An alternative approach to speech act research in the study abroad context

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to contribute to a description of the breadth of opportunities for L2 contact and pragmatic development offered by the Canadian study abroad (SA) context by taking an alternative approach to speech act research. This study reports on the frequency and range of L2 speech acts and events as described by SA students in interaction logs completed with their mobile phones. Nine undergraduate SA students completed structured electronic surveys (n = 801) regarding their English oral interactions over ten-day period. The participants, from various disciplines, proficiencies and L1 backgrounds, were attending an English-speaking university in Montreal as part of a one- or two-semester academic exchange. Participants completed the two-three minute online survey each time they interacted orally in English, describing the content of each interaction, the interlocutors involved, and the location in addition to rating its difficulty. Results showed frequent exchanges on cultural issues with other international students and a low percentage of native interaction, suggesting that SA students have the opportunity to perform a range of speech acts and events but do so within their own peer community. Implications for the describing pragmatic development in SA speech act research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Every year, over 100,000 international students attend universities in Canada, the majority of which are second language speakers of English (AUCC, 2007). It is widely assumed that time abroad will vastly improve their language skills and increase their career opportunities. Following this reasoning and in order to promote intercultural awareness, universities worldwide have implemented extensive study abroad programs and many foreign language faculties, such as those in Oxford and Harvard, formally require students to participate in an study abroad (SA) program. As an English language teacher, I have worked with hundreds of learners who have sought to broaden their horizons through experiences abroad. These students face innumerable challenges as they struggle to acquire a new language in an environment where the rules and practices can differ greatly from their own culture. While some students do benefit from these programs, others return to their host countries disappointed with the lack of progress in their language skills (Freed 1995).

I first noticed this phenomenon when I participated as a student in a year-long SA program at Université Lyon II, France. During my stay, I noted that many students only slightly improved their French and few made native friends. Several years later, I returned to Lyon II as an English teacher and taught a preparation course for study abroad. This experience called my attention to the relatively small amount of socio-cultural knowledge possessed by my students. They were often unaware of how to conduct an English conversation in a socially and culturally appropriate fashion. Reflecting on my own formal language instruction experiences, I realized that a strong emphasis on grammatical and lexical accuracy had almost entirely obscured questions of what constituted situationally appropriate talk. As a teacher, I could understand the

choice to gloss over the social aspect of language: grammar and vocabulary are easier to evaluate objectively and class time is limited. However, from a study abroad student perspective, I remembered how ill-equipped I felt to communicate with real people in real-world situations. I consequently became interested in better understanding how students gain knowledge about language in use and was led to discover the area of second language acquisition research known as interlanguage pragmatics.

Research in interlanguage pragmatics examines how speakers use a second language (L2) in accordance with their interpretation of the context, including the attitudes and beliefs of the participants involved. Central to the field of pragmatics is the study of the linguistic strategies used to realize speech acts such as requests, apologies, refusals, complements, and advice. The frequencies and patterns of these strategies vary depending on the language, the social status (friend vs. boss) and the social distance (colleague vs. stranger) of the interlocutor (Blum-Kulka & Oshtain, 1984) as well as additional social factors such as identity (Kinginger, 2009). When L2 learners fail to use the correct pragmatic strategies, pragmatic failure can occur and misunderstandings or offense can result (Thomas, 1983). I have personally experienced pragmatic failure on numerous occasions, the first of which occurred while I was interviewing a native French speaking adult for a high school project. During the interview, I addressed my participant with both the formal pronoun *vous* and the informal pronoun *tu,* haphazardly alternating between the two. After a few questions, my participant stopped, frustrated, and told me curtly that I was being rude. I was mortified that what I perceived as an insignificant language mistake would be taken so personally. Similar anecdotes of pragmatic failure

abound in the SA literature and indeed are often remembered as defining moments in a students' language learning career.

My intuition concerning these communicative failures is that they play a role in students' willingness to communicate while abroad and ultimately impact the amount and quality of practice opportunities these SA students are exposed to. I became motivated to investigate the pragmatic training students receive prior to their arrival the host country as a way of counteracting the possible negative effects of pragmatic failure during the SA experience. However, my investigation revealed that current SA students' preparation is likely limited, as my own had been. While the body of research on pragmatic instruction is increasing (see studies in Kaspar & Rose, 2001), it seems that pragmatic norms are seldom taught systematically in the language classroom (Rose, 2005). Instead, it is assumed that SA students will simply "pick up" pragmatic norms as they go by virtue of exposure to authentic language and to native speakers in the host country.

Following this assumption, the speech act research on pragmatic gains in SA has focussed on comparing the SA learner performance of acts, principally requests and apologies, to that of native speakers and other, non-SA learners (e.g., Barron, 2003; Cohen & Shively, 2010). However, the results have generally shown that the developmental development does not progress directly towards the native norm, with some strategies developing more than others. In addition, there seems to be a large amount of variability in the progress attained by learners, with some progressing substantially while others make only meagre gains. These results indicate that the relationship between pragmatic gains and SA is probably not as straightforward as the "immersion equals gains" assumption often associated with SA.

An alternative way of understanding the relationship between pragmatic gains and the SA context is by examining the quality and quantity of pragmatic practice that the context typically provides. Do these SA students really use the target language to communicate regularly? Do they have frequent contact with native speakers? Do they communicate on a wide range of topics and with a variety of people? The general aim of this thesis is to explore these questions by examining the oral interactions encountered during an SA experience from a pragmatics perspective in order to inform the creation of testing materials that better capture the complex nature of gains made in the SA context.

The manuscript that follows describes the L2 oral practice opportunities reported by nine SA exchange students attending English-speaking universities in Montreal. It seeks to paint a picture of the pragmatic gains that can be expected from a sojourn abroad in an English university by surveying the breadth of social contexts in which students use their L2. To achieve this, I have adopted a novel methodology for collecting ethnographic data through self-report involving mobile surveys completed on Smartphones.

Having a clearer notion of the quality of students' L2 experiences will allow researchers to design instruments that are more likely to capture the unique nature of gains made in these contexts, and secondly to incorporate features of these students' experience into study abroad policy and programming in ways that will allow these students to maximize those gains. In this sense, it is an alternative approach to traditional speech act research which has sought to compare native speaker and L2 performance on discourse completion tasks and role plays.

MANUSCRIPT

Exploring L2 pragmatic practice in study abroad:

Surveying speech acts and events with mobile phones

Studies on the benefits of study abroad (SA) for pragmatic development have been steadily emerging since the landmark publication of Freed's (1995) paper calling for more in depth research on the connection between language gains and short-term immersion. Within this growing body of research there has been a marked interest in SA student's ability to produce various speech acts, such as requests (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Shively, 2011) and apologies (e.g., Schauer, 2009; Beckwith & Dewaele, 2008). The fundamental assumption motivating the design of these studies is that SA provides sustained meaningful exposure to authentic L2 input and opportunities for practice with native speakers and is therefore ideally suited for pragmatic development. Pragmatic gains are therefore conceptualized as a movement towards the local native norm and progress is measured by comparing learner and native performance on tests such as discourse completion tasks and role plays scenarios.

However, not all SA participants experience extensive and intimate contact with native speakers during SA, as contact and case study research is increasingly demonstrating (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Kinginger, 2008). Given the extreme variability in quality and amount of L2 practice with native speakers that has been attested, it is not surprising that while some development towards the native norm has generally been observed (Kinginger, 2009), the typical progress seems to follow a non-linear path throughout the SA sojourn (e.g., Kondo, 1997; Warga & Shölmberger, 2009), In some cases, these students have even been found to use less native-like strategies after a period

abroad than they did before their sojourn (e.g., Barron, 2003, 2007; Bataller, 2010; Shively, 2011). While researchers have suggested a number of learner-centred factors that may influence the amount of L2 use and contact in SA, such as proficiency (Taguchi, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011) or identity maintenance (Kinginger, 2008; DuFon, 2006; Davis, 2007), the exact nature of the relationship between pragmatic gains and the SA context remains unclear. In this paper, I suggest examining the issue from a different perspective, one that shifts focus away from the learner performance in the SA context towards an exploration of the practice opportunities offered by the context itself.

The first step towards achieving such a goal, which has been partially addressed through the diary and log studies of researchers such as Kinginger (2008) and Isabelli-Garcia (2006) and most recently Ranta and Meckleborg (2013), is to understand the kinds of opportunities that the SA context provides for pragmatic development. This requires investigating the range of communicative contexts in which SA students use their L2, the types of interlocutors with whom they interact and the frequency with which they practice different speech acts. According to Bardovi-Harlig (1999), this basic ethnographic research is essential when creating appropriate speech act testing materials. In addition, understanding the extent to which SA students have opportunities to interact with native speakers will address mounting concerns about the use of the native norm as benchmark against which to measure progress (Roever, 2011). Finally, identifying the types and characteristics of contexts in which students encounter difficulties could inform the creation of pedagogical resources to better support and prepare SA students for their sojourn.

This study investigates the self-reported L2 use of nine SA students who used their Smartphones to complete surveys asking about their oral L2 English interactions during a ten-day period. The survey aimed to find out who they interacted with, how often, when and for what purpose. It was hoped that survey would provide some preliminary insights into the extent to which a small group of SA students are able to practice their L2 in a variety of communicative contexts and the characteristics of contexts that they find especially challenging. By asking them to complete their survey on their smart phone this paper also hoped to explore the contribution of this data gathering for the collection of ethnographic data relevant in the creation of testing and instructional materials.

Speech act research in SA

A speech act is defined as a "functional unit of communication", (Cohen, 1996), such as a complaint or a compliment. In SA, although studies investigating the production of speech acts have sometimes been based on naturalistic speech data (Shively, 2011; Alcón Soler & Códina Espurz, 2002), more often, in order to acquire a sufficient number of instances of the desired act and for reasons of convenience and control (Kaspar, 2008), researchers have elicited speech acts through role plays or more often, through discourse completion tasks (DCTs). The DCT was made popular during the first systematic analysis of L1 and L2 requests and apologies carried out in the 1980's as part of the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka, Olshtain & Cohen, 1984). Though there are multiple types of DCT (e.g., oral or written, single or multiple-rejoinder) and role-plays, they all require the participant to respond to a prompt situated within a well-defined context of communication. The

following example taken from Warga and Shölmbergers' (2007) study on apologies in

SA illustrates a typical written, single-rejoinder DCT test item:

> *It's your friend Anne's birthday party. Anne is one of your colleagues from university but you do not consider her as a very close friend. In her invitation she asked to bring something to eat for the buffet. You promised to prepare some Mousse au Chocolat, but you didn't manage to do it. You feel embarrassed. What do you tell her when she opens the door?*
>
> *You: Hi Anne! Happy birthday!*
> *A: Hi! Good to see you!*
> *You: _____*

The scenario description contributes to the learners' understanding of the wider context

of communication and contains information about the speaker and the hearer; the mode,

channel and code of communication; the goal of the communicative act; and the topic and

setting. This wider context of communication corresponds to what Hymes (1972)

famously referred to as a speech event, and can include one or more speech acts.

In SA, DCTs have been used to study the realization of apologies in L2 French,

Spanish, Japanese and Russian (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Warga & Shölmberger, 2007;

Beckwith & Dewaele, 2008; Kondo, 1997; Shardakova, 2005), L2 German requests,

offers and refusals (Barron, 2003, 2007) and requests in L2 English and Spanish

(Schauer, 2009; Cohen & Shively, 2007). In each of these studies, native baseline DCT

data served as the target norm against which pragmatic gains was measured (with the

exception of Cohen & Shively, 2007, who used native ratings of the data to establish

gains). Results showed that no participant was able to attain native-like proficiency

following a period of SA, and longitudinal studies typically characterized SA students'

progress as non-linear (Kondo, 1997; Barron, 2003; Warga & Shölmberger, 2007;

Schauer, 2009). Barron (2003), for example, in her study of refusals for Irish SA learners of German found that students acquired new strategies for downgrading, but overgeneralized these strategies to places where it was inappropriate. Similarly, in Warga & Shölmberger's (2007) study of apologies by German SA learners of French, the authors found that students increased their range of pragmalinguistic strategies but, by the end of the sojourn, had begun to overuse the repetition of illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs, e.g., *désolé, désolé*).

Another group of studies examined speech act realization through role plays with native speakers. These studies examined L2 Spanish service encounters (Bataller, 2010), L2 Indonesian requests (Hassall, 2003), L2 Spanish advice giving (Baca, 2011), and L2 Spanish refusals (Félix-Brasdefer, 2009). Bataller found no statistically significant move towards the native norm in her study of American SA learners of Spanish when compared to native role-play data, and Hassall found that after a period of near to one year in the target culture, Australians' use of strategies in Indonesian remained far from the native norm. Félix-Brasdefer noted that in role-play data of refusals, though time spent abroad was positively related to use of indirect strategies, there was a substantial amount of variation in performance from learner to learner. He also found that similar to Warga and Shölmberger, his American SA participants tended to overgeneralize the use of IFIDs.

In the majority of these studies, there was no formal attempt to establish whether the DCT and role-play scenarios were frequent occurrences in the participants' daily lives. Neither was there an attempt to relate the reported amount of L2 contact to the findings. For example, in Beckwith & Dewaele's (2008) study of apologies by American SA learners of Japanese, speech events represented scenarios of apologies in both work

situations and school settings, despite the fact that not all participants had both types of experience in the host country. Only Barron and Warga and Shölmberger requested that native speakers evaluate the likelihood of the scenarios' occurrence prior to testing; however, they did not ask the SA respondents if they had also experienced similar situations during their time abroad.

A second interesting methodological aspect of these studies is that authors typically do not mention situational difficulty, focussing instead on the relative power and distance of interlocutors involved (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Shardakova, 2005). For example, in Bataller's (2010) study of English SA students' performance of two service encounters, one role-play scenario involved simply ordering a drink, while the other involved the participant negotiating the return of a pair of shoes without a receipt. Both role-plays implied the use of markedly different amounts of language, complexity, and risk. Interestingly, no significant progress towards the native norm was observed for this second scenario, suggesting that SA participants had likely not previously encountered a similar situation. Research is needed to establish the contexts in which participants are likely to demonstrate development in order to better characterize the types of gains that can be made in the SA context.

Study abroad, language contact, and pragmatic development

One assumption underlying the popular belief in the power of SA context for promoting pragmatic gains is that SA guarantees increased opportunities for contact with speakers of the target language. In laymen's terms, SA is a bit like throwing a child in the deep end of the pool: the child must learn to swim to survive just as SA learners must

learn to communicate appropriately to make a life for themselves in the target culture. Despite this longstanding assumption, however, the link between contact and L2 pragmatic development has only recently begun to be explored. In the first large scale study if its kind, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) examined the perception and production of conventional expressions for 122 L2 learners of English living in the USA, comparing their performance to their amount of L2 interaction, length of stay, and proficiency. They found that amount of interaction (defined by hours/week speaking English and watching English TV) was positively correlated with better scores on tests of both perception and production, while length of stay produced no significant correlations, and proficiency correlated positively only with production scores. The authors also reported different patterns of interaction for students who claimed more contact with English, observing that students with high contact profiles interacted more frequently with native peers. In a similar study, Bella (2011) also found that 40 adult L2 learners of Greek who had regular intimate contact with native speakers showed more native-like production of politeness strategies of invitations than learners who had spent substantially longer in the host country but who had little native speaker contact.

Taguchi (2008), who worked with Japanese SA learners of English in Vancouver, investigated the correlation between gains in comprehension of implicatures on a multiple choice test and amount of L2 speaking outside the classroom using the Language Contact Questionnaire (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2004). She found that performance speed was positively correlated with contact, but that no correlation was found for accuracy of comprehension. Matsumura (2003) also observed that on a multiple choice discourse completion task on the speech act of advice giving,

performance gains for 137 Japanese SA students in Vancouver were positively correlated with out of class exposure.

Although the connection between pragmatic learning and contact seems straightforward (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011), the connection between extensive L2 contact and participation in SA programs is less obvious. A growing body of research is showing that simply participating in an SA program does not necessarily provide the opportunities for L2 contact many students expect. Freed, Segalowitz and Dewey (2004) compared amounts of L2 use for American learners of French in three contexts, SA, an intensive domestic immersion program, and a standard domestic language learning program. They discovered that students enrolled in domestic immersion spoke significantly more French outside of class than SA students.

Diary research also confirmed that contact with native speakers and use of the L2 from learner to learner, in accordance with factors ranging from living situation, to attitude, to language proficiency (see for e.g., Siegal, 1996; Hassall 2003; Dekeyser, 2010). Isabelli-Garcia (2006) tracked the social networks and L1/L2 use of five American SA students in Argentina, and found that only three students were able to develop multiplex native speaker friend networks while two others formed few relationships with native speakers and made less language gains overall. Similarly, in her case study of two American SA students in France, Kinginger (2008) found that while one male student integrated quickly and developed many close friendships with French speakers, the female student who lived alone and was almost entirely isolated from the French speaking community, preferring to spend time with international students with whom she spoke English. In Canada, Ranta & Meckleborg (2013) observed the L2 contact patterns

of recently arrived Chinese graduate students using electronic logs completed over a period of six months. She found that participants preferred Chinese for their social interactions and used oral English most often for interactions about school or their research and service encounters. These results have prompted SA researchers to call for more studies on specific features of the SA context, such as living arrangements, mentorship programs and language support resources, that might promote increased opportunities for L2 practice in SA (Kinginger, 2011).

A final important difficulty in interpreting SA research on contact stems from the multiple definitions of the context itself, which the literature has described as anything from onsite language classes lasting just a few weeks (e.g., Dekeyser, 2010) to the completion of a four year degree in a foreign institution (e.g., Ranta & Meckleborg, 2013). Kinginger (2009) defines SA broadly as "a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes" (p.11). In Canada, where this study took place, one frequent SA format at the postsecondary level is the third-year undergraduate exchange, lasting one or two university semesters (4-10 months). For the purposes of this research, which was conducted in Montreal, we will define SA as a sojourn to a L2 university last between one to three semesters.

Contact data collection

Data on interaction patterns has typically been collected in previous studies using diaries, log, or questionnaires, such as the Language Contact Profile cited above, in which participants self-report their L2 use. As with any self-report data, these methods imply a substantial delay between interaction and reporting, and there is a high potential

for incidents to be forgotten or reported incorrectly. With the proliferation of mobile technologies, it is now more convenient for participants to record log entries throughout the day, theoretically reducing this retrospection bias. Indeed, Ranta and Meckleborg's (2013) electronic log study took advantage of this by using a highly structured electronic interface that allowed participants to record their activities using drop-down lists for each 15 minute increment of their day at any time during the day. The log format allowed for the collection of data that was simple to categorize and which painted a complete picture of each participant's language use throughout the collection period.

Taking inspiration from the Ranta and Meckleborg study, for this project, a structured interaction log was designed to be completed by students' using their own mobile phones, allowing them to record specific contextual information soon after the interaction. By incorporating the use of devices students were consulting regularly, it was hoped participants would be more likely to complete entries consistently. This methodology has been used successfully in event-sampling studies in psychology research on reports of emotional incidents (e.g., Song, Foo & Uy, 2008). To the author's knowledge, this is the first time this technology has been used to report interaction patterns in L2 research.

Study

The current study takes an alternative approach to speech act research in SA by using self-report data provided by SA students to obtain information on the frequency, range, and characteristics of their daily L2 speech acts and events. It is a preliminary attempt to describe the breadth and quality of opportunities for L2 oral contact offered by the

Canadian SA context in order to guide the creation of innovative research and testing instruments that reflect the experiences of these students.

The research questions for this study are the following:

RQ1: What speech acts and events do SA students perform over a ten-day period? How often, with whom and where are they performed?

RQ2: Which of these acts and events do SA students perceive as difficult? How do SA participants describe the difficulties they encounter?

Method

Descriptions of the L2 oral interactions of SA students (n = 9) attending two English-speaking Montreal universities were collected using an online mobile survey tool for a period of ten-days. Following the collection period, participants attended a group wrap-up session where they completed a questionnaire and contributed to a group discussion concerning their oral interactions patterns and their impressions of the mobile tool. The data gathered during this first phase was then used to design four role-plays that elicited target speech acts and events, which were performed and rated for difficulty by a subset of three participants.

Context and participants

This research was conducted with undergraduate SA students attending two large Anglophone universities in downtown Montreal. The official language of Montreal is French, however, there is a large Anglophone community and most services are offered in both French and English. According to the Association of Universities and Colleges

Canada (2007), approximately 7500 foreign students participated in exchange programs at Canadian institutions in 2006, with this number projected to increase substantially as part of an initiative to promote campus internationalization. While students involved in this type of exchange sometimes take language courses, they are required to have demonstrated an upper-intermediate language proficiency in the language of instruction before arrival and are expected to attend subject courses delivered in the target language. Language learning is cited as a key reason for participating in these programs; however, SA students also point to increased intercultural awareness and opportunities for tourism as equally important priorities during their sojourn. Students typically live in student residences or shared apartments, although there are sometimes homestay options available, and are socialized into the Canadian context through university organized events for international students, such as orientations and trips to local tourist destinations.

Participants (n = 9) were recruited through the international student offices of two large English universities. Care was taken that the final participants represented a variety of first languages, nationalities, and disciplines. All met the English proficiency requirements for acceptance in their programs and ranged from intermediate to advanced proficiency, measured by standardized test scores on the TOEFL or IELTS. All participants owned a Smart phone which they used daily to connect to the Internet. None reported having English-speaking parents, having lived in an English-speaking country, or having attended an English-speaking institution prior to collection. All were attending subject matter classes in their respective fields. Improving their English was reported as an important, or very important, priority for all participants; however, only three were

attending additional English classes. Self-reports indicated an average of 72% of their weekly oral communication took place in English. Participant information can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Mobile diary study participants

Pseudonym	Age	Home country	First language(s)	Field	Exam	Score	English Use(%)
Oscar	23	Argentina	Spanish	Engineering	TOEFL ibt	102	80
Rose	20	Japan	Japanese	Political science	TOEFL ibt	89	80
Jim	22	Argentina	Spanish	Theatre	TOEFL ibt	78	90
Marcello*	23	Brazil	Portuguese	Engineering	TOEFL ibt	82	60
Jennifer	20	China	Mandarin	International business	TOEFL ibt	76	90
Paul	23	Sweden	Cantonese/ Swedish	Human resources	TOEFL ibt	85	50
Audrey	20	France	French	Political Science	IELTS	6.5	30
Solomon*	25	Israel	Hebrew	Agricultural Engineering	TOEFL ibt	91	90
Jesse*	20	Colombia	Spanish	Business	TOEFL PB	537	80

*Participants attending English classes during their stay

Supplementary role-play data were collected from a subset of three participants: Marcello, Solomon, and Rose.

Instrument

The electronic survey, created using Survey Gizmo, was accessible online from tablets, laptops or smart phones with optimal formatting for mobile technologies (Appendix A). It consisted of eight short questions that required participants to record

details of each oral English interaction. Participants first identified themselves by entering a name or code and then entered details of the interaction including a general description of the situation (e.g., *I asked my friend to borrow her pencil because I forgot mine*), and the location of the act (e.g., *university classroom*). They were then asked to indicate their relationship to each interlocutor, (e.g., *classmate*), to rate how well they know each interlocutor (*1 = not at all, 5 = very well*) and to indicate whether each interlocutor was a native English speaker. Finally, participants indicated how frequently they participated in similar social encounters in a typical week (*1 = not often at all, 5 = very often*) and rated the level of difficulty they felt when communicating (*1 = not easy at all, 5 = very easy*). An optional space was provided at the end of the survey for comments on difficulties or additional explanations. Questions were purposefully short and presented on separate pages so that no scrolling would be necessary, even on small mobile screens. Once a survey was completed, the information was immediately transmitted to the researcher's account, allowing the researcher to monitor the entries for each participant throughout the collection period.

Procedure

Data collection occurred in late October, six weeks after participants' arrival in Montreal. Before the survey period, participants attended a two-hour group training session in which they completed a background questionnaire (Appendix B) and practiced completing the mobile survey using their phones. Pilot testing with two native speakers had revealed that users provided vague information without practice and coaching and for this reason, the group was given a checklist of 15 speech acts including items such as *saying sorry, making a promise, asking for something, saying thank you, introduce*

someone and asked to add any other items they saw fit. They then used the checklist while watching a clip of a popular TV series, selecting all options that applied and comparing their answers with a partner. This activity completed, participants were introduced to the electronic interface of the survey, and practiced completing entries. Written instructions were also distributed and reviewed as a guide to be referred back to during the collection period (Appendix C). Participants were encouraged to include all oral English interactions, including entries using inappropriate language. They were also informed that while using the mobile phone was preferable, they could complete their entries on any device of their choosing.

The following day, participants began submitting entries for the ten-day collection period. Entries were monitored by the researcher and all participants were contacted during the collection period to ensure that there were no technical problems. Two days following the end of the collection period, participants attended the group wrap-up session. Participants first completed a paper and pencil post-collection questionnaire (Appendix D). They were then divided into three small groups and asked to discuss and agree upon the top five most frequent types of interaction rated in order of difficulty followed by the top five most difficult interactions ranked in order of frequency. This was followed by an open discussion about the mobile interface and experience with the research in general.

Following the survey data analysis, three participants were asked to return in order to take part in recorded role-play sessions. Role-plays were conducted with participants individually in a quiet research office. Participants interacted with a previously unknown peer who was a female, L1 Spanish international student of a similar

age. After each role play, the participant rated the extent to which the participant found communication to be difficult and justified their ratings in writing on a rating sheet (Appendix E). An informal interview was conducted following the role-play concerning the influences of the interlocutors' gender and L1 in their ratings.

Coding

In total, 801 complete surveys were submitted during the ten-day collection. On average, participants reported having completed surveys for 70% of their oral English interaction. Of the 801 entries, the number of difficult interactions was established by tallying entries rated as 1, 2, or 3 on the question "How easy was it for you to communicate (1= not east at all, 5= very easy). Entries collected per participants are represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Entries per participant

Participant	Total Surveys	Difficult interactions	L2 interaction reported (%)
Oscar	101	32	40
Rose	110	37	70
Jim	57	7	70
Marcello	72	21	80
Jennifer	100	18	90
Paul	114	10	90
Audrey	79	16	90
Solomon	63	25	30
Jesse	105	7	70
Mean	89	18.5	70
Total	801	167	-

Each entry was doubly coded for speech act and speech event (a complete list of codes and definitions can be found in Appendix F). Coding was verified by a second rater specializing in pragmatics for the first two hundred entries and difficult cases were resolved through discussion. The author coded the remainder of the entries. Below are a few examples of entries and the assigned codes (participant data appears in italics):

Table 3

Sample entries

Entry Description	Interlocutor	Location	Speech Act	Speech event
I told someone how did I do on the exam	*Roommate*	*Residence*	Providing information	School talk
I told the girl she played soccer very well	*Friend*	*Park*	Complimenting	Situation commentary
I asked for a coffee	*Seller*	*Gas station*	Ordering	Service encounter

Some entries could only be coded for speech act (when the broader context was not indicated) and some only for speech event (when a specific function was not indicated). In some cases, multiple codes were also assigned to a single entry. Table 4 provides a few examples:

Table 4

Sample coding exceptions

Entry Description	Interlocutor	Location	Speech Act	Speech event
I said good luck.	*Roommate*	*Residence*	Well-wishing	No info
We talked about canadian people and	*Roommate*	*Home*	No info	Culture talk

how they behave				
Accidentally met my friend Hi how are you? I'm so sleepy because I didn't sleep last night for preparing for my oral presentation	*Friend*	*University*	Greeting Complaining	Updating School talk

Each entry was additionally coded for type of interlocutor (peer, service-staff, academic staff, unknown) and native/non-native interaction. Finally, each entry was coded for sphere of interaction including: private (home or residence), school (on campus), social (with friends in places other than school or home), public (with strangers in places other than school or home), and phone.

Subsequently, two role play scenarios were adapted from interactions described in entries rated as very easy (5) and very frequent (5) and two scenarios were adapted from those rated as not easy (2), or not easy at all (1) and frequent (4) or very frequent (5).

Results

RQ1: What speech acts and events do SA students perform over a ten-day period?

In total, 737 speech act tokens belonging to 35 categories were identified. The data indicated that requesting and providing requested information are the two most common speech acts, followed by interactions taking place in restaurants or shops (ordering, requesting service), and by small talk conventions such as joking, thanking, greeting and introducing. Acts are listed in order of frequency of occurrence in table 5.

Table 5

Speech acts: frequencies of occurrence

requesting information	151	notifying	19	planning	5
providing information	119	introducing	18	expressing state	4
providing opinion	44	refusing	17	providing justification	4
ordering	42	recommending	16	commanding	3
requesting service	41	requesting clarification	13	well-wishing	3
offering	25	apologizing	12	disagreeing	2
joking	23	requesting permission	10	expressing surprise	2
requesting favour	23	accepting	8	comforting	1
thanking	23	agreeing	8	expressing anger	1
complaining	22	leave-taking	8	negotiating	1
complimenting	22	exclaiming	6	promising	1
greeting	19	requesting justification	6	no info	93

Note: "no info" refers to cases in which a speech act code could not be attributed.

Questionnaire and group session data also confirmed that "ordering food", "asking for something", "asking for direction" or "say good morning" constituted these students' most frequent speech acts. A total of 764 speech event tokens were identified belonging to 25 categories. Discussions of cultural differences were the most frequent type of exchange followed by updating, a speech event usually comprised of a greeting and a brief discussion of each interlocutors recent activities (e.g. *Hey! How are you? How was the party?)* The table below presents events in order of token frequency.

Table 6

Speech events: frequency of occurrence

culture	81	language talk	24
updating	76	flirtation	19
get to know you	63	coaching	18
shopping service encounter	61	decision-making	17
restaurant service encounter	56	meal-time	16
school talk	49	informing	13
situation commentary	43	directions	10
discussion	42	apology	9

favour granting	37	gaming	4
coordinating	35	confrontation	2
advising	30	daring/gossiping	2
invitation	29	doctor visit	1
info-exchange	27	no info	65

Note: "no info" refers to cases in which a speech act code could not be attributed.

These results were confirmed in the post session where students indicated that talking about school and culture, meeting new people, and service encounters were frequent interactions.

With whom and where do students speak English?

Results showed that the majority of interactions occurred with peers, followed by staff in restaurants and shops. Interaction with professors and strangers accounted for only 12% of the reported L2 interactions. The locations where these interactions took place were relatively evenly dispersed between home, school and social events. Figure 1 represents the distribution of interaction across different spheres of communication and interlocutor types.

Figure 1

Spheres

■Private ■School ■Social ■Public ■Phone

Interlocutors

■Peers ■Service ■Unknown ■Academic
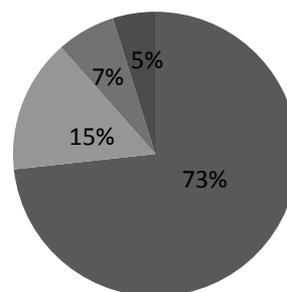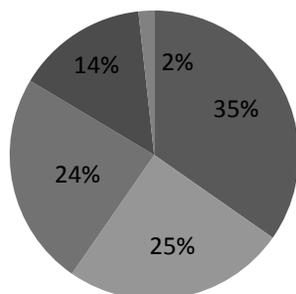
The large proportion of interactions taking place in these students' homes can be attributed to the fact that all students had housemates and all but one, Jennifer, used English at home. Only 220 of the 801 entries (27%) involved native speakers and contact with natives varied greatly for each participant, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
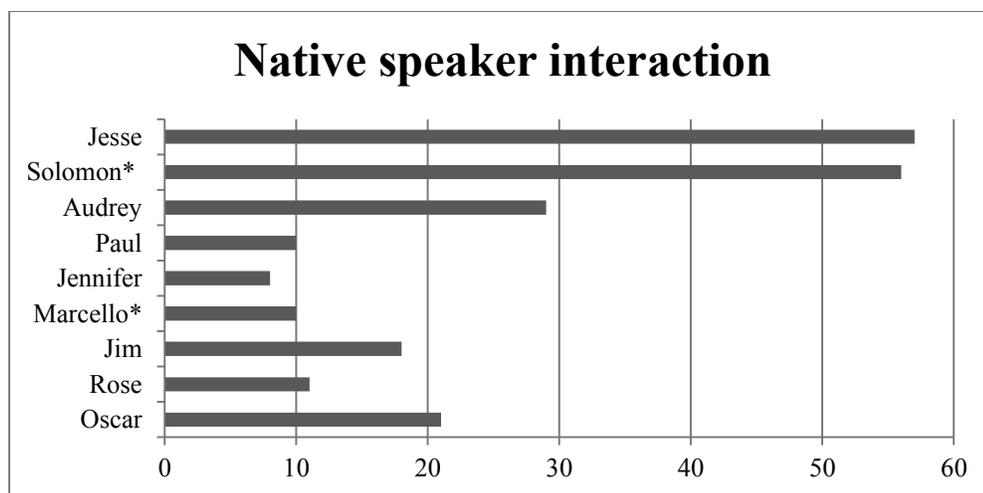
These large differences can be explained by the interlocutors that participants' frequented in their private environments: both Jesse and Audrey lived with native speakers, and

Solomon was dating a native speaker. For Jennifer, Paul and Rose, native interactions

represented less than 10% of their English use during the collection period. In the post

collection questionnaire, Oscar, Jennifer, Paul, Rose and Jim indicated that they had few

if any native speaker friends and interacted primarily with other international students.

RQ2: Which of these acts and events do SA students perceive as difficult?

Entries rated as difficult accounted for approximately 20% of the total reported

interactions (n = 167). In these entries, 149 speech act and 152 speech event tokens were

identified. The tables below report the difficult acts and events indexed in order of

difficulty. The index represents the percentage of entries of that type rated as difficult, for

example if one of three well-wishing acts was reported as difficult, the difficulty index is

set at 33.3. Speech acts appearing above the line in the tables 7 and 8 represent those with

a higher than average difficulty index.

Table 7

Difficult speech acts

Speech Act	Frequency	Difficulty index
disagreeing	2	100.0
expressing anger	1	100.0
promising	1	100.0
commanding (online gaming)	2	66.6
providing information	44	36.9
well-wishing	1	33.3
providing opinion	14	31.8
recommending	5	31.2
requesting clarification	4	30.7
agreeing	2	25.0
apologizing	3	25.0
expressing state (e.g., hunger)	1	25.0
ordering	10	23.8
complaining	5	22.7

	5	21.7
joking	5	21.7
planning	1	20.0
requesting service	8	19.5
refusing	3	17.6
exclaiming	1	16.6
introducing	3	16.6
requesting information	22	14.5
thanking	3	13.0
requesting opinion	1	12.5
offering	3	12.0
notifying	2	10.5
greeting	1	5.2
complimenting	1	4.5
no info	25	26.8

Table 8

Difficult speech events

Speech event	Frequency	Difficulty index
advising	3	100.0
doctor visit	1	100.0
culture	41	50.6
coaching	9	50.0
confrontation	1	50.0
meal-time	4	25.0
restaurant service encounter	13	23.2
school talk	11	22.4
info-exchange	6	22.2
discussion	9	21.4
shopping service encounter	13	21.3
flirtation	4	21.0
language talk	5	20.8
directions	2	20.0
situation commentary	7	16.2
favour granting	5	13.5
apology	1	11.1
updating	7	9.2
coordinating	3	8.6
invitation	2	6.9
decision-making	1	5.9
get to know you	3	4.8

How do SA participants describe the difficulties they encounter?

Participants reported that expressing cultural differences and emotions, both positive and negative, made interactions especially difficult. They also indicated that complex thoughts, such as those expressed in lengthy discussions or when coaching someone through an activity, posed a challenge. Finally they pointed out that any situation in which the subject or lexis was unknown or unfamiliar made communication more difficult. In the group session, students added that restaurant service encounters were sometimes very difficult but that the level of difficulty varied greatly depending on variables such as time pressure and familiarity with the menu. They also indicated that speaking with interlocutors of limited English proficiency made communication challenging. From these comments, it was possible to identify two broad categories of difficulty: linguistic difficulties, referring to their own or their interlocutor's limited L2 knowledge; and sociopragmatic difficulties, referring to social constraints of the situation.

Difficulties originating from the participant's own linguistic capacity included lack of lexis or fluency, pronunciation or grammar mistakes, and difficulties expressing ideas or opinions on complex topics. These difficulties principally arose when participants were led to talk about topics they had not previously discussed in English or when they were required to talk for extended periods. Often, despite their professed difficulties, they note that their interlocutors were supportive of their efforts to communicate and they were able to co-construct meaning using other strategies. When the problems were attributed to the interlocutor's linguistic abilities, it was generally because the participant felt that they were unable to understand the interlocutor's speech because of their speed, accent, or

poor level of English. Below are a few examples of comments about difficult interactions taken from the mobile survey entries:

Jesse: *I don't know if it is ok to say purplish referring to a hematoma in her eye, but she understood me.*

Jennifer: *Sometimes I will think in Chinese and it hinders me from communication.*

Rose: *Not easy to explain the "little rain" outside.*

Jesse: *It was a little bit difficult to find some words to explain them exactly what happened, but they help me and they understood me.*

Audrey: *One does not simply knows the word "cauliflower!"*

Oscar: *I barely understood his English because he spoke very basic English. It was supose to be easy but the waiter didn't understand in the first time I asked.*

When difficulties were of a sociopragmatic nature, participants referred to the relative power of their interlocutors or their impression that their speech would not be well-received. High power interlocutors included professors, doctors, mentors, landlords and bankers. Of the 30 encounters that involved these interlocutors, 16 were considered difficult. Interestingly, strong group members at school and native speakers were also considered by this group to be high status: of the 173 entries marked as difficult, 60 involved native speakers. In reference to interactions with natives concerning school work, these participants commented:

Paul: [Some group members] *speaks alot and uses the space well. Often i feel like they do understand me or they do not try.*

Oscar: *I don't feel that comfortable speaking to native people.*

However, it was interactions in which the participant was required say something not desired by the hearer that seemed to pose the greatest challenge. This type of

"undesired communication" has been referred to in the literature as "dispreferred responses" (Levinson, 1983). A classic example of a dispreferred reponse comes from Paul's account of refusing a sales pitch from an eager seller in a clothing store. He notes how difficult it was to communicate effectively:

Paul: *It was VERY difficult because he wanted to sell me so much this second article, and argues a lot. And i'm not enough fluent in English to convice him truly that i was not interested. He insisted a lot.*

In his theories of politeness, Levinson notes that dispreferred responses, aside from being high-stress communicative situations, are often more linguistically demanding than preferred responses, such as agreeing. This is because they require extra strategies for lessening the undesired impact on the hearer including increased indirectness, explanations, or justifications.

Role plays

To further explore the sources of communication difficulties, four role-plays were designed including two situations which participants would find easy (control scenarios), and two situations which participants would find difficult. For the easy situations, one scenario involved greeting an acquaintance and asking them how things were going, eliciting the event of updating. The second involved requesting help on an assignment and arranging a time to meet, eliciting the acts of favour-granting and coordinating. For the difficult role-plays, one situation included a dispreferred response: the participant was forced to discuss a poor performance on an exam with a student who had done well (school talk and culture speech event). The second was linguistically complex: participants were asked to describe and justify what they liked or disliked about Montreal and if they would consider moving to Canada permanently (see Appendix G for role-play

prompts). Because the role plays were designed from the mobile entries, the scenarios

corresponded to situations familiar to the participants and were thus idiographic.

Participants were also allowed to maintain their own identities within the scenario and

thus draw on experience of similar past encounters, thus more closely approximating

their performance in a naturalistic environment (Kaspar, 2008). All role-plays involved

interaction with a Spanish speaking international student of advanced English

proficiency, Anita (pseudonym). A Spanish speaking female international student was

chosen as a role play partner to represent the frequent peer interactions with non-native

speakers. Table 9 presents each participants' ratings supplied directly following each

role-play (5= very easy, 1= not easy at all).

Table 9

Role play ratings

Speech event	Characteristic	Rose	Marcello	Solomon
Updating	Easy/frequent	5	4	4
Favour granting	Easy/frequent	3	4	5
School talk	Dispreferred response	3	3	4
Culture	Linguistic complexity	4	4	4

Rating results indicate that, as per findings in the mobile surveys, the dispreferred

response situation was typically the most difficult for these three participants. When

asked which scenario was the most difficult, Marcello and Rose selected the school talk

scenario, giving the following explanations:

Marcello: *I mess up in the beginning but then I got a little bit more fluent... I don't know, 'cause I, the topic or because my performance, for me it was the difficult one.*

Rose: *Sometimes I didn't know how to explain why it's difficult and wondered if my use of English was right or not. The feeling for the exam was difficult. I found it so difficult but she found it so easy!*

Interestingly, Rose rated the favour granting scenario, designed to be easy, as being of equal difficulty with the school talk scenario. She attributed her difficulties with favour granting to the linguistic complexity of the situation when she was asked to further justify her favour request:

Rose: *It's a little difficult to deliver conversation with fluency. So sometimes I need to stop and take time to think what to say. It's easy to ask help but difficult to explain specifically what I want her to help.*

Solomon did not rate any scenario as difficult, despite Anita's impression that he was the weakest and least comfortable of the three participants. However, when asked at the end of the interview what he perceived to be the most difficult, he cited the dispreferred nature of his opinions in the culture scenario, in which he had complained that Montrealers were too polite:

Solomon: *The most difficult? To explain like why I don't like the people here, or something like that, I don't like to speak bad thing about people, so.*

While he did not find the school talk scenario difficult, he did comment about its potential for difficulty:

Solomon: *When speaking on unhappy situation, it's could more stressing or will be harder to explain your failure.*

Finally when asked if they would have felt differently about the scenarios if Anita had been a native speaker, all participants adamantly agreed that the situations would have been more difficult. Below are some of their impressions of the difficulties involved with communicating with natives.

Rose: *Sometimes I like ah I find so difficult to have a conversation with native speakers because I always think like if my English is okay or not or I think, I have to think like um, uh, do they understand my pronunciation because I have accent, strong accent, so I have to think a lot with native speakers… and I'm too shy like.*

Marcello: *I think it would be a little more difficult… 'cause I think native speakers, they speak faster… yeah so more difficult. 'Cause I had some friends from, from here… sometimes I can't understand them.*

Solomon: *It was less comfortable cause I would feel like I need to have ah, better English or... yeah if I would make some mistakes, some grammar mistakes or, would take me time to find the word…*

While the results of the role play did not provide any new information that was not already found in the mobile survey, they did provide elicit further confirmation of the difficulty of interacting with native speakers as well as a further exploration of these participants' reactions to situations in which they had to produce dispreferred responses.

Discussion

The SA students' participating in this small-scale study engaged in a variety of speech act and event types ranging from routine service encounters to in-depth discussions of culture. However, this wide range of types was found to occur in a limited range of contexts that are essentially informal and social, as can be seen by the high proportion of peer interactions in the private, social and school spheres. In these social

peer-to-peer interactions, participants described encounters in which they discussed their cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and preferences while getting to know people from all over the world. These discussions constitute the common thread that traverses the contact patterns of all participants, despite the very different venues where the interactions occurred. Marcelo, for example, preferred to party in the bars of Montreal or play soccer, where Paul preferred to practice kung fu, game online and attend functions with his clubmates. Solomon spent much time with the Anglophone Jewish community and his girlfriend, whereas Jim the theatre major often discussed and attended rehearsals, plays, and concerts. However, within all these activities, participants described interactions in which they discussed their experiences as exchange students and how their new lifestyle differed from what they experienced in their home countries.

It was in these interactions and interactions with housemates that participants had the opportunity for extended talk and practice, such as teaching friends how to play games or to use newly discovered resources, discussing pop culture and coordinating household activities such as cooking, paying the bills, and doing laundry. While performing these speech events in informal atmospheres, participants had the opportunity to negotiate for meaning with collaborative, unintimidating interlocutors, as was evidenced by comments in the surveys about help received from conversation partners. Indeed, some participants noted that this type of exchange made them feel empowered and pleased to have practiced their English.

Meetings or interactions of a formal or administrative nature, on the other hand, were rare for this group during the ten-day period and only a few of the participants had brief interactions with professors or mentors. Participants also rarely reported speaking about

the content of their classes. When school was discussed, interactions consisted mainly of comments on assessment methods and features of the education system they found difficult or different from their home-country institutions. Thus their use of oral academic English was limited as were their opportunities to practice English with traditionally high status interlocutors (e.g., professor, banker, landlords).

These results suggest that researchers seeking to use role-plays and DCTs to evaluate speech act perception and performance may need to be aware that SA students principally interact with each other and that, while the range of speech acts they encounter is quite broad, the types of interlocutors and contexts of interaction are in fact limited. Researchers looking to assess gains may have to tailor their instruments to scenarios that students are likely to have encountered in order to perceive significant changes in performance.

SA as a community of practice and the role of the native speaker

A second observation that can be made from these surveys is that these students' shared experiences seem to have allowed them to form their own community of practice. Wenger (1998) describes a community of practice as a group comprised of members who have a mutual engagement, a jointly negotiated enterprise, and a shared repertoire. In the case of these SA students, they are all mutually engaged in the task of discovering their new environment and have a shared repertoire of experiences of culture shock and adaptation which they express through their common second language, English as a lingua franca (ELF).

The role of native speakers within this community seems to be essentially as an outsider-expert, largely external to the group. Participants repeatedly mentioned anxiety associated with speaking to natives and the communicative inadequacies they felt. Rose, for example, confided that her SA friends felt pressured to "keep up" with natives, which caused them to doubt their abilities to communicate and avoid native interaction. While native speakers participated in the SA community in a few cases (e.g., Jesse's native speaker roommate), often, natives were perceived as intimidating, high status interlocutors who were not interested in getting to know the participants.

This finding challenges the popular assumption that SA guarantees quality contact with native speakers and casts doubts on whether such learners would experience enough exposure to allow them to progress towards a native norm. The high proportion of cultural negotiation also suggests that the university and social experiences of SA students might differ substantially from that of locals, despite the fact that the experiences for both groups probably occur in the same physical locations. This has implications in terms of the amount of native-like gains that can and should be expected after study abroad and supports the current move towards studying how norms develop and emerge rather than measuring gains (Barron, 2012).

Perception of communicative challenges

Following the analysis of situations participants perceived as difficult, it was possible to identify two main sources of difficulty: linguistic gaps and sociopragmatic stress. Situations perceived as linguistically difficult, while challenging, were also generally perceived as learning opportunities. This was particularly the case for lexical gaps, where students seemed to have no difficulties asking for help and generally did not

express much distress about their inability to find the right word when these situations occurred with peers. They were able to co-construct meanings together through gestures and elaboration and did not note any communicative breakdowns.

Sociopragmatic difficulties, however, left a more lasting impression of inadequacy. These occurred when the interlocutors perceived that some facet of their communication was displeasing to the hearer, either because the hearer did not understand or judged their language mistakes negatively. Oscar for example commented in one entry how, when his interlocutor did not understand him the first time, he felt he had not made any progress since he arrived in Montreal.

Similarly, having to produce dispreferred responses in the L2 was a significant source of stress for these students. In the post-session, Solomon referred to how he felt unequipped to describe his position on the political situation in Israel with interlocutors who had negative opinions of his country. Similar difficulties have been described by American SA students abroad, who are faced with anti-American sentiments and who lack the linguistic tools to defend their identities and beliefs adequately (Shively, 2010). Despite the difficulties reported with dispreferred responses, not all interactions involving differences of opinion were perceived as stressful. In the culture exchange role play for example, when Rose expressed different opinions than Anita about life in Montreal, there was mutual fascination rather than conflict. Anita commented after the role play that Rose was most comfortable when expressing these differences because she was contributing something genuinely interesting to the conversation. In addition while expressing anger and disagreeing were consistently rated as difficult, refusing was not necessarily rated as a difficult task for these students.

Speech act researchers should be careful to note scenarios containing dispreferred responses, and to ensure that when testing performance, participants truly perceive their responses as dispreferred. These results also have implications for SA pedagogy and programs. SA students might benefit from training in strategies for expressing dispreferred responses, in order to avoid situations of disempowerment and lasting feelings of inadequacy. Universities could also provide training for locals acting in buddy, mentorship or homestay roles to make them aware of the feelings of intimidation their "expert" status might provoke in SA students.

Mobile methodology

To my knowledge, this was the first attempt at using mobile surveys for reporting L2 pragmatic use throughout the day as it was happening. Participants reported few difficulties using the interface and all indicated it was easy to use, clear and relatively convenient. The mobile version was used to complete approximately 75% of the entries, with the remaining 25% completed on desktops, laptops or tablets. Participants cited issues such as dead batteries and slow internet connections to justify their use of other devices. Entries tended to be recorded in small batches at several points throughout the day and few incomplete entries were submitted. The ability to monitor incoming entries was highly convenient and allowed the author to contact the participants in the event of a discrepancy (e.g., few entries in a day) in the data.

In addition, all participants reported having made certain realizations about their use of English through the completion of the surveys, such as how much or how little English they actually spoke during the day and with whom they usually interacted. Some mentioned that they used the surveys as a way to request vocabulary by asking their

interlocutors to help them record the details more clearly. A few participants did note that they found it difficult to remember all interactions in a long series of exchanges when they considered it rude to use their phones to record what was going on. Others noted they felt they had too many interactions to record effectively. However, in general, this method was successful in gathering a large number of entries in an organized and convenient fashion. Future research could investigate the utility of mobile phones to collect data on specific speech acts or noticing of pragmatic routines such as conventional expressions. This technique could also be transformed into a tool for language teachers wishing to extend students language contact beyond the classroom.

Limitations and future directions

This study looked at the range and frequency of speech acts and events for nine SA students attending an English speaking university in Montreal. Findings point to abundant opportunities to practice a wide range of speech act and events but that these interactions occur essentially in informal peer-peer contexts and primarily with non-native speakers. However, while the findings of this study offer an interesting useful snapshot of a ten-day period in the lives of these nine participants, it is clear that this study is only preliminary and exploratory and is largely context-dependant. Indeed, the context itself, Montreal, may have contributed to the small amount of native interaction these students experienced. The city, being officially French speaking, interaction opportunities in the language of the minority, English, may have been restricted. The timing of the data-collection, just six weeks after their arrival, also coincided with mid-terms and Halloween, which almost certainly influenced the number of interactions

concerning school complaints, and to some extent, culture as well as the number of "get-to-know-you" interactions. More research in different contexts and with more widely spread collection periods is needed in order to get a clearer picture interaction patterns. Finally, it is crucial to note that not all these students' English oral interaction was reported and thus a part of the picture may still be missing.

Despite these limitations, the results tend to point to the predominance of lingua franca (ELF) communication for these students. The pragmatics of ELF have only recently begun to be explored in academic settings (see special issue of *Intercultural pragmatics,* edited by House, 2009), but the little evidence that does exist point to what House (2009) refers to as a "lingua franca factor", or in other words identifiable features that characterize this variety of English including variability in pragmalinguistic strategies and increased explicitation of intended force. With this in mind, future speech act research in SA pragmatics could focus on describing these students' ability to co-construct pragmatic norms that allow effective and appropriate intercultural communication rather than imposing a native norm on production.

Finally, this paper has introduced a novel method of collecting interaction data through self-report using mobile technology. Because of the self-reported nature of the data, it is of course impossible to determine the accuracy of reporting and speech acts such as greeting, leave-taking and thanking may have been underrepresented in the data due to their typically short duration and participant perceptions that these were not "full" interactions. Still, in this study, this relatively quick and labour saving data collection method provided an abundance of both quantitative and qualitative information on the nature of the interactions in which the participants were involved. Further research might

consider the multiple uses to which mobile surveys could be adapted and attempt to use this technology with larger test populations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research have painted a rich picture of the pragmatic exposure this small group of SA students experienced. As they form relationships with other English speakers, they negotiate their identities through discussions of culture and adaptation and are active participants in student life and social activities. However, this active community remains an essentially international and transitory one: they attend events organized by the international office, their housemates tend to be other international students and those they meet at orientations and in classes are also often L2 English speakers.

Perhaps the most surprising result of this research was the intimidation observed when learners spoke about their encounters with native speakers. These natives were immediately attributed superior status in the eyes of these students and participants keenly felt the gaps in their L2 skills when speaking to natives. These results suggest that universities could implement more programs that encourage international and native or expert speaking students to mix and form relationships, either through a mentorship program or buddy events. Research is increasingly showing that the intimacy and multiplexity of relationships with native or expert speakers in a good predictor of pragmatic development (e.g., Bella, 2011) and likely fosters more positive attitudes towards the host culture and language. Thus future research might compare pragmatic development of students who participate in mentorship programs in SA with those who do not.

An alternative to this which is becoming increasingly popular is to remove the native element from the equation entirely in order to observe how these students co-construct their own pragmatic norms that avoid pragmatic failure and cross cultural boundaries.

One facet of this process may be that students learn to be more direct, providing explicit reasons and justifications for their actions or words. This phenomena was observed in Warga and Shölmbergers' (2007) and Félix-brasdefer's (2009) studies of apologies in which the learners systematically overused the expression "sorry" (*désolé* and *lo siento*) respectively in order to make their message clear. This identification process has already begun in Europe, where researchers have identified the pragmatic strategies used by groups of English as a Linga Franca (ELF) students working on group projects or in classroom settings as well as the pragmatic difficulties these students sometimes encounter (see special issue on ELF edited by Björkman, 2011). Being that most of these students will return to their home countries and speak English to other ELF speakers, it seems useful to identify the pragmatic norms that allow effective cross cultural communication and select these norms as targets for assessing development.

For me, this project was an enlightening experience. I began with a desire to prove that SA students were not being taught to communicate appropriately in the classroom before their arrival and that this would negatively impact their chances of making native friends and thus progressing significantly in their L2. What I discovered is that these SA students were in fact practicing their L2 extensively without the help of native speakers, building up and international pragmatic repertoire that will no doubt serve them well in the future.

Where it seems they were able to do this the best was in cross-cultural discussions and comparisons with peers. These interactions seemed to be of special importance to these learners in shaping their language attitudes and willingness to communicate. In these interactions, they were able to take on the role of experts on their own culture and

felt both valued and interested in the conversation. This stands in stark opposition to discussions that took place with high status interlocutors where the students felt restricted and intimidated. Given this, in my own future research, I would like to focus more closely on the socialization processes and pragmatic strategies learners use to communicate during these "culture comparison" moments to better understand the role of this type of communication in these learners L2 attitudes and identities.

Traditional speech act research methods, such as the DCT, have come under heavy scrutiny from many authors and speech act research in general seems to be on the decline. However, this does not mean that research on speech acts is unimportant. By shifting the focus away from how participants use English in largely invented situations to an examination of the actual social situations in which they are able to practice, we may gain insight into what learners can reasonably be expected to acquire and more carefully examine their development in contexts in which they do obtain a substantial amount of practice. This in turn should allow the creation of tests and pedagogical materials that better reflect learners' needs and experiences. Thus, the main contribution of this paper is to have approached speech acts from a new angle with the participation of learner-ethnographers and the use of mobile technology.

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Appendix A

Social Interaction Diary

Record every interaction you have in English using this diary. You should complete at least 10 entries every day.

1. Your name

2. What happened? What did you say?

3. Location

4. Who were your conversation partners? (e.g.,waiter, friend...)

		Native speaker		
	Relationship	**Yes**	**No**	**I don't know**
1		☑	☐	☐
2		☐	☐	☐
3		☐	☐	☐
4		☐	☐	☐

5. How well do you know your conversation partners?

> 1 = Not well 5 = Very well

	1	2	3	4	5
Partner 1	○	○	○	○	○
Partner 2	○	○	○	○	○
Partner 3	○	○	○	○	○
Partner 4	○	○	○	○	○

6. How easy is it for you to speak English in this situation?

> 1 = Not easy at all --- 5 = Very easy

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

7. In one week, how often do you use English to say something similar?

> 1= Not often at all --- 5 = Very often

1	2	3	4	5
◉	○	○	○	○

8. Comments about the interaction:

> Thank you! If you had more than one interaction in your conversation, refresh this page and complete another entry.

Appendix B

Background Questionnaire

Name: _____   Age: _____

Gender: _____   Country of origin: _____

First language: _____   Home university: _____

Field of Study: _____   Course level at Concordia: _____

1. When did you arrive in Canada?   _____

2. How long will you study in Montreal?

_____

3. How many years did you study English before coming to Canada? _____

4. At what age did you begin learning English? _____

5. What languages do your parents speak at home? _____

6. Do you speak any other languages? _____

7. What English test did you take in order to be admitted to your Montreal University?

A. IELTS   What was your score on
B. TOEFL IBT   the test that you took
C. Other (please specify): _____   _____

8. Have you ever lived in or travelled to an English speaking country before now? yes/no

   If yes, where and for how long?

   _____

9. In a typical week, how much of your oral communication is in English? (circle one)

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

10. In a typical week, how much of your oral communication is in your first language?

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

11. In a typical week, how much of your oral communication is in French?

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

11. Why did you choose to study in Montreal? Check up to <u>three answers</u>

- o To improve my English
- o To travel and be a tourist
- o To learn about a new culture
- o To meet new people
- o To be on a special sports team
- o To please my parents
- o To study at a prestigious university
- o To get a better job when I go back to my country
- o To take a specific class related to my field
- o To be with a friend or partner
- o To visit family that live in Montreal
- o To learn French
- o Other (please specify):_____

12. How important is it for you to improve your English during your time in Montreal?

Not important   1 ------- 2 -------- 3 ------- 4 -------- 5   Very important

13. Are you taking, or do you plan to take English classes while you are in Montreal?

Please indicate the kind of class, where the class is, and how much time it takes.

Class: _____   (e.g., *Academic writing class)*

Location: _____ Number of hours/weeks: _____

(e.g., Concordia, *4 hours each week, 12 weeks*)

Class: _____

Location: _____ Number of hours/weeks: _____

MOBILE PHONE SURVEY:

What kind of mobile phone do you have? _____

Do you have a data plan (i.e. access to the internet without wifi)?   Yes / No

Do you use your phone to go on the internet every day?   Yes/No

Appendix C

Diary instructions and examples

Name: *Use the same name for every diary* _____

What happened? What did you say?

Be specific – what task were you trying to do by speaking in English?

I asked for help with my homework   vs.   I talked about homework

_____

Location   *One or two words is okay for this, but be specific.*

                   university   vs.   university library

_____

Who were your conversation partners?

   Write down the role of this person NOT the person's name.

Person 1   *friend*   *vs.*   *Paul*   Native / non-native / I don't know

                   _____

Person 2   *Dr. Roberts*   *vs.*   *Professor*   Native / non-native / I don't know

                   _____

How well do you know your conversation partners?

   5 means very well. Circle only one number.

   Person 1   1-----2-----3-----4-------5

   Person 2   1-----2-----3-----4-------5

How easy was it for you to speak English in this situation?

5 means it was very easy, you felt comfortable, fluent and had all the words you needed.

                   1-----2-----3-----4-------5

In one week, how often do you use English to say something similar?

A similar situation means that you were trying to do the same task (asking for help with homework), with the same kind of person (a friend). 5 means you use English many times per week to do this task.

<div align="center">1-----2-----3-----4-------5</div>

The comment box:

Include extra information about difficult interactions, technical problems, interactions that were very easy, negative or positive reactions others had to your English.

<div align="center">*My friend said no, it is cheating to help with homework*</div>

REMEMBER:

<div align="center">Spelling doesn't matter! If you make mistakes, it's okay.</div>

<div align="center">All the interactions you write must happen in spoken English.</div>

Appendix D

Post-collection Questionnaire

Thank you for completing the study! Your help is very valuable for this research. Please answer the following questions about the electronic questionnaires and your interactions for the 10-day period.

Name: _____

Using the electronic questionnaire

Circle one number on each rating scale.

How easy was the electronic questionnaire to use?
       Difficult   1-----2------3----4-----5   Very easy

How convenient was the questionnaire to use on your mobile phone?
       Inconvenient   1-----2------3----4-----5   Very convenient

How clear were the questions on the questionnaire?
       Not clear   1-----2------3----4-----5   Very clear

How fast was the questionnaire to complete?
       Slow   1-----2------3----4-----5   Very fast

Did you have any technical problems using the questionnaire?
_____
_____
_____

When did you generally complete the questionnaires (right after the interaction, or later)? Why?
_____
_____
_____

Where did you generally complete the questionnaires? Why?
_____
_____

How many of the entries were completed with your mobile phone? (circle one)

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

How many of the entries were completed with a tablet? (circle one)

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

How many of the entries were completed with your laptop or desktop? (circle one)

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

Which platform did you like best (phone, tablet or computer)? Why?
_____
_____
_____

Is there anything you would change about the questionnaire (format, questions, technical aspects...)?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you have any other comments about using the questionnaire?
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>Your English interactions</u>

How many of your English interactions were you able to record using the questionnaires?

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

If you were not able to record 100% of your interactions, why not?
_____
_____

Were there interactions you didn't include because you wanted to keep them private?
Yes / no

Do you believe that your entries accurately represent your interactions? Why or why not?
_____
_____
_____

How many of your interactions were with native speakers of English? (circle one)

10% ---- 20% ---- 30% ---- 40% ---- 50% ---- 60% ----70% ---- 80% ---- 90% ---- 100%

Do you often have the opportunity to speak with native speakers? Why or why not?
_____
_____
_____

Where do you speak the most English? Why?
_____
_____
_____

Think about the interactions you had during the 10-day period.

What were the easiest interactions? Why were they easy?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What were the most difficult interactions? Why were they difficult?
_____
_____
_____
_____

What were the most frequent interactions (i.e., they happened very often)?
_____
_____
_____

What were the least frequent interactions (i.e., they didn't happen very often)?
_____
_____
_____

Did you learn anything else about how you use English by completing these questionnaires?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How well did your home university prepare you to speak English for the interactions you recorded?

<div align="center">Not well   1------2-----3-----4-----5   Very well</div>

Explain your answer

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

After completing these questionnaires and spending time in Montreal, is there anything you would change at your university here in Montreal or suggest to your university at home that would help students be more prepared to interact in English?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for completing the study. Good luck with your studies here in Montreal!

Appendix E

Participant role play rating sheets

PARTICIPANT: SCENARIO _____

How easy was it for you to communicate in English in this situation?

5 means it was very easy, you felt comfortable, fluent and you had all the necessary words.

Not easy at all 1----------2---------3----------4----------5 Very easy

Justify your rating:

Why did you choose this rating? What made this interaction easy or difficult for you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix F

Speech act and event codes and definitions

Speech act	Description
Accepting	Agreeing to participate in a proposed or requested service or offer to meet in the future.
Agreeing	Concurring with a proposed course of action or an opinion.
Apologizing	Expressing remorse or regret.
Complaining	Expressing dissatisfaction with something or someone.
Complimenting	Expressing admiration about another's actions, apparel, etc.
Disagreeing	Expressing disapproval of an action or opinion.
Exclaiming	Expressing excitement.
Greeting	Saying hello or how are you when meeting someone.
Introducing	Communicating personal details such as name, nationality, or field of study when meeting someone for the first time.
Joking	Making humorous remarks.
Leave-taking	Saying goodbye or excusing oneself from a gathering.
Notifying	Informing or reminding an interlocutor of a fact.
Offering	Notifying someone of a willingness to help someone or have future contact (e.g., favour granting, invitations).
Ordering	Requesting food in a restaurant or establishment serving food.
Providing	*Information* - Giving the interlocutor factual information that has been requested (e.g., time, name, locations, personal details or details about home country).
	Opinion - Giving a personal opinion on work, music etc.
	Justification - Giving a reason for actions/behaviours.
	Permission – Giving authorization for a requested action.
Recommending	Advising the interlocutor to perform an action or make a choice.

Refusing	Saying no to a suggested or requested action (invitations or requests for favours).
Requesting	*Clarification* – Asking to repeat or rephrase what he, she or someone else said or make intentions clear.
	Information - Asking interlocutor to provide information
	Favour - Asking interlocutor to act to provide help by demonstrating or performing a service (e.g., helping with a mid-term question), ceasing an action (e.g., avoiding loud noises during study periods), or lending an object (e.g. a credit-card, pants, a pen)
	Opinion -Asking interlocutor for an opinion or advice about a subject
	Permission - Asking for the interlocutors approval of a planned action (e.g., borrowing something, sitting somewhere)
	Service - Asking a service provider for a service (e.g., bags at the grocery store, gift wrapping, information, etc.)
Telling a story	Extended recounting of a past experience.
Thanking	Expressing gratitude.
Well-wishing	Congratulating someone or wishing them all the best in the future (e.g., good luck).
Other	Speech acts occurring 5 times or less: promising, expressing anger, comforting, commanding, planning (e.g., career aspirations), expressing state (e.g., *I'm hungry*), expressing surprise.

Speech event	Description
Advising	Exchanges in which one interlocutor recommends a certain course of action to another interlocutor (e.g., a restaurant, where to go for information, how to cure an illness).
Apologies	Exchanges grouped around an apology.
Coaching	Exchanges in which the interlocutors explain a way to perform an action usually by giving instructions (e.g., cooking, connecting to the internet, lifting weights, etc.).
Coordinating	Exchanges in which the timing of activities or relative locations for meetings is discussed (e.g., planning a study session, scheduling shower use, informing someone of a late arrival)
Culture comparison	Exchanges in which interlocutors discuss cultural aspects of the host countries, their own countries, or the country of the interlocutor (e.g., weather, politics, food, education).
Decision-making	Exchanges in which interlocutors work together to plan projects or divide tasks (e.g., group school work, deciding what to cook).
Directions	Exchanges in which directions to a location are given.
Discussion	Exchanges in which interlocutors give opinions and exchange information on topics of interest (e.g., current events, movies, music, new technologies…).
Favour granting	Exchanges in which one interlocutor asks the other to perform an action for his or her benefit (e.g., help with dinner, cleaning, lending an object…).
Flirtation	Exchanges in which the goal is to initiate or pursue a romantic relationship.
Get-to-know-you	Exchanges in which interlocutors trade personal information about their interests and histories (e.g., name, studies, previous travels, future plans).
Info-exchanges	Exchanges in which practical information, impersonal information is exchanged (e.g. time, location of a class, availability of tickets, number of assignments due…).
Informing	Exchanges in which the speaker provides unsolicited information to the interlocutor in the form of reminders or notifications (e.g., informing another that they have received a call, there is no more

milk, an item was forgotten, a package has arrived).

Invitations   Exchanges in which one interlocutor invites the other to participate in a future activity (e.g., drinks, dinner, games, sports).

Language talk   Exchanges in which language issues such as grammar, pronunciation or learning difficulties are discussed.

Meal-time talk   Exchanges which involve the appreciation of food in the form of thanking, compliments and inquiries into how to make dishes.

Restaurant service encounters   Exchanges that take place with restaurant staff including ordering, thanking and clarifying.

School talk   Exchanges in which students speak about assignments, exams, presentations, and teachers as a form of small talk.

Service encounters   Routine exchanges in which a product or service is negotiated or information is exchanged with professionals (e.g., restaurant, customer service, shopping, etc.).

Situation commentary   Exchanges in which interlocutors comment on the present circumstances as a form of small talk (e.g., concert, game on TV, an object in the room).

Updating   Exchanges that provide information about how an interlocutor is feeling or what they have been doing recently or are planning to do for the rest of the day/week. Usually this is also a form of small talk.

Other   Speech events that occurred 5 times or less: daring, online gaming, confrontation, doctor visit, gossiping

Appendix G

Role-play scenarios and instructions

Participant instructions

1. Read the scenario.
2. Imagine when you were in a similar situation. Think about what you said and how you reacted**.**
3. When you are ready, your role-play partner will begin the conversation.
4. Continue the conversation for as long as you feel is natural. There is no time limit.
5. You are <u>not</u> being evaluated on the correctness of your English.

PARTICIPANT PROMPTS

Practice scenario

You are at the student orientation and you don't know many people. A person comes over and introduces him or herself.

Introduce yourself and discuss your arrival in Montreal.

Easy scenarios

1) You're waiting for the metro and you see a student you met once before coming towards you. You first met at the student orientation at the beginning of the year. **Greet the student and find out how the person has been lately.**

2) You are eating lunch with another student. You know that this person has good grades. You have an assignment due next week in one of your classes and would like some help. **Ask your friend for help and arrange a time to meet.**

Difficult scenarios

1) You have just received your grade back for your mid-term exam and you are unhappy with your score. In your opinion, the exam wasn't fair. You find the style is very different than classes in your home country. **Complain about the exam to another international student.**

Appendix continued

2) You're speaking with a friend about your experiences in Montreal. You have noticed that people behave differently in Montreal than they do in your country. Sometimes you find it strange. **Describe these differences and your feelings about them to your friend.**

PEER PROMPTS

Practice scenario

You are at the student orientation and you don't know many people. You see someone standing alone that looks interesting. You decide to approach the person and introduce yourself. **Introduce yourself and discuss your arrival in Montreal.**

Start the conversation: Hey, my name's _____.

Easy scenarios

1) You're at the metro and you see a student you met once before. You first met the student at the orientation at the beginning of the year. You go toward the person to say hello.
Greet the student and found out how they are and what they've been doing lately.

Start the conversation: Hey! How are you?

2) You are eating lunch with a friend of yours. He or she is worried about an assignment and would like some help. **Accept to help your friend and arrange a time to meet to talk about the presentation.**

Start the conversation: So how is school going?

Appendix continued

Difficult scenarios

1) You have just received your mark back for your mid-term exam and you are very happy with your score. You are very excited and want to share how happy you are, so when you leave the class, you want to discuss the exam with a classmate to see what he or she thought. **Discuss the exam with another international student.**

   Start the conversation: So how did you do on the exam?

2) You are having a discussion with a friend about Montreal and how you feel about it. Your friend has noticed some things that surprise you and has certain opinions that you disagree with. **Ask your friend to explain these differences and tell them about your own opinion.**

   Start the conversation: I really like Montreal so far, but there are some things I miss about home. Do you think you could live here?