the factors enhancing the different competences of L2 learning. Indeed, while a strong effect of acculturation on pragmatic learning was revealed in the present study, the influence of further variables was also observed. In particular, learners' cultural background was found to play a significant role in both acculturation and pragmatic development. The shorter the social distance between two cultures, the more successfully the sojourning cultural group is expected to acculturate and acquire the TL pragmatic competence. In this investigation, Brazilian students shared the most sociocultural values with US society, and they were seen to have a significant advantage over the rest of groups in terms of both adaptation and acquisition of routines.

Apart from cultural background, academic pressure and social support from L1 peers also seemed to determine the learning of pragmatic routines, the former exerting a negative

effect, and the latter enhancing psychological adaptation and hence pragmatic learning. These findings question the idea that students participating in SA programs should try to avoid contact with their L1 peers, while their efforts should concentrate in establishing relevant friendships with NSs. In the present study, support from their heritage peers seems essential to develop their psychological adaptation, and this is likely to assist in their pragmatic learning.

In conclusion, pragmatic routines are a key aspect of pragmatic competence, given their culture- and situation-bound nature, and their role in enhancing fluency and imitation to NSs' pragmatic performance. As such, they serve as excellent tools allowing integration into a new speech community. This study provides evidence of the relevance of enhancing L2 learners' acculturation in the TL society during SA programs so as to maximize the development of their pragmatic competence. In particular, research findings emphasize the need to help newly arrived students cope with their sociocultural and behavioral adaptation, their understanding of cross-cultural differences, that is, cognitive adaptation, as well as not disregard their psychological adjustment. Contemplating these different aspects of acculturation is likely to play a role in L2 learners' ability to recognize and to produce pragmatic routines. It should however be noted that both the ability to acculturate and to use pragmatic routines vary across cultures, and sociocultural distance is likely to mediate learning of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competences of a new culture. With this in mind, the present investigation supports the idea of addressing SA research from an approach focused on the process and on the individual learners, rather than on the outcomes of studying abroad.

9.3. Pedagogical implications

The current study shows a general trend by L2 learners participating in SA programs in the US of improving their recognition and their production of pragmatic routines. Moreover, it reports on group-scale and individual-scale results that reveal the non-linear nature of the process of learning pragmatic competence. At the group scale, significant differences were observed across cultures, indicating the influence of sociocultural and/or language distance in pragmatic acquisition. At the individual level, the reasons behind different learning trajectories were traced with a focus on students' processes of acculturation to the TL speech community. These findings have several pedagogical implications which are discussed below.

Although a macro-scale analysis reveals that L2 learners experienced an increase in their knowledge of pragmatic routines, as well as in their acculturation, a micro-scale analysis indicates that exposure in the SA context is not enough to enhance pragmatic and intercultural competences. In line with previous scholars (Bataller, 2010; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004), it is proposed, hence, that instruction might foster acquisition. Instruction during SA, in fact, has been observed to be significantly beneficial in terms of the development of pragmatic competence (see Alcón, 2014, for an overview on the effect of instruction on pragmatic learning). Moreover, preparation before going on a particular SA program may also be designed, or reoriented, towards the pragmatic and intercultural performance students undertake in the given context. This section reviews implications of the study in relation to instruction before, during and after the SA experience addressed at enhancing pragmatic and intercultural competence.

In this investigation, an increase in proficiency level was not associated with an increase in pragmatic competence. Rather, gains in knowledge of routines were determined

by students' acculturation progress. The importance of this finding in terms of pedagogical implications firstly lays in the fact that teaching pragmatic competence independently from grammatical and other language abilities is likely to be beneficial for students to improve their knowledge of routines and consequently acquire speaking fluency. Since pragmatics involves pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competences, both should be addressed in instruction. For example, the pragmatic routines included in the VKS could be implemented in classroom practices before and during SA programs with the aim of raising pragmalinguistic competence. Moreover, the situations presented in the DCT could be addressed to promote sociopragmatic knowledge as well. Indeed, a special focus on the routines that presented more difficulty for learners to recognize (e.g. *Could you do me a favor? I gotta go*, and *Help yourself*) and to produce (e.g. *Sorry I am late,* and *No thanks, I am just looking*) is highly advised. Secondly, the SCAS used in this study could be used to design teaching practices addressed at sociopragmatic knowledge applied to the given SA environment. In this sense, acculturation situations that were more difficult for students to cope with during a semester (e.g. finding food they enjoy and dealing with the climate) could be put into practice in the classroom by means of discussions to raise awareness of language use by learners of different cultural backgrounds.

Teachers should also acknowledge the difference between receptive and productive pragmatic ability. The present study provides evidence that, although interrelated, recognition and production of routines develop to different extents and are determined by different factors. In particular, participants showed significantly more gains in recognition than in production of routines. Since recognition seems to precede production, a pedagogical option could be to focus first on training students to recognize formulas, then teaching them to understand their meanings, and finally working on practice to use them in appropriate

contexts.

Alcón and Safont-Jordà (2008) propose different methods to raise pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production. To enhance pragmatic recognition, these authors recommend explicit instruction, and the use of awareness-raising activities. These activities should focus on connections between previous pragmalinguistic knowledge (from L1 and TL) and new knowledge, and should involve audiovisual input to enhance pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic elements. With respect to how to teach pragmatic routines, it should be noted that research is scarce. An example is Yang (2016), who recommends that strategies to teach routines should first address recognition. These strategies should involve different sources (textbooks, computer-delivered media, movies, cassettes, TV and scripts) with the aim of employing authentic data that include routinized and culturally-bound routines.

Regarding production, Alcón and Safont-Jordà (2008) suggest that teaching efforts should address appropriateness – which includes knowledge of the context and situational purpose – and cultural elements. In this sense, an option proposed is to design activities that involve the use of routines in specific contexts. This is, situations linked to given sociocultural contexts may be reinforced in class, with the aim of preparing students for the out-of-class world. In this study, we observed that certain situations presented more difficulty than others in terms of production of routines. For instance, students decreased their use of appropriate routines in a situation of apologizing to a professor for being late (the "Late" situation). One may hypothesize that this scenario may not occur sufficiently frequently. In contrast, learners seemed to have encountered the situation "Have a nice day" sufficiently for them to significantly learn to produce appropriate routines.

Results of the present study point to a strong association between acculturation and pragmatic learning. This association has been previously pointed out by scholars considering

293

pragmatic instruction. According to Alcón and Safont-Jordà (2008), learning L2 pragmatics also involves learning L2 culture. Moreover, learning culture involves changing one's own worldview and attitudes while learning L2 pragmatics. Thus, the implementation of instructional techniques focused on culture to enhance pragmatic production before students go abroad, during SA programs, and also upon return to the home country, should be encouraged.

Pre-study-abroad preparation in intercultural competence may involve critical thinking addressed not only at raising understanding of TL sociocultural values and behaviors, but also at enhancing cross-cultural awareness. More specifically, critical thinking may be fostered in a FL classroom by means of oral discussions, reflective essays or projects on cultural and cross-cultural topics. More practical methods could also include tasks and activities taught implicitly within content, and including authentic material in the curriculum. Additionally, interactive teaching practices can involve the interaction between FL learners and NSs via telecollaborative platforms such as Skype, or email correspondence on topics pre-established by teachers. Ultimately, language instructors working with SA students should put efforts into establishing intercultural awareness as a key role in their lesson planning.

Instruction in intercultural competence during SA programs could also be highly beneficial to facilitate L2 learners' acculturation in the new environment. In particular, teaching techniques should aim at fostering students' awareness of cross-cultural differences and their understanding of the sociocultural values of the TL community. For instance, writing periodic diary entries could help students self-evaluate their behavioral and cognitive progress and reorient their willingness to participate in the new community. A similar technique is the use of telecollaborative diaries; that is, pairing SA students with L2 speakers

that are in their home country, and having them discuss intercultural topics, share difficulties they encounter during the sojourn, and comment on aspects they find interesting or shocking.

Finally, the SCAS used in this study could serve to have returning students reflect upon their SA experiences and the main difficulties they encounter, with the aim of orienting prospective SA students. In particular, findings from the present study suggest that SA learners should focus on their integrative strategies in order to maximize the benefits of the experience in terms of both acculturation and pragmatic learning. Engaging in clubs, music bands, and making a few NS close friends are specific aspects that students should consider. Additionally, social support from L1 peers seems to be beneficial to improve psychological adaptation. In contrast, a strong concern for academic pressure is likely to limit adaptation and pragmatic learning. Raising awareness of these aspects in prospective SA students could drive their concern to take advantage of the future opportunities the SA setting offers.

Another implication of the present study may be considered by SA-program directors and coordinators. As mentioned in chapter 2 (see section 2.1), the goal of SA programs is four-fold, as they should consider the academic, professional, personal and intercultural orientations of L2 learners. In this study, students had different motivations behind engaging in the programs, some of which they expressed in the interviews: some students wanted to improve their English to have better job opportunities in the future, other learners hoped that a better level of English would afford them more access to scientific papers and more opportunities to get accepted on graduate programs, other participants wanted to learn about a new culture, and a final purpose was addressed at personal development. The optimal SA program would enhance these four aspects.

Efforts by institutions seem to focus on academic and professional goals, and some consider intercultural development. However, the personal side has been typically

disregarded by SA program directors and organizers. In the present study, psychological adaptation and students' well-being played a significant role in their pragmatic learning. More specifically, international students that had social support from their L1 peers (e.g. William and Mike) seemed to improve their psychological adaptation over the semester, and also experienced gains in their recognition and production of pragmatic routines. Apart from social support, there is evidence that overcoming language shock seems to lead to an increase in learners' confidence to engage in daily communicative situations, and hence appears to foster the acquisition of pragmatic routines, as in the case of Emma. Findings on the reasons behind psychological adaptation reported by case study analyses thus provide valuable information for SA program coordinators in order to reorient the goals of SA programs.

9.4. Limitations and directions for future research

The present study involves some limitations that are acknowledged and addressed. The first limitation includes the nature of the gathered data. Learners' recognition of pragmatic routines was measured by means of a VKS that asked students to self-report their familiarity with specific pragmatic routines. Similarly, students' level of sociocultural adaptation was measured through a SCAS, a Likert-scale that asks participants to self-report their difficulty in different daily situations. It is acknowledged that self-report measures have the disadvantage of providing data that may not be 100% valid in order to establish generalizations, since participants may not be truthful or may exaggerate their answers. However, this limitation was addressed by employing a mixed-method approach that includes qualitative data to complement quantitative outcomes. Additionally, validity of self-reported answers to the VKS was considered by asking participants to provide a definition of the elicited routines, so as to ensure their comprehension.

With respect to production of routines, a written DCT was administered. Being aware that written DCTs do not trigger natural conversational data, it was used as they represent the best option to collect large amounts of data on learners' production of pragmalinguistic features, as was the case in this study. Previous scholars have indicated that written DCTs accurately reflect the content of natural data, although they do not account for prosody – intonation, pauses, tone, stress – (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). Since the present study was only concerned with content, a written DCT was the optimal choice. Nevertheless, the VKS and the DCT used in this study could be redesigned to be administered aurally and orally via computer.

The second limitation concerns a lack of control group. Since the purpose of the study was to examine the interlanguage and SA experiences of L2 learners from different countries, a control group was logistically difficult to establish, as it would involve different control groups across the participants' heritage nations. It is suggested, however, that future studies draw from the present findings to conduct research focused on particular cultures, and compare the development of their pragmatic and intercultural competence with that of a group of students at home. Additionally, given the significant effect of cultural background as a determiner of pragmatic and acculturation gains revealed in this study, further cross-cultural research is suggested. In particular, future studies could expand the exploration of the influence of cultural and L1 congruence on learning pragmatic routines, and also on the development of different aspects of acculturation.

Thirdly, in this longitudinal investigation a delayed post-test was not administered. The study employs a pre-test–post-test design with the aim of examining changes in knowledge of routines and in acculturation over one semester (4 months) abroad. A delayed post-test was not distributed since loss of participants would have been too high. While it is

acknowledged that the data collecting from only two data points limits the analysis of longer stays, this option also provides relevant insights as it accounts for pragmatic gains in a typical and frequent context, namely semester-long SA programs. Moreover, this limitation was addressed by combining quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to obtain an in-depth longitudinal account on participants' pragmatic learning and adaptation processes. Further longitudinal ILP research employing (at least) three data-collection points is encouraged as it would address some relevant questions such as: are pragmatic routines particular to the beginning stages? Is their use maintained, increased or reduced after a semester? Will production of routines develop faster at later stages? Is a semester sufficient for students to acculturate? Will the influence of acculturation be significant for learning routines after a semester? Additionally, a delayed post-test could be administered after return to the home country to investigate whether pragmatic gains are sustained.

The last limitation of the study is related to the potential effect of further environmental and individual factors confounding the reported findings. Results revealed a significant influence of acculturation and of students' cultural background on the development of recognition and production of pragmatic routines. Additionally, the effect of certain variables was controlled; these include proficiency, gender, age, and previous relevant experience abroad. Nevertheless, the possibility of further aspects playing a role in pragmatic development exists. For instance, the analysis revealed that some learners did not experience significant pragmatic gains since they already possessed knowledge of some routines, thus indicating a ceiling effect. They may have acquired this knowledge either from instruction in their home country, from interaction with L2 speakers in their home country or from previous experience abroad. Further research on variables that may determine learning of pragmatic routines is therefore strongly encouraged. This may include intensity of interaction, living

situation, proficiency, nature of pragmatic routines, and even additional aspects of acculturation not addressed in this study, such as the perception of SA.

Finally, additional research on SA learners' acculturation development including its different sociocultural and psychological aspects is encouraged. Most studies on acculturation (Schmidt, 1983; Schumann, 1978) have been conducted within the field of cross-cultural psychology and sociology, and have examined the process of adapting to a new environment by immigrants, refugees, or indigenous populations. The present study brings the exploration of acculturation to the SA field, and explores the ways international students experience immersion in a new and unknown environment at an early adult age. Research in the field of the SA context is of relevance given the increasing popularity of SA programs around the world, and also the particularity of the population of SA students, who differ from other sojourning groups in numerous aspects such as their voluntariness, mobility and permanence.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the current study provides new insights on how students develop recognition and production of pragmatic routines during SA. It represents an in-depth account on acculturation experiences and how these determine pragmatic learning across different cultural groups of students. The acknowledgement that L2 learners accomplish greater gains in recognition than in production of pragmatic routines, and the exploration of the particular routines that present difficulty points out learning needs to be considered by researchers and teachers. Moreover, an intensive analysis of students' SA experiences has revealed frequent troubles that sojourners face while immersing in a new and unknown environment, and which should not be disregarded by investigators, SA coordinators and by students themselves. This dissertation thus provides some directions to maximize learners' pragmatic learning while abroad.

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310

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Consent Form

Title of Research: Pragmatic Routines during Study Abroad Programs: the Impact of Acculturation and Intensity of Interaction

Researcher: Ester Ariadna Sánchez-Hernández, MA, Ohio University

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

During this study I will test your degree of acculturation to the American culture, the intensity of interaction with this society, and your knowledge of pragmatic routines. In addition, a short background questionnaire will be presented to you in order to collect demographic data and information about your linguistic background. For this, you will be asked to complete three instruments: a background questionnaire, which will take about 3 minutes, an acculturation and intensity of interaction questionnaire, which will last around 15 minutes, and a pragmatic routines test, which will take about 15 minutes. The total estimated of your participation is 33 minutes. I am asking you to participate in the study by completing, as honestly and openly as you can, these questionnaires and test. Please have in mind that **there are not right or wrong answers**; I am just interested in your opinion.

Risks and Discomforts

We do not foresee any risks or discomforts for you as a participant in this research.

Benefits

The study will contribute to the field of English linguistics (sociolinguistics and pragmatics) and study abroad programs (processes and outcomes involved in these), and it will inform the field of second language acquisition and second language teaching, as well.

Your participation in this study does not represent any immediate benefits to you.

Confidentiality and Records

Please be assured that your identity will be kept confidential. Although your name and other demographic information is requested in the questionnaires, only the primary investigator will have the information about the participants' identity and under no circumstance it will be revealed to anyone else. Participants´ results in the test and questionnaires will be used as research materials to help the researcher gain a better understanding of the process of language learning. Your result in the test, as well as the questionnaire information you provide, will be kept confidential and no individual's results will be released, only aggregate results will be reported. While in the research site (Athens, Ohio) the data will be stored in

secure cabinets in the researcher's home. After completing the data collection, the data will be kept in a file cabinet secure in Dr. Emilia Alonso-Marks, Department of Modern Languages, 247 Gordy Hall, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Ester Ariadna Sanchez Hernandez
256 Gordy Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH, 45701
es668613@ohio.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_____ Date_____

Printed Name_____

_____Version Date: *[09/06/2013]*

APPENDIX B. Background questionnaire

Please, answer these 10 questions with your own answers and write an X next to the correct answer when indicated. Question 10 is optional.

1. First and last name: _____

2. Email address: _____

3. Age: _____

4. Gender (please mark with an X): ____Male   ____Female

5. Nationality: _____, 6. Native language: _____

7. When did you get to the United States (approximate date/month)?: _____

8. How would you rate your level of English? (Please mark with an X).

_____ Proficient (C2)

_____ Advanced (C1)

_____ Upper-intermediate (B2)

_____ Elementary (A2)

_____ Beginner (A1)

9. What languages do you know, other than your mother language and English? Please indicate the language in the first column and mark with an X the general level **you think** you have.

Language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2

10. Have you ever been in the United States before? Please mark with an X: ___Yes   ___No
If you have marked "yes", please explain how many times you have been there, for how long and for what purpose.

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C. Sociocultural Adaptation Scale

Please indicate how much difficulty you experience in the United States in each of these areas by using the following 1 to 5 scale:

1=extreme difficulty   2=great difficulty   3=moderate difficulty   4=slight difficulty   5=no difficulty

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Making friends.					
2.	Finding food that you enjoy.					
3.	Following rules and regulations.					
4.	Dealing with people in authority.					
5.	Taking an American perspective on the culture.					
6.	Using the transport system.					
7.	Dealing with bureaucracy.					
8.	Understanding the American value system.					
9.	Making yourself understood.					
10.	Seeing things from an American point of view.					
11.	Going shopping.					
12.	Dealing with someone who is unpleasant.					
13.	Understanding jokes and humor.					
14.	Accommodation.					
15.	Going to social gatherings.					
16.	Dealing with people staring at you.					
17.	Communicating with people of a different ethnic group.					
18.	Understanding ethnic or cultural differences.					
19.	Dealing with unsatisfactory service.					
20.	Worshipping.					
21.	Relating to members of the opposite sex.					
22.	Finding your way around.					
23.	Understanding the American political system.					
24.	Talking about yourself with others.					
25.	Dealing with the climate.					
26.	Understanding the American world view.					
27.	Family relationships.					
28.	The pace of life.					
29.	Being able to see two sides of an inter-cultural issue.					

Part 1: Vocabulary Knowledge Scale

Instructions: Circle the letter (a), b) or c)) of the most appropriate option for each expression according to whether you have never seen or hear the expression, you have seen or hear it but do not remember what it means, or you know the expression and are able to explain, translate or provide a synonym for it.

Example: I'd love to

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means __**I would really like to do something**
      _____ (synonym or explanation)

1. I gotta go

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____(synonym or explanation)

2. I was wondering…

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____ (synonym or explanation)

3. My bad

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____ (synonym or explanation)

4. Thanks for coming

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____ (synonym or explanation)

5. Thanks for your time

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____ (synonym or explanation)

6. That works for me

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____ (synonym or explanation)

7. Do you think you could make it?

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____ (synonym or explanation)

8. Could you do me a favor?

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____ (synonym or explanation)

9. Would you mind…?

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____(synonym or explanation)

10. Do you want to come to my place?

 a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

 b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

 c) I know this expression. It means

 _____(synonym or explanation)

11. Help yourself

       a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

       b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

       c) I know this expression. It means

       _____ (synonym or explanation)

12. Can I get you anything else?

       a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

       b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

       c) I know this expression. It means

       _____(synonym or explanation)

Part 2: Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

Instructions: Please fill in the blank with what you would say in the situation. Write down the first think you think of.

Example: You are in the cafeteria and the person standing next to you drops his fork. You pick it up for him. He tells you "Thank you." You say: <u> You're welcome   </u>

1. Your friend invites you to have dinner with his parents. His mom offers you more food but you couldn't possibly eat more. You say:

_____

2. You are just introduced to a new person. You tell him/her:

_____

3. You work in a fast food restaurant which serves food which customers can eat seated down in the restaurant or can take it home with them. Before a customer starts ordering, you ask him/her: _____

4. You are walking together with your friend, and he is about to step in a puddle. You tell him: _____

5. You go to the bank and after you are done talking to the banker she tells you "Have a nice day!" You respond to her: _____

6. You have an appointment with one of your teachers, but you are ten minutes late. After she tells you "Good morning, come on in" you answer:

_____

7. The phone rings. You pick it up and answer: _____

8. You are in class and you need to write something down, but you realize you forgot your pen at home. You tell the classmate sitting next to you:

_____

9. You are in a store but you do not really want to buy anything. The salesperson comes to you and asks you if he can help you. You tell him:

_____

10. You see your friend and he tells you that his grandpa just died. You tell him:

_____

11. A friend you just made comes to your home, and you did not clean, did not do the dishes and your clothes are everywhere. As he comes in, you tell him:

_____

12. A classmate asks you for a piece of paper. As you give it to him, you tell him:

_____

13. Your roommate is getting ready to drive his car to school, and the roads are very icy. Before he leaves you tell him: _____

Part 1: Vocabulary Knowledge Scale

Instructions: Circle the letter (a), b) or c)) of the most appropriate option for each expression according to whether you have never seen or hear the expression, you have seen or hear it but do not remember what it means, or you know the expression and are able to explain, translate or provide a synonym for it.

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c) I know this expression. It means __**I would really like to do something**
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1. Thanks for your time

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b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

c) I know this expression. It means
_____(synonym or explanation)

2. Would you mind…?

a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

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a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

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4. That works for me

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

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        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____ (synonym or explanation)

5. I gotta go

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

        b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____ (synonym or explanation)

6. My bad

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

        b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____ (synonym or explanation)

7. Can I get you anything else?

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

        b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____ (synonym or explanation)

8. I was wondering…

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

        b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____(synonym or explanation)

9. Do you think you could make it?

        a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

        b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

        c) I know this expression. It means

        _____ (synonym or explanation)

10. Do you want to come to my place?

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____(synonym or explanation)

11. Help yourself

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____(synonym or explanation)

12. Thanks for coming

      a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.

      b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.

      c) I know this expression. It means

      _____ (synonym or explanation)

Part 2: Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

Instructions: Please fill in the blank with what you would say in the situation. Write down the first think you think of.

Example: You are in the cafeteria and the person standing next to you drops his fork. You pick it up for him. He tells you "Thank you." You say: ___You're welcome_____

1. You are just introduced to a new person. You tell him/her:

_____

2. The phone rings. You pick it up and answer: _____

3. A classmate asks you for a piece of paper. As you give it to him, you tell him:

_____

4. You are in class and you need to write something down, but you realize you forgot your pen at home. You tell the classmate sitting next to you:

_____

5. Your roommate is getting ready to drive his car to school, and the roads are very icy. Before he leaves you tell him: _____

6. You go to the bank and after you are done talking to the banker she tells you "Have a nice day!" You respond to her: _____

7. You have an appointment with one of your teachers, but you are ten minutes late. After she tells you "Good morning, come on in" you answer:

_____

8. A friend you just made comes to your home, and you did not clean, did not do the dishes and your clothes are everywhere. As he comes in, you tell him:

_____

9. Your friend invites you to have dinner with his parents. His mom offers you more food but you couldn't possibly eat more. You say:

_____

10. You are walking together with your friend, and he is about to step in a puddle. You tell him: _____

11. You are in a store but you do not really want to buy anything. The salesperson comes to you and asks you if he can help you. You tell him:

_____

12. You see your friend and he tells you that his grandpa just died. You tell him:

_____

13. You work in a fast food restaurant that serves food that customers can eat seated down in the restaurant or can take it home with them. Before a customer starts ordering, you ask him/her: _____

APPENDIX F. Guidelines for semi-structured interview pre-test

- **Educational background and English experience at home:** When did you start learning English? English use at home / at school (number of class hours in English) / out of school. British or American English? English use by means of movies or books. Amount of contact with English speakers at home. What did you know/think about the American culture before coming?

- **Goal of Study Abroad Program and expectations**: why did you decide to study at Ohio University? What do you want to get from it (academically, personally, socially)? Do you view this experience as a way to socialize or as a learning experience? Why do you want to learn English?

- **Sociocultural adjustment**: Difficulties of adjustment to the new environment – academically and socially. - Satisfaction: what do you like so far? Do you like American culture? What did you know about it? Has your view of it changed after being here?

- **English Use (interaction with E. Speakers**): have you made many friends? Are they American or from other nationalities? Do you speak English with them? Would you like to make more friends during the semester, either American or other International students? Do you interact with your teachers? Do you think there are enough opportunities to practice English (in class and out of class)? Are you engaged in clubs or other out-of-school activities?

- **Linguistic awareness**: Do you feel your English level has improved so far? Do you find American English easy to understand? Can you think of expressions you have learnt during these days? Are there expressions used by Americans that you learnt differently at home?

- **Metapragmatic awareness**: have you noticed differences in the way Americans speak? (provide example if necessary)

- **Acculturation / English Use/ Pragmatic Routines Test**: How do you think you did? What did you find easier/more difficult?

APPENDIX G. Guidelines for semi-structured interview post-test

- **Outcomes of Study Abroad Program**: What have you gained more from the semester: academically, personally, or socially? Do you want to continue learning English? Would you like to stay longer here in Athens or in the US in general?

- **Sociocultural adjustment**:

- **Academically**: difficulties of adjustment? What do you like the most about American education? And the least? What about class participation (do you enjoy it? Is it different than in your country?)? Did you have enough opportunities to practice English in class? Do you feel that you have learnt a lot from your classes?

- **Socially**: Difficulties of adjustment to the new environment. What do you like the most about life in Athens? And the least? Do you like American culture? Has your view of American culture changed after being here?

- **English Use (interaction with E. Speakers**): have you made many friends? Are they American or from other nationalities? Do you speak English with them? Do you interact with your teachers? Do you think there are enough opportunities to practice English (in class and out of class)? Are you engaged in clubs or other out-of-school activities? Where do you find the most opportunities to listen and to speak in English?

- **Influence of instruction**: have you learnt more formal or informal English? Did you learn any colloquial English in class? Do you feel that your classes helped you learn English? In general, can you see an influence of instruction during the semester?

- **Linguistic awareness**: Do you feel your English level has improved during the semester? Do you find American English easy to understand? Can you think of expressions you have learnt during this semester? Are there expressions used by Americans that you learnt differently at home?

- **Metapragmatic awareness**: have you noticed differences in the way Americans speak? (provide example if necessary)

- **Acculturation / English Use/ Pragmatic Routines Test**: How do you think you did? What did you find easier/more difficult?

342

APPENDIX H. Pre-test and post-test performance in recognition of pragmatic routines
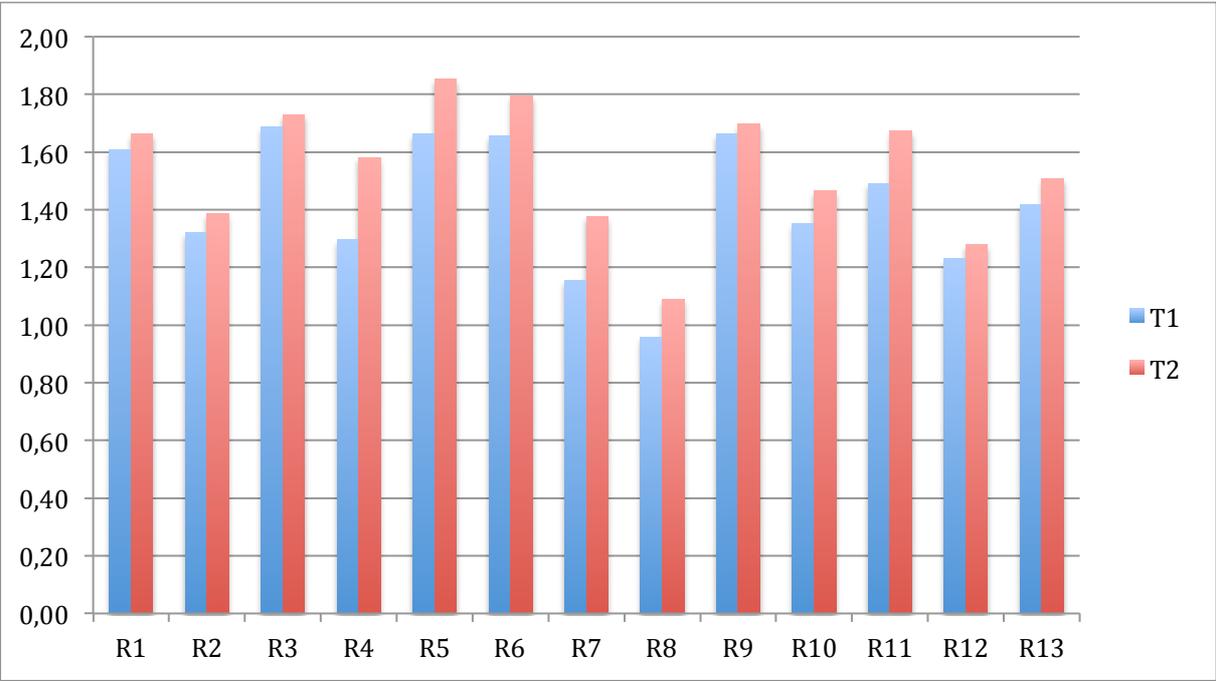
APPENDIX I. Pre-test and post-test performance in production of pragmatic routines
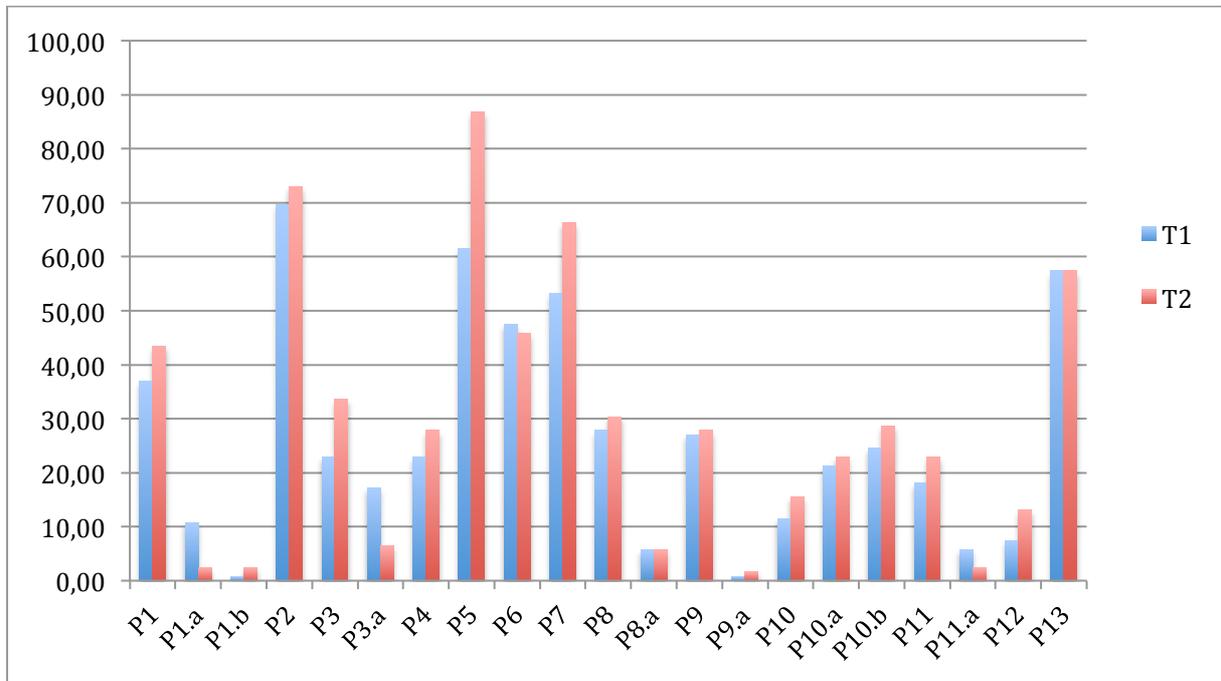
APPENDIX J. Gains in production scores in each situation of the DCT
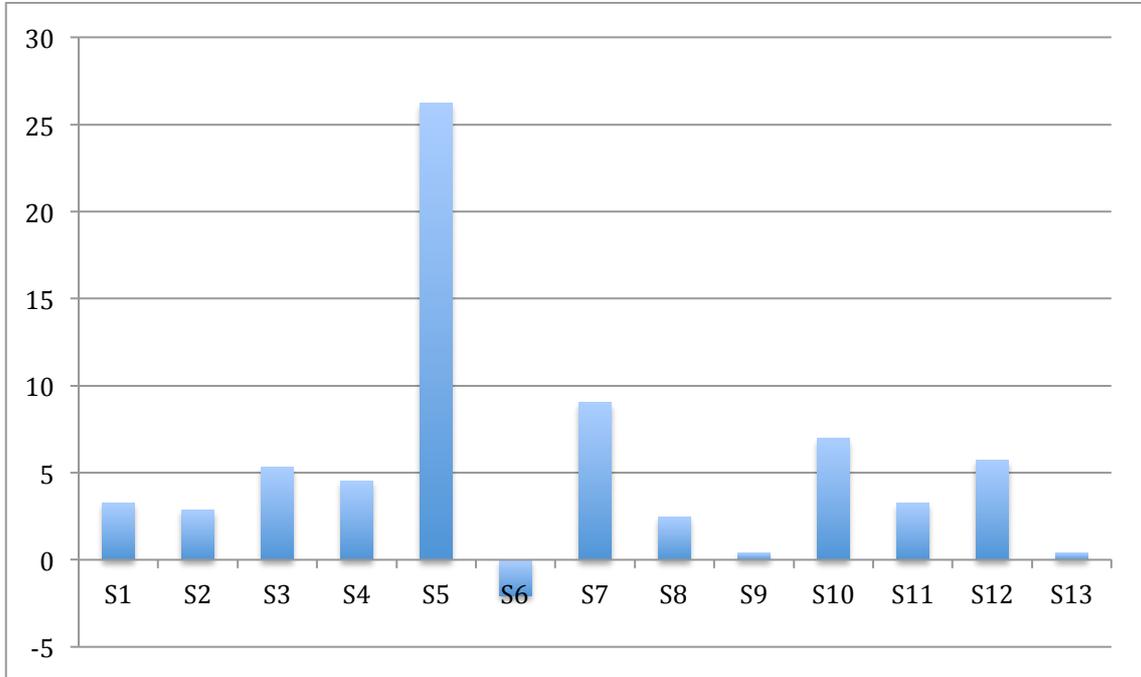
1. No more food

2. Introduction

3. Restaurant

4. Puddle

5. Have a nice day

6. Late

7. Phone

8. Borrow pen
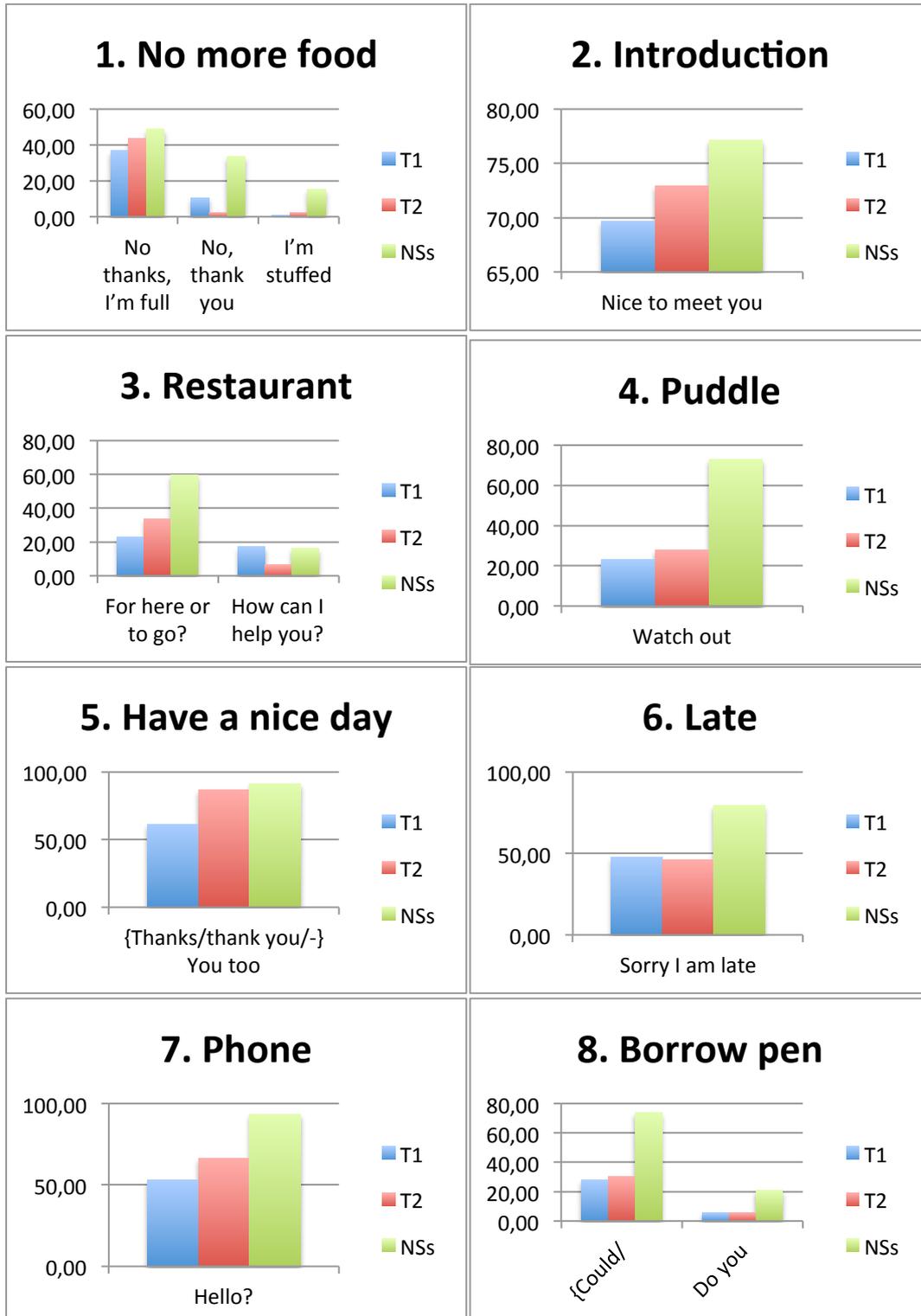
9. Store
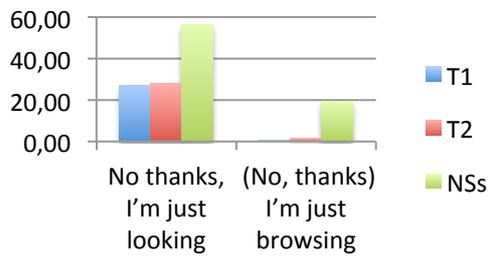
10. Decease
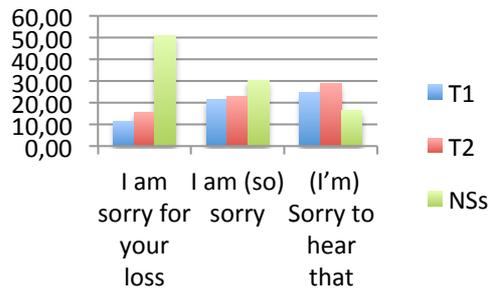
11. Messy house
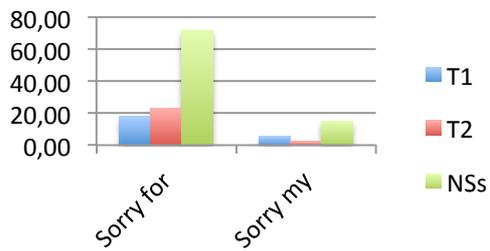
12. Piece of paper
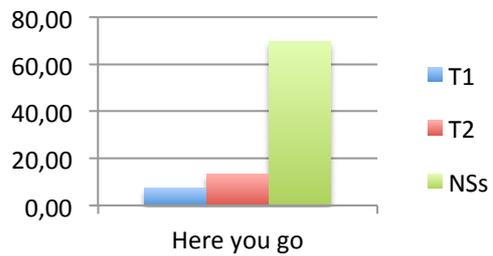
13. Careful driving
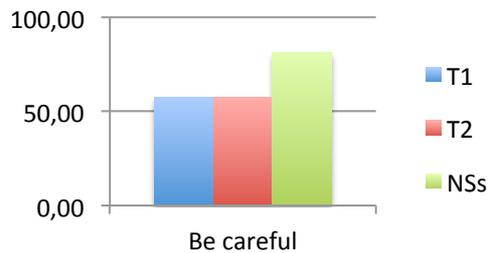
APPENDIX L. Pre-test and post-test performance in SCAS ítems