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Learning Pragmatic Routines during Study Abroad: A Focus on Proficiency and Type of Routine

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The present study explores pragmatic learning during study abroad (SA) programs, focusing on gains in learner recognition and production of pragmatic routines, and considers whether proficiency and type of routine play a role in this. One hundred and twenty-two international students in their first semester of study at US universities completed a pre-test and a post-test version of a vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) and a written discourse-completion task (DCT). Pragmatic routines elicited for recognition were categorised according to how bound they are to specific situations, while production routines were operationalised in terms of prototypicality. The results revealed that knowledge of pragmatic routines increased during a semester abroad, particularly in terms of recognition. While this increase was unrelated to proficiency, type of routine did play a significant role. Students showed greater gains in recognition of situational routines and in production of those that are highly-prototypical. The findings of the study underline the importance of SA programs for the acquisition of pragmatic routines, and suggest that exposure to routines in relevant contexts enhances pragmatic development.

Keywords: interlanguage pragmatics; study abroad; pragmatic routines; L2 pragmatic competence; recognition; production

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Aprendizaje de rutinas pragmáticas durante programas de estudios en el extranjero: nivel de inglés y tipo de rutina

El presente estudio examina el aprendizaje de la competencia pragmática durante las estancias lingüísticas en el extranjero. En particular, se centra en el reconocimiento y en la producción de rutinas pragmáticas, considerando si el nivel de inglés de los estudiantes y el tipo de rutina influyen en la adquisición de las mismas. Ciento veintidós estudiantes internacionales

en su primer semestre de estudios en universidades de Estados Unidos completaron un pre-test y un post-test de una escala de conocimientos de vocabulario—*vocabulary knowledge scale* (VKS)—y una prueba de elicitación del discurso—*discourse completion task* (DCT). Las rutinas pragmáticas presentadas para reconocimiento se clasificaron según su dependencia de contextos específicos, mientras que las de producción según su prototipicalidad. Los resultados del estudio confirman que el conocimiento de rutinas aumenta durante un semestre en el extranjero, y en especial la habilidad de reconocerlas. Aunque el nivel de inglés no afecta en este aumento, el tipo de rutina ejerce una influencia significativa. En concreto, se observaron mayores ganancias en el reconocimiento de rutinas situacionales y en la producción de rutinas muy prototípicas. Estos resultados corroboran la importancia de las estancias lingüísticas para la adquisición de rutinas pragmáticas, y sugieren que la exposición a las mismas en contextos significativos es determinante para el desarrollo de la competencia pragmática.

Palabras clave: pragmática de la interlengua; estancias lingüísticas; rutinas pragmáticas; competencia pragmática de segundas lenguas; reconocimiento; producción

1. Introduction

Research in the area of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has examined the study abroad (SA) context as a potential environment for second language (L2) learners' pragmatic development—for a recent overview on pragmatic gains from SA, see Xiao (2015).[1] Previous studies have examined awareness and production of speech acts, command of informal style, comprehension of implied meaning, and a few investigations have dealt with pragmatic routines. Overall, findings point to the SA context as being significantly beneficial for the development of pragmatic aspects. Such development, however, is variable and non-linear, and is influenced by various factors. Among these, intensity of interaction, instruction and language socialisation have been seen to exert a positive influence (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1993; Barron 2003; Schauer 2009; Bataller 2010; Iwasaki 2010; Taguchi 2011; Alcón 2015). However, since there is no conclusive empirical evidence of the extent to which pragmatic competence develops during SA, further research is needed in the field.

The present study focuses on pragmatic routines, that is, semi-fixed expressions used recurrently by speech communities in specific situations of everyday life. This pragmalinguistic aspect has received increasing attention in ILP research since the early 2000s, with studies underlining the importance of knowing routines for the development of L2 pragmatic competence (e.g., Kasper and Ross, 2002). Given that the majority of studies to date have analysed knowledge of routines, rather than actual increase or decrease in use, the present investigation addresses pragmatic gains in their recognition and production. In addition, and in contrast to previous studies that have analysed the acquisition of routines by comparing pragmatic knowledge of learners in the SA context with their peers at home, this study examines gains accomplished by a single group of learners during a semester abroad. Pragmatic development is also explored across proficiency levels, in an attempt to gain an understanding on how learners at different proficiency levels make progress over time, rather than observing pragmatic knowledge at a given point in time, which has been a common focus of research. Finally, the study also addresses a key research gap, namely the influence of type of routine on pragmatic changes from an acquisitional perspective.

[1] As members of the "LAELA. Lingüística Aplicada a l'Ensenyament de la Llengua Anglesa" ["Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of the English Language"] research group at Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain), we would like to acknowledge that this study is part of a research project funded by (a) the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad ["Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness"] (FFI2016-78584-P), (b) Universitat Jaume I (P1·1B2015-20), and (c) Projectes d'Innovació Educativa de la Unitat de Suport Educatiu ["Educational Innovation Projects by the Educational Support Office"] Universitat Jaume I (352/16). Thank you also to Prof. Dr. Anne Barron and the members of her research group for their insights provided during this project.

2. Background Research

2.1. Pragmatic routines

As a subarea of the wider field of formulaic language, pragmatic routines differ from other concepts such as idioms, collocations or formulas in terms of their sociocultural nature and their recurrent use in particular situations. Coulmas (1981), for instance, refers to pragmatic routines as implicit agreements supposedly shared by the members of a community. According to this author, knowledge of routines, which reflects the speech of a society, is essential to handle everyday situations. In a similar vein, Taguchi (2011) defines pragmatic routines as expressions with a fixed or semi-fixed formal structure, and whose meaning is bound to a specific situation and to a certain communicative function.

Pragmatic routines have been categorised according to their form and to their meaning or function. Despite their highly conventional nature, variability in their internal structure and in the degree to which their meaning is situation-bound are defining traits. With respect to form, routines have been classified in "chunks" and "patterns" (Wray 1999), according to whether they have, respectively, a fixed and prefabricated form, such as *For here or to go?* or they are more flexible and may include one or more missing gaps, such as in *Would you mind…?* Regarding meaning and function, pragmatic routines have been categorised according to the extent to which their meaning is more loosely or tightly linked to specific situations (Roever 2005). A routine may imply a literal significance—*Can I help you?*—or a situationally-bound meaning, which makes sense only in a particular contextualised situation—*Help yourself*. Additionally, it may involve two meanings, as is the case of the expression *Do you have the time?* Without context, one many infer that *Do you have the time?* is an enquiry about time, as expressed in hours and minutes. However, it may also indicate an enquiry about somebody's availability. In this regard, Roever (2005; see also Coulmas 1981) differentiates between functional and situational routines. Situational routines have a more fixed internal structure and they are used in specific situations, as in the question *What brings you here?* asked by a doctor to a patient at the beginning of a medical interview. Hence, their significance may be difficult to discern without contextual clues. In contrast, functional routines have a more flexible form, they may be used in different settings and discerning their meaning presents less difficulty; that is to say, inferential reasoning is not necessary, e.g., *Do you mind if…?*

In terms of the distinction between functional and situational routines, there is a body of research that has pointed to how form and situation boundness of pragmatic routines shape L2 learners' recognition and production of routines (Kecsckes 2000; Roever 2005; Taguchi 2011; 2013). However, to the best of our knowledge, previous studies have not addressed whether type of routine influences pragmatic gains during SA. Previous research has also explored the factors that potentially influence the acquisition of pragmatic routines. These will be reviewed in the next section.

2.2. Previous research on the acquisition of pragmatic routines

The acquisition of pragmatic routines has been investigated mainly in cross-sectional studies addressing knowledge of routines, and in a few longitudinal studies exploring pragmatic gains. A number of previous studies have focused on the factors influencing the acquisition of pragmatic routines during SA. For instance, Roever (2005) examined pragmatic performance by a group of German students of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the US, in comparison with a control group of EFL learners in Germany, and addressed the effect of proficiency and exposure on learners' recognition of pragmatic routines, comprehension of implicatures and production of speech acts. Participants completed a recognition task with twelve routines that included both situational routines and other functional expressions, and it was found that recognition of pragmatic routines was only influenced by exposure. Additionally, learners' production of pragmatic routines in a discourse-completion task (DCT) revealed higher use of functional than situational routines.

Similarly, Kecskes (2000) analysed learners' ability to recognise and produce pragmatic routines, which he labelled "situation-bound utterances." Three tasks were presented to eighty-eight international students at a US university: a DCT, a dialogue-comprehension task and a problem-solving task. The instruments included expressions with a literal meaning versus formulas with figurative language such as *piece of cake* ["easy"] or *shoot* ["go ahead"]. His findings provided further evidence that it is degree of conventionality what determines the acquisition of formulas, since students recognised and produced literal and grammatically transparent formulas more easily than figurative ones. Additionally, Kecskes examined how previous experience in the second language context influenced use of routines, providing evidence that lengthier previous experience abroad did not imply higher production of routines.

Taguchi (2011; 2013) also refers to conventionality as a determiner of acquisition of routines and provides further evidence of learners being more successful at recognising and producing routines with a more literal, non-conventional meaning—i.e., functional routines. Firstly, Taguchi (2011) addressed comprehension of conventional and non-conventional implicatures, including pragmatic routines, by sixty-four Japanese students of English in an immersion setting in Japan, finding that recognition of routines was more difficult and took more time than comprehension of indirect implicatures, thus supporting the work of Kecskes (2000). Moving on to production, in a later study by Taguchi (2013) participants completed an oral DCT with four situations that elicited routines. Production was measured in terms of appropriateness, planning time and speech rate. In line with both Kecskes (2000) and Roever (2005), students produced functional routines more accurately than situational ones (dominant core expressions) within the same context. The same author also examined the influence of proficiency and SA exposure on comprehension

and production of routines, reporting that proficiency correlated positively with recognition of routines, while exposure in the SA context had the greatest effect on production of routines (Taguchi 2011; 2013).

Further evidence that it is easier for international students to recognise than to produce pragmatic routines was reported by Bardovi-Harlig (2008). The same author (2009) provides the following explanations for the low production of pragmatic routines: lack of familiarity with expressions, overuse of familiar routines, subsequent underuse of more target-like expressions, level of development and lack of sociopragmatic knowledge. Additionally, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) explored the effect of proficiency, intensity of interaction and length of stay, finding a positive influence of proficiency on production of routines—hence in line with Taguchi (2013)—but no significant effect on recognition. Results also pointed to the relevant role of intensity of interaction on both recognition and production of formulas and no significant influence of length of stay on either aspect.

While the above-mentioned studies are cross-sectional, measuring knowledge and performance of pragmatic routines while abroad, Barron (2003) and Taguchi, Li and Xiao (2013) addressed actual gains in pragmatic routines during SA, focusing on production. Barron (2003) examined the acquisition of discourse structure, pragmatic routines and internal modification by thirty-three Irish students of L2 German in a ten-month SA program in Germany. Regarding routines, the author measured production at three times, reporting that although the learning path seemed to move towards the L2 norm, it was difficult for L2 learners to acquire full native-like pragmatic performance. This study confirmed that the SA context is beneficial for acquiring pragmatic routines, but mere exposure is not enough for learning. The author suggests that frequency and saliency of input is a determining factor during an SA experience.

In the same vein, Taguchi, Li and Xiao (2013) analysed gains in production of L2 Chinese routines during a semester-long SA program in China. Following a pre-test/post-test design, thirty-one American students took a speaking test with twenty-four situations that prompted the use of formulas. Additionally, they completed a survey about their perception of frequency of encountering the situations presented. Their findings revealed that learners showed significant gains in production of routines. Additionally, although some students made gains towards the use of target language (TL) formulas, most of the participants produced more non-target-like grammatical routines in the post-test, the authors concluding from this that learners appear to place more importance on conveying meaning rather than on producing accurate forms. Consequently, production of routines during the SA seemed to develop towards the use of functional pragmatic routines

As reported above, previous studies have examined learners' knowledge of pragmatic routines during SA, but they have paid relatively little attention to how learners develop their knowledge of pragmatic routines over time. Interestingly, the two studies that have addressed gains in pragmatic routines have only focused

on production, disregarding the ability to recognise routines. Regarding proficiency, mixed findings have been reported on whether learners' proficiency level influences recognition and production of routines. In relation to type of routine, learners seem to have less difficulty in producing and recognising more literal and transparent routines. Nevertheless, existing studies have disregarded whether type of routine plays a role in learners' pragmatic development. This study addresses such research gaps by exploring how type of pragmatic routine influences pragmatic gains across different proficiency levels during a semester-long SA program. To this end, two research questions guided the study:

RQ1: Do learners at different proficiency levels show differential gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines during study abroad programs?

RQ2: Does type of routine influence learners' gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Data was collected from three public universities in the United States of America. The institutions are close in geographical proximity, all within the Appalachian region of the US, an important factor to take into account in order to maintain the same cultural, societal and linguistic values, and especially to ensure that the members of the L2 speech community use the same pragmatic routines. Moreover, the three universities offer similar ESL programmes for undergraduate international students, aimed at enhancing their English competence and at preparing them to live and study in the US. Learners enrolled in full-time, part-time or occasional ESL classes, depending on their initial proficiency level, which was determined by the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores. Participants of the study were students enrolled in these ESL programs.

One hundred and twenty-two international students participated in the study. Originally, the sample included one hundred and thirty-four students, but twelve had previous experience in the TL setting, and were excluded in an attempt to ensure homogeneity in previous sociopragmatic knowledge. Background information about the final group of one hundred and twenty-two participants is included in table 1.

As observed in table 1, the sample includes seventy-five males and forty-seven females and their age ranges from eighteen to forty-two, the average being 23.4. They have seventeen different L1s, and hence are from varied sociocultural origin. Furthermore, based on TOEFL scores, students were classified according to their English proficiency level and comprised twenty beginners, sixty-three intermediate and thirty-nine advanced learners.

Table 1. Demographic information about participants

Variable	Values	Number	%
Gender	Male	75	61.5
	Female	47	38.5
Age	18 to 24	72	59
	24 to 30	45	36.9
	30 to 42	5	4.1
L1	Chinese	37	30.3
	Portuguese	32	26.2
	Arabic	10	8.2
	Thai	10	8.2
	Turkish	7	5.7
	Spanish	5	4.1
	Vietnamese	4	3.3
	Indonesian and Indonesian dialects	3	2.5
	Korean	3	2.5
	German	2	1.6
	Japanese	2	1.6
	Uzbek	2	1.6
	Kituba (Congolese)	1	0.8
	Russian	1	0.8
	Serer (Senegal)	1	0.8
	Tajik	1	0.8
	Urdu	1	0.8
English level	Intermediate	63	51.6
	Advanced	39	32
	Beginner	20	16.4

3.2. Instruments

In order to collect data on the participants' recognition and production of pragmatic routines, two tests were designed. To assess recognition, a modified version of the multilevel "vocabulary knowledge scale" (VKS) was used (Wesche and Paribakht 1996). This instrument aims to identify both self-perceived and demonstrated knowledge of certain pragmatic routines. Example 1 shows one of the items in the test:

> Example 1:
> Instructions: Circle the letter a), b) or c) of the most appropriate option for each expression according to whether you have never seen or heard the expression, you have seen or heard it but do not remember what it means or you know the expression and are able to explain, translate or provide a synonym for it.

1. *I gotta go*
a) I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before.
b) I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means.
c) I know this expression. It means _____
(translation, synonym or explanation)

As illustrated in the above example, participants self-report their ability to recognise the presented item, and they provide evidence that the reported recognition is true by providing a synonym, an example or an explanation of the item.

With respect to production of pragmatic routines, a written DCT was adapted from Roever (2005) and Bardovi-Harlig (2008; 2009). The instrument requested participants to express what they would say in thirteen scenarios. Example 2 is extracted from the DCT:

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

Both the VKS and the DCT were pilot tested with ninety-two native speakers (NSs) in order to check for frequency and community-wide use of the routines. Following Bardovi-Harlig (2008), a cut-off point was established for recognition—with 100% of NSs' agreement—and for production—with a 50% of NSs' agreement. Additionally, pragmatic routines produced by at least 15% of NSs were taken into consideration as low-prototypical routines. The cut-off served as an indicator of validity of the instrument by showing NS agreement and it was also used to codify the routines produced in the DCT. Finally, in order to avoid familiarity with the instruments in the post-test, two versions of the VKS and the DCT were designed by modifying the order of the items presented.

3.3. Taxonomy of pragmatic routines

Drawing on Roever (2005), the pragmatic routines elicited for recognition were divided into functional and situational routines, depending on how bound their meaning is to particular situations. Situational routines have a relatively fixed internal structure and a conventionally established meaning that makes sense in a given situation. In contrast, functional routines include more formal flexibility, their meaning is more literal and they may be used in different situations. The present study includes five situational routines— (a) *Do you have the time?,* (b) *My bad*, (c) *That works for me*, (d) *Do you think you could make it?* and (e) *Help yourself*—and eight functional routines—(f) *I gotta go*,

(g) *I was wondering*, (h) *Thanks for coming*, (i) *Thanks for your time*, (j) *Could you do me a favour?*, (k) *Would you mind…?*, (l) *Do you want to come to my place?* and (m) *Can I get you anything else?*

Additionally, pragmatic routines elicited for production were examined in terms of prototypicality. In line with Bardovi-Harlig (2009) and Taguchi (2013), routines produced in the DCT were classified according to percentage of NSs agreement in each particular situation. Expressions with a NS agreement of 50% or more were considered highly prototypical, while expressions produced by more than 15% and less than 50% of NSs were coded as low prototypical routines.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

This study employed a pre-test/post-test design. The process of collecting the data took two semesters: the spring semester of 2014 and the autumn semester of 2014. At the beginning of each semester, newly arrived international students were asked to participate. The instruments were administered in paper format during face-to-face sessions. The pre-test was completed during the second week of each semester and the post-test two weeks before the end of each semester.

Learners' recognition of pragmatic routines was coded in terms of familiarity with the expressions. Each response in the VKS test received a point value and, for each participant, average scores were calculated on a scale from 0 to 2. This score indicates how frequently learners recognise the expressions presented to them: zero points (0) were given to "I don't remember seeing or hearing this expression before"; one point (1) corresponded to both "I have seen or heard this expression before but I don't know what it means" and "I know this expression. It means (incorrect answer)"; finally, two points (2) were assigned to the response "I know this expression. It means (correct answer)."

To code learners' production of routines, only expressions previously produced by a sample of NSs were taken into account in the analysis. For each situation in the DCT, the number of learners that produced each prototypical expression—including both highly and low prototypical—was determined for the pre-test and the post-test and compared with NSs performance. Comparison with production by NSs also allowed the limits of variability to be established. Correct responses were measured as fitting within the boundaries of variation, which may take many forms, lexical, morphological or syntactic—see Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), Schmitt and Carter (2004) and Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011). For example, *Nice to meet you* and *Nice meeting you* were considered under the same routine, as well as contractions or lack of copula, such as in *I'm sorry*, *I am sorry* or *Sorry*.

Before data coding, one of the authors and a recruited scholar practised coding together on data from a pilot study to confirm consistency. They then independently coded 20% of the study data. The agreement rate was 92% for recognition of routines, and 87% for production.

4. Results and Discussion

In order to answer the first research question (RQ1), gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines during SA across proficiency levels were explored. Firstly, differences between pre-test and post-test means were examined using a series of paired-samples t-tests, and the effect size was calculated using Cohen's d. Recognition and production mean scores were calculated on the basis of a minimum score of zero points and a maximum of twenty six points—two points for each of the thirteen routines in the VKS and the thirteen situations in the DCT. Overall scores were the sum of recognition and production ratios, hence the maximum score a learner could achieve in overall knowledge of routines was fifty two points. In order to test the normality of the data, a Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$) showed that recognition, production and overall gain ratios were normally distributed, with a skewness of -0.845 (SE = 2.19) and a kurtosis of 0.479 (SE = 0.435) for recognition in the pre-test, a skewness of -1.207 (SE = 2.19) and a kurtosis of 1.26 (SE = 0.435) for recognition in the post-test, a skewness of 0.185 (SE = 2.19) and a kurtosis of -0.437 (SE = 0.435) for production in the pre-test and a skewness of 0.205 (SE = 2.19) and a kurtosis of -0.224 (SE = 0.435) for production in the post-test.

Table 2 shows that learners scored higher on recognition, as compared to production, both in the pre-test (recognition M = 18.52, SD = 4.993; production M = 10.36, SD = 4.696) and in the post-test (recognition M = 20.01, SD = 4.504; production M = 11.73, SD = 4.481).

Table 2. Pre-test–post-test means, standard deviations and differences in knowledge of pragmatic routines.[2]

	T1			T2						
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Difference	Diff.(%)	Sig.	t	df
Recognition	122	18.52	4.993	20.01	4.504	1.49*	5.73	.000	-4.36	121
Production	122	10.36	4.696	11.73	4.481	1.37*	5.27	.001	-3.42	121
Overall	122	28.88	8.461	31.75	7.652	2.87*	5.52	.000	-5.21	121

Inferential statistics also indicated that changes between pre-test (T1) and post-test (T2) were statistically significant for recognition [$t(121) = -4.36$, $p < 0.001$, $d = -0.313$], for production [$t(121) = -3.42$, $p < 0.001$, $d = -0.298$] and for overall knowledge [$t(121) = -5.21$, $p < 0.001$, $d = -0.356$], suggesting that a semester abroad can afford significant pragmatic gains. As shown in table 2, gains in recognition of routines (5.73%) were slightly greater than those for production (5.27%), pointing to the particular advantage of the SA context in terms of recognition. These findings

[2] The values for the *difference* column are the changes from the pre-test to the post-test. *$p < 0.001$ (paired-samples t-test)

support previous research reporting that learners increase their knowledge of pragmatic routines while participating in SA programs (Barron 2003; Taguchi, Li and Xiao 2013).

In order to examine pragmatic gains across proficiency levels, participants were divided into three groups: beginner (n = 20), intermediate (n = 63), and advanced learners (n = 39). Results from a one-way ANOVA revealed that proficiency was not significantly associated with gains in recognition—$F(2,119) = 1.792$; $p = 0.71$—in production—$F(2,119) = 0.195$; $p = 0.82$—or in overall knowledge of pragmatic routines—$F(2,119) = 1.327$; $p = 0.27$. Indeed, the analysis showed that the three groups did not show significant differences in their learning of pragmatic routines. This means that more proficient learners did not necessarily achieve greater gains. In fact, some beginner students showed higher or similar gains to advanced learners. Consequently, pragmatic improvement might be determined by factors other than proficiency. While, to the best of our knowledge, there are no studies reporting the effect of proficiency on gains in knowledge of routines over time, these findings echo a cross-sectional investigation by Roever (2005) that revealed no association between proficiency level and knowledge of routines.

To sum up the results related to RQ1, the present investigation reveals higher gains in recognition than in production of pragmatic routines during a semester of study abroad. In addition to this, our findings provide new insights on how pragmatic gains are influenced by proficiency. In this study, proficiency was unrelated to the reported pragmatic gains, as learners across levels did not show significantly different pragmatic learning paths.

The second research question (RQ2) of the study examined whether the type of pragmatic routine influences learners' gains in recognition and in production. Below, the results for the influence of type of routine on gains in recognition are presented, followed by the effect on gains in production. Table 3 presents the data on participants' recognition scores and gains for each of the thirteen expressions contained in the VKS.

Scores in the pre-test and post-test range from 0.96 for *Do you think you could make it?*, indicating that a high number of students reported not recognising the expression or not being familiar with its prototypical meaning, to 1.85 in the post-test of *Thanks for coming*. Gains were calculated in percentages, ranging from -2% to 14%, with an average of 5.85%. Learners showed improvement in recognition of all expressions except for *Do you have the time?* (-2% of gains). After *My bad* (14%), *That works for me* is the routine with the second highest percentage of gains (11%) and this is followed by *Thanks for coming* (9.5%), *Do you want to come to my place?* (9%), *Thanks for your time* (7%), *Do you think you could make it?* (6.6%) and *Would you mind…?* (6%). Other routines that participants did not seem to learn during the semester—i.e., expressions with a gain percentage below the means—are *Could you do me a favour?* (2%), *Help yourself* (2.5%), *I gotta go* (2.5%), *I was wondering…* (3.5%) and *Can I get you anything else?* (4.5%).

Table 3. Recognition of pragmatic routines

		NNSs (N = 122)			
		T1	T2	Gains	
	Expression	Score	Score	Score	%
R1	I gotta go	1.61	1.66	0.05	2.5
R2	I was wondering…	1.32	1.39	0.07	3.5
R3	Do you have the time?	1.69	1.65	-0.04	-2.0
R4	My bad	1.30	1.58	0.28	14.0
R5	Thanks for coming	1.66	1.85	0.19	9.5
R6	Thanks for your time	1.66	1.80	0.14	7.0
R7	That works for me	1.16	1.38	0.22	11.0
R8	Do you think you could make it?	0.96	1.09	0.13	6.5
R9	Could you do me a favour?	1.66	1.70	0.03	2.0
R10	Would you mind…?	1.35	1.47	0.11	6.0
R11	Do you want to come to my place?	1.49	1.67	0.18	9.0
R12	Help yourself	1.23	1.28	0.05	2.5
R13	Can I get you anything else?	1.42	1.51	0.09	4.5

In order to analyse whether the type of pragmatic routine determines the learners' gains in recognition listed above, a distinction is made between situational and functional routines. Table 4 displays pre-test and post-test means, standard deviations and differences (gains).

Table 4. Pre-test/post-test means, standard deviations and differences in recognition of situational and functional routines

	T1			T2						
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Difference	Diff. (%)	Sig.	t	df
Situational	5	1.27	0.268	1.40	0.227	0.128*	6.48	.009	-2.23	4
Functional	8	1.52	0.145	1.63	0.161	0.110*	5.43	.001	-5.45	7

Mean scores for both situational and functional routines in T1 and T2 are calculated on a scale from zero to two points. Analysis from paired-samples t-tests indicated that changes between pre-test and post-test were statistically significant for both situational routines—$t(4) = -2.23$, $p < 0.01$, $d = -0.523$—and functional ones—$t(7) = -5.45$, $p = 0.001$, $d = -0.718$—suggesting that there is a significant pragmatic improvement in both types of pragmatic routine.

In table 4 it can be seen that learners accomplished slightly greater gains in their recognition of situational routines—e.g., *My bad*, *That works for me*, *Help yourself* (6.48% improvement)—compared to functional ones—e.g., *I gotta go*, *I was wondering*, *Thanks for coming* (5.43%). Lower gain percentages in functional routines make sense for two reasons. Firstly, students may already possess knowledge of most functional routines, such as *I gotta go* or *Could you do me a favour?* and thus they did not show gains during the semester—Schmitt, Dörnyei, Adolphs and Durow (2004) refer to it as the "ceiling effect." In contrast, exposure to the TL seems to enhance the recognition of formulas whose meaning is tied to situations that are probably frequent in the TL context. For instance, students may regularly encounter situations where *My bad*, *That works for me* and *Do you think you could make it?* are employed by NSs or other TL users, hence improving their ability to recognise them. Although previous studies have indicated that it is more difficult for L2 learners to recognise routines with a situation-bound meaning (Kecskes 2000; Roever 2005), the findings from this study suggest that exposure to input during SA is beneficial for improving the ability to recognise this type of routines. In fact, in the speech community where the study was conducted people use the expression *My bad* recurrently, while other communities use different expressions of apology such as *Sorry, it was my fault*. This finding echoes Barron's (2003) claims that saliency and frequency of input during SA seem to determine increases in the production of L2-like routines.

Moving to production, table 5 shows the data on number of learners producing prototypical routines in the pre-test and post-test, and differences between these and NS production ratios in each pragmatic routine elicited. Gain percentages range from -10.66% to 25.41%, with an average of 3.16%. Learners accomplished the greatest gains in *{Thanks/thank you/-} You too* (25.41%), followed by *Hello?* (13.11%) and *How can I help you?* (10.66%), implying that the SA context is beneficial for learning these pragmatic routines. In contrast, students decreased their use of *How can I help you?* (-10.66%), *No, thank you* (-8.20%), *Sorry my {place/house} is a mess* (-3.28%) and *Sorry I am late* (-1.64%). Furthermore, no gains were reported in the production of *Do you have (a/an extra) pen I {could/can} borrow?* and *Be careful*.

To examine whether the type of routines influenced production gains, a distinction was made between highly-prototypical and low-prototypical routines, according to NS production percentages—see table 5, last column. On the one hand, all the reported negative gains corresponded to low-prototypical routines—except for *Sorry I am late*. On the other, learners increasingly opted to produce highly-prototypical routines, as reflected in positive gain percentages. Situation "Restaurant," is an example. The DCT asked the students what they would say in the following situation: "You work in a fast food restaurant which serves food that customers can eat while seated in the restaurant or can take home with them. Before a customer starts ordering, you ask him/her."

This context prompts the highly-prototypical routine *For here or to go?* where learners reported positive production gains (10.66%) and the low-prototypical one *How can I help you?*, which students used less frequently during the semester, as is made clear by

Table 5. Production of pragmatic routines

Situation		Expression		NNS T1 (N = 122)		NNS T2 (N = 122)		Production gains		NSs (N = 92)	
				(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%
1	Dinner table	P1	No thanks, I'm full	45	36.89	53	43.44	8	6.56	45	48.91
		P1.a	No, thank you	13	10.66	3	2.46	-10	-8.20	31	33.70
		P1.b	I'm stuffed	1	0.82	3	2.46	2	1.64	14	15.22
2	Introduction	P2	Nice to meet you	85	69.67	89	72.95	4	3.28	71	77.17
3	Restaurant	P3	For here or to go?	28	22.95	41	33.61	13	10.66	55	59.78
		P3.a	How can I help you?	21	17.21	8	6.56	-13	-10.66	15	16.30
4	Puddle	P4	Watch out	28	22.95	34	27.87	6	4.92	67	72.83
5	Farewell	P5	{Thanks/thank you/-} You too	75	61.48	106	86.89	31	25.41	84	91.30
6	Late	P6	Sorry I am late	58	47.54	56	45.90	-2	-1.64	73	79.35
7	Phone	P7	Hello?	65	53.28	81	66.39	16	13.11	86	93.48
8	Borrow pen	P8	{Could/Can/May} I borrow a pen?	34	27.87	37	30.33	3	2.46	68	73.91
		P8.a	Do you have (a/an extra) pen I {could/can} borrow?	7	5.74	7	5.74	0	0.00	19	20.65
9	Store	P9	No thanks, I'm just looking	33	27.05	34	27.87	1	0.82	52	56.52
		P9.a	(No, thanks) I'm just browsing	1	0.82	2	1.64	1	0.82	18	19.57
10	Decease	P10	I am sorry for your loss	14	11.48	19	15.57	5	4.10	47	51.09
		P10.a	I am (so) sorry	26	21.31	28	22.95	2	1.64	28	30.43
		P10.b	(I'm) Sorry to hear that	30	24.59	35	28.69	5	4.10	15	16.30
11	Messy house	P11	Sorry for the mess	22	18.03	28	22.95	6	4.92	66	71.74
		P11.a	Sorry my {place/house} is a mess	7	5.74	3	2.46	-4	-3.28	14	15.22
12	Piece of paper	P12	Here you go	9	7.38	16	13.11	7	5.74	64	69.57
13	Careful driving	P13	Be careful	70	57.38	70	57.38	0	0.00	75	81.52

the negative gains (-10.66%). There is only one instance of learners decreasing their use of a highly-prototypical routine: *Sorry I am late*. Decreased production of this routine may imply that students did not encounter the "Late" situation (i.e., arriving late to a meeting with a professor) frequently enough to practise it in a recurrent manner. Therefore, it seems that increases and decreases in the production of pragmatic routines may be explained by a tendency towards prototypicality. Participants decreased their use of less prototypical routines—more typical of the L2 learners' pragmalinguistic repertoire—in favour of more prototypical ones—those more commonly produced by NSs—at the end of the semester abroad.

To summarise the results related to RQ2, it seems that type of routine significantly influences gains in both recognition and production of pragmatic routines during an SA period. Greater gains in recognition of situational routines, whose meaning is strongly tied to a particular situation, were observed during the semester. Besides, participants experienced larger gains in production of highly-prototypical routines, and showed a decrease in the use of low-prototypical ones. Considering the above research findings, we might claim that the study abroad period seems to push learners to go through a process of native-like selection (Pawler and Syder 1983), which involves the ability to select and use pragmatic routines from among different "native-like formulations." In this process, the boundness to a particular situation and the prototypicality of the routine play a significant role.

5. Conclusions, Limitations and Further Research

The present study explored gains in recognition and in production of pragmatic routines in the SA context. Additionally, it examined whether proficiency and type of routine have an influence on the reported gains. Firstly, the research findings revealed that L2 learners experienced higher gains in recognition than in production of pragmatic routines following a semester abroad. Secondly, different proficiency levels did not show significant differences in pragmatic gains in the context of SA. Finally, both gains in recognition and in production were influenced by type of pragmatic routine. In particular, situation-boundness and prototypicality are features of pragmatic routines that seem to influence learning of pragmatic routines during SA programmes. Regarding recognition, greater gains were observed in the identification of situationally-bound routines—routines more tightly tied to a social context, e.g., *My bad*—than functional ones—e.g., *Would you mind…?*. With respect to production, learners decreased their use of low prototypical routines (e.g., *How can I help you?*) in favour of highly prototypical ones—e.g., *For here or to go?*. Consequently, an approach to the NS norm was observed.

This study presents, however, some limitations. In relation to the instruments administered to measure learners' recognition of pragmatic routines, a VKS was used, which asked students to self-report their familiarity with specific pragmatic routines. We acknowledge that self-report measures have the disadvantage of producing data that may not be a hundred percent valid for the establishment of generalisations as participants may not be truthful or may exaggerate their answers. However, this limitation was overcome by asking participants to provide a definition of the elicited routines, so as to ensure their comprehension. We are also aware that written DCTs do not trigger natural conversational data. Nevertheless, DCTs represent the best option to collect large amounts of data on learners' production of pragmalinguistic features, as was the case in this study. Additionally, this investigation employs a pre-test/post-test design with the aim of examining changes in knowledge of routines during one semester (four months) abroad. A delayed post-test was not administered, given that loss of participants would have been too high. In our opinion, further research is needed on the development of pragmatic routines during SA. This type of research should involve mixed-method approaches, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

Finally, among the different factors that may influence learners' gains in production and recognition of pragmatic routines during SA, we have examined type of routine and L2 proficiency. Type of routine was found to play a role in the observed pragmatic gains, while no significant effects of proficiency was found on gains in knowledge of pragmatic routines over time. Further studies are needed to examine the influence of other variables on pragmatic learning during SA experiences. Among them, the relationship between intensity of interaction and acculturation is an issue to consider. One tentative hypothesis is that, since the amount of exposure to the target language could differ according to individual learners, intensity of interaction with L2 speakers could also have an impact on the extent to which students acculturate and acquire pragmatic routines in SA settings. We also acknowledge that learners' L1s may have an impact on pragmatic learning. This issue was not the focus of the present investigation, but in further studies it would be worth exploring data on the effect of background language and nationality on learners' pragmatic changes during SA.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations and suggestions for further research, this study provides new insights on how students recognise and produce pragmatic routines during SA. The acknowledgement that L2 learners accomplish greater gains in recognition than in production of pragmatic routines during an SA period suggests that it would be beneficial if language teachers placed emphasis on pragmatic routines in instructional contexts. This would involve including pragmatics in the linguistic preparation courses that students take before participating in SA programs. Thus, pragmatic aspects, such as performance of certain pragmatic routines, the recognition and use of which students do not seem to improve during the sojourn, could be emphasised.

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