Agreeing to disagree: The effect of task repetition on Colombian EFL students' pragmatic competence

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ABSTRACT

Agreeing to Disagree: The Effect of Task Repetition on Colombian EFL Students' Pragmatic

Competence

César Augusto García Fuentes

Research has confirmed the benefits of pragmatics instruction for a variety of speech acts such as suggestions and requests (Gu, 2011; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Martinez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2007; Takimoto, 2012); however, less is known about instruction of proper disagreements, which are face threatening acts as they intentionally establish a point of view that runs against the other speaker's opinion. Additionally, little is known about the effects of instructional tasks used as part of pragmatics instruction. The current study explored the effect of explicit instruction with task repetition on Colombian EFL learners' (N = 40) use of politeness strategies when disagreeing. Over a two-week period, the control class (n = 11) received explicit instruction only, while the task repetition classes received both instruction and practice tasks. Whereas the procedural repetition class (n = 15), repeated the same task procedure four times with new content, the content repetition group (n = 14) repeated the same content with different task procedures (Patanasorn, 2010). The participants carried out a pretest, immediate and delayed posttests which consisted of discourse completion tasks (DCT) and role-playing. Results from Friedman tests, non-parametric repeated-measure ANOVAs, indicated that the procedural repetition group significantly performed better in the posttests in both DCTs and role-playing. Meanwhile, the content group and the control group did not show significant differences. Results are discussed in terms of implications for pragmatics research and pedagogical implications in EFL settings.

Key words: Pragmatic competence, task repetition, disagreements

Acknowledgment

Contribution of Authors

As first author for the included manuscript, César Augusto García Fuentes was principally

responsible for each and every aspect of this study, including conceptualization, the development

and piloting of materials, and data collection, analysis, and interpretation, with the support of Dr.

Kim McDonough, who provided guidance and feedback throughout the various stages. During

the process, César Augusto García Fuentes developed several drafts and redrafts of the

manuscript, with Dr. McDonough supplying extensive feedback on organization and content, as

well as rewording some passages. The manuscript's conception and content was developed by

César Augusto García Fuentes, which is reflected in his status as first author.

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Chapter 1

Arguably the most important focus in foreign and second language teaching is the

development of L2 learners' language competency. However, second language instruction

usually focuses mainly on grammar and ignores other aspects important for learners' language

development (Eslami, 2011). Authors like Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan (2006) claim that to help

learners become competent language users it is necessary to reappraise the concept of

grammatical knowledge as the only measure for communicative competence as well as to accept

different notions of language competence as part of the learners linguistic development; including

the pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence is defined as the ability to use the appropriate linguistic resources

given the necessities of the setting; in other words, it is the knowledge and correct use of

contextual rules in order to make meaning out of an utterance (McLean, 2004). According to

Thomas (1983), pragmatic competence is divided in two categories, pragmalinguistics and

sociopragmatics. The former refers to the linguistic knowledge that is required to communicate

an idea; in other words, the structural knowledge of the language; and the latter is defined as the

understanding of social norms in order to communicate such idea; said differently, it is to know if

one statement is appropriate for a particular context (Taguchi, 2011).

It has been highlighted that when messages are not pragmatically correct, the costs

learners face range from simply being perceived as uncooperative to more severe; being

acknowledged as rude or even insulting (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991).For that reason research on

pragmatic competence has increased during the last two decades, showing the importance of the

benefits that it brings to second language acquisition. As O'Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs (2011)

point out, this effort is worth pursuing because this new research attention "has demonstrated that

there is a need for it and... it has proven to be effective" (p. 138). The main reason for the need of pragmatic competence research is that even students who have mastered a high level of grammatical knowledge still lack the pragmatic competence to get their messages across appropriately (Eslami, 2011). With this in mind, it can be argued that L2 learners need to develop the ability to communicate their ideas properly, not only in terms of adequate grammar use, but also pragmatically accurate depending on the context; in this way they can become competent language users (Vasquez & Fioramonte, 2011).

Due to the aforementioned reasons, teachers need to take up the challenge of developing instruction based on pragmatics, and researchers should investigate the outcomes of such instruction (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005). This constant inquiry has led to an important number of studies testing ways to teach L2 learners the pragmatic rules of the target language focusing on speech acts (Alcón-Soler, 2005; Chang, 2009; Chang, 2010; Cohen & Shively 2007; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; Gu, 2011, Halenko & Jones, 2011; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Nguyen, Pham & Pham, 2012).

Since research on speech acts might be the most relevant in the field of pragmatics (Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010) it has been covered from several different angles. Arguably, the most frequent analysis of speech acts is linked to politeness theory which originates in Goffman's (1967) concept of face, described as the positive self-image that a person claims for him/herself during a given interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) expand Goffman's notion and defined politeness in terms of positive and negative face; the former refers to the desire to be accepted, liked and respected (Dunleavy et al. 2008); and the latter is described as the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition (Erbert & Floyd 2004). Furthermore, Brown and Levinson proposed a series of politeness strategies to mitigate face damage throughout face-threatening acts.

Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) is one example of this line of research. In this study the appropriate use of four speech acts was evaluated (requests, apologies, suggestions and refusals.) Results showed that learners were able to identify pragmatic problems or conflict but, in most of the cases, were unable to correct them accurately. Although the authors confirmed the existence of pragmatic awareness in the students before instruction, they called for the necessity to build on that awareness in order to help learners increase their productive abilities in L2 pragmatics. In a similar fashion, Alcón-Soler and Guzmán (2010) also examined the efficacy of pragmatic instruction of refusals. The results revealed that students changed the focus of their refusals; that is to say, during the pre-test most of the students focused more on the linguistic aspects of the target language than the pragmatic aspects; however, in the posttest their attention switched to pragmatic aspects. The authors claimed that "instruction makes a difference in the pragmatic realm" (Alcón-Soler & Guzmán, 2010:77).

Since evidence points to the importance of pragmatics instruction, research has focused to understand the most effective way to teach pragmatics; both explicit and implicit methods have been compared. For example, Halenko and Jones (2011) sought to determine the effects of the explicit instruction of request in Chinese students at a university in the UK. The results showed a significant improvement in the production of requests for the explicit instruction group over the control group in the post-test; however this was not maintained through to the delayed test. Concerning this point, the authors pointed out the necessity for sustained input. Additionally, two participants were interviewed to test the usefulness of the treatment to which they answered positively underlining the necessity for this kind of instruction. In a different study, Martinez-Flor and Alcón-Soler's (2007) study explored the efficacy of explicit and implicit instruction of suggestions. After explicit or implicit instruction was carried out, the authors concluded that both explicit and implicit groups outperformed the control group significantly.

Similarly, Gu (2011) compared the effects of explicit and implicit instruction of requests. Results showed an improvement in the performance of the student's requests by means of discourse completion tasks (DCTs) in both groups; however, the explicit group had a performance that was statistically much stronger than the implicit group. On the contrary, role-plays did not show any significant improvement in either group. Notwithstanding, the author concluded that instruction of pragmatic competence in requests is necessary for learners to improve their understanding and production of requests. In another study, Ghobadi and Fahim (2009) investigated the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instruction on thanking formulas in English at an Iranian context. After comparing the responses of the DCTs with native answers from corpus and rating the role-plays in a 5 point scale, the authors concluded that the explicit group significantly outperformed the implicit group in the use of accurate thanking formulas during the posttest and that the explicit instruction showed an important effect on the students' hindrance of L1 pragmatic transfer of thanking formulas.

Taken together, the results of the studies whose main focus is the effect of instruction on the use of pragmatically appropriate language underline two important aspects in L2 classrooms. First, it is clear that learners of a second language struggle with the interpretation of the cultural norms of the target language; in that way, the use of the language is pragmatically inaccurate even though it might be grammatically correct. Second, pragmatic instruction by means of either explicit or implicit approaches seems to have a positive impact across different speech acts. All the studies reviewed coincide with the necessity to implement pragmatic instruction in the classrooms because it is effective and because it helps learners grasp a more holistic use of the target language.

Interestingly, although the results on pragmatic teaching show the efficacy of explicit, and in some cases, implicit instruction, an area that has not been entirely documented is the role of the

tasks employed during such instruction. Takimoto (2009) is one of the few studies that investigated the impact of three different input-based tasks: (1) structured input tasks with explicit information, (2) problem-solving tasks, and (3) structured input tasks without explicit information. Results showed that the three treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group in the use of requests in DCTs and role-playing. The author underlined the fact that L2 pragmatic proficiency can be influenced by manipulating input by means of different task types.

The aforementioned results seem to align with the effects of task repetition on L2 learning; an area that has been investigated in different fields of language acquisition. Task repetition is useful in language learning because as learners build familiarity with the task, they can redirect their attention processing to make form – meaning connections (Bygate, 1996). Bygate compared a single participant's narration of the same cartoon on two different occasions separated by three days. The author reported that the participant had performed better on the second occasion in terms of accuracy and fluency. This was explained as a shift of attention from understanding the task to paying attention to form. In a follow up study, Bygate (2001) reported similar gains in fluency and language complexity in 48 L2 learners who repeated the same narrative and the same interview with a 10 week interval.

Other studies have shown the benefits of task repetition on language acquisition. For example, Lynch and Maclean (2000) found that task repetition was favourable for students in a poster carousel. Students were divided into two groups, A were the presenters and B visited the posters presented by A. As the students had to present the same information six different times they benefited from the repetition. Due to this repetition, the authors reported gains in accuracy and fluency. Gass et al. (1999) compared the impact of content repetition on the use of the Spanish verb 'ser-estar'. Results showed that content repetition represented gains in overall

proficiency, morphosyntax and lexical sophistication. Once more, the authors highlighted the shift of attention from content of the task to the control of linguistic knowledge.

Generally, results of task repetition research yields important findings for L2 acquisition. First, it is beneficial for learners since they seem to improve language use as they gain control over meaning – form connections throughout task repetition. Second, task repetition influences the mastery of different linguistic aspects; for example, fluency, accuracy, lexical sophistication and morphosyntax. However, although the findings in task repetition are evident, little is known about its effect on pragmatics understanding. Considering the benefits of task repetition in other areas of L2 development, there are reasons to think that they can also be beneficial for pragmatic acquisition; in other words, if research has reported gains in different linguistic aspects in second language acquisition, it might be of interest to combine research in task repetition with pragmatics instruction and explore the possible advantages of this specific line in task design research on the understanding of pragmatics. Said differently, procedural and content repetition might boost the pragmatically appropriate use of the language as students who repeat tasks can also shift their attention from understanding the task itself to monitoring the use of the language; or as it has been said, to make pragmatic form – meaning connections.

Ultimately, taking into account the results from previous research on the benefits of pragmatic instruction, a pedagogical intervention is called for; especially in EFL contexts where the opportunities to be in contact with authentic language exchanges outside the classroom are minimal if not null (Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). Given the grammatical focus of the instruction in these particular contexts, learners do not have the required information to understand the pragmatic rules that govern the use of the target language and because of that they fail to use the different speech acts accurately. Additionally, in view of the advantages of task repetition in different areas of linguistic development, it might be of interest to test the effects of

task repetition on pragmatics acquisition. Linked to the previous idea, the present study seeks to add to the extensive body of research on pragmatic instruction in an EFL context; Colombia.

Colombia is a place where English is considered a foreign language, and, because of that English learners are not exposed to the language on a daily basis. English is learned in classrooms in different universities and institutions, and, like most EFL settings, the main emphasis of the lessons is grammar. Similarly, a focus on pragmatics is not underlined either in classroom instruction or as an area of research. To my knowledge, to date no empirical studies on pragmatics have been conducted in the context of a Colombian EFL classroom; the only approximation to this area of inquiry was a literature review calling for an urgent intervention published in a Colombian journal (Tello Rueda, 2006). Because of that lack of pragmatic information, L2 learners in this context, as in any other EFL contexts, fail to deliver messages accurately; for that reason a pedagogical intervention is necessary.

The present study is an attempt to investigate the possible effect on pragmatic instruction on Colombian learners. The rationale for this research focus is that the vastly informed benefits of pragmatic instruction in different EFL contexts have not been investigated in the selected context. Over the next sections of this paper, the author will illustrate the effects of a pragmatic intervention based on the teachability of disagreements carried out at a university in Colombia. This speech act was selected given its face threatening nature which requires the use of linguistic tools to mitigate its negative impact. Additionally, it was selected also because even though previous literature stresses the necessity of teaching L2 learners how to disagree politely, to date no empirical research on the instruction of this speech act has been reported.

Agreeing to disagree: The effect of task repetition on Colombian EFL students' pragmatic competence

In the field of pragmatics, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies have been central for understanding how speech acts are performed. Although research has shed light on the use of politeness strategies for requests (Blum-Kulka, 1987), apologies (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983), and refusals (Beebe et al., 1989), less is known about the use of politeness strategies for disagreements. Disagreements have been defined by Sornig (1977: 364) as follows: "a speaker S disagrees when s/he considers untrue some Proposition P uttered or presumed to be espoused by an addressee A and reacts with an utterance the propositional content or implicature of which is *Not P.*" In other words, disagreements state personal opinions which go against the interests of another speaker, which presents a threat to the other speaker's face. Disagreements have been classified as collegial (without intention to attack the speaker), personal challenges (confrontational questions), and personal attacks (direct statements), which vary in the degree to which they threaten a speaker's face (Scott, 2000).

Because disagreements are face-threatening acts (Sifianou, 2012; Tannen & Kakava, 1992), speakers use politeness strategies to mitigate face damage when disagreeing (Locher, 2004; Pomerantz, 1984), such as hedging, tokens or asserted agreements. Previous research about the use of politeness strategies in disagreements have analyzed first-language (L1) speakers' conversations (see; Kuo, 1994; Pomerantz, 1984; Scott, 2002) and compared L1 speakers' politeness strategies with those of second language (L2) speakers (Walkinshaw, 2007, 2009). Since L1 speakers understand the negative impact that disagreeing carries, they use strategies to mitigate face damage. For example, Holtgraves (1997) found that L1 speakers used a variety of politeness strategies such as hedging, token agreement and partial agreement to mitigate the hearer's face damage during disagreements. Research has also found that first language speakers

successfully discriminate the different contexts in which more direct disagreements are allowed. Rees-Miller (2000) explained that during academic lectures and conferences at an American university when disagreement was not severe (e.g. corrections) it was direct but did not carry consequences; however, when it was severe (i.e. personal or professional identity was affected) two strategies were used: on the one hand, disagreement was over-mitigated and on the other hand it was aggravated.

Since L1 speakers acquire the sociocultural norms of the language as they acquire the linguistic code (Garcia, 1989), they are prepared to disagree in ways that are considered appropriate when interacting with other speakers. However, the same is not true for L2 speakers who may lack awareness of mitigation devices when disagreeing in the target language. A new body of research on disagreement has informed the academic community on substantially differences between how L1 and L2 speakers' use strategies to manifest opposite points of view (see Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). In her research, Garcia (1989) compared the way that 10 American and 10 Venezuelan women disagreed during role-playing interaction. Results showed that while the American participants used multiple stylistic devices that mitigated the disagreement, the Venezuelan participants used more confrontational strategies.

The study of disagreements has led to classify the strategies used by L1 and L2 speakers when they perform this specific speech act. In his study, Kreutel (2007) summarized the findings of previous research and categorized the strategies employed during disagreements as *desirable strategies*, associated with native speakers, and *non-desirable strategies*, related to L2 speakers; see table 1. In this study, Kreutel found that in general English L2 speakers used significantly more non-desirable strategies than L1 speakers when completing discourse completion tasks that contained situations that evoked disagreements.

Table 1

Disagreement expressions. Adapted from Kreutel (2007).

Desirable features (assumed to be native-like):	Non-desirable features (associated with NNS):
Token agreement *Yes, but…; okay, but…*	Message abandonment
Hedges *Maybe, I think, well, just.*	Total lack of mitigation *Are you crazy? That's wrong!*
Requests for clarifications *What do you mean? Really?*	Use of the performative *I disagree*
Explanations *A: It's your turn to clean* *B: I did it last time.*	Use of the performative negation *I don't agree* Use of the bare exclamation *no*
Expressions of regret *I'm sorry but…*	Blunt statement of the opposite *A: It looks good on you*
Positive remarks *That's a good point, but…*	*B: It does not.*

Taken together, the studies about disagreements show that L2 speakers may lack pragmatic competence when expressing disagreement. The mitigation tools used by L2 speakers differ greatly from the strategies that L1 speakers employed to soften the negative impact of disagreements. As a result, the way in which L2 speakers state different opinions might not be pragmatically appropriate, which in turn brings consequences ranging from being perceived as uncooperative to more severe perceptions such as being aggressive (Malamed, 2010). However, research to date has not investigated whether instruction helps L2 speakers mitigate the threats to face associated with disagreements.

In order to be competent language users, L2 learners need to develop the ability to communicate their ideas both grammatically accurately, and pragmatically appropriately (Vasquez & Fioramonte, 2011). Authors like Murray (2010) maintain that teachers have the responsibility to develop L2 students' pragmatic competence because, as Rose (2005) argues, simple exposure to the target language is insufficient to acquire pragmatic knowledge., The main rationale for providing pragmatics instruction is that even learners at advanced levels of L2

proficiency struggle with the correct use of the language (Cohen, 2008). In other words, a pedagogical intervention may play an important role in simplifying the process of understanding and learning pragmatic rules of the target language at any stage of the learning process.

Effectiveness of pragmatics instruction

Since L2 learners need pragmatic instruction in order to achieve an understanding of the target norm, research on cross-cultural pragmatics has paid particular attention to the ways in which L2 speakers can be taught the pragmatic principles of the target language (Gilabert & Barón, 2013). This inquiry has led to an important body of research on different approaches to teach pragmatics while performing different speech acts. Nevertheless, the main foci of the research is suggestions and requests. Results show that L2 students benefit greatly from instruction, especially when explicit teaching was implemented (Gu, 2011; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2007).

For example, Martinez-Flor and Fukuya (2005) attempted to determine if explicit and implicit instruction had any effects on the learners' production of linguistically and pragmatically accurate suggestions. There were three intact groups for this study; one group received explicit instruction by means of metapragmatic instruction, another received implicit instruction using input enhancement and recast techniques, and the last was a control group who received no instruction on the speech act. The authors found that although both explicit and implicit pragmatic instruction benefitted the learners' understanding and performance of suggestions, the explicit techniques had greater advantages.

In a similar fashion, Alcón-Soler (2005) compared to what extent explicit and implicit instruction had an effect on the learners' knowledge and production of requests. The study was designed with three randomly assigned groups. The first group received explicit instruction by means of awareness-raising activities and metapragmatic written feedback. The implicit group

received implicit awareness-raising activities and implicit feedback in the form of recasting. The control group did not receive any kind of instruction on requests. Results confirmed that explicit and implicit treatments were effective for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge of requests. For the production of requests, Alcón-Soler found that the explicit group significantly outperformed both the implicit and the control groups. She underlined the necessity for instruction of pragmatics in the classroom in order to help students develop awareness and production of accurate target language.

It seems clear that, although both kinds of instruction (explicit and implicit) have an impact on the acquisition of pragmatic awareness and improved performance of speech acts, explicit instruction appears to facilitate greater gains in pragmatic competence. However, an aspect of pragmatics instruction that has not been widely studied is the role of instructional activities in facilitating the acquisition of pragmatics. It is unclear how students learn to use language in pragmatically appropriate ways by practicing speech acts across different task types. It is also unclear whether different types of tasks are more effective. The proposed study will explore the impact of task repetition on the perception and production of disagreement strategies by English L2 speakers.

Task repetition and language learning

The effects of task repetition on the acquisition of English have been investigated in different fields of language learning, such as feedback (Gass, Mackey & Feldman, 2005), proficiency, morphosyntax and lexical sophistication (Gass, Mackey, Fernandez & Alvarez-Torres, 1999), and pronunciation (Trofimovich & Gatbonton, 2006). Task repetition is believed to be beneficial for L2 learning because as familiarity with a task builds, students may shift their attention from the content of the message to the use of appropriate linguistic resources (Bygate, 1999b). During the repeated, subsequent performance of a task, some processing resources are

available to be used to foster the development of form-meaning mappings (Kim & Tracy-Ventura, 2013).

As described by Patanasorn (2010) task repetition can be operationalized as procedural, content, or task repetition. Whereas procedural repetition is repeating the same task procedure with different content, content repetition is carrying out tasks with the same content but different procedures. Finally, task repetition (hereinafter identical task repetition) is repeating the exact same task, i.e., the same procedure and the same content. Patanasorn compared the effectiveness and differential effects of all three task repetition's conditions on the accurate and fluent production of the simple past tense by means of a story retelling task with 92 Thai students. The results showed that while the procedural repetition group demonstrated improvement in accuracy of the simple past tense, the content repetition group improved with regards to global fluency; however, the identical task repetition group did not show any major improvements. It is clear that procedural and content repetition benefit L2 learning in different ways; however, this improvement seems to come at the expense of a different linguistic feature; that is, while procedural repetition enhances accuracy somehow hurting fluency, content repetition improves fluency affecting accuracy levels.

Using the same definitions as Patanasorn (2012), Kim (2013) compared the effects of procedural and identical task repetition on 48 Korean EFL learners' attention to form, operationalized as language-related episodes (LREs), during the students' interaction with their peers and their teacher. She found that procedural repetition favoured the production and resolution of LREs. In a follow up study, Kim and Tracy-Ventura (2013) compared the effects of procedural and identical task repetition on complexity, accuracy and fluency in 36 Korean EFL learners' oral production. The results showed that (1) the procedural repetition group improved the syntactic complexity, (2) both groups increased the task-induced linguistic features, and (3)

neither group showed improvements in fluency. These studies also suggest that identical task repetition does not bring about major improvement in L2 learning; also, they supported previous results about procedural repetition in which the benefits were associated with accuracy.

The study of the effects of task repetition on L2 learning has drawn important conclusions on accuracy and fluency; and, although it appears to be extensive, it is in fact an area of research that has not been fully developed in different fields of linguistics. For example, the study of task repetition in pragmatic research is remarkably unexplored and only one study to date has investigated the impact of task repetition in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Takimoto (2012) compared procedural and content repetition on Japanese EFL students' requests. 45 Japanese students that were divided into three groups (content repetition, procedural repetition and control) took part in the study. Results, coming from discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and acceptability judgement tests, showed that for the production of polite requests, both task repetition groups significantly outperformed the control group that focused on learning new words and phrases without being exposed to the target request features that the experimental groups were taught; however, the procedural group performed better than the content group in both the DCTs and the acceptability judgement tests.

In sum, the results of the task repetition studies showed that procedural and content repetition are effective for second language acquisition due to the fact that they boost the development of some linguistic features. In the case of procedural repetition, accuracy seems to be improved, while content repetition is likely to enhance fluency. Finally, although identical task repetition is said to free up learner's memory space as familiarity with the activity is built, it does not bring great benefit to students during the learning process.

Purpose of the study

Despite previous cross-cultural research that has shown differences in L1 and L2 speakers' ability to express disagreement and the abundance of research that has investigated instruction in other speech acts, studies to date have not examined whether pragmatics instruction helps L2 speakers express disagreement politely. Furthermore, although research has shown that explicit instruction is particularly effective for facilitating pragmatic competence, little attention has been devoted to the role of tasks in the instructional interventions. It is still unclear if students learn to accurately use the speech acts most efficiently by carrying out different kinds of tasks. For this reason, and taking into account Kreutel's (2007) classification of disagreements, the present study compared the effects of procedural and content repetition on EFL students' production of politeness strategies, operationalized as the use of desirable strategies, when disagreeing.

The research question that guided this study was:

What are the effects of task repetition on EFL learners' use of politeness strategies when disagreeing?

Since there is not enough information about the effectiveness of content and procedural repetition for acquiring pragmatics, the present study will test the null hypothesis.

Method

Participants

Forty students in three intact classes taught by the same instructor at Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Colombia took part in the present study. All the participants were non-English majors studying undergraduate programs and taking a required EFL class. Participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups: procedural repetition ($n = 14$), content repetition ($n = 15$), and one control group ($n = 11$). They had a mean age of 21.2 (SD = 2.4). Regarding their English level, some of the participants studied in Bilingual schools ($n = 6$) while the others studied in monolingual schools with English as a subject ($n = 34$). At the time of the study, 17 participants had visited English speaking countries on repeated occasions (M = 2.5 months). All of the participants were in level 6 EFL classes, this meant that according to the guidelines for level 6 prepared by the university they were at low-intermediate proficiency level.

Design

This study adopted a quasi-experimental, mixed design. The between-groups variable was task repetition, which had three levels: procedural repetition, content repetition, and the control group. Both experimental groups, and the control group received explicit instruction about disagreements since it was more effective than implicit instruction (see Jeon & Kaya, 2006); however, only the procedural group and content group practiced the speech act by means of procedural and content repetition. Following previous research (Patanasorn, 2010) procedural repetition was operationalized as repeating the same task procedure with different content; content repetition was operationalized as repeating the same task content with four different procedures. The three EFL classes were randomly assigned to the procedural repetition, content repetition, and control conditions. The within-groups factor was time, which had three levels: pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest. The dependent variable was the students' ability

to express disagreements, which was operationalized as the type and number of desirable and non-desirable strategies employed during discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and oral role-playing tasks.

Materials

The materials for the present project consisted of testing materials, and instructional materials which contained explicit instruction materials and the content and procedural repetition tasks for the experimental groups. Materials were designed to focus on desirable and non-desirable features for disagreement expressions adapted from Kreutel (2007), see table 1.

Testing materials

The testing materials for the present study consisted of discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and role-playing. DCTs and role-plays are frequent instruments to collect data in pragmatic research, the former are meant to measure the participants' pragmatic knowledge and the latter measure their ability to deploy that knowledge during an interaction (Félix, 2010). The testing materials consisted of three DCTs and six role-plays that were used during the pre-test and post-tests. Each DCT and role-play measured the participants' pragmatic competence in expressing disagreements. Situations in the DCTs and role-plays varied according to one sociopragmatic factor dealing with politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) namely status (e.g. Professor/student and student/student) in order to counterbalance context differences.

Discourse completion tasks (DCTs). The discourse completion tasks were premeditated written-production tasks (Takimoto, 2012) which asked participants to read short situations that elicited disagreements in English and had students write what they would have said in such situation. There were three DCTs (pretest, immediate posttest, delayed posttest) and each one contained eight items. The situations were adapted from items used by Kreutel (2007) and Walkinshaw (2007). The DCTs reflected different scenarios where status (Brown& Levinson,

1987) was controlled by presenting situations where participants replied to people with a higher

status (e.g. a Professor or a boss) and also to people with an equal status (e.g. a friend or a

sibling). One sample item is shown below. The total number of items for the three DCTs is

presented in APPENDIX A.

Your boss **tells you about an idea he has**. He thinks that **this idea will help <u>increase</u> (<u>aumentar</u>) the quality of the company**. You think **that the idea is not very good**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?**

Role-plays. Role-plays were prepared scenarios aiming to test the participants' ability to

produce disagreements through on-line, interactive-communication. Participants interacted with

three tests consisting of two scenarios each. Similar to the DCTs, each scenario was controlled

for status; that is, participants acted out two situations: (1) different status i.e. while one

participant played the role of a professor, a parent or a boss, the other participant was a student, a

son/daughter or an employee, and (2) similar status i.e. both participants played the role of

friends, classmates or siblings. One sample of role-playing is presented below. The total number

of items for the three role-plays is presented in APPENDIX B.

Student A:
You are an apartment administrator. You received several **<u>complaints</u>** (**<u>quejas</u>**) from other **<u>tenants</u>** (**<u>residentes</u>**) in the building that student B **was listening to rock music loudly** all night long, and that **apparently it happens every weekend**. You are **convinced that this is a recurring pattern**, so you decide to **call student B** to talk to about the situation.

Student B:
You pay the rent in an apartment. The building administrator **calls you to tell you that some of the other people** who live in the building **complained (se quejaron)** about you listening to loud rock music all night long**, and that **this happens every weekend**. However, **you usually do work for your classes on the weekends** because **it is the only time you have free**; additionally, you **like to listen to classical music while doing homework**.

All the DCTs and role-plays were proofread by a native speaker and then piloted by EFL students in the same context where the study took place with the purpose of measuring the clarity of the given situations. After the reviewing and piloting process, and taking into account the comments coming from the teachers and students who piloted the DCTs and role-plays, the author adjusted the DCTs and role-plays in order to ensure their understanding when they were used during the tests. Input enhancement techniques such as bolds, underlined expressions and even translations were included in order to augment understanding during the actual study.

Instructional materials

The instructional material was divided into two sets, explicit instruction materials which were composed of explicit awareness raising activities, and the content and procedural repetition task whose purpose was to enhance the participants' practice of disagreements.

Explicit instruction materials. The explicit instruction materials were the same for both experimental groups and the control group, and consisted of four different explicit consciousness raising activities designed to make participants aware of appropriate ways to disagree politely. The prepared material aligned with the content of the required book for the class selected by the university. According to the schedule, students were studying unit 9 which was discussing the theme *Material World*. The awareness activities were presented in the following order during the four treatment sessions:

1. A chart showing examples of the different desirable and non-desirable strategies. The teacher explained the difference between the desirable and non-desirable strategies, he

also emphasized the importance of increasing the use of the desirable strategies and decreasing the use of the non-desirable strategies. Additionally, students were given two written dialogues showing different ranges of inappropriate disagreements along with different possibilities to repair the dialogues. Students were asked to repair the two conversations using the given options.

2. A narrative where the teacher explained a problem he had when paying a telephone bill. The teacher described the different strategies to disagree he used during interactions with different interlocutors and the consequences of using them; once more, the teacher underlined the implications of using both desirable and non-desirable strategies.

3. Six short video clips, ranging from 30 seconds to one minute, which depicted conversations in which speakers expressed disagreement with their interlocutors. The video clips were sampled from recognized TV shows with specific conversations selected to present speakers while disagreeing. Students received the transcripts of the video-clips and were asked identify all the strategies used and to think of desirable strategies to repair the inappropriate strategies.

4. Two audio recorded conversations presenting native speakers at two different job interviews where desirable and non-desirable strategies to disagree were included. Students were supplied with the transcripts and were required to compare the two conversations and to discuss ways to change the non-desirable strategies employed in the dialogues.

Content and procedural repetition tasks. After the explicit awareness raising activities, participants in the treatment groups underwent repetition tasks that matched the treatment condition. Whereas content repetition included the repetition of the same content with four different procedures, procedural repetition consisted of repetition of the same procedure with four

different content areas. The control condition continued with their regular classes after the instruction of disagreements; in other words, they did not perform further tasks regarding the speech act.

       Content repetition materials. The content repetition group worked on four different tasks: a ranking task, a decision-making task, a categorizing task, and a debate where the content was the same; *possessions* which was part of the chapter topic.

       Ranking activity. In this task, students worked in groups of three. Students were presented with a list of objects for the house. In groups, they had to rank the order of importance of those elements from 1 to 5. Participants had two minutes to rank the order individually. After that, they shared their ideas with their groups. Finally, they were asked to reach a consensus on one ranking order per group. The list of objects contained more than five elements to give the students multiple alternatives to choose from. The objective was that students discussed the reasons why an object was more or less important than the other (APPENDIX C).

       Decision-making task. The objective of this decision-making task was to decide which objects (possessions) students would buy in an imaginary situation. Students imagined that they were part of a family and that they won 20 million Colombian pesos in a TV show. Students had to decide how to spend the money. Students worked in groups of four and each one of them was given an option to spend the money and possible reasons to select their answer which they had to propose and defend in front of their partners (APPENDIX D). Individually they had two minutes to read the reasons to choose their option; then, they discussed with their partners trying to convince them to choose their option over the others.

       Categorizing task. For this task students worked in groups of four. The objective was to decide which possessions were more important in two occupations; a film maker and a designer. Students received the material presenting the two jobs and a list of ten items. They had to

individually select five possessions for each job, but, in the process of categorizing they could not repeat the same object in the two jobs. After that, students joined the groups and tried to come to an agreement to make only two lists per group by giving reasons of why an object belonged to a job (APPENDIX E).

Debate. In this task, students were in groups of four divided into pairs. They discussed the most important possession a person might need. They were presented with three options from which they could select one primary object to defend and one secondary; in case the other students selected the same one. First, in pairs they selected the two objects and thought of reasons of why to defend their object in two minutes. After that, one pair; assigned randomly introduced the possession they considered to be the most important by presenting one argument. Then, the second couple continued the debate by presenting the object they had selected (if the primary object was the same they had to present the second one). The debate continued with arguments both for and against the objects in the discussion (APPENDIX F).

Procedural repetition materials. Four ranking activities were used for the procedural repetition task: the most important possession for a person, the best way to spend money, the most important moment to take a picture, and the most difficult job. The procedure was the same in all classes; students worked in groups of three or four depending on the number of students. The objective was that students discussed the reasons why an option was more or less important than the other. Students were presented with a list of options for each discussion. In groups, they had to rank the order of importance of those options from 1 to 5. Similar to the ranking activity in the content repetition group, participants in the procedural repetition group had two minutes to rank the order individually. Then, they shared their ideas with their groups. To finish the task, they had to reach a consensus on one ranking order per group. The lists contained more than five elements to give students different alternatives to choose. (APPENDIX G).

Procedure

The study was carried out over a four-month period from August to November, as shown

in Table 2. In Weeks 1-3, the researcher trained the instructor in the use of the testing and

instructional materials.

Table 2

Instructional procedure

Week	Procedure			
Week 1 to 3	Train instructor in use of materials			
Week 4	Pretest DCT and role-play			
Weeks 6 &7	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Procedural repetition	Explicit instruction Written dialogues	Explicit instruction Narrative	Explicit instruction Video clips	Explicit instruction Conversations (audio)
	Task Ranking task	Task Ranking task	Task Ranking task	Task Ranking task
Content repetition	Explicit instruction Written dialogues	Explicit instruction Video clips	Explicit instruction Video clips	Explicit instruction Conversations(audio)
	Task Ranking task	Task Decision-making task	Task Categorizing task	Task Debate
Control group	Explicit instruction Written dialogues	Explicit instruction Video clips	Explicit instruction Video clips	Explicit instruction Conversations (audio)
Week 8	Immediate posttest DCT and role-play			
Week 13	Delayed posttest DCT and role-plays			

In Week 4 the participants in all three classes completed the pretest (DCT and role-plays).

After the pre-test, in weeks 6 and 7, participants underwent a treatment that varied according to

each group. Whereas the control group received the explicit awareness raising activities on the

performance of disagreements with a mean of 13.25 minutes, both procedural and content groups

received the same explicit awareness raising activities with a mean of 13 and 13.25 minutes

respectively. After the awareness-raising activities, the content group performed content

repetition tasks and the procedural group completed procedural repetition tasks with a mean of 14

minutes per task, including instructions for the tasks, individual work and group work. In week 8

and then in week 15, all participants took the immediate and delayed post-tests. The researcher

observed all classes in which research activities were implemented to take field notes and

complete observation checklists to ensure treatment fidelity.

Data analysis

The data came from the DCTs and the transcription of the role-plays. The analysis was

carried out in three steps. First the responses from DCTs and role-plays were reviewed by

searching for disagreements, only stances that resembled the speech act were included in the

analysis. Second, the author classified the strategies used during disagreements as desirable and

non-desirable strategies. This coding was made following the desirable and non-desirable

strategies for disagreeing by Kreutel (2007). Additionally, along the coding process four new

strategies, two desirable and two non-desirable, emerged and were adopted from Garcia (1989):

downtoned suggestions, *willingness to cooperate*, *orders*, and *refusal to cooperate* (see table 3).

Table 3

Disagreement expressions. Adapted from Garcia (1989), and Kreutel (2007).

Desirable features (assumed to be native-like):	Non-desirable features (associated with NNS):
Token agreement	Message abandonment
Yes, but…; okay, but…	
Hedges	Total lack of mitigation
Maybe, I think, well, just.	*Are you crazy? That's wrong!*
Requests for clarifications	Use of the performative
What do you mean? Really?	*I disagree*
Explanations	Use of the performative negation
A: It's your turn to clean	*I don't agree*
B: I did it last time.	Use of the bare exclamation
Expressions of regret	*no*
I'm sorry but…	Blunt statement of the opposite
Positive remarks	*A: It looks good on you*
That's a good point, but…	*B: It looks terrible*
Downtoned suggestions	Order
Maybe we should talk to her	*Check again*
Willingness to cooperate	Refusal to cooperate
I will try to be quiet	*If you like the place go, I'm not going to go*

The frequency of the desirable and not desirable strategies used by the students during the

pretest and posttests in the DCTs and the transcriptions were counted in this step. Third, the

frequency counts were converted to proportion scores and were given the same values following the next steps: (1) total strategies used were calculated adding the desirable and non-desirable strategies, and (2) desirable strategies were divided by the total number of strategies produced by each participant.

Interrater reliability for the use of desirable and non-desirable strategies to disagree was calculated for a subset of the checked DCTs (25%) and transcripts of the role-plays (25%), which were then analyzed by an independent coder. Interrater reliability was obtained using Pearson correlations (r): Desirable strategies $r = .88$, and Non-desirable strategies $r = .84$, for the DCTs; and for the role-plays, Desirable strategies $r = .91$, and Non-desirable strategies $r = .86$.

Because of the small sample size in the different groups and the non-normal distribution of scores, non-parametric tests were used. Separate Friedman tests, non-parametric repeated-measures ANOVAs, were used for the DCT and role-play data to identify whether there was change over time in the use of strategies for each treatment group, with Wilcoxon-signed rank tests (a non-parametric paired-sample t-test)were used for post-hoc comparisons with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in a significance level set at p < 0.017.

Results

The research question asked about the effects of task repetition on EFL learner's use of politeness strategies when disagreeing. Because proportion scores were calculated for inferential statistics, the statistical analysis was performed only in the desirable strategies, given the complementary nature of the desirable and non-desirable strategies when disagreeing.

Use of desirable strategies in the DCTs

Participants in the three groups varied the use of politeness strategies to disagree over time. Table 4 summarizes the means and standard deviations of the changes. Over time, participants in the three groups increased the total use of strategies to disagree. In a closer view,

there was growth in the use of the desirable strategies in all groups; in particular *hedging* and

explanations. The procedural and content groups also increased the use of *request for*

clarification over time. However, the other desirable strategies did not suffer important changes

from the pre-test to the post-tests.

Table 4

Total raw scores to calculate proportion scores in DCTs

	Group								
	Control			Procedural			Content		
	Pretest	Posttest	D_Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	D_Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	D_posttest
Desirable	5.82	11.30	13.22	7.53	11.54	13.00	8.79	11.86	11.45
strategies	(3.65)	(5.40)	(7.12)	(5.26)	(6.97)	(6.39)	(3.82)	(5.35)	(3.08)
Non_desirable	7.55	8.90	9.56	7.40	4.31	5.64	6.07	7.14	10.82
strategies	(3,75)	(4.36)	(4.80)	(3.70)	(3.01)	(3.54)	(2.67)	(4.09)	(4.19)
Total	13.36	20.20	22.77	14.93	18.84	18.64	14.85	19.00	22.27
strategies	(5.18)	(7.23)	(3.70)	(7.84)	(6.96)	(7.40)	(4.18)	(4.62)	(4.96)

As mentioned earlier, in order to analyse the data, proportion scores were calculated.

Friedman tests were performed on the results of the proportion scores calculated for the desirable

strategies to disagree separately in each group. As shown in table 5, the mean of the use of the

desirable strategies by the control and procedural groups was higher in the posttest and delayed

posttest as compared to the pretest[1]. The content group shows the same mean during the pretest

and post-test; however, the mean is lower in the delayed posttest.

Results for the procedural group, showed that there was a significant growth in the use of

desirable strategies, $\chi2$ (2) = 14.000, p = .001. Post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank tests

with Bonferroni correction applied showed a significant increase in the use of the strategies

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[1] A Kruskal-Wallis H test performed on proportion scores of the pretests in the DCTs showed no statistical difference between the three groups, $\chi^2(2)$ = 5.665, p = .59.

between the pretest and the post-test (Z = -3.180, p = .001, d = 1.49), and between the pretest and

the delayed posttest (Z = -2.453, p = .011, d = 1.41). Between the posttest and the delayed

posttest there was not significant differences in the use of desirable strategies to disagree (Z = -

0.157, p = .875). Regarding the control group $\chi 2$ (2) = 2.250, p = .325, and the content group $\chi 2$

(2) = 4.909, p = .086, no significant variations in the use of desirable strategies over time were

found.

Table 5

Proportion score for desirable strategies in the DCTs

		Proportion desirable strategies					
		Pre-test		Post-test		Delayed post-test	
Group	*n*	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Control	8	.43	.21	.58	.17	.58	.25
Procedural	12	.46	.18	.72	.17	.70	.16
Content	11	.61	.21	.61	.20	.52	.13

Summing up, the results showed that participants in the procedural group significantly

used more desirable strategies when disagreeing from the pretest to the posttest and also from the

pretest to the delayed posttest. These results indicate that not only did the number of strategies

significantly increase from the pretest to the posttest but also that this increase was maintained to

the posttest. Additionally, taking into account the suggestion to consider effect sizes as small

when the *d* value is .60, medium 1.00, and large 1.40 for within group contrasts made by Plonsky

and Oswald (2014), Cohen's d effect size from the pretest to the posttest and delayed posttest in

this study suggest a large effect for the treatment. However, from the posttest to the delayed

posttest there were no significant changes. Even though the control group showed an increased

number of desirable strategies used from the pretest and the posttest this difference was not

statistically significant. Finally, despite a decrease in the use of the desirable strategies by the content group in the delayed posttest as compared to the pretest and posttest, the difference was not significant and therefore should not be considered.

Use of desirable strategies in the role-plays

Modifications in the use of politeness strategies to disagree were also true in the role-plays. Whereas the total use of strategies to disagree during the role-plays changed over time only in the control group, the procedural and content group showed a different pattern; that is, during the posttest there was an increase which was not maintained to the delayed posttest. Additionally, the content and control group showed steady growth in the use of the desirable strategies over time; however, the procedural group used more desirable strategies during the posttest but it decreased to the delayed posttest. Individual strategies did not vary significantly in the control group; but, *hedging* and *explanations* changed in the two experimental groups over time. Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations of the variation of the use of the desirable and non-desirable strategies in the three groups.

Table 6

Total raw scores to calculate proportion scores in role-plays

	Group								
	Control			Procedural			Content		
	Pretest	Posttest	D-Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	D-Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	D-posttest
Desirable strategies	4.27 (2.97)	6.60 (4.30)	6.44 (3.64)	4.73 (3.32)	14.77 (5.92)	8.58 (3.60)	3.57 (3.27)	8.43 (6.26)	12.91 (7.85)
Non_desirable strategies	3.18 (2.23)	4.30 (2.21)	9.44 (4.40)	5.33 (2.94)	2.77 (2.09)	3.00 (2.37)	2.79 (3.89)	7.93 (6.64)	4.09 (3.75)
Total strategies	7.45 (4.54)	10.90 (4.45)	15.88 (6.75)	10.06 (4.96)	17.53 (5.56)	11.58 (4.14)	6.35 (4.96)	16.35 (10.35)	17.00 (9.99)

Similar to the DCTs data, Friedman tests were used on calculated proportion scores during the three tests (pre-test, posttest and delayed posttest) in the control, procedural and

content repetition groups looking for differences in the use of desirable strategies when

disagreeing during the role-plays. Table 7 shows the results of the proportion scores which reveal

an increase in the use of the strategies from the pretest[2] to the posttest in all three groups.

However, only the procedural and content groups seemed to maintain this growth to the post-test.

Table 7

Proportion score for desirable strategies in the Role-plays

		Proportion desirable strategies					
		Pre-test		Post-test		Delayed post-test	
Group	*n*	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Control	8	.50	.30	.59	.28	.40	.15
Procedural	10	.51	.19	.87	.11	.77	.16
Content	11	.51	.45	.57	.24	.80	.17

Results of the Friedman test performed for the Procedural group showed a significant

increase in the use of the desirable strategies $\chi2$ (2) = 13.282, *p* = .001. Post hoc analysis with

Wilcoxon signed-rank tests with Bonferroni corrections applied indicated that a significantly

major number of desirable strategies were deployed from the pretest to the posttest (Z = -2.830, *p*

= .005, *d* = 2.32) and from the pretest to the posttest (Z = -2.510, *p* = .012, *d* = 1.49). From the

posttest to the delayed posttest (Z = -1.364, *p* = .173) no significant differences were found.

Concerning the content group and the control group, Friedman test revealed no significant

differences in the use of the desirable strategies $\chi2$ (2) = 4.158, *p* = .125, and $\chi2$ (2) = 4.750, *p* =

.090 respectively.

Summing up, the results of the tests performed in the use of desirable strategies when

disagreeing during the role-plays with reference to the procedural group, the results revealed that

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[2] A Kruskal-Wallis H test performed on proportion scores of the pretests during the role-plays showed no statistical difference between the three groups, $\chi^2(2)$ = .936, *p* = .626.

participants in that group employed significantly more desirable strategies from the pretest to the posttest, and also from the pretest to the delayed posttest. Though there was a decrease in the use of the strategies from the posttest to the delayed posttest it did not significantly indicate that the procedural group maintained the increased use of the desirable strategies. Similar to the DCTs, Cohen's d effect size from the pretest to the posttest and delayed posttest suggest a large affect in the treatment. Even though, the control group used more of the desirable strategies from the pretest to the posttest this was not statistically significant. This difference was not maintained to the delayed posttest; after the posttest there was a reduction in the use of the desirable strategies within the group. Finally, results from the content group suggest that there were no statistically significant differences over time even though the means of the use of desirable strategies increased from the pretest to the delayed posttest.

Discussion

The present study attempted to answer the question of how task repetition in the form of procedural and content repetition affected the participants' use of politeness strategies during the production of disagreements. The results coming from proportion scores calculated for both DCTs and role-playing showed a significant increase in the use of desirable strategies in the procedural group from the pre-test to the post-test and that the significant difference was maintained to the delayed post-test.

Regarding task repetition, previous research has underlined the positive effects of repeating the same task completely or partially on different linguistic aspects during the L2 development. The main argument is that as L2 learners gain familiarity with the task more processing space is available to make form – meaning connections (Bygate, 1999b, 2001; Gass, Mackey & Feldman, 2005; Gass, Mackey, Fernandez & Alvarez-Torres, 1999; Kim & Tracy-Ventura, 2013; Patanasorn, 2010). Takimoto (2012) is the only task repetition study on pragmatic

instruction carried out to date. Takimoto found that both procedural and content repetition groups demonstrated greater gains in the production of requests than the control group by means of DCTs over time; however, the procedural group performed better than the content group. Results in the present study partially confirm Takimoto's findings since the procedural group in this study showed the same pattern not only in the DCTs but also in the role-plays; that is, a significant growth in the appropriate use of disagreement strategies during the immediate and delayed posttests as compared to the pre-test.

However, in the present study, as opposed to Takimoto's, the content and the control groups had similar results; that is, neither group showed significant changes in the use of desirable strategies when disagreeing from the pretest to the posttests in the DCTs and role-plays. On the one hand, this could indicate a subtle effect of the metapragmatic instruction received by the control group. But, this explanation is speculative in nature since no information regarding pragmatic instruction in control groups has been reported in previous studies. On the other hand, results in the content group could be linked to attention which will be discussed later.

An interesting finding relates to the significant use of desirable strategies by the procedural group during the posttest and delayed posttest in both tests i.e. DCTs and role-plays in comparison to the results in the content group, which did not show any significant increase in the employment of the desirable strategies during the posttests either in the DCTs or role-playing. Regarding this concern, there are three possible explanations, the role of planning time before the task performance, the role of attention influenced by task complexity while the activity, and the role of the content of the tasks.

Planning time might have been the key factor that determined the difference in performance between the two experimental groups. Ellis (2005) states that planning is beneficial for task development since in counterbalances the learners' limited working memory capacity as

the attention that learners pay to a given linguistic feature will influence the processing space allocated to another linguistic characteristic. This looks to be the case in the present study because even though the two treatment groups had the same amount of time to plan the task (2 minutes) only the procedural group was already familiar with the procedure of the task since it was the same in all the cases. As the participants in this group had the opportunity to *rehearse* (Ellis, 2005) they only needed to plan what to say during the task which in turn resulted in a more appropriate use of the language. Meanwhile, on the contrary, as the content group not only had to understand and plan the procedure of a new task but also the language to deploy during the task every time, they could not really plan the appropriate expressions to use during the tasks and as a consequence language use could not be planned. Said differently, during the 2 minutes to plan the two groups had, the procedural group could have used most of this short period to plan language while the content group had to divide the time between planning the procedure and the language which might have influenced the limited use of desirable strategies during the task.

A second explanation for the difference between the treatment groups might be related to attention in combination with task complexity. Robinson (2001) states that the degree of attention devoted to the development of the task depends on task complexity, with more complex tasks requiring more attention. In this case, as the procedural group had to perform the same task over time, they could redirect most of their attentional resources to the language use once the procedure of the task was clear on the first and maybe second class. Differently, the content group had to perform new tasks with different levels of complexity during the treatment; in this way, they had to divide their attention based resources between understanding the procedure of the tasks and conveying meaning in a short time. It might be possible that while performing different task procedures participants in the content group mostly attended to the procedure of the

task instead of what language to deployed, which in turn might have hindered the use of desirable strategies to disagree.

Finally, it may be argued that the content of the tasks might have played a role in the results in the procedural group. Patanasorn (2010) found that the procedural group in his study improved in the accuracy of use of past simple over time. He sustained that this change might have been explained due to the variety in the content in the different tasks; in other words, participants in this group had to use different verbs in each of the three tasks they performed because the content was always different. In the present study, participants in the procedural group also had a new content to discuss during the four procedural repetition tasks. It might be the case that since the content was different every time, it might have increased the opportunities to use a wider variety of desirable strategies during the discussions in this treatment group. However, this explanation must be read with caution as the conversations during the development of the tasks in both groups were not analysed and they type and tokens of desirable strategies were not counted for analysis.

To sum up, the explicit instruction in the use of politeness strategies to disagree seem to be beneficial; at least in the procedural group. The procedural group outperformed both the content and control groups and this can be associated with three different aspects: planning time, task complexity and attention, and variety of contents in the tasks.

Pedagogical implications

Given the instructional character of the present study, some pedagogical implications are underlined. First, it was shown that students in this specific foreign language context demonstrated limited pragmatic competence during the pretest; but, with instruction and practice these levels of competence were increased. In that concern, the present study adds to previous literature which underlines a need for explicit pragmatic instruction in EFL settings. Pragmatic

instruction needs to be included in the lessons so that students can receive information about an aspect of the language they might not be familiar with. Second, procedural task repetition proved to be more effective in the production and the understanding of how pragmatics work; at least when referring to polite ways to disagree. In that way, teachers need to be aware of the benefits that procedural repetition will bring for the students' language development. Thus, it could be affirmed that teachers need to include task repetition in their class design with a certain frequency in order to facilitate the students' development of linguistic features; in this case pragmatic development. It is a fact that in regular classes there are time constraints, students need enough time to plan a task which includes understanding the procedure and attending to the language. The present study suggests that procedural repetition will help mitigate the time limitations involved in a class. Teachers could save time by using procedural repetition on a regular basis and, at the same time, students could focus on the use of the language instead on deciphering what to do during the task. However, this is not to say that variation in tasks should be avoided. What it means is that teachers should be aware that repetition of the same procedure is beneficial too and that it can be mixed with other teaching techniques in order to maximize the use of time in class and also improve the use of the language by the students.

Finally, some politeness strategies to disagree were not used in the present study at any of the three tests, which could mean that the time to understand their use was short. In this regard, it has been suggested that it is necessary to select specific items in order to take full advantage of instruction (Doughty, 2003). Pragmatics instruction requires that teachers make decisions regarding the procedures to follow. In the case of disagreement strategies, teachers could start by teaching the strategies that students might find easier to process e.g. hedges, and at later stages, teachers could introduce other strategies; for instance positive remarks or explanations which

might require more attention. In this way, students are not overburdened with information and their attention capacity might be maximized.

Limitations and future research

There were several limitations in the present study that should be considered in future research. First, the results must be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size ($n = 40$) as they cannot be generalized to other populations. In this regard, research of this type needs to be carried out with bigger samples in order to run stronger analyses by means of repeated measure ANOVAS and also to analyse size effects. Second, due to institutional constraints pragmatic instruction is not part of the general educational program and because of that it was difficult to fully adjust the material to pragmatic instruction. Additionally, as the focus of the class was on grammar, the teacher had some difficulties finding links between the pragmatic instruction and the regular instruction; for that reason, the teacher might have felt that this kind of instruction was taking time to pay attention to the original program established by the university.

Third, the institutional constraints on time also caused an important limitation. Participants in the treatment groups only had a limited amount of time to understand and plan the tasks which reduced the chances, at least in the content group, to fully develop the required comprehension of the tasks and the language. Finally, the normal development of the class made it impossible to control for the teacher using the politeness strategies in regular classes outside of the treatment time i.e. between the posttest and the delayed posttest. This additional instruction and use of the strategies might not have been equal in all three groups as they were spontaneous responses to class moments. It might have been possible that any of the three groups had additional practice or at least more practice than the other groups that was not planned in the design of the study.

Fourth, the interactions during the tasks were not analyzed even though they were recorded; however, this analysis was beyond the scope of this explorative study. It might be of interest to analyze the exchanges during the activities in order to discuss possible trends regarding the use of the strategies to disagree during procedural and content repetition tasks and the relationship between the type of strategies employed and the nature of the task. Finally, a fifth limitation was the lack of explicit instruction of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of the use of politeness strategies to disagree. Even though they were controlled in the DCTs and role-plays, they were not formally discussed before, during or after the tasks.

To close, some suggestions for future research are addressed. Since this study did not control for planning but it was one of the possible influences in the results, it would be of interest to include planning in future methodological designs in pragmatics research. Additionally, feedback could be another variable to include in future studies of task repetition and pragmatic instruction as it has been demonstrated that feedback would be beneficial for pragmatics development (Alcón-Soler, 2005). In the present study the participants received explicit instruction and task repetition, in the case of the treatment groups; however, feedback was not provided when it was necessary. The present study did not include explicit instruction on pragmalinguistics or sociopragmatic aspects. In this regard, future research on disagreement instruction should make clear distinctions between these factors in order to give students opportunities for a more complete understanding of how pragmatics works in the target language. Additionally, it would be interesting to analyze the strategies used during the DCTs completion and the interactions in the role-plays looking for sociopragmatic differences i.e. higher vs equal status; in other words, it would be important to see if the strategies used during disagreements vary according to interlocutor or if, on the contrary, there is not a clear distinction in the sue of the strategies according to the status of the recipient. Similarly, a qualitative component should

be included in order to disclose possible effects of task repetition on the students' motivation since there are conflicting results. For instance, Plough and Gass (1999), and Kim (2013) reported that students lost motivation due to the repetitive nature of the treatment; however, Takimoto (2012) found the opposite point of view as the participants in his study claimed that they did not find repetition unmotivating. Finally, since this current study and Takimoto (2012) suggest there are greater advantages to using procedural repetition in pragmatics instruction, it could be interesting to design investigations that focus only on this type of repetition controlling for frequency; in other words, mass versus spaced procedural task repetition practice.

Conclusion

It has been claimed that students in EFL contexts fail to master the appropriate use of the language regarding pragmatic principles; thus, they need instruction in order to understand how the language norms of the target language work. As students in the particular context do not have contact with the language other than in the classroom, a pedagogical intervention is necessary to facilitate the comprehension of pragmatic rules. The present study has added new evidence for the impact of explicit pragmatics instruction in an EFL context found in previous research.

In particular, this study investigated the effects of task repetition on the use of politeness strategies to disagree. It was shown how procedural repetition benefited the students to a higher degree. These results support previous research on task repetition and pragmatics instruction (Takimoto, 2012) suggesting that pragmatics acquisition is greater when students have the chance to focus most of their attention resources on the language than on the task itself. On the contrary, content repetition seems to not bring many advantages to pragmatics development in EFL contexts as students require more time in order to interpret the task procedure and the goal, and to formulate the appropriate language to use. To finish, more research on the effects of task

repetition in pragmatics development is needed as only two studies to date have focused on that

particular aspect of second language acquisition in pragmatics.

Chapter 3

The results of the above study yielded two important findings in pragmatics research. The first one supports to previous research indicating that pragmatics instruction is necessary for L2 learners since they are not equipped with the linguistic tools to recognize, understand and produce accurate language that relates to the cultural norms of the target language (Martinez-Flor, & Alcón-Soler, 2007). Furthermore, the present study adds to the growing number of empirical investigations that back the belief that teachers have the responsibility to take on the role of informants regarding pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Cohen, 2005). The second one suggests that the concept of task repetition can be applied successfully in areas of language development different from emphasis on grammatical aspects of language acquisition.

The entire body of research focusing on instructional approaches to teaching pragmatics has found that explicit, and sometimes implicit instruction, does benefit L2 learners since they are able to improve their appropriate use of the target language; even with a short intervention as is the case of the present study (Alcón-Soler, 2005; Chang, 2009; Chang, 2010; Cohen & Shively 2007; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; Gu, 2011, Halenko & Jones, 2011; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Nguyen, Pham & Pham, 2012; Takimoto, 2009, 2012). However, more pedagogical applications are necessary. That is to say that, even though research has shown both a necessity to teach learners how to be pragmatically competent, and that pedagogical interventions are effective to enhance this pragmatic competence knowledge, in the classroom little is done for teaching learners how to use the language accurately.

This lack of attention of pragmatics instruction in the classrooms could be explained in two ways that directly relate to what could be seen as the teaching priority in EFL contexts; a focus on grammar. First, in the programs that train teachers, the role of pragmatics in language learning is not directly studied, or in the best of the cases it is seen in a piecemeal fashion; that is,

some aspects such as politeness theory or speech acts are covered in a camouflaged way while dealing with other more grammatical features (e.g. the use of modals) (Vásquez & Fioramonte, 2011). In a survey of approximately 100 MA-TESL programs in the United States, Vásquez and Sharpless (2009) found that even though the majority of the programs do have courses related to phonology and syntax, they do not have courses dedicated to pragmatics. This reality is also true for EFL contexts. If we consider this information, then we may state that language teachers are not being prepared to address pragmatic issues in their classes. What they know can be perceived as intuition transferred from their first languages or because they have had some opportunities to face the pragmatic norms of the target language by visiting native contexts. However, as Vásquez and Fioramonte (2011) state, knowledge of pragmatics and knowledge of how to teach it is something that teachers do not acquire automatically on their own; in other words, teachers need to be taught as well as students. Second, as research has found, the material that is used in the classroom does not contain appropriate information on pragmatics (see Jiang, 2006; Vellenga, 2004). In this regard, since pragmatic instruction is not covered in books, students do not have an explicit contact with accurate models they can use to use the language appropriately. Furthermore, as teachers are tied to time constraints to cover the material given to them in a particular period of time, they do not usually use extra resources to cover for this absence of information in the books (Vellenga, 2004).

The present study found the aforementioned limitation in the selected context for research. The teacher was not informed about the raised importance of pragmatic instruction and for that reason he found the treatment used to provide students with pragmatic information, and the tests used to measure any possible changes in the use of politeness strategies to disagreeing somehow intrusive in his class as they took time devoted to fulfill the program requirements. Additionally, the material used in the course did not include information related to pragmatics. In

this concern, the adaptation of the additional material that the treatment represented was challenging and, even though efforts were made to link the content of the tasks to the content of the course, students and also the teacher might have felt the pragmatic instruction was not associated with the information in the class; however, in order to draw more informed conclusions in this regard, qualitative methods should be included in future pragmatic research in the same context.

With reference to the aforementioned limitations, as a pedagogical implication, and given the undeniable evidence that pragmatic instruction is needed in EFL contexts, the present study should be taken as an illustration of how pragmatic instruction could be integrated into the regular English classes in Colombian classrooms. The results showed gains in the use of politeness strategies when disagreeing, indicating that the pragmatic intervention was efficient. This research also presented some evidence that extra material is needed in order to bring pragmatics into the classrooms as the books lack this information. Even though it will be difficult to adjust the new material to the course, efforts are called to look for, select, adapt and use extra sources that will be beneficial for enhancing pragmatic knowledge in Colombian students.

A further interest in this study was to test the efficacy of task repetition on pragmatic related areas. Task repetition has proven to have positive effects on the acquisition of different linguistic aspects because it helps students focus their attention to monitoring the use of the language once they are familiar with the procedure and the content of the task (Mackey et al., 2007). Even though research has found that repeating tasks is beneficial for learners, little is known about its impact in pragmatic development. To date, only Takimoto (2012) and the present study have investigated the effect of task repetition operationalized as procedural repetition and content repetition (Patanasorn, 2010) on the understanding and production of appropriate use of the language, given the target language norms.

Results from the present study show that, similar to other researched linguistic aspects, task repetition can simplify the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge. Procedural repetition was shown to be more effective than content repetition in facilitating the use of politeness strategies to disagree; operationalized as the number of desirable and non-desirable strategies learners employed when disagreeing (Garcia, 1989; Kreutel, 2007). These result confirmed the same findings in Takimoto (2012) where procedural repetition was also the most effective type of repetition. In this regard, it is the case that since learners in EFL contexts are so predisposed to grammar lessons that they do not necessarily feel that they are repeating the same content in a task; in other words, they might think that the new task is not related to a previous one even if the content is the same. In that way, students need to use most of their attentional resources to understand the procedure of the new task. On the contrary during procedural repetition learners become fully aware of the fact that they are repeating the same procedure with a different topic and because of that they can redirect their attention to the correct use of the language since they have mastered the procedure related to the task. Taking into account the results from both this study and also Takimoto's (2012), then it might be possible to conclude that procedural repetition is a more appropriate approach regarding pragmatic knowledge acquisition; however, given the small amount of research of this type, more research is needed in order to confirm this conclusion.

A direct pedagogical implication then is the implementation of task repetition as a way to integrate pragmatic instruction in the class designs in Colombia. As mentioned earlier, teaching pragmatics is important in EFL settings as it helps learners gain a more complete control over the target language. In this regard, teachers should look for the most appropriate alternatives to enhance the effects of such instruction. Apart from a more explicit approach to teaching pragmatics, procedural repetition seems to be one adequate technique to maximize the results of

any pedagogical intervention on pragmatics. It is reasonable to design tasks that require some repetition in which learners have the opportunity to practice the appropriate use of the language. Research has found that this type of repetition is beneficial for the acquisition of pragmatic norms of the target language as it drives the students' attention to monitoring the correct use of the language after they have grasped the procedure of the task. However, the use of procedural repetition must be interpreted with caution as it could represent a threat to ecological validity inside a classroom. Teachers should integrate the use of procedural repetition as a technique to teach pragmatics; but, the instruction must not be solely based on task repetition as it might cause learners' decrease of motivation to learn the new aspects of the language (Kim, 2013).

In conclusion, this research has shown that in Colombia, as in any EFL context, pragmatic instruction brings benefits to learners because they can use the target language not only correctly linguistically but also pragmatically accurate. This focus on pragmatics needs to be included in the programs that train teachers in order to inform them about the advantages of teaching students how to use what they have learnt according to the cultural norms of the target language. Additionally, procedural task repetition is a good alternative to facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic norms; in that way, teachers should include the use of procedural repetition as a means of improving the results of the pragmatic intervention. However, they need to be cautious not to exaggerate the use of this type of repetition as it can unmotivate learners in the process of becoming pragmatically competent speakers.

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APPENDIX A
Discourse Completion Tasks

Your boss **tells you about an idea he has**. He thinks that **this idea will help <u>increase</u> (<u>aumentar</u>) the quality of the company**. You think **that the idea is not very good**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are clothes shopping with your friends Karen and Ronald. Ronald **<u>tries on</u> (<u>se mide</u>)** a sweater that **you find very, very ugly**. Karen says, "**That sweater is perfect, you have to buy it!**"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You will not **<u>renew the lease</u> (<u>renovar contrato</u>)** of your apartment because you are going to move to a new place. You call the **<u>landlord</u> (<u>dueño</u>)** so that he sees that the apartment is in good conditions. When you moved, **you bought the curtains for the apartment**. However, the landlord says: **"Where are the curtains? You cannot take the curtains with you; they are part of the apartment."**

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

In a discussion during one of your English classes, a classmate is presenting some information about the United States **and says that the US has 52 states**. **You did some research on the internet** for your own presentation, and **you know for sure that there are only 50 states**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are in a barbeque with all your family. Your cousin, who is the same age as you, is telling a story about some vacations the family had some years ago. He says: "We went to *San Andres* **two years ago**." **You are sure** that the trip to *San Andres* was **four years ago**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are working on a course project. Your teacher has a new idea for your project**, but you think the idea is not good at all**. Your teacher says: "What do you think of my idea? **I think it's very good, you should <u>try it</u>**! (**<u>ponerla en práctica</u>**)"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and your classmate need to print some material for a class. It has **to be in color** because it's what your teacher prefers. Your classmate says: "**we have to go outside the university because we cannot print in color at the university laboratory**." You know that **students can print copies in color at the university laboratory because you have done it many times.**

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and your father are talking about Colombian history. He says that **the new constitution of the country was promulgated in 1989**. However, you are **taking a history class at the** university and recently **read that the constitution was promulgated in 1991.**

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You live in an apartment with your friend, and the both of **you have agreed to take turns cleaning the apartment** every weekend. **You cleaned last weekend**, but your roommate comes up to you and says, "**You know that it's your turn to clean this coming weekend, right?**"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐   I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are at a restaurant with your family; you are at table 3. **You ordered two fried chickens and 5 sodas**. When you are about to pay, the owner of the restaurant says: "Table 3, **five hamburgers and 5 beers. That is fifty thousand pesos**."

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and two of your classmates are talking about a class you are taking during this semester. **They are saying that the class is terrible.** However, **you enjoy the class and think that you are learning a lot**. They say: "This class is a __waste__ (__desperdicio__) of time, what do you think?"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You had to write an __essay__ (__ensayo__) for one of your classes. **You gave this essay to your teacher during class on Monday**. Today is Thursday, and the teacher returns the essays to the class. When he comes to your desk, he looks at you and says: "**I'm sorry, but you get a '0' because you didn't __hand in__ (__entregar__) your homework.**"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and your friend are walking past a shop that sells second-hand **furniture** (**muebles**). Your friend sees a big, **purple and pink sofa** in the window. 'Oh, that's nice' she says. You look at the sofa. **You do not like it at all**. Your friend says, **'Pink and purple are good colours**. Don't you think it's beautiful?'

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and your mother are going downtown by bus. **Your mother says that you have to take the H-21 bus and get off at *Jimenez* station**. However, **you take the H-21bus frequently and know that it doesn't stop at *the Jimenez* bus station**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are in the car with your boss, who is driving. **You know the way very well**, and **you know** that at the next intersection, you have to **turn right** (**girar a la derecha**). However, your boss says, "**I'm turning left here; I think that's the shortest way**."

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are at your friend Andres's house for dinner, which he cooked himself. **It was horrible**, but **you didn't say anything because you did not want to hurt his feelings**. After the meal, however, he says, "**I think I should cook this meal for my girlfriend's parents on the weekend. They will be impressed.**"

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

Today is your mother's birthday. You and your brother are buying her a present. You two are looking at a red leather jacket **which you think is really ugly**. Your brother says: "**Look, I think my mother will love this jacket, let's buy it**."

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You have a meeting at **4 pm with your teacher**. You know the meeting was at 4 pm because **he sent you a note**. The note said '**Let's meet at 4 o'clock at my office**'. So, at 4 o'clock you go to his office. But when you arrive your teacher looks a little angry. He says: '**You're late. I told you to come here at 3 o'clock**.'

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are on vacation with your best friend. **The weather is sunny and nice**, and **you think you should** take advantage of it and **go to the beach**. However, your best friend says, "**I think we should go shopping**."

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

Your mother says that she would like to paint the apartment. She thinks **that green, orange and red are the best combination of colors for the job**. You **think that they would look ugly together**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You and your best friend are preparing a power point presentation for a final assignment. **The class is in 15 minutes**. Your friend looks at you and says "**I think we should change some ideas in the slides**." However, **you think it is not a good idea**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You are talking to two people from University, Juan and Professor Ruiz. Juan says that he wants to take a writing class because he is not very good at writing essays. **You took the course and think it is excellent**. Professor Ruiz **laughs at (se ríe de) Juan and says: 'Only bad students need to do those classes'. (Professor Ruiz looks at you) 'Don't you think so?'**

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You live in an apartment with your best friend. You and your best friend are making a chocolate cake for a big party at your apartment tonight. Your friend says to you, 'I think you should **put some brandy in the cake** mix'. **You think brandy will make the cake taste bad and that some people might not like alcohol in their food**.

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

You live in an apartment and pay the rent every first of the month. **You paid last week**. Today, you met the **landlord** (**dueño**) in the hallway and he told you, "**You haven't paid the rent this month**."

You say:

_____
_____
_____

☐ I wouldn't say anything. **Why?** _____

APPENDIX B
Role-plays

Role-play 1

Student A:
You are **a professor** at the university. You are at the University cafeteria reading **one of your favourite books**: "**No One Writes to the Colonel (El coronel no tiene quien le escriba**)" when a student comes and says hello. In the conversation with the student, you say **that with this book the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez won his Nobel Prize**. **You also believe** that the year that García Márquez received **the prize was 1981**. **You are very sure of this information**.

Student B:
You are **a student** at the university. You enter to the University **cafeteria and say hello to one professor**. He is reading a book written **by your favourite author**; **Gabriel García Márquez:** "**No One Writes to the Colonel (El coronel no tiene quien le escriba)**" Your professor **says that with this book García Márquez won his Nobel Prize**. You know that the book was called "**A Hundred Years of Solitude (100 años de soledad**)". Your **Professor also says** that the year that García Márquez received **the prize was 1981; but, you know that it was 1982.**

Role-play 2

Student A:
You went to **the movies with your brother/sister**. You really **liked the movie that you just saw** and tell your brother/sister **that the movie was the best movie you have ever seen**; it has lots of **action and the story is very good. The actors were very good and the effects were excellent**.

Student B:
You went to **the movies with your brother/sister**. He/she is telling you how much he/she liked the movie; however, **you did not like it**. You think **that the sound and the special effects were terrible. Also, that the actors and the story were just okay.**

Role-play 3

Student A:
You are an apartment administrator. You received several **complaints** (**quejas**) from other **tenants** (**residentes**) in the building that student B **was listening to rock music loudly** all night long, and that **apparently it happens every weekend**. You are **convinced that this is a recurring pattern**, so you decide to **call student B** to talk to about the situation.

Student B:
You pay the rent in an apartment. The building administrator **calls you to tell you that some of the other people** who live in the building **complained (se quejaron) about you listening to loud rock music all night long**, and that **this happens every weekend**. However, **you usually do work for your classes on the weekends** because **it is the only time you have free**; additionally, you **like to listen to classical music while doing homework**.

Role-play 4

Student A:
You and your friend are hungry after a long day at your university. **You both want to eat hamburgers**. You say you **prefer to go to *El Corral* because**, even though it is a little far from the university and it is a little expensive**, the hamburgers are the best**. **You always go to *El Corral* because you do not like other places.**

Student B:
You and your friend are hungry after a long day at your university. **You both want to eat hamburgers**. Your friend wants **to go to *El Corral*, but it is a little far from the university**. You think that *Presto* **is a better option**, because **it is closer, cheaper, and has better hamburgers**.

Role-play 5

Student A:
You are **studying English at university**. Student B is **a classmate of yours** who **you don't know very well**. You are preparing a poster together. **Your partner shows you a photo that s/he wants to put on the poster**. You **do not like it**, because **it's very dark and there are not many colours**. Additionally, **you think that the picture is not related to the topic of the poster**. You **don't want to put it on the poster.**

Student B
You are **studying English at university**. Student A is **a classmate of yours who you don't know very well**. You are preparing a poster presentation together. **You think have a good photo for the poster, and you show it to your partner**. You tell him/her that you think it will look good on the poster. **You really want this picture on the poster.**

Role-play 6

Student A:
You are a father/mother planning some vacations for your family. You think that the best option **is to go to Cartagena by car which would take around 24 hours**. You **think that in this way you can enjoy the landscape** of our beautiful country. Also, **you think it will be cheaper than flying**.

Student B:
Your father/mother is planning some vacations for the family. He/**she says that going to Cartagena by car is the best option**. It will take **around 24 hours** to arrive there. **You think that the best option is to fly** because it only takes **around one hour**. Also, you **think that if you fly** you can **have more time in Cartagena and not in a car**.

APPENDIX C
Ranking Activity (Content Repetition)

The following list presents objects that are important for a house.

1. Individually select and rank from one to five the most important possessions. 1 is the most important.

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

| Television | Computer | Refrigerator | Stove | Internet | Telephone |
| Microwave | Sofa | Dining table | | Washing machine | Blender |

2. Discuss with the members of your classmates. As a group, select and rank from one to five the most important possessions. 1 is the most important.

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

APPENDIX D
Decision-making Activity (Content Repetition)

Imagine that you are part of a family and that they won 20 million Colombian pesos in a TV show. You have to decide what possession to buy. Each one of you will present an option to your partners. As a group you have to discuss and select the best option.

One new car for the family.
- Your family does not have a car.
- The car is safe because it is new.
- Gasoline will be cheaper.
- Only one car is cheaper for taxes
- No more "transmilenio" for the family

Two second hand cars for the family.
- The family does not have a car.
- "Pico y placa". Car restriction.
- All members can use both cars.
- No more "transmilenio" for the family

Down payment of a house.
- You won't pay more rent.
- You can have your own space.
- Own room for all the members of the family.
- You can move to a safer neighborhood.

A trip to Europe for the family
- No visas necessary.
- You can know new cultures.
- Go on tours.
- Know different countries in Europe (Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Greece).

APENDIX E
Categorizing task (Content group)

Let's talk about jobs and possessions. You have two jobs and some possessions.

1. Individually select the most important possessions for each job. Choose 5 per job; but, keep in mind that you cannot repeat the possessions.

Film maker   Designer
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

| Computer | Camera | Credit card | Cell phone | Desk |
| Agenda | Office | Video beam | Car | Computer programs |

2. Discuss with your classmates. As a group, select the possessions for each job. Remember, you cannot repeat any possession.

Film maker   Designer
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

APPENDIX F
Debate (Content Repetition)

You and your partners will debate about the most important possession for a person.
You will work with one classmate to defend the object that you choose.

1. With your classmate select two of the following items; and number them 1 and 2 where 1 is your first option.

Laptop

Cellphone

Tablet

2. In two minutes find advantages and disadvantages for the two objects you select.

3. Choose who will talk first.

4. The first couple will present object number

5. The second pair will present their object (if it is the same object the first couple selected you have to choose object number two in your list).

6. Present arguments for and against the objects you are discussing.

APPENDIX G
Ranking Activities (Procedural Repetition)

Day one

The following list presents objects that are important for a house.

1. Individually select and rank from one to five the most important possessions. 1 is the most important.

    6. _____
    7. _____
    8. _____
    9. _____
   10. _____

Television	Computer	Refrigerator	Stove	Internet	Telephone
Microwave	Sofa	Dining table		Washing machine	Bed

2. Discuss with your classmates. As a group, select and rank from one to five the most important possessions. 1 is the most important.

    6. _____
    7. _____
    8. _____
    9. _____
   10. _____

Day two

Imagine you received 200.000 pesos. The following list presents ideas on how to use the money.

1. Individually select and rank from one to five the best way to use the money. 1 is the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Pay bills	Buy a new treats	Invest the money	Put it in the savings account
Pay debts	Share with friends	Put it away Fuel the car	Give it to your parents

2. Discuss with your classmates. As a group, select and rank from one to five the best way to use the money. 1 is the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Day three

Let's talk about taking pictures. The following list presents different moments where you might need a camera.

1. Individually select and rank from one to five the most important moment to take a picture. 1 is the most important.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____

Concert	Vacations	Graduation ceremony	Your birthday	With a famous person
Car crash	Marriage	Demonstration/protest	Baby's first day	

2. Discuss with your classmates. As a group, select and rank from one to five the most important moment to take a picture. 1 is the most important.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____

Day four

Let's talk about jobs. The following list presents different challenging jobs.

1. Individually select and rank from one to five the most difficult job. 1 is the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Teacher	Policeman	Soldier	Doctor	Model	Actor
Designer	Accountant	Sportsperson	constructor man		Bodyguard

2. Discuss with your classmates. As a group, select and rank from one to five the most difficult job. 1 is the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____