

4 Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results gathered by the methods explained in Chapter 3. The results of each method will be followed by a discussion of these results and what they imply for this study. Section 4.1 will present and discuss the tape-recorded conversations. Section 4.2 will deal with the ethnographic observations. Section 4.3 will be about the email and MSN messenger data. Section 4.4 will discuss the DCT questionnaires. Section 4.5 will speak about the data gathered through interviews. Section 4.6 summarizes this whole chapter.

4.1 Tape-Recorded Conversations

This section will first present the data collected by tape-recording conversations between the students and me in sub-section 4.1.1. For space reasons in this study, only the excerpts of transcripts where the students use language which shows the use of the formal or informal form of address will be displayed. If any reader wishes to obtain the complete tape-recording, he may contact me via email at mheydweiller9@hotmail.com. I will present the transcripts one by one and discuss them immediately after presenting them. The verbs or pronouns that indicate a certain form of address are shown in bold. Keep in mind when reading the transcripts that my initials are MRH which corresponds to what I have said and the other initials refer to one of the student participants. Also, it is important to keep in mind that these recordings were done in class in order to make comparisons between the language use in class as opposed to out of class to see if the setting makes a difference. It will be stated whether the participant in each transcript is male or female in order to make comparisons between the male and female students to

answer the third research question posed in Chapter 1. The transcripts were coded by Coder G and me. There was no discrepancy in our transcript coding. The presentation of the transcripts will be followed by a discussion of the transcripts as a whole in subsection 4.1.2.

4.1.1 Transcripts

Conversation Recording 1:

1 1: Estos son los CAL reports de Ale.
 2 1: Esto, esto, esto...y esto
 3 MRH: Ok.
 4 1: I forgot my CALs so.. Puedo dárselos..
 5 MRH: Hasta el próximo jueves
 6 1: ok está bien.

This transcribed recording shows that the participant 1 uses the formal form of address with me. Participant 1 is a male student. The use of the formal form of address is shown in line 4 where he says “Puedo darselos”. The “se” part of *darselos* is indirect object form of the formal form of address. There are several possible reasons why Participant 1 used the formal form of address. First, it could be that he is taking into consideration speech community membership. He may identify me as a member of the professor community or as a non-member of the male speech community and, therefore, choose to form a relationship of non-solidarity. His choice may be because of the setting. Since the conversation takes place in the classroom, the setting is more formal and gives the relationship of teacher-student more emphasis than in other settings. The topic of the speech act is also class-related, which might have the similar effect that the setting has in emphasizing the formal teacher-student relationship. Another possible reason is the

function of the speech act. Participant 1 is asking for a favor and he may be deferring to a figure of greater authority or power to grant him the favor by using negative politeness strategies. The use of the formal form of address could indicate that Participant 1 views the relationship between him and me as a power relationship.

Conversation Recording 2:

- 1 2: Miss por qué no **vino** a la clase pasada?
 2 MRH: Estaba muy enferma
 3 2: De qué?
 4 MRH: Tenía fiebre y de mi estomago.

Recording 2 shows that participant 2 uses the formal form of address with me. The verb *vino* in line 1 indicates the use of the third person formal (*usted*) conjugation of the verb *venir*. Participant 2 is a female student. This recording was done in class, so it is possible that she used the formal form due to the setting as discussed in the section on Participant 1. However, unlike the case of Participant 1, the topic of conversation is not school-related which means that the formal teacher-student relationship is not emphasized by the topic. The topic shows more personal interest since she is asking about my well-being and may be a sign that she wants to show solidarity but she uses the formal form which probably means that her choice of address does not have to do with the topic. Since Participant 2 is a female, she shares this speech community with me, but she may identify me more with the professor speech community than with the student or age speech communities and for that reason used the formal form of address. Also, she may be using a politeness strategy because she is asking a personal question or to show

respect for my position as a teacher and this respect could be stronger than shared speech community membership.

Conversation Recording 3:

- 1 3: Ya **trae** los resultados.. de los exámenes?
 2 MRH: Uh huh.
 3 3: Los **va** a dar ahorita?
 4 MRH: No.

Recording 3 shows that Participant 3 uses the formal *usted* form with me. This is shown first in line 1 where Participant 3 uses the third person formal conjugation of the verb *traer* (*trae*). It is also shown in line 3 where the participant uses *va* which is the third person formal conjugation of the verb *ir*. The topic of the conversation is class-related and the setting is in class. This may possibly strengthen Participant 3's association of me with the professor speech community and subsequently prompt the use of the formal form of address. The language function is that he is asking for something but in this case it is not a favor since I was obliged to give out their grades anyways. In this instance, neither form of address is specifically prompted by the function of the speech act. Participant 3 is male and therefore, this may have an effect on his perception of solidarity with me because we do not belong to the same sex speech community.

Conversation Recording 4:

- 1 4: Ya **revisó** los que había dado?
 2 MRH: Cómo?
 3 4: Los calificados
 4 MRH: No.

Recording 4 shows that Participant 4 uses the formal form of address with me. In line 1, Participant 4 uses the third person formal conjugation of two verbs. First the

participant uses *revisó* which is the simple past third person formal conjugation of the verb *revisar*. Later in this same line, the participant uses the past perfect third person formal conjugation of the verb *dar* when she says *había dado*. Participant 4 is a female student. The topic of the conversation is class-related and the setting is in class. Once again, these factors probably strengthen Participant 4's perception of me as a teacher and weaken her association of me with her age group and the student speech community. Her topic, speaking about grading, indicates that she knows that I am the person that is doing the grading, hence giving me some type of power over her in the educational setting. Her use of the formal form of address may be a reflection of this knowledge and the formation or maintenance of her idea that this is a power relationship.

Conversation Recording 5:

- 1 2: Que **va** a hacer el lunes?
 2 MRH: El lunes me voy...me voy a dormir todo el dia. Todavía estoy muy cansada.

Recording 5 is talking about the upcoming day off from school on Monday. This recording shows the use of the formal form of address. In line 1, the participant uses *va* which is the third person formal form of the verb *ir*. Notice that participant 2 is the same participant from recording 2 and the use of the formal form of address is consistent in both recordings. Her topic of conversation, just as in recording 2, is not school-related. It seems that she is trying to form solidarity with me by speaking of personal lives instead of class-related or school-related topics. However, she uses the formal form of address which would suggest that solidarity is not the reason she chooses to use that form. One possible reason for her form of address choice is that, even though her topics of

conversation suggest that she wants a relationship of solidarity, she also may try to keep some social distance by using the formal form of address. She may be struggling as to how she wants to define the relationship, either as one of solidarity (as the topic would suggest) or as one of social distance (suggested by the form of address use). She might lean towards solidarity if she views me as a member of her age speech community, the female speech community or in the student speech community, or she could lean towards social distance if she sees me as a member of the professor speech community.

Conversation Recording 6:

- 1 5: **Se siente** mejor?
 2 MRH: Todavía no estoy cien por ciento pero mejor que ayer.

Recording 6 was done on my first day back to class after cancelling a class because I was sick. This recording shows that Participant 5 used the formal form of address with me. In line 1, the participant uses *se siente* which is the third person formal form of the verb *sentirse*. The topic of the conversation is personal and not school-related which would suggest solidarity and the use of the informal form. However, the setting (in-class) strengthens Participant 5's association of me with the professor speech community and creates social distance between us. The social distance is increased even more because Participant 5 is a male student and may be even more inclined to use the formal form of address because we do not share membership in the sex speech community.

4.1.2 Transcript Discussion

All six of the transcripts show that the participants used the formal form of address with me. Data was gathered from two female students and three male students, all of whom used the formal form of address. Below, there are possible explanations for the use of only the formal form of address by the participants in this section. Due to the fact that there was little data collected through tape recordings, I do not have sufficient evidence that the use of the formal form of address is predominant and does not prove that males and females use the same form of address with me. However, this data is still valuable and useful because it will be compared to the responses and other data collected from these six participants through the other data collection methods. Data comparison will show if these participants are consistent in the use of the formal form of address. Notes will be made on the consistency of these participants in the other sections of this chapter.

There are several factors that may have been used by the participants when choosing which form of address to use. The setting is one of these factors. All recordings were in the classroom and all participants used the formal form of address. The setting lends itself more to the formal form of address than out-of-class settings because of the formal nature of the class.

The type of relationship is also a factor. Because of the setting, the students are more likely to view me as a professor. A teacher-student relationship is an example of a power relationship because as their teacher, I have a type of power over them at least in terms that I make them do certain exercises in class, I grade their work and they follow my directions.

As I have hypothesized in Chapter 1, the choice could be affected by the participants' negotiation of my speech community membership. If they choose to view me as a professor over student, as a professor over someone of their own age or, in the case of male students, as a non-male, they should use the formal form of address because of the greater social distance in our relationship. This factor is influenced by the previous two factors mentioned. It is more likely that the students place me into the professor speech community in these tape-recordings based on the setting and type of relationship. Since the recordings were done in class, their association of me with the professor speech community is greater because the students are constantly reminded of that identity in class.

4.2 Ethnographical Observations

This section presents the data collected by ethnographical observations and discusses their significance. As described in the previous chapter, these observations were done throughout the semester using the pre-designed coding sheet shown in Appendix A whenever the students spoke with me in Spanish. Appendix C shows the data collected through this method. It also shows the coding done by Coder G and me (Coder M). There was no discrepancy in the coding. These results are discussed in the next part of this section.

As seen in the data presented in Appendix C, the choice of form of address by the participants was mixed. Out of the sixteen participants observed, ten used the formal form of address with me. Six used the informal form of address. The four participants who were observed more than once were all consistent with their form of address choice.

This shows that, first, their results are consistent at least throughout the ethnographical observations. Second, it may indicate that these participants did not feel ambiguous about which form of address to use with me since they did not change between the two forms.

There are many factors which are possible reasons that the students chose one form of address over the other. One of these factors is the setting. All of the ethnographical observations were made in the classroom. During the period in which I did the ethnographical observations, there were no out-of-class interactions between the students and me in Spanish beyond them just saying *hola* which does not indicate a form of address. As discussed in the previous section, the in-class setting may strengthen the students' perception of me as their professor and increase the likelihood of the use of the formal form of address. However, as seen in the results, the students varied on which form of address they used. Therefore, while the setting may strengthen the reasons why the students who chose the formal form used that form, it does not explain why about a third of the students chose to use the informal form of address.

Another factor is the conversation topic. Theoretically, if the topic of conversation is school-related, the students would be more likely to use the formal form of address due to their strengthened perception of me as a professor and them as my students. If the topic is not school-related, the students would be more likely to use the informal form of address because they are trying to form solidarity or a friend relationship by discussing more personal topics. Seven out of the ten students that spoke about school-related topics chose to use the formal form of address. When speaking about topics that were not school-related, the students were evenly divided between the

formal form of address (four students) and the informal form of address (four students). This seems to imply that the formal form of address is used more with school-related topics. However, this does not seem to always hold true. For example, participant 14 is observed twice and the topics of both conversations are school-related. However, instead of using the formal form as one would think theoretically, he used the informal form both times. On the other hand, Participant 16 was observed four times; three of which were not school-related. Even though theoretically he should use the informal form of address in these three instances and the formal form in the school-related observation, he uses the formal form of address all four times. It appears that the topic of conversation may contribute to the choice of the form of address; however, it is not *the* deciding factor.

A third factor that could be used to determine which form of address to use is speech communities. If the setting and the topic of conversation alone do not determine which form of address the students use, then their perception of my identity might be the basis for their decisions. Speech communities are comprised of characteristics which make up a person's identity, so it is likely that the students used my membership to speech communities to negotiate my identity. Since my membership to the professor speech community and the students' age speech community cause a conflict in what form of address the students should use with me, this provides an explanation for the division between the use of the formal form of address and the informal form of address in the ethnographical observations.

In looking at the forms of address used by each sex, there was data collected on four females and twelve males through the ethnographical observations. Three out of the four females used the formal *usted* when talking to me. Regarding the male participants,

seven used the formal form of address while five used the informal form. One could postulate that females would be more likely to use the informal form of address with me because they share the sex speech community. However, the numbers for the males and females are fairly even. If anything, the males use the informal form more than the females. It appears that the sex speech community is not a factor, at least in this section.

In looking at individual participants, some participants were observed in both the ethnographical observations as well as the tape-recorded conversations. These participants will now be discussed to see whether their results are consistent so far. Participant consistency is shown in Appendix G. There are four participants who had data collected on them through these methods. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 were all consistent with their use of the formal form of address. The consistency of these and other participants will continue being analyzed in the following sections of this chapter.

4.3 Emails and MSN Conversations

This section will present the email and MSN conversation data that was gathered through the course of the study. The email data is shown in Appendix D, which is organized by participants and the chronological order in which the emails were received starting with the oldest and ending with the most recent. Coding was done on the email data by Coder G and Coder M. There was one email that was not coded the same by these two coders so Coder J was asked to code this data. Coder J's choice reflects the final coding decision in these cases. Email data will be discussed in sub-section 4.3.1. After the analysis of this data, the MSN conversation data will be presented and discussed in sub-section 4.3.2 and will be discussed in 4.3.3.

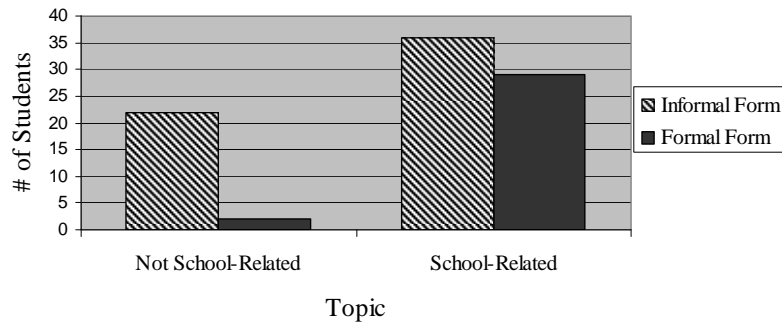
4.3.1 Email Data Analysis

Email data was gathered on thirty-six out of the fifty-five participants in this study. Looking at the participants as a whole, sixteen participants used *tú*, twelve used *usted* and eight used both forms of address in communication via email. The email data shows a somewhat larger number of participants who use the informal form of address than in the transcribed data and the ethnographical observation data. However, it seems that there is generally a half and half division in the email data.

There are again many reasons why the participants chose to use one form of address over the other. In this section, the setting is an unknown variable. The students, even though they are not in class, may write the emails from school, their homes, their friends' homes, in another class, in the language lab, etc. Since their location is unknown, the setting factor cannot be analyzed here.

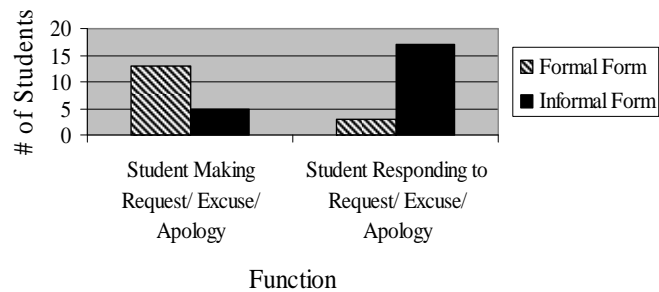
One factor that can be analyzed is the conversation topic. Twenty-four of the ninety-one emails dealt with a topic that was not class-related or school-related. In twenty-two of these, the participants used the informal form of address with me. Sixty-seven emails were about school-related topics. Of these, in twenty-nine of the emails the participants referred to me in the formal form, and in thirty-six, they referred to me in the informal form. Two emails used both forms of address in the same email. As seen in Figure 2 below, the ratio of students who used the informal form of address to those who use the formal form is much higher in the emails with non-school-related topics (22:2) than school-related topics (36:29). This data supports the idea that conversation topic influences the form of address used.

Figure 2: Email Topic Data



Another factor that could have an effect on the forms of address used in the students' emails is the function of the speech act. If the participants wanted a favor from me, were making an excuse or apologizing, then they may have been more likely to use the formal form of address as a politeness strategy. On the other hand, if I was asking them for something (such as an interview for my study), the students may have been more likely to respond with the informal form of address. There were eighteen emails in which the students wanted a favor, made an excuse or apologized, of which thirteen used the formal form of address and five used the informal form. This supports the theory that they are using forms of address as part of a negative politeness strategy. When I sent them emails asking for something, seventeen responded using the informal form and only three responded using the formal form. As can be seen by the numbers above and Figure 3 below, the functions of speech acts appear to affect the form of address used.

Figure 3: Email Function Data



Another factor possibly taken into account by the participants when choosing a form of address is the type of relationship that they want to have with me. Here, it is interesting to notice that some of the participants waver between the two forms of address. About a fifth of the participants in this section used both forms of address. For example, Participant 1 uses *tú* in his first email and *usted* in the second. This may be indicative of their uncertainty as to what form of address they should use. Another possible explanation is that they may have used the formal form of address more towards the beginning of the semester when they did not have a high level of familiarity with me and then when they got to know me better and formed a closer relationship towards the end of the semester they changed to the informal form of address. Participants 9, 16, 20, 25, 31 and 32 all started writing emails using *usted* and later changed to *tú*. This supports the idea that the relationship changes over time and that the relationship has an effect on the form of address used. Relationship changes may be reflected by changes in the form of address.

Another occurrence to note in this section is that two of the participants actually use both forms of address in the same email. Participant 29 uses both forms of address in his first email listed. *Darte* is indicative of the informal form because *te* is the indirect object form of the informal “you”. *Tenga* is indicative of the formal form because it is

the second person formal command conjugation. Participant 16 also uses both forms of address in his fourth email listed. For example, he uses *le escribo* which indicates the formal form of address. Later in the same email, he also says *contigo* which shows the use of the informal form. The use of both forms of address in the same email may be because the participants did not clearly identify what kind of social relationship they had or wanted with me and the uncertainty came out in the emails.

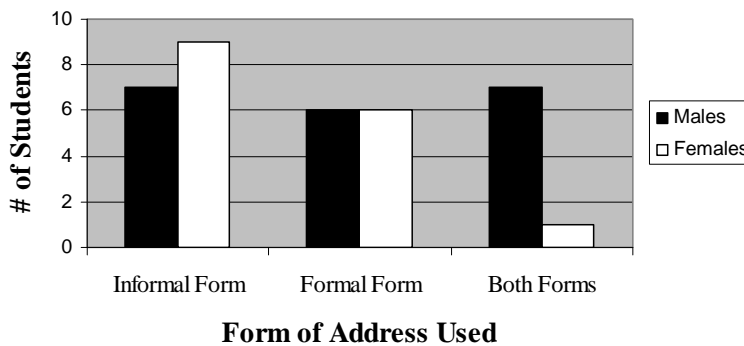
Another factor is the type of language used. In the first two sections, the data was gathered on spoken language. In this section, the data gathered is about written language. Simply because the language is written, the participants may use a different form of address from the form they would use with spoken language. For example, Participant 5 used the formal form in both the tape-recorded conversations and the ethnographical observations, but in all seven of the emails that he sent to me he used the informal form. This may have been because the topics of conversation of some of his emails were not school-related and he did not feel that he needed to use formal language. It may be that since he did not write the emails in my class, my association to the professor speech community was not as strong and he associated me more with his age speech community. Also, he could have changed the form of address that he used because emails are a different medium than spoken language.

Speech communities are the final factor that will be discussed in this section on emails. A speech community, as discussed previously, is formed based on similar characteristics of its members. The fact that there is division between the participants over which form of address to use may be because some of them identify me with the professor speech community while others identify me with their age speech community.

The fact that there is a greater proportion of students who use the informal form of address in this type of data than in the other previous two types may be because there are simply more participants which provides a better sample of the group as a whole. These participants who were not analyzed in other types of data may associate me more with their age community thereby using the informal form.

The forms of address used by both sexes in emails will now be discussed. This information is also shown below in Figure 4. Of the twenty male participants in this section, seven used the informal form of address, six used the formal form of address and seven used both forms. This shows equal distribution between the forms used by male participants. Out of the sixteen female students included in this section, nine used the informal form of address, six used the formal form of address and one used both. The numbers show that the females were also fairly evenly divided between the use of *tú* and *usted*. This means that my membership to the female community does not have an effect on which form of address the participants used. However, it appears that females tended to choose one form and stick with that form instead of wavering between the two of them. This may be because the females had the extra incentive to choose the informal form based on solidarity within the female speech community.

Figure 4: Email Sex Data



Next, the consistency of the participant responses in this section with those of the previous sections will be discussed. The consistency of participants for all data collection methods is shown in Appendix G, but for now I will just discuss the consistency of the participants for the tape-recorded conversations, ethnographical observations and emails. Participants 2, 8, 12, 13 and 14 were all consistent in the forms of addresses used in the ethnographical observations and the emails. Participants 2 and 4 were consistent in the forms that they used in the tape-recorded conversations and the emails. Participants 9 and 16 were semi-consistent in the ethnographical observations and the email data. They were only semi-consistent because they used both forms of address in the email data. The email data collected on participants 1, 5, 6 and 17 was not consistent with the data collected by the other two methods mentioned previously. Participants 1 and 5 both used the formal form in the tape-recorded conversations and in the ethnographical observations but used the informal form in their emails. Participant 6 and 17 both used the formal form of address in the ethnographical observations but used the informal form in their emails. The inconsistency in form of address use by these four participants may have a few possible explanations. First, as discussed in Chapter 2, emails are written data and not spoken like the data collected in the tape-recordings or in the ethnographical observations and therefore the participants may use different language in writing than they would use in spoken language. A second possible explanation is the setting of the speech act. The tape recordings and the ethnographical observations were done in the classroom and represent data collected only in the classroom. On the other hand, the emails were written when the participants were not in the classroom. Since they were not in the classroom, the participants may not have thought of me as such an authority figure

or as needing to have a larger social distance and therefore used the informal form of address. Physical distance may have compensated for social distance due to the language medium. Since the participants were farther away physically, they did not feel that they needed to add more distance (social) by using the formal form of address. A third explanation is that emails might be a more informal medium than face-to-face communication in a formal classroom setting. A final explanation is that these participants felt confused about what form of address to use with me and they just happened to vary in the email data.

4.3.2 MSN Conversation Data

This section will present the data collected through MSN conversations between my students and me. Data was gathered on four participants in this section. The students were not obligated to talk to me through messenger conversations and these four students are the only ones who voluntarily contacted me through this medium. The other students had access to this option but did not choose to engage in conversation with me through this medium. The conversations were coded by Coder G and me (Coder M) and we were in complete agreement about the coding. Parts of the conversations that do not indicate forms of address are omitted; however, the full conversations can be obtained by contacting me. The data is displayed in the exact form in which it was written by the participants. This means that spelling and grammatical errors were included and not altered. In the conversations below, the forms of address or the verbs that indicate a form of address are in bold. After each participant, that participant's conversations are

discussed. A general discussion of the results seen in this section is presented in the next section (4.3.3).

Participant 31

31: hola mary, que bueno que **te** encuentro
 MRH: hola
 MRH: que pasó
 31: lo que pasa es que he andado ocupada con lo de mi congreso, ayer por eso no pude ir a clase, si pensaba hacerlo pero se alargó el taller y la verdad el jueves no se si pueda ir, sólo queria que **estuvieras** enterada
 MRH: ok pero intenta venir si puedes porque hay un quiz el proximo jueves
 MRH: no este pero el otro
 MRH: ya me tengo que ir...nos vemos
 31: ah ok
 31: gracias, nos vemos, espero pronto

Participant 31 is female. She uses the informal form of address in this conversation. This is fairly consistent with the data collected on this participant in the email section. The participant used the formal form of address in one of her emails while she used the informal form three times. Since the participant wrote the one email with the formal form of address at the very beginning of the semester, it is possible that once she formed a view on the social relationship that we shared, she decided to use the informal form.

Participant 35

35: ya recibí **tu** msje sobre que el jueves no hay clases
 35: gracias por el aviso
 MRH: si de nada
 35: mary, ya **recibiste** mis tareas pendientes?
 MRH: si...ya cambié tu promedio a 9.0
 35: ok, gracias

Participant 35 was a male. In this conversation, he used the informal form of address to refer to me. This is consistent with the data collected in the email section where he also uses the informal form of address.

Participant 2

Conversation 1:

2: como **esta**?

MRH: hola. bien y tu

2: pues molestandola

2: para ver si me **puede** decir el significado de unas palabras

MRH: si adelante

2: absent-minded

MRH: una persona que se olvida de todo

.

.

.

2: y open-minded

MRH: open-minded es el opuesto de narrow minded

2: haaaa ok miss

2: que pena con **usted**

2: pero no las encontraba

MRH: esta bien no te preocupes

2: y que **hace** no **tiene** clases

2: hoy

2: ?

MRH: no pero estoy en mi otro trabajo

2: ha perdon miss

MRH: está bien

2: en donde **trabaja** miss

MRH: en un negocio atras de Baskin Robbins

2: ha esta bien

2: que bueno a doble ganancia

2: no **cree**

MRH: jaja si está más o menos bien

2: que bien

2: y a que hora **sale**

MRH: a las 2

2: pues esta super a **hace** cosas en la tarde

MRH: si no esta mal

2: eata bien miss ya no **la** molesto

MRH: jaja ok...nos vemos
 2: ok gracias
 2: mil gracias miss
 2: **cuidese** que **este** bien
 MRH: igual. bye
 2: bye

Conversation 2:

2: hola miss
 2: perdon
 MRH: hola
 2: pero perdi **su** numero telefonico
 2: y no me acuerdo de **su** nombre completo
 2: me los **puede** dar otra ves
 MRH: Mary Heydweiller
 MRH: 044xxxxxxxxxx
 2: gracias miss que **tenga** un buen dia
 2: **cuidese**
 MRH: de nada
 MRH: adios
 2: adios miss

Conversation 3:

2: Hola miss como **esta**?
 MRH: hola
 MRH: bien y tu
 2: bien miss
 2: peron que **la** molesta como siempre
 2: pero no se si me **podria** ayudar con lo de una compocicion
 2: solo quiero que me **ayude** a rebisarla
 MRH: para cuando?
 2: no se si **puede** hoy en la tarde
 2: despues de **su** clase
 MRH: no puedo me voy hoy para semana santa
 2: haaaaaaa
 2: no **va** venir a dar clase
 2: hoy
 MRH: si pero despues de la clase me voy...a las 530
 2: entonces **se** lo puedo llavar **asu** hora de clase
 2: solo quiero que lo **cheque**
 MRH: puedes a las 345?
 MRH: entre mis dos clases?

2: si miss **la** veo alrato
 MRH: ok
 2: bye
 MRH: bye

Participant 2 is a female. In all three of the conversations, she used the formal form of address with me. This is consistent with the other data collected on Participant 2 in the tape-recordings, ethnographical observations and emails. In all three of the conversations, she is asking for favors. Therefore, a possible reason for her use of the formal form of address is that she is using a politeness strategy. Another reason is that, because she was consistent in other speech acts where she was not asking for anything, she chose that form of address based on the speech community that she identified me with.

Participant 37

Conversation 1:

37: Hi teacher, how are u today?
 37: espero **esté** bien, **recibe** un saludo y que **tenga** un buen día!
 MRH: hola gracias
 MRH: tu tambien

Conversation 2:

37: Hi teacher,
 MRH: hi
 37: verdad que me fue mal en el test
 37: en realidad me confundí un poco
 MRH: si no fue el mejor examen para ti
 37: necesito hacer mas para pasar el curso de Inglés
 37: estoy desesperado
 MRH: te ayudo cuando quieras pero tambien estoy ocupada con otras cosas...si

- quieres sugerir un día y una hora adelante
- 37: muchas gracias!! vienen los siguientes test y tengo que prepararme para tener mejor calificación,tengo alguna esperanza teacher
- MRH: si
- MRH: tienes 8.7 en el primer periodo que vale más que el midterm
- 37: Ok teacher, mañana **le** digo si me **puede** dar una asesoría, y el horario
- MRH: ok
- MRH: veamos qué horario funciona para los dos de nosotros mañana
- 37: si teacher, **se** lo voy a agradecer
- MRH: no hay problema

Conversation 3:

- 37: Hola teacher Mary! me imagino que **está** trabajando, hoy es viernes y por fin descanso!
- MRH: jaja gracias por acordarme
- 37: hahahahaha, ok, teacher, normalmente no hago eso, pues sé que el trabajo es mucho y uno espera el fin de semana! que **tenga** buen día!!
- MRH: gracias igual

Participant 37 is a male. He uses the formal form of address in all three conversations. He also used the formal form of address in the email data so his use of the formal form is consistent.

4.3.3 MSN Conversation Analysis

Out of the four participants who had online conversations with me, two were female and two were male. One female and one male used the informal form while the other female and the other male used the formal form. It does not appear that there is any difference in the form of address used by the two sexes in this section, however with the small number of participants it is impossible to make generalizations about the sexes based on just four participants. All four participants were consistent in their form of

address use compared with data collected by other methods so it does not appear that the online chat form of the speech act had an effect on the type of language used.

The change of language medium does not seem to be a factor in the results of these participants because all of the participants used the same forms of addresses in different types of language. This means that the language medium either, does not have an effect on the use of forms of address, or at least these participants do not use it as a criteria.

The setting is not an analyzable factor in this data for the reasons described in the previous section on email data. It is probable that the participants chose which form of address to use based on their relationship with me or into which speech community they place me.

4.4 Discourse Completion Task (DCT) Questionnaires

This section presents and discusses the data gathered through the DCT Questionnaires, which is shown in Appendix B for reference. The table in Appendix E represents the data gathered from the questionnaires. It includes the participants' initials, age and sex. Then it shows the coding done on the participants' responses on the questionnaires for situations one through six, which form of address they say they use with me, why they use that form, if they have ever felt unsure of which form of address to use with me and if so, why. The coding was done by Coder V and me. Coder V was instructed to code the data in the exact same way that Coder G, who coded the data in the previous sections, was. I checked his coding after he did the first few questionnaires to make sure that the coding was done in the same way that Coder G and I did it. The table

is divided into two sections: the males are presented first and then the females in order to more clearly view and discuss any differences in the responses between the sexes. A discussion of the participants' responses will be presented next.

There were fifty-six students included in this study, but only forty-nine are included in this section because seven students did not come to class the day that the DCT questionnaire was given. The participant responses were coded into *tú* (the informal form of address), *usted* (the formal form), *both* (if the participant used both the formal and informal form), and *n/a* (if the participant's response did not indicate either form).

First, I will discuss the form of address used in each situation given in the DCT section of the questionnaire. Figure 5, shown after the discussions for all six situations, shows the results in graphical form for all the situations. Some of the situations were in an in-class setting and others were outside of class. This may help to determine whether the setting of the conversation has an effect on what form of address is used by the students. The topics of the conversation were also either class-related or not related to class. This may also be a factor as to why the students chose one form of address instead of the other.

Situation one asked the participants what they would say if they saw me in the school clinic and I appeared to be sick. This situation was in an in-school setting but it was not inside the classroom. The topic of the conversation is not related to the class or to school. Out of the forty-nine participants, thirty-four used the informal form, twelve used the formal form, two used neither form and one used both forms. When a participant is coded as using neither form, it means that he had written an answer which

did not use a noun or verb referring to me. An example of this is *¿Qué paso?*, which contains no verb or pronoun form referring to me. This might be because the participants are using the indirect off-record politeness strategy discussed in Section 2.3.2. Approximately 70% used the informal form in this situation. This may be due to the setting being outside of the classroom or that the topic of conversation did not pertain to the class. Because of this, it is more likely that the students associated me with their age group speech community or with the student speech community. The function of the speech act may also have had to do with the form of address used. If I appeared to be sick, it means that the students would be in the position to offer me help, thus creating a greater bond of solidarity.

Situation two asked the participants what they would say if they wanted to ask me for help on English grammar in class. This setting is obviously in class and the topic of the conversation is class-related. Twenty-one students used the informal form, sixteen used the formal form and twelve did not use either form. Approximately 43% used the informal form and 33% used the formal form. This is a much more equal distribution between the two forms than in situation one which may be due to the setting and/or the topic of the conversation being class-related. More students opted to use the formal form in this situation than in situation 1, which may have been due to the function of the speech act. Asking for help means that the students may be using a politeness strategy to get that help through forms of address. It also strengthens the association of me with the professor speech community because they are conscious that I have some sort of knowledge that they do not.

Situation three asked the students what they would ask me to find out what I had done for a vacation. This situation specifically stated that they would be asking me this in class; however, the topic of the conversation is not related to the class. For this situation, thirty-one students used the informal form, fourteen used the formal form and four used neither. Approximately 63% used the informal form and 29% used the formal form. This shows a similar distribution to situation one and both this situation and situation one occurred in school but did not ask the students to speak about school-related topics. Although the students were in class, they did not seem as inclined to use the formal form of address such as in situation two. For that reason, it seems that the topic of conversation is more important in deciding what form of address to use with me than the setting. This topic in particular creates solidarity because it asks about my personal life.

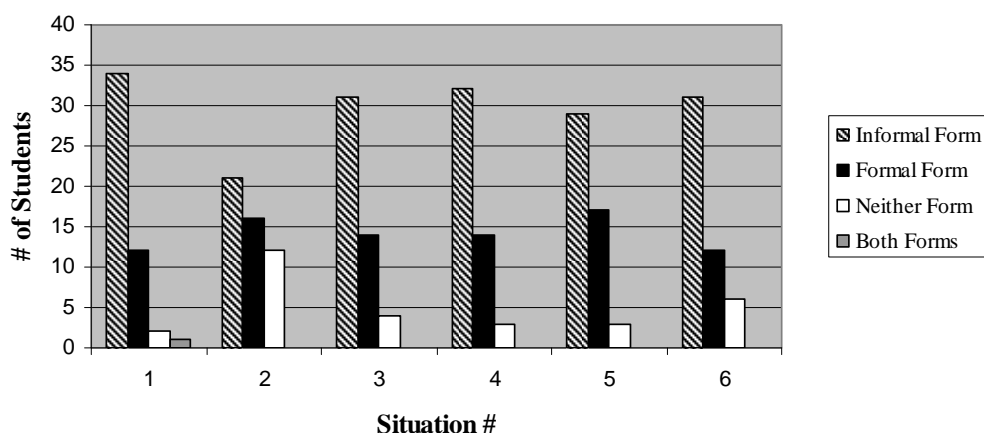
Situation four asked what the students would say if they saw me in the Tigre (a bar/nightclub near the university) in order to find out what time I arrived there. This situation was outside of school and the topic was not school-related. Thirty-two participants (65%) used the informal form, fourteen (29%) used the formal form, and 3 (6%) used neither form. These results are almost equal to those in situations one and three where the topic of conversation was also not related to school. Seeing me in such a setting might reinforce the students' perception of me as a student or as someone of their age group because most professors would not go out to a student bar. If the bonds to these two speech communities are stronger, the informal form of address should be used by more students, which is the case in this situation.

Situation five prompted the students to ask me if I was going to teach the next level of English classes. It was stated in the question that they would be asking me this in

class. Therefore, the setting was in class and the topic was school-related although not directly related to their class. Twenty-nine participants (59%) used the informal form, seventeen (37%) used the formal form and three (6%) used neither form of address. The use of the informal form decreased slightly compared to situations one, three and four and this may be due to the setting being in the classroom and the topic being related to school. However, the use of the informal form is still not as high as in situation two which may be because the topic of this question was not directly related to the class that the students were in as was the topic in situation two. This topic also creates more solidarity because if the students are interested in knowing whether I will be teaching the next level, it is assumed that they are interested in taking it with me and probably have a good relationship with me.

Finally, in situation six the participants were prompted to ask who I was with if they saw me at an American football game. Thirty-one participants (63%) used the informal form of address, twelve (24%) used the formal form and six (12%) used neither. Again, these results are very similar to the responses from situations one, three and four where the settings are outside of class and the topic is not related to school.

Figure 5: DCT Situation Results



From the results provided by the students in the DCT part of the questionnaire, there are two important factors on which to comment. First, it seems that the setting did not matter much as to what form of address was used. The number of participants who used the formal and informal forms was fairly constant regardless of the setting being in and outside of the classroom. One factor of importance was the topic of conversation. It appears that if the topic was school-related, the participants were not as likely to use the informal form of address. Situations one, three, four and six were topics that were not related to school and the number of participants who used the informal form of address was higher than the situations which dealt with school-related topics.

The function of the speech act also appears to have an effect on the form of language used. If the function created a bond of solidarity, more participants used the informal form of address. If the function was asking for help, more students used the formal form of address. The functions are related to politeness strategies and speech communities. Functions that create solidarity are positive politeness strategies and also serve to strengthen my association with the students' age speech community or with the student speech community.

Next, I will discuss the second page of questions in the questionnaire. The first question asks the participants which form of address they believe that they use with me. Fourteen participants (29%) said that they used the informal *tú* form with me. Twelve (24%) said that they used the formal *usted* form and thirty-three (67%) said that they used both the formal and informal forms with me. This may seem contradictory to the percentages shown in the situations from the DCT section of the questionnaire; however, the majority of the students who claimed to use both really did use both in the DCT

questions. It is interesting to note that some participants' answers contradicted the forms of address that they had used in other methods of data collection. Out of the forty participants who participated in the questionnaire and on whom data was collected through other methods, twenty-eight were consistent with previous results. Ten participants wrote that they would use both forms of address but data was only gathered on each of them one time so they may very likely use both forms of address with me if more data was gathered on them.

Only two participants contradicted their previous data. These participants were 5 and 41, both of whom were subsequently interviewed about their responses. The interview data will be presented in the following section. Participant 5 used *usted* in data gathered by tape-recordings and ethnographical observations and used *tú* in emails and the questionnaires. The difference may be due to the nature of the speech acts. The instances in which Participant 5 used *usted* were spoken language while the email data and the questionnaire were written language. Participant 41 used *tú* in data collected via email but said that he used *usted* with me on the questionnaire. However, the DCT responses from Participant 41 show that he used both *usted* and *tú* so it is possible that if there was more data gathered on him he would have used both forms.

When asked why they chose to use a particular form of address (or both), the participants cited four principal reasons for having chosen one form of address over the other. Eighteen participants (37% of the total) said that my status as a teacher inclined them more towards the use of *usted*. This would be a speech community. Fourteen (29%) answered that the type of relationship that they had with me influenced which form they used. Relationships that were closer or made the participant feel more at ease

encouraged the use of *tú* while relationships where the participants felt that they were not at ease pushed the participants towards the use of *usted*. Another fourteen participants (29%) stated that my age (also a speech community) was a factor and made them likely to use *tú*. The fourth principal factor was cited by ten participants (20%) who said that the setting in which the conversation took place was largely responsible for which form of address they used. Generally, they said that formal (mainly in-class settings) prompted the use of *usted* and that *tú* was used in less formal settings (mostly outside of class). These reasons support the theoretical background, which were presented in Chapter 2, as to why a person may choose to use a particular form of address. Two out of the four principal reasons (cited by 66% of the students) were speech communities and this supports my claim that speech communities have an effect on the form of address chosen.

When the participants were asked if they had ever felt unsure about which form of address they should use with me, there was a fairly even division in numbers. Twenty-seven participants (55%) said that they had felt unsure and twenty-two (45%) said that they had not. The following question asked them why they had felt unsure. One reason was that they wanted to express respect for me as a teacher by using *usted* but my age indicated the use of *tú*. This reflects the conflict in my membership to these two speech communities. Some participants said that their relationship with me changed over the course of the semester and as they grew more familiar, they wanted to use *tú*. Some participants also said that they weren't sure what my reaction would be if they used the informal form and for that reason they opted for the formal form.

In regards to the differences between male and female participants in the entire questionnaire, a greater percentage of the females used the informal form of address than

the males. As seen in the results table (with the totals reprinted below in Table 2), the females always had a higher number who chose to use *tú* in the DCT questions than *usted*. The males were approximately divided half and half between the use of *tú* and the use of *usted*. In the multiple choice question, more than double the number of females than males said that they would use just *tú* with me. One possible explanation for the tendency of females to use the informal form of address with me is that since I am also female, they are more likely to want to form solidarity because we all belong to the female speech community. The females also appear to have less doubts of what form of address to use with me according to the answers they reported on the question which asked if they had ever felt unsure about what form to use with me. This may be because of the added incentive of solidarity in the female speech community.

Table 2: DCT Questionnaire Totals

Participant	Age	#	SITUATIONS						Which form?	Felt unsure?
			1	2	3	4	5	6		
Male	Avg. 22	22	tú- 14 usted- 5 n/a- 2 both-1	tú- 9 usted- 8 n/a- 5	tú- 11 usted- 9 n/a- 2	tú- 10 usted-10 n/a- 2	tú- 10 usted-10 n/a- 2	tú- 10 usted- 8 n/a- 4	tú- 4 usted - 7 both-11	yes- 14 no-8
Fem.	Avg. 20	27	tú- 20 usted- 7	tú- 12 usted- 8 n/a- 7	tú- 20 usted- 5 n/a- 2	tú- 22 usted- 4 n/a- 1	tú- 19 usted- 7 n/a- 1	tú- 21 usted- 4 n/a- 2	tú- 10 usted- 5 both-12	yes- 13 no- 14
Totals	Avg. 21	49	tú- 34 usted- 12 n/a- 2 both-1	tú- 21 usted-16 n/a-12	tú- 31 usted-14 n/a-4	tú-32 usted-14 n/a-3	tú- 29 usted-17 n/a- 3	tú-31 ud.-12 n/a-6	tú- 14 usted-12 both-33	yes- 27 no- 22

4.5 Interviews

This section will discuss the data collected through the participant interviews. Once again, for the purposes of this study, only the parts of the transcripts relative to the discussion will be shown in this section. The interview transcripts are presented in Appendix F. There were seventeen participants who were interviewed for this study who were selected based on the data collected on them by the other methods and their responses will be discussed in this section.

First, I wanted to find out what criteria the participants used to decide which form of address to use with me. Out of the seventeen participants, five used just *tú* with me, four used just *usted* and eight used both forms of address. Those who used the informal form of address said that my age (a speech community) and the relationship that they had with me affected their choice of address use. Participants 17 and 23 said that it was just age which influenced their decision to use *tú* with me. Participants 22, 34 and 38 stated that they chose the informal form of address because they felt at ease with me in the class but also that they use the formal form only with older people.

All four of the participants who had used just the formal form of address with me explained that it was due to the fact that I was their teacher. This means that they identified me by my membership to the professor speech community. It seems that age did not affect their decision to use the formal form with me because they all stated that they would use *tú* to speak to an unknown female classmate. This means that the professor speech community carried more weight in their decision than the age speech community.

Those participants who used both forms of address also helped to shed light on the ambiguity of which form of address the students used with me. Four of the participants said that the form of address that they used depended on the setting in which they were when talking to me. Participant 41 said that I was more of an authority figure in the classroom which prompted him to use *usted* but outside of the classroom he could use *tú* with me. It seems that for Participant 41, my link to the professor speech community was strengthened by the classroom setting, which also created a power relationship of student-teacher. Participant 25 stated that while speaking to me during class, office hours or in other school events, he saw us having a teacher-student relationship and, therefore, he used *usted*; however, when we were in an outside of school setting we had more of a friend relationship which let him refer to me as *tú*. Participants 9 and 52 said that in the classroom there needed to be more respect for me as a teacher and they showed this by using the formal form of address but outside of the classroom they identified me as a young person and could use the informal form of address with me. Setting seems to change which speech community bond is stronger for these four participants, making their form of address choice dependent on setting and speech communities combined.

Participant 25 was the only one of the interviewed students to mention conversation topic as being a factor in what form of address they used with me. He said that in a conversation that had to do with grades, the class or school, he would use the formal form of address with me because the student-teacher relationship was stronger. The other students may not have mentioned specifically the conversation topic as a factor

because they did not consciously realize that topic affected their choice of form of language.

Three of the participants explained that the form of address that they used with me changed as the relationship that they had with me changed. Participant 16 said that he viewed me as just a teacher at the beginning and then as he got to know me better he felt comfortable using the informal form of address. Participant 20 said that he starts out using the formal form of address with people that he doesn't know, and then as there is more and more ease in the relationship, he can speak to them using the informal form. Participant 31 also said that when she feels more at ease with a person in their relationship, she uses the informal form of address.

The last participant, 5, was of special interest because he had used the formal form of address in spoken language but the informal form of address in written language. He said that he felt that it was more personal to communicate via the written emails and the questionnaires because I was the only person to receive them and for that reason he used *tú*. On the other hand, in spoken language he preferred to use *usted* because other students could hear what language he used and he felt that it was more appropriate to use the formal form in class to preserve a respectful relationship between the student and the teacher. Participant 5's form of language decision was influenced by not only speech communities and the type of social relationship that he wanted to have, but also the medium and setting.

Fourteen out of the seventeen participants reported that they were taught when to use *usted* by their parents or their schools when they were young. Many said that they were taught that the formal form of address should be used with older people and others

were also taught to use it with teachers, superiors and strangers. This shows that upbringing is also a very important factor.

It is important to note here that all of the participants who were interviewed came from the central part of Mexico (Veracruz, Puebla, Oaxaca and Mexico). Since these four places are all very close, it is very likely that regional differences in how the participants were educated or raised by their parents have been minimized.

4.6 Results Summary

In total, fifty-five students were observed as participants in this study. A general summary of the findings is shown in Appendix G.

The participants were consistent in their choice of which form of address to use with the exception of two who were discussed in section 4.4. Taking into account all of the data gathered, fourteen participants always used the informal form (25.5%), fourteen always used the formal form (25.5%) and twenty-seven used both forms of address (49%). This shows an exactly even distribution between the forms. Participants reported that their choice of which form of address to use with me depended on several factors which included my position as their teacher, my age, setting and their relationship with me. My characteristics of being a teacher and my age were two of the speech communities that I originally believed to have an effect on the form of address that the participants used with me. This indicates that speech communities are a factor in determining which form of address to use, but as seen above, they are not the only factor.

Participants were able to explain why they chose to use one form of address (or both) and they were aware that I was part of different groups such as the teacher group or

their age group. They also stated that setting, type of relationship and upbringing as factors. This shows that they were conscious of at least some of the factors that determined their form of language use.

It seems that sex was not a determining factor in choosing which form of address to use with me. In total for all instruments, the males and females used the forms of address almost in equal numbers (*tú*: 8 females, 6 males; *usted*: 7 females, 7 males; *both*: 14 females, 13 males). The only exception to this was found in the situation part of DCT questionnaire where more females used the informal form than males. This may be because the data was elicited and the students reported language use which does not reflect how they actually use language in natural settings. It may also be due to the fact that there were more students who were observed through DCTs than through other methods. It may be that females really do use the informal form of address more but that the smaller numbers of participants in other instruments did not reflect this difference. I tend to believe that the participants were not making a connection between me and the person at whom they were directing their answers in the situation part of the questionnaire and therefore their responses were not one-hundred percent consistent with their natural speech. I believe this because their free response answers were more consistent with the other data observed and these answers showed that there was no important difference between the forms of addresses used by both sexes. Generally speaking, using the other collected data and the free response questions from the questionnaire, the sexes produce the same results. The following chapter will discuss the implications of these results and this study as a whole.