

Chapter two: Literature Review

2.1 Morphology and semantics

Chomskian linguists, also called generative grammarians, thought of syntax as an explanation to native speakers' ability to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences, regardless of the fact that the majority of them would not be able to recite syntactic or morphological rules if asked. It is therefore argued that utterances do not come out of habit but rather result from a creative combination of already known words following already known, unconscious principles¹. By the same token, generative grammarians argued that speakers of a language are able to construct and understand new words in the same way that they produce and understand new sentences, an ability that is known as lexical competence. Accordingly, word formation processes were considered analogous to sentence formation processes. That is to say, words were considered as having a syntactic structure, and therefore generative linguists applied transformation analysis to the lexis (Cressey, 1978; Lang, 1990; Moreno, 1986).

Morphology, however, is the branch of linguistics concerned with the internal structure of words. It can be subdivided into two categories depending on the type of process that a word undergoes. Derivational morphology, on the one hand, looks at additions made to a lexical root whose grammatical category changes as a result of the insertion of a derivational morpheme. On the other hand, inflectional morphology deals with the addition of morphemes that solely express tense, gender, person, and/or number, (known as inflectional morphemes) and thus might indicate a semantic change (Moreno, 1986). Morphemes, for Moreno (1986) are meaningful units or meaning carriers, while Lang (1990) considers them as grammar units that cannot be further subdivided. Aronoff (1983, as cited in Lang, 1990), in contrast, suggests that morphemes hold no constant meaning. Instead, meaning is determined by the lexical context in which the newly formed word is produced. Consequently, meaning cannot always be deduced from morphemes alone (Aronoff, 1983 as cited in Lang, 1990). Nonetheless, morphemes are

¹ As a result, came both the idea of linguistic competence and the rule-governed creativity assumption.

considered the basic unit of analysis, as they combine with one another to form words which in turn combine to form sentences (Cressey, 1978). A morpheme, however, will only be valid if it is easy for the speaker to tell its function. In addition, in word formation processes, however, the word might also be considered the unit of analysis (Moreno, 1986).

2.1.1 Word formation processes.

Word formation aims at “analyzing and understanding the processes through which the lexis is created or renewed” (Lang, 1990:3). Purists and lexicographers, however, might criticize and even condemn the creation of new terms, which they might consider irrelevant and unnecessary. Nonetheless, speakers and writers, support lexical innovation and creativity either proposed by themselves or by mass media because it allows them to be more expressive when speaking and writing. To illustrate, let us think of all the playwrights, poets, and authors that have for long coined words of their own to give way to richer linguistic devices. Consequently, the data analyzed when looking at word formation processes is obtained from dictionaries, scientific and technological texts, the mass media, modern literature, and colloquial speech (Lang, 1990).

The most common word formation processes are compounding and derivation. The former occurs when independent lexemes, also known as free morphemes, combine and give way to more complex morphological structures. Compounding can be subdivided into two types: orthographic and syntagmatic. The former occurs when free morphemes are graphically joined, e.g. *sabiondo*. The latter takes place when the components have become semantically coherent but without orthographic fusion, e.g. *patria potestad*. Derivation, on the other hand, involves the combination of words or stems of words with affixes, either prefixes, suffixes, or infixes. These latter might not be able to freely exist in the language, and therefore are called bound morphemes (Lang, 1990).

Word formation brings together pretty much all branches of linguistics: syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology. Grammar, or syntax, and semantics hold a particularly important

role as they restrict possible combinations of affixes and/or stems. An affix, for example can be monosyntactic, e.g. *-dero* ending in Spanish only attaches to verbs; or it might be polysyntactic, which rarely happens in Spanish. In this sense, according to Aronoff (1983, as cited in Lang, 1990) the input and the output of any word formation process must be able to fit major grammatical classes, i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs.

Accordingly, in Spanish there are specific rules that govern word formation processes. In fact, there are specific orders of attachment which are as follows: compounding, suffixation and infixation, prefixation, and inflection. It must be said, however, that compounding and affixation may occur at the same time or one before the other, e.g. *poder - poderoso - todopoderoso*. Furthermore, there are specific derivation and compounding rules that prevent the appearance of ill-formed words. Such rules are expressed in the formulaic sequences presented in Table 1, some of which are more widely used than others.

Table 1

Basic rules of compounding and derivation in Spanish

Compounding	Derivation
1. Compound + suffix: <i>cuentacorrentista</i>	1. Prefix + lexeme: <i>maldecir</i>
2. Prefix + compound : <i>supervinicultor</i>	2. Lexeme + suffix: <i>golpismo</i>
3. Prefix + compound + suffix : <i>archivanaglorioso</i>	3. Prefix + lexeme + suffix : <i>transnochador</i>
4. Compound + suffix: <i>cuentacorrentista</i>	4. Lexeme + infix + suffix: <i>humareda</i>

Post-generative theorists consider that lexical morphology is a component of grammar. In this sense, morphemes are surface forms under which there is a syntactic structure. Post-generative theorists also hold the idea of lexical competence and creativity. Despite of creativity, however, there are certain morphemic properties which determine the meaning and the form of

new words, be it derivatives or compounds. Such properties are: 1) the etymological nature of the base, 2) the base's conjugational category, 3) whether it is an animate or inanimate item, 4) abstraction and materialization in suffixation, 5) transitivity and inchoativity of the bases and their derivatives, and 6) the range of semantic labeling of both constituents.

Nonetheless, there are other word formation processes that may involve non-morphemic procedures like the ones described in Table 1. These processes are 1) acronym, which refer to the use of the initial letters or syllables of a company or an institution's name to create new words, e.g. ONU; 2) clipping, which involves the elision of final or initial symbols, e.g. colegio becomes cole; 3) blending, which happens when separate words are put together regardless of their morphemic structure, e.g. Maribel; and 4) borrowing, which occurs when a foreign term is adapted to the language. Each procedure takes place in a distinct and particular register and context. Modern Spanish, and especially Mexican Spanish, for example, is characterized by an exponential use of borrowed words or affixes such as *hyper*, *tele*, *moto*, among others. Clipping is also very common among young speakers (Lang, 1990).

2.2 Pragmatics

Language is the main tool with which human beings have been able to construct *meaning*, which is rarely stable during social interaction as it depends entirely on speaker²s' intentions, which in turn depend on the general context of the interaction (Verschueren, 1999). It can be therefore concluded that language is used to generate meaning that can be context³-dependent or context-independent. Pragmatics, like discourse analysis⁴, focuses on the former type of meaning, while semantics investigates the latter (Paltridge, 2006; Verschueren, 1999).

² Speaker is defined by Johnstone (2002) as the person who uses language in written, spoken, or gestural ways.

³ Context is defined by Huang (2007) as "any relevant features of the [...] setting or environment in which [language is used]" (p.13).

⁴ As mentioned by Johnstone (2002), discourse analysis is useful to pragmatics since it offers way of describing language, and therefore understanding speakers' linguistic choices to perform actions, as well as addressees' interpretations.

Two schools of thought have contributed to the field of pragmatics since the 1950s: the Anglo-American and the European Continental (Huang, 2007). The former is also known as the component view because it suggests that pragmatics should be considered a primary element of a theory of language (Huang, 2007). In other words, the Anglo-American school acknowledges pragmatics as being at the same level as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. However, pragmatics focuses purely on the study of the meaning that results or that depends on the use given to language itself. For the latter school of thought, pragmatics is a theory of linguistic communication that sees language as a dynamic process with a meaningful functioning. In other words, all linguistic resources, namely phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax serve speakers' intentions to influence others through verbal messages (Huang, 2007; Verschueren, 1999). In this context, pragmatics analyzes discourse, understood as "actual instances of communication in the medium of language" (Johnstone, 2002:2), by looking at linguistic form, structure, and function, as does discourse analysis (Johnstone, 2002).

Pragmatics, therefore, is a modern area in linguistics that was systematized in 1983 with the publication of Levinson's textbook *Pragmatics* (Huang, 2007). It is said however, that Charles Morris is the father of the field. In his definition, Morris differentiates pragmatics from syntax and semantics. The former studies the relationship between signs and their utterers and interpreters, while syntax analyzes the relation of signs to other signs, and semantics examines the relations of signs to the objects they refer to (Verschueren, 1999). The main topics of inquiry that pragmatics focuses on are implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis (Huang, 2007). Thus, pragmatics offers a new perspective as it examines, describes, and attempts to understand linguistic phenomena, especially *meaning*, in relation to the social, situational, textual, and background knowledge contexts in which a person speaks or writes (Huang, 2007; Paltridge, 2006; and Verschueren, 1999). Hence, pragmatics is especially interested in the relationship that exists between a linguistic form and the communicative function it serves, basically, "what people mean by what they say" (Paltridge, 2006:3). That is, the meaning a

linguistic expression generates considering the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena that intervene in the functioning of signs (Huang, 2007; Verschueren, 1999).

To further illustrate, Verschueren (1999) defines pragmatics as “a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior” (p.7). Thus, pragmatics considers that language is a form of action that takes place in a real-world context. In order to visualize how verbal messages influence behavior, it is necessary to differentiate the meaning “embedded” in the linguistic form from the intended meaning (Verschueren, 1999), as well as to comprehend the relationship between what is said and what is understood (Paltridge, 2006). Both are undoubtedly affected and influenced by the situational context, which includes the physical, the social, the linguistic, and the psychological contexts of any interaction (Huang, 2007; Paltridge, 2006). In turn, these are crucial factors that influence meaning production and interpretation. Specifically, the linguistic context refers to surrounding utterances, namely what has already been said and what remains to be said in consequence. Therefore, meaning is generated by both the speaker and the listener depending on the situational context, which includes the physical, the social, and the psychological contexts. Respectively, the physical context refers to the spatio-temporal location of an utterance and what language users know about it; the social and the psychological contexts, also known as general knowledge context (Huang, 2007) or sociocultural context (Bravo, 2003, as cited in Bernal, 2008), include what language users know about each other, about the world in general, and about what is expected and assumed in a particular communicative situation depending on the discourse community⁵ (Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002; Paltridge, 2006).

⁵ Johnstone (2002) defines discourse community as “A group a people who regularly talk to one another [in a particular way, i.e. discursive practices] about a particular topic in a particular situation”. According to Paltridge (2006) members of a discourse community share an activity and ways of communicating with each other. By the same token, Paltridge (2006) and Mills (2002) mention that members of a community of practice share particular ways of interacting with each other and of expressing their group identity. Due to the similarity that exists between the characteristics of both terms, it was decided to use them interchangeably, as both of them characterize the groups that were looked at in the present study.

In this context, the use of language is all about making linguistic choices, mainly because users of a language are constantly negotiating their relationships during an interaction (Johnstone, 2002; Verschueren, 1999). Utterers make production choices, whereas addressees make interpretation choices either consciously or purposefully, or the opposite, based on three major notions: variability, negotiability, and adaptability. The former refers to all the possible linguistic and paralinguistic choices available for the speaker. Once the pertinent choices have been made, others are created or canceled. Negotiability suggests that choices are guided by principles and strategies that participants deem necessary throughout the interaction. In this sense, whatever is said can be interpreted in more than one way. Finally, according to the latter notion (adaptability), principles and strategies change in order to satisfy communicative needs, in other words, linguistic choices should be relevant to the context including the physical setting, the social relationship between the participants, and participants' mutual knowledge. Furthermore, people also make specific linguistic choices as they are aware of the role they play in the interaction (Johnstone, 2002), in addition to culture, social class, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, age, profession, gender, among others, which in turn lead to issues of power and solidarity (Verschueren, 1999:55-92).

2.2.1 Power and solidarity issues. Considering that speakers belong to more than one social group, hierarchies and discursive practices are common ground in every interaction for various reasons: 1) to signal "the rules of the game", i.e. how are participants expected to behave; 2) to highlight the relevance that the group at hand has for the individuals involved; and 3) to show group membership and solidarity between group members. Power and solidarity, therefore, are to be found simultaneously in every interaction (Tannen, 1994). The former refers to asymmetric relationships, it therefore implies distance, and it generally comes with social status. Power is not, however, dominance, it is rather a person's ability to make things happen, including the skill of controlling someone else's behavior (Holmes, 1995; Johnstone, 2002; Tannen, 1994). This brings us back again to the influence that language has on people's

behavior, and how people use language to influence others. In addition, it gives way to the polysemy and ambiguity of linguistic strategies (Tannen, 1994). In this respect, and as will be also seen in the following section, a given linguistic strategy can have different meanings, purposes and interpretations depending on the context, i.e. the participants and their conversational styles (Tannen, 1994).

2.2.2 Speech acts. It is said that one can perform acts through the use of linguistic forms in the same way that we perform physical actions (Grundy, 2008; Johnstone, 2002; Paltridge, 2006; Nagane, 2012). In this sense, people draw on their knowledge about language itself, about the use of language, and about the world in general to do something (Johnstone, 2002) or to make things happen (Nagane, 2012). This brings forth Austin's speech act theory (Austin, 1975), which is an issue analyzed by pragmatics, and which looks at language as a form of action and states that language is always used under the tenets of social institutions and conventions (Austin, 1975; Grundy, 2008; Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002; Paltridge, 2006; Verschueren, 1999). In his theory, Austin (1975) suggested three facets of a speech act: the locutionary, which basically refers to the actual production of an utterance⁶; the illocutionary, which is the utterer's intention behind a locutionary act; and the perlocutionary, which is the consequence or by-product of speaking, namely, the effect that the expression has on the addressee (Austin, 1975; Grundy, 2008; Huang, 2007; Paltridge, 2006; Verschueren, 1999; Nagane, 2012). In this respect, any given utterance can have both a literal and an illocutionary meaning, which goes beyond the former (Austin, 1975; Paltridge, 2006).

Some examples of illocutionary acts are promising, congratulating, joking, apologizing, and insulting, which is one of the main points of interest in this paper and which will be developed further in the following sections of this chapter. These and other speech acts can be carried out by the same linguistic expression. In other words, the same locutionary act can have

⁶ According to Huang (2007), an utterance "is the use of a particular piece of language: a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a group of sentences, in a given context. An utterance is different from a sentence in that the latter is a sequence of words put together following a given set of linguistic rules. Therefore, an utterance is a sentence used in context.

different illocutionary forces (Huang, 2007). When swearing, for example, the speaker might be pretending insult or to show solidarity or distance (Coates, 1997; Martínez Lara, 2006; Stapleton, 2003). The reaction of the addressee, however, is not in the hands of the speaker, as there are no specific perlocutionary acts linked to particular locutionary acts (Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002). In this context, when a swear word is uttered, the speaker is fully conscious of the intention s/he is aiming at; the addressee, however, might feel offended or flattered depending on the context in which they are. There are, however, settings where people are expected to use and interpret language in already established ways (Johnstone, 2002). In other words, people know how to interpret something based on the situation they are in (Paltridge, 2006); this is called preference organization by Verschueren (1999).

Given this constraint, according to speech act theory, for a speech act to be effective, a number of conditions, known as felicity conditions, must be met. Particularly, the person carrying out a speech act must have an intention in mind, yet s/he must be recognized by the discourse community as having the authority to perform it at the right time and place (Austin, 1975; Huang, 2007; Grundy, 2008; Johnstone, 2002; Paltridge, 2006). To illustrate, an uncle of mine teaches undergraduate courses at the *Instituto Tecnológico de Durango*. When I was describing my thesis work to him, he mentioned that he has noticed that the vocative “*güey*” has become very popular among his students. This drove him to call one of them *güey* by saying “Hey *güey*, come here!” My uncle mentioned that the student was utterly surprised and showed signs of having been offended. He asked my uncle his reason for having called him *güey*, to which my uncle answered humorously “I thought that was your name, since everyone calls you that”. The student made reference to the first of the felicity conditions by saying “Only my friends can call me that, please do not call me *güey* again”. In this context, my uncle, although he was the teacher

and therefore the authority in the classroom, he was not recognized by the student community as being able to use the term *güey* when talking to them⁷.

Further into the topic, according to Searle (1969; and as cited in Nagane, 2012), speech acts are the basic unit to express meaning. In this respect, a speech can be a single word or an entire phrase, but they are always uttered for a reason. Hence, in order to understand language, one must get a grasp of an utterer's intention because this latter determines meaning. However, the way in which meaning is expressed brings forth one out of five categories of speech acts proposed by Searle: assertive, commissive, expressive, directive, and declarative (Searle, 1969; Nagane, 2012). The former is characterized mainly by declarative constructions, although interrogative and imperative are also found. Some examples of assertive speech acts are criticizing, concluding, denying, and disagreeing, all which share the fact that the utterer holds that what s/he says is true. With commissive speech acts, the speaker compromises his or herself to do something. Thus, promising and threatening are commissive speech acts. On the other hand, expressive speech acts occur when a speaker verbalizes the attitudes that s/he holds towards something or someone. Congratulating, apologizing, and insulting are some examples of this type of speech act. Directives, i.e. requests and orders, are used by speakers to communicate what they expect or want from their addressee. Finally, declarative speech acts can only be uttered by a speaker who has been granted the appropriate authority to change the world (Nagane, 2012).

Thus, in addition to felicity conditions, Grice's co-operative principle (1975), which is part of his theory of conversational implicature (Huang, 2007; Grundy, 2008; Verschueren, 1999), must also be observed by speakers when attempting to make a speech act work. The co-operative principle states that speakers are aware of their role during the interaction so that communicative needs are fully met. Accordingly, during communication, participants assume

⁷ There is no transcription for this particular encounter between the author and her relative, as it was merely an informal family meeting where no such interaction was intended to happen, but since it did the author deemed it appropriate evidence for the topic at hand.

that whoever is speaking has a reason for doing so and is saying exactly what needs to be said at the appropriate point during the interaction. These assumptions are related to Grice's maxims (1975) of quality, quantity, relation, and manner (Paltridge, 2006). The maxim of quantity states that speakers should not offer more information than is required, such information should be truthful and easy to corroborate, so stated by the maxim of quality. The third maxim states that the information should be relevant to the participants and should relate to the topic at hand. Finally, the maxim of manner indicates that speakers should avoid ambiguity and should therefore be as clear and brief as possible (Huang, 2007; Paltridge, 2006; Verschueren, 1999). More often than not however, felicity conditions and Grice's maxims are flouted during conversation for specific purposes, namely irony, politeness and humor strategies (Grundy, 2008; Johnstone, 2002; Paltridge, 2006; Verschueren, 1999).

2.2.3 Politeness, impoliteness, and antipoliteness are essential to face, identity, and relation negotiation in any given interaction. Although they are universal phenomena, the strategies and speech acts employed vary from culture to culture and even within cultures, i.e. subcultures like gender (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007). Each will be further described in the following sections.

2.2.3.1 Politeness. Politeness has to do with the notion of adaptability previously mentioned in that it refers to speakers' linguistic and non-linguistic choices to acknowledge, respect, and express concern for their interlocutors' feelings (Grundy, 2008; Holmes, 1995; Johnstone, 2002; Verschueren, 1999). Mills (2002) defines politeness as "[...] a set of strategies or verbal habits ... [that have become] a socially constructed norm within particular communities of practice" (p.77). This could be related to what Bernal (2008) calls codified politeness, i.e. certain linguistic forms are used for particular speech acts, for example, the word *please*. It must be said, however, that although politeness is generally characterized by formal and distancing behavior that avoids imposing or intruding (Holmes 1995), it is not encapsulated within linguistic

forms or behaviors (Mills, 2002). In addition, the addressee is the one who will determine if a given speech act was polite or not, depending on its adherence to the conventions agreed upon by the members of a community of practice or even of society as a whole in respect to the current context of interaction (Mills, 2002). Furthermore, as Grundy (2008) and Holmes (1995) mention, politeness is culturally defined, and therefore what a speaker of language considers polite might be terribly tedious and unnecessary for the speaker of another language. Accordingly, in the example previously provided about the interaction between an uncle of mine and his student, my uncle was considered impolite when he addressed his student with the vocative *güey*, because he was flouting the social conventions that govern a teacher-student relationship.

Lakoff (as cited in Johnstone, 2002 and in Paltridge, 2006) proposed the social-norm model, by stating that there are three rules of politeness that tell speakers how to behave with one another so that the communicative process remains harmonious (Martínez-Lara, 2009). Such rules are: 1) *formality or distance*, i.e. avoid being overbearing; 2) *hesitancy or deference*, i.e. give the addressee the opportunity of choosing whether or not to answer and how to do so; and 3) *equality or camaraderie*, i.e. behave as being at the same level as the addressee. There are however, other three models of politeness: the conversational maxim model, the conversational contract model, and the face-saving model, this latter being the most accepted one so far (Huang, 2007).

Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Bernal, 2008, Huang, 2007, Johnstone, 2002, Mills, 2002, and Martínez-Lara, 2009) created the face-saving model, which focuses on production, i.e. how the speaker's linguistic and non-linguistic choices reflect his/her intentions to protect or threaten the addressee's face-wants, namely how the latter wishes to be seen by others (Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007; Mills, 2002). In this model it is assumed that all members of a society have a positive and a negative. The former refers to a person's desire to be appreciated and approved of, whereas the latter is a person's need of freedom from imposition.

In line with Searle (1969; and as cited in Nagane, 2012), Gil (2012) indicates that the speaker's meaning is encapsulated in an utterance and it is comprehended by means of evidence provided by both the utterance and the context in which it appears. Therefore, face is a universal notion that is never individual or static (Goffman, 1967 as cited in Bernal, 2008) as it is constructed based on who we are and who we are interacting with [transportable identity], depending on the communicative situation [situational identity], and it changes throughout an interaction [discourse identity]. Face, therefore, is the public self-image that both the hearer and the speaker seek to maintain during the interaction. However, it can be lost, challenged, gained, or maintained (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Martínez-Lara, 2009; Mills, 2002).

In order to guarantee that people feel relaxed and comfortable, almost all religions and faiths around the globe encourage their believers to show respect for others' reputation or face (Nodoushan, 2012). Face can be defined as a person's public self-image, and it includes the emotional and social perceptions of the self that are expected to be recognized and respected by others (Nodoushan, 2012). In this context, under Brown and Levinson's model, politeness is all about showing concern for a person's positive or negative face, and making linguistic choices accordingly (Huang, 2007; Holmes, 1995; Mills, 2002; Paltridge, 2006). The face that will be preserved during interaction, and the strategies chosen to do so, will depend on the social distance between the interactants, the power relationship between them, other audience members, the topic at hand, the setting, and the medium, i.e. spoken or written (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007). When a person's face is saved or threatened, then the utterance or action is considered polite or impolite respectively (Bernal, 2008). Generally and ideally however, participants seek to protect both their face and that of their interlocutor during a given interaction (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007).

Speakers need to take into account their addressee's as well as their own negative and the positive faces. If an individual does not wish to be imposed on and therefore s/he defends his or her autonomy and freedom of action, s/he is showing a negative face (Bernal, 2008;

Grundy, 2008; Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002; Martínez-Lara, 2009; Paltridge, 2006; Mills, 2002; Verschueren, 1999), also called autonomous face by Bravo (2004, as cited in Bernal 2008). The linguistic strategies that highlight deference and distance, like indirectness, hedges, and apologies are used to save interactants' negative face, or to show negative politeness (Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002); whereas advices, orders, suggestions, requests, and insults are speech acts that threaten it (Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002).

On the contrary, when an individual wishes to be approved of, looks for acceptance, desires to be liked and admired, and shows a need for involvement, in other words, seeks for group membership, s/he is showing a positive face (Bernal, 2008; Grundy, 2008; Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007; Johnstone, 2002; Martínez-Lara, 2009; Paltridge, 2006; Mills, 2002; Verschueren, 1999), also known as affiliative face (Bravo, 2004 as cited in Bernal, 2008). Expressions of disapproval, criticism, accusations, and insults threaten a person's positive face, whereas those speech strategies that show solidarity and equality preserve it or show positive politeness (Holmes, 1995; Huang, 2007). Linguistic strategies and speech acts that compromise a person's positive or negative face are called face threatening acts. They can be performed on record, that is to say, directly, or off record, meaning indirectly. The first type, on record, can be performed baldly, in other words, without redress, or with positive or negative redress (Huang, 2007; Verschueren, 1999).

Nodoushan (2012) and Gil (2012) sustain that *all* speech acts are intrinsically face-threatening, because the mere act of uttering something already puts the addressee's face at stake due to the fact that s/he *has to* listen or pay attention to the utterer, in turn, this threatens the utterer's face because whatever s/he has said is subject to valuation on the part of the addressee. Thus, every utterance is a speech act that affects both the utterer's and the addressee's face. Threats, however, can be minimized with redressive action, i.e. the utterer might be polite either consciously or unconsciously. Nonetheless, in the end it is the addressee who determines how threatening or invading a speech act was. In this sense, Gil (2012)

proposes a distinction between non-impolite or face-threatening (FTA) speech acts, and rude or face-invading speech acts (FIA). The former may or may not include at least one politeness strategy, while the latter are triggered by the utterer's intention to overtly and directly damage or invade the addressee's face, which in this case will undoubtedly result seriously damaged.

According to Gil (2012) the categories of speech acts proposed by Searle (1969; and as cited in Nagane, 2012), are face-threatening acts. The reason, is that assertive acts, for instance, threaten the utterer's negative face because s/he has to be consequent with what s/he says, i.e. s/he is imposed with an obligation, while the addressee's negative face is also threatened because s/he has to be attentive to the subject that the utterer imposed on him or her. Further, directive speech acts are face-threatening speech acts because, on the one hand, the utterer admits that s/he needs something from the addressee (threat to utterer's positive face), and on the other hand, the addressee's face is threatened because s/he is imposed to do something. Commissive acts threaten the utterer's negative face because s/he becomes obliged to do something for the addressee. This implies that the addressee holds specific wishes or preferences, which is a threat to his or her positive face. Finally, with expressive speech acts the utterer threatens his or her positive face because s/he openly declares his or her emotions or feelings, which can be evaluated by the addressee. However, according to Gil (2012), in this case, when the utterer openly declares his psychological attitude towards something or someone, s/he is imposing such attitude or valuation on the addressee, whose negative face is consequently threatened. It must be mentioned that the latter was but a general description of face-threatening acts as proposed by Gil (2012) was provided, yet it can be fully appreciated in table 2, which was adapted from Gil's paper.

Table 2

Facethreat according to Searle's (1969) categories of speech acts

Category of speech act	Type of threat			
	Utterer's face		Addressee's face	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Assertive	U's commitment to the truth of a proposition is exposed to A's valuation.	U imposes himself an obligation: U has to be consequent with his/her own words.	U has chosen a subject and has presented it in some particular way. Subject and mood may not be valuable to A.	U imposes A a subject.
Directive	U admits that s/he wants, prefers or even needs A to do something.	U imposes himself an obligation: U has to be consequent with his or her own words, i.e. with his want, preference, or need.	U makes an assumption about A's capacities or social condition.	U imposes A to do something.
Commissive	U admits that s/he wants to do something in order to benefit A. U makes manifest an assumption about his or her capacities and social position.	U imposes himself to do something in the benefit of A.	U makes manifest an assumption about A's wishes or preferences. For example, s/he believes that A wants U to accomplish the promise.	U promises himself a future action that will affect A.
Expressive	U's feelings or	A imposes him	U makes an	U imposes A

	emotions are exposed to A' valuation.	or herself an obligation; U will have to be consequent with the feelings or emotion s/he expressed.	assumption about A's wants, preferences, and needs.	his/her own valuation; i.e. A is expected to be thankful or charitable with U.
Declarative	U, an authorized individual, exposes something that must be institutionally legitimate.	U imposes himself to give support to the new state of affairs that was generated, at least in part, by the declaration.	Involving conditions and rules, it is a strong assumption about U's possibilities and social position.	A is part of the institutional framework where the declaration is performed, and s/he must accept it.

Note: Gil (2012) uses the terms speaker and hearer, nonetheless, since this paper focuses on written material, such terms are substituted with the terms utterer (U) and addressee (A) but the rest remains true to the original. Thus, this table was adapted from Gil, J. (2012). Face-Threatening Speech Acts and Face-Involving Speech Acts: An Interpretation of Politeness Phenomena. *International Journal Of Linguistics (IJL)*,4(2), 400-411. doi:10.5296/ijl.v4i2.1858

In regards to face-invading speech acts (FIA), Gil (2012) mentions that although the addressee's face is the one that may result more severely damaged, the utterer's positive and negative faces are also invaded. On the one hand, when saying something rude, i.e. "You're such an idiot", the utterer becomes exposed for openly declaring his or her negative valuation of the addressee, i.e. idiot. Since this not positively seen by the majority, the utterer's positive face is invaded. Further, the utterer's negative face is invaded because s/he is obliged to be consequent with his or her disapproval of the addressee. On the other hand, the addressee's positive and negative faces are invaded because the utterer explicitly declares or expresses his

or her disapproval of the addressee or something that belongs to him or her. Such a valuation is imposed on the addressee and it is something that s/he will not like or will not agree with.

In line with Gil's (2012) proposition, Nodoushan (2012) mentions that assertive, expressive, and commissive speech acts are considered negative FTAs because when carrying them out the utterer compromises the addressee's freedom. Yet, at the same time, when expressing thanks for example, the utterer's freedom is also compromised. Further, expressive speech acts can also be positive FTAs, especially when they involve insults and accusations, because they imply disapproval. However, when the utterer recognizes s/he is wrong, i.e. apologizing, his or her positive face is threatened. Nodoushan (2012) further mentions that a face-threatening act can also be a face-attacking act (FAA), although the opposite is not possible. The reason is that all speech acts are implicitly threatening, however it is the utterer or agent who intentionally wishes to attack. In other words, there's a motive behind any FAA, which implies that the attack starts even before the speech act is performed, i.e. it purposefully starts in the utterer's mind. By way of contrast, FTAs are rather a speech act's by-product.

Although FAAs may start in the utterer's mind, they might never see the light of day mainly due to contextual reasons, e.g. distance between utterer and addressee. Thus, face-attacking acts depend on the utterer's intention and motivation, which can be malignant or benign. Slandering and insulting, for instance, result from the former type of motivation because they are intended at "destroying" the other. Nonetheless, the addressee will always be the one to determine whether a face-threatening or a face-attacking act has been performed (Nodoushan, 2012).

2.2.3.2 Impoliteness and antipoliteness. In the same way that politeness is not embedded in specific linguistic forms, impoliteness is not an intrinsic characteristic of lexical expressions (Culpeper, 2005 as cited in Bernal, 2008), rather, according to Terkourafi (2008 as cited in Nodoushan, 2012), impoliteness occurs when the utterer's linguistic choices go against the addressee's expectations in relation to the context. Therefore, as always, the context needs

to be taken into account and participants of an interaction need to have shared knowledge in order to determine how polite or impolite an action was (Bernal, 2008; Holmes, 1995), especially because every society has developed and established a set of values that determine what is considered (in)appropriate, which Nodoushan (2012) calls collective pragmatic competence (CPC).

Impoliteness, therefore, is understood as a communicative action whose objective is to damage the other person's face (Bernal, 2008), therefore it usually leads to the breakdown of a conversation (Mills, 2002). Impoliteness is constructed in interaction in a number of ways: when there is an explicit intention on the speaker's part to damage his/her interlocutor, s/he is doing bald on-record impoliteness; positive impoliteness and negative impoliteness damage the addressee's respective face-wants; off-record impoliteness consists of the use of indirect forms to show offensiveness, e.g. sarcasm (Culpeper, 2005, as cited in Bernal, 2008). Accordingly, impoliteness also results from the linguistic and non-linguistic choices that a speaker does and how the addressee interprets them.

Although little attention has been paid to impoliteness strategies (Culpeper, 2005, as cited in Bernal, 2008), two types can be identified: authentic and unauthentic, which occur depending on the degree of cooperativeness between participants. Accordingly, authentic or genuine impoliteness –also known as communicative rudeness or on-record impoliteness-- (Culpeper, 2005 and Kienpointer, 1997 as cited in Bernal, 2008) is characterized by verbal or physical aggressions consciously done, and which therefore have a negative interpersonal effect as there is conscious verbal or physical aggression intended to damage. This type of impoliteness is more frequent in intimate relationships where there are no explicit social sanctions or restrictions.

Unauthentic impoliteness, on the other hand, is used to neutralize authentic impoliteness, to show affiliation, and to strengthen trust (Bernal; 2008). Ritual insults are an example of this type of impoliteness. In this case, insults are not used to offend, but rather to signal in-group

solidarity and to create a friendly and relaxed environment (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Bernal, 2008). In this sense, insults can be a form of antipolite acts, which threaten a person's face, but they are not intended to offend. Speakers who use them hold a friendly relationship with the addressee(s). They are mainly, yet not exclusively, present in male juvenile language. Therefore, antipolite acts are a type of conversational strategy that results from the flouting of interactional conventions to construct identity and to show closeness, affiliation, and camaraderie (Bernal, 2008; Martínez-Lara, 2009).

2.2.3.2.1 *Bad language: its components and functions.* In every society and in every community of practice there are individual behaviors that are unwanted, avoided, and sometimes sanctioned because they may jeopardize someone's face, including our own. The use that we give to language is no exception, and it has been judged ever since the time of the Greek philosophers, and continues to be constantly judged and censored because it is said that a word's antecedent may contaminate it (Allan and Burrige, 2006). Accordingly, for some groups the use of linguistic forms found mainly in colloquial styles, namely slang and dirty words, swearing, and cursing, is unwanted, and they are examples of tabooed language.

Taboo behavior brings forth issues of politeness and impoliteness because participants of an interaction generally seek to save their own and their addressee's face. In such case, when a tabooed expression is to be avoided to prevent face loss, speakers make use of orthophemisms and euphemisms, the former being more polite and formal than the latter. In this sense, society itself provides alternative terms that substitute taboo terms. In English for example, it is more acceptable to publicly say "shoot" instead of "shit", which is a euphemism in an informal arena. However, if either *shit* or *shoot* were used in a medical meeting where the medical term is preferred, they would be considered impolite as they are not technical terms. Consequently, euphemisms and orthophemisms are directly related to politeness strategies, while dysphemisms are more related to impoliteness strategies. Dysphemisms are defined by Allan and Burrige (2006) as: "[words or phrases] with connotations that are offensive about the

denotatum and/or people addressed or overhearing the utterance” (p.31). Accordingly, dysphemistic language, also referred to as strong language, is used to express fear, frustration, distaste, hatred, and disapproval, also to humiliate or degrade. Cursing and name-calling, as well as other linguistic expressions used to insult or wound, in other words, to show authentic impoliteness, are dysphemistic expressions.

2.2.3.2.2 *Swearing, cursing, and dirty words.* In languages as distant as Japanese and Danish, there are taboo words considered dirty because they refer to bodily effluvia, sex organs and sex itself, and diseases or death (Spinney, 2007). These words are thought of as dirty because in the same way that dirt and diseases contaminate people, those who use dirty words also pollute the environment and other people (Allan and Burrige, 2006). Therefore, dirty words are ritually prohibited in almost all societies, even though they refer to natural human activities (Spinney, 2007). Euphemistic, orthophemistic, and other polite terms are used instead of dirty and other taboo words so that our and others’ face is protected. It must be said, however, that what is considered taboo varies according to the circumstances, the participants, and time and place (Allan and Burrige, 2006:1-28).

Cursing and swearing are defined as the use of taboo, vulgar, offensive, profane, scatological, or obscene language, e.g. dirty words and other dysphemistic terms. Since such a use may derive from anger or frustration, children learn that cursing is a way to cope with stressful situations and it has been noticed that they begin to curse as soon as they are exposed to the use of actual cursing and swearing (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Jay et al., 2006). However, when cursing is paired with punishment, children give swear words a long-lasting emotional meaning and they also learn that cursing may upset others (Jay et al., 2006). In this sense, since taboo words are charged with emotional meaning, they are more likely to be condemned, and yet, they are more popular especially to alleviate strong emotions, to strengthen an argument, as a stylistic device, solely to insult the interlocutor (Raisin and van der Heijden, 2005) or to show solidarity (Allan and Burrige, 2006; Bernal, 2008; Martínez-Lara, 2009).

2.2.3.2.3 *Insults and swearing.* Since swearing includes the use of offensive language, insults are a form of it. Insulting is therefore an intrinsically dysphemistic and tabooed speech act as it involves using words or actions to offend, wound, provoke, denigrate, or reject someone (Allan and Burrige, 2006). Consequently, insults are a face threatening speech act that reflect the attitudes, beliefs, and qualities that are appreciated and rejected in a given society. Accordingly, when analyzing insults, one gets an insight to a culture's social values and expectations from an individual.

Considering that insults are a face threatening act, they are generally avoided. However, it has been noticed that young people, including both men and women, use insults widely and freely when interacting in an attempt at being accepted and appreciated by others, in other words, to show solidarity and familiarity rather than to offend (Martínez Lara, 2006). This phenomenon is known as ritual insult (Allan and Burrige, 2006). In this case, politeness is an option rather than a rule. However, little research has been done on insults in Spanish speaking countries (Martínez Lara, 2006). Further, since young people are considered a powerless group in society and whose language is believed to disappear rapidly, even less research has been carried out on the insults used by the youth.

As a distinctive feature of juvenile language, insults are probably a sign of disagreement with social rules imposed by dominant groups. Therefore, they are widely used to emphasize, alert, call someone's attention, and to show solidarity and closeness, which is a form of positive politeness. In this sense, politeness is the set of rules that prevent aggressiveness, and therefore keep social order. Insulting would generally be considered a form of authentic impoliteness. However, when insults threaten a person's identity but do not offend, they are considered antipoliteness acts. These are present in juvenile language, mainly in groups of men, where there is a friendly relationship between the speakers. Accordingly, in this case, the use of insults is a conversational strategy to show affiliation and closeness, and therefore an example of unauthentic impoliteness (Bernal, 2008).

The degree of offensiveness of an utterance, however, is only determined by the hearer, whose perception and interpretation are influenced by the sociocultural context (Bravo, 2003, as cited in Bernal, 2008), which refers to the knowledge a person has about the way interpersonal interactions and relations should take place. Such knowledge creates expectations and helps interlocutors determine if a given behavior is polite or impolite depending on the context, which is defined by what the participants are doing during the interaction. Accordingly, speakers should know the rules that govern each situation (sociocultural knowledge) so that a given expression or utterance can be identified as polite or impolite (Bernal, 2008). In this respect, del R o (2001) mentions that the way in which words are traditionally used is what makes people relate them to evilness or politeness. *Chingada*, for instance, is said to derive from the *n huatl* form *xinachtli*, which means vegetable seed, but today in most of Latin America it is associated with alcohol or drinking, while only in Mexico *chingada* can be used as either an insult or a form of appraisal depending on the context (del R o, 2001).

2.3 Political discourse

Chilton and Sch ffner (1997) mention that “politics cannot be conducted without language” (p.206). Accordingly, political discourse analysis (PDA) aims at relating linguistic behavior to political behavior, which includes all actions that involve power or resistance. In this sense, it is inferred that in political discourse, as in any type of discourse, the meaning enclosed in wordings and phrasings is consistent with a person’s or a group’s political background knowledge and values. Therefore, PDA attempts at investigating the political functioning of pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic choices in relation to four types and/or levels of discourse organization, rather called strategic functions. These latter are: coercion; resistance, opposition, and protest; dissimulation; and legitimization and delegitimization. Each strategic function is characterized by specific speech acts (Chilton and Sch ffner, 1997). For the purposes of this study, we will only focus on the speech acts that have to do with resistance, opposition, and protest (petitions,

appeals, and chants for example), and with delegitimization⁸ (blaming, accusing, and insulting to mention a few).

There are three approaches to political discourse analysis: the French, the German, and the Anglophone. The first school (French) has two main methodological tendencies. For the purposes of this paper, it is only relevant to mention political lexicometry, which aims at determining how chronologic shifts in political ideologies are reflected in computer-generated lexical statistics. The German school has shifted from word-centered to text-centered analysis. Notwithstanding, motivated by the strength of fascism in the 1940s, this school has focused on the ways in which certain words are used to achieve specific political aims, or how they have been linked to a political party. Finally, in contrast, the Anglophone approach has focused mainly on pragmatics by means of two methodological tendencies. On the one hand is the transformational-generative model, which is used to describe how “certain syntactic forms have politically pragmatic implications” (p.211). On the other hand is the functional model which makes a connection between the linguistic form and social and political activity (Chilton and Schäffner, 1997).

Due to the massive expansion of print and electronic media means, there is now “apparently” more access to information of all kinds. This calls for a better interpretation and critique of all texts, especially those that are political in nature (Chilton and Schäffner, 1997). It is sustained that most politicians and political institutions use language in persuasive and manipulative ways that are not very plausible to the general public (Chilton and Schäffner, 1997). Accordingly, political propaganda works as commercial advertising does: both are used to persuade users (or voters in this case) to economically or politically behave in a certain way (Luna, 2011). In the late 70s, political parties in Mexico were allowed access to the media to promote their proposals and political campaigns (Paoli, 2011). Since then, the messages

⁸ Chilton and Schäffner (1997) mention that legitimization is the strategic function used to establish an institution's or a person's right to be obeyed, whereas delegitimization is used to negatively present a political actor.

transmitted have never encouraged public debate or political culture⁹ (Luna, 2011; Orozco, 2011), instead, they are used to discredit and insult adversaries (Orozco, 2011). To make matters worse, they do not even use political language, but rather commercial language. The former differs from the latter in that it encourages analysis and reflection by providing relevant factual data, and therefore attempts at educating and orienting rather than only persuading (Luna, 2011).

The newer Mexican propaganda model, which was introduced with the 2007 constitutional amendment, emulates commercial advertising. This has led to voters' inhibition and no electoral participation mainly because the bombardment of spots¹⁰ transmitted on television has deprived them from the access to relevant political information which could help them to cast more conscious votes. In this sense, Rohini (2007 as cited in Luna, 2011) highlights that misinformed societies will undoubtedly elect corrupted politicians.

2.3.1 Mexican politics: an overview. In Mexico, elections have been going on since 1920 (Navarrete, 2011). Since then, however, and until the year 1994, the political regime existing in the country was an authoritarian presidential model. The president, in this case, held all the power and among his duties he basically had to assure that his party (the PRI, see section 2.3.1.1.1.1) would remain in power. In order to guaranty the political monopoly of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, the president could manipulate the electoral processes and arbitrarily choose his successor, i.e. *dedazo*. The ruling classes argued that their political monopoly was but a mere instrument to achieve modernization (Delgado, 2003).

The Mexican electoral process, therefore, has always been full of irregularities (Ackerman, 2011) as it was designed to work in a centralized, old fashioned way that ignores pluralism (Rodríguez Manzanares, 1994). Surprisingly enough, it was for long used "to make people believe" that they were actively participating in the creation of a strong, democratic

⁹ Political culture can be understood as the information available regarding political matters, and the set of values and attitudes that a person holds towards such matters (Lujambio, 1994).

¹⁰ Spots are advertising spaces that are bought and transmitted on television in a specific geographical area and for a specific period of time (Luna, 2011).

system (Galindo, 1994). At this point, it is necessary to mention that after World War II democracy became the ideal form of government in many countries, including Mexico¹¹. In a democratic system, power is decentralized and evenly distributed, and citizens can and should freely choose their government officials (Rodríguez Manzanares, 1994:338; Delgado, 2003).

For decades, the need to believe in democracy led many Mexicans to blindly trust the ruling class, and in turn it was easier for the latter to deceive the people. To illustrate, Galindo (1994) and Lujambio (1994) indicate that in the decades that followed the Mexican Revolution, the ruling class was able to take people's attention away from the electoral process by leading the country to an amazing economic growth, which they used as a justification of their power. In the 1970s and 80s, however, the economy grew weaker while the crisis and the political parties grew stronger. Still, the ruling class managed to convince voters of the fact that they were living in a democracy although the country was economically falling apart (Galindo, 1994).

In the 1988 presidential election, the number of votes for the PRI, the leading party since 1920, significantly dropped. Nonetheless, this party's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, turned out to be the elected president (Galindo, 1994). Salinas' adversaries, however, distrusted the results and refused to recognize him as their new president because there had been an accidental and mysterious system failure during the vote count (Delgado, 2003; Ruíz, 1994; Zurita, 1994). In order to ensure the validity of the election results, the *Instituto Federal Electoral* was created between 1989 and 1990. It is an autonomous organism with legal personality in charge of improving the Mexican democratic system by 1) promoting a political culture, 2) encouraging citizen involvement in political matters, 3) supporting political parties because they represent pluralism within the country, 4) organizing and observing the electoral process as it is required by the law, 5) refining vote counting methods, and 6) protecting the citizens' vote¹² by

¹¹ Accordingly, article 40 of the Mexican Constitution provides that Mexico is a Democratic, Representative, and Federal Republic.

¹² The duties listed are included in the COFIPE: Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales Ruíz, 1994; Zurita, 1994).

guarantying a clean and rightful electoral process (Ruíz, 1994; Zurita, 1994; Delgado, 2003; Ackerman, 2011; Paoli, 2011). Because the IFE was created due to the electoral incidents that took place in 1988, it is said that it was until that year that Mexico began its road towards democracy (Navarrete, 2011).

The creation of the *Instituto Federal Electoral* was done by means of a constitutional amendment made to article 41, and due to the 2006 presidential elections its functions were further modified. Since 1978 many amendments have been made to the electoral process code (COFIPE) and to the constitution itself in regards to electoral and political matters (Navarrete, 2011). The presidential 2006 elections, as was already mentioned earlier, triggered a new constitutional amendment that aims at protecting candidates and parties from the negative influence that mass media, government officials, and private institutions might have during electoral times, and therefore preventing that wealth be a determining factor in political broadcasting (Orozco, 2011; Ackerman, 2011). In that year, the *Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial Federal* concluded that the private sector illegally intervened in the election campaigns by making negative advertisements on radio and television against Andrés Manuel López Obrador, candidate for the PRD (see section 2.3.1.1.1.1). The situation got worse in the 2009 elections when the TV station companies themselves openly favored a particular candidate by giving him and his crew advertising spaces for free or for lower prices (Ackerman, 2011).

As a result, the 2007-2008 constitutional amendment, as it is called, provides that:

1. Political campaigns can only be made during official times (Ackerman, 2011) and will last no longer than 90 days¹³ (Orozco, 2011).
2. Advertising spaces will be evenly distributed among political parties. Each has a right to four minutes on television and three on the radio. During precampaign (Orozco, 2011).

¹³ Before the 2007 constitutional amendment political campaigns in Mexico lasted 160 days (Orozco, 2011).

3. The IFE will manage advertising spaces and is allowed to punish political parties, candidates, radio or TV concessionaires, and/or any legal person or entity that might intervene in the electoral process (Ackerman, 2011).
4. The IFE must organize two debates amongst the presidential candidates. These will take place on the first week of May and the second week of June respectively (Orozco, 2011).
5. It is prohibited to attack, denigrate, insult, or slander a candidate, a political party, or a government agency or institution (Orozco, 2011).

As can be seen, this amendment is very specific. Notwithstanding, it focuses mainly on regulating the use of television and radio, but it disregards other media, e.g. newspapers, journals, magazines, and the Internet. In addition, it also prohibits politicians and political parties to insult or denigrate one another. However, it does not make such prohibition to civilians. Finally, it might be considered an attempt against freedom of speech because insulting could be thought of as a way of expressing oneself and one's opinion regarding political matters (Orozco, 2011).

2.3.1.1 Political parties. The history of political parties is quite vast. Delgado (2003) indicates that they appeared in 19th century Europe as electoral committees made up of a limited number of rich and powerful people who chose the candidates and financed their campaigns. Due to their structure, these parties were called *cadre parties* or *partidos de notables*¹⁴. It was thought that only the educated and the rich should be able to belong to the ruling class because only they could govern with responsibility. Nonetheless, they ignored the needs and interests of the majority. In response to such unfair practices, in mid-19th century, socialists started a new party type by recruiting enormous amounts of people whose membership dues were used to finance the campaigns. This type of party is called membership party and its structure was

¹⁴ *Notable* is the Spanish word for remarkable. These type of parties were called thus because their members were considered remarkable because of their wealth and education (Delgado, 2003).

adopted by liberals and conservatives alike because it ensures a more democratic recruitment of candidates and promotes political participation¹⁵. Accordingly, political parties play an important role in the development of democracy (Delgado, 2003; Rodríguez Manzanares 1994).

There is more than one way to define the term political party because of the vast history behind it. However, experts and political theorists agree in saying that a political party is a stable and organized group of people who aim at gaining political power and/or participation to achieve common good based on shared ideologies and principles (Delgado, 2003; Paoli, 2011). Accordingly, political parties in most cases must encourage and organize public opinion, stimulate citizen involvement in public affairs, recruit and train political leaders, and contend in the elections and define the political orientation of government actions in case they win (Delgado, 2003). Because of their duties, which are both political and social, private and public, experts debate on whether or not political parties are part of the State, if they are private organizations, or both. In Mexico, political parties are classified as state bodies pursuant to the 2007 constitutional amendment made to article 41, because they behave under a specific law (COFIPE), they have legal personality, and they are subsidized with public budget (Paoli, 2011).

2.3.1.1.1 Mexican political parties. As in Europe, Mexican political parties began to emerge in the 19th century. At first, they followed the European model in that their members were rich and educated friends of Porfirio Díaz, the infamous dictator. Then, a few years before the Mexican Revolution four political parties were created, and during the revolution there were even more. The excessive presence of political parties resulted in greater political and social chaos that lasted ten years and that prevented a pacific electoral process from taking place. Once the revolution ended, it was stated in the Mexican Constitution that every citizen has a right to associate with others in order to get involved in political matters. In other words, Mexican

¹⁵ Political participation involves casting the vote, belonging to a political party, participating in demonstrations, and sharing political information, among other activities. The process of becoming a citizen is also an example of political participation that aims at increasing an individual's involvement in political matters (Rodríguez Manzanares, 1994).

citizens are free to belong to any political party although the term was not officially included in the constitution until 1963 (Delgado, 2003; Rodríguez Manzanares, 1994).

The political parties that arose in Mexico during the 20th century are many. Some of them still stand today, be it with a different name or with a different ideology. The PRI and PAN, for instance, were created in the first half of the 20th century, whilst the PRD was created in the second half (Delgado, 2003). These are the major parties in the country as of right now; therefore, we proceed to include a bit of history of each.

2.3.1.1.1 Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). It was officially created in 1946 with the aim of promoting a democratic and nationalistic culture amongst citizens. Yet, it is not a brand new party as it had previously had two other names: PNR¹⁶ and PRM¹⁷. From these names it can be inferred that the party emerged in an attempt of defending the ideals of the revolution. They differed, however, in their ideology. The PNR, for instance, was created under socialist views, whereas the PRI promoted capitalism. Regardless, they are all the same party, which lasted 70 years in power. During those years, PRI candidates were not chosen in a democratic way. This gave way to strong internal divisions mainly because there were two groups, one of them fought for neoliberalism, whereas the other fought for nationalism and social justice. The party's downfall began in the 1980s. By 1988 the party was already losing political strength, and the murders and economic crisis that took place in 1994 aggravated the situation even more (Delgado, 2003: 95-102). The party lost the presidential seat in the year 2000, but has recently recovered it with Enrique Peña Nieto, the current president of Mexico, elected in the year 2012.

2.3.1.1.2 Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). It was created in September 1939 to look after the interests of mainly Catholic businessmen who disagreed with the socialist policies implemented by President Cárdenas and the PMR. *Panistas* sustained that the private

¹⁶ Partido Nacional Revolucionario, created by Plutarco Elías Calles in 1929 (Delgado, 2003).

¹⁷ Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, created by Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938 (Delgado, 2003).

enterprise and the social doctrine of the Church would lead to a better society. Accordingly, between 1940 and 1962, the PAN decided to act more as the country's democratic conscience than as a political party, therefore it only made propaganda during electoral times. In 1979 it became the second most powerful party, after the PRI. However, the economic crises, the deceiving practices, and the murders that caused the PRI to lose political strength, helped the *panistas* to finally occupy the presidential seat in the year 2000. Vicente Fox was the first president in 70 years to belong to a party that was not the PRI (Delgado, 2003: 102-106). He was succeeded by Felipe Calderón, another panista.

2.3.1.1.1.3 Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). It emerged in 1986 as a result of the discontent of some left-wing *priístas* regarding the antidemocratic ways in which candidates were chosen. They were Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Cuahutémoc Cárdenas, both of whom left the PRI as soon as they knew that Carlos Salinas de Gortari was the new candidate for the 1988 presidential elections. Cárdenas also ran as a candidate in that same year and gained considerable sympathy, but Salinas was elected president despite a system failure during the vote count.

Similarly to the PRI, there were two major ideological stands within the party. Some were willing to dialogue and work together with Salinas' government; others with more radical views preferred demonstrations and other types of social movements in order to achieve political change. In 1997 Cárdenas became the Head of Government of Mexico City. He was succeeded in the year 2000 by Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Delgado, 2003:108-110), who has ran for president two times in a row, in the year 2006 and in 2012.

In the 1970s and 80s, political parties gained significant force in the Mexican electoral system, and ever since they have tried to persuade society about the idea that they are the unique solution to political, economic, and social issues, and therefore they deserve to be elected as the ruling class. However, political parties have also disregarded social and political agreements. In addition, until January 2008 they were not legally obliged to be transparent, i.e.

allow public access to their administrative movements (Hernández, 2011). Consequently, voters' distrust towards the government, its institutions, and the electoral process itself has been caused and aggravated by politicians and political parties alike because it must be said that the latter are real experts at discrediting each other or the government itself even before something, e.g. Election Day, takes place (Galindo, 1994).

Thus, in Mexico, political institutions and current electoral regulations are quite faulty and untrustworthy, which is why voters and the bulk of society have decided to step away from polling stations and pretty much everything that has to do with politics. Information on political matters needs to be available for all voters since it is the basis not only of the values and beliefs they hold towards political matters, but also of their ultimate political decision when being in the voting stations on the Election Day. In Mexico, it is only during election times that mass media gets involved and urges others to get involved in political matters. What is worse is that the content they spread is utterly biased and preselected. Voters and society in general will only engage in political practices when they fill part of the decision making process and are no longer treated as mere observers (Lujambio, 1994; Orozco, 2011).

2.3.1.2 The 2012 Election Day. For the 2012 Election Day, one million Mexican citizens were trained by the IFE to serve as polling station officers (presidents and clerks). In addition, there were two million party representatives and 30,900 national and international observers (Jiménez, 2012). At exactly, 8:00am, as it is stated in article 41 of the Mexican Constitution (Delgado, 2003), polling stations were set up by the officers in charge, and were opened to voters at 8:30am and were closed at 6:00pm. It is also constitutionally stated that in case there are still voters in the polling stations, these will not close until everyone has cast their vote. Once the polling stations are closed, the uninterrupted 24 hour vote count starts at exactly 8:00pm, and it is until then that the media is allowed to announce exit poll results (Jiménez, 2012). The 2012 electoral roll consisted of 80 million Mexicans, 25% of which have Internet access (Aguilar,

2011). However, although there were 40 million internet users, they did not reflect their online political activism in the polling stations (Pérez, 2012).

In this election not only would the people vote for their president, but they also voted for 128 senators, 500 congressmen, 6 governors, the Mexico City Head of Government, 579 members of the assembly, among other positions (Ordaz, 2012). Enrique Peña Nieto, candidate of the PRI, was seen by many as the revival and restoration of a regime characterized by extreme poverty, violence, and unemployment. This presidential candidate was especially rejected by the youth. A clear example of such rejection was the incident that took place at Universidad Iberoamericana from which a strong social movement, apparently headed by university students, started (Orozco, 2012).

Before the 2007 reform, political parties and even candidates themselves were legally allowed to buy advertising spaces on TV and radio. Nowadays, however, advertising spaces are bought by the government and the IFE distributes them evenly among the parties. The reform aims at avoiding dirty wars during the electoral process. Nonetheless, since online networking sites are by no means included in Mexican law, i.e. the IFE has no right over them, because in most cases the servers of such sites are foreign, the dirty war took place on the internet, and thus slander, taunt, defamation, direct confrontations and accusations, and insults were common practice before, during, and after the Election Day (“Se avecina la Guerra electoral”, 2012; “El IFE sin facultades”, 2012; “Las redes sociales le ponen picante”, 2012; Pérez, 2012; Ramírez, 2012).

2.3.2 Politics, internet, and online social networks. Information and communication technologies, mainly the internet and cell phones, have had an important impact and influence on people’s behavior, especially when it comes to politics and democracy (Del Rey Morató, 2008; McGrath, 2011; and Morozov, 2009; “Internet: un derecho”, 2012). The reason is that computer-mediated communication (CMC) not only helps in maintaining already existing relationships and in building new ones (Bargh and Mekenna, as cited in Kujath, 2011; Bonds-

Raacke and Raacke, 2010; Kujath, 2011; Welwu, Johnson, Seltzer, and Bichard, 2010), but it also facilitates information dissemination, support gathering, and massive mobilizations (Leighninger, 2011), all of which serve as infrastructure for public engagement and democracy (Leighninger, 2011; Islas, 2012; “Preparan inédita declaración”, 2012).

Democracy, as defined by Robledo (2011), refers to society’s active participation by way of getting involved in decision making processes and being motivated to defend their rights. Currently, however, democracies around the globe are undergoing critical moments because the majority of the voting population, especially the youth, refuses to get fully involved in political processes mainly because they distrust the government, politicians, and political institutions (Enríquez, 2011; Lozano, 2010; Rodríguez Manzanares, 1994; Leighninger, 2011). In addition, people tend to think that a democracy works automatically and effortlessly on its own, and thus forget that an active citizenship would make things a lot easier when it comes to democratic matters. Consequently, there is an urgent need of developing or updating the legal framework that might ensure citizen involvement in political activities (Leighninger, 2011). In this sense, ideally, the Internet should be a tool to create *e-governments*, in which there is an open, reciprocal and ongoing interaction between governments and citizens (Leighninger, 2011; Del Rey Morató, 2008). However, although Leighninger (2011) says the Internet is a “tool to change governments” because so have demonstrated the 2008 presidential election in the United States and the revolutions in the Arab World, the truth is that freedom of speech on the Internet is only a theoretical concept considering that both governments and extremist users have found ways to censor other internet users (Del Rey Morató, 2008; Morozov, 2009).

Nonetheless, in the year 2011, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared that Internet access is a human right because it promotes social progress and freedom of speech as it allows users to become opinion leaders and information sources (Garret and Dazinger, 2011). Therefore, it is the State’s responsibility to ensure that citizens have Internet access (Contreras, 2012a). As a result, the Internet is considered to be bringing forth new forms of political

participation and expression (“Redes sociales, internet y elecciones”, 2012). Leighninger (2011) mentions that the Internet has gained such political power because it has, on the one hand, empowered individuals in that they can easily find and share information with others who think the way they do. On the other hand, the Internet has also empowered groups of people which not only results in an increasing sense of belonging, but also in collective problem solving practices. Thus, the internet is already a place where to share political ideas (Garret and Danziger, 2011), which makes it both a source of political information and a medium for political and electoral expression and persuasion (Garret and Danziger, 2011; Contreras, 2012b; Leighninger, 2011).

It must be said that there are two types of users, those that already hold a political posture, and those that have no (definite) political posture but end up having one. It is therefore concluded that the Internet and online social networks will never be homogeneous. Thus ideology, understood as a form of power held on an individual or a group of people, is never stable on the internet (“Internet, ideología y política”, 2012). In this sense, voters look for information that will allow them to cast a well-reasoned vote. However, most Internet users tend to visit sites where their points of view are shared and promoted while they avoid those with which they disagree (Garret and Danziger, 2011). In addition, political websites are only attractive to those who already are politically active offline (Weiwu, Johnson, Seltzer, and Bichard, 2010). It must be noted, however, that online information is seldom reliable because it is hard to verify (Del Rey Morató, 2008; Morozov, 2009), because the opinions of experts are no longer taken into account (Enríquez, 2011), and because it is most of the times biased as it has already been selected and is directed to a specific audience (Garret and Danziger, 2011).

When it comes to online political expression, it involves receiving or sending political e-mails, signing online petitions, posting comments on the sites they visit, and sharing or making videos. Thus, the Internet allows individuals to become opinion leaders and information sources, which further facilitates that information be more democratically spread. Nonetheless, the

political information that can be found on the internet can be so vast that users might feel alienated and thus lose interest in voting or they might develop very negative attitudes towards the electoral process or the actors involved in it. Finally, individuals might be merely interested in being entertained by political information, a process known as infotainment (Garret and Danziger, 2011).

It must be noted that in its first four years of existence, the Internet had around 50 million users. In 2012 there were over 2 thousand 200 million users around the globe, half of which has an account in one or more online social networking sites, Google, and Youtube. In Mexico, particularly, there are 40 million Internet users, out which 87% has an account in at least one social networking sites (Contreras, 2012a; “Redes sociales, internet, y elecciones, 2012; “Las redes sociales le ponen picante a las elecciones”, 2012; Islas, 2012), which will be further tackled in the section that follows.

2.3.2.1 Online social networking sites: Facebook. The Internet and online social networking sites are popular among adolescents and young adults because they belong to the “millennial generation”. To them, social interaction and activities are very important, even more so than the academic ones. In addition, they are multitaskers, and use the Internet as their main source of information, thus they barely read a book (Hanson, Drumheller, Mallard, McKee, and Schlegel, 2011). Furthermore, online social networking sites have proven to be very convenient in that the access to them is free, they are also time-efficient because they enable communication with more than one person at the same time, and they are unobtrusive in the sense that they facilitate interaction among people who might not interact on a regular offline basis because contact is not possible or not desirable (Young, 2011; Gutiérrez, 2012).

Therefore, people’s reasons to become a part of online social networking sites are: 1) to keep in touch with offline acquaintances and/or friends, 2) to entertain themselves, 3) to socialize, i.e. make friends, learn about all sorts of events, and dating; and 4) to look for both academic and personal information (Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010). Park, Kee, and

Valenzuela (2009) mention that peer pressure and a desire to “look cool” are also a strong reason why people join social networking sites. Furthermore, they report that people who seek self-status when joining social networking sites are more likely to engage in political movements and activities.

Online social networking sites (SNS), also called friend networking sites (Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010) or simply social networks are virtual communities where people with similar interests gather to communicate, share, and discuss ideas, thoughts, feelings, and activities by posting messages, pictures and hyperlinks (Raacke and Bonds.Raacke, 2008; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010; Young, 2011). It must be said that virtual communities such as these also develop social norms since they are also social structures that operate in systematic ways and are based on shared interests or purposes (Reich, 2010). Members of these communities are both individuals and dividuals because they might display more than one online social identity (Dalsgaard, 2008). In this sense, Facebook differs from other CMC mediums in that it makes it easier to corroborate a person’s identity because it allows access to their name and demographic information, as well as tastes and hobbies. Thus, it is considered as a reliable social networking site in general terms (Thompson and Lougheed, 2012).

Facebook was created in 2004 (Kujath, 2011). Surprisingly enough, it has been existing for less than a decade and it already has more than 500 million users around the world. Thus, if it were a country, it would be the third most populated after China and India (Young, 2011). Furthermore, Thompson and Lougheed (2012) and Kujath (2011) report that at least 250 million users log in approximately six times a day in order to broaden connections or simply to keep in touch with friends, family, coworkers, virtual peers, and acquaintances with whom tastes or ideologies might be shared (Cebrián, 2010; Kujath, 2011; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010).

The most popular Facebook tools and applications used by adult Facebook users are wall comments, status updates, events, photos, and videos. Photos are particularly relevant for this study as they reflect a person’s online identity, they are used to strengthen connections, and

they trigger conversations (Young, 2011; Dalsgaard, 2008) because users are able to make endless comments to pictures shared by themselves or by their Facebook friends. Hence, communication on Facebook can take place by means of written words, pictures, or videos. In any case, the information shared and consulted on Facebook (and in other online social networks) is always accompanied by the person's point of view (Cebrián, 2010) or has already been selected and distributed to a target audience (Garret and Danziger, 2011). When it comes to political matters, Facebook users share photos, videos, or texts with their family or friends. Videos, in particular, are commonly used to discredit political candidates (Garret and Danziger, 2011), although most pictures are also used to denigrate candidates or their followers.

Another very popular Facebook application is Facebook Groups, which are mainly discussion forums where messages are easily and rapidly spread. As a result, Facebook Groups are now being widely used by social, political, and other types of organizations to set up meetings and events, as well as share information that might not be available elsewhere, and to ensure community engagement. Consequently, Facebook Groups appear useful and attractive for those interested in engaging in political activities (Park et al., 2009). Royal (2008, as cited in Weiwu, et al., 2010) mentions that at least 80% of all Facebook users belong to a group. Furthermore, in their study, Park et al. (2009) found that Facebook users who belonged to Facebook groups were more likely to get involved in offline civic and political activities. Thus, it is concluded that Facebook groups are useful to draw people's attention, especially that of the young, to social and political matters. Hence, online social networking sites are considered an extension of off-line relationships and activities (Kujath, 2011; Park, et al., 2009).

Political information is transmitted by means of social interaction, e.g. interpersonal discussion (Weiwu et al., 2010). Thus, for some users, online social networking sites are a source of political and campaign information, including what others think or say about a candidate. Consequently, SNS enable us to learn about the political standing of our friends, and/or to meet other users who share our political views. In addition, online social networking

sites are a space where we can engage in political discussions with or about the candidates (Weiwu et al., 2010). In this sense, technology and new media also lead to digital activism and cyberspace politics (Morozov, 2009) which are now decentralized, uncontrollable, and even dangerous as it has empowered extremists and anarchists who are now able to spread their thoughts and ideas to larger groups (Del Rey Morató, 2008; Morozov, 2009).

Notwithstanding, the current president of the United States, Barak Obama, was able to use online social networking sites in a positive way in that through them he promoted his proposals, and also established more direct contact with the voters (Aguilar, 2011; Islas, 2012). Four years later, in the 2012 presidential elections, Mexican politicians tried to mimic Barak Obama's campaign ("Las redes le ponen picante", 2012; Islas, 2012). However, in the end the use they gave to SNS was archaic, i.e. in a top-down fashion and only when votes were needed (Islas, 2011), and unethical because they created fake accounts and trolls, i.e. people who insult and discredit candidates and their followers (Islas, 2012; Pérez, 2012; "Redes sociales, el otro escenario", 2012) all of which lead to disinformation, paranoia, distrust, and deception ("Redes sociales, el otro escenario", 2012).

2.3.2.2 Mexican politics on Facebook. When speaking of modernized States, the most basic characteristics that they must have are democratic systems, technologies and infrastructure, political involvement, law enforcement, and citizen awareness of civil rights. In Mexico, 49% of the population is aware of their civil and political rights, 59% casts their vote on Election Day, and 66% is not at all interested in political matters. Furthermore, less than 40% of the population has Internet access (Pérez, 2012). Thus, the Mexican society is not fully modernized not only because of what was just mentioned, but also because the political class refuses to do things differently.

Due to the increasing popularity of SNS in Mexico, since the year 2010 they were expected to be positively used by the 2012 presidential candidates and their campaign crew

during that year's electoral process (Mejía, 2012). At first, Enrique Peña Nieto appeared to be the most popular candidate in online social networking sites (Pérez, 2012). In Twitter alone, he had 870, 000 followers by July the 1st (Ordoqui, 2012), and 3 million followers on Facebook (Pérez, 2012; Seco, 2012). In contrast, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, once again candidate of the PRD, had 782, 000 followers on Twitter (Ordoqui, 2012) and 450,000 on Facebook (Seco, 2012). Nonetheless, the PAN was the party with the highest number of online followers (Herrera, 2012). Despite of this apparent online popularity, the literature reports that politicians instead of using online social networks in positive and productive ways, e.g. to make proposals and communicate more openly with the voters, they applied old practices like the use of bots and trolls, as well as the creation of fake accounts to appear more popular than they really were (Mejía, 2012; "Las redes sociales le ponen picante", 2012; Seco, 2012; "Redes sociales: el otro escenario", 2012; Islas, 2012b).

Bot and trolls were used for political cyberbullying (Poy Solano, 2012), that is, people were hauled to create fake accounts in the most popular online social networking sites in Mexico so that they would attack a candidate by means of violent and aggressive language against him and his followers, as well as the creation of rumors and lies that lead to distrust, disinformation, and intolerance (Poy Solano, 2012; "Las redes sociales le ponen picante", 2012; "Las redes sociales, el otro escenario", 2012). As a consequence, many SNS users felt intimidated and decided not to express their political opinion and ideas in online social networking sites because they were afraid to be victims of political cyberbullying.

Hence, against all odds, in the 2012 electoral process communication in online social networks between political actors and voters remained distant, frozen, and unidirectional, (Mejía, 2012). In this context, political parties decided 1) to ignore relevant issues brought forth by SNS users, 2) not to respond to the doubts or comments written on their walls by SNS users, 3) to make no proposals, 4) not to consult the citizens, and 5) to erase negative comments from their online profiles (Herrera, 2012). To make matters worse, all parties online political campaigns

were intended at discrediting their adversaries and intimidating their followers, i.e. dirty war, instead of making valuable and better proposals and opening the channels for discussion and dialogue, which is what voters expected (Poy Solano, 2012; Herrera, 2011). All this was due mainly to Mexican politicians' reluctance to accept and profit from the horizontal organization of online social networking sites, where no user is more important than the rest (Aguilar, 2011). It is thus concluded that Mexican political actors refuse to use the Internet as a tool to increase political involvement, to improve communication between citizens and themselves, and consequently ameliorate the way in which they are perceived by the general public.

Politicians in Mexico, at least the majority, remain corrupt, individualistic, cynical, and avoid debates and problem solving. Consequently, voters believe that political parties and politicians are not fit for governing, and thus they criticize rather than trust government institutions. Their discontent is most of the times expressed by annulling their vote on the Election Day (Castañeda as cited in de la Calle and Jerade, 2011). Recently, however, most Latin American societies have decided to follow minorities to protest in aggressive and disruptive ways in order to weaken democracy. In this context, since SNS are most popular among the young, and since they appear to gradually become more interested in political matters than the rest of the population (Serrano, 2012), they were the ones to innovate political practices in these virtual spaces (Ramírez, 2012). Thus, they become politicized through the videos, jokes, photomontages, animations, and caricatures that are shared by candidates, political parties or by other citizens ("La explosión de las redes sociales", 2012).

In Mexico there are 40, 041 million Internet users, 52% of them are men and 48% are women. These users generally access the Internet to check and use their e-mail, to chat, to log into their SNS account, and to visit forums or blogs ("Las redes sociales le ponen picante", 2012; Islas, 2012). In addition, it has been noticed that social networking sites have become the main source of information for most internet users in Mexico (Islas, 2012), mainly among young adults between 18 and 30 years of age (Serrano, 2012). The most popular SNS in Mexico are

Facebook (95% of internet users have a Facebook account), Twitter (45%), and Youtube (Islas, 2011), to check others' pictures and profile, to contact someone, to upload pictures of their own, to look for and get in touch with acquaintances (Islas, 2012a; Islas, 2012b). Thus, online social networking sites, especially Facebook, were indeed an ideal way for politicians to come close to citizens and rightfully gain their vote (Mejía, 2012).

Regardless of politicians' misuse of online social networking sites, the 2012 elections took place in a unique scenario because citizens acknowledged the freedom and impunity provided by their anonymity in online social networks (Torres Nabel, 2009), and thus they used them widely to share and spread their feelings and opinions about the political parties, the candidates, and the electoral process itself, and to organize both online and offline demonstrations and protests, i.e. cyberprotesting and cyberactivism (Lozano, 2010; Torres Nabel, 2009; Mejía, 2012; Contreras, 2012a). To illustrate, during the presidential debates, SNS users posted their critiques and opinions regarding the candidates' proposals, mistakes, and behaviors ("Los políticos utilizan las redes sociales", 2012). By the same token, during the Election Day, particularly, voters or users in general used their SNS account to show their support to their favorite party or candidate, to report and condemn that votes were apparently being bought by political parties. On that same day, SNS were used by EPN's followers to declare his victory even before the official results were made public. As a result, those in favor of AMLO showed their disagreement by declaring there had been an electoral fraud and that EPN was being imposed on us ("Las redes sociales se vuelven vehículo", 2012; Ordaz, 2012).

In this context, during the 2012 electoral process, online social networking sites became society's voice (Mejía, 2012). Society's increasing power, however, might turn out to be somehow ill because disinformation and a lack of long term vision can be very common. In addition, anarchists and rebels might use online social networking sites for violent and antidemocratic means (Lozano, 2010) especially because there is no legal framework that regulates the political use of online social networking sites (Ramírez, 2012; "Preparan inédita

declaración”, 2012; Contreras, 2012b). To illustrate, Seco (2012) mentions that many online advocates of AMLO attacked journalists, other candidates, and other SNS users, and were intolerant, sexist, and anti-Semitic (Seco, 2012). In general, not only were political parties aggressive and violent in their use of online social networking sites, but also regular users who also discredit and insult political actors and their followers, i.e. cyberbullying (“El IFE sin facultades”, 2012).

2.1 The remainder of the document

The present chapter provided a vast description of the theoretical and contextual background that support this thesis. In the chapters that follow a thorough explanation of the present study is provided. Chapter three presents a complete description of the methodology followed to gather and analyze the data under study. Chapter four informs on the results obtained and chapter five provides a complete discussion and analysis of the data gathered in relation to the literature review. Conclusions, limitations, and further areas of research are also included in chapter five.