

THE SOCIAL MEANING OF VARIABLE POLITE *LEÍSMO*
IN MEXICO CITY

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Departments of Linguistics and Spanish & Portuguese,
Indiana University
November 2020

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Date of Defense:
August 28, 2020

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Language is intricately complex and powerful. Even the smallest words, like the *le* pronoun in Spanish, are capable of meaning so much beyond their dictionary definition. This specific pronoun, roughly meaning a formal ‘you’, is found at the intersection of language, context, and society, with implications for understanding language and culture under the broader perspective of human behavior. This dissertation is the first variationist sociolinguistic study with experimental pragmatic component exploring the variable polite *leísmo* phenomenon in Spanish, focusing on the linguistic treatment of our various socially distant interlocutors. Furthermore, it is the first study to look at the production and perception of polite *leísmo* in interactive settings in search for its social meaning and value in Mexico City.

Due to the complex implications of the variation found with this pronoun as direct object (Aijón Oliva, 2006; Parodi, Luna & Helmer, 2012; RAE 2010), the study makes use of complementary theoretical and methodological approaches common to the areas of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. The multivariate conditioning of polite *leísmo* is statistically uncovered through carefully designed production and perception methods: 107 interactive role plays with diverse residents of Mexico City and 92 reports on contextualized perceptual acceptability of this linguistic variation.

Despite its relatively rare use (17%), polite *leísmo* is commonly perceived as acceptable (56%). It illustrates subtle morphosyntactic ambiguities capable of serving as multifunctional (face-enhancing and mitigating) politeness and social mobility projection tools. This is possible due to the multiple linguistic, contextual, and social factors that simultaneously condition its use and acceptability. Polite *leísmo*, then, is a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social relationships and the speaker’s identity within a community by softly signaling speaker’s background (predominantly female educated immigrants), intention (mitigate an imposition and enhance the interlocutor’s image), power dynamics (especially in subordinate positions), and strategic communication (offer and negotiate) through day-to-day speech acts.

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1. Introduction

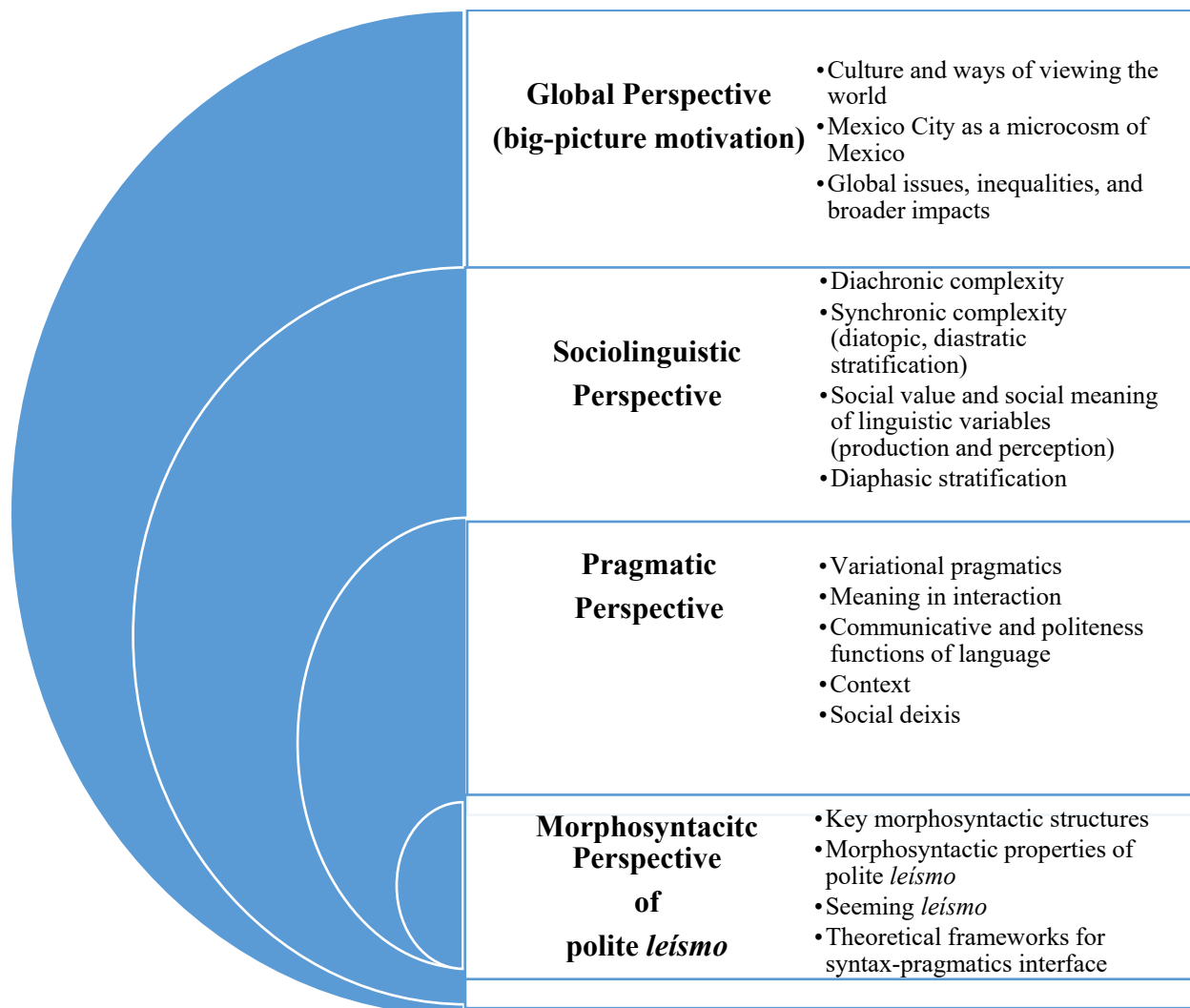
This research is the first variationist sociolinguistic study that includes an experimental pragmatic component exploring variation in the direct-object clitic use in Spanish. Specifically, it is the first study to look at the production and perception of polite *leísmo* in interactive settings, aiming to determine its social meaning and value in Mexico City. In spite of its subtle nature and place in the grammatical system, polite *leísmo* is shown to be an illustrative example of a subtle morphosyntactic ambiguity capable of serving as a multifunctional politeness and social mobility projection tool, due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. Polite *leísmo* is a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social relationships and the speaker's identity within a community by softly signaling speaker's background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic communication through day-to-day speech acts.

While the specific linguistic phenomenon at the heart of this research is rather subtle, infrequent, and requires intricate technical knowledge of morphology, it has significant implications and its importance is best discoverable through a variety of complementary perspectives. For this reason, the dissertation is organized along these perspectives, from the more global implications for broader audiences to the more narrowly focused look at the specificities of the single clitic *le* for specific linguistic audiences. What connects the specific with the general and vice versa is the contextualization of the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* within the **morphosyntactic** perspective on pronouns and social deixis, as part of the larger **pragmatic** perspective on meaning and context of communication, which can be further subsumed as diaphasic variation stemming from the **sociolinguistic** perspective on language variation, and ultimately the **global, anthropological** perspective on language as part of human

behavior, reflecting and reinforcing cultural norms and practices. Particularly the initial review of the literature and the discussion of the results of the study follow this sequential approach, inviting the reader to follow the complex connections that this research unveils. Figure 1.4 schematizes the structure of the presentation of this research and its implications, taking into account the micro- and macro-perspectives on polite *leísmo*.

Figure 1.4

Schematic overview of the structure of the work through complementary perspectives on polite leísmo



I will start with the big-picture perspective and slowly zoom in on the social, pragmatic, and linguistic issues behind the specific phenomenon of interest, before connecting the dots again. I will first contextualize this research at the **global level** of social development in terms of culture and ways of viewing



the world, including social problems and inequalities that historically have been shaping our patterns of life and perceptions. This will open the door to seeing language as behavior, social capital, identity marker, and a tool for reflection and perpetuation of ideals and social realities.



This connection between common human behavior and language is a bridge into the more focused **sociolinguistic** perspective that is explored next. At this level, language variation mirrors the complexity of the dynamic society.

Synchronic social stratification is multifaceted: it is at the same time *diatopic* (i.e. geographic), *diastratic* (i.e. social), and *diaphasic* (i.e. situational). This undoubtedly raises the multiple-perspective challenge brought up earlier. It takes more than one sociolinguist to contribute to the full picture of sociolinguistic landscapes. Tellingly, the three waves of the study of variation began with a *macro-view* of a speech community by way of classifying a large group of people into a few discretely defined classes of geography, sex, age, and social class – the first social variables considered (e.g. Labov, 1963, 1966, 1972). Having established this perspective, however, more nuanced looks have been taken at the nature and dynamics of the smaller social groups and the individuals that comprise them. The *micro-social* variables of contexts, community networks, multiplexity and strength of ties, and specific practices, social roles, and individual identities deepened the sociolinguistic analysis through ethnographic approaches as part of the second wave (Milroy & Milroy, 1985) and then the third wave (Eckert, 2008) of variation research. The ultimate goal of analyzing these various social variables through different

lenses has been the quest for unveiling *social meaning* and social value of a linguistic variable. The idea that language has meaning beyond itself has led to such socially-central linguistic concepts as stigma and prestige, age grading, sociolects, linguistic discrimination, etc. These social meanings in particular become most apparent by comparing *production* behaviors and their perceptual *evaluation* – both sides of the coin that define a speech community (Labov, 1972).



The primary goal of **pragmatics** research, when examining linguistic variation from the *micro*-perspective, is the focus on meaning in context. This is an essential perspective to take in search for the social meaning of polite *leísmo*.

In this case, meaning in context has been called *meaning non-natural* (Huang, 2007) that expands beyond the literal meaning of an utterance or even a word to reveal the speaker's intention, the shared interlocutor knowledge, implicatures, the dynamically constructed contexts, and the co-constructed speaker relationships in interaction. The notion of construction speaks for the dynamic nature of the context (Thomas, 1995): on the one hand, an interaction occurs in a certain situational context and at the same time it creates a context for how the rest of the interaction is shaped. The speakers' *intentions* become the driving force behind the choices they make to construct discourse and the implicatures that arise as a result (Grice, 1968). It has also been long noticed that language is rarely used to simply describe the affairs of the world; instead, it is most often used to accomplish a particular communicative function or to actually "do things with words" (Austin, 1962). The so-called *speech acts* carry various *illocutionary forces* or intentions to produce desirable changes in the affairs of the world by way of dialogue. Language is primarily a communal behavior, and so it can be used with either a *transactional* function (to achieve a certain end: ask, negotiate, receive) or a *relational* function (interaction

being an end in itself as a convivial act: relate, commiserate, make feel good) (Placencia, 2004). The norms for such interactions are largely encompassed in *politeness* protocols, and their various cultural implementations have given rise to a number of politeness theories (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005; Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021). Polite *leísmo* by definition calls for the study of politeness. The existing politeness theories attempt to account for the differences in linguistic behavior depending on the one hand on the relative cultural values of solidarity and autonomy (Curcó, 2007), goals of the interaction in terms of communicative function and illocutionary point (Placencia, 2004), and on the other hand, on the set of situational factors conforming the context: social distance, power differential between the interlocutors, and degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These last ones are the typical pragmatic variables used in variational pragmatics and sociopragmatics research. This study adopts a Hispanist Hernández-Flores's (2004) definition of **politeness** as a “communicative behavior that aims at achieving an ‘ideal’ balance between the addressee’s *face* and the speaker’s *face*” (p. 266, original emphasis).



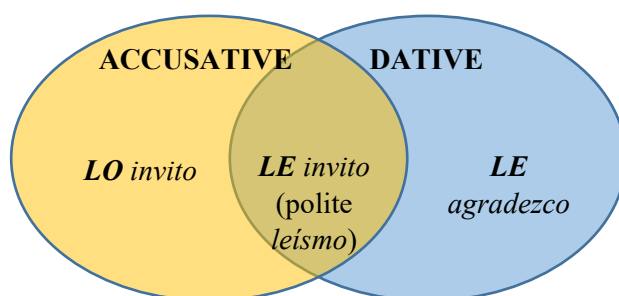
Another important point of connection between social, situational, and linguistic meaning is the area of **social deixis**. While most sociolinguistic phenomena simply get associated with social realities and acquire social meanings of the variants of the same variable, there are also lexical and grammatical resources that encode these social realities in the linguistic deictic form itself. Some examples of social deixis are titles to refer to social hierarchies (e.g. Dr., Mrs., Professor, Your Highness), personal pronouns (e.g. *tú* ‘you-informal’ vs. *usted* ‘you-formal’), their corresponding verb forms (e.g. *estás* ‘you-informal are’ vs. *está* ‘you-formal are’), as well as certain register and discourse markers. The most visible example of social deixis in sociolinguistic research is

the use of second person subject pronouns across languages that lexically encode formality, distance, or another defining feature of the relationship to the interlocutor, such as the famous T-V distinction, characteristic of Spanish, French, Russian, and other languages (Brown & Gilman, 1960). While the focus of previous research has been mostly on subject pronoun forms, the social relationships indexed in them carry over to clitic pronoun forms (e.g. direct and indirect object pronouns) and verbal paradigms. The phenomenon of interest to this research is polite *leísmo* in Mexican Spanish, which is the use of the clitic *le* (typically reserved for dative or indirect object use) in place of the accusative direct object *lo* with reference to the 2nd person singular masculine interlocutor treated with *usted* ‘you-formal’. It can be represented in form of the diagram and exemplified with the following examples in Figure 1.2:

- *Lo invito* ‘I invite you-masc-ACC-formal’
- *Le invito* ‘I invite you-ACC-formal’
- *Le agradezco* ‘I am thankful to you-DAT-formal’

Figure 1.2

Proposed accusative-dative ‘you-formal’ clitic continuum in Spanish



One of the potential reasons why these clitic forms have been understudied is that they depend on their syntactic and semantic context. Particularly in Spanish, for example, clitics depend on the verb argument structure, which includes verb semantics as well as the syntactic and semantic roles of their arguments (subject and one or two objects, depending on transitivity). Therefore,

the final perspective that this research takes is the **morphosyntactic** one. First, the social deixis variable of the 2nd-person singular reference is encoded in two morphological variants: *le* and *lo* – the dependent variable of the study. Among the conditioning variables, the verb semantics is related to the verb’s argument structure: whether it is monotransitive or ditransitive.

Monotransitive verbs are those that only require a direct object, which may be a noun phrase (e.g. *say something*) or a clause (e.g. *say that something is a fact*). Ditransitive verb argument structure is more complex, because it requires a direct and an indirect object (e.g. *give something to someone*). The arguments and their semantic roles contribute to the degree of agentivity and transitivity of the verb, which may affect the intention and the interpretation of *le* and *lo*, as this research suggests. To foreshadow the results, of particular interest to the politeness perspective is the shift of the semantic role of the direct object from theme to beneficiary, which explains how the direct object is being reinterpreted as an indirect object, but this discussion is reserved for later.



Having followed the zoom-in path to the introduction, we can now propose the following close-up perspective on the phenomenon at the center of this dissertation research and situate it in the big-picture context. The central insight and the big takeaway of this research can be summarized as follows.

Polite *leísmo* is an illustrative example of morphosyntactic ambiguity, due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. What has not been known yet is its nature and manner of being a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and potentially redefine social relationships and the speaker’s identity within a community by softly signaling speaker’s background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic

communication with the interlocutor through day-to-day speech acts and acting as a multifunctional politeness and social mobility projection tool.

Table 1.3

Etymological and non-etymological linguistic and syntactic/semantic configurations of second-formal and third-person Spanish clitics

	Typical Linguistic Configuration		
	feminine	masculine	
	LA(S)	LO(S)	LE(S)
<u>Direct Object</u>	etymological	etymological	non-etymological <i>leísmo</i>
• Case: Accusative	(prescriptively correct)	(prescriptively correct)	
• θ Role: Theme/Patient			
<u>Indirect Object</u>			etymological
• Case: Dative	<i>leísmo</i>	<i>loísmo</i>	(prescriptively correct)
• θ Role: Beneficiary	(not considered)	(not considered)	

In traditional terms, the phenomenon of *leísmo* is the use of the dative clitic *le(s)* in place of the accusative *lo/la(s)* to refer to a third-person referent as in *le invito* ‘I invite him,’ commonly used in Spain (see Table 1.3). The etymological use of *le* is precisely its historical and prescriptive function as a marker of indirect object or dative case. In contrast to its etymological use, any other use of *le*, such as a direct object referent in the accusative case, is therefore non-etymological. This difference between etymological and non-etymological uses is not necessarily the same as correct and incorrect, although it does fundamentally invoke the original meanings and structures often promoted by prescriptive grammars. In fact, the non-etymological use of *le* has been officially accepted by the Real Academia Española with reference to human masculine singular direct objects (RAE, 2010) and serves as one of the most salient dialect markers that

distinguish Peninsular from Latin American Spanish varieties (DeMello, 2002; Parodi, Luna, & Helmer, 2012). Nevertheless, a special use of *leísmo*, the so-called **polite leísmo** or *leísmo de cortesía*, has indeed been attested in Spain and the otherwise non-*leísta* varieties of Latin America with reference to a second person singular and formal *usted* as in *le invito* ‘I invite you-formal.’

What motivates this research is that, while multiple dialectology studies and grammars testify to the long-existing presence of polite *leísmo* even in non-*leísta* Spanish dialects (cf. *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, 2005; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999), few sociolinguistic studies explore its conditioning (e.g. Blas Arroyo, 1994; García & Otheguy, 1983; Klein, 1979), and no studies to this day have looked at its perception and interpretation. Furthermore, in spite of the characterization of this particular kind of *leísmo* as ‘polite,’ the pragmatics behind its use in different contexts is largely unexplored. Besides the evident gap in the literature, polite *leísmo* is of interest to sociolinguists and pragmaticians because of its complex characterization through multiple social and pragmatic factors reflective of the speakers’ ability to disambiguate deictic reference as well as to productively manipulate deictic markers in interaction to construct social relationships and achieve social goals. The objective of this research, therefore, is to uncover the social, pragmatic, and linguistic factors accounting for the variation in production and perception of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City.



From a macro perspective, this specific structure has implications for understanding the interplay of conscious and subconscious linguistic and social factors in managing social relationships on a more global level, independent of language and culture. Additionally, the multidisciplinary and multimethod approach to language variation through polite *leísmo* offers evidence of the interplay of

language, cognition, society, and culture, and lays the foundation for supra-disciplinary collaboration in social sciences and humanities within and outside of academia in the future. The overarching perspective of this study is that **polite *leísmo* is an illustrative example of a subtle morphosyntactic ambiguity capable of serving as a multifunctional politeness and social mobility projection tool, due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. It is a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social relationships and the speaker's identity within a community by softly signaling speaker's background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic communication through day-to-day speech acts.**

2. Perspectives on Polite *Leísmo*

Previous research and theoretical frameworks motivating this dissertation range from the more general to the more concrete complementary views. The more global, anthropological, and economic perspective provides the big-picture motivation for the other two: the sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspectives that further translate into the dual methodology. The final and most up-close perspective on the morphosyntax of the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* is complemented by additional interface theoretical perspectives that connect language to context and to the social structure, justifying the multi-method and multidisciplinary approach to language variation and its social meaning.

2.1 Global Perspective on Polite *Leísmo*: Big-Picture Motivation



I will first contextualize this research at the **global level** of social development in terms of culture and ways of viewing the world, including social problems and inequalities that historically have been shaping our patterns of life and

perceptions. This will open the door to seeing language as behavior, social capital, identity marker, and a tool for reflection and perpetuation of ideals and social realities. Specifically, intracultural variations in non-linguistic behavior are meant to clarify the ensuing linguistic variation as signifying practices that are generalizable to similar cultures outside of Mexico and to other cultures around the globe. In order to contextualize this research within this global perspective and highlight its broader impacts, this section first defines *culture* and ways of viewing the world, gradually centering on Mexico City as a microcosm of Mexico. The stratification of social lives and cultural practices exemplified in Mexico City are further connected to the global issues, inequalities, and the broader impacts of this research, setting the stage for taking a closer look at the sociolinguistics of polite *leísmo* in the following subsection.

2.1.1 Culture and Ways of Viewing the World

Culture as a concept has had so many definitions across different disciplines that it proves ever more difficult to define and delimit (Williams, 1995). The term has been most heavily exploited in sociology and anthropology and applied to analyses of high and low culture, artistic versus popular culture, and ranging from the idealist perspective of culture as ways of life to materialist focus on culture as social order, to an increasingly closer look at cultural practice emerging toward the end of the twentieth century. One mid-twentieth century definition reads as follows:

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 86)

Hofstede (1984), a Dutch social psychologist and organizational anthropologist, treats culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group

from another” (p. 21). In Williams’s (1995) *The Sociology of Culture*, the British founding father of cultural sociology conceives of culture “as a *signifying system* through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (p. 13, original emphasis). The overarching theme of treating the notion of culture, whether as a whole way of life or as signifying practices, is the understanding that culture is an integral part of all forms of social activity, including **practices** and **end-products** or artifacts. In sociolinguistics, both sides of the coin are relevant as one helps us understand the social aspects of **linguistic community** and the other the community’s **language** as a signifying practice.

Culture and Society: Collectivism and Individualism. From the zoomed out perspective on culture, societies have been roughly classified into collectivist and individualist cultures (Hofstede, 1984) – two broad types according to their different prioritization of a set of universal values, social systems, morality, cognitive differentiation, economic development, and cultural patterns, among other axes (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). This cultural dichotomy has been probed and supported by cross-cultural psychologists Triandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990), social psychologist and cross-cultural researcher Schwartz (1992), and personality and well-being psychologists Oishi, Schimmack, Diener, and Suh (1998).

According to Triandis and colleagues (1990), **collectivists** show more group-linked elements in their content of self, prioritize the welfare of the ingroup, and their ingroups are perceived as more homogeneous and characterized by more intimate and subordinate social behaviors. **Individualists**, on the other hand, while vary considerably in self-perception, generally define themselves less in group terms, prioritize individual goals more, and conceive of their ingroup and outgroups as heterogeneous, with less of a difference in dissociative and superordinate behaviors toward outgroup members. Societies that are commonly known as

individualist or contractual include the United States and other Anglophone countries, while most research on Africa, Asia, and Latin America identifies them as largely collectivist or communal (Triandis et al., 1990).

Figure 2.1.1.1

Cultural value systems, adapted from Schwartz (1994) and Triandis (1995), reproduced from Oishi et al. (1998)

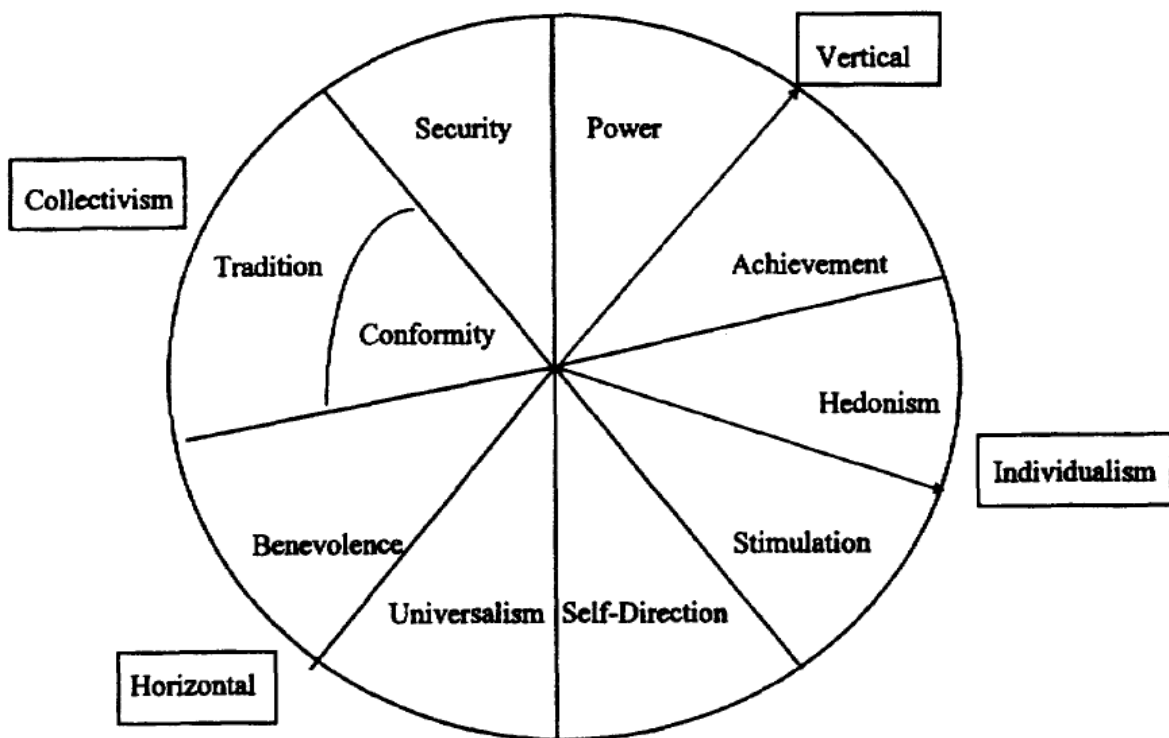


Figure 2.1.1.1 summarizes the cultural value systems, from Schwartz’s (1994) main ten values and Triandis’s (1995) individualism-collectivism dichotomy, conceptualized by Oishi, Schimmack, Diener and Suh (1998) as a dynamic system of values.

The complexity of value-to-goal and individual-to-society relationships leads to reconsider the generalizability and scope of culture in society, challenging especially the traditional geographical culture-as-country boundaries. Two relevant cases in point are studies

examining collectivism-individualism across Mexico: Cienfuegos, Saldívar-Garduño, Díaz-Loving, and Avalos-Montoya (2016) and Díaz-Loving, Cruz-Torres, Armenta-Huarte & Reyes-Ruiz (2018). These studies are presented in more detail the subsequent section on Mexico City as a Microcosm of Mexico. They describe different levels of conservatism and value systems across various regions in Mexico, pointing to the undergoing cultural change toward greater individualism based on values such as autonomy, independence, and equal rights. The found variation in cultural values within one and the same country, namely Mexico, is worth exploring further to understand ensuing linguistic variation as signifying practices defining cultural ways of life. Specifically, the collectivist-individualist dichotomy will be useful to understand different politeness orientations (positive and negative) and their variable linguistic encoding, including that of polite *leísmo*.

Culture and Communication: Interdisciplinary Theoretical Perspectives. The present research is informed by approaches, concepts, and debates from other disciplines that are of particular interest to sociolinguistic research, particularly to the combination of social and linguistic perspectives on communication. For the study of social meaning of polite *leísmo*, it motivates the sociolinguistic variationist approach specifically due to how the social constructs of identity and cultural capital connect culture and communication through social stratification. This section gives an overview of and connects these issues at a global and interdisciplinary level, while the following chapter on Sociolinguistic Perspectives takes a closer look at them as building blocks of sociolinguistic study.

Socially speaking, our identities and group associations can be understood through such social factors as gender, social class, and communities of practice. Language grammar books usually omit these factors, leaving much linguistic variation unaccounted for and stripping it of

power to be used in meaningful ways in negotiating identities and interpersonal relationships. It is, therefore, important to take into account work in anthropology and social theory, and especially consider Bourdieu's (1986) social theory of **cultural capital**, Goffman's (1967) notion of **face** and Tajfel's (1974, 1978) and Elinor Ochs's (1993) **Social Identity Theory**.

Linguistically speaking, one may consider these social concepts to be aligned with Giles's (1973, 2016) **Communication Accommodation Theory**, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2012) **interactive sociolinguistics**, and the **pragmatics politeness theory**, whereby we manage our own and our interlocutors' various identity needs (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and use language variation to position ourselves with respect to others as it has been proposed, for example, in the model of **audience design** (Bell, 1984). Polite *leísmo*, as a strategy that serves multiple social and identity functions, can be viewed as a type of currency that projects the speaker's social status (Weber, 1978) and at the same time dynamically establishes a hierarchical or affiliative association with the interlocutor (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012). The view of language as symbolic capital is part of Bourdieu's (1977b, 1980) **linguistic market theory**, adopted by such anthropological linguists as Heller (2010) in studying the commodification of language in modern societies and extended to alternative linguistic markets by Milroy and Milroy (1985, 1993) in their social stratification of mobile and migrant communities. These theoretical approaches, their complementarity, and relevance for the study of polite *leísmo* are further explored in the Sociolinguistic Perspective section.

Social Perspective on Culture and Communication: Motivating Sociolinguistics.

French sociologist Bourdieu's (1986) influential social theory is largely built on the concept of **cultural capital** that, similar to monetary wealth, stratifies the society into classes according to culturally specific symbolic values, behaviors, and ways of speaking. The language-related

stratification is referred to as **linguistic marketplace** theory (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1980), which relates linguistic practices and variation to the individual's economic activity, such as employment, occupation, and socioeconomic position within the society. Specifically, "a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, i.e. the power and authority in the economic and cultural power relations of the holders of the corresponding competence" (1977b, p. 652). This view is associated with the sociolinguistic notion of **age grading**, where middle-age working adults adopt more standard language in order to ensure success with their higher-stakes responsibilities at work and at home (Wagner, 2012). All of this shows that linguistic systems are not fixed in time or geographically bounded, but rather are products of cultural practices that are carried out by individual speakers and serve as resources for various social processes.

Social stratification, therefore, has much to do with individual notions of self, as situated within larger society. As one approximation to **social identity**, a Canadian-American sociologist Goffman (1967) introduces the notion of *face* as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 5). This notion has been later adopted into linguistic politeness theory with the complementary **positive-negative face** definition of one's social desires for self: to be accepted as a valued member of the ingroup community and simultaneously to be respected as an autonomous individual unimpeded in personal decision-making (Brown & Levinson, 1987). More on politeness is presented in the Pragmatics Perspective section.

This social nature of self and one's social identity is emphasized in British social psychologist Taifel's (1978) **Social Identity Theory**, where one's identity is defined by one's relationships with others through ingroups and outgroups. This is similar to what Milroy and

Milroy (1993) call alternative linguistic markets that stratify the community into social networks, viewed as a more potent social variable than social class.

The social constructs of identity and cultural capital connect culture and communication through social stratification: just as societies are socially stratified, so are linguistic manifestations of social relationships. This theoretical grounding motivates the sociolinguistic variationist approach to studying polite *leísmo*, which is expected to reflect aspects of the dynamic and stratified nature of the society. Uncovering the social stratification of polite *leísmo*, then, will reveal the meaning and social value of it as a sociolinguistic variable.

Linguistic Perspective on Culture and Communication: Motivating Pragmatics.

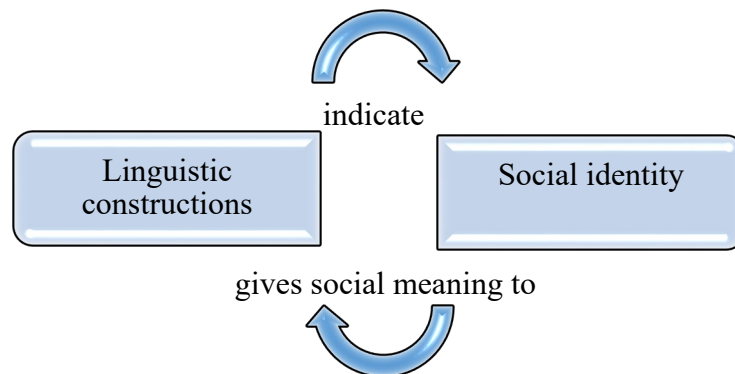
American linguistic anthropologist Elinor Ochs (1993) takes a **language socialization** perspective on social identity construction. According to her, “social identity is not usually explicitly encoded by language but rather is a social meaning that one usually *infers* on the basis of one’s sense of the act and stance meanings encoded by linguistic constructions” (p. 289, original emphasis). The difference between encoded and inferred meaning is similar to the difference between literal and figurative meaning or semantic and pragmatic meaning, which linguistically often takes form of direct and indirect utterances, respectively, but has its repercussions for social identity encoding and inference (cf. Wilson & Carston, 2007). Figure 2.1.1.2 shematizes this dynamic and cyclic relationship between social identity and linguistic constructions: while linguistic constructions indicate social identity, the social identity gives social meaning to linguistic constructions.

The locus of this dynamic construction of social identities through linguistic constructions, are what Ochs (1993) calls various **social acts**, such as requesting, contradicting, or interrupting. Success of the projected social identities, then, involves inference and

interaction, cemented in shared cultural and linguistic conventions for constructing acts and stances, shared economic, political, and other social histories of sociolinguistic associations, and other interlocutors' active role in ratifying the speaker's attempts.

Figure 2.1.1.2.

Dynamic and cyclic relationship between social identity and linguistic constructions (based on Ochs, 1993)



Pragmatics literature refers to these social acts as **speech acts** (Austin, 1962; Huang, 2007; Searle, 1969). While speech acts and the related discussion on linguistic politeness are discussed in greater detail in the Pragmatic Perspectives section, it is important to note their importance in cultural and intercultural research for the more global perspective on culture and communication. Specifically, speech acts have been a major focus of linguistic research into culture and crosscultural differences, and this dissertation research is no exception. By comparing and contrasting linguistic conventions, cultures corresponding to different languages have been classified along a continuum of **positive- and negative-politeness** cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987), closely mirroring the collectivist-individualist classification in social research (Hofstede, 1984; Oishi et al., 1998; Schwartz, 1992; Triandis et al., 1990). Specifically, negative politeness refers to the culturally appropriate linguistic behavior of showing politeness through mitigation of imposition and highlighting each interlocutor's individuality and autonomy. Positive

politeness, on the other hand, is expressed through linguistic devices that bring the interlocutors together and strengthen favorable and desirable interdependence. For example, the commonly mitigated English language that is most commonly directed at the speaker, or *I*, is known as a negative-politeness culture (Márquez Reiter, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009), while languages such as Spanish and Russian that use more direct, unmitigated constructions, revolving around the *you*, or the listener, are referred to as positive-politeness cultures (Filimonova, 2015; Ogiermann, 2009; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010). Just as with the collectivist-individualist classification, positive-negative politeness is not a black-and-white dichotomy, especially considering fuzzy geographical, economic, social, and situational borders of real-life contexts (for example, see Curcó, 2007; Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021; Watts, 2003).

The culture-related concepts of language socialization, speech acts, and culturally appropriate politeness pave the way for research on polite *leísmo* as a culturally meaningful linguistic manifestation of social identity. Methodologically, these theoretical concepts motivate a pragmatic approach to the study of polite *leísmo* as meaningful in culturally appropriate contexts.

Constructivist Perspective on Culture and Communication: Merging Perspectives.

The interactional sociolinguistics view of culture (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012) is based on ethnography of communication and takes a different approach to Bourdieu's (1977b, 1986), namely the **constructivist approach** to communicative practice, merging societal and interactive forces. Focusing specifically on language as corollary of culture, instead of viewing language as embodied norms, beliefs, and values, we can view language as interactively constituted in specific situations and within culturally framed encounters. Therefore, instead of defining speakers by the cultural capital they possess, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2012) seek to

determine “what it is about speakers’ linguistic and cultural background that leads to either potentially satisfactory exchange or misinterpretation” (p. 68). **Communication Accommodation Theory** (Giles, 1973, 2016; Giles & Ogay, 2007) and Bell’s (1984) **Audience Design** subscribe to the same constructivism foundation by focusing on the dynamics of adjustments individuals make during discourse, assuming strategic, cooperative decrease of social distance with the interlocutor by adapting to his or her discourse style. While both theories view language as the main tool for accommodation, the Communication Accommodation Theory, developed in the discipline of social psychology, also takes into account nonlinguistic behaviors, reminding us that language is just one of cultural practices defining communities (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

Bourdieu’s (1977a) embodiment and the more recent constructivist perspectives on language as culture (Bell, 1983; Giles, 1973, 2016; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012) reflect a similar perspective shift in the study of sociolinguistic variation, moving from macro-social stratification of speech communities (Labov, 1966, 1972) to micro-social view of communities of practice and dynamic construction of their linguistic and social realities (Eckert, 1988, 2006, 2008; Milroy & Milroy, 1985). This dissertation takes into account both the macro and the micro perspectives in their theoretical and methodological approaches, in order to connect the meaning of complex individual interactions to their meaning for the society more generally.

Language, therefore, is seen as behavior, social capital, identity marker, and a cultural practice that reflects and perpetuates ideals. By studying the linguistic choices conditioned by social and contextual factors across space, this project offers useful sociolinguistic and pragmatic input to many disciplines, such as **anthropology, social psychology, and cognitive science** – all attempting to understand language as our symbolic capital and cultural practice as well as the

resources we have to accommodate language's social function in real-time interaction. Polite *leísmo*, as a phenomenon found at the intersection of morphosyntax, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics, highlights the value of **dialogue** among these and other disciplines. As anthropology provides depth to the study of language through qualitative approaches, the sociolinguistic approach offers quantitative support and big-picture comparisons. Pragmatics, on the other hand, stresses the dynamicity and context-dependency of meaning in interaction. The uncovered generalizations can inform cognitive sciences about the malleability of cognitive categories associated with processing multiple social and contextual variables simultaneously. In turn, understanding the cognitive structure will help social psychologists understand how humans are able to manage multiple personal and group identities, while enriching anthropological approaches to culture and human behavior. Polite *leísmo* and my research approach ultimately exemplify the interrelated organization of multiple dynamic and nonlinear systems studied in ecology, economics, computer science, sociology, and more, formulated as a supra-disciplinary complexity theory.

2.1.2 Mexico City as a Microcosm of Mexico

This research is situated in Mexico City, which can be viewed as a microcosm of Mexico. What this means is that due to various historical, geographical, and socioeconomic factors, the sociodemographic diversity of the country finds at least some representation in the metropolitan center of Mexico. Diversity is essential for variationist research: first, in order to give a faithful account of real-life communications in a diverse community; second, for generalization purposes, where a stratified sample is taken to represent the larger society; and finally, for prediction purposes, due to the applicability of the results of the sample to the society it

represents now and potentially in the future. This section presents several sociodemographic realities of Mexico as a country and of its metropolitan center, represented by Mexico City and the surrounding Mexico State. This metropolitan center is also locally known a major part of the Valley of Mexico (*el Valle de México*), which is used here interchangeably¹. Specifically, this section outlines Mexican sociodemographic landscape in terms of the social and economic dynamic realities of the population. The linguistic landscape corresponding to this sociodemographic diversity is addressed in the following Sociolinguistic Perspective section.

Mexico City, *Ciudad de México*, or its conventional acronym *CDMX*, is the capital of Mexico. It is one of Mexico's 32 federal units, with the population of 9,031,213 of the total population of the country of 126,577,691 (INEGI, 2019). Mexico City not only has the highest population of any city, but also the highest population density (5,967) in the country, followed by Mexico State (724), against the national average of 61 inhabitants per square kilometer. These population characteristics make Mexico City, along with the surrounding Mexico State, the **metropolitan center of Mexico**, as mapped in Figure 2.1.2.1.

Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, or INEGI in Spanish, is the most authoritative source of the dynamic demographics of the country. The Institute's publications, interactive website tools and maps, and original databases are available to the public and are used here to paint the sociodemographic landscape of Mexico City as a microcosm of Mexico, and therefore contextualize the present research and its sample population with potential generalizations to the national level. A number of INEGI's reports and datasets are consulted

¹ The Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico, technically includes all of Mexico City, 59 of the 125 municipalities of Mexico State, as well as one municipality of a bordering Hidalgo state (CONAPO, 2005). Due to the large territorial correspondence (and especial likeliness of geographic mobility), availability of census data, and the lack of a better term in reference to Mexico City and Mexico State together, the term Valley of Mexico is adopted to refer specifically to this geographic complex.

throughout this section, including the *Encuesta nacional de dinámica demográfica* (INEGI, 2014a), *Anuario estadístico y geográfico por entidad federativa* (INEGI, 2019), the interactive Statistics eXplorer (INEGI) online tool for diachronic and current data up to 2017-2019, and several of the most recent census reports. The reported numbers and trends cover a period of the last five years, from 2014 to 2019, and represent the most current demographic information until the new 2020 census data becomes available.

Figure 2.1.2.1

Map of Mexico, Mexico State, and Mexico City (INEGI, 2018)

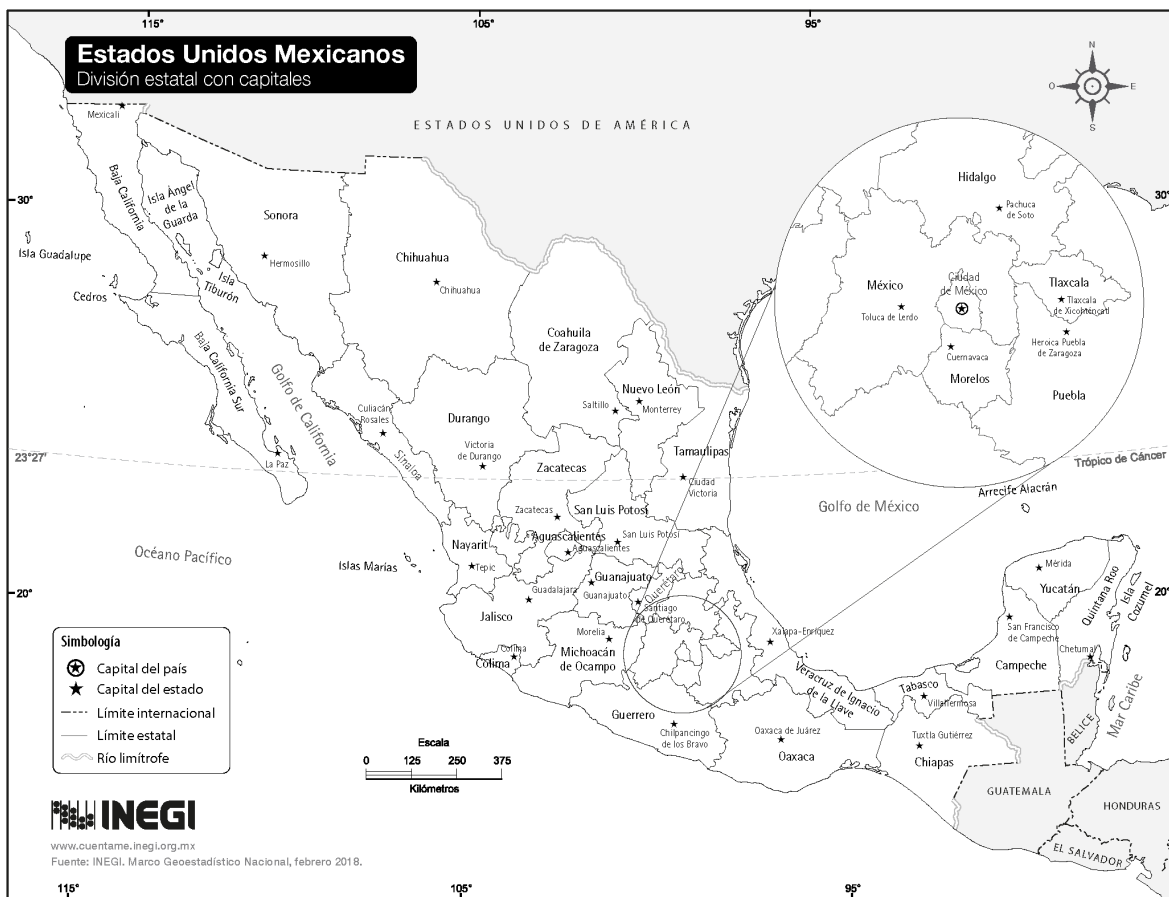


Table 2.1.2.2 summarizes some of the defining sociodemographic factors for Mexico as a country, Mexico State, and Mexico City, based on the latest available data from INEGI. This table visually introduces a selected number of aspects of the sociodemographic diversity of the

country and the Valley of Mexico, in terms of general population trends, sex, age, education, socioeconomic level, geographic mobility, and language contact. The rest of this section is structured to present a general but succinct portrait of the population, its mobility, and some relevant features of its daily life and social relationships across the country and its capital center. These factors are important in understanding social stratification of the population as explanatory forces behind sociolinguistic variation of polite *leísmo* at the heart of this research, but also to introduce Mexico as part of the world map for the global perspective.

Table 2.1.2.2

Sociodemographic comparison of Mexico City, Mexico State, and national profiles

	National (year)	Mexico State (year)	Mexico City (year)
Population	126,577,691 (2019)	17,245,551 (2019)	9,031,213 (2019)
Population density	61 (2015)	724 (2016)	5,967 (2015)
Men-women ratio	49-51% (2019)	49-51% (2019)	48-52% (2019)
Median age	27 (2015)	27 (2015)	33 (2015)
Literacy	93.6% (2015)	95.8% (2015)	97.7% (2015)
Years of schooling	9.5 (2018)	9.8% (2018)	11.2 (2018)
Non-poor population	21.9% (2018)	20.4% (2018)	33.3% (2018)
Net Migration	-0.2 (2014)	1.2 (2014)	-3.1 (2014)
Indigenous population	21.5% (2015)	17.0% (2015)	8.8% (2015)
Indigenous language-speaking population	6.5% (2015)	2.7% (2015)	1.5% (2015)

Population. The portrait of the population under study considers the common macro-social factors, namely age, sex, education, socioeconomic status, and origin or ethnicity (see the Sociolinguistic Perspective).

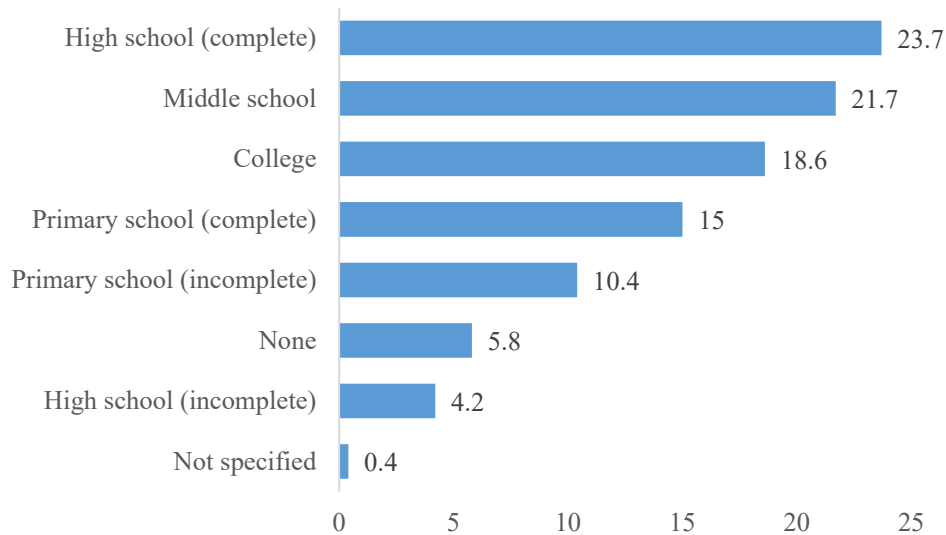
The median **age** of the population in Mexico City is a rather young 33 years, while the country's median is even younger at 27 (INEGI, 2015). In terms of gender, the population is made up of 49% **men** and 51% **women**, according to the country statistics (INEGI, 2015). Based on the 2015 census, 93.6% of the country's population aged 15 and above is literate, with the highest **literacy** rate being in Mexico City (97.7%). Mexico City also has the highest average of **schooling years** at 11.1, which nears the 12-grade compulsory education target, compared to the national average of 9.2.

A series of recent education reforms, focused on **compulsory education**, have significantly shaped the education reality in the country. Compulsory education was proclaimed for preschool education in 2002, for primary school in 2009, and for middle and high school in 2012. The most recent reform was passed in May of 2019, during the course of this research, by president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, adding college education to the obligatory level of education (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 2019), which is certain to affect subsequent generations and social stratification along the education dimension in Mexico in future studies.

At the present time, however, the national population can be divided roughly into thirds around the middle school education: 31.2% of the population do not reach middle school, 25.9% remain at the middle school level as the highest completed level, and the remaining 42.3% are those with complete degrees above the middle-school level, including high school, college, and beyond (INEGI, 2015). Figure 2.1.2.3, recreated from the INEGI data on the country population over 15 years old, illustrates these rates by highest completed level of education. An increased literacy rate nationwide is leaving fewer and mostly older citizens (aged 65 and older) without education, of whom women represent two thirds (INEGI, 2015).

Figure 2.1.2.3

Percent of national population of 15 years and older by education level (recreated from data from INEGI, 2015)



Educational opportunities have always been connected to the **socioeconomic status** of the population, albeit indirectly. INEGI’s National Survey of Occupation and Employment (*Observatorio Laboral*, 2019) from the last quarter of 2019 reveals that the majority of the employed 58.7% of Mexico’s population are subordinate employees, while almost 30% are self-employed, and much fewer act as employers. The largest part of the workforce (19%) is concentrated in the commerce sector, and has up to high school education. Most of the minority college-educated population is found in the prestigious areas of health and education (70%), professional services (55%), and the government (46%), in contrast to the well-represented but less prestigious agriculture sector with workers with predominantly either no education or primary education (58%). Figure 2.1.2.4 helps to contrast the employment numbers with college education rates across the work sectors nationally.

Figure 2.1.2.4

National 2019 employed population (in millions) and the college education rates by work sector (Observatorio Laboral, 2019)

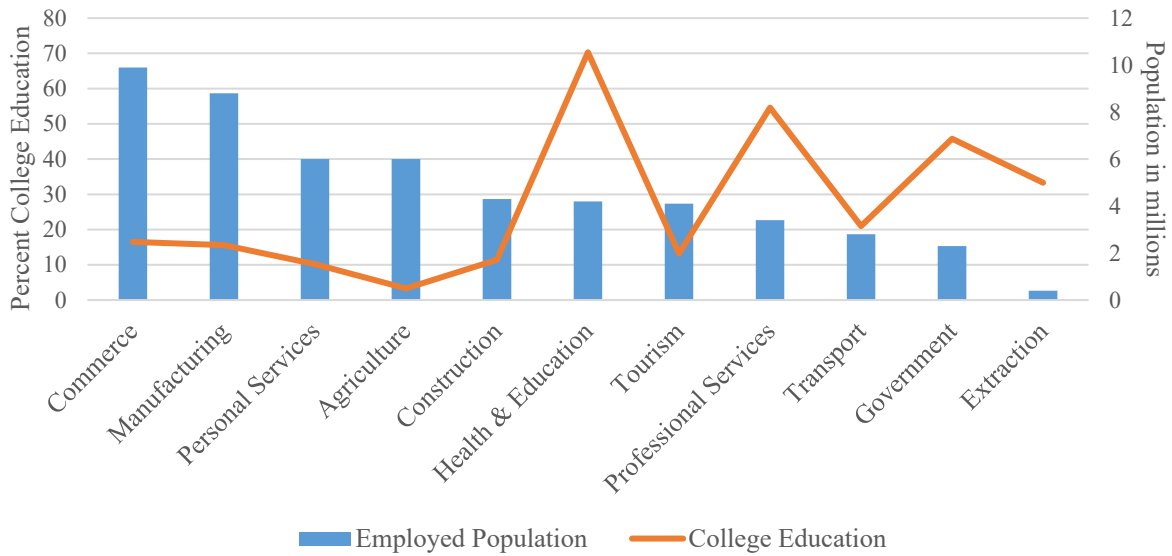


Figure 2.1.2.5

National 2019 employed population (in millions) and the average monthly income (in Mexican pesos) by work sector (Observatorio Laboral, 2019)

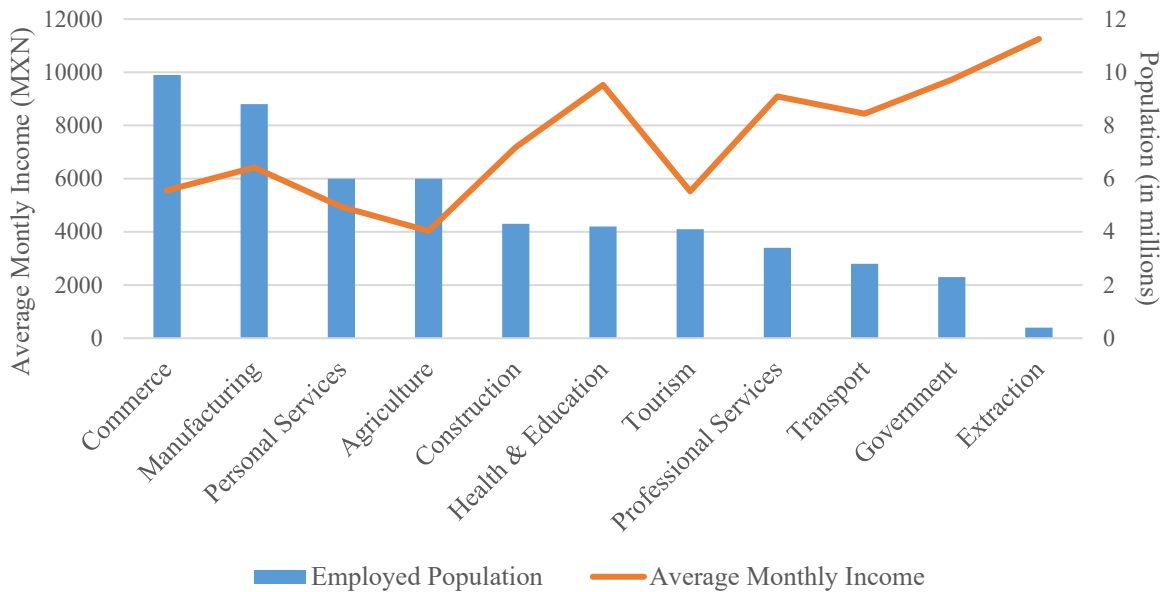


Figure 2.1.2.5 shows that the most populated sectors receive lower income than the less common sectors, which to some degree reflects unequal education levels characterizing the different occupations. The three areas with the highest college education requirement, however, as pictured in Figure 2.1.2.4, more faithfully coincide with the highest income: health and education, professional services, and the government.

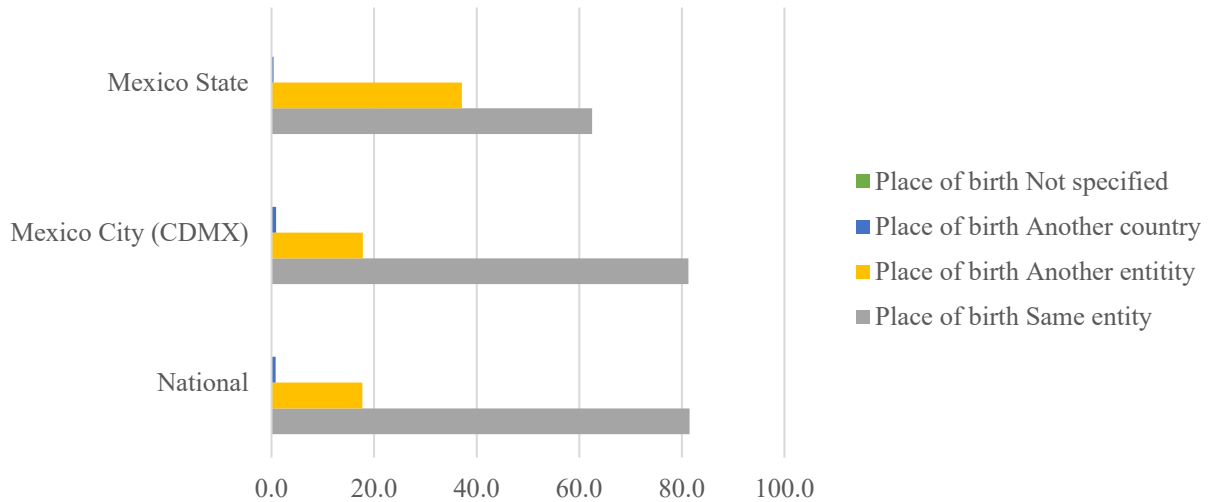
Based on these Figures 2.1.2.4 and 2.1.2.5, which correlate education, occupation, and income, an average socioeconomic status for Mexico is represented by occupations in commerce and manufacturing, which do not require a college degree, and which are characterized by a below-average monthly income.

Finally, the country profile requires a description of the **origin and ethnicity** of the population, as Mexico is a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society, although this diversity is not equally represented or embraced across the nation.

INEGI's Dynamic Demographics National Survey (2014a) provides data on diversity of origin of the Mexican population across the country. Figure 2.1.2.6 shows that, nationally, about 80% of the population remains residing in their original entity, which coincides with the population of Mexico City. This means that the other 18% of the national population and 18% of Mexico City's population are born in another state (also known as federal entity) and are immigrants to their place of residence at the time of the survey. Mexico State stands out as the federal entity with a high number of immigrants from another entity (37%) and forms part of a handful of other states with over 30% of immigrant population: Baja California (40.9%), Baja California Sur (38.7%), and Quintana Roo (50.1%). This information further informs the portrait of mobility taken up later.

Figure 2.1.2.6

Total population by state and its percent distribution by place of birth (INEGI, 2014a)



What adds stronger significance to the difference in origin is the diversity among the places themselves. Different federal entities are distinguished not only by their geography, but also by multiple socioeconomic and sociodemographic factors, among which are ethnicity and language. Based on the 2015 government data, about 7,382,785 persons in Mexico over 3 years of age are speakers of one of the identified 72 indigenous languages (although the National Institute of Indigenous Languages of Mexico defines them as 68 officially recognized linguistic groups, containing a total of 364 languages). At the national level, this translates to about 7% of the population. The percentage is even higher, however, considering that a great majority of the ethnically indigenous population no longer speak the language: 21.5% of the national population self-reports as indigenous and 12.3% are monolingual in their language without knowledge of Spanish. Figures 2.1.2.7 and 2.1.2.8, captured from INEGI's Statistics eXplorer online tool, provide a general overview of the country in comparison to Mexico City and Mexico State in terms of the self-identified indigenous population. The states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Yucatan

are home to the highest ethnic diversity of the country. Nevertheless, there are areas of Mexico City, and even more so of Mexico State, where indigenous population is representatively high.

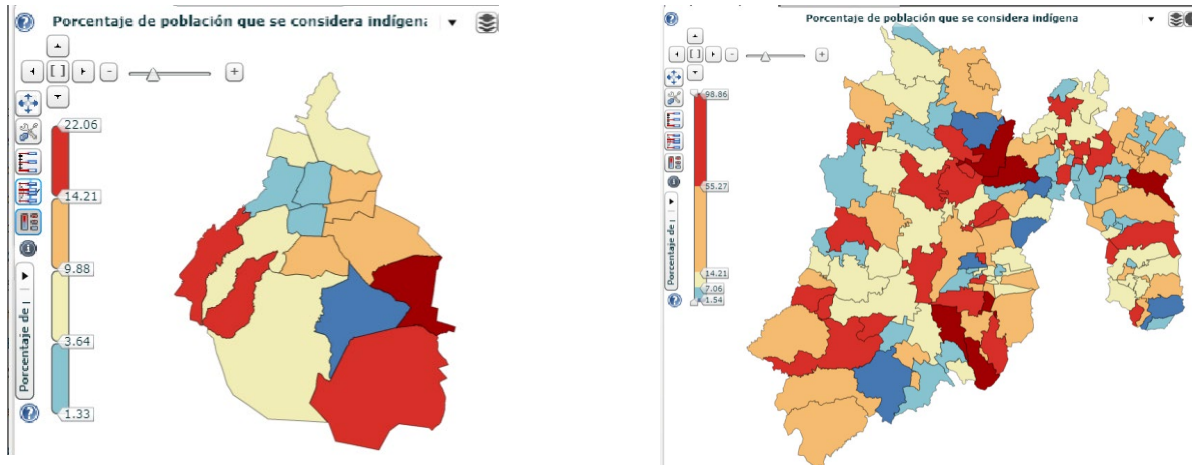
Figure 2.1.2.7

National distribution of self-identified indigenous population (INEGI, 2018)



Figure 2.1.2.8

Mexico City (left) and Mexico State (right) self-identified indigenous population (INEGI, 2018)



Less numerous, but certainly worth mentioning, are Afro-descendent Mexican nationals and other nationalities in Mexico. Based on the 2015 data, the Afro-descendents constitute 1.16% of the national population, while 0.4% of the population are not Mexican nationals. The diversity of the origins and ethnicities of Mexico inhabitants, as well as the fact that much of this diversity is found in the Valley of Mexico, leads to the observation of high mobility of the population that also characterizes the country profile.

Mobility. The sociodemographics of any country are dynamic and constantly in flux. One important way to show this reality is by considering population mobility. Two types of mobility are essential for the purposes of research on linguistic variation: geographic mobility and socioeconomic mobility. Geographic mobility revolves around the macro-social factor of origin and assumes language contact and accommodation (see the Sociolinguistic Perspective). Socioeconomic mobility is a product of a complex system of such macro-social factors as social class, education, occupation, sex, and age.

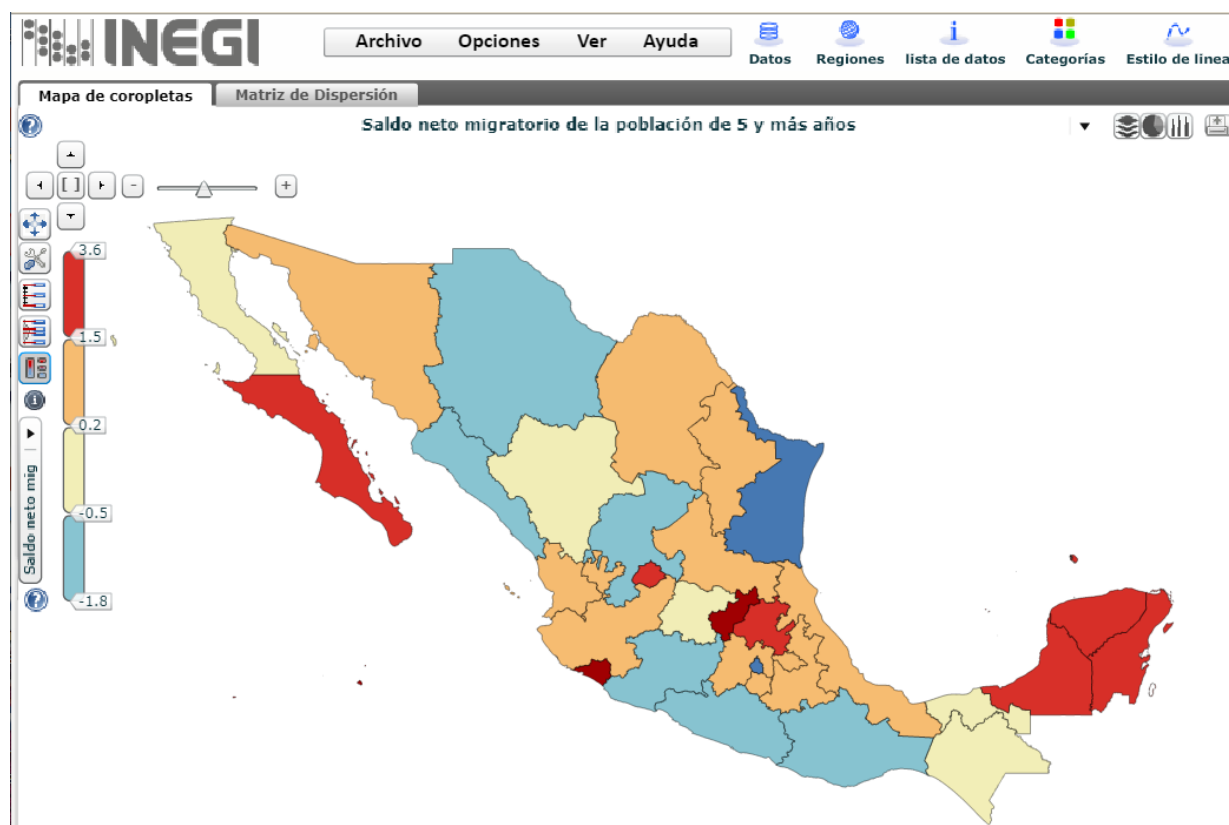
Very briefly, I will begin with **geographic mobility**. In view of its highest population and population density, Mexico City is the only federal entity that is no longer growing, remaining at a steady, almost invariable **growth rate** of -0.2 between the time periods 2000-2010 and the more recent 2010-2015. The surrounding Mexico State's growth is a positive 1.4, but this rate is also unchanged from the beginning of the century. Figure 2.1.2.9 illustrates national net migrations.

Relatedly, Mexico City has the most negative net **migration** rate in the country (-3.1), meaning that it loses more citizens than it gains (INEGI, 2014a). At the same time, Mexico State is characterized by a positive 1.2 net migration rate, meaning that population tends to migrate in more than out of it, and most of the influx is precisely from Mexico City. The country's

migration patterns vary, from Mexico City's -3.1 to +4 in the state of Colima (INEGI, 2014a), as illustrated in Figure 2.1.2.9, captured from INEGI's Statistics eXplorer online tool.

Figure 2.1.2.9

National net migration of population of 5 years old and older (INEGI, 2014a)



The reasons for internal migration, last surveyed in August of 2009, include family unification (45.5%), job search (17%), job change (10.4%), education (7.5%), public or violent insecurity (6.4%), with a few other or unknown causes (13.2%) (National Survey of Dynamic Demographics, 2014). These percentages only apply to the portion of the population that moves from their place of origin, which is about 18% at the national level and at the level of Mexico City (Figure 2.1.2.6). While almost half of these migrations are family-related, the socioeconomic reasons are also notable and worth exploring further as part of socioeconomic mobility.

Socioeconomic Mobility. According to the National Survey of Dynamic Demographics (INEGI, 2014a), the socioeconomically related reasons for internal migration nationally are job search (17%), job change (10.4%), and education (7.5%), connecting geographic to socioeconomic mobility.

Socioeconomic mobility is a product of a complex system of such macro-social factors as social class, education, occupation, sex, and age, suggesting that social class is not a simple or static factor. Moving along a socioeconomic scale may have a number of manifestations, from new educational opportunities, to changing occupational activity or sector, to experiencing changes in pay or employment status, to relocation, among others. Fluctuations in the country's economy, such as this century's growth of informal economy yet lack of national growth (Centro de Estudios de las Finanzas Públicas, 2018), are built of fluctuations in individual lives of its citizens, which in part define their socioeconomic mobility.

While gender does not have an inherent link to socioeconomic status, the differences in social roles explored further in the Sociolinguistic Perspective section do account for socioeconomic opportunity and position of women with respect to men. For example, men are significantly more present on the labor market than women (59% vs. 41%, INEGI, 2015, based on the 2014 Economic Census). These percentages vary greatly from sector to sector, where the agriculture sector is almost categorically male (90%), while commerce reaches a close balance with 52% men and 48% women (INEGI, 2014b), and yet most domestic and caretaking activities are almost categorically female and furthermore unpaid (Rodríguez Abreu & García Guzmán, 2020). Nevertheless, Mexican society, just as the rest of the world, is undergoing important social changes that offer greater educational and professional opportunities to women, and therefore result in growing socioeconomic mobility of women (Zabludovsky, 2007). This mobility is

further supported by longitudinal observations in changes of employment, occupational activity, and sector, whereby women have been generationally increasing in their advancement in salaried positions across their work life span (Mansini, 2016). The present research quickly discovers and attempts to give account of these trends in socioeconomic status as a complex social variable, consisting of dynamic changes on generational and individual lifespan scales.

Social Life Panorama. The characteristics of the population and its dynamic, mobile lives opens the door to anticipating complex patterns in the population's social lives, defined by social positioning, experiences, identities, relationships, and aspirations. Once again, what happens at the national level is composed from individual lived experiences, often communicated and reinforced through language.

At the national level, various changes can be observed in the social and political profile of the country, which is further better understood in comparison to the global picture. The Social Progress Imperative ranks 149 world's countries according to multiple dimensions reported by the most authoritative sources based on census and evaluation research, to describe and compare social progress worldwide since 2014. Mexico's current index of social progress is 71.51, which is above the world's average of 64.47. This index number is the average of three compiled scores for basic human needs (82.31), foundations of wellbeing (74.67), and Opportunity (57.54). The basic human needs category comprises scores for nutrition and basic medical care (92.53), water and sanitation (95.71), shelter (87.33), and personal safety (53.68) – the latter score being below the world's average of 61.82. Foundations of wellbeing include scores for access to basic knowledge (81.93), access to information and communications (81.37), health and wellness (65.26), and environmental quality (70.13) – all above the world averages. Finally, opportunity comprises of scores for personal rights (77.68), personal freedom and choice (60.59),

inclusiveness (48.62), and access to advanced education (43.27) – all above world average, except that personal freedom and choice is right at the average of 60.55.

These social realities translate into values, norms, and practices of the individuals' identities, histories, and day-to-day experiences. It is impossible and beyond the scope of this work to describe all of the social life intricate correspondences with the observed national and global patterns. What is most relevant to this work is to connect the above needs and rights with the cultural values conceptualized by Oishi, Schimmack, Diener, and Suh (1998) as a dynamic system of values (refer back to Figure 2.1.1.1, subsection on Culture and Ways of Viewing the World), according to which Hispanic cultures have traditionally been recognized as collectivist or communal (Hofstede, 1984; Omar, Ferreira, Souto, Delgado, Assmar, González, & Galáz, 2007). This social reality is being challenged with the social changes that Mexico as a country has been undergoing in the most recent decades and further challenging the traditional geographical culture-as-country boundaries.

Cienfuegos, Saldívar-Garduño, Díaz-Loving, and Avalos-Montoya (2016) study two different regions of Mexico: Mexico Valley and the state of Guanajuato, characterized by different levels of conservatism. While Mexico had been traditionally considered, along with other Latin American countries, a collectivist culture, a survey of 420 young-to-middle-age respondents from both states shows mid-high indices for both collectivism and individualism. The values included in the study are conformity, group cohesion, egocentrism, self-affirmation, cooperation and agreeableness, competitiveness, familism, collectivist adjectives, horizontal individualism adjectives (e.g. authentic, free, independent), and vertical individualism adjectives (competitive, special). Guanajuato participants match Mexico Valley responses on most of the values, but showing significantly greater indices of egocentrism, self-affirmation, familism, and

horizontal individualism, among which the highest individualist values are expressed by female participants. While the authors fail to draw attention to the fact that this variation is largely associated with the younger layer of population (average age of 24.1), they nevertheless make an important adjustment to the dichotomous view of culture.

An even more recent comparison of four regions of Mexico considers two cultural axes: individualism-collectivism and vertical-horizontal values – across Mexico City, Guanajuato, Tabasco, and Sonora states (Díaz-Loving, Cruz-Torres, Armenta-Huarte & Reyes-Ruiz, 2018). A sample of 990 urban participants rated 39 cultural statements, where 4 possible cultural profiles were significant for all regions except for Sonora. Of the cultural profiles, the highest values were expressed for horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism across the four regions, followed by some vertical individualism and vertical collectivism dimensions. A positive correlation between the educational level and horizontal individualism was also found. Along with the consideration of the young average age of the sample of 24.5, the authors propose that Mexico, although still largely collectivistic, is undergoing cultural change toward greater horizontal individualism based on values such as autonomy, independence, and equal rights.

One specific example of changing social relationships and realities that becomes significant in the present research in light of the more global changes, is the meaning of *compadrazgo* ('co-parenting') tradition and relationships in Mexico City. The role of *compadre*, or co-father, has its roots in the Catholic tradition of baptizing a child in order to provide a good-life example and protection in case anything happens to the parents. The person or the couple baptizing the child would be the child's *padrinos* ('godparents'), at the same time becoming the actual parents' *compadres* ('co-parents'). This ritual kinship used to be called a cultural universal for Latin America until relatively recently (Mendoza Ontiveros, 2010). It has also been noted in

the literature and in this research that this traditional co-parenting relationship with non-family traditionally establishes a special type of ceremonial relationship often socially indexed with an *usted*, or the ‘you’ of solidarity defining *compadrazgo* (Álvarez Muro & Carrera de la Red, 2006; Vázquez Carranza, 2009). A similar ritual of establishing *padrinos* and *compadres* in modern times takes place during other religious and non-religious life events, such as the first communion, a girl’s 15th birthday (*quince años*), and a wedding. In Mexico, this tradition has been changing over time and geographically in parallel with socioeconomic and political changes in the society (Mintz & Wolf, 1950), leading to social commentary and sometimes criticisms for its acquired connotation of financial responsibility, as the Results of this work illustrate. Nowadays, it is being increasingly delimited to the close friends and family circle, redefining these traditional relationships in the more individualist direction and carrying with it corresponding language change in address terms and the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* under study. This and other situational configurations of daily life communication in Mexico City are described in the Pragmatic Perspective section and form the fundamental part of the methodology of this study in order to understand how people actually talk.

The study’s focus on the metropolitan center of Mexico as a microcosm of the entire country means to recognize the great diversity concentrated in Mexico City, where most of the country finds some representation in terms of population, mobility, and social lives. By some indicators, it is Mexico City that more closely reflects the national patterns (e.g. migration), while in other cases it is the Mexico State (e.g. education and indigenous representation). This sociodemographic stratification is helpful not only for understanding of the sample data as a representation and reflection of the larger national reality, but also as a reality situated in the more global arena of similarly stratified and dynamically changing societies across the globe.

2.1.3 Interfacing with the Global Perspective: Global Issues, Inequalities, and Broader Impacts

One way to connect sociolinguistic research on polite *leísmo* with global issues and inequalities is precisely through social stratification. Socially, all countries and cultures vary and develop along multiple dimensions in synchronic and diachronic terms, which is reflected on language and other social behaviors. It is sufficient to glance at the United Nations' 2030 Sustainability Development Goals to get a big picture of the universal values, inequalities, changes, and directions in which cultures currently participate worldwide and how this may affect sociolinguistic research. Linguistically, all natural languages are highly variable, making language variation an important part of human behavior that reflects and reinforces social organization of stratified communities. Such organization includes various dimensions of social inequality and cognitive bias, such as sexism, classism, and the use of gendered language and historically shaped stereotypes. How polite *leísmo* fits into these sociolinguistic issues depends on its social meaning and value, which is precisely the goal of this research, but an important starting point for this research is that is indeed variable.

All humanistic disciplines that see language as a form of cultural capital rely on aspects of **linguistic relativity** (e.g. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) and **universals** of language and thought (e.g. Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012). While the former focuses on the intercultural differences and the latter on the commonalities, both perspectives suggest that there is a close relationship between the language we speak and our perceptions of the world, including such cultural norms as politeness.

Similar to the social research into cultural individualistic-collectivistic values (e.g. Schwartz, 1992), the United Nations' (UN) 2030 agenda for world development identifies

universal issues that affect modern societies and ways of human life. These issues, rather than problems, are formulated as goals or directions in which the world's countries are called to action to ensure development and achieve sustainability by the year 2030 (Figure 2.1.3). The need for such goals and their worldwide spread are a result of long-lasting socioeconomic inequalities and the tradition of heavy socioeconomic stratification of the worldwide community. The proposal of the world-wide goal of sustainability was defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) as maximization of goals across three major systems: environmental, economic, and social. In 2000, the United Nations proposed 8 Millennium Development Goals around the issues of extreme poverty and hunger, health and education, environmental sustainability, among others, which proved to be difficult to monitor, measure, and achieve (Nagan, Hammer, & Akhmetkaliyeva, 2017). In 2015, for better applicability, translation into policies, and assessment, the same idea has been expressed as 17 concrete goals and decomposed into 169 targets and 230 indicators for realizing these targets (Barbier & Burgess, 2017). All goals across systems are interlinked, bridging the current neoliberal economic theory with the legal theory of interdisciplinary "responsible economics" through promotion of liberty, equality, security, social justice, conservation, and responsible production (Nagan et al., 2017, p. 56). This is significant for social and sociolinguistic research for two reasons. First, social stratification, as part of the social system and interlinked with economic and environmental systems, has been a starting point for comparison, contrast, and interpretation of linguistic and other human behaviors across social sciences. Secondly, we are no longer limited to historical and narrow current data to trace diachronic societal and linguistic developments, but can now view these developments in light of global issues, as well as with a clear future-oriented perspective.

Figure 2.1.3

United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (2015)



Figure 2.1.3 is the UN’s officially adopted visualization of 17 universal goals to achieve “inclusive, people-centered and sustainable development with no one left behind” (United Nations, 2015), combining environmental, economic, and social systems, and targeting 5 areas of critical importance: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. Among particularly the social development issues raised are those directly related to defining the various socially stratifying factors in sociolinguistic research: socioeconomic status (employment, poverty, quality education), age (ageing, youth), sex (social inclusion, family), among others. The goals of ecological, health, and economic responsibility, as well as peace and inclusive partnerships, are actions and policies that are to globally affect the nature of social stratification within and across cultures, as the world becomes more interconnected and intercultural. This global

awareness of socioeconomic inequalities and agendas is sure to affect the academic world by adapting the focus and interpretations of any ongoing socially related research, as well as its predictive power going forward.

Concerning polite *leísmo* specifically, it is important to view it as embedded in time, space, and social movement of the socially and economically stratified world community that is in flux. Stratification means variation, and variation often implies diversity, evaluation (discrimination or development), and a range of social action. The social action that is represented by polite *leísmo* or that is provoked by it as a response depends on its meaning and social value – the goal of this dissertation research.

Due to the variability in polite *leísmo*, only a close study of its production and perception across the society will uncover the power of this strategy to indirectly **index the social organization of the society** in terms of gender and social class (Ochs, 1993), age (Wagner, 2012), among other stratifying factors (United Nations, 2015), as well as the dynamic individual and cultural practices to construct social selves and social relationships (Eckert, 1988, 2008; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012; Ochs, 1993). The complexity of this specific linguistic structure –namely the interfaces between morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics– further exemplifies the interconnectedness of multiple dynamic systems within culture as a unifying larger complex system. The **complexity theory**, often accompanied by the metaphor of the butterfly effect, is a holistic perspective on both micro and macro levels of organization of dynamic entities, such as societies, economies, and ecosystems, being adopted across sciences and humanities (Byrne & Callaghan, 2013). It reminds us to be open-minded and interdisciplinary in our research focus and methodologies to give due diligence to the complexity of the world we live in.

This dissertation promotes the vision of a variety of internationally-focused institutions and organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), National Science Foundation (NSF), Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and CLACSO (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales) by adopting an innovative interdisciplinary approach to complex social and cultural issues. The **broader impacts** of this research include potential contributions to a range of related disciplines within the academic world and beyond. Academically speaking, the multimethod approach to studying language variation through polite *leísmo* offers evidence of the interplay of language with multiple social factors and advances cross-disciplinary collaboration with the humanistic social sciences broadly construed. As a natural outcome, academic value of such research should inform subsequent educational practices and tools. Outside of the academia, appropriate knowledge and use of polite *leísmo* is useful to many individuals and social institutions in our increasingly interconnected world. At the individual level, polite *leísmo* will be shown to have two different politeness function and also serve as a social mobility projection tool. As a consequence, incorporating polite *leísmo* as linguistic currency into institutional communication practices –interpersonal and intercultural– can make these institutions more culturally sensitive, ethical, and successful. Sociolinguistics further benefits the development of technologies aimed at improving communication in contexts of cultural diversity and augmentative communication, including for people with various language disorders and other disabilities. This can be achieved by incorporating the social significance of polite *leísmo* into assistive technologies, human-machine interaction, translation, localization, and other services.

2.2 Sociolinguistic Perspective on Polite *Leísmo*



At the sociolinguistic level, language variation mirrors the complexity of the dynamic society in time and space. Diachronically, societal changes in population, geographical and power boundaries, development and mobility have all contributed to language change. Synchronic social stratification is multifaceted as well: it is at the same time *diatopic* (i.e. geographic), *diastratic* (i.e. social), and *diaphasic* (i.e. situational). This undoubtedly raises the multiple-perspective challenge brought up at the beginning of this chapter, which means that it takes more than one sociolinguist to contribute to the full picture of sociolinguistic landscapes. Tellingly, the three waves of variation study began with a *macro-view* of a speech community by way of classification of a large group of people into a few discretely defined classes of geography, sex, age, and social class – the first social variables considered (e.g. Labov, 1974). Having established this perspective, however, closer and closer looks have been taken at the nature and dynamics of the smaller social groups and individuals that comprise them. The *micro-social* variables of contexts, community networks, multiplexity and strength of ties, and specific practices, social roles, and individual identities deepen the sociolinguistic analysis as part of the second wave (Milroy & Milroy, 1985) and then the third wave (Eckert, 2008) of variation research. The ultimate goal of analyzing these various social variables through the different lenses has been the quest for *social meaning* and social value of a linguistic variable. The idea that language has meaning beyond itself has led to such socially-central linguistic concepts as stigma and prestige, age grading, sociolects, linguistic discrimination, etc. These social meanings in particular become most apparent by comparing *production* behaviors and their perceptual *evaluation or attitudes* – both sides of the coin that define a speech community (Labov, 1972). The following sections introduce the diachronic background of polite

leísmo, followed by sociolinguistic approaches to synchronic variation relevant to the phenomenon, leading to a discussion of social meaning behind sociolinguistic variation, and culminating with diaphasic stratification as a bridge into the Pragmatic Perspective section.

2.2.1 Diachronic Complexity: The Historical Context of Leísmo

Cuervo (1895) explores the historical development of the Spanish clitic system, beginning with Latin etymological case system and providing a descriptive quantitative comparison of the 3rd-person accusative clitics in the Spanish literature from the year 1202 up until the year 1889. The timeline suggests that the 3rd-person *leísmo* became categorical in Madrid and its surrounding provinces by 16th and 17th centuries, extending from there to other localities represented by authors who maintained a high level of contact with the court. This association, the author argues, is what gave *leísmo* “an air of culture and elegance that won credit for becoming literary language” (p. 104, own translation). The variation that persisted throughout history is explained by the persistence of the etymological system maintained by multiple provinces outside of Madrid and sometimes by purely literary forces such as rhyme. According to Cuervo’s (1895) analysis, the regions of Aragon, Andalusia, Extremadura, and the Canary Islands were the leaders of etymological clitic use of the time, especially in popular use. Plural and feminine referents were least likely to be expressed with an accusative *le* overall, and the reverse use of *lo* as a dative was highly uncommon, while the feminine *la* for *le* did appear in Madrid, giving rise to a simultaneous *laísmo* phenomenon. Singular references, however, were found to be much more likely to be expressed with *leísmo* than plural referents, which remains true today.

A similar study conducted by Flores (2002) included works published in Mexico between the 16th and 19th century, where the same animate, singular, and masculine referents favored

leísmo, although with lower overall frequency than in Spain, amounting to only 12% during the nineteenth century (Flores & Melis, 2007). According to Cantero Sandoval (1979), this corresponds to the peak of clitic ‘confusion’ around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The general historical trend identified by Parodi, Luna, and Helmer (2012) and Dumitrescu and Branza (2012) of fading *leísmo* in the postcolonial Latin America is part of the ideological shift toward independence expressed through new models of national literature. As a consequence, third-person *leísmo* visibly disappeared from Mexican and Peruvian literature by the beginning of twentieth century, setting their own national standards of prestigious language.

In Mexico City in particular, Lope Blanch’s (1953) syntactic observations of spoken, educated Spanish lead the author to conclude that this variety of Spanish is characterized by the etymological *le-lo* distinction, and therefore virtual absence of *leísmo*. Cantero Sandoval (1979) explores Mexico City’s speech among the same educated speakers and finds 2.9% of *leísmo*, of which the great majority are of the invariant and impersonal *se le*, discussed further as ‘seeming’ *leísmo*. The rest of the occurrences are described as appearing with very specific verbs. These particular cases form part of the description of *leísmo* in the Morphosyntactic Perspective section. The author explains these cases as consequences of Castillian influence through prestigious literature and, more recently, radio and television. What remains clear is that there are significant dialectal differences in varieties of Spanish, where Mexico has presented little evidence of *leísmo* in the past couple of centuries.

Rates of polite *leísmo* are also directly connected to the relative rates of formal and informal ‘you’ treatment in Mexican Spanish: *tú* vs. *usted*. It has been recently observed that the overall use of the formal *usted* in Mexico has been diminishing in favor of the informal *tú* reference (Orozco, 2010). A questionnaire-based variationist study in the City of Guadalajara,

Jalisco state, northeast of Mexico State, shows that the informal address is being preferred by the younger generation, as well as men, urban participants, and participants with at least some education, as expected of overt-prestige variables and a change in progress. Some interlocutor characteristics that favor the use of *tú* include equal or lower power, perceived social status, social distance, and females (except for older members of politic family). The participant observations and commentary on the use of the two ‘you’ addresses includes the dichotomy for respect-*confianza* (‘trust’), which is seen as something either given or actively constructed. At the extreme respect end of the continuum are interlocutors characterized with prestigious status in the Mexican society, eliciting the least use of *tú* in the study in favor of *usted*: professor, priest, and doctor – motivating the inclusion of pragmatic methodology in the present study.

This historical context provides an important backdrop for the present study of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. On the one hand, it is expected that there be little presence of *le* as a direct object, and arguably similarly as a third person and as a second person by association. However, historical data comes from mostly written or highly educated speech and therefore is not fully representative of the society. Furthermore, it is wise to recognize that Peninsular and Latin American societies have long had multiple particularities with respect to the second-person treatment: from the wide-ranging relative *tú-usted* rates (e.g. default *tuteo* in Spain vs. default *ustedeo* in Costa Rica), to expanding the binary formality continuum to include a familiar *voseo* (e.g. El Salvador), to codifying formality in the plural ‘you’ reference as *ustedes* (Latin America) or *vosotros* (Spain). Therefore, another second-person phenomenon like polite *leísmo* is not unprecedented, even if only sparsely found. It only remains to study its nature, extent, and implications – what this research project attempts to accomplish.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Approaches to Synchronic Complexity

Synchronic variation in language is most commonly studied by dialectology and quantitative sociolinguistic approaches. As I have explored elsewhere (Filimonova, 2016a), **quantitative sociolinguistics** is characterized by its empirical nature, strive toward valid and reliable methods of data collection and analysis, and a goal to explain and to predict patterns in the data. The staple of quantitative sociolinguistics is a multivariate analysis that seeks to identify linguistic and extralinguistic factors that condition a particular variable behavior by means of statistical modeling (Tagliamonte, 2006). While it was first conceived of in relation to sociophonetic phenomena in American English, pioneered by Labov (1972), it was enthusiastically, though slowly, adopted by researchers studying morphosyntactic phenomena, such as the one under study. The main difficulty with extending the quantitative framework to morphosyntax lies precisely with quantification: **morphosyntactic variables** are not as frequent in natural speech as specific phonemes, nor can their variants always be said to be semantically equivalent to fit the definition of a variable as two or more ways of saying the same thing (Labov 1972). Lavandera (1978) was one of the first authors to voice this concern and Romaine (1984) offered a now well accepted definition of a morphosyntactic variable as defined by a common **function or common pragmatic meaning** of various forms in a particular context. In the present research, the variable may be defined as a clitic referencing a formal ‘you’ object of a transitive verb, which can be expressed as either *lo* (etymological) or *le* (innovative) – two forms with arguably the same syntactic function (although the equivalence of their pragmatic function is part of the research objective). García and Otheguy (1977) insist that defining these variants in terms of their prescriptive direct- and indirect-object properties misses the point. Instead, they propose what they call a Form-Content analysis, which allows them to identify semantic properties that *le*

brings into the picture that *lo* does not. The reality of form-meaning asymmetry in language is now widely recognized among post-generativist linguists (Torres Cacoullos, 2011; Delbecque, 2008), which has important implications for defining the envelope of variation.

In the original conceptualization of a linguistic variable, the **envelope of variation** refers only to the context where both variants alternate to some degree and any categorical cases are excluded (cf. Tagliamonte, 2006). This could be fairly easily established in terms of phonetic context and other objectively identifiable linguistic phenomena, such as syntactic category or relative word position (e.g. D’Introno & Sosa, 1986), where the semantic content is unaffected by pronunciation. On the contrary, morphosyntactic variation not only takes away the certainty provided by the semantics but also questions the speaker meanings that are not obvious, including the pragmatic implications, of the linguistic choice, such as a choice to use an active versus passive construction of the same proposition (cf. Funes, 2011; Labov & Weiner, 1977; Lavandera, 1978). This issue poses some challenges for circumscribing the envelope of variation of such variables as verb tense, word order, pronoun use, and prepositions. Nevertheless, while language users are much more creative with their syntax than with phonetics, their creativity is limited by their speech community conventions and the cognitive constraints on both production and perception between the interlocutors. Furthermore, their freedom to be creative may be more or less limited depending on the degree of **grammaticalization** of the structure in question. For the purposes of this research, the envelope of variation is delimited to all formal-‘you’ objects of transitive verbs, which are unambiguously accusative. This means that indirect, dative object *le* or ambiguous cases such as potentially ditransitive constructions are omitted in the quantitative analysis of the study, but are necessarily discussed as integral parts of the grammatical system.

The definitions of the variable and its envelope of variation are helpful in defining and delimiting the dependent variable under study. The independent variables of interest to sociolinguistic research range from language-internal (i.e. linguistic) to language-external (i.e. contextual and social). The choice and definition of contextual and social variables to test typically depend on the approach to sociolinguistic complexity and the perceived relationship between speakers and their community, ranging from Labov's (1972) speech community macro-social variables to Milroy and Milroy's (1985) social networks' micro-social variables, to the dynamics of Eckert's (1988, 2006, 2008) communities of practice (CofP), in a disciplinary shift from social stratification to interactional sociolinguistics, known as the first, second, and third wave of variationist research. In Labov's (1972) first wave of variationist study, the social conditioning was defined as a function of such **macro-social variables** as speaker age, sex, origin, education level, and socioeconomic status. These variables belong to the **diatopic** and **diastratic** types (delimiting geographic and social stratification, respectively) and have been instrumental in uncovering various social inequalities, such as power hierarchies and gender inequalities. The second wave of variation, pioneered by Milroy and Milroy (1985) in addition to the above, takes into account such **micro-social variables** as the speakers' relationships, social networks, their density, as well as strength and multiplexity of ties as predictors of language variation and change. With the third wave of variation focused on communities of practice (Eckert, 1988, 2006, 2008) and a shift toward interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2003) the research focus shifted from making generalizations to individual speakers: "The aim of interactional sociolinguistics is to detect what it is about speakers' linguistic and cultural background that leads to either potentially satisfactory exchange or misinterpretation" (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2003). This approach is often accomplished through more

discourse analytical methods and qualitative components of analysis instead of or in addition to quantification, including many pragmatic or contextual factors, also known as **diaphasic** factors, among which are commonly **social distance**, **power** difference, and various **speech event** properties and conditions. Cameron and Schwenter (2013) argue that phenomena at the interface of pragmatics-semantics-syntax, applicable to polite *leísmo*, indeed require combined pragmatic and variationist sociolinguistic approaches, where variational pragmatics provides tools for appropriately defining the envelope of variation and analyzing contextual and interactional variables, while variationist sociolinguistics contributes mechanisms for impartial hypothesis testing and modeling, including possible social realities and repercussions. The present research project combines a range of these social and contextual variables, among them diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic, for better interpretation, generalization, and prediction power of analysis. For the purposes of maintaining focus on sociolinguistic perspectives, the diatopic and diastratic variables are presented first, leaving the diaphasic variation partially to the discussion of social meaning and partially as a bridge from macro- to micro-social variation, explored further in the Pragmatic Perspective section.

Macro-social **diastratic** variables in particular have been used in the construction of many sociolinguistic corpora organized by age group, sex, and some measure of socioeconomic status (SES). An exemplary corpus that has served as a model for data collection in the present study is the *Corpus sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México* (CSCM) ‘Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City’ (Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015), which is a part of the larger international project PRESEEA (*Proyecto para el Estudio Sociolingüístico del Español de España y América* ‘Project for the Sociolinguistic Study of Spanish of Spain and America’). This corpus has the

structure schematized in Table 2.2.2.1, based on three macro-social stratifying factors: age, sex, and education level.

Table 2.2.2.1

Social stratification of the Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City

Age Group	Education Level					
	None/Primary (0-6 years of study)		Middle/Secondary (10-12 years of study)		College/Graduate (16+ years of study)	
Sex:	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Young (18-34)						
Adults (35-54)						
Older (55+)						

Post-stratification sociodemographic variables considered by the corpus authors include various correlates of socioeconomic status, such as income level, living conditions, profession, mode of life by employment sector, origin, social mobility, ethnic group, residence location, and travel and reading patterns. This information is often collected in response to the fact that **socioeconomic status** is traditionally difficult to operationalize and that certain operationalization in one community or geographic area at a particular point in time may not match up closely with another community, area, or time period. However, many sociolinguistic studies continually report strong correlations between income level, professional achievement, and education level, of which the latter has been the most commonly reported factor due to its more direct measurability and comparability across societies. The income level is a highly variable factor inter- and intra-nationally. Professions also vary in social prestige and economic demand from one society to another. A glance at the Mexico City categorization of professional achievement is illustrated in Figure 2.2.2.2, organized from lowest working class to highest socioeconomic position, adapted from Butragueño and Lastra (2011-2015).

Figure 2.2.2.2

Mexico City professional achievement continuum (adapted from Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015)

category 1	category 2	category 3	category 4	category 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street vendor • urban unspecialized worker • farm worker • domestic service • unspecialized service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • merchant • secretary/office help • specialized worker • craftsman • mechanic • store attendant • collector • technical help • police, guard, soldier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university personnel • middle- and primary-school faculty • little businessmen or producers • middle command • technician • supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent university staff • middle management of public or private sector • graduated military • middle businessman and producer • university faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high official with executive, legislative or judicial power • high military official • big private businessman • big property owner • high executive of public or private sector

The present study adopts the operationalization of educational level and professional category in recognition of the extensive socioeconomic and anthropological research conducted by this leading team of sociolinguists in Mexico City and with the ambition to contribute to this ongoing collaborative effort by building a useful and comparable corpus of Mexico City speech elicited through a complementary interactive method of contextualized role-play dialogues.

Diatopic Stratification: Dialectology Studies of *Leísmo*. In spite of the decline of the typical 3rd-person *leísmo* in the twentieth-century Latin America, some remaining non-etymological use of *le* puzzled dialectologists who attributed it to diverse possible influences: contact with minority languages (de Granada, 1982; DeMello, 2002; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1994; 1999; Urritia Cárdenas, 2003), variable interpretation of polysemic and optionally ditransitive verbs (DeMello, 2002; Diccionario panhispánico de dudas, 2005; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; García, 1975; Parodi et al., 2012), grammaticalized and phonologically conditioned impersonal

constructions with *se le* (DeMello, 2002; Parodi et al., 2012), and the less-understood socio-pragmatic motivation behind 2nd-person courteous treatment (Aijón Oliva, 2006).

The term “polite *leísmo*” was coined by Lorenzo Ramos (1981) in his work on Canarian Spanish, which bears a lot of similarities to Andalusian Spanish, the common main ancestor to both Canarian and Latin American dialects. The need for the term polite *leísmo* arose from the necessity to distinguish the southern Peninsular and Canarian dialects from Castillian Spanish that use *leísmo* in a very different way from the North-Central dialects: with a second-person referent rather than the most commonly reported third person.

García and Otheguy (1977) study dialect variation in third-person *leísmo* across seven Spanish-speaking nations: Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, and two Cuban immigrant populations – in New York and in Puerto Rico. Spain clearly stands out as the leader with 73% *leísmo* collected via a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire, but shows evidence that the Latin American countries also have it, albeit to lesser extent (from 13% in Argentina to 41% in Ecuador).

Dumitrescu and Branza (2012) report survey results from several major cities in Spain and Latin America suggesting a positive correlation between *le* and 2nd-person referent in Sevilla (Southern Spain), Bogotá (Colombia), San Juan (Puerto Rico), and Quito (Ecuador), but not in La Habana (Cuba), Santiago (Chile), Buenos Aires (Argentina), and Vigo (Northwest Spain). Their fill-in-the-blank questionnaire was designed based on some of the linguistic factors that have been shown in the literature to favor *leísmo* with third and second persons, although 5 out of their 12 sentences may be arguably dismissed by DeMello (2002) and Fernández-Ordóñez (1999) as seeming *leísmo*, discussed further in the next section. Further inquiry and a revised methodology in the study of *leísmo* are clearly necessary. What remains obvious from

Dumitrescu and Branza's (2012) work, in spite of argument about true and seeming *leísmo*, is that different dialects and speech communities place different weights on the factors conditioning polite *leísmo* as a phenomenon undergoing change in progress (p. 681), albeit taking different paths and rates of change.

Diastratic Stratification: Social Stratification Studies of *Leísmo*. Most sociolinguistic studies of *leísmo* have been conducted on Peninsular varieties and specifically limited to 3rd-person reference (Blas Arroyo, 1994; Klein-Andreu, 1993; Moreno Fernández, Amorós Gabaldón, Bercial Sanz, Corrales Fernández, & Rubio Haro, 1988), while a few are more broadly defined by non-normative clitic use and therefore consider a wider range of variables (Aijón Oliva, 2006). Among the social factors examined with respect to third-person *leísmo* are *speaker sex* (Blas Arroyo, 1994; Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1988), *speaker age* (Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1998), *social class* (Klein-Andreu, 1993; Martínez Martín, 1984), *speaker origin* and *level of bilingualism* (Blas Arroyo, 1994), and *contextual style* (Aijón Oliva, 2006; Blas Arroyo, 1994; Martínez Martín, 1984).

Moreno Fernández et al.'s (1988) study on non-normative clitic use in Madrid Spanish shows equally high levels of *leísmo* on a multiple-choice questionnaire among both sexes and all age groups. Similarly, Martínez Martín's (1984) study on Burgos Spanish finds no effect of sex, age, or social class on the use of *leísmo*. It is found to be virtually categorical throughout a series of reading, conversation, and grammaticality judgment tasks and deemed a sociolinguistic marker of Burgos speech. Blas Arroyo's (1994) follow-up study utilizes data from bilingual Valencian youth in three different contextual styles as well: semi-guided conversations, fill-in-the-blank and grammaticality judgment tasks. The trends are similar to those in other Spanish communities, showing about an 80% preference for *leísmo* across all social strata, although

slightly less in Spanish-Catalan bilinguals. No significant differences are noted among the more and less formal styles either. Only perception and acceptability reports reveal some significant differences for females and monolinguals who view *leísmo* significantly more positively than their counterparts. Some social class effects are discovered by Klein-Andreu (1993), mediated by dialect: while third-person *leísmo* with reference to living entities is favored by all classes equally in Valladolid, Spain (90%), it is especially led by high social class in Logroño, Spain (38%). This lack of significant social differences with respect to the 3rd-person *leísmo* in European Spanish is typical of a concluded language change and explains its grammatical acceptance by the RAE (2010) with a set of the most common referent categories (i.e. animate, masculine, singular).

Aijón Oliva's (2006) analysis of oral and written media language in Salamanca, Spain, includes the linguistic factors of gender, number, and person of the referent as well as the topicality of the direct object with respect to the subject, confirming the trends proposed in theoretical literature: specifically, preference for masculine and highly active referents that are singular but also those that are plural. Importantly, his study includes second-person formal references, which are found to be mostly present in oral radio messages and expressed exclusively with *le* (100%). As a result, second-person *leísmo* is found to be more prevalent in oral radio messages, while third-person *leísmo* dominates in the written corpus. Aijón Oliva (2006) adapts Fernández-Ordóñez's (1999) interpretation of polite *leísmo* as a disambiguator of participant vs. non-participant referent and marker of respect through elimination of gender specification codified in the etymological *lo/la*. The true politeness, according to the author, is in shifting focus from gender to human participant quality of the referent. Politeness, however, is a term that belongs to the realm of pragmatics and requires analysis of interpersonal interaction in

communicative and social context, taking into account the speaker and the interlocutor. This aspect is missing in the current sociolinguistic literature and is considered in the Pragmatics Perspective section. What helps gain this bigger picture is consideration of language ideologies and attitudes, as detailed in the following overview of social meaning.

2.2.3 Social Meaning and Social Value of Variable Linguistic Phenomena

Language Ideologies. Any sociolinguistic, anthropological, and even economics research into the social value of language at least assumes that this social value comes from culturally established language ideologies. **Language ideologies** are shared societal beliefs that connect linguistic value to such sociocultural values as personal identity, aesthetics, morality, and epistemology, among others (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Language ideologies are what determines the value of symbolic capital that each linguistic phenomenon may hold for the community as well as language attitudes. Language attitudes, in turn, play an important role in language variation and change, as propagated by certain social agents in their particular community contexts. This section describes these underlying mechanisms, the social factors and agents involved, and a number of methodological approaches and patterns already discovered in the previous literature. Given the paucity of research on polite *leísmo*, hypothetical connections are offered with what is known or expected based on literature.

While language ideologies establish a range of positive and negative values for different linguistic resources available to the communities, these values may or may not coincide with how social progress and justice are perceived more globally. It is not uncommon, for example, for societies to have a standard language ideology, where the standardized variety is promoted as more prestigious and desirable over other equally valid varieties, as has been the case of

Standard English in the United States (Lippi-Green, 1994; Rahman, 2008). Likewise, plurilingual and multicultural societies have often imposed a dominant language ideology over minority or regional languages, as is the case of Mexico's *castellanización* (de Estrada, 1989). In their strongest form, these language ideologies are strong enough to produce mass action in violation of human rights in the form of **linguistic discrimination** (Baugh, 2003; Rickford & King, 2016). In their mildest form, standard or another prestigious language may be seen and used strategically in one's day-to-day life for personal benefit, such as career opportunities (Parton, Siltanen, Hosman, & Langenderfer, 2002). Bourdeiu's (1977, 1993) **linguistic marketplace** theory has been used to explain why more standard or prestigious linguistic variants might be valued and adopted by the middle-age working layer of population: the widely accepted standard language acts as symbolic capital to secure job stability and to advance on a career ladder onto higher social strata where this language is used (Wagner, 2012). In Heller's (2010) research, this has been referred to as **commodification of language**, implying the power of linguistic skills to manage the flow of resources, add value to produced resources, facilitate construction and use of niche markets, and develop linguistically mediated knowledge and service industries (p. 103). These theories and the negative effects of language ideologies, however, assume a certain level of awareness and the ability to manipulate language for individual or group benefit, especially in terms of prestige and stigma. However, most natural linguistic variation is largely subconscious and not manipulable, at least at some stages of language change in progress. Multiple questions arise as to the potential for polite *leísmo* to be either a commodified resource or a target of discrimination. This is especially due to its non-standard and seemingly subconscious nature, corresponding to grammatical words, as well as whether polite *leísmo* participates in a change in progress or is part of stable variation. These

questions are answered by this research, in conjunction with the following theoretical and methodological observations.

The possible social evaluation of a linguistic phenomenon depends largely on its level of consciousness, or salience. It ranges from highly conscious and value-laden **stereotypes** (prestigious or stigmatized variants) to social **markers** of in-group stylistic variation, to largely subconscious and therefore value-free **indicators** (Labov, 1972). Conscious phenomena and their social associations give rise to language attitudes. Stigmatized variants typically produce negative attitudes toward a certain layer of population in the community that uses them, with whom other layers of population try to dissociate for ideological reasons. Prestigious variants are, on the contrary, associated with positive social qualities and practices and therefore provoke positive attitudes. Markers, in turn, tend to correlate with formality and style, available to all social strata of a speech community, at least in an ideal world. Discovering whether polite *leísmo* is a stereotype, marker, indicator, or something else is one of the key motivations of this research. Due to the lack of attention to the phenomenon in the literature (largely due to the relatively low extension of the phenomenon), it is logical to hypothesize that polite *leísmo* is not prototypically prestigious or largely stigmatized, at least not across the country.

However, just as language is not inherently good or bad, social values of any linguistic phenomena may vary within communities, from community to community, and also with time, which adds complexity to the aforementioned definitions of social values. For example, around the same time that /r/-less speech was found to be non-standard and associated with lower class in mid-twentieth century New York City (Labov, 1966), just the opposite was true of England, where /r/-less speech forms part of the so-called received pronunciation (Chambers & Trudgill, 1998). In fact, Milroy and Milroy's (1985, 1993) correction of Bourdieu's (1977b, 1980)

linguistic market notion to the **alternative linguistic markets** highlights the reality of different prestigious and stigmatized norms that are defined by different social networks that stratify the communities in a much more informative way than traditional social classes do. Furthermore, the sociolinguistic meaning of linguistic variants often goes beyond prestige and stigma as straightforward and dichotomous, but rather undergoes a range of complex relationships and attitudes, which are commonly in flux across time and space. Therefore, the social evaluation of polite *leísmo* may depend on specific communities or social strata, as this research will show, as well as on the place it is given in day-to-day communication. One important distinction to make in all cases is the type of prestige that a linguistic phenomenon may carry: overt or covert.

Prestige and Prestige Actors. Both overt and covert prestige involve linguistic phenomena that are conscious and associated with positive social qualities that a speaker may desire to emulate. What marks the difference between overt and covert prestige is a seemingly drastic difference between the groups emulated. **Overt prestige** is often characteristic of one's outgroup, of which one aspires to become a part. In Bourdieu's (1977b, 1980, 1986) theory, this would mean adopting a more standard language, when the motivator is such as professional growth. **Covert prestige**, on the other hand, may paradoxically involve adoption of stigmatized forms of one's ingroup, where the motivator is ingroup membership and solidarity (Trudgill, 1972). Which type of prestige might polite *leísmo* have, if it is at all conscious? As stated before, whether any linguistic phenomenon participates in language change and the direction that change takes depends largely on the consciousness and the attitudes developed toward that phenomenon at any point in time and space. Socially, this process is adopted and furthered differently by agents of different social positions, including age, social class, and gender. Looking at these

social factors is what will clarify the consciousness and the prestige of polite *leísmo* at different social levels.

According to Labov (1980), it is younger speakers and speakers from the upper-working and lower-middle classes that are often the ones who lead linguistic innovations. The **Gender Paradox** establishes women as both conservative and innovative agents, depending precisely on the type of prestige that a phenomenon acquires in the community (Meyerhoff, 2006). Based on Labov's (1990, 2001) generalizations within the first-wave variationist research, women tend to prefer standard variants of stable stylistic markers as well as overtly prestigious variants that lead language change. At the same time, women are often early adopters of variants that are largely subconscious and potentially possess covert prestige for their ingroup. This means that women tend to be more sensitive than men to the more prestigious variants (old or new) and also adopt different types of prestige (overt or covert) for different purposes. Could women be the ones using polite *leísmo* more than men in Mexico City, and what would it tell us about the social value of the phenomenon? As part of the second wave of variationist research, Milroy and Milroy (1993) explore this connection between gender and prestige further, showing that they better account for language change propagation through social networks than Labov's macro-social category of social class. That means that the key to gender is in social roles and opportunities of men and women within the community. The third wave of variationist studies (Eckert, 1988; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1999) takes advantage of this assumption by focusing on gender as interactive social identity within various communities of practice. It is thus important to understand the complexities and intricacies of the communities of practice in order to understand why and how women and men become agents of language change.

Loose networks, according to Milroy and Milroy (1985) are what allows for language change to be introduced and spread across a community. The authors pick up and develop one of Labov's (1980) observations, namely that the change agents are typically those with a balanced number of local and outside contacts who have a positive reputation at the local level independent of class. Specifically, Milroy and Milroy (1985) translate this observation into an interaction between two types of change agents: innovators and early adopters. The **innovators** are those marginal to their group with weak links to outside groups and weak links to their group, which often corresponds to the mobile middle social classes. On the other hand, the **early adopters** are characterized by their centrality to the group, strong ingroup ties, and that positive social position within the group that will allow them to disseminate the change across the group. Mexico City is a perfect place for multiple groups to coincide and create a complex web of weak and strong ties. **Strong ties** are what enforces group norms, which are most often conservative and anti-innovation, but are exactly what helps spread (overtly or covertly) prestigious variants even if they are innovative. On the **social class** scale, low and high social classes tend to be more close-knit and less socially mobile, in comparison to the middle social class (Milroy & Milroy, 1993). In terms of **age** as a factor, two hypotheses exist: younger speakers might lead a change in progress, independently of prestige (Labov, 1980), while middle-age speakers who are at the peak of their career lives are more sensitive to prestigious variants as social mobility projection tools, which may remain in stable variation (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1980; Wagner, 2012). What is necessary, then, are weak links between groups and strong links within groups, for any linguistic change to be introduced into and diffused within a group, as well as two types of agents for introduction and propagation of the change. In connection to polite *leísmo*, the analysis of agent characteristics and the community dynamics will confirm whether this phenomenon is in the

process of change, as has been suggested by Dumitrescu and Branza (2012). One thing is true: just as social changes are quickly propagated in this metropolitan center of Mexico, linguistic changes might follow suit.

Returning to the question of agent characteristics, and in particular gender and women being central to language change propagation, Milroy and Milroy (1985) claim that gender overrides social class in its effect on linguistic variation due to the ability of gender to better reflect social roles rather than social positions within a community. In terms of **social roles**, men have traditionally been the ones making professional ties with outside groups, while women remained central to their local network, although exceptions abound, such as Nichols's (1983) study of Gullah community. In the proposed terminology, men would more often be the innovators, while women would become early adopters of changes that represent some sort of prestige, however prestige may be defined for any social network. Given Mexico City's melting-pot nature, other social roles might turn out to be important for the central-peripheral relationships and language change, defining the innovators and early adopters in terms of gender, age, origin, education level, occupation, and various ideologies. Once linguistic phenomena gain social value through shared social evaluations, including prestige and stigma, speech communities begin to vary along these language attitudes and adjust their language ideologies.

Language Perception and Attitudes. **Language attitudes** have been a focus of study in sociology, psychology, education, language acquisition, and certainly sociolinguistics. Language attitudes are of particular interest to linguistically variable phenomena because they echo sociolinguistic stratification found in language production and also provide a complementary perception angle for improved interpretive power of such variation. Positive and negative attitudes are responsible for different patterns of variation of a linguistic phenomenon. For

example, **linguistic insecurity** is the negative attitude the speakers have toward their own linguistic variety in comparison to other varieties with certain social prestige (Meyerhoff, 2006; Preston, 2013). This attitude often results in hypercorrection, or purposefully distorting their way of speaking and distancing themselves from their native variety in unnatural ways. For sociolinguistic studies, this means working with under-representation of non-prestigious linguistic phenomena characterizing the linguistic community – especially in metalinguistic tasks, which often stand in contrast to spontaneous production patterns. Prestigious phenomena, on the other hand, due to typically positive attitudes, are likely to be over-represented, and more so in metalinguistic than spontaneous production studies. However, the type of prestige (overt or covert) and the study design would really determine the quality of the results and their interpretation. Furthermore, linguistic markers that are not as conscious as prestigious and stigmatized variants, may show similar patterns in production as opposed to perception. Language attitudes and language perception, therefore, are a valuable focus for research on little understood variable phenomena, such as polite *leísmo*.

Seeing how language variation is affected by and further affects language ideologies, including our perceptions of self and others in our day-to-day decision-making, language perception is a valuable research focus to complement sociolinguistic production studies. **Perception** of language variation, as a research focus, has been defined differently across time and disciplines: through metalinguistic judgments, implicit attitudes toward speakers, geographical identification of stereotypes, and various psychological reactions and neurological processes, such as memory and attention. Methodologically, there are a number of approaches to examining the meaning of linguistic variation that tap into attitudes and perceptions. These are correspondingly represented by grammaticality or acceptability judgment questionnaires,

matched guise and sociolinguistic attitude surveys, and an array of psycholinguistic experiments measuring reaction times, gaze, and other manifestations of cognitive processes. Based on these different methodologies and definitions, perception has been measured in terms of correctness, appropriateness, degree of awareness, ease of cognitive processing, and association with various sociocultural conventions. The following representative studies from linguistics-related disciplines shed light onto several specific ways that language attitudes are connected with variation in language production and perception and that inform the research design of the present study.

Language attitudes research began with psychological **matched-guise** studies of auditory perception of stereotypes by naïve listener judges, showing clearly how voices and stereotypical linguistic phenomena are associated with such speaker traits such as social position, personality traits, ability, and more (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960). The success of this methodology is in great part due to the indirect and therefore implicit measure of attitudes, avoiding conscious metalinguistic discussions and rather tapping into the subconscious. A survey of such studies confirms that speaker attitudes are not based on any intrinsic linguistic superiorities or aesthetic differences, but rather on “the levels of status and prestige that they are *conventionally* associated with in particular speech communities” (Giles & Billings, 2004, p. 191, original emphasis). Specifically, it is the standard varieties that are found to be most often associated with high socioeconomic status and **prestigious social positions**. That is exactly what Labov (1972) finds in New York with this methodology. As expected of prestigious variants, the pronounced /r/ was viewed positively, but especially by the most mobile lower middle class (86%), followed by the upper middle class (75%). This was in contrast to the lower and working classes, of which only half of the respondents expressed positive attitudes. The general

observation in sociolinguistics is that speakers of the lower middle social class, as the most **upwardly mobile**, produce most reliable evidence of a change in progress of any social markers, traceable in both production and perception (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 196).

Language documentation and description research has long made use of **grammaticality judgment** elicitation tasks that ask speakers to report on their perceptions of acceptability of good and bad structures (Chomsky, 1965). Martínez Martín (1984), for example, uses a grammaticality judgment task among other elicitation methods to understand the social meaning of the traditional third-person *leísmo* in Burgos, Spain, and finds that it is used as a marker, exhibiting small stylistic differences. The term “grammaticality” receives its origin from the objective of this type of research – describe grammatical systems. Yet, the field does not take long to recognize that language grammaticality is not binary or static, renaming and reformulating this methodology as **acceptability judgment** (Schutze & Sprouse, 2013). Blas Arroyo (1994) uses a simple acceptability judgment task to gauge a continuum of speaker attitudes toward sentences with the third-person clitics in Valencia, Spain. Comparing the acceptability ratings with actual production allows him to conclude that third-person *leísmo* is an acceptable norm and a marker, and that any non-correspondences in production and acceptability are manifestations of linguistic insecurity among the sampled youth. While there are differences in exact formats of acceptability tasks, mostly in the types of scales used, the cognitive process of detecting differences is the same and results have been found to be quite similar (Weskott & Fanselow, 2011). Given the tested methodological validity of this method, the NSF reviewers for this project suggested this methodology as particularly fitting for the study of polite *leísmo*, especially in the absence of other evidence of its variable perception and use.

Complementary to the focus on acceptability, the **Usage-Based Exemplar Theory** of language variation takes into account cognitive processes that underly language variation across diachronic and synchronic dimensions. Contrary to traditional language documentation efforts, Bybee (2003, 2006) proposes to view grammar as the individuals' cognitive organization of their experience with language, stored as exemplars, and changeable with usage. According to the author, our variable grammars and what is acceptable and to what extent can be explained by considering a set of universal cognitive processes behind grammaticalization: generalization of meaning, habituation, and pragmatic inferencing (Bybee 2003, 2010). Methodologically, language corpora provide appropriate quantitative data for measures of frequency and collocations, signaling variable language experience with specific linguistic exemplars. This research is responsible for attributing the importance of **frequency** of linguistic units to their ease of access, ease of change, and various linguistic and non-linguistic meaning associations. For example, frequent tokens are more accessible in memory and more resistant to change, at the same time serving as prototypes for other cognitively associated structures (Bybee, 2010). Cognitive associations are, therefore, implied by usage patterns and are not directly or metalinguistically measured. They do, however, provide a measurable context and explicative power to the perceptions and attitudes in question, and are taken into consideration in the methodology and the analysis of the polite *leísmo* production data, which together form a corpus.

All of the described methodologies so far (acceptability judgments, matched guise tests, perceptual dialectology maps, and usage-based analysis) tap into the underlying, often subconscious cognitive processes of speakers' experience with language indirectly. They correspond to the growing interest in **socio-cognitive psychology in linguistics**, which can be defined as "the study of mental processes which govern human behaviour in instances of

interaction through language” (Jensen, 2011, p. 6). These methods produce indirect measures of language perception because they rely on reports or inferences and do not measure perceptions directly. In **psycholinguistics**, self-paced reading measures have been used to explore perceptions and comprehension of linguistic and, more recently, nonlinguistic and social information. Studies on processing of linguistic information include wh-movement (Juffs & Harrington, 1995), clitics and causatives (Hoover & Dwivedi, 1998), subject-object ambiguity (Juffs & Harrington, 1995), verbal ambiguity (Juffs, 1998), and other structures in native or second-language contexts. Socially, processing studies now also include perceptions of speaker gender (Dussias, Valdés Kroff, Guzzardo Tamargo, & Gerfen, 2013), ethnic or racial background (Casasanto, 2008), and social status (Squires, 2013). These studies have shown that social and contextual information indeed affects processing of linguistic information and therefore must be taken into account. However, whether processing can count as a measure of language perception is still an empirical issue. A pilot study of the present research suggests that perception and processing are not unrelated and that further research is needed to understand their relationship better. For an understudied phenomenon such as polite *leísmo*, however, a more traditional and validated measure of perception is a welcome first step to begin to understand its social meaning and social value.

To summarize, social meaning of a linguistic variable phenomenon depends on the characteristics of the speakers themselves, their communities, and their ideologies. Most social values, other than overt prestige or stigma, are generally inferred from the use and perception of each phenomenon by particular social agents and their characteristics (gender, age, social class, etc.). This inference, however, has several tested methodological paths that are worth taking, such as acceptability judgment and usage-based analysis. For this reason, perception of polite

leísmo is a necessary complement to production of polite *leísmo*, when the objective is to understand the social meaning of its variation in Mexico City.

2.2.4 Interfacing with the Sociolinguistic Perspective: Diaphasic Stratification

Sociolinguistic perspective on morphosyntactic phenomena cannot fully account for the social meaning of variation without taking into account diaphasic stratification, based on contextual and pragmatic factors. This is obvious from the increase in movement toward interactional sociolinguistics and the bottom-up approaches to data analysis. Similarly to Aijón Oliva (2006), some sociolinguistic studies are shifting their focus from purely linguistic and macro-social variables to semantic, pragmatic, and micro-social conditioning of linguistic variation. García and Otheguy (1974, 1983) initially conducted a fill-in questionnaire study of middle-class members of several Latin American dialects and of Spain. They found the expected trend of third-person *leísmo* with male referents and especially with ditransitive verbs, supporting the *relative transitivity hypothesis* (García, 1975). This hypothesis is formally defined in the Morphosyntactic Perspectives section, along with other hypotheses, but its general assumption rests on the prototypical transitive configuration in which the effect of the event or action is moved from the most to the least human and agentive participant – semantic features that define grammatical choices. Second-person *leísmo* was observed in slightly higher numbers than third-person *leísmo* in Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, with only Ecuador reversing this trend. This led the authors to suggest that in Ecuador, politeness is actually communicated through the etymological use of clitics, which shows speakers' culturally conscious command of lexical gender nonexistent in Quechua. They propose that *leísmo* is stigmatized as a gender avoidance strategy resulting in a partial two-clitic system *le-lo* or even a

one-clitic *le* system for most Quechua-Spanish bilinguals and some Spanish monolinguals.

García and Otheguy (1983), therefore, build an argument that the *relative transitivity hypothesis* with its multiple linguistic factors is not sufficient to account for the inter- and intra-dialectal differences in the use of *leísmo* as a social communicative strategy to signal social relationships, group memberships, and ideologies.

Similarly, Flores's (2001, 2002) and Flores and Melis's (2007) diachronic focus on the evolution of the clitic system in the Peninsular and Mexican literature extends the framework of the same gradual transitivity to suggest a series of pragmatic values associated with the third-person *leísmo*, *laísmo*, and *loísmo*. Specifically, Flores (2001, 2002) proposes to explain the non-normative clitic use as communicative exploitation of **more or less active semantic evaluation of arguments**, previously suggested by García and Otheguy (1974), to convey a range of attitudes toward the referent, from personification/respect to objectification/degradation. These notions illustrate the strong connection between syntax and pragmatics, especially with respect to linguistic politeness and impoliteness. It is only natural, therefore, that phenomena at the syntax-pragmatics interface require application of pragmatic methodology and analysis, such as interactive role-plays and careful analysis of both the speaker and the interlocutor's social and communicative context, speech acts, and deixis, as discussed further in its Pragmatic Perspective section.

2.3 Pragmatic Perspective on Polite *Leísmo*



Looking at linguistic variation from the *micro*-perspective, as opposed to the macro quantitative sociolinguistic perspective (i.e. diaphasic stratification), the focus on meaning in context is the primary goal of **pragmatics** research. In this case, it has been called *meaning non-natural* (Grice, 1968) that expands beyond the literal meaning of an utterance or even a word to reveal the speaker's intention, and involves the shared interlocutor knowledge, implicatures, the dynamically constructed contexts, and the co-constructed speaker relationships in interaction. The notion of construction speaks to the dynamic nature of the context: on the one hand, an interaction occurs in a certain situational context and at the same time it creates context for how the rest of the interaction shapes. The speakers' *intentions* become the driving force behind the choices they make to construct discourse and the implicatures that arise (Grice, 1968). It has also long been noticed that language is rarely used to simply describe the affairs of the world; instead, it is most often meant to accomplish a particular communicative function or actually "do things with words" (Austin, 1962). The so-called *speech acts*, then, carry various *illocutionary forces*, or intentions, to produce desirable changes in the affairs of the world by way of dialogue. Language is primarily a communal behavior, and so it can be used with either a *transactional* function (to achieve a certain end: ask, negotiate, receive) or a *relational* function (interaction being an end in itself as a convivial act: relate, commiserate, make feel good) (Placencia, 2004). The norms for such interactions are largely encompassed in *politeness* protocols, and their various cultural implementations have given rise to a number of politeness theories (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005; Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021). These politeness theories attempt to account for the differences in linguistic behavior depending on the one hand on the goal of the interaction

(communicative function and illocutionary point), as well as on the set of social and situational factors conforming the context: social distance, power differential between the interlocutors, degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and formality (Brown & Fraser, 1979; Formentelli, 2013). These are the typical contextual variables in *variational pragmatics* and sociopragmatics research, among others to consider. Polite *leísmo* is situated in the middle of these pragmatic concepts as an interactional device used to constructively accomplish communicative and relational goals in real-time dialogue. The definition of **politeness** adopted in this study represents a Hispanist view of it as a “communicative behavior that aims at achieving an ‘ideal’ balance between the addressee’s *face* and the speaker’s *face*” (Hernández-Flores, 2004, p. 266, original emphasis). What follows is an overview of the fundamental concepts, assumptions, and methodologies that define the field, along with their applications to the present research.

2.3.1 Variational Pragmatics

As explored elsewhere (Filimonova, 2016b), when the sociolinguistic variationist agenda (Labov, 1972) extended from sociophonetic to morphosyntactic variation in the 80s, the notion of the variable and its envelope of variation had to be redefined in terms of functional rather than truth-conditional equivalence (Lavandera, 1978). This aligned well with the general shift of the field toward explanation of linguistic variation and change, and that is how pragmatics made its way into sociolinguistics research, becoming an important part of it ever since (Cameron & Schwenter, 2013; Fried, 2010; Kearns, 2010; Schneider, 2010). Schneider and Barron (2008) call for a solution to these disciplinary gaps by proposing a ‘dialectologization’ of pragmatics and ‘pragmaticization’ of dialectology – a new approach called *variational pragmatics* (Schneider,

2010). This is one common way to conceptualize variational pragmatics, namely through regional variation, contrasting the language spoken in two or more regions of the same country or different countries, much like dialectology. However, beyond just dialectal or regional pragmatic differences, Cameron and Schwenter (2013) clarify:

Variational Pragmatics investigates how particular speech acts, routines, or even broader notions such as politeness, are realized across varieties of the same language. [...] However, the focus of Variational Pragmatics is not on the variant forms and their internal linguistic conditioning, but rather on the macro-social processes and cultural values associated with speaker strategies for carrying out pragmatic routines in natural discourse. (p. 466)

This conceptualization distinguishes variational pragmatics from just any pragmatic variation by limiting its focus to **intra-lingual variation**, and expanding it to macro-social conditioning in parallel to **sociolinguistics**, leaving inter-lingual variation to cross-cultural pragmatics. For example, Cameron and Schwenter (2013) expand the Anglo-American pragmatic focus from the traditional four pillars (i.e. implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis) to a wider range of discourse strategies and perlocutionary effects and furthermore adopt elements of the European-Continental school of thought by extending the notion of context to sociocultural and interactional one. The former is also known as theoretical or micro-pragmatics, while the latter is often referred to as functional or macro-pragmatics, referring to its connection to applied and social sciences (Huang, 2013). The complexity of the field is reflected in a division of variational pragmatics into five levels of analysis: *formal*, *actional*, *interactional*, *topic*, and *organizational* (Schneider & Barron, 2008). Sociopragmatics is further concerned with the effect of social conditioning, invoked by Cameron and Schwenter (2013).

So far, the pragmatic variables that have received most attention in variational pragmatics are speech acts, and mostly at the *actional* level of analysis (e.g. Márquez Reiter, 2000). At the

formal level, concerned with form-to-function mapping, are the discourse markers (Schneider, 2010), which are also frequently studied in sociolinguistics (e.g. Cheshire, 2005; Tagliamonte, 2012). The resulting pragmalinguistic focus on variation is also correlated to social and situational factors, which may or may not form part of these studies but usually do at the other levels of analysis.

The remaining levels of analysis are largely understudied in variational pragmatics (Schneider, 2010) but play an important role in discourse analysis research (Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2012; Kasper, 2006). The *interactional* level variables mostly include speech act sequences (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2015), but could also encompass negotiation of politeness and relational work (Schneider, 2010).

The *topic* and *organizational* levels of analysis are yet to develop variational pragmatic-friendly approaches, but they are likely to keep heavily relying on the discourse analysis methodology.

From a historical perspective, variational pragmatics research on politeness has evolved in three waves, as posited by Mugford and Félix-Brasdefer (2021). The first and strongest wave so far has focused on speech act production in relation to Gricean notion of face and Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive-negative politeness framework, often connected to mitigation (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005). The second wave of politeness research has begun including a more constructivist and interactional emphasis, taking a closer look at speech acts in sequential and immediate interactional contexts (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2015). Finally, the newest wave of ongoing research builds on the interactional agenda by looking at it from a bottom-up analytical perspective and specifically including the perceptual element on the receiving end of politeness rather than just focusing on production. The present study on polite *leísmo* includes

elements from all three waves due to its interactional methodology with the added perceptual element, in which “actual politeness practices are observed and analyzed and related to a theoretical framework rather than the other way around” (Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021, p. 361).

Variational pragmatics research has had its effect on the movement toward **experimental pragmatics** that has recently surged to validate the research methods and to test the largely relied-upon intuition data with a more scientific research design (cf. Horn, 2007; Huang, 2013; Noveck & Sperber, 2007). For example, Guasti et al. (2005) manipulated situational context, strategic emphasis placing, and the provision of training to successfully elicit pragmatic enrichments of scalar implicatures, and the performance results were considerably different from intuition-based implicature resolution exercises. Along with several other studies on the subject (cf. Bott & Noveck, 2004; Rips, 1975), it has been experimentally proven that enriched pragmatic interpretations of underinformative statements take more effort and longer time to process than literal interpretations. This finding is relevant to the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* since syntactically ambiguous personal reference (*le* ‘him/you’, *lo* ‘him/you’) is likely to require longer processing time than a syntactically unambiguous one (*me* ‘me’, *te* ‘you’, *nos* ‘us’). Ambiguity, in turn, may result in further **linguistic insecurity** (Meyerhoff, 2006) and variable **language attitudes** (Preston, 2002), as the perception part of this study shows.

To date, no variational or experimental pragmatic studies exist on the non-normative clitic use in Spanish. According to this theoretical framework, uncovering the nature and meaning of polite *leísmo* calls for a study of dynamic interaction in different speech events with consideration for formal, actional, and interactional levels of analysis (Schneider & Barron, 2008) as well as the perlocutionary effects of polite *leísmo* through a complementary perception

study. The present study incorporates different experimental methods into the research methodology, as is presented further in this work.

2.3.2 Meaning in Interaction

Determining **meaning** of a pragmatic variable depends on the more cognitive or the more social focus of macro-pragmatics: conceptual or procedural meaning. In Gricean theory of meaning (Grice, 1968), *natural* meaning refers to the conceptual or literal meaning of what is said, while meaning *non-natural* refers to what is meant or intended by what is said. The non-natural meaning is connected to the concept of *conversational inference* (Gumperz, 1977; 1978), whereby “members arrive at situated or context-bound interpretations of what is intended at any one point in an interaction, interpretations on which they build in formulating their responses” (1978, p. 395). This distinction and connection between the cognitive and the social is important because very little of what we say in interaction is said without an expectation of a response or an effect on our interlocutor that purposefully moves conversation and action along (Thomas, 1995). In Austin’s (1962) Speech Act Theory, meaning is subdivided into locutionary (what is said), illocutionary (what is meant), and perlocutionary (what is achieved) aspects. In other words, everything we say has an **illocutionary force**, and therefore “the utterance counts as a certain kind of move in verbal interaction: a command rather than a question, an assertion rather than an apology or a promise” (Sbisa, 2001). The **procedural meaning** of the illocutionary force, therefore, relies on the process of inference, or “the instructions encoded in a linguistic form” (Terkourafi, 2011, p. 366). Procedural meaning is contrasted to conceptual meaning: instead of encoding lexical or semantic meaning, some expressions encode procedures that guide inferential processes of dynamically constructed meaning (Blakemore, 2002). This definition of

pragmatic meaning, whether cognitively or socially-oriented, builds on Lavandera's (1978) functional definition of a morphosyntactic variable and cites the theoretical tool of procedural meaning from Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). It requires a **bottom-up** approach to evaluating variants of pragmatic variable by their *perlocutionary effect*, or the effect on the interlocutor, which is a characteristic of the third wave of politeness research as posited by Mugford and Félix-Brasdefer (2021). The operationalization of pragmatic meaning is an important theoretical advance in the field of variational pragmatics as it assumes the social motivation and intersubjectivity of "cognitive coordination between speaker and addressee" (Terkourafi, 2011, p. 361). It clearly echoes the variationist sociolinguistic tradition, where variables and their variants (i.e. two or more ways of saying the same thing) are identified in a careful form-to-function analysis, circumscribing the **envelope of variation** according to the **principle of accountability**, i.e. analyzing all possible contexts in which the variable might occur (Labov, 1972; Tagliamonte, 2006). Methodologically, *form-based* meaning refers to all meanings expressed by the same linguistic form, while *function-based* meaning refers to the array of multiple forms that may express the same meaning (Terkourafi, 2011). The present study attempts to incorporate the notion of procedural meaning into the study of sociolinguistic variation in polite *leísmo* by exploring social and cognitive coordination between interaction participants in day-to-day speech acts (Thomas, 1995). The meaning of polite *leísmo* is not separable from the notion of meaning in interaction due to the interactive nature of the phenomenon. Polite *leísmo* only occurs in dialogic interaction between "I" and "you", specifically toward "you", where the alternation in clitic possibilities encodes a social and relational meaning beyond pure semantics, and where this meaning is anticipated to be inferred based on sociocultural norms shared by the interlocutors. To prepare for such an endeavor, it is

important to understand just what speech acts are, what they mean or intend, and how these intentions are codified linguistically; in other words, the perlocutionary, the illocutionary, and the locutionary aspects of verbal interaction.

Perlocutionary Effects: Verbal Actions and Interactions. **Perlocutionary** forces best define what is achieved with words and how the world aligns with the words or vice versa through a verbal action. Forging and mending relationships, carrying out transactions, establishing new realities, reaffirming, changing, or eliminating them – much of this can be achieved through verbal interaction. These are actions that are defined by an initial goal and intended effect, a real-time interactive and participatory structure, and a final effect. These actions are generally known as **speech events**: “activities, or aspects of activities that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech. An event may consist of a single speech act, but will often comprise several” (Hymes, 1974, p. 52). **Speech acts**, then, are individual moves that encode intentions (Sbisa, 2001) and that are organized in a **sequence** for the appropriate expression of **intention** by the speaker and a similarly sequential response by the intended audience as a **perlocutionary effect**. This reveals the anatomy and nature of social interaction as goal-driven (defined by intention or **illocution**), sequential (defined as structured **speech events**), encoded in linguistic form (via **locutionary** resources), interactive (**co-constructed** in real time with the intended audience), and resulting in some **perlocutionary effect**. Assuming the nature of interactive and results-producing speech events as the focus of this research, the illocutionary and locutionary forces are briefly reviewed next as their building blocks.

Illocutionary Force: Intentions. The speech acts, or illocutionary acts, are derived from intentionality and are traditionally classified into 5 categories (Searle, 1979), which are exemplified in Huang (2007) the following way:

- Assertives (asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, stating)
- Directives (advice, commands, orders, questions, requests)
- Commissive (offers, pledges, promises, refusals, threats)
- Expressives (apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, thanking, greeting)
- Declaratives (bidding, declaring war, excommunicating, firing, nominating, naming)

Intentionality is defined as “directedness of our (conscious) mental states,” which is not linguistic (Searle, 1979, p. 74-75). This includes wishing for something to happen, intending to do something, or fearing something; and excludes states that lack this directedness, such as pain, ache, itch, or unconscious beliefs and states.

The four interaction types that form the backbone of the present study have as their illocutionary point or goal to greet, compliment or congratulate (**expressives**), negotiate (**directives**), promise or offer (**commissives**), and invite (**commissive-directives**). These goals are rarely achieved through just one speech act and typically require a response as part of the interaction, for which reason the interactions that emerge in response to this goal in this research are referred to as more encompassing **speech events**.

Expressive speech events, such as greetings, compliments, and congratulations, are typically relationship-building instead of transactional, although they are often included with transactionally-oriented speech events for protocol, politeness, or other strategic purposes. Just think of any comedy show where a character approaches another with a compliment, and the latter responds with “What do you need now?”. Or worse yet, if a request is made without a greeting first, such approach is often censored as impolite, daring, or even insulting depending on cultural and situational context. The speech act itself, however, can be said to be serving the

positive-face needs of both interlocutors, or their good public image, and are not inherently face-threatening or imposing (subject to cultural and situational factors).

Commissive speech events are characterized by a future-oriented mutual commitment — be it a promise or an offer— which create a sort of a contract and an expectation of fulfillment. Since the speaker is typically the one who self-imposes this commitment, it is potentially threatening to the speaker's negative face (freedom to act freely) while promoting his or her positive-face image with the interlocutor. Good-faith offers and promises also take into account the positive-face needs of the interlocutor as a valued member deserving of attention and are not typically face-threatening (although other commissive speech events may be).

Directive speech events may take many forms, which are largely transactional in that they influence the interlocutor to some consequent action. Advice, commands, orders, questions, and requests impose one's own desires on the other person who is expected to respond in some way: either accept, answer, or respond by acting or rejecting the prompted action. These are the most inherently imposing and therefore face-threatening speech events for both the speaker and the interlocutor. Typically, it is the positive face of the speaker (his or her reputation) and the negative face of the interlocutor (his or her autonomy) that are found at highest risk of these transactional negotiations.

While invitations involve an influence over the speaker (directive quality), this influence typically assumes mutual benefit to both parties and is therefore a solidary commitment (commissive quality). Therefore, rather than face-threatening, invitations are often primarily face-enhancing by promoting one's own positive face (image of a considerate person) and the interlocutor's positive face (value as a member deserving consideration and inclusion). This

places invitations on a **directive-commissive** continuum (Bach & Harnish, 1979; Hernández, 2001).

These four types of speech events are the main focus of the initial exploration of polite *leísmo* for two reasons: their commonality in day-to-day life (which is not the case with declaratives, for example) and their assumed perlocutionary effect of greater interactional involvement and interlocutor affect (which is not necessarily the case with assertives). In order to gain a meaningful and valid insight into the nature of polite *leísmo* in the day-to-day interaction, it is important to look at interactions that are common and ultimately most interactive, and represent a range of interactional goals. The meaning of polite *leísmo*, therefore, is most easily discoverable by considering its daily applicability along with the main communicative functions of language, as will be explored in the following subsection. At this stage, however, it is important to consider just how these intentions are encoded in language, and that is through specific locutionary resources: namely, illocutionary force indicating devices and their smaller subset of performative verbs.

Locutionary Resources: Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs). The linguistic means of encoding illocutionary force are conceptualized as the locutionary force or locutionary resources. Of particular interest are the various illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) and their characteristics in various illocutionary acts, commonly known as speech acts. Understanding the form-to-function relationship of these linguistic devices will aid in further understanding of various transactional and relational communicative functions as well as different politeness functions defining pragmalinguistic variation.

As already defined, speech acts, thanks to their illocutionary force (Sbisa, 2001), are also commonly known as illocutionary acts (Searle, 1976). The exact illocution, or the intention

conveyed by the utterance, is the utterance's illocutionary force or point (e.g. request, promise, invitation, etc.). This illocutionary point is often expressed by concrete linguistic means called **illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs)** to conventionally indicate or delimit the intended meaning of what is said (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). For example, a promise may be expressed unambiguously with the phrase "I promise," where the verb *promise* carries the explicit and direct meaning of the speech act and thus is a type of an IFID. Verbs of this kind are called **performative verbs** for their ability to not only refer to the conceptual meaning of what the utterance is about, but also to indicate the illocutionary force of the utterance and ultimately perform the action expressed. Other performative verbs corresponding to various illocutionary acts include *invite, apologize, request, order, declare, adjourn, congratulate, thank*, among others. Utterances containing these verbs are the most explicit performative utterances (Austin, 2013). The morphosyntactic and structural properties of the performative verbs are presented in the Morphosyntactic Perspectives section, but it is important to recognize them for their meaning and function in common with the larger set of illocutionary force indicating devices, linguistically encoding the intention of a speech act.

Most performative utterances in our day-to-day life do not contain performative verbs, making them implicit performatives, which rely on IFIDs other than performative verbs (Huang, 2007). For example, a promise can also be expressed simply by placing an utterance in the future tense "I will [call/help you]," where the IFID is the verb tense and mood. Overall, then, the illocutionary force indicating devices, or IFIDs, can take shape of performative verbs, verb tense and mood, sentence word order, intonation contour and stress (Pogoni, 2013), among other conventional and language-specific resources like particles, words, phrases, and syntactic structure.

Furthermore, one linguistic expression is capable of carrying out different illocutionary acts. For example, the same phrase “I promise” can also convey a threat or a warning when it expresses a future action not desirable to the hearer, such as “I promise you’ll regret your decision.” This variable nature of illocutionary acts with respect to form and function is largely dependent on the IFIDs and their culturally-specific availability, calling for a more in-depth understanding of such devices. Various syntactic and semantic properties of these devices are explored in the following Morphosyntactic Perspective section. What remains to recapitulate is that there are a range of linguistic resources that encode intentions and are defining for various speech acts, which in turn are organized in a sequential speech event, co-constructed together with the intended audiences and creating some perlocutionary effect as a final achievement of the interaction. All of these interactional elements are a part of the methodology for this research, whose final goal is to determine the meaning and function of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. Let us turn now to some known linguistic functions that will help to answer that question later.

2.3.3 Communicative and Politeness Functions

As mentioned in the introduction, language is most often meant to accomplish a particular communicative function or actually “do things with words” (Austin, 1962), rather than to simply describe the affairs of the world. Language is primarily a communal behavior, and the range of the speech acts described in the previous section illustrates numerous communicative goals and effects that conform this communal behavior. From the more general perspective than the individual speech acts, Brown and Yule (1983) make an important distinction between two language functions or two large objectives of doing things with words: transactional and interactional. The **transactional function** has been traditionally defined by the objective to

transfer information or achieve a certain change in the affairs of the world, while the **interactional or relational function** seeks to maintain social relationships. It has also been observed that these functions typically coexist and often even a transactional goal of gaining or achieving some end leads to extensive relational exchanges without a particular end (Placencia, 2004). From this distinction, the five speech act categories may be grouped into those that have some end in mind (e.g. ask, negotiate, receive) and those which are more convivial and thus can be said to be an end in themselves (relate, commiserate, make feel good). The first group would express the transactional communicative function, while the second group would express a relational communicative function. The norms for such interactions are largely encompassed in politeness protocols, theorized differently in the field but largely coinciding on the two main politeness functions: **face-saving** and **face-enhancing politeness functions**, roughly corresponding to negative-face and positive-face needs (Curc6, 2007; Hern6ndez-Flores, 2004; M6rquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005). Speech acts have been used prolifically to analyze these politeness functions and to improve the available theoretical models (e.g. F6lix-Brasdefer, 2004; Filimonova, 2015; Koike, 1989; Martineau, 2006; Wagner, 1999). The present research is no exception: it explores the politeness of polite *leísmo* in interaction around four different speech acts: transactional offers and negotiations and relational greetings and invitations.

Politeness research is tightly connected to pragmatic variation as study of multiple appropriate ways of saying the same thing or rather meaning to say the same thing. The history of politeness research has been summarized in three waves by Mugford and F6lix-Brasdefer (2021): a universalist comparative speech act research, a constructivist speech act sequence research, and an emic, bottom-up interactive and perceptual research. Politeness has been distinguished by Watts (2003) from **politic** behavior as non-salient and “which the participants

construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction” (p. 276). According to this viewpoint, linguistic expressions are not necessarily polite or impolite, but are rather evaluated against appropriate or expected social behavior. Following similar reasoning, the traditional perspectives on what politeness is include defining it as a **social norm** (Fraser, 1990), as a **conversational contract** (Fraser & Nolen, 1981), as a **conversational maxim** (Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983), and as a **face-saving mechanism** (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The classical Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness model is based on Goffman’s (1967) notion of **face** and face-work, as well as the face needs of independence and autonomy (‘negative face’) and acceptance and affiliation with the community (‘positive face’) (Bravo, 1998; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fant, 1989). It is theorized as an arguably universal set of generalizations around face-work that mitigates face-threatening acts, emerging from flouting Gricean maxims of cooperative conversation (Grice, 1989). This view has been widely applied and productive in generating much knowledge, but also criticized by non-Western cultures, among which are the Hispanic cultures. According to the Spanish sociopragmatitian Hernández-Flores (2004), **politeness** is a “communicative behavior that aims at achieving an ‘ideal’ balance between the addressee’s *face* and the speaker’s *face*” (p. 266, original emphasis), pointing to the benefit of the two parties involved in interaction. This definition is more in line with the sociolinguistic variationist shift from macro-social universal generalizations toward the micro-social “focus on the local working out of relations between participants” in their respective communities of practice (Mills, 2011, p. 73). Additionally, the goal of achieving a balance between the interlocutors would explain the coexistence of transactional and relational work in most exchanges (Placencia, 2004). What follows is the discussion of how these main communicative functions largely correlate with two main politeness functions: transactional talk

correlates with face-saving politeness, while relational talk correlates with face-enhancement politeness.

The described traditional attention to the positive and negative face needs has evolved into two main politeness perspectives, such as positive and negative politeness, that address these needs. Hernández-Flores (2004) identifies three politeness functions: mitigation, reparation, and face-enhancement. Brown & Levinson's (1987) framework is more readily associated with negative, face-saving, or **mitigation politeness** as it focuses on minimizing or mitigating face threat during or after the act. Hernández-Flores (2004) highlights the need to give due focus to positive, **face-enhancement politeness** in Hispanic cultures, where the value of solidarity and *confianza* ('trust') plays a more prominent role than in the traditional autonomy-prominent Anglo-Saxon accounts. *Confianza* "can be defined as a kind of relationship that aims at achieving close bindings and that alludes to familiarity and to the right to speak openly" (Hernández-Flores, 2004, p. 268). By de-emphasizing face threat, often inherent in transactional talk, it is possible to understand the richer continuum of social action, characterized by the predominance of relational talk in the absence of any real face threat (e.g., greetings, small talk, joking) (Curcó, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2015; Placencia, 2005). Therefore, the essential assumption of crosscultural politeness research, as of Milroy and Milroy's (1993) alternative linguistic markets (see Sociolinguistic Perspective), is that politeness may be expressed differently based on the context and interlocutors' expectations, and that these differences may coexist, be expressed through a number of simultaneous strategies, and be strategically used to negotiate the various cultural norms and individual needs.

Face-Saving or Mitigation Politeness. The various face needs and obligations have an explanatory and evaluative power of communicative behavior in different interactional contexts,

defined by such socio-contextual variables as **social distance** and **power**. These variables were also initially introduced in the Brown and Levinson's (1987) model and, along with the **degree of imposition**, were used to estimate the amount of potential face threat of an utterance. One particular mitigating device to offset the face threat has been **indirectness**: the higher the distance, power, and imposition, the more face-threatening the speech act, and consequently the more it is hedged, ambiguously phrased, or somehow softened (Huang, 2007). The same power and distance variables have later been adapted by other models, including Wolfson's (1990) *'bulge' theory* and Scollon and Scollon's (2001) *politeness domain system*. Wolfson (1990) identifies an unequal distribution of facework across different interpersonal relationships based on social distance. She sees the highest concentration of polite strategies in the middle of the distance continuum, which corresponds to acquaintances and colleagues but not strangers or intimates where the relationship is either nonexistent or is almost taken for granted. Scollon and Scollon (2001) further model this variable social-relational panorama as an intersection of power and distance, ranging from solidarity domain (-power, -distance) to deference (-power, +distance) to hierarchy (+power, +distance). This classification is an important feature of the sociocultural context against which the level of face-saving politeness is assessed in much of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics research. However, this focus may also lead to the belief that politeness only occurs in **face-threatening situations**. While some types of politeness certainly do, the Hispanist view adopted here emphasizes the non-face-threatening building of trust or *confianza* in day-to-day relational interactions (Curc6, 2007; Hern6ndez-Flores, 2004).

Face-Enhancing Politeness. For Leech (1983), some language is inherently more polite than other. Haverkate (1994), for example, identifies several speech acts as polite, mostly among expressive and commissive categories: thanks, congratulations, apologies, promises, and

invitations. Most of these and other speech acts have also been called *face-boosting* acts (Bayraktaroğlu, 1991), *face-saving* or *face-enhancing* acts (Sifianou, 1995), and *flattering* behavior face-enhancing acts (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997). The focus on **positive face** and **solidarity** are at the heart of the face-enhancement view of politeness that is proposed for Hispanic cultures (Curcó, 2007; Hernández-Flores, 2003). This view maintains that an important way to express politeness toward an interlocutor is by making them feel good, included, and valued, focusing on the collective (Cordella, 1990) and on building of trust or *confianza* (Bravo, 1998). It is “constructed on *collaborative, collectivistic* grounds, with a great emphasis on the *affiliation* aspect of public face” (Curcó, 2007, p. 114, emphasis added). Under this view, if **indirectness** is used, it is used primarily for this purpose and not necessarily to mitigate face threat, as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Curcó (2007) reviews and summarizes politeness studies on Mexican Spanish that highlight the cultural importance of positive-face or face-enhancement politeness in contrast to some other cultures, much along the lines of the collectivist-individualist culture continuum (Schwartz, 1992; see Global Perspective). Attention to positive face of the interlocutor has been observed in mitigating exhortative speech acts in Mexico City’s cultured speech or *habla culta* (Quaglia, 1996), avoidance of face-threatening acts and preference for diminutives, interrogative structure, and negation in interrogatives (Curcó & De Fina, 1993), interview suggestions oriented toward positive-face concerns by using a wide range of mitigating strategies, impersonal constructions, and praise (Koike, 1998), laughter as a strategy to motivate “interpersonal closeness, intimacy, and reciprocity” in business negotiations (Bravo, 1998), positive-face apology strategies (Wagner, 1999), shifting the deictic center onto the hearer and avoid confrontations with the hearer (Grindsted, 2000), and the choice of the formal or the informal

you pronoun (*tú/usted*) either to signal respect or closeness (Covarrubias, 2000). The common observation is the difficulty Mexican speakers have with the speech acts that are inherently threatening to the positive face: disagreement, complaining, refusing, and making offers (Curcó, 2007, p. 115).

Just as this brief literature overview suggests, the different politeness functions (i.e. mitigation and face-enhancement) are expressed by means of a set of concrete linguistic and non-linguistic politeness tools or strategies available to each community of practice. Many of the common politeness and mitigation strategies are morphosyntactic, such as sentence type and various hedging constructions, and are the focus of the next section (see Morphosyntactic Perspective). Generally speaking, however, indirectly expressed face-threatening acts, such as requests, are traditionally viewed as constitutive of the face-saving function, while directly phrased speech acts are unmitigated and often characterize positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), face-enhancement, and solidarity strategies, as in greetings and apologies. The Hispanists, however, add that indirectness can also be used for face-enhancing, positive politeness in the absence of face threat (Curcó, 2007; Mills, 2011).

There is, indeed, considerable geographic and social variation in politeness perception and production patterns across Spanish communities, as illustrated in Figure 2.3.3.1, adapted from Filimonova's (2015) crosscultural research on apologies, as well as in Figure 2.3.3.2 from Félix-Brasdefer's (2019) intralanguage comparison of Spanish speech act research.

Figure 2.3.3.1

Interlanguage politeness continuum (adapted from Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005, and Filimonova, 2015)

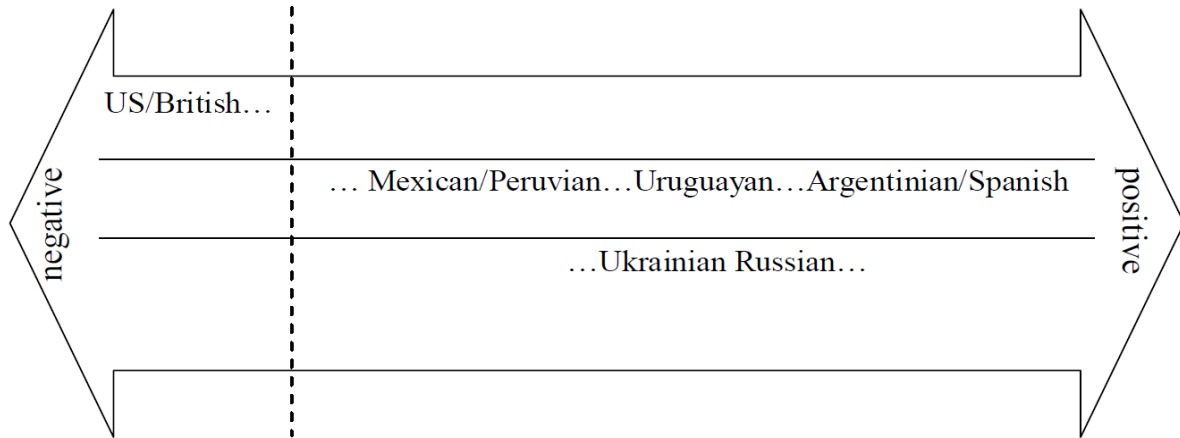
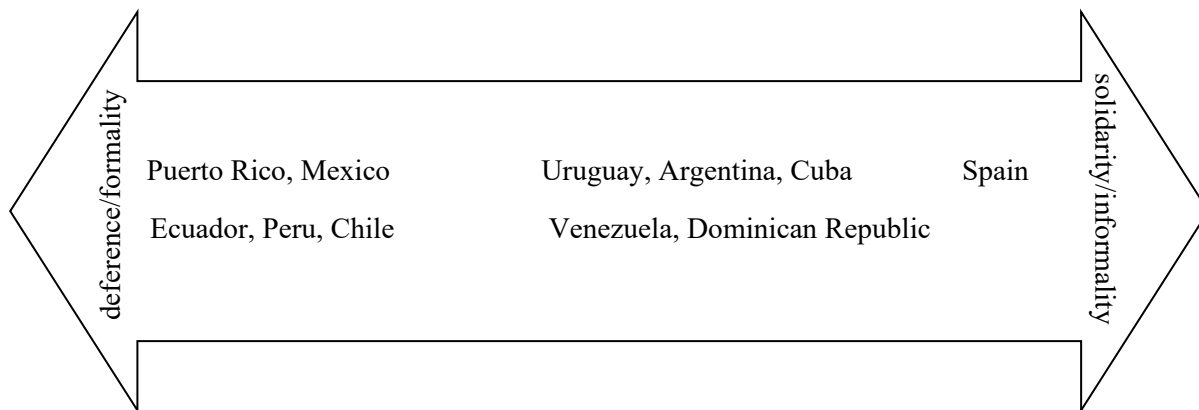


Figure 2.3.3.2

Intralanguage Spanish politeness continuum (adapted from Félix-Brasdefer, 2019)



It is important to keep the perspective on politeness not as a set of rules but rather as interaction strategies, as cautions Mills (2011):

Politeness is a resource but it is also subject to **interpretation**: for example, **indirectness** can be interpreted as negative politeness, showing respect and **deference** for other people in the group. However, it can also be interpreted as **distancing**, cold, vague, unclear, or manipulative (p. 81, emphasis added).

Particularly in Hispanic cultures, one cannot overlook the value of positive politeness and solidarity to highlight the collectivist cultural values, along with considerable social variation. Both mitigation and face-enhancement politeness perspectives contribute reasons to consider syntactic resources, and especially syntactic indirectness, as they relate to expression and perception of politeness of polite *leísmo*, described in more detail in the Analysis section.

2.3.4 Context: Social and Contextual Factors

If the objective of pragmatics is to study language use in context, then what defines **context**?

While it is difficult to define precisely, it typically includes configurations of physical, linguistic, and general knowledge context (Huang, 2007). Various important concepts of the **general knowledge context** have been introduced in the Global Perspective, the Sociolinguistic Perspective, and the Pragmatic Perspective sections – these are the common knowledge and shared evaluations defining language communities and communities of practice, including how social hierarchies are defined, how language codifies them, and what counts as polite and appropriate given various social and situational contexts. **Linguistic context**, such as discourse structure and phrasing, is considered in more detail in the following Morphosyntactic Perspective section. The linguistic and general knowledge types of context are also included in the study design and are recoverable from the elicited polite *leísmo* data, as is explained further in the Methodology and Analysis sections. **Situational context** is divided by Brown and Fraser (1979) into scene and participant elements. The scene is comprised of the setting properties (locale, time, bystanders) and the purpose of the interaction (activity type and subject matter). The participants are characterized by individual characteristics as well as by their relationships among each other. For the purposes of this study, and as conveyed here, the elements of the

physical, situational context include the macro- and micro-social factors of who interacts where, how, and why.

Micro-Social Factors. The typical **micro-social factors** operating in pragmatlinguistic variation, and especially in politeness research, are power difference between the speaker and the interlocutor, social distance between them, as well as the degree of imposition or face-threat. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these factors together determine the politeness strategies that offset the offense and restore the social order in the form of meeting positive and negative face needs of the interlocutors. The variable formality is included in many other accounts, as a combination of situational properties of setting, purpose, and participant identity and relationship features (Brown & Fraser, 1979).

For example, friends and family are typically characterized by no **power** difference (-P or =P), while hierarchical relationships with an employer or a government authority are marked by the authority of one over the other, conventionally represented by +P. Similarly, close friends and family are among the most intimate social relationships one can have, marked as -D, while all other relationships involve different degrees of social **distance**, or +D. Finally, the **degree of imposition**, similar to perlocutionary force, varies by the speech act itself, the context and the relationships just described, as well as by the various illocutionary forces of the linguistic resources. For example, directive speech acts are by definition more impository than, say, commissive or expressive speech acts: requests impose more than invitations and greetings. Within the same directive speech act, however, the degree of imposition may vary based on the exact performative verb or structure used: demand vs. insist vs. request vs. suggest – represent a diminishing level of imposition encoded in the semantics of the verb. Other linguistic resources

also serve to express face-threatening acts as either bold-on-record, off-record, or mitigated through positive or negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Formality, as another micro-social factor considered in politeness research, has multiple approaches and definitions, of which sociolinguistic and pragmatic ones are most relevant for highlighting. Sociolinguistic research on third-person *leísmo* has considered this variable as **register** or *contextual style*, which has been defined following the Labovian tradition by different task types, ranging from more to less conscious **attention to speech**: grammaticality judgment tasks, reading, fill-in-the-blank questionnaires, and semi-guided conversations (Aijón Oliva, 2006; Blas Arroyo, 1994; Martínez Martín, 1984). Aijón Oliva (2006) studies *leísmo* in Salamanca, Spain, with third-person and second-person formal references across two formality registers: the more formal written text and the more spontaneous and informal spoken radio conversations. Results show that polite second-person *leísmo* is more prevalent in oral radio messages, characterized by less attention to speech, while third-person *leísmo* dominates in the more conscious written corpus.

In politeness research, formality has adapted some aspects of the sociolinguistic register (Irvine, 1978) and has highlighted the importance of the scene elements (Brown & Fraser, 1979). Specifically it has been noted that the appropriateness of different forms of speech takes into consideration the social setting, types of activities typical in those settings, and the roles of the interactants along with their interpersonal relationship. The configurations of power and social distance used by Brown and Levinson (1987), Wolfson's (1990), and Scollon and Scollon's (2001) can be roughly characterized into informal and formal registers or **social domains**, as denominated in this research. **Informality** is typically characterized by familiar relationships and low-stakes agenda, as interactions among friends and family and spaces such as home, the

neighborhood, and the street. **Formality**, on the other hand, may involve involve social distance among participants but also higher-stakes exchanges: institutional and hierarchical responsibilities, as the most common. More recently, research into ritualistic and ceremonial register, or **traditional** social domain, has also brought to light special politeness or politic behavior. Kádár (2017) builds on Ide's (1989) discernment theory of politeness to propose a model of **ritualistic politeness**, where "certain interpersonal scenarios trigger the ritual display of the moral order instead of individually formulated (aka 'strategic') messages" (p. 117). Ritualistic politeness is, therefore, expected behavior and, as such, differs from the redressing politeness of Brown and Levinson (1987). Two specific ways in which ritualistic politeness stands out are the acceptability of "excessive" behavior to reinforce the moral order expressed and, similarly, acceptability of unexpected and creative forms of behavior that go beyond the required script (Kádár, 2017, p. 118). It is, therefore, of benefit to this study to consider how politeness of polite *leísmo* might play out differently across three types of social domains, defined by different social expectations, roles, and relationships: formal, informal, and ritualistic/traditional.

This polite *leísmo* study considers the described micro-social factors of power, distance, and social domain directly, while the imposition factor is examined indirectly, through four different speech-act configurations used in data elicitation. The exact way these factors are used and analyzed is found in the appropriate Methodology and Analysis sections.

Macro-Social Factors. The **macro-social factors** characterize sociopragmatic research by highlighting the importance of individual and relationship characteristics of discourse participants. They typically coincide with the macro-social factors of sociolinguistics: geographical or ethnic group, sex, age, social class, and level of education or proficiency in

interlanguage research. The macro-social factors considered in third-person *leísmo* research include *speaker origin* and *level of bilingualism* (Blas Arroyo, 1994), *speaker sex* (Blas Arroyo, 1994; Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1988), *speaker age* (Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1998), and *social class* (Klein-Andreu, 1993; Martínez Martín, 1984).

Geographical or ethnic group variable is the most common in cross-cultural pragmatics research, where politeness and speech-act strategies are compared and contrasted based on wide-stroke generalizations among communities. For example, Filimonova's (2015) research comparing politeness strategies of Mexican Spanish and Ukrainian Russian apologies finds that Russian apologies are more direct than Mexican apologies, thus highlighting cultural differences. Research on third-person *leísmo*, for example, shows lower acceptability rate among bilingual Spanish-Catalan speakers rather than monolingual Spanish speakers in Valencia, Spain (Blas Arroyo, 1994). García's (1975) comparative study, observed more polite *leísmo* than third-person *leísmo* in Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, with only Ecuador reversing this trend, calling for hypotheses about language contact.

The variable **sex** has most often been applied to examining the speaker's social roles in the pragmalinguistic variation, but is also considered an important interlocutor factor. In politeness research specifically, for example, women are found to use more politeness strategies than men, for example in terms of frequency and range of apology strategies across different language communities (Holmes, 1989; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009). According to Lakoff (2015), traditionally, women's language is differentiated from "the standard" by indirectness, emotional expression, and conservatism (p. 80). It has also been proposed that different acceptability judgments by sex are reflections of different perceptions of contexts,

influenced by a number of factors that comprise individual speakers' sociocultural experiences (Lakoff, 2015, p. 83). For example, women predominate on the receiving end of apologies due to their differing perceptions of the circumstances and their relationship to the linguistic resources available to them (Holmes, 1989). Research on third-person *leísmo* in Spain does not show sex as a conditioning factor of its use, given its status as a marker, but Blas Arroyo (1994) does find that females' perceptions of third-person *leísmo* in Valencia, Spain, are more positive than those of males. This fact once more highlights the need to investigate perceptions along with production of variable phenomena.

The two main reasons the factor of **age** would be a factor in pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic variation are the same as described in the Sociolinguistic Perspective section: age is a proxy variable for diachronic change in apparent time studies of language change in progress and it is also an important variable to determine the linguistic market in situations of stable variation. The reason most relevant to pragmatics is certainly the latter one: how language can be contextualized as a symbolic tool to ensure greater success of an interaction. To recall, Bourdieu's (1977, 1993) linguistic marketplace theory explains the use of standard or prestigious linguistic variants as symbolic capital among the middle-age speakers at the peak of their career lives and seeking career success. *Leísmo* research has not so far seen any age significance, which is understandable in Spain where *leísmo* is a general phenomenon – neither a prestigious variant to be used by the middle-age speakers nor a change in progress to be used by the youngest population. The present research shows how age affects polite *leísmo* variation in Mexico City along the linguistic marketplace lines and helps define it as a symbolic capital in stable variation rather than a change in progress.

Whether **social class** is defined by one's socioeconomic status (SES) or the highest level of education completed, it is an important factor that sets standards against which all conscious language choices are evaluated as desirable or not. Pragmatically speaking, the speaker's accommodation or non-accommodation to the linguistic expectations of each group of people give rise to implicatures about the speaker's identity, the interlocutor's role or status, and the speaker and interlocutor's relationship along with its evaluation in subjective terms. In third-person *leísmo* research, some social class effects are discovered by Klein-Andreu (1993), mediated by dialect: while third-person *leísmo* with reference to living entities is favored by all classes equally in Valladolid, Spain (90%), it is especially led by high social class in Logroño, Spain (38%). However, the general non-significance of social class in Spain is just another consequence of and predictor of *leísmo*'s marker status. This polite *leísmo* research shows a direct relationship between the level of education and the level of consciousness of the phenomenon, which consequently gives it variable social and pragmatic value.

It is expected that by defining these socio-contextual factors (origin, sex, age, social class, as well as power, distance, imposition, and formality), the pragmatic meaning in context and the social value of polite *leísmo* becomes easier to define and understand. It is these factors that guide the methodological decisions and the interpretation of the data in this study, and so these concepts are frequently referred to throughout this work.

2.3.5 Interfacing with the Pragmatic Perspective: Social Deixis and Deictic Relationships

Extensive pragmatic inquiry flourishes in the areas of cross-cultural and L2 speech acts (cf. Blum-Kulka, Kasper, & House, 1989), leaving a substantial gap with respect to L1 inference and deixis, also referred to as **micro-pragmatics** (Cap, 2011; Huang, 2013). **Deixis** "is the

phenomenon whereby features of context of utterance or speech event [such as person, space, or time] are encoded by lexical and/or grammatical means in a language” (Huang, 2013, p. 138). Maldonado (2021) identifies six deictic categories: person, location, motion, temporal, social distance, and reference relations types of deixis, in addition to discourse deixis or anaphora. Coined by Bühler (1934), the notion of a **deictic center** is the use of these person, space, and time references for cultural and situational positioning and perception of the organization of the world. Deictic center is the *here* and *now* of the speech event as conceived by the speaker, or the *I* of the speech event. Whether the speech event is expressed in these terms or uses a **deictic projection** (i.e. shifting the center elsewhere) is often culturally or situationally motivated, for which reason it is of particular interest for polite *leísmo* research.

One simple example of culturally different configurations of the deictic center are the English and Spanish common speech act formulas, as illustrated below. The first example shows specifically how **person deixis** is used to configure the deictic center of a request:

English: Can **I** have some coffee?

Spanish: *Me regala un poco de café?* - Do **you** gift me a little coffee?

 *¿*Puedo tener un poco de café?* - *Can **I** have some coffee?

The deictic center in the English request is the speaker, who is the center of the sought benefit by way of taking the subject position. The Spanish formula, however, uses the ‘you’ subject, focusing the center of attention on the interlocutor as the source of the benefit of the request. One way to know that this deictic center configuration is culture-dependent is observing that it is not literally translatable between the two languages. Neither the English literal translation of the

Spanish request sound appropriate, nor does the literal translation from English to Spanish sound native-like.

The next example illustrates how **time deixis** is used to configure the deictic center and a deictically projected target in a common promise formula. These examples are taken from the oral role play data in this study, discussed in more detail further. Basic speaker information is indicated in parentheses by the participant ID, followed by the age group (1 = young, 2 = middle age, 3 = older), sex (Male or Female), and origin (CDMX = Mexico City, MxState = Mexico State, OtherState = any other state outside of Mexico City and Mexico State).

English: I **will** call you

Spanish:	<i>lo llamaré</i> (1119.3M-CDMX)	- I will call you
	<i>le voy a llamar</i> (1008.1M-MxState)	- I am going to call you
	<i>yo le llamaría</i> (1206.2F-CDMX)	- I would call you
	<i>le estaré yo llamando</i> (1154.3M-CDMX)	- I will be calling you
	<i>lo llamo</i> (1140.1M-OtherState)	- I call you
	<i>yo estaré por llamarle</i> (1019.2F-CDMX)	- I will be about to call you

The deictic target of any promise, by definition, is future tense for both English and Spanish. Syntactically, the typical English formula for promising is expressed in future tense or less frequently in periphrastic future with *going to*. Spanish, on the other hand, as observed in the present study's role plays, has a wide variety of linguistic resources to express promise through

present, future, future conditional, conditional, and periphrastic future constructions, among various indirect and subordinate constructions not shown.

Spatial deixis aids in expressing deictic center and deictic projection in several ways: through marking the *here* and *there* of the action with respect to the interlocutors, as well as the *to* and *from* directions of action. As an example, the motion verbs *traer* ‘bring’ and *llevar* ‘take’ in reference to offering someone a ride mark the deictic center and the deictically projected target in space, as illustrated by two offers within the same speech event of invitation produced by the same middle-age male speaker from Mexico City (1075.2M-CDMX):

*Vamos, lo **llevamos** y lo regresamos*

Come on, we take you [there] and we return you [here]

*A las cuatro de la tarde, lo invitamos a comer y se queda ahí y ya lo **traemos***

At four in the afternoon, we invite you to eat and you stay there and then we bring you [here]

In this particular case, the speaker is inviting a local priest to join in a traditional Christmas procession of *Posadas* and the accompanying festivities. Seeing how this invitation contains a fair degree of imposition on the priest’s schedule and commitments, the speaker not only shares the invitation but also accompanies it with an offer of taking the priest to the place (deictic target) and bringing him back to the church as the deictic center, where the speech event is taking place.

Quite similarly, the role plays of the present study yield many invitations and offers from the deictic ‘we’ center toward the interlocutor but include the specification of who exactly this ‘we’ are by adding the space-delimited “*here*” and “*there*”:

<i>Ahí lo vamos a recibir</i> (1146.3F-CDMX)	- We there will receive you
<i>Ahí lo recibimos</i> (1085.1F-CDMX)	- We there receive you
<i>Estamos aquí para acompañarlo</i> (1123.1M-MxState)	- We are here to accompany you
<i>Aquí estamos pa’ ayudarlos</i> (1215.3F-CDMX)	- Here we are to help you

The examples using the place adverb *ahí* ‘there’ define ‘us’ as the speaker plus someone else not present during the interaction but who is expressed as present at the place defined by the invitation. The place adverb *aquí* ‘here’ defines ‘us’ as the speaker and someone else who is present in place and time during the interaction.

The choice to pluralize the 1st-person subject or the 2nd-person object in reference to the interlocutor is part of **person deixis**: how speakers signal different actors in interaction and thus relate to each other via the actions described by the verb. While the deictic center of any speech act produced by the speaker is by default the speaker’s *I*, multiple deictic projections allow the speaker to shift the responsibility, authorship, or interest in the action and the effect expressed by the speech act. A deictic projection of person deixis, therefore, may serve as a communicative

device of mitigation, politeness, evidentiality, or some other implicature, as illustrated by the data from this study. The following examples are taken from the situation in which each speaker invites a local priest to form part of a traditional Christmas procession, which is a speech event characterized by social distance between the interlocutors and an imposition on the interlocutor with higher authority over the speaker. Notice the variety of deictic projections in an effort to avoid using the 1st-person *I* as the source of the imposition, even though the speaker is always alone:

We: *Nosotros lo necesitamos mucho en estos días* (1159.2F-MxState)

We need you a lot these days

They: *Mis **vecinos** lo eligieron a usted* (1148.2M-CDMX)

My neighbors selected you

They/I: ***Me** mandaron a intentar convencerlo a usted* (1113.1F-OtherState)

They sent me to try to convince you

He/she: *Ya sabe esa **doña Clemencia** lo adora* (1094.1M-CDMX)

You know, **that Mrs. Clemencia** adores you

Impersonal: *¿No hay **algo** que lo pueda hacer cambiar de opinión?* (1094.1M-CDMX)

There isn't **anything** that could make you change your mind?

In the illustrative examples, different speakers not only shift the deictic center and focus from themselves onto others, often by pluralizing, but also shift the responsibility for the imposition expressed through the verbs *need*, *select*, *convince*, *adore*, and *change mind*. It is also not surprising to find pluralization of the interlocutor's *you* reference in consideration of who else besides the interlocutor would be affected by the speech act performed by the speaker. When speaking to an uncle, for example, many speakers use the plural *you* to include his wife and children in the offer or help, expressed through the verbs *take care*, *help*, and *receive*:

Ahí estamos para atenderlos y para ayudar (1088.3F-MxState)

There we are to take care of **you-PL** and to help

Igual puede venir con su familia, los podemos recibir (1209.1M-CDMX)

Anyway you can come with your family, we can receive **you-PL**

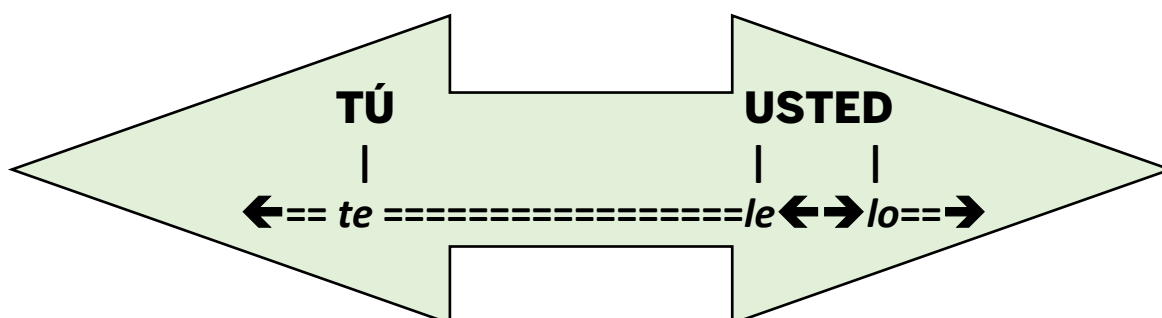
The technical aspects of such deictic projections and their meaning with respect to polite *leísmo* are explored further in the Analysis and Results sections of this work.

Social deixis is specifically concerned with linguistically codifying social distance and power hierarchy of the interlocutors. It is an important point of connection between social, situational, and linguistic meaning. While the sociolinguistic phenomena simply get associated with social realities and acquire social meanings of the variants of the same variable (e.g. r-ful and r-less speech, cf. Labov, 1972), there are lexical and grammatical resources that encode these social realities in the linguistic form itself. Some examples of social deixis are titles to refer to social hierarchies (e.g. Dr., Mrs., Professor, Your Highness), personal pronouns (e.g. *tú* 'you-

informal' vs. *usted* 'you-formal'), their corresponding verb forms (e.g. *estás* 'you-informal are' vs. *está* 'you-formal are'), as well as certain register and discourse markers. The most visible example of social deixis in sociolinguistic research is the use of second person subject pronouns across languages that lexically encode formality, distance, or another defining feature of the relationship to the interlocutor, such as the famous T-V distinction characteristic of Spanish, French, Russian, and other languages (Brown & Gilman, 1960). While the focus of previous research has been mostly on subject pronoun forms, the social relationships indexed in them carry over to clitic pronoun forms (e.g. direct and indirect object pronouns) and verbal paradigms. The phenomenon of interest to this research is polite *leísmo* in Mexican Spanish, which is the use of the clitic *le* (typically reserved for dative or indirect object use) in place of the accusative direct object *lo* with reference to the 2nd person singular masculine interlocutor treated with *usted* 'you-formal'. This variation in Mexican Spanish can be visualized in the following Figure 2.3.5.1, presenting the three-way 'you' codification of the direct-object pronoun: the informal treatment is invariable *te*, while the formal treatment is divided between *lo* and *le*.

Figure 2.3.5.1

Variable 'you' treatment encoded in Mexican Spanish direct-object clitics



The placement of *le* with respect to *lo* is speculative at this point since we do not yet know the real meaning and social value of *le*; however, it we can hypothesize a close relationship with *lo*

(marked with a two-way arrow between *lo* and *le*) as two way of referencing *usted*, and both in some contrast to *tú*. The arrows are meant to represent a fuzzy-boundary continuum which is precisely at the heart of this research.

This study, therefore, makes an important step in the direction of tackling the understudied complex sociopragmatic phenomenon of polite *leísmo* by bridging the fields of morphosyntax and pragmatics through a combination of social, pragmatic, syntactic, and cognitive theories and methodologies.

2.4 Morphosyntactic Perspective on Social Deixis and Polite *Leísmo*



One of the likely reasons that the clitic forms *lo* and *le* with reference to the second-person interlocutor have been understudied is their dependence on their syntactic and semantic context. Particularly in Spanish, for example, clitics depend on the verb argument structure, which includes verb semantics as well as the syntactic and semantic roles of their arguments (subject and one or two objects, depending on transitivity). Therefore, the final close-up perspective that this research takes is the morphosyntactic one. This final perspective section outlines the **syntax-pragmatics interface**, by comparing morphosyntactic categories, such as nouns, pronouns, and verbs, with their semantic and pragmatic roles in discourse. This perspective helps to understand polite *leísmo* as an interface phenomenon by connecting the meaning of morphosyntactic structures with speech functions through various interface theories. The morphological and structural properties presented here serve as specific tools for methodological design, analysis, and interpretation of the variation in polite *leísmo* and its social meaning. After establishing the general morphosyntactic relationships relevant to politeness, this section defines morphosyntactic properties of polite *leísmo* and

contrasts it with seeming *leísmo*. As a connecting and summarizing element, the section ends by outlining several theoretical perspectives that tie morphosyntax to politeness and that are used throughout this work to form hypotheses and to interpret the results.

2.4.1 Morphosyntactic Relationships between Form and Meaning

Before focusing on the clitics under study, it is worthwhile highlighting the morphosyntactic characteristics of the sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspectives already discussed. Specifically, the syntactic category of **verb** is highly implicated in indicating the illocutionary force of the utterance, whether as a performative verb or as another illocutionary force indicating device (IFID). In turn, verbs are central to the argument structure of the sentence, defining how many argument **nouns** or clauses the sentence takes and what semantic roles these nouns carry with respect to the verb and each other. Defining the subject and the object, for example, is of consequence for defining the deictic center of the utterance and any deictic projections.

Commonly ditransitive verbs also define a hierarchy of objects with respect to the subject: who suffers (patient) and who benefits (beneficiary) from the action, and to what extent? **Pronouns**, besides participating in the argument structure and deictic projections applied to nouns, also exhibit additional properties and functions through anaphora and social deixis, further capable of signaling different communicative functions and politeness. With respect to the *le-lo* clitics specifically, García and Otheguy (1977) suggest focusing on the inferential processes rather than strictly syntactic meaning in understanding the meaning of this variation. Overall, all of these morphosyntactic categories and the overall syntactic structure act together to define the illocutionary force of the utterance and its politeness configuration. Any variation in these syntactic categories or structure, however, is conventionally constrained and is, therefore, subject

to **inferences** and conventional implicatures by association. These conventions are formalized in a number of syntax-pragmatics interface theories that are explored toward the end of this section. What follows now are examples of morphosyntactic elements, such as parts of speech, and their connection to pragmatic meaning and politeness.

Verbs and Illocutionary Forces. Verbs make two main contributions to politeness expression: they carry the illocutionary force of the said and they establish relationships between event participants by specifying particular argument structures, which further contribute to argument semantic roles. The notion of **performative** verbs has been introduced in the Pragmatics Perspective chapter, focusing more on their meaning and function. However, there are additional syntactic and semantic properties that distinguish performative verbs from non-performative illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), and further from those that do not carry any illocutionary force. Performative verbs are characterized by **intentional semantics**: they must express directedness of our conscious mental states, such as desires and intents, and not just states and beliefs about something (Searle, 1979, 2001). For example, beliefs, fears, hopes, and desires are said to be intrinsically intentional (Searle, 1979, p. 88) and manifestation of that intention is what counts as performance of the illocutionary act (Condoravdi & Lauer, 2011; Searle, 2001). As such, the verbs *order*, *declare*, *invite*, and *congratulate* are **intentional verbs**, clearly manifesting intention on behalf of the subject/speaker, while the verbs *be*, *feel*, *ache* are not. The verbs that express these intentional states are often performative or at least indicative of the illocutionary force of the speech act (i.e. IFIDs). What is more, “any verb at all which names an intentional action could be uttered performatively” (Searle, 2001, p. 107). Such is the role of intentionality for Searle (2001) that he claims that no other semantic property of performativity exists. Instead, performativity is rather “just a fact about how the world works”

(Searle, 2001, p. 104). This world knowledge has been formalized by way of felicity conditions ensuring the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary success of any speech act, respecting the right procedure, the right people, and the right circumstances for the event (Austin, 1962, 2013; Searle, 1979, 2001).

Syntactically, performative verbs, are most typically expressed in a simple present tense, indicative mood, and active voice (Huang, 2007; Searle, 2001), and behave syntactically as declaratives (Condoravdi & Lauer, 2011). Cohen and Levesque (1990) require performative verbs to denote actions that are completed or ongoing, which correspond to activity or accomplishment verb classes (Vendler, 1957), without specification for telicity. An additional prototypical configuration is for the verb to agree with its 1st-person singular subject argument, which is not without exceptions in real life (Huang, 2007). Searle (1979) claims that a combination of syntactic and semantic features of verbs are what helps to understand intentionality and indeed “what is going on” in the speech act (p. 90). This is why verbs participate in important syntax-pragmatics interface: the meaning of an utterance and its effects depend largely on the meaning of the verb; and the meaning of the verb depends on the connection between syntax, lexicon, semantics, and pragmatics all at once.

The excerpts (2.4.1 a-e) are illustrations of how an invitation may call on different verbs as illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). Specifically, they show how the same verb *to see*, which is typically not intentional, is used with different pragmatic meanings by different participants in the same context. These examples are taken from one of this study’s role plays of inviting an older acquaintance to a local event while waiting in line at a governmental institution:

2.4.1 (a) Assertive *see*: *perceive* (NOT performative, NOT intentional)

*Oiga, lo **veo** que viene muy seguido también a revisar sus trámites (1015.2F-CDMX)²*

Oh, I **see** you come here very often also to take care of your enquiries

(b) Expressive *see: meet and greet* (NOT performative, NOT intentional)

*Qué bueno que lo **veo** (1154.3M-CDMX)*

How nice to **run into** you

(c) Commissive *see: welcome* (NOT performative, intentional)

*Me va a dar mucho gusto **verlo** y saludar a usted y a toda su familia (1073.3F-CDMX)*

It will be my pleasure to **see** you and to greet you and all of your family

(d) Commissive *receive: welcome* (NOT performative, intentional)

*Sería un gusto **recibirlo** en nuestra casa (1014.1F-CDMX)*

It would be our pleasure to **receive** you in our home

(e) Commissive *invite* (performative, intentional)

*Pues le **invito** yo a visitarme a la casa (1069.3F-CDMX)*

So I **invite** you to visit me at home

Verbs are, therefore, of particular interest to polite expressions as performative verbs of the head act or simply indicative of illocutionary force of the speech act (IFIDs). Polite *leísmo* is essentially affected by verbs, as it necessarily occurs with transitive verbs as a pre-posed or a post-posed clitic. One of the justified objectives of this research is to study polite *leísmo* with

² The sociodemographic information of the speakers throughout this work include the participant ID number, age group (1=young, 2=adult, 3=older), sex (M=male, F=female), and origin (CDMX = Mexico City, MxState = Mexico State, and Other = another state outside of the metropolitan center).

intentional verbs, testing their semantic and syntactic properties and allowing room for social and contextual variation.

Nouns and Semantic Roles. As mentioned above, verbs are central to the **argument structure** of the sentence, defining the event participants typically in noun or clause form and establishing syntactic and semantic roles these nouns carry with respect to the verb and each other. As a general rule, **syntactic roles** are more limited than **semantic roles**, which receive part of their definition from the verb (Aijón Oliva, 2018) and part from general world knowledge (Marantz, 2013).

Most verbs generally have the argument that is syntactically the subject or pragmatically the deictic center of the action, event, or experience, characterized by such semantic roles as agent or experiencer. Transitive verbs further define the undergoer of the action syntactically as a direct object and semantically as either a theme, a patient, or a recipient. Commonly ditransitive verbs, that take both a direct and an indirect object syntactically, also define a hierarchy of objects with respect to the subject and to each other: who suffers (semantically, patient) and who benefits (semantically, beneficiary) from the action done by the subject-actor. According to Van Valin's (1999, 2006) account of generalized semantic roles, actor nouns obtain part of their definition from the verb and may be more precisely defined as thinkers, believers, knowers, presumers, hearers, smellers, feelers, tasters, likers, lovers, and haters, givers, runners, killers, speakers, or dancers, among other active roles. Likewise, the undergoer nouns receive from the verb their characteristics of being located, moved, given, broken, destroyed, killed, given to, sent to, or handed to. Formally speaking, a **prototypical event** expresses "a transaction of energy from an agent to a patient that causes some change in the latter" (Aijón Oliva, 2018, p. 572).

Speaking in prototypical terms, the three main verbal arguments (subject, indirect object, and direct object) occupy a **salience or activity continuum** from more to less animate and human, from more to less definite, from more to less agentive, and from more to less topical (see García & Otheguy, 1977). Real-world communication, however, is much more varied and nuanced than this prototypical setup, and especially when the direct or the indirect object of the verb is another human being, and even more so when this human being is a copresent participant in the conversation with the subject-actor. In other words, prototypical schema is often justifiably avoided when dealing with a second-person referent object affected by the first-person subject. Polite *leísmo* is one such strategy as it occurs between the “you and I” of the conversation. This encoded out-of-the-prototype-box linguistic creativity is justified as a “syntactic reflection of a quite natural tendency of speakers to contemplate reality from their own point of view (Siewierska, 2004, p. 201) as well as, secondarily, from that of their interactional partners” (Aijón Oliva, 2018, p. 573). In pragmatic terms, this adjustable syntax of the event participants configures the **deictic center** and any desirable **deictic projections**, such as a shift toward the ‘you’-centered point of view.

Pronouns, Clitics, and Deixis. Pronouns, besides participating in the **argument structure** and **deictic projections** applied to nouns, also exhibit additional properties and functions through anaphora and social deixis, further capable of signaling such communicative functions as politeness. **Anaphora** is the property of pronouns to stand in place of and refer to an element not explicitly stated in the moment, often referring to something mentioned beforehand and therefore showing syntactic agreement in person, gender, and number with the referent. Anaphora resolution, or decoding of what the pronouns refer to, involves syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors (Blackwell, 1998) that together constitute context and give rise to

inference or implicature. Baumann, Konieczny, and Hemforth (2014), for example, propose that the difference between pronouns and reflexives in English involves a conversational implicature, whereby pronouns invoke an inference that they refer to something outside of the local domain, while reflexives necessarily signal something within the local domain. **Social deixis** is different from anaphora at least in that it signals the social roles and relationships of the referents, and not just who the referents are. It is the inferences about social roles and relationships of polite *leísmo* that would make it a social deixis phenomenon, as this study shows.

Clitics are a special form of pronouns that share the aforementioned properties of independent personal pronouns as well as properties of bound morphemes. For example, for García and Otheguy (1977), the meaning of the third-person *le/lo* clitics is less in the accusative/dative syntax and more in the semantics of a more or less active event participant. At the same time clitics maintain some prosodic and morphological particularities (Aijón Oliva, 2018): “Agreement is usually mandatory with preverbal objects and pronominal ones in general [...]. On the other hand, it is variable with third-person, non-pronominal, postverbal objects” (p. 575). Clitic **placement** is indeed a relevant factor to the polite *leísmo* phenomenon. In Spanish, clitic pronouns show some flexibility in either stand-alone preverbal position or postverbal attachment to nonfinite verbal forms, be it the main verb or its accompanying modal or auxiliary verbs (e.g. *te invito/te quiero invitar/quiero invitarte* ‘I [want to] invite you-informal’). This placement optionality is a source of morphosyntactic and pragmatic variation, as is explained by Saliency and Iconic Distance frameworks at the end of this section. In general, pronouns and clitics are not only capable of pointing out discourse participants, assign social roles and relationships to them, but also participate in emphasizing or taking away the focus from any

particular participant for reasons such as face-saving or face-enhancement through deictic configurations and iconic syntactic placement.

The Syntax of Mitigating Indirectness. As already mentioned, mitigated politeness is often associated with indirectness strategies, whereby syntax does not literally correspond to the intended meaning. Such is the case of expressing a request with an interrogative rather than imperative sentence structure, precisely to offset the cost of the imposition and face threat. Some commonly cited linguistic mitigation devices include non-immediacy indicators and non-specific reference, epistemic disclaimers, parenthetical expressions and tag questions, hedges, and time deixis (e.g. Flores-Ferrán, 2010), as well as particular lexical conventions (e.g. Wigglesworth & Yates, 2007). Among the multiple linguistic resources that may act as mitigators or softeners of imposition, there are lexical (e.g. “just,” “a little,” “invite” vs. “recommend”), morphological (e.g. diminutive suffixes and prepositions), syntactic (e.g. conditional and subordinate sentence structure), suprasegmental (e.g. interrogative intonation and pauses), and frequency effects, whereby the effect of repetition may convey insistence while varying word choice with less frequent forms softens the imposition and shows consideration.

Of these linguistic resources, the lexical, morphological, and syntactic are of greatest interest to this research. Among the lexical mitigating resources, are primarily the verb choices, where an inherently intentional or imposing verb may be substituted for another verb with a lighter semantic and pragmatic weight (e.g. *I recommend/invite you to listen to the lecture*). Morphologically, some verbs have the possibility to be expressed more or less transitively, and thus express different shades of directness, as is further conceptualized in the Relative Transitivity Hypothesis at the end of this section. Deictic projections expressed morphosyntactically are another possible manifestation of syntactic indirectness (e.g. *I want you*

to do me a favor > *Our neighbors want you to do us a favor*). Additionally, morphological positioning of elements with respect to each other may constitute an indirectness move, such as placing an iconic distance between elements that otherwise create an impression of greater imposition, as further presented at the end of this section (e.g. *I do not approve necessarily* > *I do not necessarily approve*). Variable word order and sentence structure are among the available syntactic strategies to express indirectness. Hedging is another strategy that cushions the directness of an expression through additional information or clauses, just as explanations are added to mitigate the severity of offense in an apology (e.g. *I must apologize* > *I must apologize because it wasn't my intention*). The final subsection on the Theoretical Frameworks for Syntax-Pragmatics Interface as well as the Analysis section of this research explore concrete applications of these indirectness strategies to polite *leísmo* and contribute to understanding this phenomenon as potentially another indirectness tool. At this time, however, let us explore some morphosyntactic properties of polite *leísmo* up close.

2.4.2 Morphosyntactic Properties of Polite Leísmo

The Spanish clitic system has a long history of variation, in which etymological use has coexisted with non-normative yet variably acceptable clitic use, including *leísmo*, *loísmo*, and *laísmo* (cf. Cuervo, 1895; Klein-Andreu, 1993; RAE, 2010). Examples (2.4.2 a-d) summarize the variation in person reference (i.e. personal deixis) with respect to *leísmo* with masculine direct objects.

2.4.2 (a) Etymological 3rd-person clitic use (Peninsular and Latin American Spanish):

Lo invito (a él)

I invite **him**

(b) Etymological 2nd-person clitic use (Peninsular and Latin American Spanish):

Lo invito (a usted)

I invite **you-formal**

(c) 3rd-person *leísmo* (Peninsular Spanish):

Le invito (a él)

I invite **him**

(d) 2nd-person *leísmo*/polite *leísmo* (Peninsular and Latin American Spanish):

Le invito (a usted)

I invite **you-formal**

Focus on third-person *leísmo* has dominated linguistics and dialectology research, with some side mentions of polite *leísmo* in non-*leísta* Spanish dialects (Diccionario panhispánico de dudas, 2005; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; Lorenzo Ramos, 1981; Uruburu, 1993), but only a few studies explore its actual use (e.g. Aijón Oliva, 2006; Blas Arroyo, 1994; Klein, 1979). It is, therefore, not surprising that no studies to this day have looked at its perception. Second-person *leísmo* is of interest because it is conditioned by multiple social and pragmatic factors, reflective of the speakers' ability to disambiguate deictic references as well as to actively manipulate deictic markers in interaction to construct social relationships. As such, a study of perception (RQ2), as well as interaction between perception and production (RQ3), sheds light onto this complex interface phenomenon and provides valuable insights for the future of other similar phenomena within sociolinguistic and pragmatic scope of inquiry.

While the linguistic form *le* is structurally used for both 3rd-person singular and 2nd-person-formal singular referents, its frequency of use and its social and pragmatic meanings are differentiated. The meaning differences are due in part to the historical evolution of language (see the Diachronic Complexity section of the Sociolinguistic Perspective) and in large part due to the differences between the persons referenced. The 2nd person is an active participant in the discourse (i.e. the interlocutor) and the 3rd person referent is a person or thing outside of the interactional context, often not present. Based solely on the grammars and dictionaries, it can be said that the 3rd-person *leísmo* is different from the 2nd-person or polite *leísmo* at least along the axes of referenced person, geographical spread, and grammatical acceptability (Table 2.4.2.1). Third-person *leísmo*, as the most commonly known phenomenon, is currently typical of European Spanish and acceptable by RAE (2010) with singular, masculine, and animate referents, while little is known about the second-person, or polite, *leísmo* elsewhere.

Table 2.4.2.1

Comparison and contrast of the non-etymological clitic phenomena of leísmo and polite leísmo

	<i>leísmo</i> (3 rd -person <i>leísmo</i>)	“polite” <i>leísmo</i> (2 nd -person <i>leísmo</i>)
Definition	Non-etymological use of LE with reference to 3rd person as Direct Object (DO/ACC)	Non-etymological use of LE with reference to 2nd person formal (<i>usted</i>) as Direct Object (DO/ACC)
Spread	Typical of European Spanish	Rarely mentioned, but exists in European and Latin American Spanish
Grammatical acceptability	Acceptable by RAE (2010) with singular, masculine, animate referents	Production and perception patterns are not well known
Example	(<i>A Pablo</i> ₁) <i>le</i> ₁ vi ayer en la UNAM. I saw him (Pablo) at UNAM yesterday.	(<i>A usted</i> ₁) <i>le</i> ₁ vi ayer en la UNAM. I saw you-formal at UNAM yesterday.

One previously suggested reason for the non-etymological use of *le* for *lo* in Peninsular Spanish is that of disambiguation since *lo* is homophonous with second- and third-person masculine

direct objects, which can further be animate and inanimate (Aijón Oliva, 2006; DeMello, 2002; Diccionario panhispánico de dudas, 2005; Lapesa, 1968; Lorenzo Ramos, 1981; Parodi et al., 2012; Uruburu, 1993). Another semantic reason proposed by García and Otheguy (1977) is the actual meaning of *le*: rather than syntactically marking the indirect object, it is proposed to mark an event participant that is less active than the subject but more active than the object.

Furthermore, considering that clitics are function words, the tendency may be to dismiss their non-prescriptive use as less meaningful than variation in content words. However, 2nd-person clitics are not just referential; they carry social consequences. As a deictic phenomenon, the meaning of clitics completely depends on context (Huang, 2007), and in the case of *leísmo*, it is particularly the social context that establishes referents established through interaction. Just as the choice between *tú* and *usted* in interaction shapes relationships and constructs interlocutors' roles, so does the use of *le* over *lo* in addressing the interlocutor. Furthermore, it would not be the first time that a less frequent morphosyntactic variant would acquire a special stylistic function of formality in an asymmetric system, such as the use of *cantase* over *cantara* form of the imperfect subjunctive (cf. Blas Arroyo & Porcar, 1994; Cuervo, 1911; Lenz, 1920) and *deber de* over *deber* (Filimonova, 2014) in modern Spanish. These observations merit a thorough analysis of this interpersonal phenomenon, which benefits from incorporating both production and perception of variable clitic use in traditionally non-*leísta* dialects, such as Mexican Spanish.

2.4.3 Seeming Leísmo

Other existential debates over polite *leísmo* stem from syntax and semantics. Syntacticians in particular have been instrumental in outlining what is and what is not *leísmo*. In formal terms, *leísmo* is the non-normative use of the indirect object pronoun *le(s)* in place of the direct object

pronoun *lo/la(s)* (RAE, 2010). However, many previous studies have been criticized for misinterpreting syntactic and semantic functions of the *le* clitic, giving rise to the debate about the seeming *leísmo* (*'leísmo aparente'*). **Seeming *leísmo*** has been cumulatively conceptualized by DeMello (2002), *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* (2005), Fernández-Ordóñez (1999), and Parodi et al. (2012) and as a justified use of *le* as a **covert indirect object pronoun**, rather than a direct object pronoun in spite of their structural similarity. These cases, with illustrations of third-person *leísmo* (2.4.3 i-v) cited or invented in *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* (2005) and (2.4.3 vi) in Fernández-Ordóñez (1999), include the following:

2.4.3 (i) **Verbs of affection** (e.g. *afectar, asustar, interesar, molestar, preocupar*) that admit agentive and non-agentive structures with a patient vs. experiencer argument dichotomy:

- a. *A mi madre LA **asombro** cuando como mucho* (Agentive effect of “I”)

‘I **amuse** my mother when I eat a lot’
- b. *A mi madre LE **asombra** mi apetito* (Non-agentive effect of the “appetite”)

‘My appetite **amuses** my mother’

(ii) **Pronominalized subjects of infinitive clauses**, especially with verbs of influence as part of **causative constructions** (e.g. *permitir, prohibir, mandar, dejar, hacer*), but also with verbs of **perception** taking an **infinitive complement** (e.g. *ver, oír*):

- a. *LO **dejé** hablar* (Causative of intransitive subordinate verb)

‘I **let** him to speak’

- b. *El alcaide de la cárcel LE dejaba tocar el banjo...* (Causative of transitive subordinate verb)
 ‘The jail warden **let** him play the banjo...’
- c. *LO vimos subirse a un taxi* (Perception of an intransitive verb)
 ‘We **saw** him get into a taxi’
- d. *Yo también LE oí decir eso* (Perception of a transitive verb)
 ‘I also **heard** him say that’
- (iii) **Ditransitive verbs with implied direct object** (e.g. *servir, robar, tocar, seguir, pegar*):
- a. *El médico curó [la herida] al torero > El médico LO curó* (Omitted direct object, but possible to passivize: *El torero fue curado por el médico*)
 ‘The doctor **healed** [the wound] of the torero’ > ‘The doctor **healed** him’
 (passivized: ‘The torero was **healed** by the doctor’)
- b. *Abrió [la puerta] a su vecino > LE abrió* (Omitted direct object, but impossible to passivize)
 ‘He **opened** [the door] to his neighbor’ > ‘He **opened** to his neighbor’
- (iv) **Verbs that used to require dative case in Latin and medieval Spanish** but have been or are being converted to accusative currently (e.g. *ayudar, avisar, obedecer, temer*):
- a. *Vidal LE ayudó* (Northern Spain)
 ‘Vidal **helped** him’

- b. *Nati LO ayudó a subir* (Cono Sur, América)
 ‘Nati **helped** him climb up’
- c. *Ella LE ayudó a recostarse en un sofá* (Southern Spain: Andalusia and the Canary Islands)
 ‘She **helped** him recline on a sofa’
- (v) **Impersonal constructions with *se* are invariable:**
- a. *Se le **considera** el mejor actor de su tiempo*
 ‘He is **considered** the best actor of his time’
- (vi) **Variation in the verb *llamar* ‘name’ that requires predicative complement**
 (DeMello, 2002; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; Parodi et al., 2012):
- a. *Aunque se llama María, todos LA/LE **llaman** Marichu*
 ‘Although her name is Maria, everyone **calls** her Marichu

The case (vi) of the verb *llamar* ‘name’ is added to the list from Fernández-Ordóñez’s (1999) survey of the world’s Spanishes and Cantero Sandoval’s (1979) report for Mexico. The variation in this verb is said to be due to its two possible meanings of referring to something by its name or of giving it a name, where the latter is an intransitive construction (García, 1975, p. 292). The third meaning of calling on the phone is the most recent one in history and is not included in these dialectology reports, but inevitably participates in this clitic variation. Cantero Sandoval (1979) studied Mexico City’s speech among educated speakers and found 2.9% of *leísmo*, of which the great majority are of the invariant and impersonal *se le* (v). The rest of the occurrences are described as appearing with very specific verbs, such as *llamar*, among which are several

representative categories of ‘seeming’ *leísmo*: *estorbar* ‘hinder’ (i), *compadecer* ‘pity’ (i), *hacer comprender* ‘make understand’ (ii), *poner a hacer* ‘put to do/make’ (ii), *ver* ‘see’ (ii), *entender* ‘understand’ (iii), *ayudar* ‘help’ (iv), *corresponder* ‘correspond’ (iv), *llamar* ‘name’ (vi), as well as other “sporadic” verbs, which are later explained by DeMello (2002) through synonymous intransitive or distransitive structures that require an indirect object. While some verbs are said to be especially frequent (e.g. *ayudar* ‘help’) and others either “indistinct” or sporadic with *le* (e.g. *llamar* ‘name’), all are intuitively explained as polite and formal, due to special effort of expression and sometimes affectation. This hypothesis is connected to the author’s certainty that these forms arrive to Mexico from Castillian influences through prestigious literature, radio, and television. DeMello (2002) later explains most of these cases as ‘seeming’ *leísmo* in structural terms. Nevertheless, similar to DeMello’s (2002) synonym approach, the present study will show that it is worth looking at individual verbs and their semantic networks in order to appreciate the fuller meaning of polite *leísmo* beyond structural justification.

The **polite *leísmo*** is set apart from seeming and 3rd-person ‘true’ *leísmo* as lying beyond the realm of syntax. It is called a special case of reanalysis by Parodi et al. (2012). First of all its use is no longer anaphoric since the referent is always a part of the communicative situation (Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999), and secondly it is used strategically to establish a social relationship between interlocutors (Dumitrescu & Branza, 2012; Parodi et al., 2012). Its use is said to be more common with masculine referents, just as third-person *leísmo* is, and is said to be particularly present in fixed formal greetings and farewells, such as *le saluda atentamente* ‘yours respectfully’ (Fernández López, 2004). However, because the morphology of polite *leísmo* is formally the same as that of the clitic *le* in other contexts, it may be wise to look at it within this larger envelope of variation and expect potential cross-pollination of systemic properties. As an

early disclosure: the pilot study excludes cases of seeming *leísmo*, while the main research work includes some of them (ii, iv, v, vi) for testing and accountability purposes. Seeing the clitic system more fully pays off with greater interpretive potential, as it will be shown that polite *leísmo* is often associated with prototypical etymological *le* or with seeming *leísmo*.

2.4.4 Interfacing with the Morphosyntactic Perspective: Theoretical Frameworks for Syntax-Pragmatics Interface

There are a number of theoretical constructs and frameworks that establish a connection between syntactic structure and subtleties in meaning, capable of signaling social and contextual information, among them politeness. The ones relevant to this study include Relative Transitivity Hypothesis, Salience hypothesis, what can be called an Iconic Distance hypothesis, and Indirectness as Politeness perspective. These theoretical frameworks are adopted in this research to justify the linguistic and contextual variables included in the methodological design and analysis and to further interpret the obtained results.

Relative Transitivity Hypothesis. The linguistic factors known to condition *leísmo* are structural elements of transitive sentences. García (1975) and most functionalist syntacticians of our time have built a strong case for the pragmasemantic motivation of *leísmo* as a tool to indicate **agentivity** of the direct object in relation to the subject and a higher **degree of transitivity** of verbs in context (e.g. Aijón Oliva, 2006, 2018; Flores, 2002; Flores & Melis, 2007). According to Hopper and Thompson's (1980) **Transitivity Hypothesis**, transitivity is a continuum dependent on multiple linguistic parameters. Specifically, higher transitivity is associated with declarative, affirmative sentences with two or more participants, with a volitional, highly potent and highly individuated agent or a totally affected specific animate

object, and with an action verb that is telic, punctual, and expressed in the indicative realis mood. As the results of this research will show, the verb semantics is related to the verb argument structure: whether it is monotransitive (only requires a direct object, which may be a noun phrase, e.g. *say something*, or a clause, e.g. *say that something is a fact*) or ditransitive (requires a direct and an indirect object pronoun, e.g. *give something to someone*). The arguments and their semantic roles, in turn, contribute to the perceived degree of agentivity and transitivity of the verb, which consequently may affect the intention and the interpretation of *le* and *lo*, as this research suggests. According to García and Otheguy's (1977) analysis of third-person *leísmo*, *le* marks the less active participant in the event with respect to the verb, and *lo* marks the least active participant. Similarly, according to this hypothesis, the choice of polite *leísmo* over the etymological clitic carries the inference of lessening the prototypical transitive effect on the direct object, who is the interlocutor in all interactional cases.

The Relative Transitivity Hypothesis has been tied to the **Differential Object Marking (DOM)** phenomenon (Bossong, 1991) by Flores and Melis (2007), which is essentially conceptualized as a set of special morphosyntactic strategies involved in distinguishing direct objects from other syntactic elements, including such mechanisms as *a*-marking and clitic doubling (Fábregas, 2013), but especially when the direct object is specific and animate or human, or better yet, copresent participant in conversation (Aijón Oliva, 2018). In fact, Flores and Melis (2007) argue that *leísmo* is a sort of a differential object marker to distinguish third-person individuals from inanimate objects. While polite *leísmo* is just as specific and human as its etymological counterpart, it may potentially differentiate the object on some other level not traditionally accounted for. To foreshadow the results, the polite *le* may express politeness through differentiation of some direct objects from others due to their social or contextual

properties and for a variety of culturally relevant reasons. This does go beyond what DOM traditionally has marked and thus invites further theoretical analysis. At this point, it is used hypothetically in support of the Relative Transitivity Hypothesis, where direct objects may be differentiated in their level of agency as part of the transitive construction. Similarly, subject person (deictic center or source) and object number (deictic target) configurations have the potential to act as additional devices to encode politeness by softening the effects produced by the speaker on the interlocutor with intentional verbs.

With respect to *leísmo*, this Relative Transitivity theoretical framework serves to explain that some animate singular referents might admit 3rd-person *leísmo* as a way to differentially mark some human direct object pronouns (Dumitrescu & Branza, 2012; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; García, 1975; García & Otheguy, 1983; Kany, 1969; Klein-Andreu, 2000; Quilis, Cantarero, Albalá, & Guerra, 1985; RAE, 2010; Uruburu, 1993), but most importantly it can be extended to explain the 2nd-person polite *leísmo* as well. According to Aijón Oliva (2006), the true ‘politeness’ behind the 2nd-person *leísmo* may be in its marking explicitly the communicative prominence of the interlocutor and highlighting his or her human quality in contrast to inanimate objects. Nevertheless, this rapport management and politeness are subject of inquiry of variational pragmatics and as such, must consider social and contextual factors beyond purely structural ones. This research in particular adds nuanced evidence to the politeness perspective by showing how the direct-object *le* is used to express two different types of politeness and by virtue of its multifunctionality serve as a social mobility projection tool. Furthermore, these results in light of this theoretical perspective motivate a further hypothesis of a reanalysis of the semantic role of the direct object from theme to beneficiary, which would

explain how the direct object is being reinterpreted as an indirect object, but this is a story for later.

Saliency Hypothesis. While the Relative Transitivity hypothesis is the syntactic perspective most directly relevant to the analysis of the transitive verbs and their clitics, the Saliency and Iconic Distance hypotheses also offer structural resources to encode subtle meaning differences. **Saliency** has had multiple and even contradictory definitions in previous linguistic and related research, mostly along the expected-unexpected axis (Blumenthal-Dramé, Hanulíková, & Kortmann, 2017). Schmid and Günter (2017) identify four possible and studied reasons for a linguistic phenomenon to be perceptually salient or stand out to the listener or the reader as prominent:

- (1) highly familiar and strongly entrenched,
- (2) highly expected in a given context;
- (3) highly unexpected in a given context, and
- (4) totally unfamiliar.

The notion of saliency has been associated with information structure (Chiaros, Claus, & Grabski, 2011) insofar as the difference between topic and focus (or new and old information) is typically structured. However, this theoretical framework is very complex (Lambrecht, 1996) and only indirectly related to the present research. Particularly, the ‘you’ reference expressed by the *le/lo* clitic can always be considered old information because the interlocutor is the co-present consumer of this information with the speaker. What is more interesting from the saliency perspective is whether the different positioning of this clitic makes any difference in terms of perceptual prominence. This is where the four potential definitions of saliency may offer useful hypotheses.

Without entering into all of the complexity of the formal structure notions, the variable **verb-clitic placement** in Spanish calls to consider the level of prominence and potential meaning consequences of preverbal and postverbal variants. For example, it is grammatically possible to express an invitation as (a) *lo quiero invitar* or (b) *quiero invitarlo* ‘I want to invite you-formal’ — both available structural resources for compound verbs that include a conjugated modal or auxiliary verb and an infinitive. Grammatically speaking, the clitics attach to the end of unconjugated verbs but precede conjugated verbs. Given that the clitic does not carry lexical information, cognitive and psycholinguistic literature considers it largely lacking conscious attention for processing. However, the same research suggests that utterances are processed element by element as they become available (Traxler, 2012). This means that the four definitions of salience can apply to the clitic position as follows: preverbal and postverbal clitics are both highly familiar and strongly entrenched (1), annulling the possibility of any unfamiliar or ungrammatical usage (4); however, preverbal clitics are different from their post-verbal counterpart in two main ways. First, preverbal clitics are not as expected as post-verbal clitics due to their variable placement potential (2-3). Specifically, at the outset of an utterance, the hearer may expect the clitic to appear in either of the two positions (if it is to appear at all), but as soon as he or she hears the transitive verb without the preceding clitic, the expectation rises for the clitic to appear post-verbally as the only remaining solution. This expectation is never violated in this study, as it would be ungrammatical and unnatural for native speakers. In fact, what would be salient is not having a postverbal clitic rather than having it. At the same time, the pre-verbal clitic becomes salient earlier in the discourse, and the rest of utterance is perceived with respect to the established direct object. It can, therefore, be hypothesized that preverbal

clitics are more salient than postverbal clitics, as that is the position where they are less expected and the position where they make greater cognitive impact.

That is similar to what Aijón Oliva (2018) finds in Spanish mass media corpus with the placement of first- and second-person clitics referencing event participants, which interconnects placement with salience and further with politeness:

Involvement is enhanced by pronoun expression, particularly at the **preverbal** position, which makes it typical of argumentative discourse. In turn, **postverbal** placement appears to downplay this value to some extent, relieving referents of responsibility for the contents expressed in *gustar*-type dative contexts, or else enhancing their patienthood in accusative ones (p. 603, emphasis added).

The salience concept is therefore useful for the polite *leísmo* research mainly in providing theoretical and methodological bases for analyzing and interpreting placement tendencies of *le/lo* as potentially more or less salient ‘you,’ where different levels of prominence may convey different politeness strategies.

Iconic Distance Framework. **Iconic distance** hypothesis has been proposed for various morphosyntactic phenomena to encode implicatures of mental or physical distance relevant to discourse propositions. For example, research on variable prepositional phrases has repeatedly proposed the use of grammatical elements as signaling meanings far beyond grammar. Research on *(de)queísmo*, for example, has produced several proposals alluding to the function of the preposition *de* as distancing the speaker from expressed opinions, as summarized in Table 2.4.4.1, borrowed from Filimonova (2016a).

Table 2.4.4.1

Iconic distancing functional-pragmatic accounts of *(de)queísmo* (adapted and expanded from Delbecque, 2008)

Study (Theory)	Ø QUE	DE QUE
Bentivoglio & D'Introno, 1977 (Iconicity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic proximity • Strong assertion/presuppositional content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic distance • Attenuation
Garcia, 1986 (Iconicity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement/certainty • Relevant/truthful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance • Irrelevant/hypothetic
Serrano, 1998 (Dynamic Semantics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No encoded intentions to be inferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deictic marker of discourse, encoding speaker's position toward proposition
Schwenter, 1999 (Evidentiality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct evidence • Truth commitment/certainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect evidence • Hearsay/inference
Del Moral, 2008 (Subjectification)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective • High speaker commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective • Low speaker commitment
Guirado, 2006 (Prepositional deixis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct evidence • Truth commitment/certainty • Source of evidence: from speaker, toward other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect evidence • Hearsay/inference • Source of evidence: from other, toward speaker
Delbecque, 2008 (Viewing arrangement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective, faithful report of original information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective attitude and intentions with respect to conveyed information

While politeness is not directly mentioned in this research, allusions to subjectivity, attenuation, and speaker intention to mark hypotheticality and low speaker commitment are all **mitigating behaviors** studied in politeness research (see next perspective of Indirectness as Politeness).

Research like this is important as it solidifies the syntax-pragmatics connection for the class of grammatical morphosyntactic variables, to which polite *leísmo* belongs. The variable clitic placement options available in Spanish are directly connected to the distance aspect as preverbal and postverbal clitics would be considered as lacking distance, while premodal/auxiliary clitics would be capable of encoding this iconic distance if the clitic indeed possesses any politeness meaning.

Indirectness as Politeness Perspective. Face-saving and face-enhancing politeness can also be achieved through various mechanisms of structuring phrases and sentences in particular ways: changing word order, expanding sentences with different types of clauses, passivizing an active formulation, and others (cf. Flores-Ferrán, 2010). Searle (2001) and Austin (2013) recognize that performative utterances do not necessarily have to contain an explicit performative verb in order to be successful in carrying out a speech act. Rather, intentions of different speech acts can be encoded in **sentence structure**. For example, directive speech acts can be performed by imperative mood, while declarations typically have a main-clause, indicative mood, and declarative structure. This direct correspondence between syntactic structure and literal sentence meaning give rise to the notion of direct speech acts. By the same token, syntactically modified speech acts, whose intended meaning no longer corresponds directly to the syntactic structure, are called indirect speech acts. A close-up look at this indirectness is especially warranted for politeness research.

The fundamental similarity between the politeness perspectives on mitigating face threat (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and face-enhancement (Hernández-Flores, 2004) is that syntactic **indirectness** correlates with intentional politeness (Haverkate, 1992). Direct utterances are normally declarative or assertive sentences, where syntax unambiguously corresponds to the intended meaning. Indirect utterances, on the other hand, can take form of a question, an if-statement, or an otherwise syntactically modified and hedged sentence whose illocutionary force must be inferred, most often by way of conventional devices. For example, an invitation can be expressed directly or to various degrees of indirectness, as illustrated in the sets 2.4.4.2 and 2.4.4.3, which are directed to an older gentleman encountered in a line at a citizen attention center, produced by the participants in the role-play task of the study:

2.4.4.2. Syntactically direct, declarative invitations:

- (a) *Con todo gusto lo estoy **invitando*** (1190.3-CDMX)³
I am **inviting** you with all pleasure
- (b) *Le **invito** yo a visitarme a la casa* (1069.3F-CDMX)
I **invite** you to visit me at home
- (c) *Me gustaría **invitarlo** a la fiesta de 15 años* (1182.1Male-MxState)
I would like to **invite** you to the quinceañera party
- (d) *Aprovecho para **invitarlo** a nuestra fiesta* (1099.3M-CDMX)
I take this opportunity to **invite** you to our party

2.4.4.3. Syntactically indirect, mitigated invitations:

- (a) *No sé si guste que lo **invite** a mi colonia a ver qué le parece la festividad*
(1121.3F-CDMX)
I don't know if you'd like for me to **invite** you to my colony and see if you like
the festivity
- (b) *¿Qué le parece lo **invito** a una posada?* (1125.3F-OtherState)
What do you think if I **invite** you to a Christmas caroling event?
- (c) *¿No quiere que lo **invite**?* (1148.2M-CDMX)
Would you not want for me to **invite** you?
- (d) *¿No lo han ido a **invitar**?* (1016.1M-CDMX)
No one has **invited** you?

³ The sociodemographic information of the speakers throughout this work include the participant ID number, age group (1=young, 2=adult, 3=older), sex (M=male, F=female), and origin (CDMX = Mexico City, MxState = Mexico State, and Other = another state outside of the metropolitan center).

While some of the declarative invitations may be hedged as in 2.4.4.2c, the syntax of the sentence corresponds to an assertion. The invitations in 2.4.4.3, on the other hand, represent a set of conventional syntactic devices to move from an assertion to either a conditional offer (*I don't know if you would like...*) or a request for information (*What do you think...? Would you (not) want...?, etc.*).

This overview of theoretical frameworks applicable to syntax-pragmatics interface places variable morphology right at the heart of politeness research. Whether polite *leísmo* is polite due to enhancement of the referent's human quality, distancing, defocusing, or otherwise mitigating the intention and the effect of the verb, there are a number of structural and lexical tools that contribute to face-saving and face-enhancing politeness. The theoretical connections drawn and illustrated here guide the hypothesis formation, variable selection, and the interpretation of the results found in the rest of this work. And having arrived at the most narrow focus of this research, in form of clitic morphology, the reader is kindly reminded to look back at the nesting perspectives for the bigger picture of the meaning and consequences of such linguistic variation. It can be summarized briefly as follows: Polite *leísmo* is an example of a linguistic form with pragmatic function and meaning, which varies socially, and tells a story about the more general human behavior reflecting and defining a culture and the global state of affairs.

3. Research Objective and Research Questions

In general terms, this research seeks to understand the social meaning of polite *leísmo* in Mexican Spanish, through examination of its variable production and perception. As described in the Social Meaning section of the Sociolinguistic Perspectives section, social meaning of a linguistic variable depends mostly on social factors of the speakers and their communities

(Baugh, 2003; Labov, 1972; Lambert, 1960), as well as on the level of awareness and attitudes toward the phenomenon (Labov, 1972; Lippi-Green, 1994). When the awareness is low, as seems to be the case for polite *leísmo*, comparing production and perception data may prove beneficial. Remembering, however, that polite *leísmo* is an interface pragmatic phenomenon, social meaning is likely to be defined in terms of the function or functions it may play, which necessarily calls for linguistic and contextual considerations. In other words, the social meaning of polite *leísmo* rests on a combination of linguistic, contextual, and social factors that condition its variable production and perception. This research objective can be addressed by a focus on its three components, as formulated in the following research questions:

RQ1. Production:

What linguistic, social, and contextual factors condition Mexican speakers' variation in (formal) 2nd-person clitic in oral production, as measured by relative production rates?

- (a) What are the linguistic factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (b) What are the contextual factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (c) What are the social factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

RQ2. Perception:

What linguistic, social, and contextual factors account for Mexican speakers' acceptability of (formal) 2nd-person clitics in a contextualized questionnaire as measured by relative clitic ratings?

- (a) What are the linguistic factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- (b) What are the contextual factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?

(c) What are the social factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?

RQ3. Social Meaning:

What is the social value of polite *leísmo* in the speech of Mexico City?

(a) How do production and perception rates and conditioning of polite *leísmo* compare?

(b) Who are the social agents at the head of polite *leísmo*?

(c) What is/are the function(s) of polite *leísmo*?

4. Methodology

Parting from the main research objective, and informed by the pilot outcomes, this section describes the study participant profiles and data characteristics, fieldwork and data collection procedure, instrument design, and finally an overview of the variables considered in the study design and the analysis.

4.1 Participants and Their Data

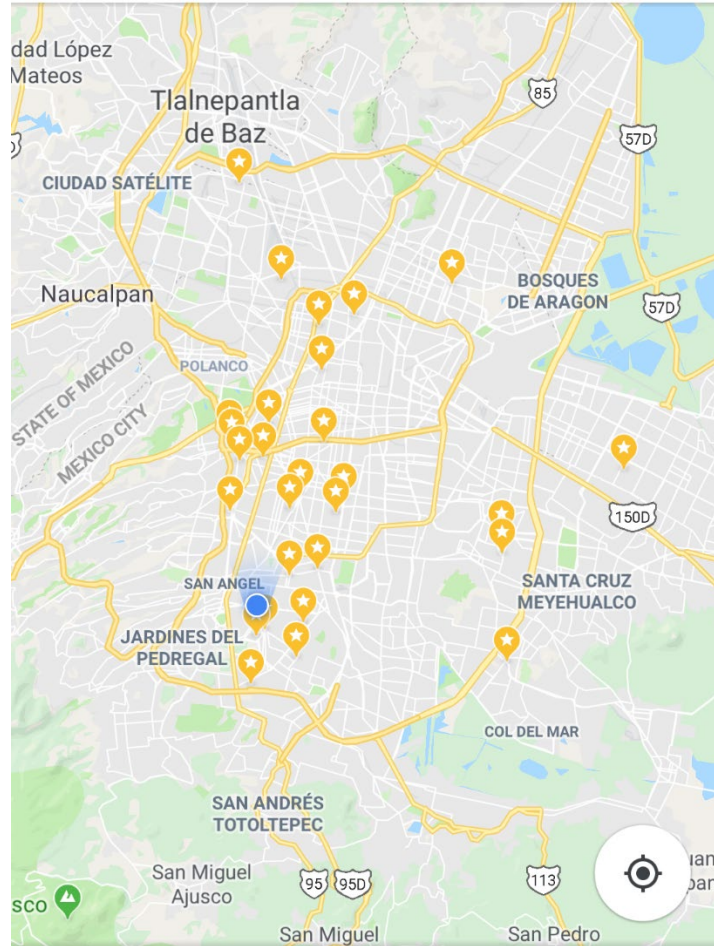
As sociolinguistic research, and in Mexico City in particular, the aim is to build a representative sample of community members, respecting geographical, socioeconomic, and otherwise social diversity of the place. The “walking the talk” of this noble goal has been a considerable physical and time journey. Physically, this research took place in Mexico City and all around it, as is illustrated in the Figure 4.1.1, commemorating the various geographical locations of data collection.

The social and geographical spaces of data collection included the following:

- **Universities:** UNAM, ENAH, UAM-Azcapotzalco, UAM-Iztapalapa
- **Markets:** CU, Tacubaya, Sta Úrsula Coapa, Portales, División del Norte
- **Cafes:** Banneton, Buena Vista Mall, Huaracha Sabrosona, etc.
- **Libraries:** UNAM, Vasconcelos
- **Parks y recreational centers:** Parque de los Venados, Ciudadela, Parque Revolución, Deportivo La Purísima, etc.
- **Cultural Centers:** Albergue del Arte, la Alameda Central
- **Churches:** Vida Abundante (Christian), Santiago de Tlatelolco (Catholic)
- **Businesses:** Publishing House Siglo XXI Editores, Agua-Tec water filter company, World Trade Center, IDM dental office
- **Private homes**

Figure 4.1.1

Map of data collection in Mexico City



This section, therefore, describes the collected corpora in terms of who and what: who the contributors are and what they contribute. First, this information is presented in terms of social stratification of the participants in the production and perception studies. Following this population profile, the section describes the characteristics of the data that conform the corpora.

4.1.1 Corpus Description: Social Stratification of Production and Perception Study Samples

Numerically speaking, the data for this research comprises a corpus of 132 role plays and 92 acceptability judgment task questionnaires. The social stratification along the traditional macro-social variables of the production study participants is summarized in Table 4.1.1.1, and those of the perception study in Table 4.1.1.2. The non-normal distribution of participants along the education level of both samples reflects the reality of Mexico City, whereby compulsory education was proclaimed for preschool education in 2002, for primary school in 2009 and for middle and high school in 2012, explaining the empty cells corresponding to youth without much formal education (see Global Perspective). Since data collection, a new educational reform was passed in May of 2019 by the new president Andrés Manuel López Obrador that adds college education to the obligatory level of education, which is certain to affect subsequent generations and social stratification along the education level in Mexico in future studies.

The population contributing to the landscape of oral polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, at least with one instance of polite *le*, is mostly youth and adults with secondary to college education (Table 4.1.1.1). The ratio of men to women is rather similar overall. However, the unequal education opportunities of prior generations are obvious from the fact that the middle/secondary education stratum consists of more women than men, while there are more men among the college educated speakers.

Table 4.1.1.1*Social stratification of the participants in Role Plays (RPs)*

Age Group	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young	0	0	19	22	23	18	82 (38%)
Adults	3	4	12	21	21	15	76 (35%)
Older	6	9	12	11	9	10	57 (27%)
Total by Education Level	22		97		96		215 (100%)

Table 4.1.1.2 describes the population contributing to the perceptual landscape of polite *leísmo*, and is also dominated by youth and adults, and predominantly with college education. This pattern is easily explained by unequal access to technology, given that this part of the study is administered mostly electronically. Specifically older and less educated members of the population are those lacking such access, and therefore requiring paper-and-pencil version of the task, administered with the assistance of several volunteers, as described in the Procedure subsection.

Table 4.1.1.2*Social stratification of the participants in the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)*

Age Group	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young	0	0	6	7	8	18	39 (42%)
Adults	0	2	4	3	11	14	34 (37%)
Older	1	1	3	4	5	5	19 (21%)
Total by Education Level	4		27		61		92

Tables 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.4 present the sociodemographic distribution of just the speakers whose data is considered and analyzed in this research, providing input for the Analysis and Results sections of this work. Of the total 215 participants reported in Table 4.1.1.1, only 132 role plays

are transcribed and analyzable by the time of this report. While all 215 contribute to the understanding of the sociodemographics and social stratification of Mexico City (reported in the Results), the stratified sample of 107 speakers help understand the variable nature of polite *leísmo* in oral speech (Table 4.1.1.3).

Table 4.1.1.3

Variable leístas in the production study (n=107/132, 81%)

Age Group	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young	-	-	6	7	10	9	32
Adults	2	3	8	9	10	7	39
Older	2	10	5	7	5	7	36
Total by Education Level	17		42		48		107

The 25 speakers (19% of sample) who never once used polite *leísmo* in role plays are acknowledged in Table 4.1.1.4 and are not included in the variationist analysis. It is important to recognize that the absence of evidence of polite *leísmo* in this sample does not mean that these speakers would never use polite *le* under different circumstances. In fact, given the high acceptability rates, it is likely that they would. What is true is that the design and implementation of the role plays has afforded the same opportunities to everyone to use the direct object ‘you’ clitics with the same set of 4 transitive verbs per scenario in a range of 12 common scenarios in situations of some social distance (i.e. about 48 opportunities per speaker to use ‘you’ as a direct object). The variation and social conditioning of the phenomenon translates into various rates of use among the 107-person sample of variable *leístas* (presented later) in spite of the same elicitation method. These 107, however, are the only speakers whose observations can be used in order to gauge the conditioning of the phenomenon. The reasons for the behavior of the 25 non-(evident-)*leístas* are connected to the extension of the informal *tú* to the detriment of *usted* (cf.

Orozco, 2010), but are most appropriate for future research that explore a wider continuum of social distance relationships. See sections 6.2.1 for relevant results and 7.3 for further discussion.

Table 4.1.1.4

Categorical non-leístas in the production study (n=25/132, 19%)

Age Group	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young	-	-	1	-	4	1	6
Adults	-	-	2	-	4	1	7
Older	2	-	5	1	3	1	12
Total by Education Level	2		9		14		25

The categorical non-*leísta* sample of 25 speakers is comprised of mostly men (21), with only 4 women participants who never used a single direct-object *le* in their role plays. Most of these non-*leísta* men have college or graduate education, independent of age (11/21), although the most likely age profile for non-*leísta* speakers is 55 and above (10/21).

The entire sample of 92 participants who took the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) show at least some *le* experience and preference, at least with some verbs and at least in some contexts. In other words, not a single participant was categorically non-*leísta* in passive knowledge or perceptual terms (see Table 4.1.1.2 above).

4.1.2 Data

The data that is used to respond to the research objectives comprises of mostly quantifiable data, which is further complemented by non-quantifiable observation data⁴. The quantifiable data

⁴ Observation data include informal during- and post-role-play commentary, a handful of optional comments on the questionnaires, personal experiences outside of the study context, including linguistic landscape of polite *leísmo* in real life. Also insightful have been personal communication with the local study assistants (interlocutors and transcribers) and attendees at various academic presentations, such as the seminar on sociolinguistic factors at the Institute of Anthropological Research at UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico (2018), the

furthermore is subdivided into production and perception data, as well as sociodemographic data from corresponding background questionnaires (see Table 4.1.2.1).

Table 4.1.2.1

Summary of production and perception data characteristics

	Production Data (role plays)	Perception Data (acceptability judgment task)	All Data
Sample population size:	107	92	199
Tokens of direct-object ‘you’ clitics:	2783 tokens	17336 tokens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4394 – preferred use • 4391 – reported exposure • 4392 – acceptability • 4159 – politeness 	20,119
Speakers not included:	25 speakers with invariable clitic choice	44 speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 speaker under 18 • 3 speakers with above 15% error rate on control items • 40 speakers who did not finish the questionnaire 	69
Tokens not included:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-<i>Usted</i> references to 2nd person (i.e. <i>tú</i>) • All <i>se le</i> cases as invariable constructions (e.g. <i>Se le admira mucho</i> ‘you are much admired’) • Ambiguous direct/indirect object <i>le</i> reference (e.g. <i>Le vengo a consultar (:)</i> <i>qué puedo hacer...</i> ‘I come to consult you (about) what I can do...’) • Ambiguous 2nd/3rd personreference of <i>lo</i> (e.g. <i>Lo apunto para mañana</i> ‘I note it/you down for tomorrow’) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 329/17665 missing/unanswered tokens (2%) 	
Sociodemographic data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal macro-social variables • parents’ background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal macro-social variables 	

Hispanic Linguistics Brown Bag series at Indiana University, USA (2019), the Asociación Mexicana de Lingüística Aplicada, Sinaloa, Mexico (2019), and the Linguistic Society of America, New Orleans, USA (2020).

- personal cultural and linguistic experiences
- personal ideology (political and ethical)

Production data consists of 2783 tokens of direct-object ‘you’ pronouns (both *lo* and *le*), produced by a socially stratified sample of 107 speakers who showed variability in *lo-le* production in role plays.

Peception data consists of 17336 tokens of direct-object ‘you’ pronouns (both *lo* and *le*), produced by a socially stratified sample of 92 participants who completed the Acceptability Judgment Task. These tokens include the participants’ choices of the clitic for each of the four categories: the one they would use in context (n=4394), the one they have heard in context (n=4391), the one that is most acceptable in context (n=4392), and the one that is most polite in context (n=4159). The unequal number of tokens per reported category are due to missing responses to the questionnaires.

The data comprising these corpora do not include production data of respondents who are invariable in their clitic choice (19% of the sample) as well as perception data of those who did not completely finish the questionnaire or showed above 15% error rate on the control items, which included only indirect-object constructions and thus only allowed for one possible answer.

The **sociodemographic** datasets collected from production and perception studies share the macro-social factors of participant age, sex, origin, predominant place of residence, education level, and occupation. The production study is accompanied by additional information, including the participants’ parents’ information, their experience with traditional roles of *padrino* ‘godfather’ and *compadre* ‘co-parent’, their experience with other languages and traveling within and outside of the country, as well as their subjective ideological views on political and ethical

issues. Due to the quantitative nature of the sociodemographic questionnaire, the profile of Mexico City population is easily obtained and is based on the total of 215 responses, of which 107 comprise the transcribed production corpus and include additional 108 responses from untranscribed role plays. Seeing that this larger corpus of sociodemographic information provides a more extensive and comprehensive picture of Mexico City, it is the dataset used to describe the social realities of Mexico City in the Results chapter. The sociodemographic dataset of the perception study significantly overlaps with it, given that some of the same participants completed both studies, and is therefore only used for variable-rule analysis, contributing a set of macro-social factors for statistical purposes.

4.2 Procedure

On-site research has been necessary for this dissertation due to its focus on language variation in interaction, in naturalistic contexts across a large stratified sample of speakers for thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis. Careful ethnographic fieldwork has proven to be invaluable for design and application of study instruments, as well as interpretation of data further on. The role-play contexts were designed and piloted first with a number of local speakers, colleagues, professors, and study assistants. The study assistants were trained as role-play interlocutors as described in the following section, as well as in ELAN transcription software, along with non-interlocutor assistants. All transcription assistants are undergraduate students in linguistics, ethnography, or journalism at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) or Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH). The perception study was developed from the production study during the administration period of role plays.

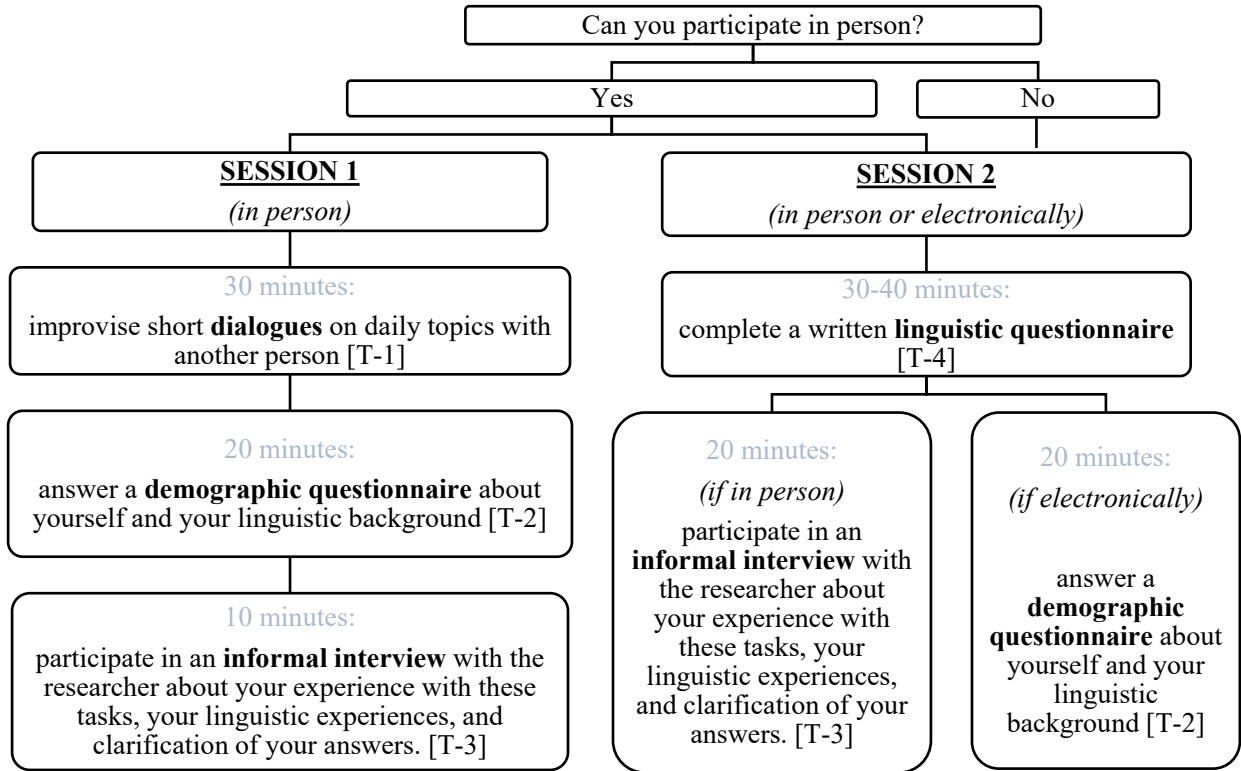
The two main phases of fieldwork and data collection then resulted in a 5-month intensive period for production study (September-December, 2018) and the entire year for the perception study (December, 2019 – December, 2020). Over 550 hours of transcription work among 5 assistants and the researcher went into the creation of the role-play production corpus of 215 speakers analyzed in this study. About half of the Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) questionnaires were answered online and another half administered in paper and pencil format by the researcher and the study assistants. All paper responses were later transferred to the electronic database, not requiring any additional transcription or involvement of the assistants.

The participants and contributors to this research were, therefore, invited to participate in either or both parts of the study: the production study and the perception study – in this order. Of the 92 AJT respondents, 40 (43%) had participated in the production study sometime between 2-12 months prior to completing the perception study. Figure 4.2.1 outlines the participation procedure presented to the potential participants during the recruitment stage of the fieldwork.

This dissertation work focuses specifically on two main parts of the study: the T-1 dialogues (i.e. the role plays) conforming the oral production corpus and the T-4 linguistic questionnaire (i.e. the AJT task), complemented by the sociodemographic information from the T-2 questionnaire. It is worth noting here that the sociodemographic questionnaire (T-2) of the electronic option of Session 2 is an abridged version of the in-person questionnaire, and therefore provides only the macro-social profile of the contributors, while the full version is richer in the personal experiences and practices of the population. Observations from the informal interview (T-3) have been used to improve and interpret the results of these tasks and are occasionally reported as informal observation data.

Figure 4.2.1

Study procedure presented to the participants on the Study Information Sheet



4.3 Instrument Design

The methodological design is presented first by justifying the two instruments chosen to collect production and perception data for this dissertation research. Because the fundamental design characteristic of both instruments is the variable situational context, this concept is operationalized and illustrated next. Finally, in order to answer the question about what factors affect the linguistic variation of polite *leísmo* and how they relate to each other, the final two subsections define the constants and the potential independent variables that either vary by design or are derived from natural variation in uncontrolled production.

4.3.1 Instrument Selection Justification

In order to address the research questions and begin to understand why and how there is variation within the formal-‘you’ reference in Mexican Spanish, it is useful to consider a wide range of possible factors that typically shape social interactions. These factors include linguistic, contextual, and social pressures on production and perception patterns, whether in similar or different ways. I am sure I do not exaggerate by saying that it is impossible to have a complete understanding of all of the factors and their exact formulas in interaction and dynamic construction of discourse – there are simply too many and their use is too socially and situationally complex. Indeed, a goal like this would be rather unuseful to linguists and to the general public as it misses the bigger picture of social science research of creating sharable and applicable knowledge about the nature and development of humanity. It is with this humble view of the reality that this research project limits its scope to only a set of linguistic, contextual, and social variables included either as constants in the design or as uncontrolled, community-driven variables produced within such design. The design is informed by variational pragmatics and variationist sociolinguistic approaches to linguistic variation. The methods chosen for this study are selected due to their capacity to shed light on the factors of interest in the most natural environment conducive to quantitative research.

The **role play (RP)** method of oral speech elicitation is inspired by crosscultural pragmatics and social psychology research (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018) and is adopted here due to its high level of interactivity, necessary for elicitation of a large number of ‘you’-references. In fact, it is the method closest to authentic discourse and akin to elicited conversation across such dimensions as interaction, comprehension, production, and online procedure, and similarly non-

metapragmatic (Kasper, 2000). While role plays are indeed simulations of natural discourse and therefore less authentic with possibility of under- or over-representation of certain phenomena or strategies (Bataller, 2013), they have been found to mirror actual realities satisfactorily well and additionally allow for comparability of contextual and social factors of interest to variationist research (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010, 2018). Obtaining the same amount of socially stratified data from naturally occurring interactions would only be possible through extensive longitudinal fieldwork, and often without access to sufficient sociodemographic or contextual information to better understand the sociocultural realities of the community. On the dimension of interaction, essential to this research, the role plays are methodologically more appropriate than production questionnaires, multiple choice, scales, interviews, diaries, and think-aloud protocols. For the same reason, available sociolinguistic corpora are not the best source of data due to their highly narrative (instead of dialogic) nature within a limited social and interlocutor context, where meaning and identity are not normally dynamically constructed by the participants of the conversation. The nature of the phenomenon under study (variation in the formal 'you') is interactive and involves online negotiation of relationships between interlocutors, which is dependent on multiple contextual and social factors, informing the choice of elicitation method.

In order to get closer to natural and dynamically constructed discourse, the design of the role plays in this study builds on the fundamental aspects of open, simulated, and naturalized role plays. The open-ended nature of role plays consists in not specifying an exact course of action for the speaker or response from the interlocutor, allowing natural variation in production (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, 2010, 2018). While naturalized role plays are a complex methodological approach that may not always be easy or desirable to replicate in every study, its defining element, similar to simulated role plays, is that the participants always act as themselves and

base their participation on their personal experience, for the purposes of increased validity (Tran, 2006). This type of role plays typically involves a variety of tasks beyond the actual scenario, of which the present study includes giving options to adapt the scenario to individual experiences, takes into account ethnographic observations and field notes, and complements the production data with a perception study via an acceptability judgment task.

The **Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)** method is a common tool in sociolinguistic attitude research. Lakoff (2015) gives a historical overview with applications to sociolinguistic research for the evolution of this method from what used to be grammaticality judgment tests in the second half of the twentieth century:

Where grammaticality judgments were determinable by purely linguistic criteria, acceptability judgments invaded the realms of psychology and sociology, greatly increasing the range of facts one had to look at, as well as the range of possible explanations. But we found we could no longer honestly restrict the concept of explanation to purely linguistic determinants... (p. 74)

It is the acceptability judgment, therefore, that takes into account social and psychological factors, where psychological acceptability typically outranks linguistic acceptability (Lakoff, 2015, p. 76). This distinction is important for this study as it is focused on pragmatic context and negotiation of meaning and identity, which goes beyond what is said but rather focuses on how it is said, to whom, why, in what circumstances, etc.

4.3.2 Situational Context Design

Because the AJT contexts in this study are identical to the RP contexts, this section provides crucial design description of the production and perception study.

The study consists of 12 contexts that are meant to simulate a range of communicative events with their different purposes, interlocutor relationships, and social settings – to reflect the

social complexities that we as speakers constantly adapt to with our linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior. Table 4.3.2.1 schematizes the 12 contexts according to the factors social domain or setting, power relationships between the interlocutors, and the speech event characterized by level of imposition.

Table 4.3.2.1

Composition of situational contexts used in role plays and acceptability judgment task

Social Domain	Power	-Imposition (relational)	+Imposition (transactional)
Formal	+P	1. Compliment	3. Negotiation
	-P	2. Offer of help	4. Invitation
Informal	+P	6. Offer of help	7. Assurance ⁵
	-P	5. Congratulations	8. Negotiation
Traditional	+P	9. Compliment	11. Negotiation
	-P	10. Offer of help	12. Invitation

As Figure 4.3.2.2 models, each context is formulated in 60-75 words, specifying the setting, interlocutor characteristics, and the purpose of conversation, allowing for adaptation to personal experience for each participant. Each context is complemented by a list of 4 suggested transitive verbs chosen for their encoded illocutionary force, matching the elicited speech event, and their capability to be directed to the interlocutor as a direct object and not only third entities. The participants were instructed to use these verbs naturally, only if they saw a natural way of using them. This means that not all participants used all suggested verbs, sometimes repeating verbs, reformulating verbs as nouns, or applying these verbs to direct objects other than the interlocutor, thus producing variable data and rates of direct object ‘you’ clitics and verb-clitic combinations.

The 12 contexts and exact instructions are found in Appendix, but Figure 4.3.2.2 below illustrates one such context, corresponding to #8, negotiation in an informal social domain, with interlocutor of no power difference and with imposition (transactional communicative function):

⁵ The originally informal setting of situation 7 gained a more formal or institutional nature in the course of instrument pilot and data collection and is therefore coded as formal in data analysis.

Figure 4.3.2.2

Presentation of situational context #8 to role-play participants

Spanish instructions	English translation
<p>Su familia se prepara para una <u>boda/15 años/graduación/fiesta familiar importante</u>. Casi todos han cooperado en los preparativos, menos su <u>compadre/cuñado</u>. Realmente necesita su ayuda y experiencia para organizar todo a tiempo. Se topa con él en un lugar público y decide aprovechar la oportunidad para pedir su ayuda. Negocie con él, ofreciéndole ayuda con el proceso, con tal de que se responsabilice aunque sea por algo.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detener/entretener • convencer • elegir/poner a cargo • apuntar 	<p>Your family is getting ready for an important <u>wedding/quinceañera/graduation/family celebration</u>. Almost everyone has cooperated in related tasks, except for your <u>co-father/brother-in-law</u>. You really need his help and experience to organize everything on time. You run into him in a public place and decide to take advantage of the opportunity to ask for his help. Negotiate with him, offering him help with the process, as long as he takes on at least some responsibility.</p> <p>Use the following verbs in any order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detain/stop • convince • elect/put in charge • note down

The verbs selected to represent the established contexts and speech events in both tasks are summarized in Tables 4.3.2.3 and 4.3.2.4. Table 4.3.2.3 is a list of all verbs included in the design, their semantics (including encoded illocutionary force), and number of appearances across the task instructions, where each verb appears at least in two different scenarios for comparability and higher validity purposes. The only exception is the singular instance of the verb *interrumpir* ‘interrupt’ being a socioculturally unlikely verb to be explicitly used to interrupt the interlocutor, as revealed in the trial stage and often commented on by the study participants. The trial role plays also prompted the decision to present several verbs with their illocutionary transitive synonyms, such as *detener/entretener* ‘hold up’ and *elegir/poner a cargo*

‘elect/put in charge’, where speakers often expressed personal preferences for using one verb over the other.

Table 4.3.2.3

Target verbs that are part of the study design, along with their IFID semantics

Design Frequency	Target Verbs		IFID or semantics of intention
	Spanish	English	
3	1. <i>acompañar</i>	accompany	commissive
2	2. <i>admirar</i>	admire	expressive
2	3. <i>apoyar</i>	support	commissive
3	4. <i>apuntar/anotar/agendar</i>	note down/sign up	commissive
2	5. <i>atender</i>	assist	commissive
3	6. <i>ayudar</i>	help	commissive
2	7. <i>consultar</i>	consult	directive
3	8. <i>convencer/hacer cambiar de opinión</i>	convince/make change mind	directive
2	9. <i>detener/entretener</i>	hold up	directive
3	10. <i>elegir/poner a cargo</i>	choose/ put in charge	directive
2	11. <i>felicitar</i>	congratulate	expressive
1	12. <i>interrumpir</i>	interrupt	directive
3	13. <i>invitar</i>	invite	commissive
2	14. <i>llamar</i>	call	commissive
2	15. <i>necesitar</i>	need	directive
2	16. <i>nombrar/nomibar</i>	name	directive
2	17. <i>querer</i>	love	expressive
4	18. <i>recibir</i>	receive	commissive
2	19. <i>reconocer</i>	recognize	expressive
3	20. <i>saludar</i>	greet	expressive
2	21. <i>visitar</i>	visit	commissive

Table 4.3.2.4 shows how these verbs are allocated among the various speech events, where their illocutionary force semantics are more easily visualized.

The Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) includes the exact same 12 situational descriptions, offering the same contextual adaptations as the role plays, except that instead of a list of 4 verbs, the participants are presented with 4 phrases comprised of the verbs and the formal ‘you’ direct object complement, in the order in which the utterances might occur in

interaction ensuing from the context. In addition to the variables set by design for the role plays (i.e. social domain, power, imposition, speech event, and verbs), an additional factor of clitic placement is included, with half of all clitics attached post-verbally and half appearing pre-verbally – both combinations present for each verb.

Table 4.3.2.4

Allocation of target verbs across the 12 role-play contexts

Social Domain	Power	-Imposition (relational)	+Imposition (transactional)
Formal	+P	1. Compliment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nominar • apoyar • admirar • reconocer 	3. Negotiation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultar • interrumpir • convencer/hacer cambiar de opinión • llamar
	-P	2. Offer of help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • atender • ayudar • apuntar/agendar/anotar • acompañar 	4. Invitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitar • acompañar • recibir • saludar
Informal	+P	6. Offer of help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apuntar/agendar/anotar • atender/recibir • invitar • ayudar 	7. Assurance*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elegir/poner a cargo • necesitar • llamar • consultar
	-P	5. Congratulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitar • saludar • felicitar • querer 	8. Negotiation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detener/entretener • convencer • elegir/poner a cargo • apuntar/agendar
Traditional	+P	9. Compliment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saludar • reconocer • admirar • felicitar 	11. Negotiation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convencer/hacer cambiar de opinión • detener/entretener • ayudar • elegir/poner a cargo
	-P	10. Offer of help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • querer • acompañar • apoyar • visitar/recibir 	12. Invitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitar • necesitar • recibir • nombrar

The same context #8 as illustrated in Figure 4.3.2.2 for the role plays is repeated in Figure 4.3.2.5, as it is presented on the paper and electronic versions of the AJT.

Figure 4.3.2.5

Presentation of situational context #8 to Acceptability Judgment Task participants

Su familia se prepara para una boda/15 años/graduación/fiesta familiar importante. Casi todos han cooperado en los preparativos, menos su compadre/cuñado. Realmente necesita su ayuda y experiencia para organizar todo a tiempo. Se topa con él en un lugar público y decide aprovechar la oportunidad para pedir su ayuda. Negocia con él, ofreciéndole ayuda con el proceso, con tal de que se responsabilice aunque sea por algo.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

a.	<i>¿cómo le va?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿cómo lo va?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.	<i>me permito detenerle un rato</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>me permito detenerlo un rato</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c.	<i>a ver si le puedo convencer de que nos ayude</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>a ver si lo puedo convencer de que nos ayude</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d.	<i>¿qué tal si le ponemos a cargo de la fotografía?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿qué tal si lo ponemos a cargo de la fotografía?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

e.	<i>entonces le apuntamos para eso</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>entonces lo apuntamos para eso</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As observed in Figure 4.3.2.5, the items b-e correspond to the four verbs elicited in the corresponding role play (item a is a distractor), exerting imposition on the interlocutor with the established purpose of negotiation (or a directive speech event), now in predetermined forced-choice form:

- b. *me permito detenerle/lo un rato*
‘let me hold you up a little’
- c. *a ver si le/lo puedo convencer de que nos ayude*
‘I want to see if I can convince you to help us’
- d. *¿qué tal si le/lo ponemos a cargo de la fotografía?*
‘What if we put you in charge of photography?’
- e. *entonces le/lo apuntamos para eso*
‘so we will note you down for that’

In order to alleviate the effect of priming on verbs (that is a cumulative cognitive effect of repetition), especially in the AJT instrument, notice in Table 4.3.2.4 that the situations are presented in 4 speech act sequences by social domain: expressive, commissive, directive, and directive-commissive. This ensures that the same key word is not repeated until several contexts later, by when it will be used in a different social domain. Priming is not seen as a factor in the role play task, because the participants are engaged in a real-time interaction where context and relationship management take the front stage. Interlocutors, however, had strict guidelines to avoid using any of the keywords for this purpose.

The AJT task includes one distractor phrase per context, in which the ‘you’ clitic refers to a recipient or a beneficiary of a verb, thus categorically calling for an indirect/dative object *le*. For example, the distractor phrase in context #8, reproduced in Figure 4.3.2.5, is *¿cómo le/*lo va?* ‘how is it going for you?’

The distractor placing with four target phrases alternates as either the first or the fifth (last) phrase presented for rating within each context. The analysis of response accuracy on these

distractors is designed to identify any participants with high risk of random response patterns and exclude their data from further analysis. Table 4.3.2.6 lists all of the verbs used as distractors in the AJT, which also serves as examples of verbs that may have appeared but were not analyzed in the role-play production data.

Table 4.3.2.6

Distractor verbs and their presentation in the Acceptability Judgment Task

Context	Placement relative to target	Distractor Verbs		Grammatical categoricity
		Spanish	English	
1	last	- <i>dar</i>	- give	ditransitive verb of giving
2	first	- <i>avisar</i>	- let know	ditransitive verb of communication
3	last	- <i>agradecer</i>	- thank	ditransitive verb marking beneficiary
4	first	- <i>pasar</i>	- happen	ditransitive verb marking experiencer
5	last	- <i>gustar</i>	- please	intransitive verb marking experiencer
6	first	- <i>contar</i>	- tell	ditransitive verb of communication
7	last	- <i>jurar</i>	- swear	ditransitive verb of communication/beneficiary
8	first	- <i>ir</i>	- go	intransitive verb of motion
9	last	- <i>tomar foto</i>	- take photo	ditransitive verb marking experiencer
10	first	- <i>ofrecer</i>	- offer	ditransitive verb marking beneficiary
11	last	- <i>prometer</i>	- promise	ditransitive verb of communication
12	first	- <i>contar</i>	- tell	ditransitive verb of communication

Finally, just as in the role play instructions, the AJT task prompts the respondents to respond to all items, but does not force them to do so. This means that the design allows for the participants to participate to the extent that they are comfortable, respecting their voluntary commitment and also learning from their choices. The hope is that putting ethics above data quantity, where participants control which and how much data they share, results in higher data quality and therefore validity.

4.3.3 Constants

In anticipation of high variability and complex interaction among multiple social, contextual, and linguistic variables, it is important that some factors be maintained constant, to avoid their interaction with the factors of interest and to ensure that any variation is indeed due to the factors in question. The elicitation methods selected for the production study (role plays) and the perception study (Acceptability Judgment Task) are especially appropriate for such control. The constants maintained in the design of the study are described in detail in the following sections and include the following:

- (1) The linguistic referent of the direct object is always masculine and singular, controlling for gender effect of the interlocutor
- (2) Some social distance with interlocutor, to prompt the use of the formal you, *usted*
- (3) Interlocutor roles in role plays are performed by a male, university-aged native of Mexico City or Mexico State
- (4) Focus verbs are chosen by their potential to serve as performatives or otherwise illocutionary force indicating devices, carrying the illocutionary force of the speech event. As such, the verbs are transitive, dynamic, telic, and relatively high in frequency based on the 5000 most frequent Spanish words (Davies, 2005)⁶.

Masculine Singular Referent. The masculine singular reference has been ensured by explicitly introducing such interlocutor characters into the context of each role play: (1) male

⁶ However, see Discussion for competing operationalizations of frequency due to context.

professor/boss, (2) male customer, (3) male doctor, (4) male older citizen, (5) male neighbor, (6) uncle/godfather/father-in-law, (7) male business provider, (8) brother-in-law/*compadre* ‘co-parent’, (9) lead mariachi, (10) older widower, (11) priest, (12) future *compadre*⁷ ‘co-parent’ (see Table 4.3.2.1).

In contexts #1, 6, and 8, options are given for speakers to better apply the situation to their own lives, promoting naturalness of conversation, while keeping the age and relationship factors more or less equivalent. For example, in the context 1, younger participants without employment experience, categorically chose to speak to their professor, while older speakers predominantly saw themselves speaking to a boss (although some remembered how they would speak to their professor, especially in cases of housewives or self-employed individuals). Context 6 presents the interlocutor as either an uncle or a godfather, or a father-in-law as a distant relative who is older and represents a degree of hierarchical difference. Context 8 presents a distant relative without a hierarchical or age difference as either a brother-in-law or a *compadre* ‘co-parent’.

Degree of Social Distance with Interlocutor. Without forcing the use of the formal *usted*, the interlocutors presented as part of the role-play design are persons outside of the intimate inner circle of one’s family and friends (see Orozco, 2010). In some cases, this social distance is explicitly marked by **age**: (4) male older citizen, (6) uncle/godfather/father-in-law, (10) older widower. In other cases, this distance is marked by difference in **social standing and authority** of the interlocutor: (1) professor/boss, (3) doctor, (7) business provider, (9) lead mariachi, (11) priest. These factors are complemented in some cases by emphasizing that the

⁷ The co-parenting or *compadrazgo* relationship has been changing in Mexico, but historically it has been between honorable non-family members, establishing a special type of ceremonial relationship and often socially indexed with an *usted* of solidarity (Álvarez Muro & Carrera de la Red, 2006; Vázquez Carranza, 2009). See sections 2.1.2 and 6.2.1 for additional discussion.

interlocutor is **unfamiliar** to the speaker, especially in formal and traditional domains: (2) friend’s customer, (7) business provider, and (9) lead mariachi. And in the cases of the informal social domain, the characters are part of the **extended family or non-blood relations** connected through tradition: (5) neighbor, (6) uncle/godfather/father-in-law, (8) brother-in-law/*compadre* ‘co-parent’, (12) future *compadre* ‘co-parent’.

Interlocutors. Given the controlled factors of masculine gender and social distance with the interlocutor character, the interlocutor assistants are chosen to have similar social characteristics among themselves. The IRB-approved call and selection of these assistants included the following desired characteristics:

- male (without exception)
- college-age (ranged from 19 to 35, one outlier at 64)
- native of Mexico City or Mexico State (or spent most of life in Mexico City)

As reported in Table 4.3.3.1, the total of 15 different interlocutors assisted with dialogues at varying rates, from conducting interaction with just 1 speaker to 61 speakers. Three of the interlocutors have some theatre training (#1, 3, and 14), but most do not and it was not required.

Table 4.3.3.1

Interlocutor profiles and participation

Interlocutor ID	Age	Origin	Occupation	Number of participations*
1	29	Mexico City	Data analyst; graduate of UNAM	27
2	29	Mexico City	UG student in engineering (UAM); martial arts instructor	14
3	19	Mexico State	UG student in linguistics (UNAM)	20
4	22	Mexico City	UG student in linguistics (UNAM)	61
5	34	Mexico City	PhD student in linguistics (UNAM); university instructor	8

6	26	Mexico State	UG student in ethnography (ENAH); office assistant	44
7	20	Mexico City	UG student in linguistics (UNAM)	5
8	35	Mexico City	University researcher (UNAM)	11
9	20	Mexico City	UG student in physics (UNAM)	10
10	25	Mexico City	UG student in linguistics (ENAH)	1
11	32	Mexico City	PhD student in anthropology (ENAH); university instructor; museum curator	3
12	30	Mexico City	Plumber; martial arts instructor; graduate of UNAM	5
13	26	Morelos (0-7), Mexico City (7+)	UG student in linguistics (ENAH)	11
14	25	Mexico City	UG student in theatre	3
15	29	Mexico City	UG student in linguistics (ENAH); researcher-anthropologist (UNAM)	3
16	64	Mexico City	Journalist; cultural promoter	1

*Note: The combined number of participations exceeds the number of participants because some role-plays had to be split into two or more sessions with different interlocutors.

All interlocutors were trained and instructed to follow the best practices outlined below:

- Speak as naturally as possible
- Speak less than the speakers, mostly providing the responses to the speech acts
- Let the speaker choose the formal or informal ‘you’-treatment at start and stick to the set tone
- Avoid using the verbs elicited from the speakers (synonyms and paraphrases were offered)
- If the speaker does not use the focus verbs, provide more opportunities for them to use them as naturally as possible, without forcing it

In general, the interlocutors were instructed to help the speakers express themselves in a natural way to achieve the goal of the speech event. The goal of each role play was explained, as well as the speech acts expected to take place. Some strategies to elicit specific verbs were shared. For

example, if a role-play context included the verb *llamar* ‘to call’ but the speaker was not producing it, the interlocutor could prompt it by asking for the speaker to get in contact with him or by offering him an information card with his number. In all cases, the priority has always been on naturalness of conversation. It was important for the interlocutors not to force the use of specific verbs, to ensure comfort of the speaker and validity of elicited data. This meant that the conversation would have to end naturally, even if the verbs are not used. In those cases, the researcher or the trained assistant would ask post-participation questions about specific verbs, along the lines: “Do you see yourself using this verb in this context? If so, when and how? If not, why not?” Sometimes the respondents would add or modify the dialogue with the focus verbs. Other times, their comments on unnaturalness of these verbs would inform further research, hypotheses adjustment, and data analysis. This, for example, has led to the inclusion of synonyms *apuntar/anotar/agendar* ‘to note down, to sign up,’ where different speakers chose a different synonym to mean the same thing based on personal preferences and experiences. My genuine gratitude to all of my interlocutor and transcriber assistants, a few of whom are pictured in Figure 4.3.3.2 at the conclusion of the oral corpus collection.

Figure 4.3.3.2

Some of the transcribers and interlocutor assistants in this research (Jan. 23, 2019)



Verbs with Semantic, Syntactic, and Pragmatic Properties Constitutive of the

Speech Event. The focus verbs across tasks are chosen by their potential to serve as performatives or otherwise illocutionary force indicating devices, carrying the illocutionary force of the speech event: negotiation, greeting, invitation, and offer. As such, the verbs chosen as the focus of the study are transitive and intentional, mostly dynamic and telic, and relatively high in frequency. Table 4.3.3.3 is reproduced here from Table 4.3.2.3, with added information about each verb's dynamicity and telicity (defined further), as well as word frequency rank according to the Davies' (2006) *A frequency dictionary of Spanish* and the raw verb frequency in the collected role-play corpus (lowest numbers indicate smallest counts). The Davis' word frequencies are based on a 20-million word corpus from geographically diverse Spanish speaking countries (lowest numbers indicate highest frequency but do not take into account possible semantic ranges that go beyond the focus meanings). The role-play corpus consists of just 1783 transitive verb tokens, but it has as its main advantage the fact that this is a speech act corpus, where all verbs are intentional and directed at the second-person interlocutor, which is shown to be the most relevant frequency factor for the context of the study.

Table 4.3.3.3

Verbs included in the study design with their semantic and frequency properties

Design Frequency	Target Verbs		Davies word frequency rank	Role-play corpus raw frequency	Dynamicity	Telicity	IFID or semantics of intention
	Spanish	English					
3	<i>acompañar</i>	accompany	512	206	+	+/-	commissive
2	<i>admirar</i>	admire	1682	65	-	-	expressive
2	<i>apoyar</i>	support	616	173	+	-	commissive
3	<i>apuntar/anotar/agendar</i>	note down/ sign up	1361/2570/ ?	25/10/12	+	+	commissive
2	<i>atender</i>	assist	697	114	+	+	commissive
3	<i>ayudar</i>	help	345	246	+	+	commissive
2	<i>consultar</i>	consult	1587	24	+	+	directive

3	<i>convencer/ hacer cambiar de opinión</i>	convince/ make change mind	1169/25+2 46	104/20	+	+	directive
2	<i>detener /entretener</i>	hold up	490/2722	14/60	+	+	directive
3	<i>elegir/poner a cargo</i>	choose/ put in charge	494/77	39/15	+	+	directive
2	<i>felicitar</i>	congratulate	3532	181	+	+	expressive
1	<i>interrumpir</i>	interrupt	1405	41	+	+	directive
3	<i>invitar</i>	invite	954	227	+	+	commissive
2	<i>llamar</i>	call	104	182	+	+	commissive
2	<i>necesitar</i>	need	229	5	-	-	directive
2	<i>nombrar/ nominar</i>	name	1147/?	20/39	+	+	directive
2	<i>querer</i>	love	57	28	-	-	expressive
4	<i>recibir</i>	receive	205	79	+	+	commissive
2	<i>reconocer</i>	recognize	327	26	+	+	expressive
3	<i>saludar</i>	greet	1744	167	+	+	expressive
2	<i>visitar</i>	visit	834	99	+	+	commissive

The verbs in the study design are not a true control variable, given that there are many and that these are not the only transitive verbs that appear in the production task. They are, however, the only transitive verbs included in the perception task for comparison purposes and are meant to represent a set of verb characteristics, especially along the dynamicity and telicity dimensions. These dimensions are important to understand before considering the more spontaneous variation produced in the study and the meaning of the results overall.

The following categories are adapted from the traditional Vender's (1957) Aktionsart categorization of verbs. **Stative** verbs refer to static situations, which may be physical, mental, or emotional, such as being, knowing, loving, and believing. **Dynamic** verbs involve action that can be typically modified by adverbs of manner (e.g. vigorously, gently, strongly), and are therefore non-stative.

Dynamic verbs can further be classified into more and less **agentive**, depending on whether they require an intentional and volitional subject to carry out the action: the more intention and volition are implied by the verb, the more agentive it is. For example, *me corté el dedo* 'I cut my finger' is lower in agentivity than *corté un pedazo demás sin querer* 'I cut an

extra piece on accident' and lower still than *corté el pastel cuidadosamente* 'I cut the cake carefully,' due to the gradual increase in intention and volition of the agent in performing the action of cutting. The degree of agentivity in this example is given by the extra-verbal information provided by the context and by the reflexive form in the first case. The same semantic distinction, however, also applies to polysemic verbs, such as *ver* 'to perceive/run into' (non- agentive) vs. 'to visit' (more agentive), *conocer* 'to know' (non- agentive) vs. 'to meet' (more agentive), and is even more evident in contrasting different verbs, such as *encontrar* 'to find' (non-agentive) and *buscar* 'to search' (more agentive). In theoretical terms, dynamic and agentive verbs are those with highest transitivity, while non-agentive verbs are lower, and stative verbs are lowest on the transitivity scale. Tying it to politeness, it can be said that the higher the transitivity, the more justified is mitigation as one possible manifestation of politeness – in this case, mitigation of the effect of a more transitive action on the object.

Telicity is the dimension of verbs with respect to time binding: **telic** verbs have a terminal point (achievements, accomplishments), while **atelic** verbs do not (states and activities). In light of the Transitivity Hypothesis and the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis, telic verbs are more transitive than atelic verbs, due to their fuller effect on the object which in turn gives way to politeness strategies. However, whether mitigation or face-enhancement politeness is required depends on the action and its perlocutionary effect. While there is no strict rule for performative verbs to be telic, most of the canonical head-act verbs are: *invitar* 'to invite,' *saludar* 'to greet,' *felicitar* 'to congratulate,' *nombrar* 'to name.' However, various expressive speech acts and some synonyms and illocutionary force indicating devices of other speech acts that are atelic can still be felicitous in expressing the illocutionary force of the speech act: *admirar* 'to admire,' *querer* 'to love,' *apreciar* 'to appreciate,' *esperar* 'to expect' (as a reinforcement of an

invitation). Additionally, inclusion of the few atelic verbs in the design is motivated by their similar illocutionary force to some of the telic verbs and therefore ability to serve as illocutionary force indicating devices (e.g. *apoyar* ‘support’ and *ayudar* ‘help’). Nevertheless, all of the verbs, telic and atelic, are by design intentional.

To summarize, the design of both the role-play task and the Acceptability Judgment Task maintains several factors constant: the masculine interlocutor referent, some degree of social distance with the interlocutor to elicit natural formal treatment, training and appearance of interlocutor assistants, and the focus verbs. Controlling for these factors in the design allows the analysis to reveal other linguistic, social, and contextual factors of interest and how they might interact to condition the variable clitic production and perception in Mexican Spanish interaction.

4.3.4 Potential Factors

Of the three types of variables studied in this research (i.e. linguistic, contextual, and social), mostly contextual and some linguistic variables are the backbone of the research design. **Design variables** are those that represent controlled methodological decisions prior to data collection, while **dynamic variables** are data and community driven, and therefore coded and analyzed as uncontrolled (see Analysis section). As the Table 4.3.4.1 shows, not all of the study’s variables are equally controlled in both production and perception studies, and not all of the uncontrolled variables are possible to code exactly the same way. **Contextual** factors define the interactive contexts for the role plays and the contextualized AJT questionnaires, which are speech event, social domain, and interlocutor power. One additional uncontrolled contextual factor of (ir)realis mood is coded in both tasks. One of the **linguistic** factors included in the design of both studies is the verb: the exact verb selection (see the Constants section) and verb telicity property, which

relates to the dynamicity and agentivity semantics just presented. The linguistic factors of polarity, verb tense morphology, tense expression, and syntactic structure are uncontrolled as variables occurring spontaneously in the role plays but are available for controlled account in the AJT. The clitic position was controlled in binary terms in the AJT design and coded as more nuanced in the oral corpus: specifically the pre-verbal position is marked as either pre-verbal or pre-auxiliary/modal. Likewise the subject and object number variables are available for nuanced coding in the oral corpus (sufficient numerical representation of all persons and numbers), but not in the AJT due to the higher control of the linguistic stimuli, designed with the 1st-person subject and singular object in mind. The **social** factors are not controlled for by design, but are considered for representative corpus stratification and are consistently assessed between the two studies, as described in the following Analysis section.

The present section only gives an overview of these variables, while the definitions and coding of all of the controlled and uncontrolled variables are explained in the Analysis section, illustrated with actual data.

Table 4.3.4.1

Controlled design variables (shaded) and uncontrolled dynamic variables and their variants considered in the production and perception parts of the study

	Variable	Production (Role Plays)	Perception (AJT)
Linguistic factors	Telicity of verb	• telic vs. atelic	• telic vs. atelic
	Subject	• I • we • he/she • they • impersonal	• N/A
	Object number	• singular • pluralized	• N/A
	Polarity	• negated • non-negated	• negated • non-negated
	Verb tense/mood morphology	• present indicative	• finite

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • future/conditional indicative • past indicative/subjunctive • non-past subjunctive • nonfinite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-finite
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present • future • conditional • past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present • non-present
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unmitigated • interrogative • if-conditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigated vs. unmitigated declarative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noun • Clause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-auxiliary/modal • pre-verbal • post-verbal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-verbal vs. post-verbal
Contextual factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer • negotiation • invitation • greeting/compliment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer • negotiation • invitation • greeting/compliment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal • informal • traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal • informal • traditional
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher vs. zero authority over participant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher vs. zero authority over participant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realis • irrealis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realis • irrealis
Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none/primary • middle/high • college/graduate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none/primary • middle/high • college/graduate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low • mid-low • mid-high • high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low • mid-low • mid-high • high
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none • some • moderate • high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico City • Mexico State • non-metropolitan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico City • Mexico State • non-metropolitan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth • adults • seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth • adults • seniors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • females • males 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • females • males

Note: Shaded variables are controlled for the specified task. Non-shaded variables are not controlled, but coded as indicated. Variables with N/A are not controlled, not measured, and not coded.

The main hypotheses behind these variables are those that have equated variable syntax with variable meaning: the Transitivity Hypothesis, Saliency hypothesis, Iconic Distance hypothesis, and Indirectness as Politeness hypothesis. The applications and examples of these theoretical connections are explained in the following Analysis section.

4.4 Summary of constants and variables (controlled, by design, and dynamic)

Overall, this research takes into account a number of factors from linguistic, contextual, and social dimensions. Some of these factors are maintained constant, while others are controlled by design, and others still are uncontrolled and coded as dynamically varied by the community. All of these factors are tested in their relationship with the 2nd-person-singular formal direct-object *le-lo* clitic as the dependent variable, of which specifically the *le* variant is denominated polite *leísmo*. This section gives a mere overview of all of these variables as part of the methodology of this research, while the following Analysis section explains how the controlled and uncontrolled variables are handled with respect to polite *leísmo*.

Dependent Variable:

Linguistic binary function-based variable:

- (a) *le-lo* variation in the 2nd-person-singular formal direct-object reference

Controlled Constants:

Social constants:

1. Interlocutor sex: male
2. Interlocutor social distance: present, higher authority than speaker

3. Interlocutor linguistic variant: Central Mexican

Linguistic constant: 32 verbs, paired with contexts in sets of 4

- (b) All transitive verbs
- (c) All intentional verbs
- (d) All verbs with illocutionary force of the select 4 types of speech events

Controlled Design Variables:

Linguistic design variables:

- 1. Telic vs. atelic verb semantics

Pragmatic/contextual design variables:

- 1. Social domain/register: formal, informal, traditional/ceremonial
- 2. Interlocutor power or authority over speaker: +/-P
- 3. Illocutionary point of the speech event:
 - (a) greeting/compliment (expressive, relational, -imposition)
 - (b) offer/promise (commissive, transactional, -imposition)
 - (c) invitation (commissive-directive, relational, +imposition)
 - (d) negotiation (directive, transactional, +imposition)

Dynamic, Uncontrolled Variables:

Linguistic:

- 1. Subject
- 2. Object number (pluralization)

3. Polarity
4. Syntactic structure
5. Clitic position with respect to verb
6. Syntactic category of direct object
7. Verb tense morphology
8. Tense expression

Pragmatic/contextual:

1. (Ir)realis mood of action expressed by the verb

Social (participant variables):

1. Sex
2. Age group
3. Education level
4. Origin
5. Socioeconomic Status (SES)
6. SES mobility
7. Generational SES mobility

All together, 20 variables are considered in the analysis as potentially conditioning elements of polite *leísmo*: verb subject, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, telicity, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, syntactic category of direct object, verb tense morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood, social domain, interlocutor power, speech event, speaker sex, speaker age, speaker origin, speaker education level, speaker's highest SES achieved, speaker's SES mobility, and generational SES mobility.

It is important to consider the advantages and the disadvantages of applying a logistic regression analysis with a large number of independent variables, as is the case in this study. The motivation for surveying a large number of variables is based on the understanding gained from previous literature that language variation is affected by multiple social, pragmatic, and linguistic factors simultaneously. Additionally, given the understudied nature of the phenomenon of polite *leísmo*, any apriori choices of such variables in the up-down approach may yield incomplete and even incorrect results guided by confirmation bias. On the other hand, the bottom-up analytical approaches let the data speak for itself and reveal the true nature of variation that may later be explained through existing theoretical connections. For the data to speak for itself, however, it is useful to test multiple factors and let statistical models confirm or discharge them based on data patterns, while also be mindful of potential issues of collinearity.

However, it is true that too many variables, while showing the sincerity of unbiased curiosity, at the same time weaken the statistical effect of the resulting models. It is typically true that the more factors are included in the model, the better the model fits the data, even if the changes introduced into the model with each variable are very minor. Additionally, with more variables included, there is a higher chance of interactions between variables that are assumed to be independent. This results in the lowering of the power of the model. What remains true in the step-wise logistical regression is the ranking of the factor groups from most to least influential through the comparison of ranges of variation within each factor group. These rankings are especially highlighted in this research, as is presented in the Results section.

These methodological limitations create significant tension between the desire to avoid confirmation bias and the goal of achieving a statistically sound result. Furthermore, statistical significance in social sciences has been questioned as potentially hindering from uncovering real

tendencies that go unnoticed by the setting of the p value of significance at the conventionally accepted .05 for the confidence level of 95% and discarding nonsignificant results as unimportant. The uneasy decision in this dissertation to include up to twenty factors and risk loss of statistical power is driven by the sincere quest for the meaning of polite *leísmo* when very little about it is known. As one measure of precaution, several trial statistical tests have been conducted on portions and on the entire corpus in order to identify and eliminate clear cases of interactions (taken as cases of collinearity), recode the data for better analysis, and achieve a fair level of comparability between the production and perception data analyses. One such variable, for example is the test variable of generational SES mobility, which was found to interact with the individual's SES and was therefore removed from the analysis.

Linguistic and contextual factors are explored in connection to the **communicative functions** of polite *leísmo* as a morphosyntactic-pragmatic interface phenomenon. Various interface theoretical proposals are used to draw possible connections between the semantic, morphosyntactic, and pragmatic elements of meaning. Social factors are explored with the goal of discovering **social significance and value** of polite *leísmo*. It is expected that a combination of linguistic, contextual, and social factors together better define and explain the meaning and function of polite *leísmo* as a variable social deixis phenomenon in Mexico City, which is the ultimate objective of this research.

5. Analysis of Independent Variables

This section defines, explains, and illustrates the analysis of the variables explored in connection to polite *leísmo* in both production and perception studies through the voices of the participants.

The dependent variable in both corpora is the binary *le-lo* choice, whose conditioning is tested via a multivariate logistic regression analysis. This is a bottom-up approach (Terkourafi, 2011) that first analyzes function-based variation in the direct-object clitic (same syntactic function, two forms), and moves into a form-based analysis of the more pragmatic functions of each of the two forms, among which is politeness. Function is explored through a test of social, linguistic, and contextual dependent variables, motivated by the theoretical approaches relevant at the morphosyntax-pragmatics interface (see Morphosyntactic Perspective section). These dependent variables are formulated in the first two research questions, while their relationship to the function analysis is part of the third research question:

RQ1. Production:

What linguistic, social, and contextual factors condition Mexican speakers' variation in (formal) 2nd-person clitic in oral production, as measured by relative production rates?

- (d) What are the linguistic factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (e) What are the contextual factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (f) What are the social factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

RQ2. Perception:

What linguistic, social, and contextual factors account for Mexican speakers' acceptability of (formal) 2nd-person clitics in a contextualized questionnaire as measured by relative clitic ratings?

- (d) What are the linguistic factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- (e) What are the contextual factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?

(f) What are the social factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?

The third research question (RQ3) about the functions and the social meaning of polite *leísmo* (i.e. comparison of production and perception patterns, social profile of leading agents, and the functions of polite *leísmo*) is more about the bottom-up interpretation of the results of the patterns found in both production and perception, and so is explored in the Discussion section of this work.

There are a total of twenty factors tested among the two studies: all twenty in the production study and fifteen of them in the perception study. These variables are the subject of the verb, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, telicity, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, argument structure, verb tense morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood, speech event, social domain, interlocutor power, speaker sex, age, education level, origin, socioeconomic status or SES, SES mobility, and generational SES mobility. The limitations of including this many variables in a quantitative analysis are presented and justified in the Summary of Constants and Variables subsection of Methodology.

Production and perception corpora have their peculiarities. The linguistic variables measured in the perception study are more limited than in the production study precisely by the streamlined design of the linguistic forms presented in the AJT. The factors included in the perception analysis are polarity, syntactic structure, morphosyntactic position, telicity, verb morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood, speech event, interlocutor power, social domain, participant sex, age, education level, origin, and SES.

This section presents all variables included in this research, controlled and uncontrolled, in their respective tables. Each variable is defined along with its variants, which are accompanied

by examples from the role-play oral corpus and a connection to the theoretical frameworks and hypotheses motivating their inclusion. The main theoretical perspectives behind these variables are those that have equated variable syntax with variable meaning: the Relative Transitivity Hypothesis, Saliency hypothesis, Iconic Distance hypothesis, and Indirectness as Politeness perspective. Each of these theoretical perspectives is defined in the Morphosyntactic Perspective section. Care is taken to select representative examples with both *le* and *lo* clitics and basic sociodemographic and contextual information, including the speaker ID number, age group (1=young, 2=middle age, 3=older), sex (male or female), origin (Mexico City, Mexico State, or Other), and the role play number with its corresponding interlocutor. The exact role play, for contextual purposes, is referenced by the number and the interlocutor, but its full text can be consulted for further detail in Appendix.

First, the social variables are presented, setting up the stage for understanding the sociodemographics of the participant population as a representative sample of Mexico City. This is followed by contextual and linguistic variables, controlled by design and dynamically variable in speaker production. While no linguistic variable is dynamically variable in the perception task due to the design, those that are well represented are coded similarly to the production task for comparison purposes. Any differences in coding are explained for each variable as required. Each presented variable is accompanied by the hypotheses that it invites for the meaning of polite *leísmo*.

5.1 Social Variables

For the analysis of social factors across the tasks of this research, seven variables are taken into account. These include a number of participant characteristics, while controlling for some

interlocutor characteristics described in the Constants subsection of Methodology. This subsection begins by operationalizing the participant social variables and ends by a reminder summary of the interlocutor variables. The social variables collected in the perception task are reduced to the macro-social variables due to the abridged version of the electronic presentation, while the production corpus enjoys richer sociodemographic information, as presented below.

5.1.1 Social Participant Variables

The social variables recorded and analyzed across the production and perception studies, corresponding to the first two research questions, include the participant’s sex, age, education level, origin, socioeconomic status or SES, SES mobility, and generational SES mobility. Table 5.1.1.1 lists these variables and their variants for each of the studies, indicating with *N/A* the two SES variables that are not assessed in the perception sample due to the abridged nature of the electronic sociodemographic questionnaire.

Table 5.1.1.1

Social variables and their variants considered in the production and perception studies

Social Variable	Production (RQ1)	Perception (RQ2)
1. Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • females • males 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • females • males
2. Age group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth • adults • seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth • adults • seniors
3. Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none/primary • middle/high • college/graduate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none/primary • middle/high • college/graduate
4. Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico City • Mexico State • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico City • Mexico State • Other
5. Socioeconomic Status (SES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low working • high working • low middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working • low middle

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high middle • low high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high middle • low high
6. SES or career mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none • some • high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
7. Generational SES mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none • some • moderate • considerable • high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

It will be recalled that social variables are defined in accordance with the Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City (Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015) and that the SES variable is based on the occupational categories corresponding to different income ranges. The most likely reason that the perception study does not include low working class participants is their typical lack of access to education or technology to ensure their informed and reliable contribution. The rest of this subsection defines and illustrates these variables and their variants further, justifying the chosen coding schemes.

The typical macro-social variables of age, sex, education level, and origin have been included in the analysis, based on the participants' responses and self-characterization in the sociodemographic questionnaire. Additional characteristics of the participants' profile include socioeconomic status (SES), personal socioeconomic mobility, generational SES mobility, and geographic mobility, even though all but the SES variable are only available for the role-play participants due to the abridged sociodemographic questionnaire for the AJT. This subsection explains how these variables are recorded and coded into categories, and the following Results section reveals the sociodemographic makeup and trends of the participant population.

The **age**, **sex**, and **education** variables have been coded into discrete groups as in Figure 5.1.1.2, based on the categorization employed by the *Corpus sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México* (CSCM) 'Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City' (Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015).

Figure 5.1.1.2

Social stratification of the Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City (reproduced from Figure 2.2.2.1, from the Sociolinguistic Perspective)

Age Group	Education Level					
	None/Primary (0-6 years of study)		Middle/Secondary (10-12 years of study)		College/Graduate (16+ years of study)	
Sex:	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Young (18-34)						
Adults (35-54)						
Older (55+)						

Sex. Sex of the speakers is coded in binary terms, as self-reported: male or female. This variable is important in politeness research due to its centrality in linguistic innovation of prestigious variants and stable variation of stylistic or stigmatized variants (Labov, 1980). If polite *leísmo* is prestigious (overtly or covertly), females are hypothesized to use it more. On the contrary, males are likely to lead if polite *leísmo* has a conscious or a subconscious negative connotation. No sex difference would be expected if polite *leísmo* is a stylistic marker or a subconscious indicator of some sociodemographic reality.

Age. While age is a true continuous variable, the decision to analyze it as categorical is guided by the standards set by the Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City (Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015) and the potential for future comparative research. All speakers are classified by **age** into three age groups: young/youth (18-34 years old), middle-age/adults (35-54 years old), and older/seniors (55 and above years old). It can be recalled that young generations typically lead linguistic changes in progress, and so it is crucial for the analysis of polite *leísmo* (Labov, 1980). If polite *leísmo* is not really undergoing change, then it might show stable variation across generations or appear peaking in the middle-age group as a resource of social mobility, defined by the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1980). In the latter case, the phenomenon is likely to

have a higher social value than if the leaders of polite *leísmo* are the youngest and most innovative generation.

Education. The **education level** categories were provided following the categorization used for the CSCM (Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015), and further coded into three levels based on the country's sociodemographic education profile and for the purposes of analysis, as presented in Table 5.1.1.3.

Table 5.1.1.3

Education level assessment and coding, adapted from Butragueño & Lastra (2011-2015)

<u>Original (Spanish):</u>	<u>English (translation)</u>	<u>Coding:</u>
• <i>Sin educación</i>	No formal education	1 = Basic education
• <i>Primaria incompleta</i>	Incomplete elementary	
• <i>Primaria (6 años)</i>	Elementary (6 years)	
• <i>Secundaria/bachillerato (9-12 años)</i>	Middle/high school (9-12 years)	2 = Secondary education
• <i>Superior (licenciatura o equivalente) (16 años)</i>	Higher education (BA or equivalent) (16 years)	3 = Higher education
• <i>Posgrado (maestría/doctorado)</i>	Graduate school (MA or PhD)	

The hypotheses that can be formed for the significance of polite *leísmo* are similarly based on previous sociolinguistic research. Speakers with higher education would prefer polite *leísmo* if it has any positive value for the society, as the most conscious, the most connected, and the most socioeconomically mobile part of the population (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). On the contrary, if polite *leísmo* is found to be preferred by speakers with the least formal education, we can deduce that its social value is rather negative for the larger population, even if it carries covert prestige for the ingroups of those who use it.

Origin. All participants are further classified by **origin** based on their centrality and relationship to Mexico City as the capital of the country: those from Mexico City (CDMX), those from Mexico State (MxSt), and those from outside of this metropolitan central network (Other). The work and life patterns within **the capital, CDMX**, as presented in the Global Perspective on Mexico City as a microcosm of Mexico, are characterized by diversity from within and from outside, brought in by commuters, migrants, and immigrants. While the capital is no longer growing, it is surrounded by a growing metropolitan **Mexico State**, characterized by high-volume and high-intensity commute between the capital and the state. This dynamic changes drastically once outside of Mexico State, and therefore **outside of the metropolitan center**, from local commute to more significant migratory patterns, characterized by different life-work and contact realities. This geographic relationship is visualized in Figure 5.1.1.4.

Figure 5.1.1.4

Origin, operationalized in relationship to the metropolitan center of Mexico



It can be hypothesized that for polite *leísmo* to have the most positive and most overtly prestigious social value, it must be a feature of Mexico City. The contrary is also likely to be true

if most of polite *leísmo* comes in from the outside. A variety of scenarios are possible with respect to the origin variable: from covert prestige as an identity or solidarity marker, to a stylistic marker across the national borders, to a stigmatized variant in Mexico City as an outsider marker (Milroy & Milroy, 1985; see the Social Value subsection of the Sociolinguistic Perspective). In any case, Mexico City and Mexico State are likely to show similarity of patterns, and perhaps even greater mobility within Mexico State population due to the current national mobility patterns (see Global Perspective).

Socioeconomic Status and Correlates.

The **socioeconomic status**, or **SES**, of the participants is operationalized according to professional achievement instead of the more sensitive alternative of income ranges, which was intentionally avoided.

Figure 5.1.1.5

Mexico City professional achievement continuum (reproduced from Sociolinguistic Perspective

Figure 2.2.2, enhanced with class approximations)

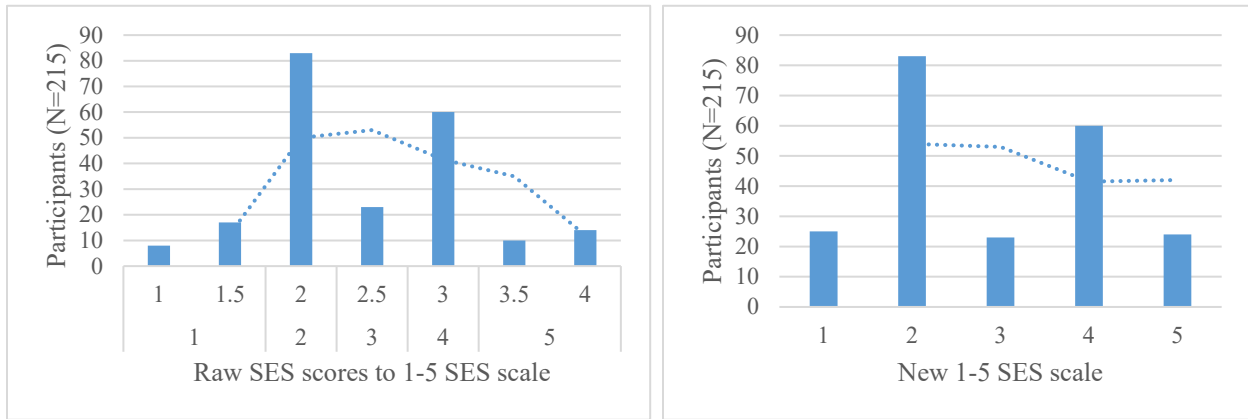
<u>category 1</u> (low/working)	<u>category 2</u> (high working/ low middle)	<u>category 3</u> (middle/ high middle)	<u>category 4</u> (low high)	<u>category 5</u> (high high)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street vendor • urban unspecialized worker • farm worker • domestic service • unspecialized service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • merchant • secretary/office help • specialized worker • craftsman • mechanic • store attendant • collector • technical help • police, guard, soldier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university personnel • middle- and primary-school faculty • little businessmen or producers • middle command • technician • supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent university staff • middle management of public or private sector • graduated military • middle businessman and producer • university faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high official with executive, legislative or judicial power • high military official • big private businessman • big property owner • high executive of public or private sector

To recall from the Sociolinguistic Perspective section, Figure 5.1.1.5 is reproduced here to illustrate how Butragueño and Lastra (2011-2015) organize professional achievement in correlation to socioeconomic position, from lowest to highest. The five occupational categories correspond to the 1-5 point scale in professional achievement used for the calculation of socioeconomic status (SES). For multiple occupations and professional activity reported, the SES is coded at the highest achieved category, and ranges from 1 to 4 in both production and perception population samples. Given the abridged nature of the sociodemographic questionnaire given online to the perception sample, these scores are taken as the only measurement of participants' SES, stratifying the sample into (1) working class, (2) low middle class, (3) high middle class, and (4) low high class.

However, considering three motivations, the occupational responses of the production sample are further converted to a 1-5 scale. First, none of the surveyed 200+ participants identifies with the category 5, even those few that the researcher considers as high executives. Second, those holding positions in category 4 are well underrepresented in comparison with the bulk middle class and therefore can be considered representatives of the highest class in the sample population. Third, an odd-numbered scale is preferred in this and the other two SES-related variables, to better codify the fine-grained socioeconomic stratification of Mexico City. The average of occupational responses is, therefore, converted to a 1-5 SES scale as in Figure 5.1.1.6, taking into account the representativity of each raw average, and resulting in the following socioeconomic status categories: 1 = low working class, 2 = high working class, 3 = low middle class, 4 = high middle class, and 5 = low high class.

Figure 5.1.1.6

Conversion of raw SES average scores to the 1-5 SES scale, in number of participants and the moving average line based on the n=215 sociodemographic sample



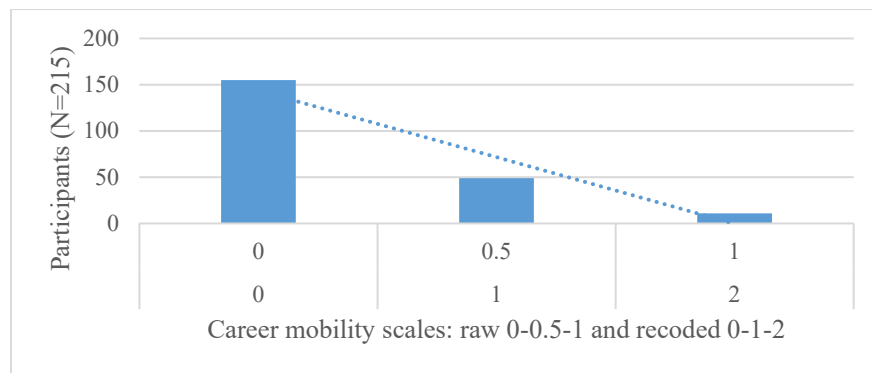
It may be recalled that the most socially mobile classes are the middle and the low-high social classes (Labov, 1980). These are the speakers that lead in prestigious and stylistic variants. Once again, if polite *leísmo* is prestigious for any social group in Mexico, then it will predominate among speakers ranked between 3-5 on the SES scale. If polite *leísmo* is rather found among the lower, working class speakers, then we can speak of stigmatized or covert prestige meaning of the phenomenon that would be mostly confined to the population ranked in the 1-2 range on the SES scale.

However, as most things on this planet, things are rarely clear-cut. Seeing how most participants report multiple occupational activities that range across multiple occupational and SES categories, the production sample population is additionally assessed for SES mobility and generational SES mobility. With both of these SES correlates, it is expected that higher SES mobility is accompanied by more prestigious and stylistically positive variants as strategic resources of the mobile population.

The **SES or career mobility** score is proposed by subtracting each individual’s average occupational score from their highest occupational score reported, based on categories in Figure 5.1.1.5 (adapted from Butragueño & Lastra, 2011-2015). The average occupational score is calculated by averaging the points corresponding to the various career categories occupied by the individual. The observed differences between the average and the highest SES of the participants range from zero (the average is the highest occupation), to half-category jump, to an increase by one whole category. These naming differences are illustrated in Figure 5.1.1.7, as coded on a 3-point scale as 0 = no career mobility, 1 = half-category/class jump, and 2 = whole category/class jump.

Figure 5.1.1.7

Career mobility scale, in number of participants and a line of best fit, based on the n=215 sociodemographic sample

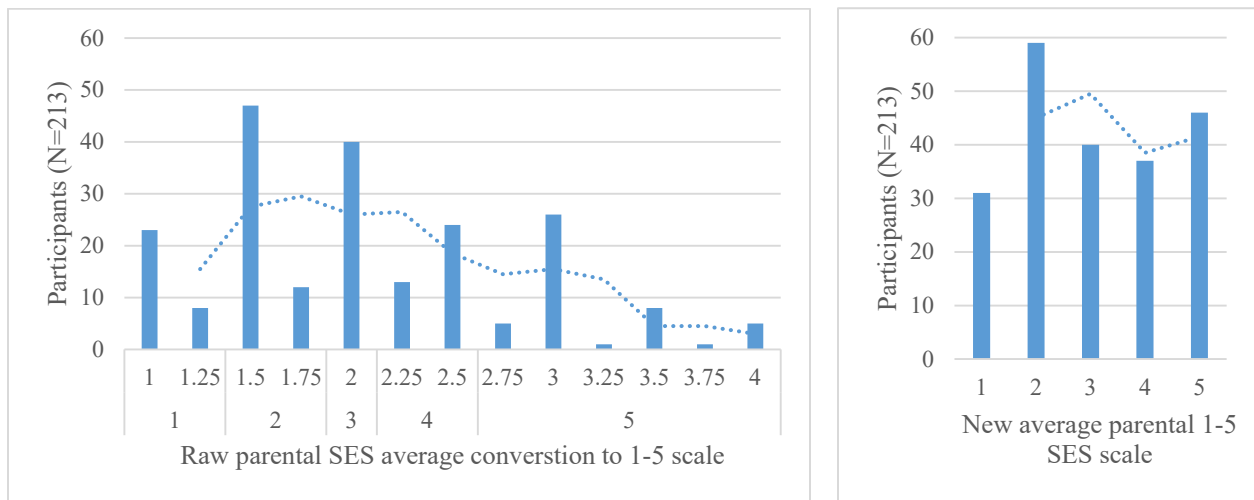


Generational SES mobility, gauged only among the participants in the oral production study, is a difference between parent SES and participant’s SES, which are based on the same occupational categories. These are presented in Figure 5.1.1.5, which is adapted from Butragueño and Lastra (2011-2015). Generational SES mobility is based on several averages as a relative and approximate measure, meant to act merely as a directional indicator. For multiple occupations reported, an average is taken for the participant SES, the father’s SES, and the

mother's SES. The average of both parents' SES, whenever available, is then converted into a 1-5 scale as a solution to skewed distribution toward and finer differences among the first three occupational categories. The raw parental average SES scores are combined to produce the converted parental average SES of 1 (1+1.25), 2 (1.25+1.5), 3 (2), 4 (2.25+2.5), and 5 (2.75 and higher), as illustrated in Figure 5.1.1.8.

Figure 5.1.1.8

Average parental SES conversion scale, based on a n=213 sociodemographic sample and a moving average line



This conversion also reflects the change in socioeconomic scales over the course of Mexican history. What used to be high achievement in the past generations is a basic starting point for many of the current generations. This applies to education and to professional activity alike.

The parental average SES (1-5 scale) is then subtracted from the participant's average SES (1-5 scale). The resulting range of -4 to +3 is further recoded into the 0-4 scale, corresponding to how the participant surpasses or not the socioeconomic position of his or her parents, and taking into account the real distribution and the reality of Mexico City. Table 5.1.1.9

summarizes the scale and its characteristics, as explained below and as illustrated in Figure 5.1.1.10.

Table 5.1.1.9

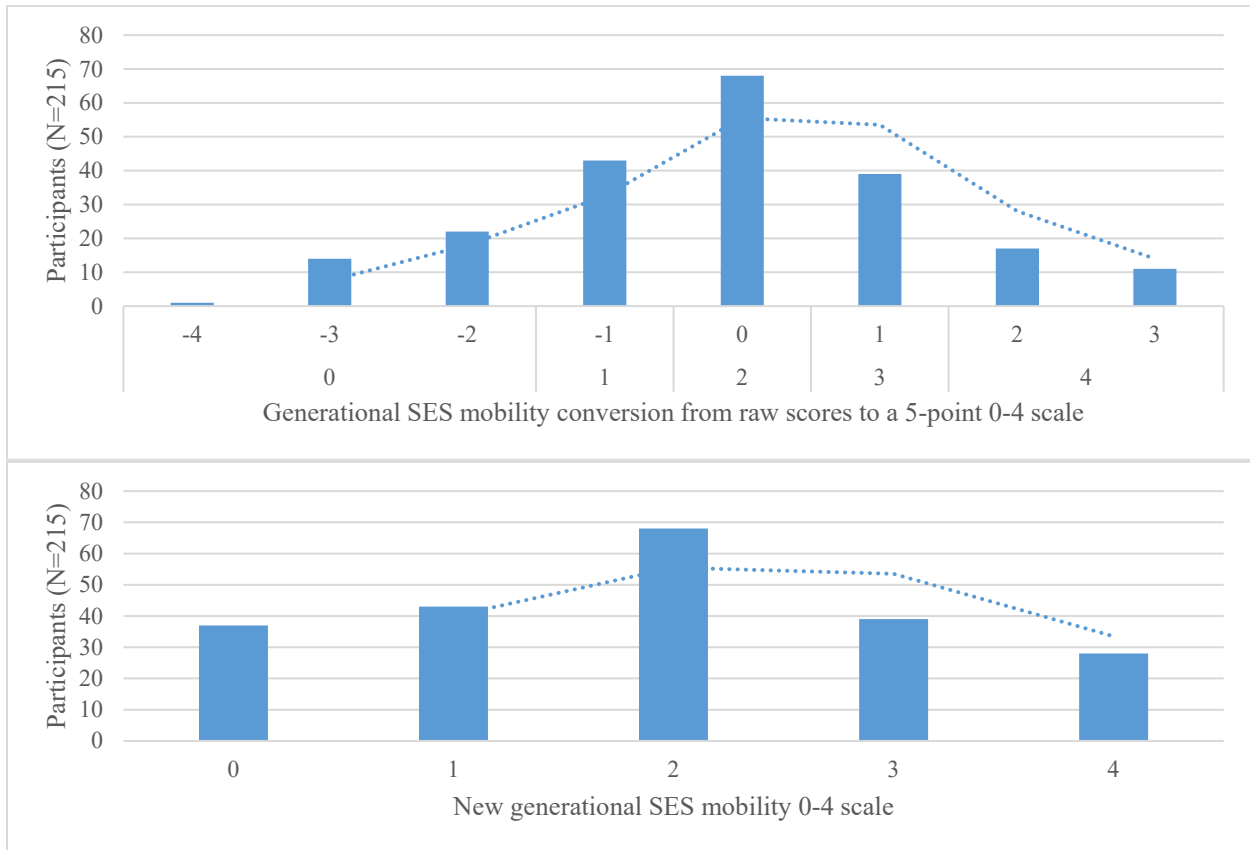
Generational SES 0-4 Mobility scale, derived from participant-parental differences in age and occupational achievement

Participant SES - Parent SES	Generational SES Mobility Scale	Participant Average Age	Parental Average SES (on 1-5 scale)
-4	0 (no sign of mobility)	32.5	4.4 (high-middle class)
-3		(young adults)	
-2			
-1	1 (close to parental SES)	36.7 (adults)	3.5 (middle class)
0	2 (potential mobility)	46.4 (adults)	2.9 (lower-middle class)
+1	3 (some observed mobility)	49.0 (middle-age)	2.2 (working/lower-middle class)
+2	4 (significant mobility)	47.7	1.85
+3			(working class)

The rare negative difference of -4, -3, and -2 is coded as 0 or no positive SES mobility between generations, most common of the younger generation of higher status families; a slight -1 difference is coded as 1 signaling those close to parental SES, common for the adult sample whose parents are categorized by strong middle-class status; equal average is coded as 2 for potential SES mobility, common for the adult sample with parents equally distributed across the SES scale; +1 is the first actually observable mobility coded as 3, achieved mostly by middle-age adults whose parents are on the working/lower-middle class point of the scale; and a slim layer of participants who surpass their parents by +2 or +3 points are scored at 4 as the highest SES generational mobility group, irrespective of age but characteristic of families with parents on the lowest end of the SES continuum.

Figure 5.1.1.10

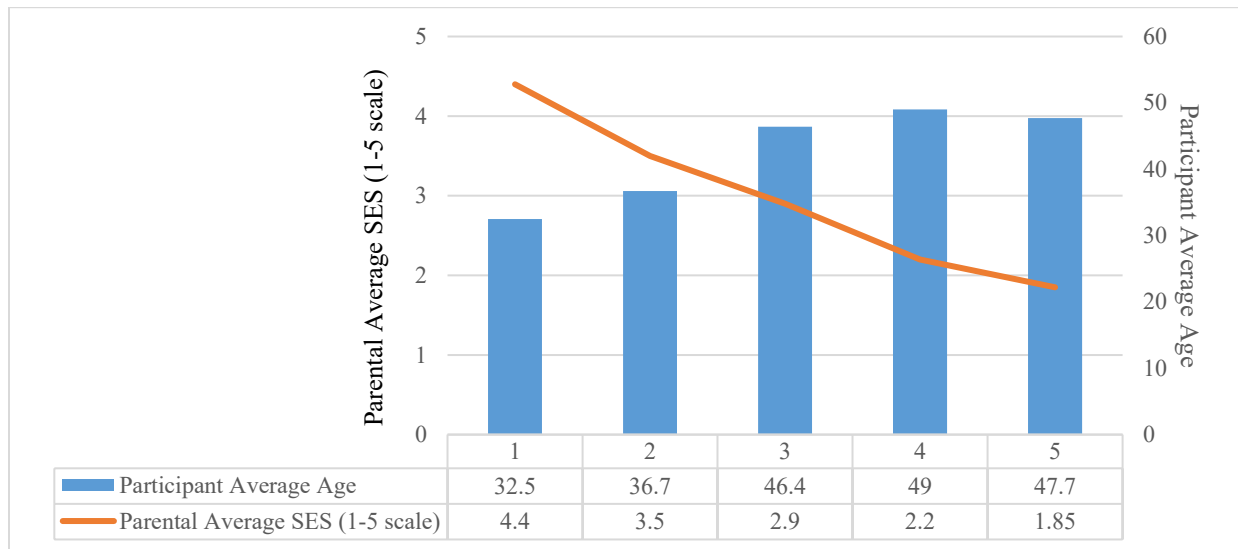
Generational SES mobility conversion scale, based on the n=215 sociodemographic sample and a moving average line



It can be observed that generational SES mobility scores are mostly directly proportional to participant age and inversely proportional to parental SES. The younger the participants and the higher the status of their parents, the more invisible or absent are the signs of mobility. On the contrary, participants with highest evidence of SES mobility are usually middle-age adults from working class families, who have had time, opportunity, and arguably motivation to move up on the socioeconomic ladder. This relationship can be visualized in Figure 5.1.1.11.

Figure 5.1.1.11

Generational SES mobility: participants' average age and parental average SES rank



Sociodemographic Profile. Looking at the different distributions of several SES-related measures, it is considered worth exploring more than just one, in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamic and changing socioeconomic realities of Mexico City. As one concrete example, the participant 1196 is a 69-year-old man from Hidalgo State, who has worked as a small merchant, waiter, and cashier earlier in his life, and is currently an owner of a neighborhood restaurant-bar, pictured in Figure 5.1.1.12.

Table 5.1.1.13 is a more visual way to illustrate the coding scheme of all relevant sociodemographic factors and their raw and converted scores, as described and referenced by corresponding tables and figures. Because this man's earlier employment was in category 2 and his current professional activity is in category 3, this participant's **highest SES achieved** is 3, and his **average SES** is at 2.5 (see Figure 5.1.1.5), translatable as 3 on the 1-5 scale (see Figure 5.1.1.6). His **SES career mobility**, therefore, equals the difference between his average and his highest achieved SES: $3 - 2.5 = 0.5$, translatable to 1 on the SES mobility scale (see Figure 5.1.1.7).

Figure 5.1.1.12

Restaurant-bar of Participant 1196 in Mexico City (December 19, 2018)



This man’s mother was a cook (raw SES = 2) and his father was a small merchant (raw SES = 2) in Hidalgo. This gives the raw **average parental SES** of 2, converted to 3 on the new 1-5 scale (see Figure 5.1.1.8). Taking this into account, this man’s **generational mobility** score in raw terms is 0 and on the new 1-5 scale is 2 (see Figure 5.1.1.10).

Table 5.1.1.13

The sociodemographics of Participant 1196, relevant categories, raw scores, converted scores, and conversion references (Ref.)

ID: 1196	Sex	Age	Origin	Educa-tion	Occupation	SES-High	SES-Avg	SES Career Mobility	Parent SES-Avg	Generational Mobility
Raw score	M	69	Hidalgo	Primary	small merchant/ waiter/ cashier (2); restaurant owner (3)	3	(2+3)/2 = 2.5	3-2.5 = 0.5	cook (2) + small merchant (2)/2 = 2	3-3 = 0
Code	M	3	Other	1	2 + 3	3	3	1	3	2
Ref.	5.1.1.2		5.1.1.4	5.1.1.3	5.1.1.5		5.1.1.6	5.1.1.7	5.1.1.8	5.1.1.10

In other words, the citizen of this example, Participant 1196, illustrates how malleable and dynamic the variable of socioeconomic status may be: first, historically, in comparison to the earlier generations as illustrated by his parents' status; second, diachronically, as a changing reality for himself throughout his lifespan; and third, synchronically, as a reflection of the dynamic present of the country in terms of opportunities for upward mobility of different strata of Mexican society. In linguistic terms, we expect this social mobility to be accompanied by some linguistic currency of positive value. To foreshadow the results of the study, this speaker indeed makes use of polite *leísmo* at the average rate of the population (15%) and contributes to the conclusion that one aspect of the social meaning of polite *leísmo* is precisely the social mobility projection tool.

5.1.2 Interlocutor Variables

Some interlocutor variables form part of the social and contextual makeup of the interactional context, as described in the Constants and the Design Variables subsections of Methodology. **Interlocutor characteristics** are considered important for the conditioning of such interactive phenomenon as polite *leísmo*. In this study, the interlocutor is by design a **male**, a native **Mexican** speaker from **central, metropolitan Mexico** (in character and physical presentation), and a character with some **social distance** from the speaker as a natural motivation for the use of *usted*, the formal 'you'. What is varied systematically and intentionally by design is the **power difference** between the speaker and the interlocutor character as part of interactional and relational context: an interlocutor with and without an authority over the speaker. The power difference is hypothesized to explain the value and function of polite *leísmo* as follows: appearing in hierarchical relationships, polite *leísmo* would be considered as having overt

prestige or stylistic power; whereas if it appears in equal, solidarity contexts, polite *leísmo* may mean covert prestige or even stigma.

5.2 Contextual Variables

The contextual variables are largely fixed in the design of the study and coded accordingly. It will be recalled that the same 12 contexts are used for both production and perception studies, meaning that all of the constants and by-design variables are the same across the two tasks:

interlocutor variables of sex, social distance, power difference with speaker, social domain, speech events, and verbs. Table 5.2.1 summarizes the contextual or pragmatic variables explored in the production and perception parts of this research.

Table 5.2.1

Pragmatic or contextual variables controlled by design (shaded) and not controlled

	Variable	Production (RQ1)	Perception (RQ2)
Contextual factors	Speech event (design)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer • negotiation • invitation • greeting/compliment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer • negotiation • invitation • greeting/compliment
	Social domain (design)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal • informal • traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal • informal • traditional
	Interlocutor power (design)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher vs. zero authority over participant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher vs. zero authority over participant
	(Ir)realis mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realis/irrealis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realis/irrealis

All of the pragmatic or contextual variables in this study, except for one, are included in the design of the role plays and the AJT situations, for the purpose of control and comparison. These variables define the interactive context and include interlocutor relationship factors, nature and purpose of the communicative event, and setting. Specifically, the twelve scenarios are designed to represent a range of day-to-day interactions among people with some social **distance**

(constant) that vary across four **speech events** (greeting, negotiation, offer, and invitation), hierarchical **power** differences (more powerful or power-equal interlocutor), and **social domains** (formal, informal, and traditional). The relational-transactional communicative function characterization explains the nature and purpose of interaction in general terms, but it is not considered an independent variable, because it is part of the definition of the more concrete speech events. The most relevant theoretical perspective for all of the contextual factors is the **Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis**, which focuses on the socially appropriate and expected contexts for mitigation as an indirectness strategy. These design variables are summarized in Table 5.2.2 and illustrated further one by one.

Table 5.2.2

Pragmatic variables that comprise the design of the production and perception tasks

Social Domain	Context (self+interlocutor)	Speech Event	Communicative Function*	Power/ Authority
Formal	#1 (student/employee +professor/boss)	greeting	relational	+P
	#2 (friend+friend's client)	offer	transactional	-P
	#3 (patient+doctor)	negotiation	transactional	+P
	#4 (citizen+senior fellow citizen)	invitation	relational	-P
Informal	#5 (neighbor+important neighbor)	greeting	relational	-P
	#6 (nephew/godson/son-in-law+uncle/godfather/father-in-law)	invitation	relational	+P
	#7 (client+distributor) ⁸	offer	transactional	+P
	#8 (brother-in-law/compadre +brother-in-law/compadre)	negotiation	transactional	-P
Traditional/ Ceremonial	#9 (citizen+mariachi leader)	greeting	relational	+P
	#10 (community member +older community member)	offer	relational	-P
	#11 (commoner+priest)	negotiation	transactional	+P
	#12 (parent+future compadre)	invitation	transactional	-P

*Note: Communicative function is not considered an independent variable, as it is part of the definition of the more concrete speech events

⁸ The context #7 (client+distributor) was originally meant to represent an informal social domain. However, after piloting, it was reclassified as a formal or institutional social domain, even though the most common treatment toward the interlocutor was in its majority the informal 'you.'

Each of the contextual variables is presented below along with its variants used for coding of the data. The coding scheme is accompanied by examples from the oral production corpus, as well as by the theoretical connection between each variant and the clitic choice. All data is accompanied by basic sociodemographic information of the speakers: participant number, age category (1=young, 2=middle age, 3=older), sex (male or female), and origin (Mexico City, Mexico State, and Other). The exact role play for contextual purposes is referenced by the number and the interlocutor, which can be consulted for further detail in Appendix.

5.2.1 Social Domain

Social domain is a variable included in the design of both the oral and the perceptual studies, and it refers to different social practices, relationships, and expectations of social behaviors from (i) the more informal, familiar domain to (ii) the more formal, institutional domain, and (iii) to what can be called a traditional or ceremonial domain. The **Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis** considers the relative prominence of solidarity and autonomy needs in each of these contexts and suggests higher need for face-saving indirectness in formal and traditional domains, typically characterized by unequal status or lack of rapport. Face-enhancing indirectness is expected in the informal contexts characterized by *confianza* and affiliative relationships. The function of polite *leísmo* is hypothesized to depend on its relative use among these contexts. For illustrative purposes, Table 5.2.1.1 includes greetings with a common verb *saludar* ‘greet’ across the different social domains, as part of various interactions with different illocutionary points, and representing the *le-lo* clitic variation across a range of the speakers’ sociodemographic profiles.

Table 5.2.1.1

Analysis and coding of the contextual variable social domain

Variable: Social Domain	Examples (participant; #role play)	Hypotheses
Formal: institutional settings (school, work office, client service, governmental office)	Context #1: Visiting a professor or employer at his office, to propose his nomination for a recognition (a) <i>Nomás vine a <u>saludarle</u></i> (1180.1F-MxState; #1-professor/boss) I just came to greet you (b) <i>Nada más quería <u>saludarlo</u></i> (1009.1F-CDMX; #1-professor/boss) I just wanted to greet you	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>More need</u> for indirectness: More face-saving/ mitigation politeness
Informal: home, the street, neighborhood	Context #5: Visiting a neighbor at his home to congratulate him on an important job just obtained (c) <i>vine a <u>saludarle</u> y a preguntarle cómo le ha ido</i> (1125.3F-Other; #5-neighbor) I came to <u>greet</u> you and to ask how you have been (d) <i>me da mucho gusto <u>saludarlo</u></i> (1119.3M-CDMX; #5-neighbor) it gives me much pleasure to <u>greet</u> you	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Less need</u> for indirectness: Less face-saving/ mitigation politeness and more face-enhancing /solidarity politeness
Traditional: ceremonial events (patriotic, religious, and life-cycle rituals, such as a funeral)	Context #9: Paying a compliment to a mariachi leader at the Independence Day festivity (e) <i>Pues me da mucho gusto <u>saludarle</u></i> (1213.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) Well, it gives me much pleasure to <u>greet</u> you (f) <i>Entonces aprovecho para <u>saludarlos</u> y felicitarlos</i> (1137.3F-Other; #9-mariachi) So I take the chance to <u>greet</u> you-PL and congratulate you-PL	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Some need</u> for indirectness: More face-saving/ mitigation and face-enhancing /solidarity politeness

5.2.2 Speech Event

The **speech event** design variable takes form of the set communicative purpose of each role play or Acceptability Judgment Task interactive context, by specifying what the speaker is to do with his or her words. The exact goals are classified into either relational or transactional (Placencia, 2004) and are expressed in four speech event types: expressives, commissives, directives, and commissive-directives. In three **expressive** speech events, the speaker is instructed to express

goodwill or well wishes to the interlocutor in the form of support or compliment – these interactions serve a relational function as the main objective of the interaction. The three **commissive** speech events are offers and promises that ask the speaker to commit to some future benefit for the interlocutor, which is in the speaker’s power and interest to provide. Because of and the existence of a concrete achievable outcome of the conversation, offers and promises are considered to be transactional. The **directive** speech events provide instruction to the speakers to negotiate a better outcome for themselves by exerting some influence on the interlocutor – these interactions are the most prototypically transactional because they revolve around an achievable benefit as the end goal. Finally, another relational set of interactions in this study are **commissive-directive** invitations: while they involve an influence over the speaker, this influence typically assumes mutual benefit to both parties and is therefore a solidarity, and a face-enhancing commitment more than an imposition (Bach & Harnish, 1979; Hernández, 2001). There are certainly numerous exceptions, contradictions, and finer subdivisions in the real-world richness of these and other speech events. This study simply intends to provide an overview of several common real-world interactional possibilities by delimiting them in the described way, and thus shed light on the polite *leísmo* phenomenon.

The most relevant **Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis** correlates the transactional function with need for mitigation of face threat, whereas the relational function, defined by solidarity building, suggests more face-enhancing politeness. Table 5.2.2.1 illustrates the four speech event types with a focus on their prototypical performative verbs or IFIDs indicating the illocutionary force of each interaction. Each speech event type is accompanied with examples illustrating the variation in the *le-lo* clitics, produced across the sociodemographic continuum.

Table 5.2.2.1

Analysis and coding of the contextual variable speech event

Variable: Speech Event	Examples (participant; #role play)	Hypotheses
Expressive: greeting/compliment (relational)	<p>(a) <i>le queremos de verdad felicitar mucho</i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) we want to truly <u>congratulate</u> you a lot</p> <p>(b) <i>de verdad lo felicito</i> (1005.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) truly I <u>congratulate</u> you</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>No need</u> for mitigation politeness: No inherent face threat, rather a need for face-enhancement politeness
Commissive: offer/promise (transactional)	<p>(c) <i>Al contrario, le acompaño hasta la puerta</i> (1176.3F-CDMX; #2-friend's client) To the contrary, let me <u>accompany</u> you to the door</p> <p>(d) <i>estamos aquí para ayudarle... para apoyarlo</i> (1015.2F-CDMX; #10-widower) we are here to <u>help</u> you... to <u>support</u> you</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Possible need</u> for mitigation of own face threat, but no face threat to the interlocutor
Directive: negotiation (transactional)	<p>(e) <i>me gustaría pues hacerle cambiar de opinión</i> (1022.2M-CDMX; #11-priest) I would like to, well, <u>make</u> you change your mind</p> <p>(f) <i>pero quiero convencerlo para que nos apoye</i> (1148.2M-CDMX; #11-priest) but I want to <u>convince</u> you to support us</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Most need</u> for indirectness as mitigation politeness: face threat to both self and interlocutor
Commissive-directive: invitation (relational)	<p>(g) <i>Buenas tardes. Oiga: ¿le puedo invitar?</i> (1164.2F-Other; #4-senior citizen) Good afternoon. Excuse me, can I <u>invite</u> you?</p> <p>(h) <i>Me gustaría recibirlo</i> (1187.2M-CDMX; #4-senior citizen) I would like to <u>receive</u> you</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Possible need</u> for both mitigation of face threat to interlocutor and face-enhancement politeness

5.2.3 Power

Interlocutor power, or **authority**, is another contextual variable whereby the interlocutor and the corresponding social relationship form part of the interactional context. This study considers two of the most common hierarchical variants: non-hierarchical social equality (-P) and subordinate hierarchy, where the interlocutor has some authority over the speaker (+P). It is hypothesized, based on the **Indirectness-Politeness perspective**, that speaking to someone with higher authority creates potential for both face-saving and face-enhancing strategies due to the

vulnerability involved in unequal relationships and risk of losing face, especially when threatening the face of someone socially important. In some sense, these are relationships in which the speaker's good face depends on the good face of the interlocutor. Indirectness, then, is more likely in the hierarchical relationship, with either a mitigation or a face-enhancing function, at the same time available as a face-enhancing solidarity tool in socially equal interactions.

Table 5.2.3.1

Analysis and coding of the contextual variable interlocutor power/authority

Variable: Interlocutor Power/Authority	Examples (participant; #role play)	Hypotheses
No authority over speaker (-P)	<p>(a) <i>Pues me gustaría <u>invitarle</u> un café o algo, ¿verdad?</i> (1190.3M-CDMX; #5-neighbor) Well, I would like to invite you a coffee or something, right?</p> <p>(b) <i>Y allá lo <u>esperamos</u>. Por favor, vecino</i> (1079.3F-CDMX; #5-neighbor) And we <u>expect</u> you there. Please, neighbor</p>	<p>Indirectness-Politeness:</p> <p><u>Less need for mitigation:</u> Equal-power relationships are a source of lower face threat, but opportunity for face-enhancing solidarity</p>
Authority over speaker (+P)	<p>(c) <i>Yo le <u>invito</u> [...] a que venga aquí al albergue donde yo estoy colaborando</i> (1101.3M-CDMX; #6-uncle/godfather/father-in-law) I <u>invite</u> you [...] to come here to the shelter where I am collaborating</p> <p>(d) <i>Si se puede dar una vuelta, lo <u>recibimos</u> con mucho gusto</i> (1041.1M-CDMX; #6-uncle/godfather/father-in-law) If you can stop by, we will <u>receive</u> you with much pleasure</p>	<p>Indirectness-Politeness:</p> <p><u>More need for mitigation:</u> Hierarchical relationships are a source of higher face threat, requiring mitigation, but also a motivation for active face-enhancement</p>

Table 5.2.3.1 serves as an illustration of this difference by focusing on a similarly relational interaction with the illocutionary purpose of invitation in the informal social domain, but with interlocutors characterized by different hierarchical relationships. In the examples presented, it is specifically the familial and age hierarchy that represent authority, as one interlocutor is the speaker's neighbor with no familial hierarchy or specified age difference (-P) and another is the speaker's extended family member who is necessarily older and with parental power in the family, such as an uncle, a godfather, or a father-in-law (+P). Other ways to operationalize

authority in this study include a greater degree of competence and reputation in the area of concern: a professor/employer, a doctor, a mariachi leader, a local distributor, a priest, and an honorable member of the community considered for a *compadre*, i.e. co-parent role. As with all examples, care is taken to illustrate the *le-lo* variation in the direct-object clitic references to the formal ‘you’ and provide basic sociodemographic profile of the speakers.

5.2.4 (Ir)realis Mood

While most pragmatic or contextual variables in this research (see Table 5.2.1) are controlled by design, the **(ir)realis** mood of the action expressed by the verb is added to the analysis as a dynamic variable in both the production and perception studies.

The realis/irrealis mood is a hybrid morphosyntactic-pragmatic variable because the verb tense encoded in the morphosyntax calls for additional inference of the meaning, specifically the hypotheticity. There have been different definitions and classifications of the realis/irrealis mood with the general common agreement that what is said may be different from what is meant literally. For example, (ir)realis semantics distinguishes between actual or hypothetical events and how they are expressed. Whether an action is expressed as actually occurring or as hypothetical correlates with verb tense and mood, but also with pragmatics and linguistic expression of illocutionary force. For example, indicative mood and present and past tense morphology typically are used to signal actual events that already took or are taking place, while future and conditional morphology, along with conditional clauses and counterfactual information indicate hypotheticity (Exter, 2012). Therefore, the variable (ir)realis mood is one way to code the actuality vs. hypotheticity of the action expressed by the verb (Table 5.2.4.1).

Table 5.2.4.1

Analysis and coding of the interface syntactic-pragmatic variable (ir)realis mood

Variable: (Ir)realis Mood	Examples (participant; #role play)	Hypotheses
Realis	<p>(a) <i>Yo le agendo la cita y me dio mucho gusto <u>atenderle</u></i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #2-client) I will schedule you an appointment and it gave me pleasure to <u>assist</u> you</p> <p>(b) <i>Aquí lo estamos <u>acompañando</u> pues todas las personas que estamos aquí</i> (1121.3F-CDMX; #10-widower) Here we are <u>accompanying</u> you, well, all of the people who are here</p> <p>(c) <i>Entonces, discúlpeme que lo <u>detenga</u>, que lo esté yo <u>entreteniendo</u>, pero...</i> (1196.3M-Other; #11-priest) So forgive me for <u>holding you up</u>, for <u>keeping</u> you, but...</p>	<p>Indirectness-Politeness: Direct</p> <p>Relative Transitivity: More transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Immediate</p>
Irrealis	<p>(d) <i>Si tiene que llevar algunas cosas [...] yo le <u>ayudo</u> en lo que yo pueda</i> (1206.2F-CDMX; #6-uncle) If you have to carry some things [...], I'll <u>help</u> you however I can</p> <p>(e) <i>Compadre, deje lo voy a <u>entretener</u> un ratito</i> (1180.1F-MxState; #8-extended family) <i>Compadre</i>, let me <u>hold you up</u> briefly</p> <p>(f) <i>Dígame ¿en qué lo pudeo <u>atender</u>?</i> (1014.1F-CDMX; #2-client) Tell me, how can I <u>assist</u> you?</p> <p>(g) <i>¿Qué le parece si lo <u>convenzo</u> de que deje pendientes las cosas que tiene...?</i> (1140.1M-Other; #8-extended family) What do you think if I <u>convince</u> you of leaving your pending commitments...?</p>	<p>Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect</p> <p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Distant</p>

In this study, the most prototypical performative verbs in directly phrased speech acts are expected to state the action of invitation, request, compliment, and offer in the realis mood: present-tense indicative (e.g. I invite you; I hold you up; I admire you; I help you). However, not all transitive you-directed verbs in the study are performative, and many speech acts are not expressed directly. The actual use of verbal morphology shows much more creativity on the part

of communicators, as the variable tense expression shows in the Table 5.2.4.1. Coding of this variable, then, requires reading in context and answering the question: Is the action expressed by the verb a fact or not?

Actions that are interpreted as really happening are expressed with infinitives governed by the matrix clause in past tense (a), present continuous constructions (b), and even present subjunctive triggered by an expressive main verb (c). Specifically, the action of assisting is viewed as a finalized action and fact in “it gave me pleasure to assist you” (a). In (b), “we are accompanying you” states another ongoing and evident fact by commenting on the current state of things. By virtue of apologizing for holding someone up, as in (c), the speaker acknowledges a fact that deserves an evaluative comment.

On the contrary, the present indicative may actually follow the if-clause (d) or form part of a question (f) or both (g) to convey the non-actual, potential, unreal nature of the event expressed through the verb, similar to the way a future tense expression does (e). Conditioning the action of helping upon the hypothetical clause “if you have to carry things” (c) means that the action of helping is not a fact, at least at the moment of the utterance. Asking for permission to carry out an action of holding someone (e) up is not necessarily synchronous with the actual “holding up”, although it may depend on the context. The question in (f) about what one can help with assumes that the speaker is not yet helping, although arguably it may form part of helping. Finally, the very indirect request in (g) asks for an opinion in case the convincing were successful, which is counterfactual and potential at best at the moment of the utterance. The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* are the **Indirectness-Politeness** perspective, the **Relative Transitivity hypothesis**, and the **Iconic Distance hypothesis**. Hypotheticity here counts as an indirectness strategy, violating the prototypical

transitivity requirement of an actual action affecting the direct object, and placing iconic distance between real and imaginary events. While the controlled contextual factors defined above are independent of syntax (i.e. social domain, speech event, and power differential), the (ir)realis mood indeed is a hybrid syntactic-pragmatic variable and is, therefore, affected by these additional theories of syntax-pragmatics interface.

Overall, the pragmatic variables included in the design of this research serve to contrapose hierarchical and affiliative types of interactive contexts, typically defined by different face needs and calling for different politeness strategies. The (ir)realis mood variable that is not controlled but accounted for as a syntax-pragmatics interface variable appears as a potential resource to syntactically mark indirectness and mitigation. In order to understand the functions of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, it is important to explore its use along these contextual factors.

The explored theoretical connections serve to hypothesize that if polite *leísmo* is used to express face-enhancing politeness, it is likely to appear within informal social domain, relational speech events of greeting and offer, and with socially equal interlocutors sharing a relationship of *confianza* ‘trust’. On the contrary, if polite *leísmo* is a mitigation device in face-threatening situations, then it is expected in more formal social domains, in directive speech events of negotiations, and with interlocutors who have some authority over the speaker. One way to interpret politeness is the realis or irrealis mood of expressing and referencing the reality of the action affecting the interlocutor – the former best suited to express positive politeness, while the latter, negative politeness.

5.3 Linguistic Variables

Linguistic variables are a subset of the variables considered in this study regarding the variable production and perception of polite *leísmo*. Out of the total of twenty factors analyzed in this research, nine are linguistic: subject, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, telicity, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, argument structure, verb morphology, and tense expression (Table 5.3.1).

Table 5.3.1

Linguistic factors and their levels considered in production and perception studies

	Variable	Production (Role Plays)	Perception (AJT)
Linguistic factors	Telicity of verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telic vs. atelic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telic vs. atelic
	Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I • we • he/she • they • impersonal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Object number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • singular • pluralized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Polarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negated • non-negated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negated • non-negated
	Verb tense/mood morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present indicative • future/conditional indicative • past indicative/subjunctive • non-past subjunctive • nonfinite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finite • non-finite
	Tense expression (temporal reference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present • future • conditional • past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present • non-present
	Syntactic structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unmitigated • interrogative • if-conditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigated vs. unmitigated declarative
	Argument structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noun • Clause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
	Morphosyntactic clitic position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-auxiliary/modal • pre-verbal • post-verbal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-verbal vs. post-verbal

The **linguistic** variables analyzed in the role-play and AJT data include a range of semantic, structural, and morphosyntactic variables, based on the hypotheses found in previous literature as well as in the previous pilot results and observations. **Semantic** variables include the verb and verb telicity. **Syntactic, or structural,** variables refer to the organization and elements of the sentence and include subject of the target verb, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, and argument structure. **Morphological** variables focus on the expression and organization of the smallest meaning particles and include clitic position with respect to the verb, verb morphology, and tense expression or temporal reference more generally.

Differences between the production and perception corpus include the number of variables available for analysis and their coding levels. Particularly, the linguistic variables measured in the perception study are more limited than in the production study precisely due to the streamlined design of the linguistic forms presented in the AJT. One additional by-design variable included in the perception study is the clitic position that was intentionally manipulated and balanced. The same linguistic variable cannot be controlled in spontaneous speech and is, therefore, treated as dynamic in the oral production study, and in fact showing even more levels.

The main theoretical connections and hypotheses behind these variables are those that equate variable syntax with variable meaning: the Relative Transitivity hypothesis, Saliency hypothesis, Iconic Distance hypothesis, and Indirectness as Politeness perspective. Each of these theoretical perspectives are defined in the Morphosyntactic Perspectives section and are now reviewed and illustrated with concrete examples from the role-play oral data.

Each of the linguistic variables is presented below along with its variants used for coding of the data. The coding scheme is accompanied by examples from the oral production corpus, as well as by hypotheses behind the potential relationship of each variant with the direct object

clitic as a politeness marker. All data is accompanied by brief sociodemographic information of the speakers: participant number, age category (1=young, 2=middle age, 3=older), sex (male or female), and origin (Mexico City, Mexico State, and Other). The exact role play for contextual purposes is referenced by the number and the interlocutor, which can be consulted for further detail in Appendix.

5.3.1 Semantic Variables

Table 5.3.1.1 summarizes verbal semantic categories considered in this study. Most verbs included in the design are dynamic, agentive, and telic as the configuration that is expected to invoke politeness strategies (see the Morphosyntactic Perspectives section and the Constants subsection of Methodology). However, to test this and other hypotheses proposed, and to give a full account of verbs used spontaneously in the study following the accountability principle (Labov, 1972), it is important to consider their behavior in the comparison with stative, non-agentive, and atelic verbs as well. For this reason, the oral and perceptual data are coded for telicity as the most variable factor, while dynamicity and agentivity remain predominant qualities of all verbs.

The hypotheses most relevant to verb semantics are the Relative Transitivity hypothesis and the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis. The **Relative Transitivity hypothesis** states that a prototypically transitive construction involves dynamic, agentive, and telic verbs. The connection between transitivity and politeness, then, would depend on the illocutionary force of the verb. It can be expected that the actions that express some benefit to the interlocutor as a direct object (i.e. face-enhancing) are most polite as prototypically transitive verbs, because that is how they express full, active effect. On the contrary, actions that express some sort of

imposition are more face threatening, which is their prototypical format, and could use mitigation of that effect through stative, non-agentive, and atelic verbs (i.e. mitigation politeness). Relatedly, the **Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis** is taken to consider stative, non-agentive, and atelic verb semantics as potential mitigation strategies.

Table 5.3.1.1

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable verb semantics

Variable: Verb Semantics	Variants	Examples (participant; #role play)	Hypotheses
Dynamicity	Stative	(a) <i>Qué bueno que le veo</i> (1140.1M-Other; #5-neighbor) How good to <u>see/encounter</u> you (b) <i>Qué bueno que lo veo</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #4-fellow citizen) How good to <u>see/encounter</u> you	Relative Transitivity: <u>Low transitivity</u> : subjects are never agents Indirectness-Politeness: <u>No need</u> for mitigation due to unaffectedness of the direct object
	Dynamic	(c) <i>Le puedo atender un poquito</i> (1010.1F-MxSt; #2-client) I can <u>assist</u> you a bit (d) <i>Yo lo puedo atender sin ningún problema</i> (1006.2F-CDMX; #2-client) I can <u>assist</u> you without any problem (e) <i>Paso a verlo para darle más detalles</i> (1026.1M-MxSt) I'll come to see you to give you more details	Relative Transitivity: <u>High transitivity</u> : subjects are intentional and volitional agents, which affect the object Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Possible need for mitigation</u> due to dynamic affect on the object
Agentivity (of dynamic verbs only)	Agentive	(f) <i>Paso a verlo para darle más detalles</i> (1026.1M-MxSt) I'll come to see you to give you more details (g) <i>Pues no le entretengo más</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #11-priest) Well, I won't <u>distract</u> you anymore (h) <i>No lo entretengo mucho tiempo</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #11-priest) I won't <u>distract</u> you for long	Relative Transitivity: <u>High transitivity</u> : subjects are intentional and volitional, actively affecting the object Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Possible need for mitigation</u> due to intentional and volitional affect on the object
	Non-agentive	(i) <i>Qué bueno que lo encuentro</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #11-priest) How good to <u>find</u> you	Relative Transitivity: <u>Low transitivity</u> : subjects are not intentional or not volitional,

		<p>(j) <i>¡Compadre! qué tal, qué bueno que lo veo</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #8-busy relative) Compadre, how are you, how good that I <u>see/encounter</u> you</p> <p>(k) <i>Reciba una felicitación por parte de la gente que le aprecia y le quiere</i> (1140.1M-Other; #5-neighbor) Receive congratulations on behalf of the people who <u>appreciate</u> you and <u>love</u> you</p>	<p>often acting as experiencers who are not affecting the object</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Little or no need for mitigation</u> due to lack of agentivity of dynamic actions</p>
Telicity	Telic	<p>(l) <i>El año pasado lo vi por ahí</i> (1026.1M-MxSt; #4-fellow citizen) Last year I <u>saw/encountered</u> you there</p> <p>(m) <i>Y si gusta lo acompaño a algún teléfono o donde usted tenga que hacer su trámite</i> (1108.3F-CDMX; #2-client) If you'd like, I'll <u>accompany</u> you to a telephone post or wherever you need to take care of your errand</p> <p>(n) <i>Habrà otra ocasión para visitarle</i> (1040.1M-Other; #5-neighbor) There will be another chance to <u>visit</u> you</p> <p>(o) <i>OK. Entons lo paso a buscar a su trabajo</i> (1052.2M-MxSt; #8-busy relative) OK, then I will <u>go get</u> you at work</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: <u>Most transitive</u>: having an end refers to a more full effect on the object</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Possible need for mitigation</u> due to a strong effect on the object: either mitigation or face-enhancement indirectness, depending on the action and the effect</p>
	Atelic	<p>(p) <i>Siempre lo veo aquí</i> (1180.2F-MxSt; #4-fellow citizen) I always <u>see</u> you here</p> <p>(q) <i>Me gustaría acompañarlo como en este proceso de duelo</i> (1140.1M-Other; #10-widower) I'd like to <u>accompany</u> you so-to-say in this process of grieving</p> <p>(r) <i>Oiga, tío, lo andaba buscando</i> (1178.2M-Other; #12-compadre) Hey there, uncle, I've been <u>looking for</u> you</p> <p>(s) <i>Reciba una felicitación por parte de la gente que le aprecia y le quiere</i> (1140.1M-Other; #5-neighbor) Receive congratulations on behalf of those who <u>appreciate</u> you and <u>love</u> you</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: <u>Less transitive</u>: incomplete effect on the direct object</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: <u>Little or no need for mitigation</u> due to incompleteness of action, but room for face-enhancement politeness depending on the action and the effect</p>

Some verbs admit different uses along these semantic dimensions, requiring careful consideration. For example, the verb *ver* ‘to see’ can be **stative** when synonymous with perceiving or unintentional encountering (a-b) or it can be **dynamic** (e) when synonymous with intentionally visiting someone, similar to the verb ‘to visit.’ The dynamic uses of *ver* ‘to see’ can further be of **high agentivity** (f) or **low-to-no agentivity** (j), depending on whether both **intention** and **volition** move the subject to carry out the action. Likewise, in spite of its typically **atelic** use (p), it can sometimes be time-bound (**telic**) in the same sense that noticing is, as in (l). To illustrate the intrapersonal clitic variation with respect to the agentivity and telicity, the examples (f-j) and (l) are taken from one and the same speaker, a young man from Mexico State. To summarize, the verb *ver* ‘to see’ is observed to have multiple stative and dynamic interpretations: perceive, notice, encounter, observe, have/be, visit. This largely aligns with the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* of the Spanish Royal Academy RAE (<https://dle.rae.es/ver>, own translation), where the verb, just in its transitive form, has 15 entries:

Ver ‘see’ =

- perceive something with eyes, with the help of daylight
- perceive something with intelligence, understand
- confirm something by way of some sense
- observe, consider something
- examine something, recognize it with care and attention
- examine or recognize someone
- meet with someone or to be with them
- pay attention to or take care of execution of something

- realize something
- consider, warn, or reflect
- conjecture or deduce a fact of the future by some indication
- consider that something or someone is a certain way
- in a dissertation or a text, to tell, analyze, or consider something
- said of a place: be a scene of an event
- said of a judge: attend an oral discussion of a disagreement or cause to be sentenced

The observed uses of *ver* in the oral corpus data that are not among RAE's definitions are the meanings of 'have/be' and 'visit' (1-2):

(1) *Ver* = 'have/be' (**stative**):

porque lo queremos ver ahí

because we want to see/have you there (1008.1M-MxSt; #11-priest)

(2) *Ver* = 'visit' (**dynamic**):

Ya vengo a verlo, a molestarlo, doctor

I come to see/visit you, to bother you, doctor (1016.2F-CDMX; #3-doctor)

The verb *acompañar* 'to accompany' also presents variations in telicity, which is most clearly observed in two of its uses corresponding to two different scenarios: #2 – accompanying a client to a specific endpoint in place and time (m); and #10 – accompanying a widower in his grieving for an indefinite period of time and synonymously with supporting and being there (q).

The verb *buscar* 'to look for' has been used in various role plays without prompting with the following two meanings, one telic and one atelic (3-4):

(3) **Buscar** = to look for or need someone (**atelic**):

Oiga, tío, lo andaba buscando.

Hey there, uncle, I've been looking for you (1178.2M-Other; #12-compadre)

Pus andamos aquí buscándolo porque usted es más difícil verlo que al presidente municipal.

Well, here we have been looking for you, because you are more difficult to see than the mayor. (1222.2F-Other; #11-priest)

(4) **Buscar** = to visit or go get someone (**telic**):

OK. Entons lo paso a buscar a su trabajo

OK, then I will go get you at work (1052.2M-MxSt; #8-busy relative)

Sí sí sí yo igual he querido buscarlo

Yes, yes, yes, I've also been wanting to visit you (1035.1M-Other; #5-neighbor)

While it is true that, just like many words, the included verbs may vary in meaning, structure, and use, this variation is also contextually delimited by design. The choice of the verbs is theoretically and practically motivated to illocutionarily indicate four types of speech events: negotiation, greeting, invitation, and offer. The illustrative examples serve as a coding scheme and guidance for analysis and interpretation of these verbs and, by comparison, of other verbs produced spontaneously in the role-play task.

5.3.2 Syntactic, Structural Variables

Syntactic, or structural, variables refer to the organization and elements of the sentence and include subject of the target verb, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, and argument structure.

Subject. The variable subject refers to the person and number of the grammatical subject of the clitic-bearing verb as correlate of the deictic center (see the Morphosyntactic Perspectives section). This variable is coded only in the oral corpus, because the AJT experiment is intentionally designed with the first-person singular speaker-subject in mind, not leaving much room for variation. The main hypotheses behind this variable are the Relative Transitivity hypothesis and Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis. The **Relative Transitivity hypothesis** suggests that verbs are most transitive and agentive (i.e. have the greatest intentional and full effect on the object) when the subject argument is the 1st person singular, gradually diminishing in effect toward the 3rd person plural (Hopper & Thompson, 1980). The **Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis** suggests that the deictic center may be shifted away from the speaker as a mitigation strategy of attenuating the force of the speech act (Haverkate, 1992). With both hypotheses, a choice of *le* over *lo* as a direct-object ‘you’ would mean mitigation of an effect of the transitive verb over the speaker.

The following Table 5.3.2.1 gives examples of data coded along 5 subject variants: 1st-singular *I*, 1st-plural *we*, 3rd-singular *he/she*, 3rd-plural *they*, and impersonal constructions without an explicit or concrete subject. Subject to the availability of data, an example of each is given with *lo* and with *le* as direct object clitics for *you*.

Table 5.3.2.1

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable subject

Variable: Subject	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
I	<p>(a) <i>Nomás vine a <u>saludarle</u></i> (1180.1F-MxState; #1-prof/boss) I just came to <u>greet</u> you</p> <p>(b) <i>Es que lo quería <u>felicitar</u> porque me gustó mucho</i> (1180.1F-MxState; #9-mariachi) I just wanted to <u>congratulate</u> you because I liked it a lot</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Most transitive, prototypical subject-agent</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Most direct, taking responsibility on self, co-present with interlocutor</p>
We	<p>(c) <i>Usted díganos en qué podemos <u>ayudarle</u> y aquí estamos.</i> (1015.2F-CDMX; #10-widower) You tell us how we can <u>help</u> you and we are here for you</p> <p>(d) <i>Y esperamos <u>recibirlo</u> pronto.</i> (1159.2F-MxState; #6-extended family) And we hope to <u>receive</u> you soon</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive than 1st person singular due to plurality, but more transitive than 3rd person</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: More indirect than 1st person singular, dividing personal responsibility for action among many</p>
He/she	<p>(e) <i>Si él va a estar pronto aquí y pueda <u>seguirle atendiendo</u></i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #2-client) If he is going to be here soon and can continue <u>assisting</u> you</p> <p>(f) <i>Ella ya lo quería <u>saludar</u></i> (1180.1F-MxState; #4-fellow citizen) She has been wanting to <u>greet</u> you</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive than 1st person, but more transitive than 3rd person plural</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: More indirect than 1st person, shifting the responsibility for action to someone not present</p>
They and implied they	<p>(g) <i>Grupo de jóvenes pueden <u>ayudarle</u></i> (1153.2F-CDMX; #11-priest) A group of youth can <u>help</u> you</p> <p>(h) <i>Mi familia lo <u>aprecia</u> mucho</i> (1010.1F-MxState; #10-widower) My family <u>appreciates</u> you a lot</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive than 1st person and 3rd person singular, due to plurality and division of responsibility for action</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: More indirect than 1st or 3rd-sg person, shifting the responsibility for action and dividing it among many not present</p>
Impersonal	<p>(i) <i>Cuando no haya quién <u>le ayude</u>...</i> (1153.2F-CDMX; #11-priest) When there isn't anyone to <u>help</u> you</p> <p>(j) <i>Porque usted es más difícil <u>verlo</u> que al presidente municipal</i> (1222.2F-Other; #11-priest)</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Least transitive due to the focus taken away from a single specific responsible person</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness:</p>

	Because you are more difficult to get to <u>see</u> than the mayor	Most indirect, removing responsibility from any specific person
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Object Number. Object number refers to the potential pluralization of the 2nd person reference as deictic target; that is addressing the interlocutor with a singular or a plural ‘you’ to include some nonpresent but associated persons, such as the interlocutor’s family. Similarly to subject, this variable is inspired by creative variation encountered in oral production but does not form part of the AJT formulation of scenarios, in which the object is always singular. The main motivating hypotheses are similarly the Relative Transitivity hypothesis and the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis, where pluralization of the direct object in a way disperses and lightens the effect of the transitive verb (**Relative Transitivity hypothesis**) and spreads the deictic target to more than just the addressee in a way to mitigate the force of the speech act (**Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis**). For ease of comparison and visualization or variation, all of the examples in Table 5.3.2.2 are taken from the same role play, in which each speaker expresses greetings and congratulations to a mariachi leader, a traditional music band, right after their performance at an Independence Day festivity.

Table 5.3.2.2

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable object number

Variable: Object Number	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Singular	<p>(a) <i>Le queremos de verdad <u>felicitar</u> muchísimo</i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) We truly want to heartily <u>congratulate</u> you-SG</p> <p>(b) <i>Me gustaría <u>felicitarlo</u> por su grupo</i> (1182.1M-MxSt; #9-mariachi) I would like to <u>congratulate</u> you-SG on your group</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Most transitive due to the focus of the effect of the action onto one person</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness:</p>

		Most direct, as corresponds to the reality of a single present interlocutor
Plural	<p>(c) <i>Pues los felicito mucho</i> (1019.2F-CDMX; #9-mariachi) Well, I heartily <u>congratulate</u> you-PL</p> <p>(d) <i>Y pues, les felicito de verdad por ese grupo tan hermoso</i> (1216.2F-CDMX; #9-mariachi) And so, I <u>congratulate</u> you-PL truly for such a beautiful group</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Least transitive due to dispersion of the effect of the action onto multiple objects</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Least direct, as not corresponding to the reality of a single present interlocutor</p>

Polarity. The polarity variable marks the difference between the action that is expressed as happening and negating the action. Syntactically, the action expressed by the focus verb may be negated by attaching a negating particle directly to the verb, to the clause, or to the sentence. In Spanish, negation may appear in declarative as well as in interrogative sentences that express suggestions, ask clarification questions, and reproach. This variable is considered and coded equally in both production and perception data.

Table 5.3.2.3

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable polarity

Variable: Polarity	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Non-negated	<p>(a) <i>Me gustaría saber si usted, pues, estaría de acuerdo en ponerle a cargo de algunas -eh- cuestiones</i> (1026.1M-MxState; #8-extended family) I would like to know if you, well, would be okay with <u>putting you in charge</u> of some -um- matters</p> <p>(b) <i>Disculpe que lo interrumpa</i> (1026.1M-MxState; #3-doctor) I am sorry to <u>interrupt</u> you</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: Direct
Negated	<p>(c) <i>Pues no le entretengo más</i> (1026.1M-MxState; #11-priest) Well, I won't <u>keep</u> you longer</p> <p>(d) <i>No lo entretengo mucho tiempo</i> (1026.1M-MxState; #11-priest) I won't <u>keep</u> you very long</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect

The main motivating hypothesis behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* is the **Indirectness-Politeness** perspective. Negation is a common mitigation mechanism in Spanish, especially when it comes to face-threatening speech acts that impose on the interlocutor, such as making requests, questions, and even offers and invitations. The examples a-d in Table 5.3.2.3 illustrate intrapersonal clitic variation, produced by the same young man from Mexico State in three different negotiation scenarios. The highlighted verbs, used variably with *lo* and *le*, share the illocutionary force of imposition: making someone responsible (a), interrupting (b), and holding someone up (c-d).

Syntactic Structure. Three sentence structures are identified and coded in the role-play production study: (if-)conditional, interrogative, and the remaining so-called unmitigated declaratives (Table 5.3.2.4). Conditional and interrogative structures are identified as typical hedging and mitigating devices used in face-threatening speech acts, and are therefore coded to test the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis (cf. Flores-Ferrán, 2010; Wigglesworth & Yates, 2007). All other sentences that do not show interrogative or conditional elements are grouped into the majority class of unmitigated syntactic structures (see examples a-b). This decision is similarly reflected in binary coding for mitigated and unmitigated syntactic structures of the perception AJT data, due to low variation in the gauged speech samples of the questionnaire. The interrogative structures are typical stand-alone and embedded questions, as in the examples c-e. Conditional structure mostly refers to the if-clauses, specifically when the focus verbs are found inside the if-clause, presenting a condition for another event to happen as expressed in the main clause. This category also includes the if-structures “I’m not sure if” and “I would like it if” as conditioning elements of the following focus verb (see examples f-i).

The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* is the **Indirectness-Politeness** perspective. The conditional and interrogative sentence structures are viewed as indirect mechanisms, in opposition to the other structure deemed as more direct. Polite *leísmo* is, then, viewed as a possible mitigator of direct, unmitigated expressions characterized by imposition, while at the same time highlighting the benefit expressed by any directly-phrased speech act. In syntactically mitigated structures, polite *leísmo* is likely reinforcing the same reason and function as the structural choice by association, which is typically hedging and mitigation.

Table 5.3.2.4

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable syntactic structure

Variable: Syntactic Structure	Perception Data Coding	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Unmitigated declarative	Unmitigated declarative	<p>(a) <i>Así pues, le vengo a <u>consultar</u></i> (1053.3M-CDMX; #3-doctor) So then, I come to <u>consult</u> you</p> <p>(b) <i>Con gusto lo puedo <u>ayudar</u> y <u>apoyar</u></i> (1222.2F-Other; #2-client) With pleasure I can <u>help</u> and <u>support</u> you</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: Direct
Interrogative	Mitigated	<p>(c) <i>¿En qué le puedo <u>ayudar</u>?</i> (1154.3M-CDMX; #2-client) What can I <u>help</u> you with?</p> <p>(d) <i>¿En qué lo puedo <u>atender</u>?</i> (1016.1M-CDMX; #2-client) What can I <u>assist</u> you with?</p> <p>(e) <i>Deme unos minutos más y yo veo de qué forma lo puedo <u>atender</u> de la mejor forma</i> (1161.2M-CDMX; #2-client) Give me a few more minutes and I'll see how I can <u>assist</u> you in the best way</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect
Conditional		<p>If-clauses</p> <p>(f) <i>Si le puedo <u>ayudar</u>, con mucho gusto lo haré</i> (1108.3F-CDMX; #2-client) If I can help you, I will do it with pleasure</p>	Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect

		<p>(g) <i>Pero si de esa manera lo puedo <u>convencer</u>, pues usted dígame</i> (1027.1F-MxState; #11-priest) But if this is how I can <u>convince</u> you, well you tell me</p> <p>Other conditional structures</p> <p>(h) <i>No sé si podría <u>llamarle</u> la próxima semana</i> (1113.1F-Other; #3-doctor) I'm not sure if I could call you next week</p> <p>(i) <i>A mí me gustaría muchísimo que pudiéramos <u>nominarlo</u></i> (1085.1F-CDMX; #1-professor) I would like it very much if we could nominate you</p>	
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Argument Structure. Many transitive verbs may take a noun phrase (NP) or a clause as a direct object. Additionally, transitive verbs may also be used to introduce a clausal adjunct of time, place, manner, cause, and others. While in all cases the direct object is the formal ‘you’ expressed as a *le* or *lo* clitic, many role-play participants are observed to expand their sentences by using the illocutionary verb to introduce clausal adjuncts and making the interlocutor either a subject or an object of an additional subordinate clause (see Table 5.3.2.5). For example, small clauses are a typical syntactic structure associated with potentially seeming *leísmo*, where the action of the transitive verb is exerted over the object who is at the same time the subject of another action, as in *le oí cantar* ‘I heard him/you-formal sing’ (*Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas*, 2005). The reason for treating such constructions as different from simple transitive sentences with an NP direct object is that the transitivity of the main verb is decreased by the clause object, making the verb more ditransitive (see examples c-d). This is the reason Parodi et al. (2012) characterize such instances as seeming *leísmo*, basing this decision on Lapesa’s (2000) observation that the dative is commonly used when the subordinate verb has a direct object. For similar reasons, other syntactic adjuncts that explain or extend the effect of the main illocutionary verb on other events are considered in this study as potentially affecting the

transitivity of the verb and are coded accordingly (see examples e-f). Non-clausal adjuncts are not viewed as similarly detrimental to transitivity and therefore are not taken into account in the analysis. Perception AJT data does not include enough information to ensure accurate account of this variable, due to incomplete sentences presented in the design, which is why only oral data is coded for it.

Table 5.3.2.5

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable argument structure

Variable: Argument structure	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Noun phrase (NP)	<p>(a) <i>Permítame <u>interrumpirlo</u> un momento</i> (1110.3M-CDMX; #3-doctor) Allow me to <u>interrupt</u> you a second</p> <p>(b) <i>Le <u>llamo</u> esta misma tarde</i> (1146.3F-CDMX; #3-doctor) I will call you this very afternoon</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: More transitive</p> <p>Politeness-Indirectness: Direct</p>
Clause	<p>Direct object as subject of a small clause:</p> <p>(c) <i>Si gusta, <u>lo</u> puedo <u>acompañar a que vea las instalaciones</u></i> (1006.2F-CDMX; #2-client) If you like, I can <u>accompany</u> you <u>to see the facilities</u></p> <p>(d) <i>Y <u>le</u> invito <u>a que venga</u></i> (1142.1F-Other; #6-uncle) And I <u>invite</u> you <u>to come</u></p> <p>Clausal adjuncts, complementing the direct object:</p> <p>(e) <i>Me gustaría <u>invitarle</u> a una reunión [...] <u>para que participara</u></i> (1116.3F-CDMX; #4-older citizen) I would like to <u>invite</u> you to an event [...] so that <u>you may participate</u></p> <p>(f) <i>Lo quiero <u>entretener para ver qué podemos hacer aquí en los quince años</u></i> (1199.2M-CDMX; #8-extended family) I want to <u>hold you up to see what we can do</u> here for the Quinceañera</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive</p> <p>Politeness-Indirectness: Indirect</p>

The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* are the Relative Transitivity hypothesis and Indirectness-Politeness perspective. According to the **Relative**

Transitivity hypothesis, verbs are most transitive when their action affects a single participant, expressed by a noun. Expressing the action receiver as a subject of a subordinate clause makes the action less prototypically transitive. In terms of **Politeness-Indirectness**, the added clause often serves as an extra hedging information that lengthens the sentence and adds explanatory elements as a supportive and mitigating move for the expressed speech act. In this light, direct objects not accompanied by clausal information are more direct, while clausal objects and adjunct sentential expansions are more indirect. As before, the desirability or avoidance of directness depends on the perception of benefit or threat to the interlocutor, as expressed by the verb. If these direct structures express benefit to the interlocutor, then polite *leísmo* may function as face-enhancing politeness; if not, it may be viewed as mitigating of face threat. Clausal structures, as examples of indirectness, correspond to mitigation of face threat, while enhancing the interlocutor role as simultaneously a direct object and a subject.

5.3.3 Morphological Variables

Morphological variables focus on the expression and organization of the smallest meaning particles and include clitic position with respect to the verb, verb morphology, and tense expression.

Morphosyntactic Position of the Clitic with Respect to Verb. Clitic position with respect to the verb varies considerably in the oral production corpus and is subsequently controlled and balanced in the perception AJT instrument. The AJT instrument is designed for a half of all clitics to appear pre-verbally and the other half attaching to the end of the infinitival form of the verb. The spontaneous role-play speech, however, reveals much more positioning creativity (Table 5.3.3.1).

Table 5.3.3.1

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable clitic position

Variable: Clitic Position	Perception Data Coding	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
pre- auxiliary/modal	preverbal	<p>(a) <i>Ya le estaré yo <u>llamando</u></i> (1154.2M-CDMX; #7-service provider) I will be <u>calling</u> you then</p> <p>(b) <i>Previamente yo lo había <u>llamado</u> para ver si me podía ayudar</i> (1140.1M-Other; #7-service provider) I had <u>called</u> in advance, to see if you can help me</p>	<p>Iconic Distance: Most distant</p> <p>Salience: more salient</p> <p>Relative Transitivity: more transitive</p>
preverbal and post- auxiliary/modal		<p>Directly pre-verbal clitic:</p> <p>(c) <i>Entonces yo le <u>llamo</u> para ponernos bien de acuerdo.</i> (1159.2F-MxSt; #7-service provider) I will <u>call</u> you to reach a good agreement then</p> <p>(d) <i>Más tarde lo <u>llamo</u></i> (1040.1M-Other; #7-service provider) I'll <u>call</u> you later</p> <p>Post-auxiliary/modal clitic:</p> <p>(e) <i>Si él va a estar pronto aquí y pueda seguirle <u>atendiendo</u></i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #2-client) If he is here soon and can keep <u>assisting</u> you</p> <p>(f) <i>Va a ser muy bueno poderlo <u>saludar</u> ahí</i> (1153.2F-CDMX; #4-older citizen) It will be very nice to be able to <u>greet</u> you there</p>	<p>Iconic Distance: More immediate</p> <p>Salience: more salient</p> <p>Relative Transitivity: more transitive</p>
postverbal	postverbal	<p>(g) <i>Regáleme su tarjeta para poder <u>llamarle</u></i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) Would you give me your card so I can <u>call</u> you</p> <p>(h) <i>Pues yo espero <u>llamarlos</u> muy pronto, ¿no?</i> (1016.1M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) So I expect to <u>call</u> you very soon, okay?</p>	<p>Iconic Distance: Most immediate</p> <p>Salience: less salient</p> <p>Relative Transitivity: less transitive</p>

The pre-verbal position is most variable: allowing for the clitic to directly precede the conjugated verb (examples c-d), precede the auxiliary or modal verb before the main verb (examples a-b), or on a rare occasion attach to the end of the nonfinite auxiliary or modal verb right before the main verb (examples e-f). The post-verbal position of the clitic only allows the option of attaching the

clitic directly to the end of the nonfinite main verb (examples g-h). For illustrative and comparative purposes, most examples of positioning creativity are based on the use of the same target verb *llamar* ‘to call’.

The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* are the Iconic Distance hypothesis and the Salience hypothesis. The **Iconic Distance hypothesis** views distancing between linguistic elements as weakening of direct connection between them, resulting in perception of indirectness and attenuation by de-emphasization. Clitics appearing attached to the verb are the closest, following by the clitics directly preceding the verb, while pre-auxiliary/modal clitic placement is the most distant from the verb, holding at least one lexican item between the clitic and the verb (a-b). Preverbal and postverbal polite *leísmo*, therefore, correlate with the more direct expressions of speech acts and are more expected of face-enhancing speech acts. Any face-threatening acts would, on the contrary, benefit from the most distant pre-auxiliary/modal placement of polite *leísmo* as a mitigation function.

The **Salience hypothesis** further suggests that the equally close pre-verbal and post-verbal clitics are distinguished in cognitive prominence. Generally speaking, the more prominent and unexpected information is found in initial positions, such as the subject of a sentence, while the final positions are set up by the initial structure and are therefore expected. The clitics, due to their grammatical and deictic nature, are always expected. The question becomes about the cognitive effect of their placement with respect to the verb. According to this hypothesis, all pre-verbal polite *leísmo* (whether pre-auxiliary or directly preceding) present the interlocutor as more salient and contextualizing information for the remainder of the utterance, while postverbal positions less salient and perhaps de-emphasizing the interlocutor (Aijón Oliva, 2018). Emphasizing the interlocutor through cognitive prominence is useful for face-enhancement

politeness, and de-emphasizing him or her through lower salience is one way to mitigate the perlocutionary effect of any face threat. This is not unlike the **Relative Transitivity hypothesis** perspective, whereby preposed clitics are more like an agentive subject than the postposed ones.

Verb Morphology. Verb morphology is considered mostly in terms of verb tense and how it is expressed through conjugation manifestations. The AJT design allows for binary coding of finite vs. nonfinite verb morphology. Oral production is much more variable, including present, future, conditional, and past-tense morphology, along with a large number of nonfinite, mostly infinitival verb forms, as well as occasional non-past subjunctive mood endings (see Table 5.3.3.2).

The variant **subjunctive** is the only mood variant, which in Spanish applies across references and manifests in present and past-tense morphology. While past subjunctive morphology is distinctive, present subjunctive morphology applies to present and future time references, making some tenses morphologically indistinguishable on the subjunctive form. The rare cases of past subjunctive morphology, therefore, are coded within past tense, while present subjunctive morphology is coded as a separate morphological category due to its multifunctionality in time reference (examples 1-o). This methodological decision is one of many possibilities, and one that is likely to be avoided in the more controlled, counterbalanced experiments. However, as one of the advisors on this project, Tania Leal recognizes, “oral data is so rich in comparison, it yields so much data that the challenge is [...] having to decide what cannot make the model” (personal communication).

The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* are the **Relative Transitivity hypothesis**, **Iconic Distance hypothesis**, and the **Indirectness-Politeness perspective**. The prototypically transitive constructions are those that exert fullest and most

immediate effect on the object and are connected to speech act directness. Past and present tense verbs are most likely to express this full effect as it already happened or is happening, and present-tense morphology is the most direct expression of speech acts as the most immediate action according to the **Iconic Distance hypothesis**. Future, conditional, and non-past subjunctive are, in this sense, less transitive, more distant in time, and more indirect. Likewise, the nonfinite verb forms can be considered less transitive, and less direct, by delegating the decisive tense-mood-aspect characteristic to the auxiliary or modal verbs, while remaining ambiguous toward immediacy of action in themselves. Using polite *leísmo* on the more transitive, immediate, and direct expressions (specifically in present tense, as past tense is not typical in speech acts and lacks immediacy) can be face-enhancing in relational speech acts, while mitigating in transactional and face-threatening speech acts. The less transitive expressions (especially in conditional and non-past subjunctive) with polite *leísmo* are most likely to reinforce the indirectness and mitigation already encoded in that morphology.

Table 5.3.3.2

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable verbal morphology

Variable: Verbal morphology	Perception Data Coding	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Present indicative	Finite	(a) <i>¿Qué le parece si mañana en la mañana le llamo?</i> (1016.1M-CDMX; #3-doctor) What do you think if tomorrow morning I <u>call</u> you?	Relative Transitivity: High
		(b) <i>Qué bueno que lo veo</i> (1154.3M-CDMX; #4-older citizen) How good to <u>see</u> you	Iconic Distance: Closest present
Future indicative		(c) <i>Ya le llamaré entonces, doctor</i> (1178.2M-Other; #3- doctor) So I will call you then, doctor	Relative Transitivity: Lower

		<p>(d) <i>Y mañana lo acompañaremos a lo que sigue</i> (1101.3M-CDMX; widower) And tomorrow we will <u>accompany</u> you to what's next</p>	<p>Iconic Distance: Farther into the future</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Less direct</p>
Conditional indicative		<p>(e) <i>Ya nosotros le llamaríamos para pedirle más</i> (1196.3M-Other; #7-distributor) And we would/will <u>call</u> you to order more</p> <p>(f) <i>Tons, ¿usted me llamaría o yo lo llamaría?</i> (1187.2M-CDMX; #3-doctor) So would/will you call me or would/will I <u>call</u> you?</p> <p>(g) <i>Yo creo que yo lo nominaría a usted</i> (1021.2M-Other; #1-boss) I believe that I would <u>nominate</u> you</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Lowest</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Farther into the future</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect</p>
Past (preterit, imperfect, present perfect, past perfect, past subjunctive)		<p>(h) <i>De hecho le llamé por teléfono, ¿no sé si se acuerda de mí?</i> (1006.2F-CDMX; #7-distributor) In fact, I <u>called</u> you by phone, I don't know if you remember me</p> <p>(i) <i>Hace mucho tiempo que no lo veía</i> (1205.2F-CDMX; #4-older citizen) It has been a long time since I <u>saw</u> you</p> <p>(j) <i>Yo ya lo he visto en la colonia</i> (1072.3M-CDMX; #4-older citizen) I have <u>seen</u> you in the neighborhood before</p> <p>(k) <i>Creo que ella hubiera querido que lo acompañara si se quedaba solo</i> (1140.1M-Other; #10-widower) I believe she would have wanted for me to <u>accompany</u> you if you were left alone</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: High</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Farther into the past</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: N/A: Not a speech act-property as event in the past</p>
Non-past Subjunctive		<p>(l) <i>Pero si gusta que le ayude en algo, a ver si yo puedo atenderle</i> (1121.3F-CDMX; #2-client) But if you like that I <u>help</u> you with something, let's see if I can assist you</p> <p>(m) <i>A mí me encomendaron para que lo convenza que nos ayude</i> (1101.3M-CDMX; #11-priest) I have been entrusted to <u>convince</u> you to help us</p> <p>(n) <i>Pero qué bueno que lo reconozcan a usted</i> (1172.3M-CDMX; #1-boss) But how great that they <u>recognize</u> you</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Lowest</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Ambiguous present or farther future</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect</p>

		(o) <i>Pues écheme una llamada y ya sea que nosotros vengamos por usted o lo veamos en algún sitio</i> (1113.1F-Other; #10-widower) Well give me a call and it may be that we come get you or <u>see</u> you at some place	
Nonfinite (infinitives, past participles, present participles)	Non-finite	<p>Infinitives:</p> <p>(p) <i>Seguramente le voy a llamar</i> (1008.1M-MxState; #9-mariachi) I will certainly <u>call</u> you</p> <p>(q) <i>Aquí visitándolo. ¿Cómo está usted?</i> (1148.2M-CDMX; #5-neighbor) Here, <u>visiting</u> you. How are you?</p> <p>Participles:</p> <p>(r) <i>Ya le estaré yo llamando</i> (1154.3M-CDMX; #3-doctor) So I will be <u>calling</u> you</p> <p>(s) <i>Me gustaría felicitarlo por su grupo</i> (1182.1M-MxState; #9-mariachi) I would like to <u>congratulate</u> you for your band</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Lowest</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Ambiguous alone, depends on tense marking elsewhere</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Less direct/indirect</p>

As Table 5.3.3.2 shows, **future** and **conditional** morphology are coded separately, but are combined into one category in the analysis. The conditional morphology is observed to be used in the same structural domain as future morphology in expressing actions with future potential (compare e-f with c). Similarly, **past** tense morphology also includes several conjugation forms, including perfective and imperfective, which are combined into one time reference category due to low token frequency reasons (h-k). These variations in form and function, as well as the predominance of nonfinite forms (p-s), motivate the coding and inclusion of time reference as a potentially important and independent variable, denominated tense expression and presented next.

Tense Expression. Tense expression refers to the time reference that the verb alludes to or is contextualized within but does not necessarily coincide with the morphosyntactic verb morphology. The main motivators for this variable are the desire to classify the numerous infinitival verb forms that form part of compound verb constructions, as well as to disambiguate

the multifunctionality of non-past subjunctive forms (see Table 5.3.3.2 above). The main difference between the variable verb morphology and tense expression is, therefore, that the illocutionary force and the immediacy of effect are syntactically encoded into conventional ways of phrasing a speech act. For example, events that are set to occur in the future typically carry a future-tense morphology, but can also be expressed in nonfinite periphrastic constructions and conditional conjugation, which are all used extensively in Spanish. Additionally, verbs in subordinate clauses reflect the tense expressed by the main clause, which this variable takes into account. Therefore, this variable is more function-based and more closely focused on meaning in context, while the verb morphology variable is more form-based, although both with their respective complexities and exceptions not resolved by this research. Both oral and perception corpora include this variable, but the design of the AJT instrument only allows for binary coding: present-nonpresent tense expression. This decision is motivated by the predominance of present tense in formulation of direct, performative utterances as head acts of speech events. The examples in Table 5.3.3.3 are selected to show an array of morphological tenses with the same time reference function beyond the most grammatically obvious encodings.

Table 5.3.3.3

Analysis and coding of the linguistic variable tense expression

Variable: Tense Expression	Perception Data Coding	Examples (participant; #roleplay)	Hypotheses
Present (corresponding to present, nonfinite, and subjunctive verb morphology)	Present	<p>(a) <i>Exactamente por eso es de que se le está- le estamos <u>nominando</u></i> (1005.2M-CDMX; #1-boss) This is exactly why you are being- we <u>are nominating</u> you</p> <p>(b) <i>Le <u>queremos</u> de verdad <u>felicitar</u> muchísimo</i> (1030.2M-CDMX; #9-mariachi) We <u>want</u> truly to <u>congratulate</u> you a lot</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Most transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Most immedaite</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Most direct</p>

		<p>(c) <i>Ahí los espero con mi tía</i> (1180.1F-MxState; #6-uncle) My aunt and I <u>expect</u> you there</p> <p>(d) <i>Perdone que lo interrumpa</i> (1206.2F-CDMX; #3-doctor) <u>Excuse me</u> for <u>interrupting</u> you</p>	
<p>Future (corresponding to future, present, nonfinite, and subjunctive verb morphology)</p>	<p>Non-present</p>	<p>(e) <i>Vamos a poner a una persona a cargo para que le ayude</i> (1188.2F-CDMX; #11-priest) We <u>will</u> put someone in charge to <u>help</u> you</p> <p>(f) <i>Ya le estaré yo llamando</i> (1154.3M-CDMX; #3-doctor) I <u>will be</u> <u>calling</u> you, then</p> <p>(g) <i>Y en cuanto yo vea, yo trataré de llamarlo</i> (1176.3F-CDMX; #3-doctor) And as soon as I see, I <u>will</u> try to <u>call</u> you</p> <p>(h) <i>Estoy pensando que no vaya a haber nada que lo haga cambiar de opinión</i> (1112.2F-CDMX; #11-priest) I am thinking that there <u>won't</u> be anything that <u>makes you change</u> your mind</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Less transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Farther into the future</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Less direct</p>
<p>Conditional (corresponding to conditional, nonfinite, and subjunctive verb morphology)</p>		<p>(i) Yo le <u>apoyaría</u> en lo que usted necesita (1101.3M-CDMX; #1-boss) I <u>would support</u> you in what you need</p> <p>(j) Si usted le interesa, yo <u>podría apoyarlo</u> (1015.2F-CDMX; #1-boss) If you are interested, I <u>could support</u> you</p> <p>(k) ¿Cómo le <u>gustaría</u> que lo <u>apoyara</u>? (1079.3F-CDMX; #1-boss) How <u>would</u> you like for me to <u>support</u> you?</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: Least transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Farther into the future</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: Indirect</p>
<p>Past (corresponding to past, nonfinite, and subjunctive verb morphology)</p>		<p>(l) Me <u>dió</u> mucho gusto <u>saludarlo</u> (1154.3M-CDMX; #4-older citizen) It gave me much pleasure to <u>greet</u> you</p> <p>(m) Yo le <u>iba a llamar</u> [...] para que me lo dijera por teléfono (1142.1F-Other; #3-doctor) I was going to <u>call</u> you ... so you would tell me this on the phone</p> <p>(n) Me <u>dijo</u> su papá que si lo <u>veía</u>, lo <u>invitara</u> a usted y a doña Luz (1094.1M-CDMX; #4-older citizen) Her father told me, if I <u>saw</u> you, to <u>invite</u> you and also Miss Luz</p>	<p>Relative Transitivity: More transitive</p> <p>Iconic Distance: Immediate/close past</p> <p>Indirectness-Politeness: More direct (except when in subjunctive mood)</p>

While **future** and **conditional** verb morphology are combined for the purposes of analysis, the variable tense expression allows to maintain them as separate thanks to the larger number of tokens resulting from the recoded nonfinite verbs. The complexities of the **subjunctive** verb forms are also recoded according to the tense reference of the main verb, be it present, future, conditional, or past.

The main motivating hypotheses behind this variable in relation to polite *leísmo* are the Relative Transitivity hypothesis, the Iconic Distance hypothesis, and the Indirectness-Politeness perspective. **Present**-tense actions are prototypically most transitive, most immediate in time of utterance, and most directly expressed, and so are an appropriate site for positive, face-enhancing politeness. **Conditional** and future tense expressions only differ in the degree of indirectness, whereby conditional is the most indirect expression of an action, appropriate for mitigation of face-threat presented by the action. **Past**-tense expression, in spite of its closeness and immediacy of action, which is often transitive and direct, nevertheless is a characteristic of performative utterances and therefore is peripheral to the speech acts. Correlation of polite *leísmo* with either present or non-present tense expression should clarify its function correspondingly.

5.4 Summary of Factors, Theoretical connections, and Exclusions

There are a total of twenty independent variables tested among the two studies as potential conditioning factors of the dependent *le-lo* formal ‘you’ reference. These variables are the subject of the verb, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, telicity, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, argument structure, verb tense morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood,

speech event, social domain, interlocutor power, speaker sex, age, education level, origin, socioeconomic status or SES, SES mobility, and generational SES mobility. The social variables are meant to shed light onto the social meaning of polite *leísmo* by defining the population characteristics that favor this non-etymological variant, as it is precisely the social associations with users that gives social value to a linguistic phenomenon. Just as history is written by the most powerful of their time, it is the key social actors that set the currency of symbolic capital that is language.

The linguistic and contextual variables considered in this study offer explanatory potential to the functions of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City in light of the various theoretical perspectives and hypotheses connecting syntax and semantics with pragmatic meaning. Whether polite *leísmo* is indeed polite, and what type of politeness it represents, depends on its correlation with the formal linguistic elements connected to Relative Transitivity, Iconic Distance, Saliency, and structural and semantic Indirectness devices as correlates of politeness. One way to discover the communicative function of polite *leísmo* is precisely through linguistic correlations that are already established as polite or implicating subjective attitudes by prior research. Additional evidence for the same must come from pragmatic or contextual factors that focus on meaning in context. This bottom-up approach (Terkourafi, 2011) that begins with focus on form and leads into the analysis of syntactic and pragmatic function is reflected in the three research questions, focusing first on the various social, contextual, and linguistic factors behind the variation in form, and later interpreting the content of this form-in-context variation to understand its meaning and function (e.g. García & Otheguy, 1977).

Visually, these hypothetical connections between theory and linguistic and contextual factors can be distributed on a politeness continuum, between positive, face-enhancing politeness and negative, mitigation politeness in Figure 5.4.1.

Figure 5.4.1

Hypothetical theoretical and linguistic-pragmatic connections on the politeness continuum

<= Face-enhancing politeness ===== Mitigation politeness =>

Theoretical Perspectives:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative Transitivity • Salience • Iconic Distance • Indirectness-Politeness 	<p><i>more transitive</i></p> <p><i>more salient</i></p> <p><i>closest/immediate</i></p> <p><i>direct</i></p>	<p><i>less transitive</i></p> <p><i>less salient</i></p> <p><i>farthest/distant</i></p> <p><i>indirect</i></p>
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Factors:

linguistic	[<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telicity • Subject • Object • Polarity • Syntactic structure • Argument structure • Clitic position • Verb morphology • Tense expression 	<p><i>telic</i></p> <p><i>1st-person, singular</i></p> <p><i>singular</i></p> <p><i>non-negated</i></p> <p><i>unmitigated declarative</i></p> <p><i>NP</i></p> <p><i>pre-verbal, pre-auxiliary</i></p> <p><i>present, indicative</i></p> <p><i>present</i></p>	<p><i>atelic</i></p> <p><i>3rd-person/impersonal, plural</i></p> <p><i>plural</i></p> <p><i>negated</i></p> <p><i>interrogative, conditional</i></p> <p><i>NP + clause</i></p> <p><i>post-verbal</i></p> <p><i>conditional, nonfinite</i></p> <p><i>future, conditional</i></p>
contextual	[<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social domain • Speech event • Power/authority • (Ir)realis 	<p><i>informal, traditional</i></p> <p><i>greeting, offer</i></p> <p><i>equals</i></p> <p><i>realis</i></p>	<p><i>formal, traditional</i></p> <p><i>negotiation</i></p> <p><i>subordinate to interlocutor</i></p> <p><i>irrealis</i></p>

Having discussed and exemplified coding methodology applied to the data collected via role plays and the Acceptability Judgment Task questionnaires, it should be noted that some exclusions of data have been made. In the oral role-play corpus, the following reasons are bases for exclusion of tokens from coding and analysis:

- Non-*Usted* references to 2nd person (i.e. *tú*)

- All *se le* cases as invariable constructions (e.g. *Se le admira mucho* ‘you are much admired’)
- Ambiguous direct/indirect object *le* reference (e.g. *Le vengo a consultar (:)* *qué puedo hacer...* ‘I come to consult you (about) what I can do...’)
- Ambiguous 2nd/3rd personreference of *lo* (e.g. *Lo apunto para mañana* ‘I note it/you down for tomorrow’)

In perception AJT data, there are a total of 329 missing or unanswered tokens that do not form part of the perception corpus. Considering the possible maximum number of answers of 17665, this missing data comprises 2% and, therefore, is not deemed significant hinderance for accurate analysis and generalizability. These exclusions are previously summarized in the Table 4.1.2.1 of Participants and Their Data subsection of Methodology.

6. Results

The main objective of this research is to understand the social meaning of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. Before presenting the results of the production and perception studies one by one, it is beneficial to understand a bit more about the speaker population whose voices and lives give life to the data analyzed further. Although population data is often considered part of the method, it is considered here as a first part of the results for one main reason: all studied linguistic and contextual factors are best understood as embedded in this larger social context, which in itself is an important finding. Focusing on the social makeup of the speech community, we get a picture of the dynamics and composition of the social networks and the social roles of the agents in language maintenance and innovation (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). It is expected that the variation

found in the production and perception of polite *leísmo* is best understood, explained, and predicted in connection to the social realities that emerge from the sociodemographic questionnaire. This chapter, therefore, begins by presenting the sociodemographics of Mexico City, followed by big-picture trends of polite *leísmo*, and finally taking a close focus on the production and perception data, one by one, and in comparison to each other.

6.1 Sociodemographics of Mexico City, Based on the Extended Oral Production Corpus

Over the five months of onsite fieldwork and a year of online questionnaire collection, the total of 220 role plays were initiated and 137 online AJT questionnaires were opened. The reality is such that only a sample of 132 role-play participants and 92 AJT respondents form part of the respective production and perception analyses reported in this work. The main exclusion criteria are significant incompleteness of tasks (1-3 situations of 12), high inaccuracy rates of AJT distractor data, and extensive experience with non-Mexican language and culture for heritage and immigration reasons, as described in the Methodology section. Some of the role-play data that is not part of this study is indeed eligible for analysis, but could not be transcribed in one year since the beginning of data collection. It is therefore left for further exploration, corpus building, and linguist training in the future. Nevertheless, a real treasure of the role-play corpus, transcribed and not yet, are the extensive sociodemographic profiles of all who consented to and contributed significantly to this research. This section deliberately includes all of the available sociodemographic data in interest to give recognition to all of the contributing members of the community and to contextualize the participation of those whose data is later analyzed in this research. The most complete and eligible sociodemographic data available comes from 215 of

the 220 interviewees, occasionally varying due to missing information pieces on concrete questions due to non-obligatory nature of the questionnaire.

The sociodemographics of Mexico City is, therefore, presented as social stratification of this extended oral production sample, including the macro-social **characteristics of the speakers**, their **dynamic social realities and mobility**, and their **experiences with relevant aspects of Mexican life** presented in the contexts that form part of the methodology.

Specifically, the stratifying social variables corresponding to the first two research questions of this research, include the participant's **sex, age, education level, origin**, socioeconomic status or SES, **SES mobility, and generational SES mobility** (the latter excluded from the quantitative analysis due to issues of collinearity).

6.1.1 Social Profiles

The population sample representing Mexico City in this study is largely represented by young and adult members of the society, with the average age of 42.7 in the sample of 215. Table 6.1.1.1 here is reproduced from Table 4.1.1.1 first presented in the Methodology section, dedicated to the participants. The smaller number of older speakers in the sample is reflective of the fact that Mexico City's median **age** is a rather young 33, and the country's median is even younger at 27 (INEGI, 2015). This sociodemographic sample is closely balanced for **sex**, with 105 men and 110 women, and the slight overrepresentation of women is also reflective of the city and country population trends (INEGI, 2015). In following the city and country trends, especially due to the more recent educational reforms, it is important to highlight the absence of young citizens with only primary or no education, and that this lowest **educational achievement** is mostly represented by the older generation.

Table 6.1.1.1

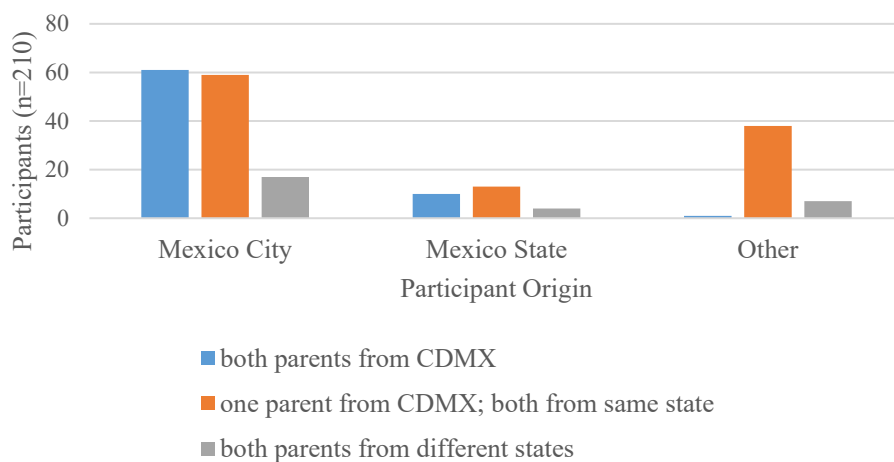
General social stratification of the extended population sample (n = 215)

Age Group Sex	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young (18-34)	0	0	19	22	23	18	82 (38%)
Adults (35-54)	3	4	12	21	21	15	76 (35%)
Older (55+)	6	9	12	11	9	10	57 (27%)
Total by Education Level	22		97		96		215 (100%)

All of the sociodemographic information about this participant sample is collected in Mexico City. However, not all of the participants are originally from Mexico City, and of those who are, many have direct experience with other parts of Mexico through their parents. Figure 6.1.1.2 illustrates the diversity of the population in relationship to the **origin** of their parents. Most participants are indeed from Mexico City (n=137 or 65%), but less than half of them can be said to be full-blooded CDMX citizens (61 or 29% of the entire population).

Figure 6.1.1.2

Diversity by origin of participants and their parents



This reality is a product of historical and present migration patterns discussed in the Global Perspectives section and are explored further.

The education level does not closely coincide with the socioeconomic positions that the individuals come to hold. The socioeconomic status, or SES, of this population is incredibly complex and dynamic, for which reason education level is taken as a stratifying variable (Table 6.1.1.1). Nevertheless, several SES factors are considered in this research, as defined in the Analysis section.

To begin with, Figure 6.1.1.3 illustrates the various occupational activities in which the population engages – simultaneously or in different progressions. These are based on the Figure 2.2.2.2, reproduced here to illustrate how Butragueño and Lastra (2011-2015) organize professional achievement in correlation to socioeconomic position, from lowest to highest.

Figure 6.1.1.3

Mexico City professional achievement continuum (reproduced from Sociolinguistic Perspective, enhanced with class approximations)

<u>category 1</u> (working)	<u>category 2</u> (high working/ low middle)	<u>category 3</u> (middle/ high middle)	<u>category 4</u> (low high)	<u>category 5</u> (high high)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street vendor • urban unspecialized worker • farm worker • domestic service • unspecialized service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • merchant • secretary/office help • specialized worker • craftsman • mechanic • store attendant • collector • technical help • police, guard, soldier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university personnel • middle- and primary-school faculty • little businessmen or producers • middle command • technician • supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent university staff • middle management of public or private sector • graduated military • middle businessman and producer • university faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high official with executive, legislative or judicial power • high military official • big private businessman • big property owner • high executive of public or private sector

businessmen (*pequeños empresarios*), 10 government employees (*gobierno*), as well as many other occupations such as secretaries, vendors, editors, technicians, medical personnel, among others. The average social position of the population is 2.45/4, and the highest achieved position averages slightly higher, around 2.62/4, on the 1-4 scale, represented in Figure 6.1.1.3. Both estimates correspond to what can be called a lower middle class, between the second lowest and second highest socioeconomic levels.

6.1.2 Social Mobility

The dynamic sociodemographic realities of Mexico City are largely a reflection of the national migration patterns. Migration is closely connected not only to geographic mobility, but also to socioeconomic mobility of the population, and both have an effect on the social significance of linguistic variation.

Geographic Mobility. **Geographic mobility** of the population begins with the story of origins and **generational migrations** to and out of Mexico City, as presented in Figure 6.1.1.2. For example, looking at parental origin where both parents are not from Mexico City, we find half of Mexico City originals remaining in Mexico City and bringing in their spouse with them, with the other half changing residence to another state or Mexico State prior to the participant's own residence in the city.

National and international travel are other manifestations of geographic mobility and additional factors in any language variation situation. Table 6.1.2.1 summarizes this additional travel experience for the sample population by origin.

Table 6.1.2.1

National and international travel experience by origin of participants (n=213)

Origin	National Travel Experience				Grand Total
	no		yes		
International Travel >>>>	no	yes	no	yes	
Another Mexican State	0.94%	0.00%	17.84%	2.82%	21.60%
Mexico State	5.16%	0.00%	7.04%	1.41%	13.62%
Mexico City	40.38%	5.16%	13.15%	6.10%	64.79%
Grand Total	46.48%	5.16%	38.03%	10.33%	100.00%

What Table 6.1.2.1 reveals is that national and international travel are directly correlated to each other: those who have national travel experience are almost twice as likely to travel internationally (10.33%) than those who don't (5.16%). Importantly, it is the Mexico City population that travels internationally the most, and largely independently of their national travel experience (no: 5.16%; yes: 6.10%). Travel experience certainly increases the chances of variable linguistic exposure for Mexico City residents and is expected to affect at least their perception of linguistic variation, specifically with respect to polite *leísmo*.

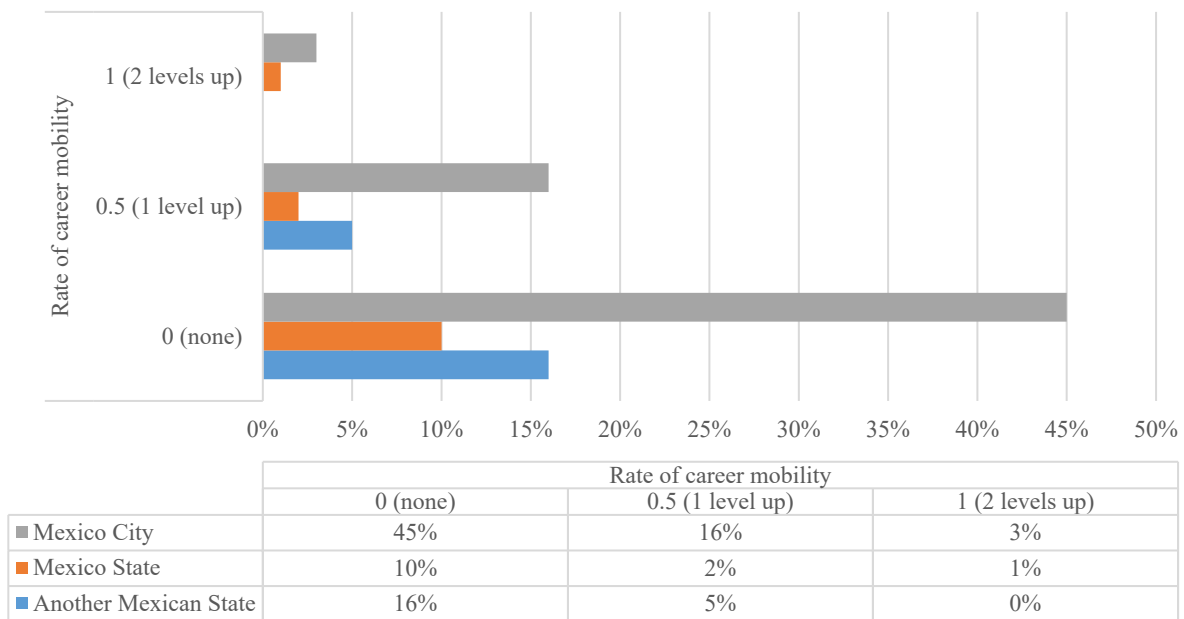
Socioeconomic, Career Mobility. Geographic mobility and travel have multiple causes, one of which is related to occupational and socioeconomic opportunities. This research considers the socioeconomic (SES), or career, mobility for the participant population in its own right as well as in comparison to their parents' generation.

Personal SES. Figure 6.1.2.2 visualizes the proportions of the population with different SES mobility rates by their place of origin. Overall, we see that the majority 71% of the entire population do not show evidence of career mobility, which is the most typical reality no matter where they are from. Nevertheless, Mexico City originals are more socially mobile than the rest, with 16% of them showing a considerable one occupational level jump and even 3% of them reaching positions two levels above where they started. Mexico State originals follow a similar trend on a smaller scale, in correlation to their smaller representation in the population sample.

What is interesting to note is that immigrants from another state, although more represented in the sample than Mexico State originals, show lowest career mobility opportunity, seeing as no one reaches a two-level jump. These trends support the ideology that the metropolitan center is a sort of a land of economic opportunity.

Figure 6.1.2.2

Personal career mobility rate by participant's origin (n = 214)



Generational SES Mobility. The sociodemographic questionnaire responses provide a valuable perspective on socioeconomic or career mobility of the individual participants in the context of the larger generational and cultural trends in the country. For example, the career trends of the past generation shed much light onto the gender roles and opportunities by comparing paternal and maternal social positions and occupations, and how this recent past is affecting the present socioeconomic opportunities of the surveyed generations. Figure 6.1.2.3 is a

visual comparison of the participants' highest achieved SES in relation to their reported parents' SES on a 1-4 scale for all, from lower to higher social class.

Figure 6.1.2.3

Participant SES in relation to parents' SES (n=213)

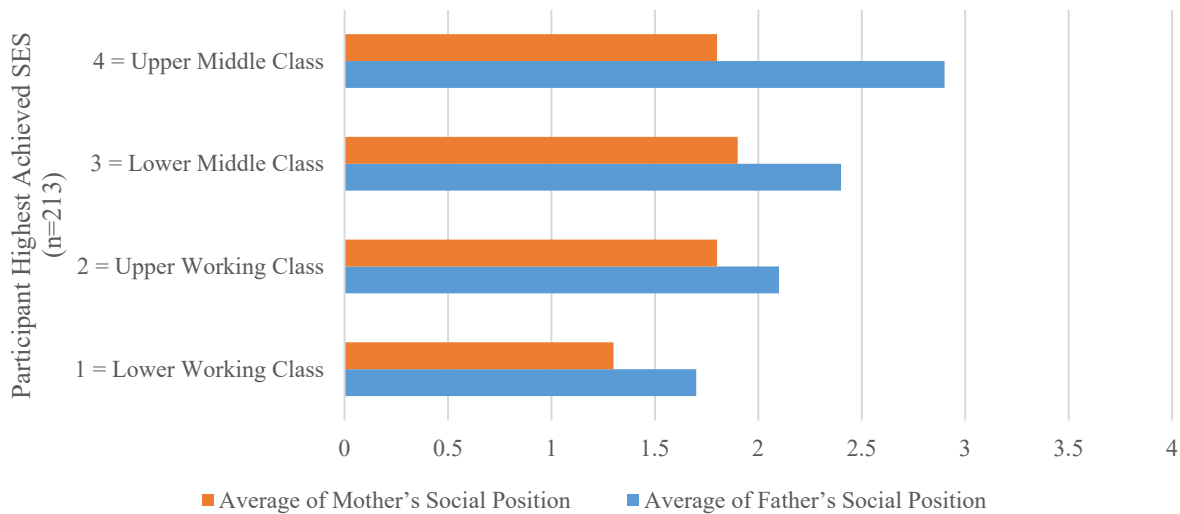


Figure 6.1.2.4

Parental occupational activity: paternal (left) and maternal (right)



Figure 6.1.2.4 contains word-cloud illustrations of the typical occupational activities held by mothers and fathers of the participant sample. The predominant activity for the mothers is a homemaker (*ama de casa, hogar, servicio doméstico*), a small merchant (*pequeños comerciantes*), or secretary (*secretaria*). The fathers are also most frequently small merchants (*pequeños comerciantes*), in addition to specialized workers (*obrero especializado*), farm workers (*obreros campesinos*), university personnel (*profesional universitario [de libre ejercicio]*), technicians (*técnico*), and supervisors (*supervisor, mandos intermedios*). The careers of the fathers are most obviously varied and generally more prestigious than those of the mothers. In Figure 6.1.2.3, this translates into the regularly higher SES averages of fathers (2.28) over mothers (1.7). The participants' own SES, then, is affected mostly by the father's social position on the individual's own achieved position at the time of the study: the highest participant SES scores correspond to the higher father's SES averages. On the contrary, mothers are not truly mobile and do not predict their child's social position at all. The mothers' average remains almost unchanged for participants of upper working class, lower middle class, and upper middle class (1.8).

This generational SES comparison also shows that socioeconomic scales change over time and have different meanings for different generations. For example, the highest status achieved by the fathers of this population sample is an average of 2.9 on a 1-4 scale, while their children are now ranked in the highest available category of 4, or upper middle class. Similarly, participants in the lower middle class are ranked at about half-point above their fathers (3 vs. 2.4 on a 1-4 scale). In a way, the data shows that the father's closeness to middle class translates into at least a 1-level up mobility for participants, occupying the middle-class continuum.

6.1.3 Social Lives, Social Relationships, and Cultural Norms (Re)Definitions

A portion of the sociodemographic questionnaire probes the dynamic definitions and redefinitions of culturally typical social relationships with godparents and co-parents by different layers of population. As presented in section 2.1.2 of the Global Perspective that looks at Mexico City as a microcosm of Mexico, godparents, or *padrinos*, are those who baptize or witness and support important initiation life stages of a person, characterized by a hierarchical relationship. Co-parents, or *compadres*, are the same responsible individuals, but in a solidarity relationship to the parents of the baptized or initiated person. This tradition has roots in the Catholic church, influentially present in Mexico since the Conquest, but often extends beyond it in practice and application. Historically, this ritual kinship was based on moral order and guidance to be provided to the younger members of society by carefully selected exemplary individuals, and its extension across Latin America has been called a cultural universal (Mendoza Ontiveros, 2010).

There are three reasons to include an evaluation of the participants' personal experiences with these culturally defined social roles and practices in this research. First, showing social stratification of a non-linguistic behavior should set the scene for analyzing and understanding linguistic variation as just one manifestation of human behavior. Secondly, these traditional roles are a purposeful part of the instrument design, as described in Methodology, and so aggregate responses are a way to test instrument validity. Thirdly, since it soon will be shown that these traditional roles are indeed valid, but to different degrees for different layers of population, this variation challenges tradition and the mere notion of a universally effective instrument design for linguistic and non-linguistic variationist research. The roles of godparents and co-parents in Mexico are shown to be dynamically redefined in generational, geographic, and socioeconomic

terms. The social lives and the more varied cultural norms become a context for linguistic variation and the social significance of polite *leísmo*.

Godparents. The question about the godparent experience is reproduced from the sociodemographic questionnaire in Table 6.1.3.1. The contributors are asked to answer a set of three questions about their godfather and godmother, whenever applicable. Their responses to the godfather experience are presented here as those most relevant to the present research, focused on male referent treatment. Because of the hierarchical relationship implied by the baptizer and the baptizee, there are reasons to treat the godfather with a formal ‘you’ and thus potentially form part of the envelope of variation of polite *leísmo*.

Table 6.1.3.1

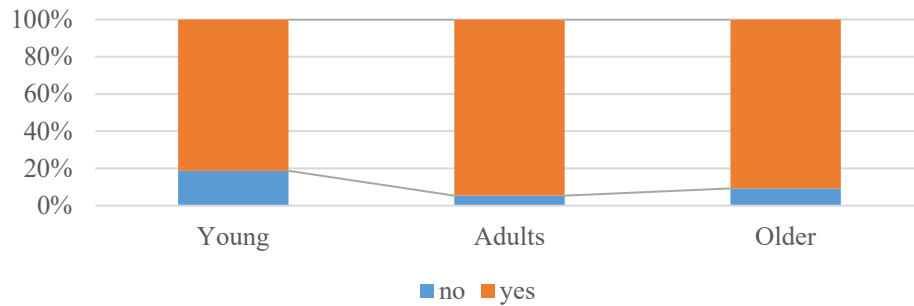
Sociodemographic questionnaire section on godparent experience (translated)

	Do you have or have you had one?			Is it someone from family or outside of family?		What type of relationship is/was it?		
Godfather	Yes, I have	I’ve had	Never	Family	Outside	None	Distant	Close
Godmother	Yes, I have	I’ve had	Never	Family	Outside	None	Distant	Close

In terms of **experience**, the Mexican population is overwhelmingly **familiar** with the role of godparents: 88.46% of 208 contributors to this research have or have had a godfather, with the younger generation having least personal experience (81.25%). These large percentages, reported in Figure 6.1.3.2, confirm it as a transending cultural trait. However, it is also recently diminishing, seeing how personal experience drops by over 10% from the previous generation to the young generation.

Figure 6.1.3.2

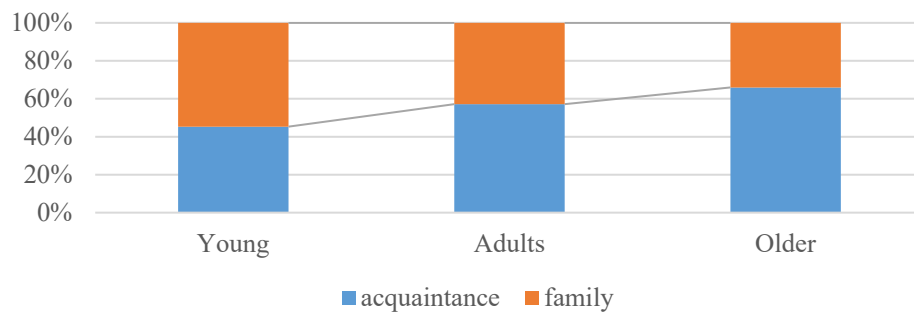
Personal experience with godfathers, or padrinos, by age group (n=208)



The **nature** of this experience with godparenting is also changing. Figure 6.1.3.3 shows that traditionally, individuals chosen to baptize or initiate a child were chosen from outside of one's family (65.96%), in keeping with the original purpose of serving as an example of morality and obliging dedication to watching over the child. This purpose is seen replaced by familial closeness in the younger generation, of which over half report family ties with their godfather (54.69%). This shift from acquaintance to family for this social role has seen a steady 10% rise with each generation, signaling a **narrowing social circle** of the godparenting relationships. It is, therefore, likely to be a cause of different contextual interpretations of social and linguistic variation found in this research.

Figure 6.1.3.3

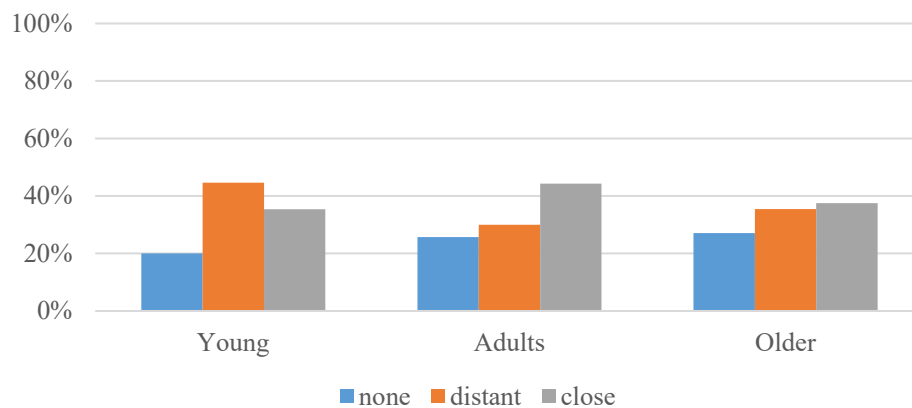
Godfathers, or padrinos, from within and outside of family by age group (n=181)



In addition to the change in the original definition of godparents and its recent decline, Figure 6.1.3.4 reveals that the **relationship** has been losing in intensity and **closeness** over the past generations. Even the adult generation, who report closest and the most personal experience with a godfather (Figure 6.1.3.2), less than half (44.29%) of their relationships are considered close. In one generation, exactly that many young people (44.62%) define their relationship with their godfather as distant. Curiously, the pattern of no relationship has been diminishing (from 27.08% to 20.00%), largely due to the shift from acquaintance to family. This indicates that the tradition of having a godfather remains **stable** in Mexico, but is being **redefined** in the nature and closeness of this relationship. The generational changes observed here speak to a redefinition of godparenting practices and their sociocultural value in Mexico City.

Figure 6.1.3.4

Closeness of relationship with the godfather, or padrino, by age group (n=183)



A cross-tabulation of family-acquaintance tie and the closeness of relationship with one's godfather reveal the expected **correlation**: the closest relationships are formed within the family, and the most distant or no relationships are found when the godfather is an acquaintance (Table 6.1.3.5).

Table 6.1.3.5

Family tie and closeness of relationship with the godfather, or padrino, by age group (n=181)

Family tie:	Acquaintance			Acq- Total	Family			Fam- Total	Row Total
	Closeness: none	distant	close		none	distant	close		
Young	14.06%	21.88%	9.38%	45.31%	4.69%	23.44%	26.56%	54.69%	100%
Adults	22.86%	21.43%	12.86%	57.14%	2.86%	8.57%	31.43%	42.86%	100%
Older	25.53%	27.66%	12.77%	65.96%	0.00%	8.51%	25.53%	34.04%	100%
Grand Total	20.44%	23.20%	11.60%	55.25%	2.76%	13.81%	28.18%	44.75%	100%

Looking at the godfather, or *padrino*, experience by age group helps identify an **ongoing cultural change** and provide explanatory tools for finding linguistic variation across generations. Nevertheless, the godparenting status is also seen affected by geographic and socioeconomic factors.

Table 6.1.3.6 cross-tabulates the godfather family-acquaintance tie and the closeness of relationship by participant origin. The general trend is that residents from outside of the central metropolis show the highest rate of acquaintance godfathers (63.41%), while Mexico City and Mexico State originals are related to their godfathers (47.01% and 47.83%). The closest relationships with the godfather figure are experienced by Mexico City originals when the godfather is a family member (29.06%). While Mexico State closely follows Mexico City in most respects, it is also important to note that it contrasts with the city and other immigrants in maintenance of their relationship with their godfather, with considerably fewer respondents indicating “no relationship” at all. The **geographic stratification** of godparenting, then, seems to indicate that the metropolis center is leading in shifting this traditional relationship into the family realm and consequently maintaining a closer relationship with the godfather figure.

Table 6.1.3.6

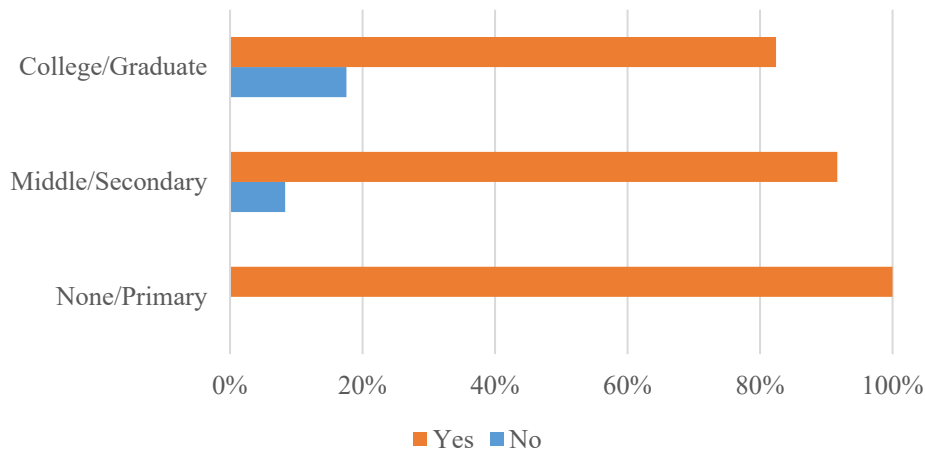
Family tie and closeness of relationship with godfather, or padrino, by origin (n=181)

Family tie: Closeness:	Acquaintance			Acq- Total	Family			Fam- Total	Row Total
	none	distant	close		none	distant	close		
Another State	24.39%	26.83%	12.20%	63.41%	2.44%	7.32%	26.83%	36.59%	100%
Mexico State	13.04%	26.09%	13.04%	52.17%	0.00%	21.74%	26.09%	47.83%	100%
Mexico City	20.51%	21.37%	11.11%	52.99%	3.42%	14.53%	29.06%	47.01%	100%
Grand Total	20.44%	23.20%	11.60%	55.25%	2.76%	13.81%	28.18%	44.75%	100%

In terms of **socioeconomic stratification**, taking education level as a proxy, Figure 6.1.3.7 reveals that having a godparent is correlated to the speaker’s level of education. Specifically, contributors with up to primary education all report having a godfather. The few that have never had a godfather have at least middle or secondary education (8.33%) or even more likely college education (17.58%). As a reminder, however, the contributors with least education are also predominantly older. And so the godparenting tradition in Mexico City is seen affected by multiple generational, geographic, and socioeconomic factors, similarly to linguistic variation. One observable result of such relationship redefinition is the **leveling of the hierarchy** and increased informal ‘you’ treatment, to the detriment of polite *leísmo*.

Figure 6.1.3.7

Personal experience with godfather, or padrino, by education level (n=208)



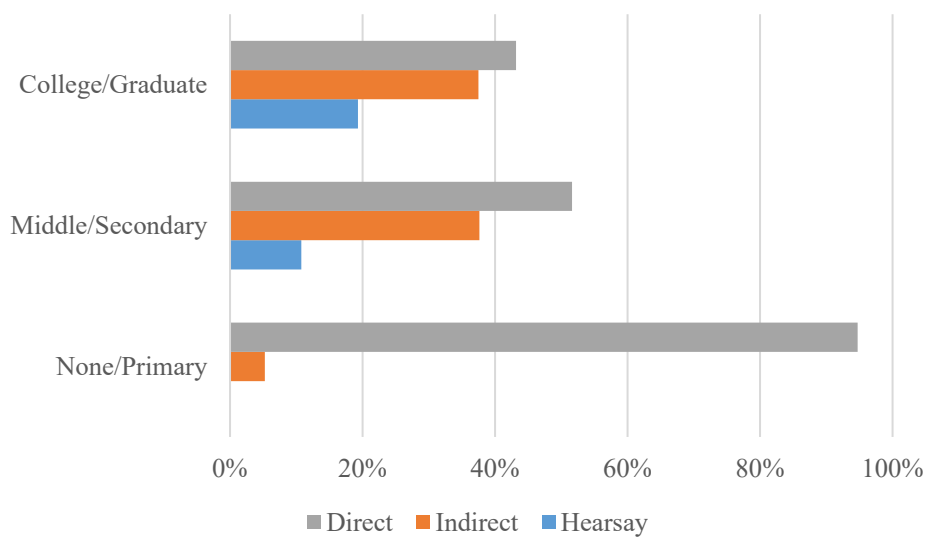
Co-Parents. The role of co-parenting, or *compadrazgo*, is related to that of godparenting. However, instead of creating a hierarchical relationship between the baptizer and the baptizee, it forms a **solidarity** link between the baptizer and the parent of the baptizee. The research contributors shared their experience with the role of a co-parent, or *compadre*, by indicating hearsay, indirect, or direct experience, by answering the following question whenever applicable:

- I am/have [a co-parent] > (direct experience)
- There are [co-parents] in my family > (indirect experience)
- I know someone who is/was [a co-parent] > (hearsay experience)

Figure 6.1.3.8 reveals a similar **socioeconomic stratification** to that found with respect to godfather experience: contributors with up to primary school education are those that have most direct experience with co-parenting, or *compadrazgo*. As the education level increases, direct experience becomes replaced by indirect and hearsay experience.

Figure 6.1.3.8

Experience with co-parenting, or compadrazgo, by education level (n=200)



Looking at both godparenting and co-parenting experiences together, a cross-tabulation in Table 6.1.3.9 shows a clear correlation between the two. Those who have a godfather are also most directly familiar with the role of a co-parent, which is most prominently seen in immigrants from another state (58.70%). The metropolis center, i.e. Mexico City and Mexico State, show direct familiarity with a godfather figure and mostly direct or indirect experience with co-parenting, even if to a lesser extent than the immigrants. However, even those who have never had a godfather, show some familiarity with co-parenting, mostly indirect, such as 7.75% of Mexico City originals.

Table 6.1.3.9

Correlation between experience with godfathers, or padrinos, and co-parenting, or compadrazgo, by origin (n=198)

Co-parenting:	No godfather experience			Yes godfather experience			Row Total
	Hearsay	Indirect	Direct	Hearsay	Indirect	Direct	
Another State	2.17%	6.52%	0.00%	4.35%	28.26%	58.70%	100%
Mexico State	4.35%	4.35%	4.35%	13.04%	30.43%	43.48%	100%
Mexico City	0.78%	7.75%	3.10%	14.73%	26.36%	47.29%	100%
Grand Total	1.52%	7.07%	2.53%	12.12%	27.27%	49.49%	100%

It has been noted in the literature and in post-role-play commentary that this traditional co-parenting relationship between non-family traditionally establishes a special type of ceremonial relationship often socially indexed with an *usted* of solidarity or *compadrazgo* (Álvarez Muro & Carrera de la Red, 2006; Vázquez Carranza, 2009). In Mexico, this tradition has been changing over time and geographically, leading to social commentary and sometimes criticisms for its acquired connotation of financial responsibility, which is being increasingly delimited to the close friends and family circle. These historical and cultural differences are well commented in a post-task informal interview by a young male participant 1131 from the state of Guanajuato (neighboring state with Jalisco, north of Mexico State), doing graduate school in Mexico City:

ID	Spanish (original)	English (translation)
1131	<p>[...] La verdad es que también aquí hay variación de costumbres geográfica, porque mi roomie, que no está ahorita, otro -una cuarta roomie-, ella es de aquí, pero vive aquí porque ya se independizó, y ella sí me contaba unas cosas que yo digo: "Ay, de veras que son unos gorriones aquí en la Ciudad de México" porque "y padrino de arroz, y padrino de quién sabe qué, y padrino de mesas, y padrino de servilleteros, y padrino de quién-sabe-qué". Y en Guanajuato no se hace eso. O sea, en realidad es como un reconocimiento -y es lo que te acabo de decir-. O sea, uno le pide a alguien que sea su padrino porque es como su súper amigo y hay una estimación, y nada más es eso.</p>	<p>[...] The truth is that there is also geographic variation of customs, because my roommie, who isn't here now, she is from here [Mexico City], but lives here because she now lives independently, and she was telling me such things that I say: "Oh, truly, here in Mexico City people are freeloaders" because there is a <i>padrino</i> of rice, and a <i>padrino</i> of I-don't-know-what, and a <i>padrino</i> of tables, and a <i>padrino</i> of napkin holders, and a <i>padrino</i> of I-don't-know-what... And in Guanajuato people don't do that. I mean, really it is like a recognition and it's what I just told you. I mean, we ask someone to be a <i>padrino</i> because he is like a mega-friend and there is certain esteem, and just that.</p>
1131	<p>[...] O sea, el padrino del rito de la boda católico es: hay uno de arras, uno de anillos y uno de lazo. Y ya. O sea, esos son los únicos que tienen un lugar dentro del evento religioso. Y son los únicos que son así como: "Ay, que tienen que ser muy buenos, de---" Todo lo demás, es para que te paguen.</p>	<p>[...] I mean, a <i>padrino</i> of Catholic ritual is: there is one of wedding coins, one of the rings, and one of the bond. And that's it. I mean, these are the only ones that have place in the religious event. And they are the only ones that are like "Oh, they must be very good people, of--" All the rest, that's so they pay for you.</p>
VF	<p>Pero mira: los que me estabas comentando ahorita, los tres de la boda, ¿verdad? ¿Solamente participan en el evento o luego también tienen la responsabilidad de guiar a la pareja?</p>	<p>But look: these that you were just telling me about, the three for the wedding, right? Do they only participate in the event or do they also then have the responsibility to guide the couple?</p>
1131	<p>Pues esa es como la visión tradicional, pero pus no. En la época de mis papás, por ejemplo, esos padrinos de lazo pues sí eran un matrimonio y sí te decían que tenía que ser un matrimonio que fuera bien, y que estuviera estable, porque pus te van a dar el ejemplo, pero yo a las bodas que he ido de amigos así de mi edad que se han casado por la iglesia, pues he visto que es--- que ya es igual que el del</p>	<p>Well that's like the traditional vision, but well no. In the time of my parents, their <i>padrinos</i> of the bond, well yes, were a married couple and they indeed told you that it had to be a marriage that is good and stable, because well they would be an example. But I, at the weddings that I've gone to of friends who are like my age, who were married by the church, well I've seen that it is-</p>

bautizo: es un amigo y una amiga y ni siquiera son esposos entre ellos. Y ya. Y algo en este sentido, por ejemplo, algunos sí pueden--- el padrino de anillos es el que entrega los anillos en el momento de la ceremonia y algunos pueden de ahí agarrarse y decirle: "Paga los anillos". O algunos sí se ofrecen y dicen: "Yo te pago los anillos". Y va a ser el padrino de anillos. Pero en realidad no es así. **Mis papás tuvieron padrinos y sus padrinos no pagaron nada.** Solo era porque había que llenar ese puesto en la ceremonia. Que yo lo veo así. Y no te lo tomes tampoco así como de Guanajuato. Yo creo que es también hasta familiar. Porque mi mamá siempre me ha dicho eso: "Ps yo no necesito que nadie me pague la fiesta. Ps si yo me estoy casando es porque tengo dinero pa casarme", ¿no?

that it's now just like baptism: it is a male friend and a female friend and they don't even have to be married to each other. And that's it. And something of the sort, for example, some really can- the *padrino* of the rings is the one who delivers the rings during the ceremony, and some can then get up and tell him "Buy the rings." Or some would volunteer and say "I'll buy you the rings." And then he becomes the *padrino* of the rings. But in reality, things are not like that. **My parents had *padrinos*, and their *padrinos* didn't pay for anything.** It was just because they had to fill that position in the ceremony. At least that's how I see it. And don't take it like for all of Guanajuato. I think it is also family-specific. Because my mom has always told me: "Well, I don't need anyone to pay for my party. If I am getting married, that's because I have money to get married," right?

	[...]	[...]
VF	¿Y los padrinos de bautizo, según tú lo ves, sí participan más allá del evento? O sea, se supone que se comprometen a estar ahí también. Y ayudar y si les pasa algo a tus papás.	And the <i>padrinos</i> of baptism, the way you see it, do they participate beyond the event? I mean, they are supposed to be committed to be there as well. And to help and if something happens to your parents.
1131	Sí, yo tengo como una experiencia rara en eso. Ah, sí, se supone que--- Es que realmente no he conocido a alguien que se haya quedado huérfano y realmente los padrinos lo hayan--- No sé si eso haya pasado realmente a alguien. Por ejemplo, ai tú vas a ver que yo te puse que nunca he tratado a mis padrinos. Dos veces los he visto. Eso es porque se fueron a vivir a otro lado. Pero, por ejemplo, al ver cómo es mi mamá como madrina, pues sí está ahí como presente y la siguen invitando a los cumpleaños...	Yes, I have something like a strange experience with this. Oh yes, it is supposed- But I haven't really met anyone who had become an orphan and that the <i>padrinos</i> really had- I don't know if this has really happened to anyone. For example, you'll see there that I responded that I have never talked to my <i>padrinos</i> . I've seen them twice. That is because they'd gone to live elsewhere. But, for example, seeing how my mom is as a <i>madrina</i>, well yes, she really is present and they keep inviting her to birthdays...
VF	Sí, ¿verdad?	Right.

- 1131 Hay como cierto rollo de "Ay, mi madrina. Sí, es mi madrina de bautizo y---". Claro que ahí yo creo que el profesor del que te habla Alberto podría tener muchas observaciones, porque **en los casos en los que mi mamá es madrina de alguien que sí es de la familia, pues o sea, el parentesco real está por encima.** O sea, le dicen madrina cuando es una señora extraña que no es nada, pero cuando mi mamá es tía o este prima o así, dicen: "Ah, es mi tía. Que también es mi madrina", ¿no? O sea la tía--- Primero es tu tía. Pero así con esos niños que no son de la familia pues sí la invitan. A mi papá también lo han invitado. Este... **Y a veces han repetido. Por ejemplo, mi mamá sí ha sido "y de bautizo, y luego también de primera comunión, y luego también de confirmación".**
- There is a sort of a deal of "Oh, my *madrina*. Yes, this is my *madrina* of baptism and-." Of course there, I believe, that the professor that Alberto was mentioning to you could have many observations, because **in the cases where my mom is *madrina* for someone who is family, well I mean, the true relative status is above all.** I mean, they'd say *madrina* to someone who is an unrelated woman without any familial relationship, but when my mom is an aunt or cousin or something like that, they say "Oh, it's my aunt. Who is also my *madrina*," right? I mean the aunt- First, she is your aunt. But with those kids who are not from the family, well yes, they invite her. My dad also has been invited. Umm... **And sometimes they would repeat. For example, my mom has been *madrina* of baptism, and then again of first communion, and then also of confirmation."**

The young man 1131 draws a contrast between how the role of a godparent is defined in Guanajuato and in Mexico City, and how it has changed over time between his parents' generation and his own. Several differences he mentions are the family links, personal qualities, and the extent of responsibilities associated with this social role (bolded in the text). This young participant's observations of the new role of *padrinos* (and therefore *compadres*) in Mexico, and more so in Mexico City, contributes to their perception as someone close, removing the distance factor often necessary to trigger the formal 'you' or *usted* treatment.

This subsection shows that the roles of *padrinos* and *compadres* (godparents and coparents) in Mexico are being redefined across generational, geographic, and socioeconomic axes (Tables and Figures 6.1.3.2-6.1.3.9). The definitions of these culturally established social relationships are challenged by the varied lived experiences of different members of this quickly-

changing community. It is seen that the social stratification of the population by age, sex, education, occupation or SES, and origin (i.e. the macro-social factors) stratify and explain variation in daily experience of social relationships. And these are only two examples of how social lives of one generation or of one social group may differ from the rest of the community. Anthropological research into this ritual kinship in Latin America explains this evolution of tradition as a function of socioeconomic and political order of the communities as well as the general rate of social change (Mendoza Ontiveros, 2010; Mintz & Wolf, 1950). While far from homogeneous, Mexico City has been undergoing fast social changes and growing in egalitarian orientation, affecting the traditional hierarchical relationships and linguistic expressions that signify them. That is precisely the first reason to present this analysis of *compadrazgo* as part of the sociodemographic profile of the study population: to position linguistic variation in this larger panorama of variable human behavior, which are equally subject to social stratification.

The second motivation for this analysis is methodological. The observed experiential variation in social norm does not necessarily disqualify the instrument validity, but rather it becomes an important contextualization and interpretation factor for the linguistic trends revealed next. It also makes visible methodological challenges of pragmatic and sociolinguistic research carried out in such socially dynamic communities as Mexico City. Specifically applicable to this research, it is clear that participants in the role-play study are sufficiently familiar with the interlocutor roles of godfather and co-parent to approximate natural dialogue. However, the observed difference in experience also supports the decision to give the participants alternative choices among several similarly hierarchical or solidary relationships, as described in Methodology and included in the Appendix.

Ultimately, this dynamic reality of variable social experiences provides context for understanding the found linguistic variation. Specifically, the **leveling of hierarchical relationships** that characterize the change in the godparenting and co-parenting tradition are most directly reflected in the higher use of the informal ‘you’ in situations that used to trigger formal treatment. With less formal treatment, polite *leísmo* stops being a resource or diminishes in its extent. If polite *leísmo* is a way to express these original hierarchies or the social changes taking place in Mexico, then its stratification is likely to coincide with the stratification of godparenting and co-parenting experience across generational, geographic, and socioeconomic lines. Young and higher educated speakers lead the change, and Mexico City becomes the point of reference for linguistic standards for the rest of the immigrants.

6.2 Big-Picture Descriptive Trends

Before presenting the quantitative results of the statistical analyses, this section introduces a general descriptive analysis to show the big-picture trends in the data. The multivariate conditioning of polite *leísmo* will be best understood when contextualized with respect to the general variation in the ‘you’ treatment, the overall presence of the *le* clitic denoting a direct object ‘you’, the verb trends with which the clitics vary, and finally the overall comparison of production and perception patterns.

6.2.1 General Use of Usted

As presented in section 2.2.1 on the historical context of polite *leísmo*, the use of *usted* in Mexico has been diminishing in favor of the informal *tú* reference (Orozco, 2010). A questionnaire-based

variationist study in the City of Guadalajara, Jalisco state, northeast of Mexico State, shows that the informal address is being preferred by the younger generation, as well as men, urban participants, and participants with at least some education, as expected of overt-prestige variables and a change in progress. Some interlocutor characteristics that favor the use of *tú* include equal or lower power, perceived social status, social distance, and females (except for older members of politic family). The participant observations and commentary on the use of the two ‘you’ addresses includes the dichotomy for respect-*confianza* (‘trust’), which is seen as something either given or actively constructed. At the extreme respect end of the continuum are interlocutors characterized with prestigious status in the Mexican society, eliciting the least use of *tú* in the study: professor, priest, and doctor – partially resembling the patterns reported here for Mexico City.

While this study is specifically focused on variation within the formal ‘you’ treatment, it is undeniably situated within the wider range of social deixis phenomena. Specifically, if the formal treatment is on decline in Mexico, and in Mexico City in particular, then surely this affects the relative polite *leísmo* rates that go with it. Due to the delimited objective of this study, the relative *tú/usted* rates do not currently form part of the analysis, relegating it to subsequent work. However, the production part of the study is most capable of revealing a big-picture trend of address terms in Mexico City, given its open-endedness and adjustability to individual participants’ experiences: the role-play instructions made no mention of address terms and the interlocutor assistants were instructed to allow the participants to lead with the address term of their choice and comfort. Based on the 2783 tokens of all formal-‘you’ clitics in the role plays, the counts per context can be seen as inversely proportional to the use of *tú* (not directly reported on in this study). Table 6.2.1.1 orders all of the role-play contexts from highest to lowest use of

usted-DO clitics, naturally implying the inverse order for the use of *tú*. The highest use of *usted* is observed with **older** interlocutors, independently of social domain, familiarity, or speech event. **Traditional** social domain and the interlocutor’s status as someone ostensibly **older** or **higher in authority** are the common denominators among the top four role plays that together are responsible for almost 50% of all *usted*-DO clitics of the corpus. These social factors seem to be independent from the purpose of interaction, seeing as each of these four role plays represents a different speech event (invitation, offer, negotiation, and expressive greeting).

Table 6.2.1.1

Use of usted clitics by role-play context (n=107 participants; 2783 tokens)

Role Play	Social Domain	Interlocutor	Speech Event	<i>Usted</i> -DO clitics	
				N	%
4	informal	older unfamiliar citizen	invitation	409	15%
10	traditional	older familiar citizen	offer	353	13%
11	traditional	priest/religious leader	negotiation	310	11%
9	traditional	mariachi leader	expressive	292	10%
2	formal	unfamiliar client	offer	266	10%
6	informal	uncle/father-in-law	invitation	237	9%
5	informal	successful neighbor	expressive	207	7%
1	formal	professor/boss	expressive	199	7%
3	formal	doctor	negotiation	161	6%
7	formal	potential business partner	offer	146	5%
8	informal	brother-in-law/ <i>compadre</i>	negotiation	109	4%
12	traditional	<i>compadre</i>	invitation	94	3%
Total				2783	100.00%

It is also curious to note that the two *compadre* (‘co-parent’) interlocutors are at the lowest end in the use of *usted* (and therefore, highest *tú* rate), also varying in social domain and speech event configurations. This relationship type is of particular interest to the Mexican culture, highlighting sociocultural shifts in traditional and familial relationships. The section 6.1.3 on the social lives of the participants in this research presents observations of the new role of *padrinos* (and therefore *compadres*) in Mexico, and more so in Mexico City. The relevant

sociodemographic and commentary data contribute to their perception as someone close, removing the distance factor often necessary to trigger the formal ‘you’ or *usted* treatment. This social reality explains the lowest rates of any formal ‘you’ clitics in the two contexts where the interlocutor was the participant’s *compadre* (simultaneously a *padrino*), in spite of the literature reporting on its original meaning.

As for the other contexts and interlocutors included in the design of the role plays, the previously noted prestigious roles of professor, priest, and doctor (Orozco, 2010) show some variation. The priest role is indeed among the highest *usted*-DO favoring interlocutor profiles. However, professor/boss and doctor are interlocutor profiles at the mid-point between high and low *usted* choice, as seen in Table 6.2.1.1. The overall decline of *usted* in favor of *tú*, the situational factors, and ceremonial language have their undeniable consequences for polite *leísmo*, which are identified through quantitative and qualitative observations, presented in their respective Results and Discussion sections.

6.2.2 General Use of *le* as a Direct Object Clitic

As presented in Figure 6.2.2.2, out of the sample of 132 speaker participants in the production study, 107 (81%) show variation in the *le-lo* direct-object pronouns, albeit to various degrees. The 25 (19%) of the categorical non-*leísta* speakers are mostly men, college-educated, and older (see Table 6.2.2.1, reproduced from Table 4.1.1.4 of Methodology’s Participants and Their Data). The overall rate of *le* among those who do show clitic variation is 17% of all direct object clitics, marking a clear dialectal preference for the etymological pronoun *lo* (83%). Figure 6.2.2.3 illustrates this ratio for all variable *leísta* participants (the 81% of the population).

Table 6.2.2.1

Categorical non-leístas in the production study (n=25/132, 19%)

Age Group	Education Level						Total by Age Group
	None/Primary		Middle/Secondary		College/Graduate		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Young	-	-	1	-	4	1	6
Adults	-	-	2	-	4	1	7
Older	2	-	5	1	3	1	12
Total by Education Level	2		9		14		25

Figure 6.2.2.2.

Production sample population

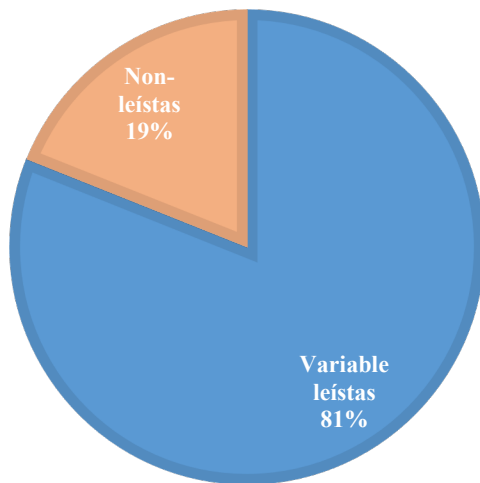
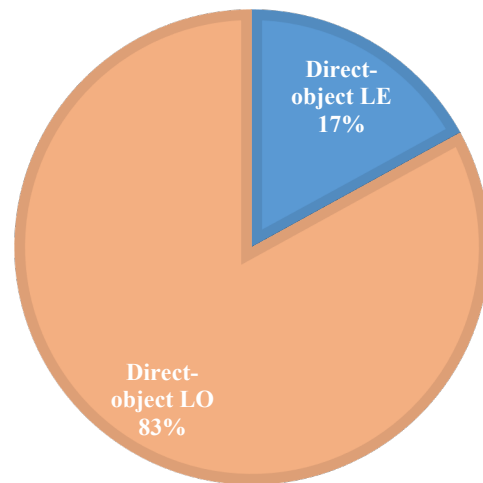


Figure 6.2.2.3.

Production direct object clitics



Among the 92 participants in the Acceptability Judgment Task of the perception study, all participants reported variation to different degrees, ranging from only 6 (3%) to the maximum possible 192 acceptable instances of *le*, as illustrated in Figure 6.2.2.4. The average acceptance rate of *le* among the categories of use, exposure, acceptability, and politeness all together is 55.9% (Figure 6.2.2.5).

Figure 6.2.2.4

Perception study individual variation in leísmo rate (maximum = 192, 100%, n=92)

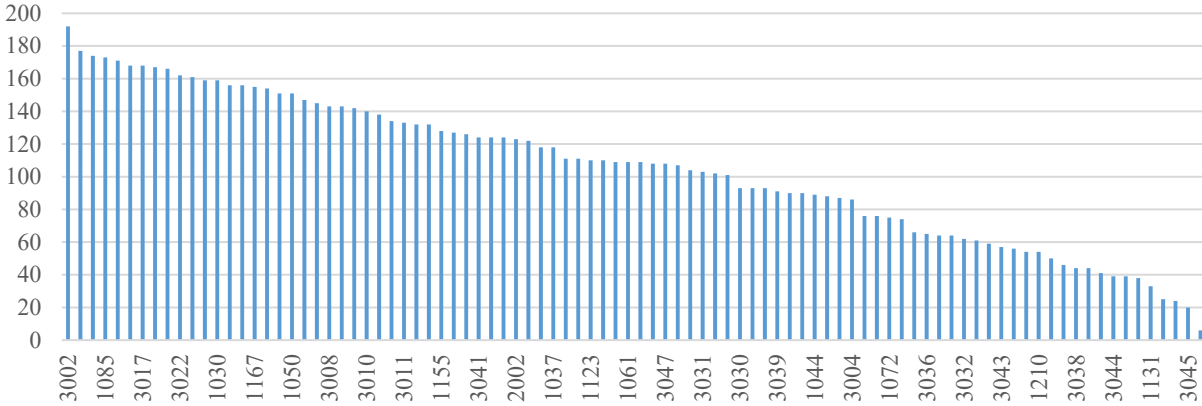
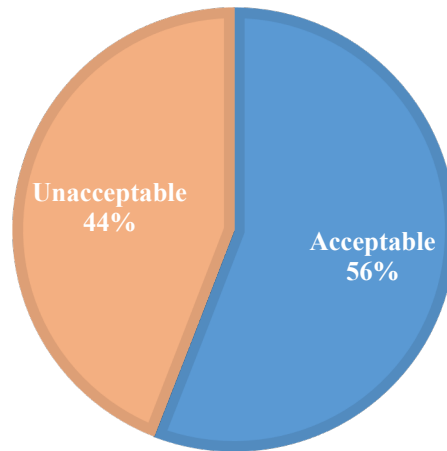


Figure 6.2.2.5

Perception study leísmo acceptability rate (n=92 speakers, 17336 tokens)

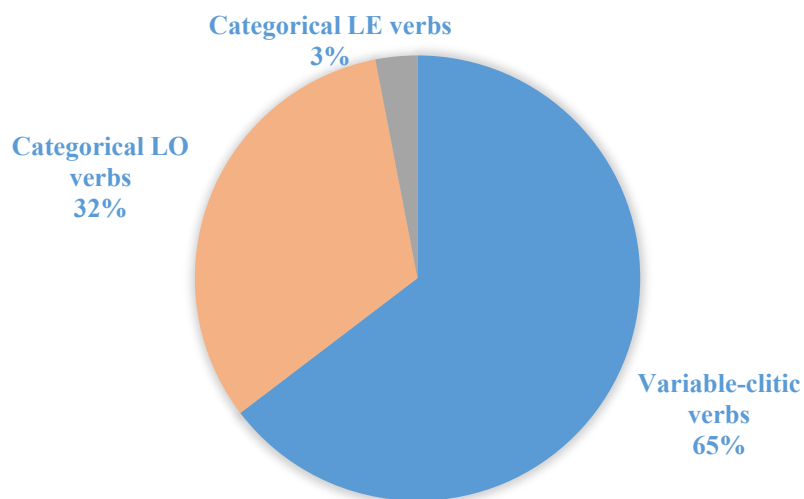


Nevertheless, as it is presented further, individual participants vary considerably in personal preferences, revealing a number of conditioning factors that together paint a curious portrait of polite *leísmo* indeed as a politeness strategy and as a social mobility projection tool available to a considerable portion of the population.

Clitic Variation in Production. Of the 132 participants in the role plays, 107 can be said to be variable *leístas* (81%) while 25 showed no evidence of polite *leísmo* and categorical *lo* use (19%). Among the 107 variable *leísta* participants in the production study and their 2784 tokens, a total of 99 verbs were produced, counting the presented key words as well as all spontaneously produced transitive verbs with a direct object ‘you’-formal clitic. As Figure 6.2.2.6 shows, of all verbs, 64 (65%) show at least some variation, while 35 (35%) do not. That results in 2379 verb tokens that are useful for variational analysis (see Table 6.2.3.4 below). Of the non-variable verbs, the great majority (32/35) are categorically *lo*-preferring, the only 3 exceptions being *mirar* ‘to watch,’ *abrazar* ‘to hug/embrace,’ and *afectar* ‘to affect’ – each with a single instance in the production corpus.

Figure 6.2.2.6

Production study verbs by clitic variability (n=107 speakers, 2784 tokens)



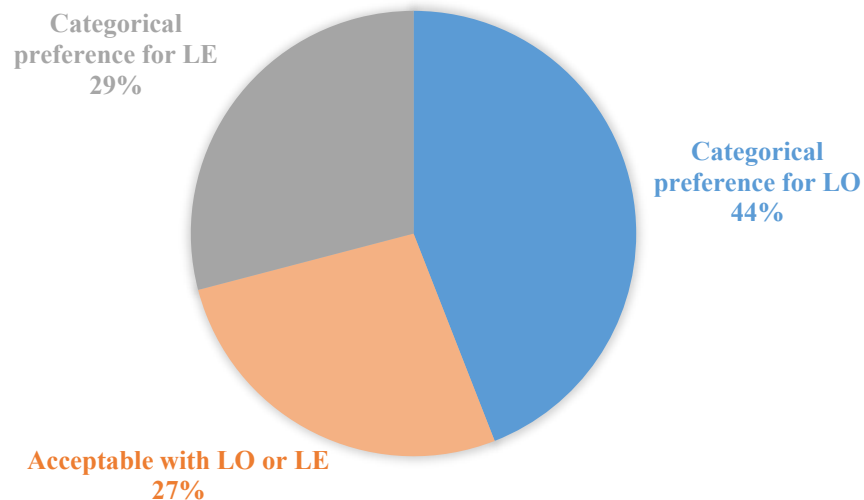
Nevertheless, while the majority of the verbs in the study show variation in the clitic, this variation is not random, as that would mean a fifty-fifty chance of either *lo* or *le*. On the contrary, as has been reported, the *le* choice conforms only 17% of all produced verb-clitic

tokens, making polite *leísmo* a significant minority variant and therefore subject to nonrandom conditioning explored in the Quantitative Results section.

Clitic Variation in Perception. Polite *leísmo* is acceptable at a much higher rate than it is produced, namely 56% of the time. All 92 perception study participants accept polite *leísmo* at least once across the twelve contextualized scenarios and four clitic-bearing utterances per scenario, for a total of 48 transitive verb tokens per participant (now limited to 25 different verbs, see Table 4.3.2.4 of Methodology). Acceptability of *lo* as the only possible clitic equals 44% of the corpus. That means that the rest 56% of the time, *le* is acceptable as either the only option (29%) or as a valid alternative to *lo* (27%). This distribution is illustrated in Figure 6.2.2.7.

Figure 6.2.2.7

Perception study verbs by clitic variability (n=92 speakers, 17336 tokens)

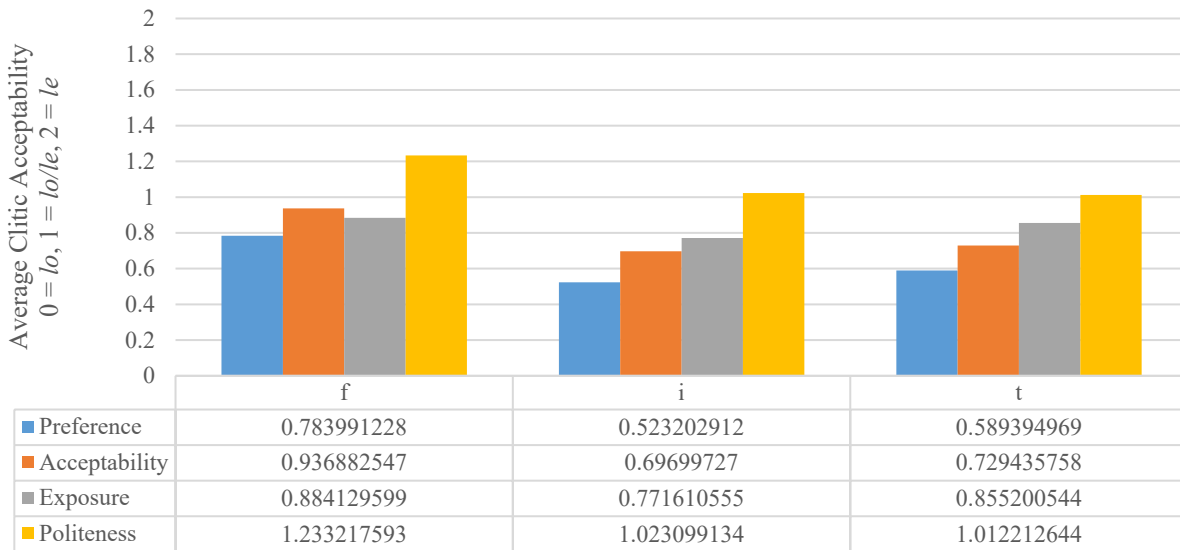


Perception data contains four types of attitudes toward clitic variation: personal preference in use, general acceptability, exposure or familiarity, and politeness. Figure 6.2.2.8 visually shows that polite *leísmo* is more acceptable in formal social domains as opposed to informal and traditional domains. In these social domains, polite *leísmo* grows modestly in acceptability from

personal preference (largely disfavored) to general acceptability, to reported exposure, and finally achieving the ambivalent acceptability as a polite variant. The average of 1 corresponds to both *le* and *lo* clitics acceptable, meaning that tendencies below 1 show preference for *lo* and above 1 lean toward *le*.

Figure 6.2.2.8

Average clitic acceptability by judgment category and social domain: f = formal, i = informal, and t = traditional (n=92 speakers, 17336 tokens)



Within the formal social interactions, however, acceptability of polite *leísmo* is higher and relatively the same across personal preference, acceptability, and exposure. This is also the domain where polite *leísmo* is considered most polite, surpassing the average ambivalent ranking of 1 on the vertical axis. Overall this general preview highlights two factors that stand out in perception of polite *leísmo*: its general perception as polite and its connection to formal contexts.

6.2.3 Verb Trends in Production and Perception

An important element of descriptive analysis involves the verbs governing polite *leísmo*. It has been proposed that verbs in this study act as the illusionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) by virtue of their semantic meaning and intentionality, and because they organize the event participants in argument structure, from which the direct-object interlocutor receives his or her semantic role. The verbs are, thus, responsible not only for the meaning of the utterance and identifying the speech event, but also for modulating the force of the action and the degree of affectedness of the participants through variable telicity, transitivity, and structure. The production and perception of polite *leísmo* as a verb-governed clitic benefits from verb analysis, which is presented here as a comparative frequency analysis.

Verb-Based Frequencies in Production. First, a frequency analysis contrasts the verbs that show the highest uses of *le* vs. *lo* in spoken role-play discourse. Figures 6.2.3.1 and 6.2.3.2 show that the number and the types of verbs differ between polite *leísmo* and the etymological choices, where the larger font corresponds to higher verb frequency. First, there are significantly fewer verbs evidenced with *le* (35) than with *lo* (96). Furthermore, some verbs appear significantly more frequently than others: *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’ appear more than any other verb with *le* (Figure 6.2.3.1), while *lo* is common with a larger and more diverse number of verbs at similar rates: *ver* ‘see’, *invitar* ‘invite’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, *felicitar* ‘congratulate’, *saludar* ‘greet’, *apoyar* ‘support’, and others (Figure 6.2.3.2).

Figure 6.2.3.1

LE-verb frequencies in production corpus

(n=107 speakers; 35 verbs)



Figure 6.2.3.2

LO-verb frequencies in production corpus

(n=107 speakers; 96 verbs)



Seeing how the *le* clitic is disproportionately used with the two verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’, Figure 6.2.3.3 allows to focus on the other 33 verbs that participate in polite *leísmo* and are not appreciable otherwise. The reasons and the meaning of this striking disproportion are taken up in the Discussion section. For now, the frequency distribution analysis shows that the main difference between the *le*- and *lo*-preferring verbs is the verb *atender* ‘assist’: it is the highest taker of *le* after the two outliers (Figure 6.2.3.3), at the same time diminishing in contrast to other more frequent verbs taking *lo* (Figure 6.2.3.2). It is interesting to note that many of the *le*-governing verbs are also among the highest users of *lo*, highlighting significance of this variation: namely, *invitar* ‘invite’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, *apoyar* ‘support’, *saludar* ‘greet’, among others.

Figure 6.2.3.3

Production: LE-verb frequencies without the prototypes *ayudar* and *llamar* ($n=107$ speakers; 33 verbs)



While some lexical differences clearly show preferences for *le* over *lo* (namely, *ayudar* ‘help’, *llamar* ‘call’, and *atender* ‘assist’), and vice versa (e.g. *ver* ‘see’), their variation within many of the same verbs calls for the analysis of other factors behind this variation, reported in the following Quantitative Results section.

Table 6.2.3.5 lists all of the verbs produced in the role-play study and conforming the spoken corpus: 2783 verb-clitic tokens produced by 107 variable speakers. Table 6.2.3.4 is a subset of Table 6.2.3.5, corresponding only to the verbs that vary in their clitic expression. The study includes verbs proposed by design (highlighted rows) and also any transitive clitic-bearing verbs produced spontaneously by the participants (unhighlighted rows), which results in 99 different verbs. The verbs are presented in the order from most to least frequently used, by the total number of occurrences independently of the clitic. The clitic rates are presented side by side with respect to the grand total of the 2783-token corpus.

Table 6.2.3.4

Verbs showing DO clitic variation in production, from highest to lowest le rate (35/99 verbs)

N	Verb	English translation	<i>le</i>	<i>lo</i>	Grand Total
1	<i>ayudar</i>	help	155	91	246
2	<i>llamar</i>	call	143	39	182
3	<i>atender</i>	assist	34	80	114
4	<i>invitar</i>	invite	23	204	227
5	<i>apoyar</i>	support	20	153	173
6	<i>saludar</i>	greet	16	151	167
7	<i>acompañar</i>	accompany	14	192	206
8	<i>consultar</i>	consult	12	12	24
9	<i>felicitar</i>	congratulate	8	173	181
10	<i>hacer</i>	make	6	14	20
11	<i>visitar</i>	visit	5	94	99
12	<i>convencer</i>	convince	3	101	104
13	<i>recibir</i>	receive	3	76	79
14	<i>entretener</i>	entertain, hold up	3	57	60
15	<i>anotar</i>	note down	2	8	10
16	<i>poner</i>	put	2	13	15
17	<i>nominar</i>	nominate	2	37	39
18	<i>reconocer</i>	recognize	2	24	26
19	<i>considerar</i>	consider	2	7	9
20	<i>ver</i>	see	2	195	197
21	<i>traer</i>	bring	2	5	7
22	<i>interrumpir</i>	interrupt	2	39	41
23	<i>apuntar</i>	note down, schedule	1	24	25
24	<i>presentar</i>	present	1	2	3
25	<i>mirar</i>	look, see	1	0	1
26	<i>conocer</i>	(get to) know	1	34	35
27	<i>afectar</i>	affect	1	0	1
28	<i>detener</i>	hold up	1	13	14
29	<i>abrazar</i>	hug, embrace	1	0	1
30	<i>entender</i>	understand	1	2	3
31	<i>nombrar</i>	name	1	19	20
32	<i>apreciar</i>	appreciate	1	7	8
33	<i>querer</i>	love	1	27	28
34	<i>festejar</i>	celebrate	1	1	2
35	<i>agendar</i>	schedule	1	11	12
	Subtotal		474	1905	2379

Note: Shaded rows highlight those verbs that are presented as suggested IFIDs in the role-play instructions. Bold counts show transitive verbs that occur at least half the time or more with *le* than with *lo*. Faded out verbs show an unreliable dominance of *le* due to low-token numbers.

In Table 6.2.3.5, verbs that vary in their clitic choice are presented in bold and represent 85% of all verbs (summarized as a subset in Table 6.2.3.4), while the 15% that appear categorically with one clitic or another are in regular font. Verbs with three occurrences or less are grayed out to caution against making generalizations due to low numbers. They represent 50% of the corpus.

Table 6.2.3.5

Production corpus by verb frequency and clitic frequency (n = 107; 2783 tokens)

N	VERB	English translation	LE		LO		TOTAL	
			raw	%	raw	%	raw	%
1	ayudar	help	155	5.57%	91	3.27%	246	8.84%
2	invitar	invite	23	0.83%	204	7.33%	227	8.16%
3	acompañar	accompany	14	0.50%	192	6.90%	206	7.40%
4	ver	see	2	0.07%	195	7.01%	197	7.08%
5	llamar	call	143	5.14%	39	1.40%	182	6.54%
6	felicitar	congratulate	8	0.29%	173	6.22%	181	6.50%
7	apoyar	support	20	0.72%	153	5.50%	173	6.22%
8	saludar	greet	16	0.57%	151	5.43%	167	6.00%
9	atender	assist	34	1.22%	80	2.87%	114	4.10%
10	convencer	convince	3	0.11%	101	3.63%	104	3.74%
11	visitar	visit	5	0.18%	94	3.38%	99	3.56%
12	recibir	receive	3	0.11%	76	2.73%	79	2.84%
13	<i>admirar</i>	admire		0.00%	65	2.34%	65	2.34%
14	entretener	hold up	3	0.11%	57	2.05%	60	2.16%
15	<i>esperar</i>	wait for		0.00%	42	1.51%	42	1.51%
16	interrumpir	interrupt	2	0.07%	39	1.40%	41	1.47%
17	<i>elegir</i>	elect		0.00%	39	1.40%	39	1.40%
18	nominar	nominate	2	0.07%	37	1.33%	39	1.40%
19	conocer	(get to) know	1	0.04%	34	1.22%	35	1.26%
20	<i>encontrar</i>	find		0.00%	31	1.11%	31	1.11%
21	querer	love	1	0.04%	27	0.97%	28	1.01%
22	reconocer	recognize	2	0.07%	24	0.86%	26	0.93%
23	<i>llevar</i>	take		0.00%	25	0.90%	25	0.90%
24	apuntar	note down, schedule	1	0.04%	24	0.86%	25	0.90%
25	consultar	consult	12	0.43%	12	0.43%	24	0.86%
26	<i>recomendar</i>	recommend		0.00%	21	0.75%	21	0.75%
27	hacer	make	6	0.22%	14	0.50%	20	0.72%
28	<i>buscar</i>	look for		0.00%	20	0.72%	20	0.72%
29	nombrar	name	1	0.04%	19	0.68%	20	0.72%

N	VERB	English translation	LE		LO		TOTAL	
			raw	%	raw	%	raw	%
30	<i>escuchar</i>	listen to		0.00%	19	0.68%	19	0.68%
31	<i>dejar</i>	leave, let		0.00%	15	0.54%	15	0.54%
32	<i>poner</i>	put	2	0.07%	13	0.47%	15	0.54%
33	<i>detener</i>	hold up	1	0.04%	13	0.47%	14	0.50%
34	<i>agendar</i>	schedule	1	0.04%	11	0.40%	12	0.43%
35	<i>molestar</i>	bother		0.00%	10	0.36%	10	0.36%
36	<i>anotar</i>	note down	2	0.07%	8	0.29%	10	0.36%
37	<i>considerar</i>	consider	2	0.07%	7	0.25%	9	0.32%
38	<i>tener</i>	have		0.00%	8	0.29%	8	0.29%
39	<i>contactar</i>	contact		0.00%	8	0.29%	8	0.29%
40	<i>apreciar</i>	appreciate	1	0.04%	7	0.25%	8	0.29%
41	<i>traer</i>	bring	2	0.07%	5	0.18%	7	0.25%
42	<i>contratar</i>	hire		0.00%	7	0.25%	7	0.25%
43	<i>cuidar</i>	take care of		0.00%	6	0.22%	6	0.22%
44	<i>proponer</i>	propose		0.00%	6	0.22%	6	0.22%
45	<i>necesitar</i>	need		0.00%	5	0.18%	5	0.18%
46	<i>meter</i>	get into		0.00%	4	0.14%	4	0.14%
47	<i>animar</i>	encourage		0.00%	4	0.14%	4	0.14%
48	<i>observar</i>	observe		0.00%	4	0.14%	4	0.14%
49	<i>estimar</i>	esteem		0.00%	4	0.14%	4	0.14%
50	<i>tratar</i>	treat		0.00%	3	0.11%	3	0.11%
51	<i>tomar</i>	take		0.00%	3	0.11%	3	0.11%
52	<i>regresar</i>	return		0.00%	3	0.11%	3	0.11%
53	<i>presentar</i>	introduce	1	0.04%	2	0.07%	3	0.11%
54	<i>entender</i>	understand	1	0.04%	2	0.07%	3	0.11%
55	<i>canalizar</i>	channel		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
56	<i>orientar</i>	orient		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
57	<i>escoger</i>	choose		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
58	<i>pasar</i>	pass		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
59	<i>integrar</i>	integrate		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
60	<i>defraudar</i>	let down		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
61	<i>adorar</i>	adore		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
62	<i>ascender</i>	promote		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
63	<i>localizar</i>	locate		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
64	<i>oir</i>	hear		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
65	<i>festejar</i>	celebrate	1	0.04%	1	0.04%	2	0.07%
66	<i>identificar</i>	identify		0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.07%
67	<i>forzar</i>	force		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
68	<i>seguir</i>	follow		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
69	<i>respetar</i>	respect		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
70	<i>notar</i>	notice		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%

N	VERB	English translation	LE		LO		TOTAL	
			raw	%	raw	%	raw	%
71	<i>mirar</i>	look, see	1	0.04%		0.00%	1	0.04%
72	<i>abrumar</i>	burden		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
73	<i>mandar</i>	send		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
74	<i>abrazar</i>	hug, embrace	1	0.04%		0.00%	1	0.04%
75	<i>sacar</i>	get out		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
76	<i>inscribir</i>	enroll		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
77	<i>sustituir</i>	substitute		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
78	<i>amar</i>	love		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
79	<i>agarrar</i>	grab		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
80	<i>asesorar</i>	advise		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
81	<i>recordar</i>	remind		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
82	<i>premiar</i>	reward		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
83	<i>representar</i>	represent		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
84	<i>aceptar</i>	accept		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
85	<i>revisar</i>	check up		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
86	<i>lanzar</i>	launch		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
87	<i>matar</i>	kill		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
88	<i>proteger</i>	protect		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
89	<i>seleccionar</i>	select		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
90	<i>acoger</i>	take in		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
91	<i>afectar</i>	affect	1	0.04%		0.00%	1	0.04%
92	<i>bendecir</i>	bless		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
93	<i>topar</i>	run into		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
94	<i>recoger</i>	pick up		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
95	<i>disculpar</i>	forgive		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
96	<i>apapachar</i>	cuddle		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
97	<i>distraer</i>	distract		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
98	<i>maltratar</i>	mistreat		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
99	<i>importunar</i>	importune, bother		0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
	Grand Total		474	17.03%	2309	82.97%	2783	100.00%

Note: Shaded rows highlight those verbs that are presented as suggested IFIDs in the role-play instructions. Bold counts show transitive verbs with at least some *le* occurrences in the production corpus. Faded out verbs are low-frequency occurrences whose percentages are unreliable due to low numbers.

With 50% of all tokens not useful for reliable lexical analysis and generalization, it is helpful to visualize the frequency distribution of the individual verbs and put it in perspective, as in Figure 6.2.3.6. Specifically, it can be observed that the overall frequency distribution is far from normal: the highest-frequency verbs are few and account for the largest portion of the data, while

the lowest-frequency verbs are many, account for most variation, but form the smaller portion of the data. This log-shaped disproportion, however, is neither planned nor problematic, as it closely follows the Zipf's law in language, which describes natural word frequencies precisely this way (Zipf, 1936).

The relative clitic frequencies, in turn, can be visualized with respect to these general verb frequencies in the spoken corpus as shown in Figure 6.2.3.6. In line with the presented *le*-governing verbs in Figures 6.2.3.1 and 6.2.3.3, the verbs responsible for the majority of all *le* clitics in the corpus are *ayudar* 'help' and *llamar* 'call', followed by *atender* 'assist' and a few other highest-frequency verbs.

Figure 6.2.3.7 reorders the verbs in Figure 6.2.3.6 from highest to lowest *le* rate in production but only shows the 35 verbs that vary in their choice of the clitic (corresponding to Table 6.2.3.4). These visualizations help notice that clitic frequency is not independent of verb frequency, but that verb frequency is not enough to predict polite *leísmo*. Other factors must be responsible for its conditioning in speech.

Figure 6.2.3.6

Relative clitic rates and raw verb frequency distribution in the spoken role-play corpus (n=107 speakers; 99 verbs; 2783 tokens)

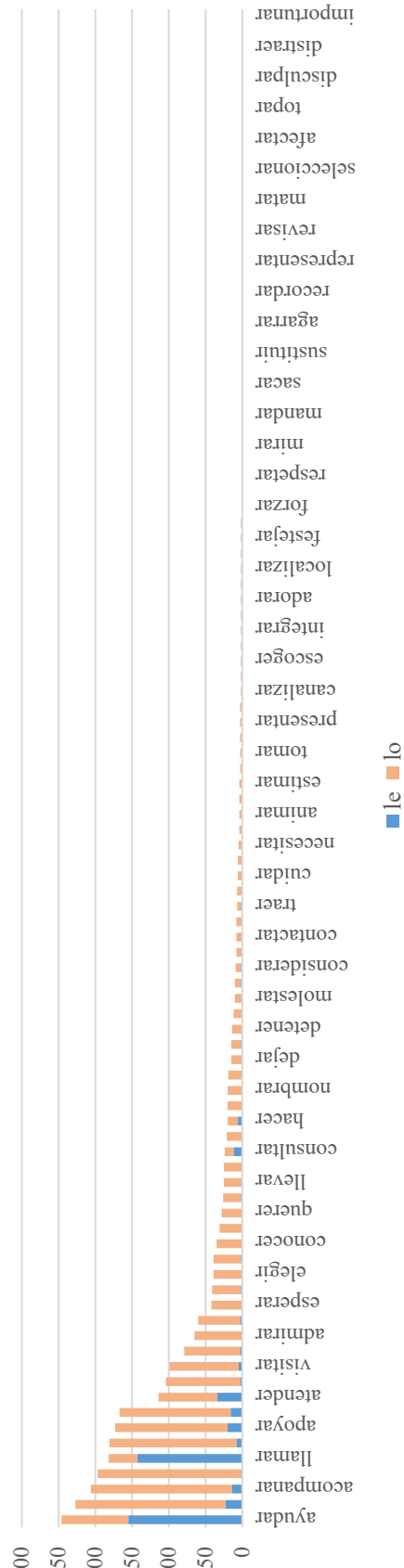
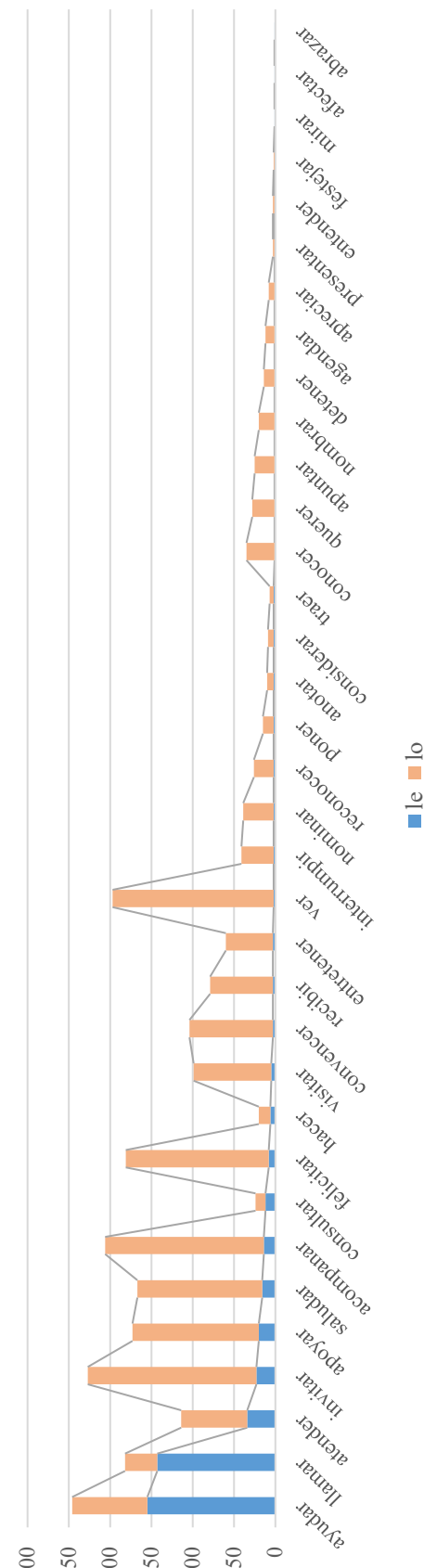


Figure 6.2.3.7

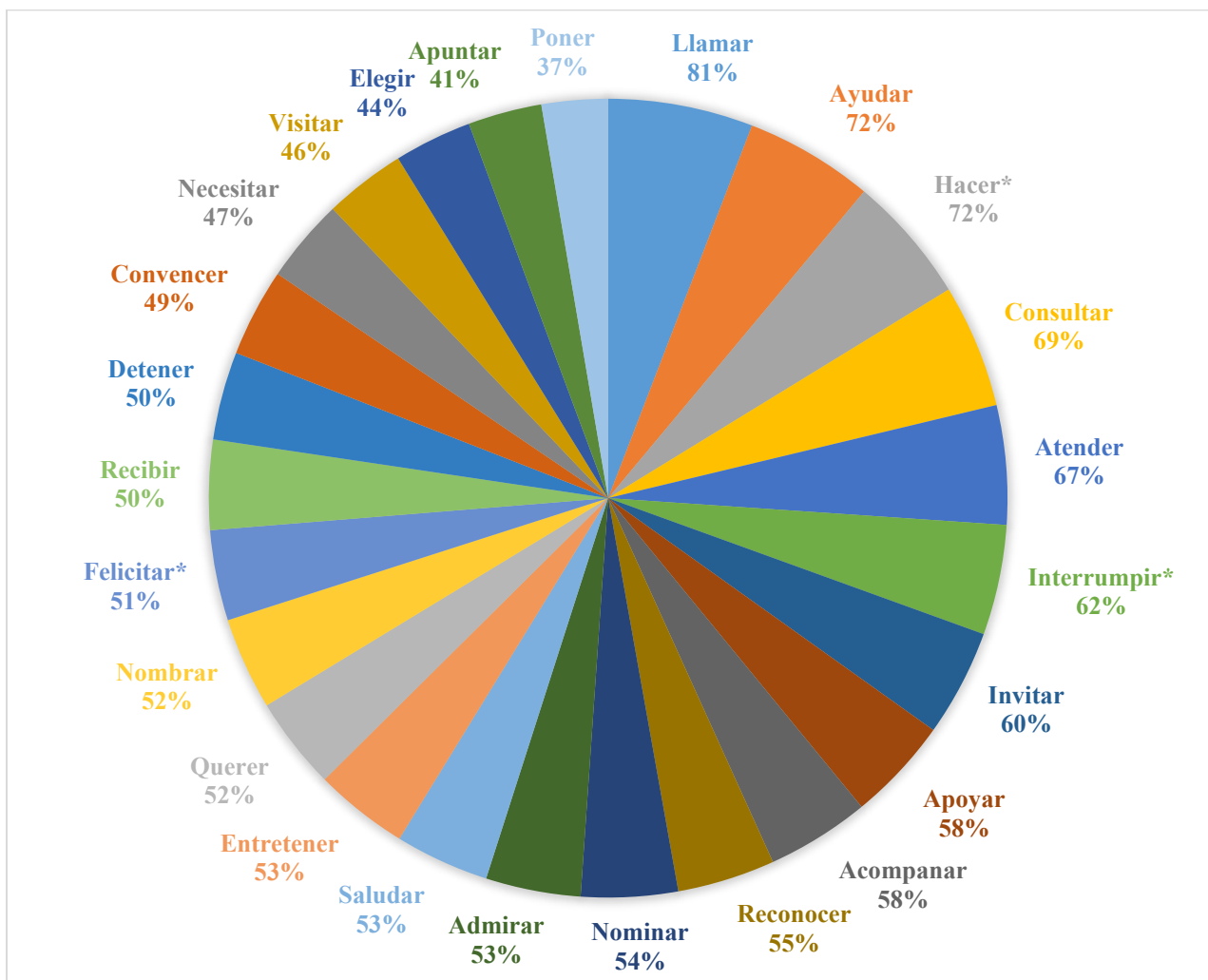
Variable DO verbs from highest to lowest production of le (n=107 speakers; 35 verbs; 2379 tokens)



Verb-Based Frequencies in Perception. The production study verb patterns show, among several things, that the *le* clitic is not in random, free variation with *lo* due to its skewness of distribution. However, these patterns represent just 17% of the spoken data, corresponding to the use of *le* over *lo*. What makes these patterns even more significant is that the same verbs are most readily perceptually accepted with *le*, either as the only possibility or as one of two acceptable clitics, as illustrated in Figure 6.2.3.8.

Figure 6.2.3.8

Relative ranking of verbs by percent acceptability of le in the AJT (asterisks mark salient deviations from the production patterns) (n = 92 participants, 25 verbs)



The AJT allows to compare 25 verbs included in the design of both production and perception studies. Diverging from the production patterns is the verb *felicitar* ‘congratulate’, which is accepted at a lower rate (51%) than some other verbs that are not particularly frequent with polite *leísmo* in oral speech. Additionally, a few verbs not seen frequently produced in the role plays stand out as highly acceptable with *le* in the Acceptability Judgment Task: *hacer [cambiar de opinión]* ‘make [change mind]’ (72% acceptable) and *interrumpir* ‘interrupt’ (62% acceptable). The Acceptability Judgment Task overall shows very few verbs acceptable only with *lo*, favoring instead clitic optionality. Verbs that show less than 50% acceptability with *le* in favor of *lo* are *poner a cargo* ‘put in charge’, *apuntar* ‘note down’, *elegir* ‘elect’, *visitar* ‘visit’, *necesitar* ‘need’, and *convencer* ‘convince’.

Figure 6.2.3.9 shows this variable verb acceptability from highest to lowest *le* acceptability, where exclusive preference for *le* corresponds to the score of 2. The middle band of the bars corresponds to the judgments allowing both *le* and *lo*, and therefore adding to the acceptability of *le* as a variant and scored as 1. The band corresponding to the value of 0 are the categorical *lo* preferences. Looking at the most frequently used verbs, it can be visually established that the categorical preferences for *lo* and *le* are inversely proportional: the more one verb is acceptable with *le*, the less it is acceptable with *lo*. This is the case of the verbs most readily acceptable with *le*: *ayudar* ‘help’, *llamar* ‘call’, *consultar* ‘consult’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, *invitar* ‘invite’, *saludar* ‘greet’, and *atender* ‘assist’. At the same time, no direct relationship is evident for the optional *le* and *lo*, which the participants select to admit that both clitics are acceptable. The middle band of the bars corresponding to this option is highest for the verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *invitar* ‘invite’ (each 2% of all of the responses), appearing most flexible with the clitics in spite of their inverse rates of categorical *le* and *lo* preferences (1.7-2.4% vs.

2.5-1.9%). For most other verbs except for the least used, this clitic optionality steadily varies from 0.9 to 1.8% of all responses. This variation in the verb preferences and particularly in the option of either clitic across verbs is noteworthy. It certainly requires a deeper statistical analysis of the factors that may condition this variation and make one clitic more acceptable over the other, which is the focus of the following Quantitative Results section.

Figure 6.2.3.10 further shows these verb differences with respect to the four reported judgments: preferred use, reported exposure, perceived acceptability, and politeness. The vertical axis corresponds to the average judgments among 92 participants ranked at 0 when strongly preferring the *lo* variant, 1 admitting both *le* and *lo*, and 2 favoring the *le* variant. Overall, politeness judgments supercede all other judgments on the acceptability task of polite *leísmo*, showing clear association of polite *leísmo* with politeness. The general trend across the verbs is that acceptability of *le* plotted on the vertical axis grows from personal preference to acceptability to exposure to politeness judgments. This trend stops among the verbs that are considered most polite with *le*, at the left end of the verb continuum. Specifically, the judgment of exposure to clitic variation levels out or drops below acceptability with the verbs most often acceptable with *le*: *llamar* ‘call’, *hacer [cambiar de opinión]* ‘make [change mind]’, *consultar* ‘consult’, *ayudar* ‘help’, *atender* ‘assist’, *interrumpir* ‘interrupt’, and *acompañar* ‘accompany’.

Figure 6.2.3.9

Averages of all reported judgments by verb with respect to 2=le, 1=both le and lo, 0=lo (n = 92 participants, 25 verbs)

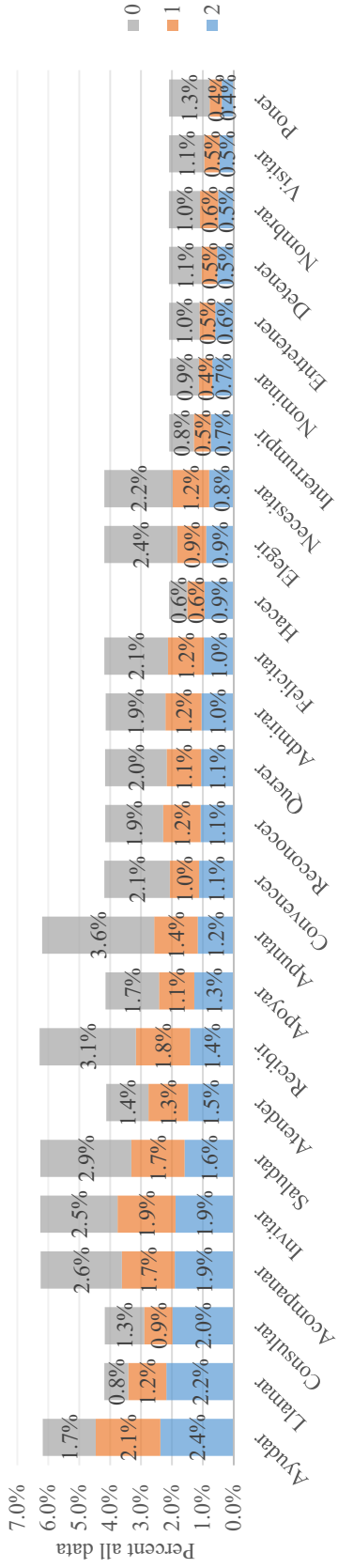
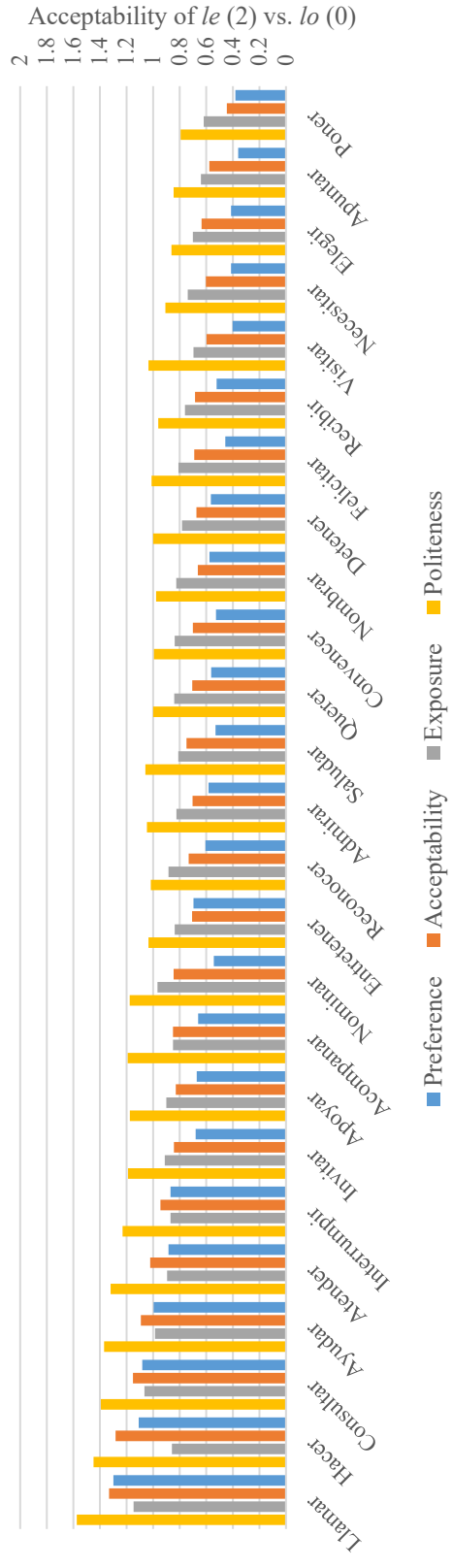


Figure 6.2.3.10

Four average acceptability judgments by verb: 0 = lo, 1 = both le and lo, 2 = le (n = 92 participants, 25 verbs)



The specific verbs are not included in the quantitative multivariate logistic regression analysis for several reasons. To begin with, there are a total of 99 different verbs between the production and perception studies, of which several are significantly overrepresented, while half of all of the verbs appear so sporadically that it is impossible to conduct a statistically reliable analysis.

Additionally, verbs are highly multifactorial in nature. They involve several related measures: lexical meaning, semantic meaning, syntactic structure, and frequency – all of which are context-dependent and variable. Therefore, it is these verbal features in context that are included in the quantitative analysis rather than specific lexical items. Furthermore, frequency is a tricky variable due to the Zipfian distribution (Zipf, 1936): it is neither categorical, nor is it a typical continuous variable. Frequency as a factor deserves special discussion about operationalization, measure, and meaning, which is left until the Discussion section.

This section has prioritized the big-picture trends that represent the context of clitic variation presented in finer detail next. Specifically, it becomes clear that the formal ‘you’ treatment is on the decline in Mexico City and that its corresponding *le* variant is rather infrequent in oral speech. It is not a feature of just any transitive context either: while almost a hundred different transitive verbs are produced in the interactive role plays, only a third of them show clitic variation, and half of all polite *leísmo* tokens occur with two of the most frequent verbs in the corpus (i.e. *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’). Additionally, the rest of polite *leísmo* predominantly accompanies verbs that are semantically associated with the most frequent two. The general differences between production and perception further point to subtleties in meaning and value of polite *leísmo*: it is obvious that *le* is not simply an available alternative to *lo*, because it is largely familiar to the population despite its low use and, what is more, is associated with formality and politeness. The meaning of this unequal verb distribution and preference is

further explored in the Discussion section, but the quantitative analysis helps shed light on additional conditioning elements of this nonrandom variation.

6.3 Quantitative Results

This section presents quantitative analyses of production and perception data separately, before culminating with their side-by-side comparison. In each case, a multivariate logistic regression analysis of the entire corpus analysis is complemented by a strategic focus on its subcorpora, in order to deepen our understanding of the complex relationships between data and social realities of polite *leísmo*. What permeates the results is the fact that polite *leísmo* is simultaneously conditioned by multiple linguistic, social, and contextual factors, and that this complexity is further enhanced by considering insignificant factors and differences in patterns between production and perception. In each case, the statistically significant factor groups are presented in order from most to least influential, which is reflected in the ranges of factor weights or probabilities for each factor group.

6.3.1 Production Study

In order to reach the objective of discovering the social meaning of polite *leísmo*, the production study corresponds to the first research question, formulated thus:

RQ1. Production: What linguistic, social, and contextual factors condition Mexican speakers' variation in (formal) 2nd-person clitic in oral production, as measured by relative production rates?

- (a) What are the linguistic factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (b) What are the contextual factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?
- (c) What are the social factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was applied to the production data consisting of 2783 tokens of LE/LO clitics produced among 107 speakers in the role-play corpus. The application value, or the dependent variable, for the analysis purposes was the use of the direct-object *le* as opposed to *lo*, a naturally binary distinction. Twenty factors included in the analysis include linguistic, contextual, and social variables: verb subject, object number, polarity, syntactic structure, telicity, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, argument structure, verb morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood, social domain, interlocutor power, speech event, speaker sex, speaker age, speaker origin, speaker education level, speaker's highest SES achieved, speaker's SES mobility, and generational SES mobility. Table 6.3.1.1 lists significant variables in order from highest to lowest effect, measured by range of variation found among the levels of the variable, of which the favoring factors (i.e. above .5) are bolded, while disfavoring factors (i.e. below .5) are in regular font.

Complete Oral Corpus Analysis. Of the 20 variables tested in the analysis, 13 are selected as affecting the LE/LO variation in the role-play production data. The variables not found to be significant are three linguistic factors of object number, argument structure, and tense expression, and such speaker social characteristics as age, education level, highest SES, and generational SES mobility. All 4 of the contextual factors are significant, and 6 of the linguistic and 3 social factors come into equation to various degrees, as visualized in Table 6.3.1.1 and described below.

Table 6.3.1.1*Multivariate analysis of polite leísmo in the complete oral corpus of role plays*

Factors:	Probability	%-LE	Apps/Total	% Data
Total N: 2783				
LE: 17.0%				
Input: .110				
<i>Log likelihood</i> = -991.268				
<i>Significance</i> = .037				
1. Verb morphology (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Conditional/Future	.698	39.7	25/63	2.3
Present	.620	15.4	107/693	24.9
Subjunctive	.494	14.8	22/149	5.4
Non-finite	.469	17.9	316/1767	63.5
Past	.182	3.6	4/111	4.0
<i>Range:</i> 52.6				
2. Speech Event (Context-Pragmatics)				
Offer	.761	29.0	222/765	27.5
Negotiation	.565	23.4	136/580	20.8
Greeting/Compliment	.362	7.6	53/698	25.1
Invitation	.296	8.5	63/740	26.6
<i>Range:</i> 46.5				
3. Telicity (Ling-Semantics)				
Telic	.571	20.6	435/2114	76.0
Atelic	.289	5.8	39/669	24.0
<i>Range:</i> 28.2				
4. Subject (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Impersonal	.644	23.9	11/46	1.7
He/She	.619	28.6	20/70	2.5
I	.511	18.1	361/1995	71.7
We	.499	14.2	63/445	16.0
They	.344	8.4	19/227	8.2
<i>Range:</i> 27.5				
5. Syntactic structure (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Conditional	.743	45.7	32/70	2.5
Interrogative	.623	37.7	69/183	6.6
Unmitigated (declarative)	.484	14.7	33/2530	90.9
<i>Range:</i> 25.9				
6. Power (Context-Interlocutor)				
Authority over speaker (+P)	.622	19.3	278/1439	51.7
No authority over speaker (-P)	.369	14.6	196/1344	48.3
<i>Range:</i> 25.3				
7. Social Domain (Context-Pragmatics)				
Informal	.602	11.8	65/553	19.9
Formal	.559	24.4	288/1181	42.4
Traditional/ceremonial	.381	11.5	121/1049	37.7
<i>Range:</i> 22.1				

Factors:	Probability	%-LE	Apps/Total	% Data
8. (Ir)realis Mode (Context-Pragmatics)				
Irrealis	.599	26.2	377/1439	51.7
Realis	.394	7.2	97/1344	48.3
<i>Range: 20.5</i>				
9. Morphosyntactic Position (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Pre-auxiliary/modal	.587	23.8	174/732	26.3
Postverbal	.512	14.2	143/1004	36.1
Preverbal	.428	15.0	157/1047	37.6
<i>Range: 15.9</i>				
10. SES Mobility (Social-Speaker)				
2-Highest	.572	16.6	33/199	7.2
0-None	.515	17.6	351/1991	71.5
1-Some	.427	15.2	90/593	21.3
<i>Range: 14.5</i>				
11. Polarity (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Non-negated verb	.510	17.2	445/2586	92.9
Negated verb	.368	14.7	29/197	7.1
<i>Range: 14.2</i>				
12. Origin (Social-Speaker)				
Other State	.564	20.8	156/751	27.0
Mexico City	.477	15.9	266/1673	60.1
Mexico State	.472	14.5	52/359	12.9
<i>Range: 9.2</i>				
13. Sex (Social-Speaker)				
Females	.536	18.3	280/1531	55.0
Males	.456	15.5	194/1252	45.0
<i>Range: 8.0</i>				

Conditioning Factors in Production. As the quantitative results show, a number of social, linguistic, and contextual factors play a role in the variable production of polite *leísmo* and the direct-object ‘you’ reference in general. This highlights the complex nature of the phenomenon, as expected at the morphosyntax-pragmatics interface. Looking at the ranges of variables that signify different levels of effect of each factor on polite *leísmo*, the variables can be grouped into 6 tiers of significance: under 10, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50+. For ease of visualization, these tiers are shaded on a continuum from lightest to darkest, corresponding to the level of significance based on these numeric ranges, the darkest being the most significant. The middle tiers are most variable in terms of the number and type of factors included, combining linguistic, contextual, and social variables. In production, all of the considered contextual factors

are selected as significant, while only some linguistic and social factors come into play to condition the clitic choice.

Pragmatic/Contextual Factors. Contextual factors refer to the context of interaction, including social setting, the interlocutor, and intention expression. Those factors conditioning polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, in order from highest significance or range, include **speech event** (range=46.5), **interlocutor power** (range=25.3), **social domain** (range=22.1), and **(ir)realis mood** (range=20.5) of the action expressed by the verb. The first three factors are defined by the study design and expressly stated in the role play contexts to ensure comparability among speaker population. The latter factor of (ir)realis mood was coded as such based on each participant's individual formulation of the projected illocutionary force, as described and illustrated in the Analysis section.

Of the four contextual variables, the speech event carries the most explanatory power, with **offers** (f.w.=.761) and **negotiations** (f.w.=.565) favoring the use of *le* over *lo* in addressing the interlocutor. Invitations (f.w.=.289) and expressive speech events (f.w.=.362), on the other hand disfavor the use of *le*, and on the contrary favor *lo*. This factor is greatly influential and therefore defining for polite *leísmo*, with only one linguistic factor ranking higher in significance, and with the rest 11 variables ranking below.

The remaining three contextual variables —interlocutor power, social domain, and (ir)realis mood— are all ranked together in the middle tier of the significance continuum, covering ranges from 25.3 to 20.5, in this order. Polite *leísmo* is conditioned specifically by those interlocutors with **power** or authority over the speaker (f.w.=.622), speaking to social hierarchies and inequalities, while more equal relationships disfavor the use of *le* (f.w.=.369). The social domains or settings that favor polite *leísmo* are **formal** (f.w.=.559) and **informal** (f.w.=.602),

contrasting them with the traditional or ceremonial domains (f.w.=.381), where polite *leísmo* is disfavored in production. In terms of (ir)realis mood, verbs expressing **irrealis** or hypothetical actions favor polite *leísmo* (f.w.=.599), while those that narrate actually occurring events disfavor it (f.w.=.394).

All of the contextual factors considered in the analysis show influence over polite *leísmo*.

Linguistic Factors. The linguistic factors conditioning polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, in order from most significant by range, are **verb tense morphology** (range=52.6), **telicity** (range=28.2), **subject** (range=27.5), **syntactic structure** (range=25.9), **morphosyntactic clitic position** (range=15.9), and **polarity** (range=14.2). Verb morphology is the most significant factor, not only among the linguistic factors, but among all of the 13 factors identified by the analysis, appearing in the highest-ranked tier (range=52.6). Three factors of the middle 20-29 tier are telicity, subject, and syntactic structure, while morphosyntactic position and polarity appear in the penultimate 10-19 tier.

As the most significant factor, verb tense morphology conditions polite *leísmo* by favoring it in verbs with **conditional and future** morphology (f.w.=.698) as well as in **present** tense (f.w.=.620). It is also insightful that past-tense morphology heavily disfavors polite *leísmo* (f.w.=.182). In terms of telicity, it is **telic** verbs (f.w.=571) that favor polite *leísmo*, while atelic verbs (f.w.=289) clearly disfavor it. Among verb subjects, those that favor polite *leísmo* are **impersonal** constructions (f.w.=.644), **he/she** (f.w.=.619), and **I** (f.w.=.511), with the plural *we* and *they* disfavoring it (f.w.=.499 and .344, respectively). Syntactic structure that favors polite *leísmo* takes shape of **if-conditional** sentences (f.w.=.743) and **interrogative** constructions (f.w.=623), as opposed to unmodified declarative sentences (f.w.=.484). The two penultimate-tier linguistic variables are morphosyntactic position of the clitic and polarity: polite *leísmo* is

seen favored in **pre-auxiliary/modal** position (f.w.=.587) as well as **postverbally** (f.w.=.512), as opposed to directly preverbal (f.w.=.428); and it is also seen slightly favored in **non-negated** verbs (f.w.=.510).

The linguistic factors not showing influence over polite *leísmo* or the clitic choice in this study include object number, argument structure, and tense expression.

Social Factors. The social factors conditioning polite *leísmo* in Mexico City are only three and largely relegated to the lowest-ranked tier for their relative significance (specifically, **speaker sex** (range=8.0) and **origin** (range=9.2)), with the factor of **SES mobility** (range=14.5) in the penultimate tier, along with two linguistic variables already described (polarity and clitic position).

Of the three significant factors, the speaker's SES mobility is the most important social predictor of polite *leísmo*, where **highest SES mobility** favors it (f.w.=.572), followed by **no SES mobility** at all (f.w.=.515), leaving some SES mobility (f.w.=.427) to be a disfavoring element. The origin factor slightly favors polite *leísmo* when speakers are from somewhere **outside of Mexico City or Mexico State** (f.w.=.510). Finally, **female** speakers (f.w.=.536) show a favoring effect on polite *leísmo*, as opposed to male speakers (f.w.=.456) who disfavor it. The factors not appearing to be significant in production of polite *leísmo* are the speaker characteristics of age, education level, highest SES, and generational SES mobility.

Production of Polite Leísmo with All vs. Telic-Only Verbs in Role Plays. An exploratory analysis and comparison with only telic verbs (a major 76% subset of production data) allows for further understanding of significance of the variables conditioning polite *leísmo* in production. Table 6.3.1.2 compares the results presented in Table 6.3.1.1 with the results of a multivariate logistic regression applied to just the clitics found with telic verbs (2114 tokens of

the 2783 total tokens). In this telic dataset, *le* appears 20.6% of the time, as opposed to 17.0% in the entire corpus, supporting that telicity is one of the most significant factors conditioning polite *leísmo*.

Table 6.3.1.2

Comparison of logistic regression analysis of polite leísmo in entire production corpus with telic-only subcorpus

	<u>ALL VERBS</u>	<u>TELIC VERBS</u>
	Total N: 2783	Total N: 2114 (76%)
	LE: 17.0%	LE: 20.6%
	Input: .110	Input: .143
	Log likelihood = -991	Log likelihood = -848
	Significance = .037	Significance = .028
Factors:	Probability	Probability
1. Verb morphology (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Conditional/Future	.698	.641
Present	.620	.608
Subjunctive	.494	.470
Non-finite	.469	.493
Past	.182	.130
	Range: 51.6	Range: 51.1
2. Speech Event (Context-Pragmatics)		
Offer	.761	.765
Negotiation	.565	.588
Greeting/Compliment	.362	.383
Invitation	.296	.299
	Range: 46.5	Range: 46.6
3. Telicity (Ling-Semantics)		
Telic	.571	[all telic]
Atelic	.289	[all telic]
	Range: 28.2	
4. Subject (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Impersonal	.644	.711
He/She	.619	.648
I	.511	.513
We	.499	.485
They	.344	.299
	Range: 27.5	Range: 41.2
5. Syntactic structure (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Conditional	.743	.756
Interrogative	.623	.606
Unmitigated (declarative)	.484	.481
	Range: 25.9	Range: 27.5

Factors:	Probability	Probability
6. Power (Context-Interlocutor)		
Authority over speaker (+P)	.622	.629
No authority over speaker (-P)	.369	.351
	<i>Range: 25.3</i>	<i>Range: 27.8</i>
7. Social Domain (Context-Pragmatics)		
Informal	.602	.576
Formal	.559	.560
Traditional/ceremonial	.381	.361
	<i>Range: 22.1</i>	<i>Range: 21.5</i>
8. (Ir)realis Mode (Context-Pragmatics)		
Irrealis	.599	.591
Realis	.394	.387
	<i>Range: 20.5</i>	<i>Range: 20.4</i>
9. Morphosyntactic Position (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Pre-auxiliary/modal	.587	.578
Postverbal	.512	.478
Preverbal	.428	.462
	<i>Range: 15.9</i>	<i>Range: 11.6</i>
10. SES Mobility (Social-Speaker)		
2-Highest	.572	n.s.
0-None	.515	n.s.
1-Some	.427	n.s.
	<i>Range: 14.5</i>	
11. Polarity (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Non-negated verb	.510	.512
Negated verb	.368	.369
	<i>Range: 14.2</i>	<i>Range: 14.3</i>
12. Origin (Social-Speaker)		
Other State	.564	n.s.
Mexico City	.477	n.s.
Mexico State	.472	n.s.
	<i>Range: 9.2</i>	
13. Sex (Social-Speaker)		
Females	.536	.540
Males	.456	.455
	<i>Range: 8.0</i>	<i>Range: 8.5</i>

The comparison of conditioning factors for both the entire corpus and the telic-only subcorpus reveals many similarities in significant factors and their ranking, with a few important differences. The most obvious difference is that two of the thirteen variables no longer exert conditioning power over polite *leísmo*, namely the social variables of speakers' SES mobility and origin. This leaves **sex** as the only social factor relevant to conditioning polite *leísmo* with telic verbs.

The remaining linguistic and contextual factors largely coincide in their strength and direction of effect with a few minor differences for telic-only verbs: **verb tense morphology, speech event, subject, syntactic structure, interlocutor power, social domain, (ir)realis mood, morphosyntactic position of the clitic, and polarity.**

The weight of the **subject** variable (range=41.2) gains in importance with telic verbs by joining the higher-significance tier, alongside **speech event** factor (range=46.6). This is due to the fact that the same subjects identified as conditioning polite *leísmo* are more strongly favoring or disfavoring it: **impersonal** (f.w.=.711), **he/she** (f.w.=.648), and **I** (f.w.=.513) favor it, while the plural *we* and *they* disfavor it (f.w.=.485 and .299, respectively).

Postverbal morphosyntactic position no longer favors polite *leísmo*, leaving only **pre-auxiliary/modal** position (f.w.=.578) as predictor of *le* with telic verbs. This means that the favoring effect of postverbal clitic position is likely to be heavily preferred by atelic verbs that are no longer part of this subcorpus.

Overall, this analysis of the telic subcorpus is insightful because it allows to test the **Relative Transitivity hypothesis** by presenting transitivity as a continuum and drawing focus to the higher transitivity end and thus higher affectedness of the direct object — correlates of telicity. The differences found in conditioning of polite *leísmo* along telicity lines suggest that postverbal clitic position is associated with low transitivity, and that **the choice of the clitic is more stylistic than socially stratifying at the higher end of transitivity.** Telic verbs are thus the most prototypical ground for polite *leísmo*, and any extensions to atelic verbs are more indicative of social stratification and variable social evaluations that are likely to promote linguistic change.

Summary of Significant Factors in Production. Overall, **linguistic** and **contextual** factors show greatest conditioning power on polite *leísmo* by the number of significant factors and their significance ranges, while social factors are few and at the very bottom of the significance scale. The most significant predictors of polite *leísmo* in role-play production data are **verb tense morphology** and **speech event** – one linguistic and one contextual factor. Specifically, it is **offers** and **negotiations** that are expressed with **conditional/future** or **present-tense** morphology that can be said to be the most favoring contexts and predictors of polite *leísmo*. The third most significant factor of **telicity** appears to be defining as it is responsible for 20% of all *le* clitics and is virtually stripped of social conditioning, except for speaker sex. Telicity, as a correlate of higher transitivity, therefore, points to polite *leísmo* as a stylistic resource to regulate the level of affectedness of the direct object, in this case, a formal ‘you’ as a theme or patient of the action expressed by the verb. While looking at significance, **non-significant factors** or disfavoring variants of the significant variables are also informative. Many social factors, for example, are not significant at all, showing low social conditioning, and especially so in all-telic subcorpus. Of the significant factors, polite *leísmo* is heavily disfavored by past-tense verb morphology, expressive and commissive speech events, atelic verbs, plural subjects, equal-power relationship with interlocutor, realis mood of expression, and negated verbs. In telic verbs, the postverbal position is additionally disfavoring polite *leísmo*, whereas it was favoring in the larger and more variable corpus. The interpretation and social significance of these findings are discussed in the Discussion section. The findings of the production study are summarized in response to the first research question (RQ1) as follows.

RQ1. Production: What linguistic, social, and contextual factors condition Mexican speakers' variation in (formal) 2nd-person clitic in oral production, as measured by relative production rates?

(a) What are the **linguistic** factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

- **verb tense morphology:** conditional/future, present
- **telicity:** telic verbs
- **subject:** impersonal, he/she, I (all singular)
- **syntactic structure:** if-conditional, interrogative (mitigated)
- **morphosyntactic clitic position:** pre-auxiliary/modal, postverbal with atelic verbs
- **polarity:** non-negated verbs

(b) What are the **contextual** factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

- **speech event:** offers, negotiations
- **social domain:** informal, formal
- **(ir)realis mood:** irrealis actions
- **interlocutor power:** authority over participant

(c) What are the **social** factors that favor the production of polite *leísmo*?

- **participant SES mobility:** highest, none
- **participant origin:** outside of Mexico City and Mexico State
- **participant sex:** females

6.3.2 Perception Study

The perception study seeks to answer the second research question posed, on the road to discovering the social meaning of polite *leísmo*:

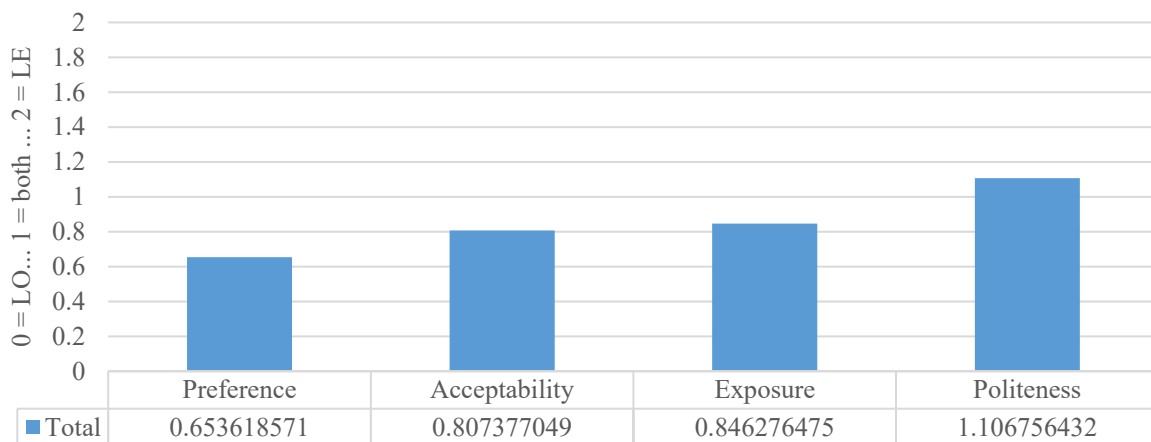
RQ2. Perception: What linguistic, social, and contextual factors account for Mexican speakers' acceptability of (formal) 2nd-person clitics in a contextualized questionnaire as measured by relative clitic ratings?

- (a) What are the linguistic factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- (b) What are the contextual factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- (c) What are the social factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?

The results of the AJT task can be explored all at once and by the specific attitude gauged: which variant one would say, which variant one has heard, which variant is more acceptable, and which variant is more polite. Figure 6.3.2.1 provides an at-a-glance overview of acceptability of *le* across these four attitudes, on a scale from 0 to 2, where 0 refers to the categorical preference against *le*, 1 corresponding to the acceptance of both *le* and *lo*, and 2 being the categorical preference for *le*.

Figure 6.3.2.1

Perception of le on 0-2 scale by attitude category of the AJT task (n = 92 participants)



It can be seen that *le* is largely disfavored in reported **use** (.65/2 or 31%), somewhat reflecting the low production rates of *le* in contrast to *lo* (17.0%), reported on in the previous section. The rates of acceptance, however, grow for the categories of **acceptability** and **exposure** (.81 and .85, respectively), showing that while speakers may not produce the direct-object *le*, they are familiar with it. Most importantly, in spite of the low rates of reported personal use, the AJT respondents accept both *lo* and *le*, sometimes explicitly favoring *le* as the **polite** variant, as testified by the average response of above 1 in that category.

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was applied first to all of the perception data consisting of 17336 clitic tokens rated among 92 participants in the AJT task, followed by four analyses of participant responses to each of the four attitudes, for comparison purposes. Specifically, the application value, or the dependent variable, is acceptability of *le* as the only or one of the possible clitics in each given context, thus resulting in a binary distinction of acceptable and unacceptable direct-object *le*. Overall, acceptability of *le* reaches 55.9% in the AJT perception data, making it slightly more acceptable than not, and definitely more acceptable than spontaneously produced (17.0%).

Complete Perception Analysis. Fifteen factors included in this series of analyses include linguistic, contextual, and social variables, largely corresponding to the variables tested in the production study: polarity, syntactic structure, morphosyntactic position, telicity, verb morphology, tense expression, (ir)realis mood, speech event, interlocutor power, social domain, participant sex, age, education level, origin, and SES. Table 6.3.2.2 lists significant variables in order from highest to lowest effect, measured by range of variation found among the levels of the variable, of which the favoring factors (i.e. above .5) are bolded, while disfavoring factors (i.e. below .5) are in regular font. Of the 15 variables tested in the analysis, a balanced mix of 4

social, 4 linguistic, and 3 contextual variables are selected as affecting the LE/LO variation in the AJT perception data. The variables not found to be significant are polarity, verb morphology, (ir)realis, and speaker sex.

Table 6.3.2.2

Multivariate logistic regression analysis of the overall acceptability of polite leísmo in AJT data

Factors:	Probability	%-LE/both	Apps/Total	% Data
1. Education level (Social-Speaker)				
3-College-Graduate	.532	58.7	6805/11597	66.9
2-Middle-High School	.461	52.9	2638/4991	28.8
1-None-Primary	.280	34.0	254/748	4.3
<i>Range: 25.2</i>				
2. SES (Social-Speaker)				
2-Mid-low	.593	59.2	2815/4758	27.4
3-Mid-high	.484	57.1	4672/8182	47.2
4-High	.458	57.9	1666/2876	16.6
1-Low	.376	35.8	544/1520	8.8
<i>Range: 21.7</i>				
3. Age Group (Social-Speaker)				
Adults	.571	60.8	3949/6495	37.5
Young	.471	56.3	4049/7197	41.5
Older	.432	46.6	1699/3644	21.0
<i>Range: 13.9</i>				
4. Speech Event (Context-Pragmatics)				
Negotiation	.563	58.4	1693/2900	16.7
Offer	.509	61.0	1959/3214	18.5
Invitation	.490	54.9	3182/5794	33.4
Greeting/congratulations	.471	52.7	2863/5428	31.3
<i>Range: 9.2</i>				
5. Social Domain (Context-Pragmatics)				
Formal	.532	60.6	4361/7195	41.5
Traditional	.505	54.1	3141/5805	33.5
Informal	.441	50.6	2195/4336	25.0
<i>Range: 9.1</i>				
6. Syntactic Structure (Ling-Syntax)				
Unmitigated (declarative)	.510	56.4	8750/15521	89.5
Mitigated (interrog., cond.)	.419	52.2	947/1815	10.5
<i>Range: 9.1</i>				

Factors:	Probability	%-LE/both	Apps/Total	% Data
7. Interlocutor Power (Context-Interlocutor)				
Authority over speaker	.530	58.9	5103/8664	50.0
No authority over speaker	.470	53.0	4594/8672	50.0
<i>Range: 6.0</i>				
8. Tense Expression (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Present	.515	56.0	7277/12997	75.0
Non-present	.455	55.8	2420/4339	25.0
<i>Range: 6.0</i>				
9. Origin (Social-Speaker)				
Other State	.527	54.8	2391/4363	25.2
Mexico City	.494	56.6	6310/11151	64.3
Mexico State	.473	54.7	996/1822	10.5
<i>Range: 5.4</i>				
10. Telicity (Ling-Semantics)				
Telic	.507	56.6	8176/14451	83.4
Atelic	.467	52.7	1521/2885	16.6
<i>Range: 4.0</i>				
11. Morphosyntactic Position (Ling-Morphosyntax)				
Post-verbal	.516	56.8	5119/9016	52.0
Pre-verbal	.482	55.0	4578/8320	48.0
<i>Range: 3.4</i>				

Conditioning Factors in Perception. As the quantitative results show, a number of social, linguistic, and contextual factors play a role in the variable perception of polite *leísmo* and the direct-object ‘you’ reference in general. Furthermore, some of the factors that are not significant in production appear significant in perception, rearranging the conditioning hierarchy. This once again points to the complex nature of the phenomenon, and calls for a deeper examination of the data across the four tested attitudes, as presented further in Table 6.3.2.3. Looking at the ranges of variables that signify different levels of effect of each factor on polite *leísmo*, the variables can be grouped into 4 tiers of significance: under 10, 10-19, 20-29, and 30+. For ease of visualization, these tiers are shaded on a continuum from lightest to darkest, corresponding to the growing level of significance based on these numeric ranges. The bottom tier is the most variable in terms of the number and type of factors included, combining linguistic, contextual, and social variables. Of all the variables, social factors show greatest

impact on acceptability of polite *leísmo*, followed by a mix of contextual and linguistic factors, as described in detail below.

Social Factors. The social factors conditioning the reported acceptability of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, in order from most significant by range, include participant **education level** (range=25.2), **SES** (range=21.7), **age** (range=13.9), and **origin** (range=5.4), and completely occupy the two topmost tiers. Education level is the greatest predictor for acceptability of polite *leísmo*, specifically led by **college graduates** (f.w.=.532), while strongly disfavored by participants with no-to-primary education (f.w.=.280). For the socioeconomic status, it is participants with **mid-low status** (f.w.=.593) that view polite *leísmo* more favorably, while participants with low status strongly disfavor it (f.w.=.376). The next factor in order of significance is the speaker's age group, where **adults** (f.w.=.571) between 35 and 54 years old accept polite *leísmo* more than those who are younger or older. Finally, it is speakers from **outside** of Mexico City and Mexico State (f.w.=.527) that show higher acceptability of *le* over *lo*.

The social factor not found to play a role in the overall reported perception of polite *leísmo* is speaker sex, which notably has significance in the production data. However, it will be shown to play a role in specific attitude categories, as reported further in Table 6.3.2.3 and discussed subsequently.

Pragmatic/Contextual Factors. The contextual factors conditioning the reported acceptability of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City are found in the bottom tier of significance by range (along with all linguistic variables and one social variable) and include **speech event** (range=9.2), **social domain** (range=9.1), and **interlocutor power** (range=6.0). The speech events predicting acceptability of *le* are **negotiations** (f.w.=.563), with slight additional

preference for **offers** (f.w.=.509), although bordering with neither favoring nor disfavoring it. The **formal** social domain (f.w.=.532) is where polite *leísmo* is most acceptable, followed by the borderline-neutral **traditional** social domain (f.w.=.505). Finally, interlocutor **power** (f.w.=.530) also predicts acceptability of polite *leísmo*.

The contextual factor not found to play a role in the reported perception is the (ir)realis mood – neither in the overall perception data, nor in the by-category analysis (Table 6.3.2.3), which is another notable difference between production and perception data to be discussed.

Linguistic Factors. The linguistic factors conditioning the overall reported acceptability of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City are found in the bottom tier of significance by range, along with other factors, and include **syntactic structure** (range=9.1), **tense expression** (range=6.0), **telicity** (range=4.0), and **morphosyntactic position of the clitic** (range=3.4). Just as in production, the syntactic structure slightly favorable to acceptability of polite *leísmo* is unmodified **declarative** (f.w.=.510), rather than interrogative or if-conditional structure. **Present tense** expression (f.w.=.515), as opposed to non-present, also predicts acceptability of *le*. Acceptability of polite *leísmo* is further slightly favored by **telic** verbs (f.w.=.507) and **postverbal** clitic position (f.w.=.516).

The linguistic factors not found to play a role in the reported perception of polite *leísmo* are polarity and verb morphology, both in contrast to production data.

Perception of Polite *Leísmo* by Reported Judgment Category. The analysis results for the entire AJT dataset is better understood by breaking it down into the four specific judgments reported: for the variant personally preferred, the variant heard, the variant most acceptable, and the most polite variant. The entire corpus, then, is subdivided into four corresponding subcorpora of preferred use (4394 tokens), reported exposure corpus (4391 tokens), acceptability corpus

(4392 tokens), and politeness corpus (4159 tokens). Polite *leísmo* is accepted in the two thirds of the subcorpus for **exposure** (68.8%) and **politeness** (61.7%), with general acceptability wavering around half-way (53.6%), and the preferred use significantly lagging behind the other subcorpora with 39.9% average acceptability. Table 6.3.2.3 reports the results of the corresponding four multivariate logistic regression analyses in comparison to the overall analysis of all perception data together.

Table 6.3.2.3

Comparison of overall perception analysis of polite le with subcorpora on four reported judgments

Factors:	ALL	Preferred Use	Exposure	Acceptability	Politenes
Total N:	17336	4394	4391	4392	4159
LE/both:	55.9%	39.9%	68.8%	53.6%	61.7%
Input:	.561	.392	.696	.537	.627
<i>Log likelihood =</i>	<i>-11477.610</i>	<i>-2821.418</i>	<i>-2600.324</i>	<i>-2898.603</i>	<i>-2584.325</i>
<i>Significance =</i>	<i>.001</i>	<i>.047</i>	<i>.009</i>	<i>.034</i>	<i>.015</i>
Factors:	Probability	Probability	Probability	Probability	Probability
1. Education level (Social-Speaker)					
3-College-Graduate	.532	.547	.525	.529	.527
2-Middle-High School	.461	.436	.471	.466	.482
1-None-Primary	.280	.240	.319	.297	.230
<i>Range</i>	<i>25.2</i>	<i>30.7</i>	<i>20.6</i>	<i>23.2</i>	<i>29.7</i>
2. SES (Social-Speaker)					
2-Mid-low	.593	.601	.597	.577	.621
3-Mid-high	.484	.485	.511	.481	.458
4-High	.458	.381	.428	.507	.508
1-Low	.376	.481	.275	.343	.368
<i>Range</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>32.2</i>	<i>23.4</i>	<i>25.3</i>
3. Age Group (Social-Speaker)					
Adults	.571	.591	.510	.566	.629
Young	.471	.433	.522	.480	.436
Older	.432	.474	.437	.424	.382
<i>Range</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>15.8</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>24.7</i>
4. Speech Event (Context-Pragmatics)					
Negotiation	.563	.608	n.s.	.570	.563
Offer	.509	.517	n.s.	.497	.521
Invitation	.490	.484	n.s.	.491	.493
Greeting/ congratulations	.471	.453	n.s.	.476	.446
<i>Range</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>15.5</i>		<i>9.4</i>	<i>11.7</i>

Factors:	Probability	Probability	Probability	Probability	Probability
5. Social Domain (Context-Pragmatics)					
Formal	.532	.540	.508	.542	.551
Traditional	.505	.516	.526	.496	.468
Informal	.441	.414	.452	.437	.457
<i>Range</i>	9.1	12.6	7.4	10.5	9.4
6. Syntactic Structure (Ling-Syntax)					
Unmitigated (declarative)	.510	.511	n.s.	.511	.509
Mitigated (interrog., cond.)	.419	.408	n.s.	.404	.423
<i>Range</i>	9.1	10.3		10.7	8.6
7. Interlocutor Power (Context-Interlocutor)					
Authority over speaker	.530	.535	.528	.532	.534
No authority over speaker	.470	.465	.472	.468	.466
<i>Range</i>	6.0	7.0	5.6	6.4	6.8
8. Tense Expression (Ling-Morphosyntax)					
Present	.515	.517	n.s.	.522	.515
Non-present	.455	.449	n.s.	.435	.457
<i>Range</i>	6.0	6.8		8.7	5.8
9. Origin (Social-Speaker)					
Other State	.527	.576	n.s.	.485	.557
Mexico City	.494	.491	n.s.	.491	.487
Mexico State	.473	.380	n.s.	.584	.430
<i>Range</i>	5.4	19.6		9.9	12.7
10. Telicity (Ling-Semantics)					
Telic	.507	.508	n.s.	.509	n.s.
Atelic	.467	.460	n.s.	.455	n.s.
<i>Range</i>	4.0	4.8		5.4	
11. Morphosyntactic Position (Ling-Morphosyntax)					
Post-verbal	.516	.518	n.s.	.519	.527
Pre-verbal	.482	.480	n.s.	.480	.471
<i>Range</i>	3.4	3.8		3.9	5.6
12. Sex (Social-Speaker)					
Female	n.s.	.484	.519	n.s.	.531
Male	n.s.	.523	.473	n.s.	.454
<i>Range</i>		3.9	4.6		7.7

Preferred Use. The preferred use category corresponds to the clitics the respondents report as what they typically produce in each contextualized situation. The conditioning of polite *leísmo* in reported use mostly matches in effect to the overall acceptability patterns reported above and resembles politeness and acceptability attitudes to various degrees. The highest favoring factors in reported preferred use of polite *leísmo* are social: **education level** (range=30.7), **SES** (range=22.0), **origin** (range=19.6), and **age** group (range=15.8). Two of the

pragmatic factors follow in the middle significance tier: **speech event** (range=15.5) and **social domain** (range=12.6). This is where the **traditional** social domain (f.w.=.516) becomes significant in addition to the formal domain in favoring polite *leísmo*. The same middle tier includes one linguistic factor, namely **syntactic structure** (range=10.3). The remaining linguistic and social factors are relegated to the bottom significance tier: **tense expression**, **telicity**, **morphosyntactic clitic position**, and **speaker sex**, along with the remaining contextual factor of **interlocutor power**. However, it is worth noting that **sex** becomes significant for this category, with **males** (f.w.=.523) reporting higher use of the *le* clitic than females.

Exposure. Exposure is the least conditioned attitude category, with just 6 conditioning factors of the 12 significant factors in other analyses. This is the category where participants indicated which of the clitics they have heard in described contexts. Five of the significant factors are social and one is contextual. As opposed to the other reported attitudes, the factor of greatest significance for having heard polite *leísmo* is the **SES** (range=32.3), with the two **middle-class** layers favoring it. The **education level** follows in conditioning power (range=20.6) as another social factor, favored by the same college-educated speakers. The bottom significance tier includes two more social factors of **age**, and **sex**, and finally two contextual variables of **social domain** and interlocutor **power**. The favoring factor variants mostly echo the overall analysis, except that **youth** (f.w.=.522) and **females** (f.w.=.519) are now among the leading reporters of having heard polite *leísmo*, in addition to adults and as opposed to males who report its use. The **traditional** social domain (f.w.=.526) is also significant for reports of exposure, while the established **formal** social domain shows a more neutral attitude (f.w.=.508), in contrast to other reported categories.

Acceptability. The category of acceptability contains responses of the clitics that are more acceptable in each contextualized situation. The conditioning factors and their hierarchy largely coincide with the overall AJT analysis reported previously. From highest to lowest effect, these are participant **SES** (range=23.4), **education level** (range=23.2), **age** group (range=14.2), **syntactic structure** (range=10.7), **social domain** (range=10.5), **origin** (range=9.9), **speech event** (range=9.4), **tense expression** (range=8.7), interlocutor **power** (range=6.4), **telicity** (range=5.4), and **morphosyntactic position** (range=3.9). Acceptability is the only category where the factor origin has a different effect on polite *leísmo*, with the **Mexico State** residents (f.w.=.584) favoring it over the outside immigrants, as is the case for the overall AJT trend. The highest ranked SES factor, in addition to the favoring mid-low status participants, also shows an effect for **highest SES** (f.w.=.507) that is neither strongly favoring, nor disfavoring due to its ranking at the .5 point. Among the speech events, only **negotiations** (f.w.=.570) remain as significant predictors of acceptability of polite *leísmo*, and the typically significant **offers** are actually neutral (f.w.=.497). The factor of sex is not found to be significant for acceptability, explaining in part why it is not significant in the overall AJT analysis, along with the fact that it flips conditioning from male to female between reported use and exposure with politeness.

Politeness. The responses in this category indicate which of the clitics is more polite given the contextualized situation. All of the same factors prove to be significant except for telicity. In some of the factors, politeness evaluations reflect the conditioning of preferred use, while in others those of acceptability of polite *leísmo*. Politeness perceptions of polite *leísmo* are first conditioned by social factors: **education level** (range=29.7), **SES** (range=25.3), **age** group (range=24.7), and **origin** (range=12.7). Polite *leísmo* is further conditioned by a combination of contextual, linguistic, and other social variables, in order from highest to lowest effect: **speech**

event (range=11.7), **social domain** (range=9.4), **syntactic structure** (range=8.6), **sex** (range=7.7), **interlocutor power** (range=6.8), **tense expression** (range=5.8), and **morphosyntactic position** (range=5.6). The favoring variants of these factors largely coincide with the overall AJT trends, with a few notable exceptions. Just as in the acceptability category, the perception of politeness of polite *leísmo* is led by the **mid-low SES** (f.w.=.621), while the **highest SES** representatives neither strongly favor it nor disfavor it at the .509 factor weight. The **age group** (range=24.7) becomes a more pronounced factor in evaluating politeness, as opposed to other categories of use, exposure, and acceptance, as seen in the significance tier jump and with **adults** (f.w.=.629) reporting more polite perceptions than anyone else and also more than for any other reported attitude. In terms of origin, it is once again the participants from **outside** of Mexico City and Mexico State (f.w.=.557) that report higher perceptions of politeness, which matches the reported preferred use of polite *leísmo* but not the acceptance. The sex factor matches the exposure reports, with **females** (f.w.=.531) favoring polite *leísmo* as more polite over males, at the same time reversing the trends for reported use, led by men.

Summary of Significant Factors in Perception. Overall, **social factors** show greatest conditioning power on the acceptability of polite *leísmo* by the number of significant factors and their significance ranges, while contextual and linguistic factors are few and lower on the significance scale. The most significant predictors of polite *leísmo* in AJT perception corpus are education level, SES, age group, and origin – all social factors. Specifically, it is speakers with **college education, mid-low SES, adults**, and from **outside** of Mexico City that report more favorable attitudes toward and personal experience with polite *leísmo*. These main social factors are followed by the two contextual factors, speech event and social domain: **offers** and **negotiations**, and especially in the **formal** social domain, favor acceptability of polite *leísmo*.

The linguistic conditioning based on syntactic structure, tense expression, telicity, and morphosyntactic position all rank lower in power to predict polite *leísmo* acceptability, which is favored by **unmitigated** sentences, **present** tense, **telic** verbs, and **post-verbal** clitic position. The contextual factor of interlocutor power and the social factor sex are also in this lower tier of significance: with **authority** figures favoring acceptability of polite *leísmo*, **males** reporting higher use, and **females** reporting higher exposure and politeness evaluation.

RQ2. Perception: What linguistic, social, and contextual factors account for Mexican speakers' acceptability of (formal) 2nd-person clitics in a contextualized questionnaire as measured by relative clitic ratings?

- (a) What are the **linguistic** factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- **sentence structure:** unmitigated sentences
 - **tense expression:** present tense
 - **telicity:** telic verbs
 - **morphological clitic position:** post-verbal clitics
- (b) What are the **contextual** factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- **speech event:** offers, negotiations
 - **social domain:** formal, traditional
 - **interlocutor power:** authority over participant
- (c) What are the **social** factors that favor the acceptance of polite *leísmo*?
- **participant education level:** college graduate
 - **participant SES:** mid-low
 - **participant age group:** adults

- **participant origin:** outside of Mexico City and Mexico State
- **participant sex:** males – reported use; females – reported exposure and politeness

6.3.3 *Production vs. Perception*

By comparing the results of the production and perception studies, we get closer to the objective of understanding the social meaning of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. Based on the third research question and its component stages, this comparison opens doors to understanding who the users of polite *leísmo* are and why they might use it:

RQ3. Social meaning: What is the social value of polite *leísmo* in the speech of Mexico City?

- (a) How do production and perception rates and conditioning of polite *leísmo* compare?
- (b) Who are the social agents at the head of polite *leísmo*?
- (c) What is/are the function(s) of polite *leísmo*?

This opening section tackles the first component of this research question. Table 6.3.3.1 compares the multivariate logistic regression analyses results side-by-side for the production and perception studies, featuring 16 variables that appear significant in at least one of the two studies. It is appropriate to recall that these analyses are differentiated by their corresponding population sizes (107 vs. 92), sizes of the corpora (2783 vs. 17336 tokens), and elicitation instruments employed (role plays vs. acceptability judgment task), even though they coincide almost equivalently by design in the contexts and verbs gauged. These corpora also differ in the relative rate of the *le* clitic in comparison to the more standard *lo*: 17.0% in production and 55.9% in perception. Furthermore, the more controlled design of the perception study results in fewer

factors that can be thoroughly compared to the production study: namely, verb morphology is compressed into present and non-present tense, syntactic structure levels are compressed into mitigated and not, morphosyntactic position is compressed into preverbal and postverbal clitics, and SES mobility does not form part of the condensed sociodemographic questionnaire accompanying the AJT. It is indicated by “?” in Table 6.3.3.1 to indicate that it is not included in the analysis, along with the factor Subject, as it was not sufficiently controlled for in the AJT.

Table 6.3.3.1

Comparison of multivariate logistic regression analyses of production and perception of polite le

	<u>PRODUCTION</u>	<u>PERCEPTION</u>
	Total N: 2783	Total N: 17336
	LE: 17.0%	LE/both: 55.9%
	Input: .110	Input: .561
	<i>Log likelihood = -991</i>	<i>Log likelihood = -11477</i>
	<i>Significance = .037</i>	<i>Significance = .001</i>
Factors:	Probability	Probability
1. Verb morphology (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Conditional/Future	.698	
Present	.620	
Subjunctive	.494	n.s.
Non-finite	.469	
Past	.182	
	<i>Range: 51.6</i>	
2. Speech Event (Context-Pragmatics)		
Offer	.761	.509
Negotiation	.565	.563
Greeting/Compliment	.362	.471
Invitation	.296	.490
	<i>Range: 46.5</i>	<i>Range: 9.2</i>
3. Telicity (Ling-Semantics)		
Telic	.571	.507
Atelic	.289	.467
	<i>Range: 28.2</i>	<i>Range: 4.0</i>
4. Subject (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Impersonal	.644	?
He/She	.619	?
I	.511	?
We	.499	?
They	.344	?
	<i>Range: 27.5</i>	

Factors:	Probability	Probability
5. Syntactic structure (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Conditional	.743	.419
Interrogative	.623	
Unmitigated (declarative)	.484	
	<i>Range: 25.9</i>	<i>Range: 9.1</i>
6. Power (Context-Interlocutor)		
Authority over speaker (+P)	.622	.530
No authority over speaker (-P)	.369	.470
	<i>Range: 25.3</i>	<i>Range: 6.0</i>
7. Education (Social-Speaker)		
3-College-Graduate		.532
2-Middle-High School	n.s.	.461
1-None-Primary		.280
		<i>Range: 25.2</i>
8. Social Domain (Context-Pragmatics)		
Informal	.602	.441
Formal	.559	.532
Traditional/ceremonial	.381	.505
	<i>Range: 22.1</i>	<i>Range: 9.1</i>
9. SES (Social-Speaker)		
2-Lower Middle		.593
3-Higher Middle	n.s.	.484
4-Highest		.458
1-Lowest		.376
		<i>Range: 21.7</i>
10. (Ir)realis Mode (Context-Pragmatics)		
Irrealis	.599	n.s.
Realis	.394	
	<i>Range: 20.5</i>	
11. Morphosyntactic Position (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Pre-auxiliary/modal	.587	.482
Preverbal	.428	
Postverbal	.512	
	<i>Range: 15.9</i>	<i>Range: 3.4</i>
12. SES Mobility (Social-Speaker)		
2-Highest	.572	?
0-None	.515	?
1-Some	.427	?
	<i>Range: 14.5</i>	
13. Polarity (Ling-Morphosyntax)		
Non-negated verb	.510	n.s.
Negated verb	.368	
	<i>Range: 14.2</i>	
14. Age Group (Social-Speaker)		
Adults	n.s.	.571
Young	n.s.	.471
Older	n.s.	.432
		<i>Range: 13.9</i>

Factors:	Probability	Probability
15. Origin (Social-Speaker)		
Other State	.564	.527
Mexico City	.477	.494
Mexico State	.472	.473
	<i>Range: 9.2</i>	<i>Range: 5.4</i>
16. Sex (Social-Speaker)		
	ALL (politeness)	
Females	.536	n.s. (.531)
Males	.456	n.s. (.454)
	<i>Range: 8.0</i>	<i>Range: - (7.7)</i>

Conditioning Factors in Production and Perception. It is important to note that the conditioning factors in the production and perception studies do not perfectly coincide, painting different pictures about the nature of the phenomenon based on the task and its corresponding level of awareness. Of the 16 factors examined together, production of polite *leísmo* is seen conditioned by 13 factors, and perception by 11 factors, of which only 8 are the same factors across the tasks, mostly coinciding in the direction of effect but often differing in significance. It is worth pointing out that production of polite *leísmo* is mostly conditioned by linguistic factors, while its perception is subject to predominantly social factors.

Social Factors. Socioeconomic status is the greatest conditioning social factor of polite *leísmo* in perception and production, but different correlates of its measurement appear as significant from one task to another. While education and the highest SES achieved condition the perception of polite *leísmo*, it is SES mobility that better explains its production patterns. Overall, lower middle class and college graduates find polite *leísmo* most acceptable, while people of highest or no SES mobility are the ones who favor spontaneous production. The other two social factors that affect both production and perception of polite *leísmo*, even if to a much lesser degree, are speaker **origin** and **sex**: females from outside of the metropolitan center are the leaders of the phenomenon. The **age** factor only conditions the perception of polite *leísmo*, but

not the production, identifying the middle-age adult population as the most accepting of the phenomenon.

Linguistic Factors. Verb telicity, syntactic structure, and morphosyntactic position of the clitic condition both production and perception of polite *leísmo*, yet in somewhat different directions. Telic verbs indeed predict polite *leísmo* in any manifestation. However, polite *leísmo* is favored in mitigated sentences in production and in unmitigated sentences in perception. The post-verbal position of the clitic also equally favors production and perception, with the addition of the favoring pre-auxiliary/modal clitic in oral speech. Production is further conditioned by linguistic factors that do not play a role in perception: **verb morphology** corresponding to the present and future/conditional tense, singular **subjects**, and positive **polarity** favor polite *leísmo* to a significant extent.

Contextual Factors. Finally, a few pragmatic or contextual factors are sandwiched in between the most significant linguistic and social factors of both analyses. **Speech event** conditions production to a higher degree than perception, but in the same direction: offers and negotiations are the illocutionary forces guiding the choice of polite *leísmo*. The **interlocutor power** and **social domain** factors are features of interactional context, in which higher authority figures and formal settings evoke more polite *leísmo*. However, polite *leísmo* is also produced more in informal settings, while it gains in acceptability in traditional or ceremonial settings as well. An additional **(ir)realis mood** variable appears significant in spontaneous production, while it could not be well accounted for in the AJT design.

Summary of Significant Factors in Production and Perception. What this comparative analysis of production and perception of polite *leísmo* reveals is that the phenomenon is most common with **offers** and **negotiations**, **higher-authority interlocutors**, **formal** social domain,

female speakers, immigrants from **other states**, **telic** verbs, and **post-verbal** clitic position. Additional social, contextual, and linguistic factors add further complexity to spontaneous production and acceptability of polite *leísmo*.

To begin to answer the Research Question 3 about social meaning, the production-perception comparison highlights the role of conscious awareness on the use and evaluation of polite *leísmo*, as judged by the non-matching patterns in factors and in the directions of their effect. Furthermore, it more clearly brings to light the role of the social agents behind this variation (females and immigrants) and the potential motivations for it (offering and negotiating). The implications of this comparison for the social meaning of polite *leísmo* is further discussed in connection to the previous literature in the Discussion section.

RQ3. Social meaning: What is the social value of polite *leísmo* in the speech of Mexico City?

(a) How do **production and perception** rates and conditioning of polite *leísmo* compare?

- **Low** production rates vs. **medium-high** acceptance rates
- **Linguistic** and **contextual** conditioning of production vs. **social** conditioning of perception
- Common favoring factors: speech events of **offer** and **negotiation**, verb **telicity**, interlocutor **power**, **non-metropolitan origin**, and **females**.

(b) Who are the **social agents** at the head of polite *leísmo*?

- **females** – in production and reported exposure and politeness; **males** – in reported use
- **immigrants**, non-metropolitan originals
- **non-authority** roles

(c) What is/are the **function(s)** of polite *leísmo*?

- **offering, negotiating**
- **politeness**
- **social mobility**

7. Discussion: Connections and Interpretations

The objective of this research is to explore the social meaning of variation in polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. Social meaning, however, is not detached from linguistic and pragmatic meaning, which is what motivates the research questions and methodology of this study. While linguistic meaning is most easily defined through lexico-semantic and grammatical means, pragmatic meaning in context involves a different approach. Procedural meaning (Blakemore, 2002; Terkourafi, 2011), or meaning in interaction (Thomas, 1995), relies on social and cognitive coordination between interaction participants in day-to-day speech acts. Thus the meaning of polite *leísmo* is first analyzed in a bottom-up function-based approach, followed by a form-based analysis of the pragmatic functions of the *le* form. Following this trajectory, the 2nd-person direct object clitic variable is first considered as two forms carrying out the same syntactic function, and then seeing how the *le* form means different things. **Polite *leísmo* serves two different politeness functions and becomes a social mobility projection tool due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. While mostly subconscious, it is nevertheless capable of reflecting, reinforcing, and redefining social relationships and the speaker's identity within a community by softly signaling speaker's background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic communication in day-to-day speech acts.** This understanding

is achieved by combining a range of linguistic, social and contextual variables, among them diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic, for better interpretation, generalization, and prediction power of analysis. The multiperspective and multimethod approach to language variation through polite *leísmo* offers evidence of the interplay of language, cognition, society, and culture, and lays the foundation for supra-disciplinary collaboration in social sciences and humanities within and outside of academia in the future.

The methodology adapted in this study allows to compare the variability in the oral production and perceptual acceptability of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City as well as its significance for understanding the phenomenon from morphosyntactic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and more global perspectives. Looking at the distribution and the intersection of production and perception patterns of polite *leísmo*, it can be determined that the use of the direct-object *le* with 2nd-person-formal reference is indeed a politeness tool for **relatively educated speakers**. However, it is largely **subconscious**, provided that its production and perception do not closely match. Study design and analysis confirm that linguistic, social, and pragmatic factors explain the nature of the phenomenon together, even if they differ in statistical factor hierarchy and weights. Specifically, the most important predicting factors of production of polite *leísmo* are linguistic, while perception is characterized by the predominant weight of social factors. In all cases, pragmatic or contextual factors are interweaved with the other two types, in particular highlighting the importance of the **purpose and nature of interaction** (i.e. the illocutionary point and the social domain). The data speaks for itself to show that polite *leísmo* plays two politeness functions and serves as a social mobility projection tool. The linguistic and pragmatic factors that predict and co-occur with polite *le* can be classified into two **politeness** strategies: face-enhancement (or positive politeness) and mitigation (or negative politeness). Social factors contribute to the

understanding of polite *leísmo* as a social mobility projection tool due to its **stylistic** capabilities in addition to **covert prestige**.

While most of the discussion is focused on the descriptive and quantifiable results, what gives the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* real taste in the community are informal observations accompanying and enriching the fieldwork and the results. The **informal ethnographic and linguistic landscape observations** are meant to provide glimpses into the experience the popular language of day-to-day activities and daily needs of diverse community members through the common modes of communication: the web, social media, printed promotional posters, televised addresses and campaigns, and public voice announcements. It is not and is not meant to be an exhaustive formal ethnography, but rather a valuable contextualizing complement to the elicited and quantitative data that permeates this dissertation product. It is a testimony of the journey and the very real living experience of this research process and of the community at the heart of this research. The cultural artefacts presented here as part of the popular linguistic landscape of Mexican politeness represent topics of cultural importance and relevance to polite *leísmo*: the spread of the informal *tú* at the expense of the formal treatment *usted*, the use of polite *leísmo* in ceremonial and written contexts, traces of the third-person *leísmo*, and the general politeness culture of avoiding saying “no”.

The Discussion is structured to understand polite *leísmo* in Mexico City by focusing first on its morphosyntactic properties and its linguistic context, then on pragmatic meaning and function, followed by sociolinguistic stratification and embedding into the society, following the perspective path from more concrete to more general. At each level, the variation patterns found in **production and perception** are recalled and interpreted in light of the previous literature, the

established theoretical perspectives, and the understanding of the society sociodemographics and life patterns.

7.1 Linguistics of Polite *Leísmo*: The Phenomenon and Its Linguistic Context



The focus of this research is the linguistic phenomenon of polite *leísmo* as a way to reference the interlocutor by way of a clitic pronoun in direct-object position, who is a theme or patient argument of the verb. The curiosity about this phenomenon surfaces from the variation existing between the canonical *lo* clitic and its occasional manifestation as *le*, despite its prescriptive agrammaticality in Spanish. The fact that this variation happens in the realm of the formal ‘you’ treatment raises many questions about the hierarchical structure of the society, construction of dynamic social interactions, and cultural norms such as politeness.

Second-person *leísmo* is of particular interest because, despite its linguistic nature, it is conditioned by multiple social and pragmatic factors, reflective of the speakers’ ability to disambiguate deictic references as well as to manipulate deictic markers in interaction to construct social relationships. As such, a study of perception, as well as interaction between perception and production, sheds light onto the nature of this complex interface phenomenon and provides valuable insights for the future of other similar phenomena within sociolinguistic and pragmatic scope of inquiry.

The Research Questions 1 and 2, concerned with understanding of polite *leísmo* in light of a number of possible factors, set forth the objective to explore its linguistic conditioning. From the linguistic perspective, polite *leísmo* can be defined by its own properties and by the properties of its context. This section discusses how politeness forms part of the definition of the

phenomenon in structural terms and in connection to the interface theoretical perspectives and previous literature. The phenomenon is discussed first by its found morphosyntactic properties (what it is and what it does), then by its linguistic context (how it is structured), frequency of its use and acceptability, and finally by its linguistic conditioning more generally. The questions of how, why, and who uses polite *leísmo*, as well as how this adds to its definition as a politeness resource, are discussed in the following Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, and Global perspective subsections.

7.1.1 Properties

This subsection discusses polite *leísmo* in terms of what it is, what it does, how it is structured, and how much it is used and accepted. The findings and their interpretations are explained in light of the theoretical perspectives that establish connection between syntactic structure and subtleties in meaning as fundamental links to politeness. These theoretical perspectives include the Relative Transitivity hypothesis, Salience hypothesis, Iconic Distance hypothesis, and the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis. An additional complementary hypothesis of theta-role reanalysis is proposed in response to the findings. This section provides multiple linguistic hints about the politeness of polite *leísmo* as part of its definition. The meaning-in-context aspect and its dynamic politeness functions are further discussed in the following subsection on the Pragmatics of polite *leísmo*.

What It Is. As defined at the beginning, polite *leísmo* is the use of the *le* clitic pronoun to reference a formal ‘you’ as the object of the verb (*Diccionario Panhispánico de dudas*, 2005). More precisely, it is one variant of the direct-object variable clitic referencing the formal ‘you’ in Spanish; the other, more established and common variant being *lo*. Being variants of the same

variable, *le* and *lo* share all of the morphosyntactic and structural properties, albeit in different proportions, as this research shows. As a clitic, it is a grammatical particle without lexical content, or by some accounts semi-lexical (Bybee, 2010; Keizer, 2007), whose meaning depends on its relationship to other information present in discourse. In other words, the content of the clitic is established by other elements of the context, in accordance with the definition of deixis (Levinson, 2004). Specifically because this referential content coincides with the formal *usted* reference, the clitics *le* and *lo* have certain formality, and relatedly politeness, as part of their definition (Lorenzo Ramos, 1981). While the exact definition of formality is a separate question of meaning in context and sociocultural norms (Atkinson, 1982; Brown & Fraser, 1979; Formentelli, 2013; Irvine, 1978), this association becomes an initial hint at the politeness behind polite *leísmo*.

But if both clitics refer to the formal *usted*, then **what is *le* that *lo* isn't?** It has been suggested by previous research on Peninsular Spanish that using the non-etymological *le* over the etymological *lo* serves as morpho-semantic disambiguation of the homophonous animate and inanimate third-person masculine objects (DeMello, 2002). This hypothesis does not directly reference any politeness function, although Aijón Oliva (2006) argues that politeness is implied in highlighting this animate and human quality of the interlocutor. Syntactically, this is similar to the **Differential Object Marking** phenomenon, by which human (animate and specific) sentential objects tend to be marked in some salient way, such as a personal 'a' or, in this case, by the polite *le* (Flores & Melis, 2007). While *le* and *lo* are both human and specific, *le* is indeed something that *lo* isn't: a differential marker of special cases of *usted* in ways that are discussed next. Pragmatically, this strategy reflects the **face-enhancing politeness** benefit of serving the

positive face needs of the interlocutor, specifically those of being valued and accepted as an individual, as well as a **mitigation politeness** protection of the interlocutor's autonomy needs.

What It Does. As all pronouns, polite *leísmo* refers to the object that already exists and is known in the context. While 3rd-person pronouns refer to something made relevant in the context by prior mentions, 2nd-person pronoun references are known due to being present as the hearer of the very utterance during the construction of the discourse. In Spanish, these 2nd-person references typically encode the relationship with the interlocutor in roughly speaking formal-informal terms, between *tú* (informal) and *usted* (formal), also known as the T-V distinction (Brown & Gilman, 1960). In the more culturally specific terms, the notion of formality behind *usted* may encode social distance, hierarchical power relationships, registers and protocols appropriate for institutional or ceremonial domains, and curiously even some manifestations of solidarity rather than distant relationships, such as the solidarity between *compadres* 'co-parents' (Álvarez Muro & Carrera de la Red, 2006; Vázquez Carranza, 2009). Linguistic encoding of social relationships according to societal norms is definitive of social deixis (Huang, 2013) as a morphosyntactic-pragmatic interface phenomenon and is further evidence of politeness behind polite *leísmo*. The clitic form *le* specifically encodes the *usted* 'you' with all of its social associations, but competes with the historically and prescriptively grammatical form *lo* in the same syntactic and semantic context (Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; Klein-Andreu, 1993; RAE, 2010). What polite *leísmo* does, therefore, is vary with *lo* with the same syntactic function of marking a human direct object as a theme or patient of a transitive verb, who is necessarily part of the discourse together with the utterer. While the two clitics may appear as interchangeable and saying the same thing syntactically, however, this variation is not random and they are not saying the same thing pragmatically.

So what does *le* do that *lo* does not do? The **Relative Transitivity** hypothesis (Hopper & Thompson, 1980) explains how the choice of polite *leísmo* over the etymological clitic carries the inference of lessening the prototypical transitive effect of an expressed action on the human direct object, who is the interlocutor in all interactional cases of this research. Prototypical transitivity is defined by the fullest effect on the object, which is prototypically inanimate (e.g. John broke the toy = John broke it). While using the etymological *lo* is most prototypical and associated with higher transitivity, *le* is not prototypical or common and, therefore, implies lower transitivity. The ability of polite *leísmo* to lower transitivity and the effect on the direct object makes it available as a pragmatic attenuating device. This lessening of unwanted effect on animate objects through the typically indirect-object clitic form is the manifestation of **mitigation politeness** focused on the interlocutor's negative face needs of being unimpeded in their actions. This is subject to further discussion from the Pragmatic perspective on meaning in context.

How It Is Structured. Structurally, polite *le*, just as *lo* and other clitics, can be manifest as a bound morpheme, attaching to the end of its governing transitive verb in the nonfinite verb form. However, in Spanish, it is also allowed to precede conjugated verbs (or conjugated auxiliaries and modals) as a stand-alone morpheme. In all cases, the verbs must be transitive—either monotransitive or ditransitive—requiring an expressed direct object.

Does this mean that *le* and *lo* are structurally exactly the same? Both variants *le* and *lo* are found in the same variety of preposed and postposed placement positions in the production study of this research, which is further incorporated in the design of the perception study as well. However, the results show the polite *le* to be more frequently produced and accepted in the post-verbal position, in addition to the pre-auxiliary or modal position in oral speech. While *le* also

occurs directly preceding the conjugated verb, it is disfavored in production and is similarly least acceptable.

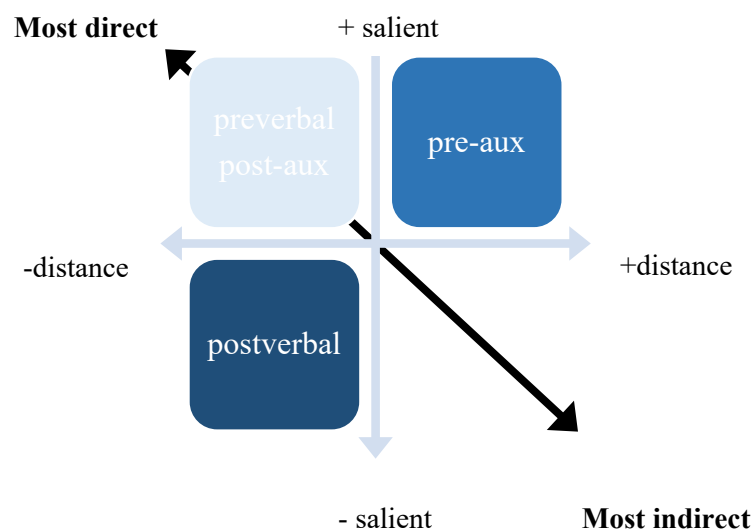
What does this structural property have to do with politeness? For one, the flexibility of clitic positioning is an instance of morphosyntactic variation, which is expected to entail some variation in meaning (Lavandera, 1978; Romaine, 1984). If the clitic still referentially signals someone who is addressed formally as *usted*, then subtleties in meaning caused by morphosyntactic variation in clitic placement would create subtleties not in the referenced person but in the formality with which this person is addressed. Variable expression of formality, then, is the question of contextual appropriateness, sociocultural norms, and politeness. Exactly how these structural clitic properties are translated into politeness resources is better explained by the **Salience hypothesis** and the **Iconic Distance** hypotheses.

The theoretical perspectives of Salience hypothesis and Iconic Distance explain syntactic variation in clitic placement as correlated with indirectness. The variable direct-object ‘you’ is found to vary along both continua: from more to less salient positions and from more distant to more immediate applications (Figure 7.1.1). Clitics appearing before the verb are more salient as they become part of the discourse context and contextualize the verb action early, while clitics attached to the nonfinite verb forms are considered less salient and most expected. This morphological closeness of postverbal clitics signals their immediate and direct connection to the action, or rather the more immediate effect of the action on the object. On the other hand, the salient preposed clitics vary in immediacy: those appearing directly before its governing verb are most directly connected to the action expressed by the verb, while pre-auxiliary and pre-modal clitics are distanced from the verb by the presence of an intervening word, iconically attenuating the effect of the action. Polite *leísmo* is found to be favored in the post-verbal position in both

production and perception studies of this research: this is where the ‘you’ reference is most immediate but at the same time less salient, in line with the **Indirectness-Politeness** hypothesis. Accordingly, Aijón Oliva (2018) explains the significance of postposed pronoun placement as lessening the responsibility through dative-like constructions while enhancing “patienthood” in accusative constructions. Immediacy and salience, characteristic of the immediately preverbal placement, are two ways to manifest syntactic directness. Polite *leísmo*, then, attenuates the immediacy of the direct-object ‘you’ by de-emphasizing it in post-verbal position and also mitigates the salience of the pre-verbal ‘you’ through iconic distancing through modal and auxiliary verbs. In both positions, polite *leísmo* corresponds to higher indirectness and therefore politeness, according to the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis. Specifically, the preference for pre-auxiliary/modal clitic position in oral speech emphasizes the clitic (a sign of **face-enhancing** politeness), but also puts distance between it and the main verb (a **mitigation** strategy). The post-verbal placement, favored in production and in perception, serves the de-emphasizing function, which is in line with **mitigation politeness**.

Figure 7.1.1

Clitic placement based on Salience and Iconic Distance



How Much It Is Used and Accepted. Polite *leísmo* is a minority variant, giving way to the etymological and prescriptive *lo* in the majority of cases in raw numbers. So to answer the question about **how much is *le* used in comparison to *lo***: not very much. However, it is recognized by everyone metalinguistically and is used spontaneously by the majority 81% of the population sample, albeit to different degrees. Some speakers show wide application of polite *leísmo* on multiple occasions and across multiple verbs, while many only rarely use or accept it with just a handful of verbs. All together, the relative frequency of the *le* clitic in proportion to *lo* is 17% in spoken Spanish. Its perceptual acceptability is significantly greater, consistent with its global recognition, and comprises 56% at the expense of the competing etymological *lo* variant.

Frequency is important to defining and understanding the acceptability and perception of politeness of a morphosyntactic variable for several reasons. Frequency has been shown to play a role in language change and subjective social evaluations and attitudes, as it serves not only to measure productivity of certain linguistic forms but also estimate their cognitive salience and degree of fixedness (Bybee, 2010). In general, Bybee's (2010) Usage-Based perspective on language maintains that highly frequent forms are more salient and fixed, serving as prototypes for other semantically and syntactically related forms or constructions. Less frequent elements, on the other hand, allow for greater creativity due to the less fixed cognitive and morphosyntactic structures. Considering the inexact equivalence of meaning of the variants of a morphosyntactic variable (Lavandera, 1978), it is not uncommon for the less frequent morphosyntactic variants to acquire a **stylistic** function related to formality. Previous research shows that the less frequent *cantase* form of the imperfect subjunctive has this stylistic or mitigating dominance over the more common *cantara* (Blas Arroyo & Porcar, 1994; Cuervo, 1911; Lenz, 1920), and so does the less frequent *deber de* over *deber* in its deontic function (Filimonova, 2014). The more

common forms, therefore, act as general defaults and points of reference, while the less frequent variants mean something a little different and are more special due to their salience as less expected. Similarly the polite *leísmo*, due to its lower frequency, is prone to stylistic interpretations. It is not surprising, then, that it would be recognized and acceptable at higher rates than it is spontaneously used across the population, once it is brought to attention as salient. Informal observational data also testify to the presence of polite *leísmo* in the auditory and visual linguistic landscape of the community, as further reported in the Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics subsections of Discussion. From the more strictly linguistic perspective, another relevant frequency factor affecting polite *leísmo* is the frequency of context in which it is used, which is discussed next.

7.1.2 Context: When and Where It Occurs

Part of the definition of the polite *leísmo* phenomenon is its context of occurrence: the properties and frequency of this context. In rather basic terms, it has been assumed and established that polite *leísmo* occurs with transitive verbs as their direct object complement, encoding that the hearer of the utterance is the theme or patient of the action expressed by the verb. Nevertheless, not only the syntactic structure of transitive constructions presents some variability, but so do the semantics of the verbs and lexical frequency. In fact, the context of polite *leísmo*, and of clitic variation more generally, is best understood by considering syntactic structure together with verb semantics, and contextualized by their relative frequency effects.

Context Frequency. The immediate and most important context of direct-object clitics is the verb. The role-play corpus consists of just 1783 transitive verb tokens and the perception

corpus, of 17336 tokens. The main advantage of these corpora is their nature as speech act corpora, where most key verbs are intentional and express actions directed at the second-person interlocutor. The largely spontaneous nature of the role plays additionally generates a greater variety of transitive verbs as another advantage point to account for natural, uncontrolled linguistic creativity of the speaker community. This captured variability is represented by 99 different clitic-bearing verbs in the oral corpus and 25 in the perception corpus, which correspond to the 25 key verbs included by design⁹.

The great majority of all transitive verbs in the oral corpus (65%) and all 100% of the verbs presented in the Acceptability Judgment Task show at least some alternation of the clitics. According to the Usage-Based perspective on language (Bybee, 2010), such high variation rate becomes a property of the system of verbs in our mental grammars and creates this expectation of variation within the system in justified ways. Another cognitive impact on the system is the significant observation of 32% of the orally produced verbs that categorically prefer the etymological *lo* and only 3 single-use instances of *le*-only verbs, which are not generalizable. In terms of the system, then, the typical transitive and intentional verb-clitic configurations in Spanish interactions are most commonly variable between *le* and *lo*, or sometimes categorical in favor of *lo*.

In order to understand how frequency of context is conducive to meaning differences between the *le* and *lo* clitics, we first turn to exploring the variation in syntactic structure and in semantic and lexical verb characteristics. The assumption is that frequency effects not only

⁹ The role-play design has been said to include 27 key words. The 25 correspond exactly to the 25 target verbs in the Acceptability Judgment Task. The two extra verbs, namely *anotar* ‘note down’ and *agendar* ‘sign up’, have been added to the role-play contexts containing the key word *apuntar* ‘schedule’ as available synonym alternatives. This was done in response to the pilot commentary from role-play participants in the main study.

impact the grammatical system, but also explain and predict system regularities and irregularities, of which polite *leísmo* is just one example.

Syntactic Structure with Its Frequency Effects. The theoretical syntax-pragmatics approximations considered throughout the study point to the meaningful, nonrandom variability in syntactic structure. Structurally, this syntactic flexibility presents variability of context in which polite *leísmo* is found: variable transitivity (Relative Transitivity hypothesis), variable salience of direct objects (Salience hypothesis), flexible distancing mechanisms (Iconic Distance hypothesis), and different degrees of syntactic indirectness (Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis). Challenging the defining assumption of transitivity of the construction challenges the very role of *le* as the direct object. This is an essential problem, because if *le* is not truly the direct object, then it must coincide faithfully with the prescriptive indirect object *le* and should not create any paradigm irregularities. In this scenario, *le* is used etymologically to refer to third-person and second-person-formal indirect objects representing recipients or beneficiaries of intransitive or ditransitive constructions, while *lo* remains as its only counterpart for direct objects corresponding to the theme or patient of transitive verbs. This problem has been presented in previous literature and in dictionaries as ‘seeming’ *leísmo* (i.e. *leísmo aparente*). And while there is empirical evidence that ‘true’ *leísmo* does exist in Latin America (DeMello, 2002; Parodi et al., 2012), ‘seeming’ *leísmo* deserves a discussion for forming part of the grammatical system.

‘Seeming’ *leísmo* refers to the indirect-object *le* which only appears to be the direct object on the surface (DeMello, 2002; *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, 2005; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999). These ambiguous or covert constructions include verbs that vary in their transitivity status, ditransitive verbs that omit direct objects from surface manifestations, verbs whose direct objects are infinitival clauses instead of noun phrases, and verbs that have varied in


their transitive status historically. Some previous studies of *leísmo* are suspected in confounding ‘true’ and ‘seeming’ *leísmo* (e.g. Cantero Sandoval, 1979; Dumitrescu & Branza, 2012), and such indistinction has been criticized by researchers dedicated to describing the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* in Latin America (DeMello, 2002; Parodi et al., 2012). The present study has initially proposed to avoid the ambiguous cases as potentially irrelevant for understanding the variation in polite *leísmo* and its social and pragmatic meaning. After the pilot, however, this decision was reconsidered in favor of including and testing a few cases of the so-called ‘seeming’ *leísmo* for three main reasons. First, including all contexts in which form and function overlap is deemed a way to respect the accountability principle of sociolinguistic variation and define more precisely the envelope of systemic variation (Labov, 1972; Lavandera, 1978). Secondly, almost all cases of ‘seeming’ *leísmo* are variable in structural and referential terms, in themselves presenting variable context and variable acceptability of objects. And finally, Bybee’s (2010) Usage-Based view of language makes central such instances of syntactic ambiguity for language change and grammaticalization precisely as potential sources of shifts in linguistic paradigms. Particularly frequent constructions present prototypical and schematic comparison points for the rest of the system. And while cases of ‘seeming’ *leísmo* are structurally ambiguous, they motivate looking at the clitic system wholly, as interconnected and potentially similarly affected by structural, semantic, and frequency factors.

This research, in particular, deliberately includes two cases of **ambiguous transitivity** as part of variable context for the direct-object clitics: the verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’. Both verbs are listed among the potentially ‘seeming’ *leísmo* constructions due to their relatively recent historical change from intransitive to transitive structure, although *llamar* is included with its original transitive meaning of naming something rather than a relatively recent means of

communication with technology (*Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, 2005). In their intransitive interpretations, the object of ‘help’ is the beneficiary of the action, while the object of ‘call’ is the recipient or addressee of the verb of communication. In Spanish, beneficiaries and recipients of verbs of communication are traditionally marked as indirect objects, as shown in the examples of a proposed prototypicality scale in Figure 7.1.2.1, directed at the second-person-formal interlocutor:

Figure 7.1.2.1

Examples of verbs of benefit and communication on a prototypicality scale formulated based on the verbs benefit and communicate

Prototypicality	Verbs of benefit		Verbs of communication	
direct	• I benefit you	<i>Le beneficio</i>	• I communicate to you	<i>Le comunico</i>
	• I pay you	<i>Le pago</i>	• I write to you	<i>Le escribo</i>
	• I please you	<i>Le complazco</i>	• I tell you	<i>Le digo</i>
	• I help you	<i>Le/lo ayudo</i>	• I call you	<i>Le/lo llamo</i>
	by association			

The **prototypical** constructions are those that most unambiguously and relatively frequently encode the syntactic-semantic relationships, and so the verbs *benefit* and *communicate* are the prototypical examples of the constructions corresponding to verbs of benefit and of communication, respectively. It is not difficult, taking them as points of reference, to associate them with the verbs *help* and *call* as participating in the same constructions at least some of the time. The verbs *pay/please* and *write/tell* serve as example verbs that, despite their non-prototypicality, take beneficiary/recipient objects for similar reasons as the verbs of reference.

The findings show that the verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’ are among the top 5 **most frequent** clitic-governing verbs in the oral role-play corpus and are indeed the most frequent contexts for the clitic *le*. Together, they form 24% (428/1783 tokens) of all verb constructions, meaning that at least a quarter of all contexts for polite *leísmo* is potentially

‘seeming’ *leísmo*. These are crucially the only verbs that prefer *le* over *lo*, despite the overall rate of *le* at the rather modest 17% in the entire oral corpus (1783 tokens, across 99 different verbs produced by 107 speakers). Of the total of 246 instances of the verb *ayudar* ‘help,’ 63% occur with *le*. And of the 182 instances of *llamar* ‘call’, *le* is the clitic in the majority 79% of all cases. The Table 7.1.2.2 partially reproduces Table 6.2.3.5 (from Results) to show the top 5 most frequent verbs in the oral corpus and their respective *le-lo* rates.

Table 7.1.2.2

Top 5 most frequent verbs in the oral corpus and their respective clitic rates (shaded verbs are part of the design of the study, unshaded are produced spontaneously)

N	VERB	English translation	LE		LO		RAW TOTAL
			raw	%	raw	%	
1	<i>ayudar</i>	help	155	63%	91	37%	246
2	<i>invitar</i>	invite	23	10%	204	90%	227
3	<i>acompañar</i>	accompany	14	7%	192	93%	206
4	<i>ver</i>	see	2	1%	195	99%	197
5	<i>llamar</i>	call	143	79%	39	21%	182

It is obvious that the verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’ lead in the use of *le* in this study. So should they be dismissed as ‘seeming’ *leísmo* or do they have a lesson for polite *leísmo*? To begin, these verbs represent a quarter of all contexts for the clitics and potentially for polite *leísmo*. This is a large enough presence to be of importance for the entire grammatical system, etymological or not. Furthermore, the only cases that run the risk of potentially being cases of ‘seeming’ *leísmo* are the 63% and 79%, respectively, of those verb-clitic combinations due to their pairing with *le*. Nevertheless, a significant portion of these verb instances are still used with the unambiguous direct-object *lo*, which remains acting as a theme or patient of the action. This means that even if these verbs form part of ‘seeming’ *leísmo*, they are not always that. The coexistence of two clitics suggests variation in the transitivity of the verb and the semantic role

of the argument receiving the action of the verb, along the lines proposed in Figure 7.1.2.1. Once again variationist analysis confirms that linguistic variation is not random. And if it is indeed systematic, it pays to consider the wider aspects of the clitic system, including the difficult and ambiguous cases such as the potentially ‘seeming’ *leísmo*, in order to understand the nature and motivations of this systematicity. The verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’ illustrate syntactic and semantic associations that govern clitic variation, and in particular the tendency toward beneficiary and recipient arguments. Precisely how semantics and lexical frequency of individual verbs affect the system is discussed next.

Verb Semantics and Their Frequency Effects. While clitic pronouns are considered grammatical or semi-lexical morphemes (Keizer, 2007), verbs that govern them are the lexical items with heaviest content load (Bybee, 2010). It is these verbs, then, that are responsible for semantic associations and systemic variations that affect polite *leísmo* and ultimately awarding the polite interpretation to the clitic *le*, which makes it different from *lo*. This study shows that general semantic properties as well as lexical meaning of individual verbs play a role in conceptualizing the direct-object *le* as polite. Both semantic and lexical factors, however, are best understood in conjunction with their relative frequencies, which becomes the connecting element throughout this discussion.

Telicity. In general semantic terms, verb telicity is seen as one of the defining elements of polite *leísmo*. While most of the verbs included in the design of this study are telic (84% in perception and 85% in role-plays), the oral corpus contains 24 different verbs used atelicly, from the 99 that are produced spontaneously among 107 participants. The intentional analysis of all produced transitive verbs with the formal-‘you’ clitics (2783 tokens) returns 76% telic and 23%

atelic verb-clitic tokens. Telic verbs are, therefore, most frequent in this corpus and represent the most common context for polite *leísmo* and the direct-object-‘you’ clitics generally.

The highest unelicited atelic¹⁰ verb in this study is *ver* ‘see’, which is the fourth most frequent transitive, clitic-bearing verb in the production study, as seen in Table 7.1.2.2. It is also obvious from the comparison that *ver* ‘see’ is drastically different from the other topmost verbs in its proportion of *le* of just 1%, while the lowest rates among the other four verbs are the more appreciable 7% with *acompañar* ‘accompany’ and 10% with *invitar* ‘invite’.

The low 7% rate of *le* with the verb *acompañar* ‘accompany’, in spite of being one of the by-design key verbs, is due to its both telic and atelic uses: the telic use situationally corresponds to guiding someone to a concrete point in space (situation #2 – a door, and #4 – a house/event), and the atelic use is reserved for expressing emotional company through condolences, without a punctual end (situation #10). The 7% *le* rate with *acompañar* ‘accompany’ is considered low given the average rate of *le* in the oral corpus at 17%. However, it will be shown that, aside from the special case verbs *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’, this rate is considerable enough to include this verb among those that most favor *le* (discussed below in Lexical Frequency, Figure 6.2.3.3).

An important finding is that both **production and perception** data reveal that telic verbs are consistently recognized as favoring polite *leísmo* in the multivariate logistical regression analysis. The telic-only subcorpus of the oral production data is the majority 76% of all data. This portion of the corpus makes the *le* clitic option even more pronounced than in the mixed-telicity corpus: with 21% of telic verbs appearing with *le*, above the whole-corpus average of 17%. What is excluded from this telic-only subcorpus are verbs like *ver* ‘see’, *admirar* ‘admire’, and *necesitar* ‘need’, which are highly or categorically *lo*-favoring.

¹⁰ It should be recalled that *ver* ‘to see’ may be used as a synonym of visiting, in which case it may be telic in light of the context (see Methodology for coding and examples).

In theoretical terms, telicity of polite *leísmo* constructions is viewed as correlated with **transitivity** by modulating the level of affectedness of the prototypical patient and the responsibility for that action on behalf of the prototypical agent. This observation is accompanied by the statistical effect of the subject and the clitic placement in light of iconic distancing, salience mechanisms, and syntactic indirectness. Considering the entire oral production corpus of telic and atelic verbs, the multivariate factor analysis selects the **subject** as significant, but considerably more significant with telic verbs, comparing the ranges found for mixed-telicity and telic-only datasets. Polite *leísmo*, then, is associated with prototypically transitive constructions in performing speech acts, produced by singular subjects. In the analysis of morphosyntactic **position of the clitic**, within the mixed-telicity dataset, both the pre-auxiliary/modal (most distant, more focused) and postverbal (least distant, defocused) positions favor *le*. However, only the pre-auxiliary/modal position remains significant in the telic-only subset. This is taken to mean that the favoring effect of the postverbal position of *le* is mainly due to the atelic verbs. Atelic verbs are considered lower in transitivity than telic verbs, according to the **Relative Transitivity theory**, by lowering the level of affectedness of the direct object (Hopper & Thompson, 1980). The postverbal *le*, then, becomes associated with lower affectedness and defocusing of the interlocutor as direct object. At the same time, the pre-modal/auxiliary *le*, typical of telic verbs, is a distancing resource of highly transitive verbs that affect the interlocutor more fully. In both cases, polite *leísmo* offsets the undesirable effect of high transitivity of the verb with such structural tools as distancing and defocusing – both examples of indirectness. **Telicity**, as a correlate of higher transitivity, therefore, points to polite *leísmo* as a **stylistic** resource to regulate and diminish the level of affectedness and focus of the direct object, in this

case, a formal 'you' as a theme or patient of the action expressed by the verb. Telic verbs are seen as the most prototypical ground for polite *leísmo*.

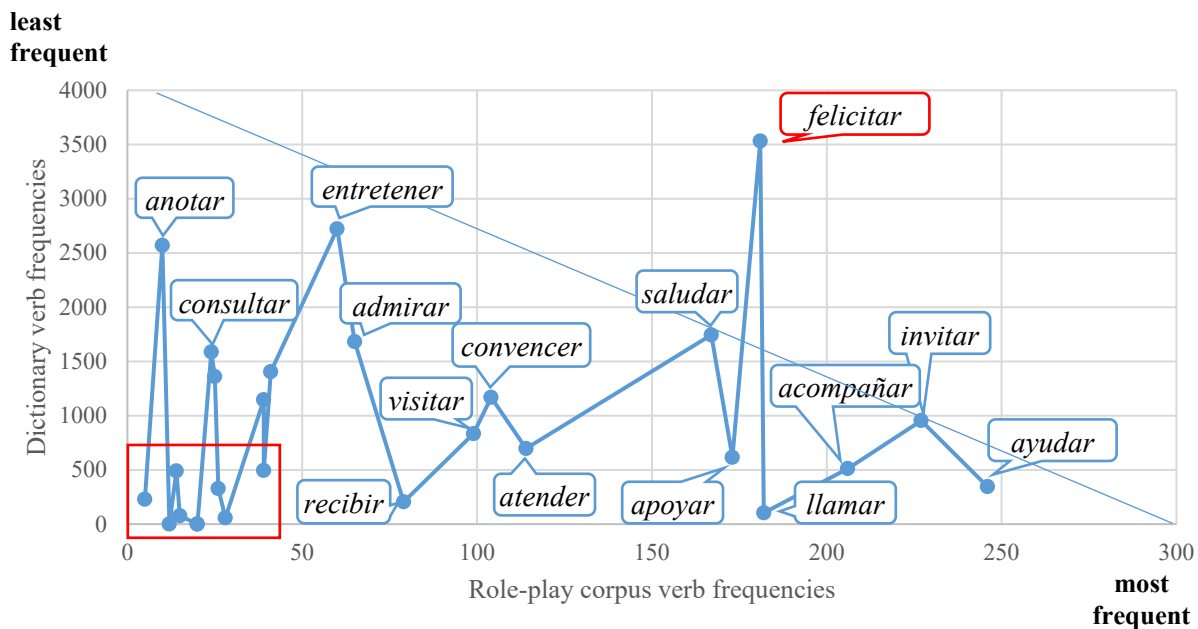
Lexical meaning and frequency. Another aspect of semantic properties of the verbs that constitute linguistic context for polite *leísmo* is the lexical meaning of the verbs. It has already been presented that the verbs *ayudar* 'help' and *llamar* 'call' lead in the use and acceptability of *le* where *lo* is generally expected for structural reasons. Now we focus on the meaning of the verbs that act as illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) during interactive speech events. While **lexical frequency** may and has been considered on its own in sociolinguistics, this methodology is focused on frequency in context in the following way. The same verb may be used very differently when expressing the illocutionary force toward an interlocutor in real-time interaction than when it is used to describe or inform genres such as narratives and not necessarily involving any present person in the expressed action. Before this study, however, there has not been a statistically reliable frequency point of reference for illocutionary verbs just in interactive contexts. This research shows that frequency dictionaries are not the most useful for research such as this, where the focus phenomenon of polite *leísmo* is a feature of dialogue, characterized by speech acts that use linguistics creatively to say more than what is said.

Figure 7.1.2.3 is a visual correspondence between the study's IFID verb frequencies reported in the Davies's (2006) frequency dictionary and the oral role-play corpus frequencies. It must be recalled that the scales vary in the following way: Davies's lowest scores correspond to the topmost frequent verbs, while the raw corpus frequencies maintain the lowest scores as the least frequently used verbs. This means that a frequent-frequent correspondence of the same verb between two sources is plotted low and to the right and the infrequent-infrequent correspondences

are located high and to the left. A diagonal has been placed to visually separate the lowest rightmost area (high frequency) from the highest leftmost area (low frequency) of the chart.

Figure 7.1.2.3

Comparison of two lexical frequency measures for the IFID verbs



For example, the verb *ayudar* ‘help’ is the rightmost point of the graph, which is located rather low on the Davies’s (2006) axis, corresponding to the highest frequency in the role-play corpus and likewise in the frequency dictionary. In fact, the rightmost four points, corresponding to the topmost four verbs in the corpus (*ayudar* ‘help’, *invitar* ‘invite’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, and *llamar* ‘call’), are largely consistent with the high frequency reported by the Davies’s (2006) dictionary. Similarly, the two leftmost spikes at the verbs *anotar* ‘note down’ and *consultar* ‘consult’ are infrequent by the dictionary and by the oral corpus standards. There is, however, no neat linear pattern between the two frequency measures across all verbs, with most of the verbs plotted showing some frequency incongruences, which are proposed to be due to their dependence on the interactive context and illocutionary force.

The rightmost spike calls attention to a significant mismatch in dictionary and corpus frequency: the verb *felicitar* ‘congratulate’ is a highly infrequent verb in the dictionary, while rather frequent in the compiled role-play corpus. This is not surprising, it being a common performative verb of an expressive speech act of congratulations. The act of congratulations assumes dialogic nature of the action expressed by the verb and so is not readily available in language corpora-based dictionaries, built on largely narrative or impersonal texts, low in interaction.

The verbs represented by the agglomeration of points in the leftmost bottom portion of the chart are all considered exceptionally frequent by Davies’s (2006) standards, while are among the rarest verbs in the current production study. They are, in the order from lowest frequency in the corpus: *necesitar* ‘need’, *agendar* ‘schedule’, *detener* ‘hold up’, *poner (a cargo)* ‘put in charge’, *nombrar* ‘name’, *hacer (cambiar)* ‘make change’, *reconocer* ‘recognize’, *querer* ‘love’, and *elegir* ‘elect’. Why would these verbs be so uncommon in interaction, despite their general commonness in language? One obvious commonality defines a verb network expressing high levels of imposition as part of their lexical-semantic meaning (namely: need, hold up, put in charge, and make change). The connotation of imposition is reason enough for Mexican culture to avoid these verbs, similar to the way most speakers tend to avoid saying ‘no’ (see the Pragmatics subsection of the Discussion). The two declarative verbs that express recognition and election of the interlocutor imply that the speaker has such power, while in real life, declarative speech acts are not a common reality for an average member of the community. It is also worth noting that for the same reason, declarative speech events are not part of the design of this study, and so the few declarative verbs are only exploratory at this point. The verb *querer* ‘love’ is indeed a dialogic verb and can be used performatively to express affection in expressive speech

acts. Its low use in the current study can be explained by the social distance established by the design of the contexts favorable to the formal-‘you’ treatment. While affection can and is indeed expressed in such contexts a total of 28 times in the role-play corpus, the social distance factor explains why it is not more common than that.

This frequency comparison is only an illustration of the necessity of considering context and frequency of context in research where context is a factor conditioning meaning – the case of pragmatic variation. Two consequences of this comparison are: (1) synonyms that share much of lexical meaning vary in lexical frequency and potentially their illocutionary force and (2) even the same verb might be considered frequent or infrequent based on the context and function. Further research is capable of elucidating this issue and discovering concrete implications for various linguistics topics of inquiry. For now, let’s delve into the Usage-Based implications around the two concrete verbs leading in the *le* clitic.

Usage-Based Implications of Frequency. In the discussion of the syntactic structure of polite *leísmo* embedding, the presence of ‘seeming’ *leísmo* brings to light two specific verbs that favor the *le* clitic disproportionately higher than any other verb: *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’. Their dominance is consistent throughout the production and perception corpora. The Usage-Based account of language variation (Bybee, 2010) maintains that high-frequency constructions may act as prototypes that affect the rest of the system by their example. This perspective helps to view the verb *ayudar* ‘help’ and *llamar* ‘call’ as prototypes or central elements of two semantic networks of verbs: (1) those related to helping and benefitting and (2) verbs of communication. Reproduced from Figure 6.2.3.1, Figure 7.1.2.4 is a word cloud representation of the 35 verbs produced by 107 role-play participants with *le* at least some of the time. The large font size of the two prototypes reflects their high frequency, leaving barely visible the other

33 verbs. These verbs are illustrated in a corresponding font size-frequency correlation in Figure 7.1.2.5 (reproduced from Figure 6.2.3.2), which intentionally omits the two most frequent verbs, for a close-up perspective.

Figure 7.1.2.4

LE-verb frequencies in production corpus
(*n=107 speakers; 35 verbs*)



Figure 7.1.2.5

Production: LE-verb frequencies less the prototypes (*n=107 speakers; 33 verbs*)



Figure 7.1.2.5 in particular helps highlight the non-prototypical verbs that lead in the production of polite *leísmo*: *atender* ‘assist, take care of’, *invitar* ‘invite’, *apoyar* ‘support’, *saludar* ‘greet’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, *consultar* ‘consult’, *felicitar* ‘greet’, and others. Upon careful examination, two semantic patterns emerge among the highest *le*-bearing verbs, along the lines of benefit and communication. These semantic networks are schematically represented in Figure 7.1.2.6 and Figure 7.1.2.7, centered on their corresponding prototype.

The *ayudar* ‘help’ semantic network consists of the most frequently *le* governing synonyms *atender* ‘assist’, *apoyar* ‘support’, and *acompañar* ‘accompany’. Interestingly, the closest synonym *atender* ‘assist’ is also the most favoring of *le* after the other two verbs, further supporting this cognitive exemplar hypothesis.

Figure 7.1.2.6

The semantic network of helping and benefiting verbs favoring polite leísmo

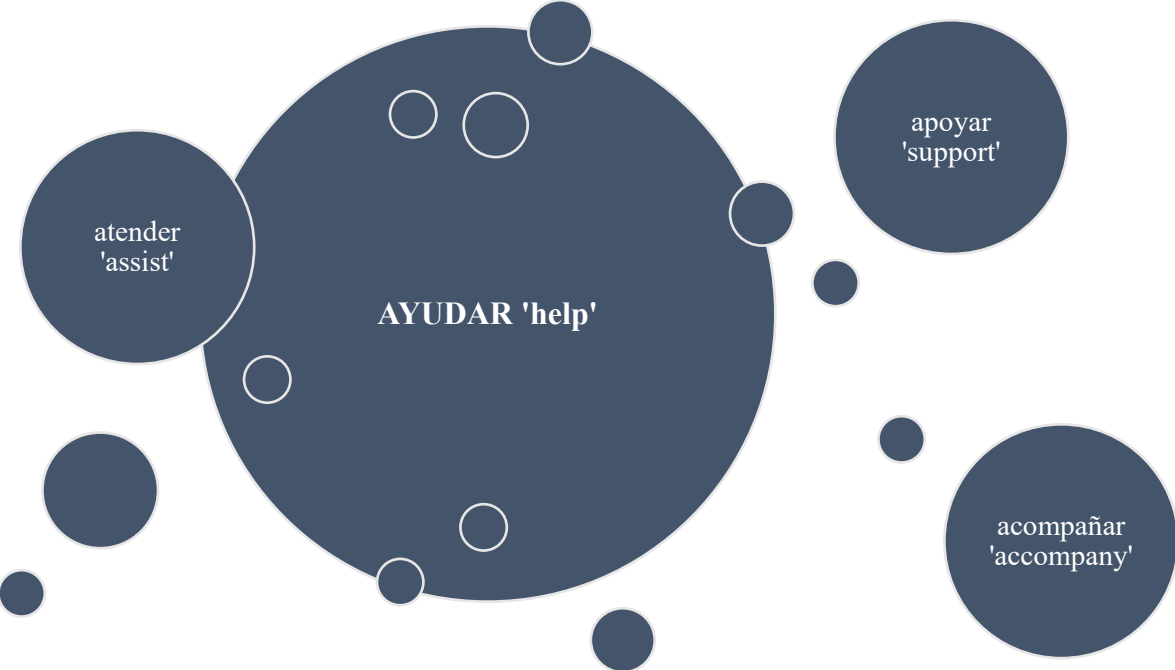
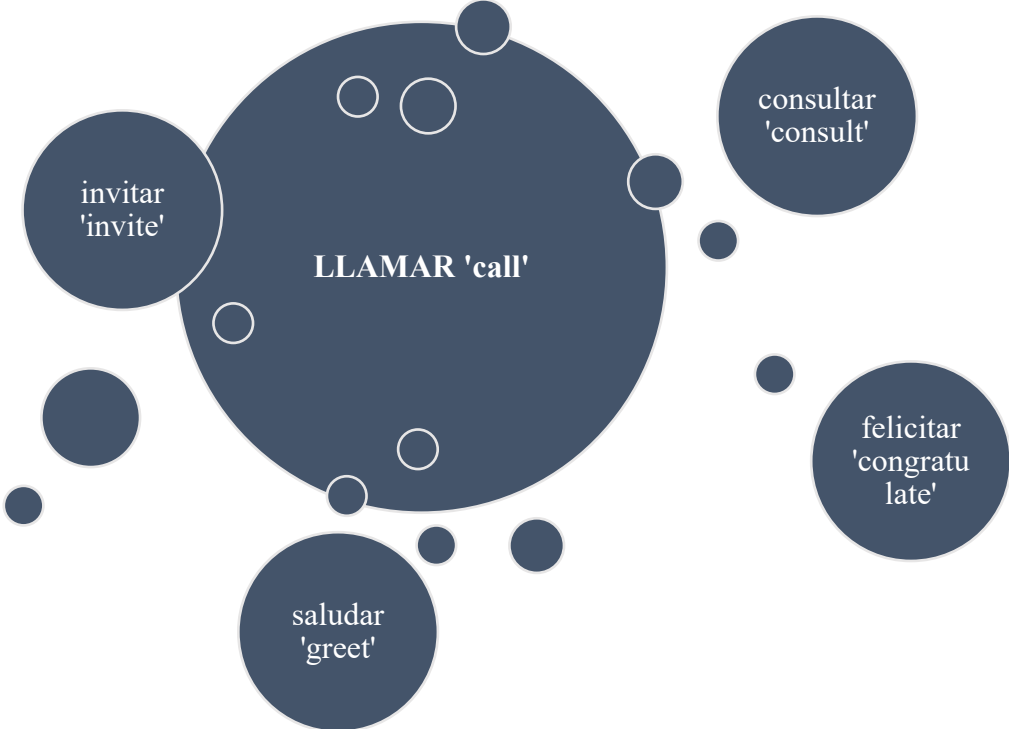


Figure 7.1.2.7

The semantic network of communication actions favoring polite leísmo



The *llamar* ‘help’ semantic network contains four of the verbs most frequently taking the *le* pronoun: *invitar* ‘invite’, *saludar* ‘greet’, *consultar* ‘consult’, and *felicitar* ‘congratulate’. Rather than strict synonymy among the verbs, it should be highlighted that most of these verbs are common performative verbs in expressive and commissive speech acts. By mere definition of speech acts, these verbs correspond to doing things with words and are necessarily directed at the interlocutor: inviting [you], congratulating [you], and greeting [you]. While ‘consult’ and ‘call’ are not typically performative, they may and are indeed used in this study to indicate the illocutionary force of the action happening or promised to happen. In all cases, the interlocutor is the addressee of an important action of communication.

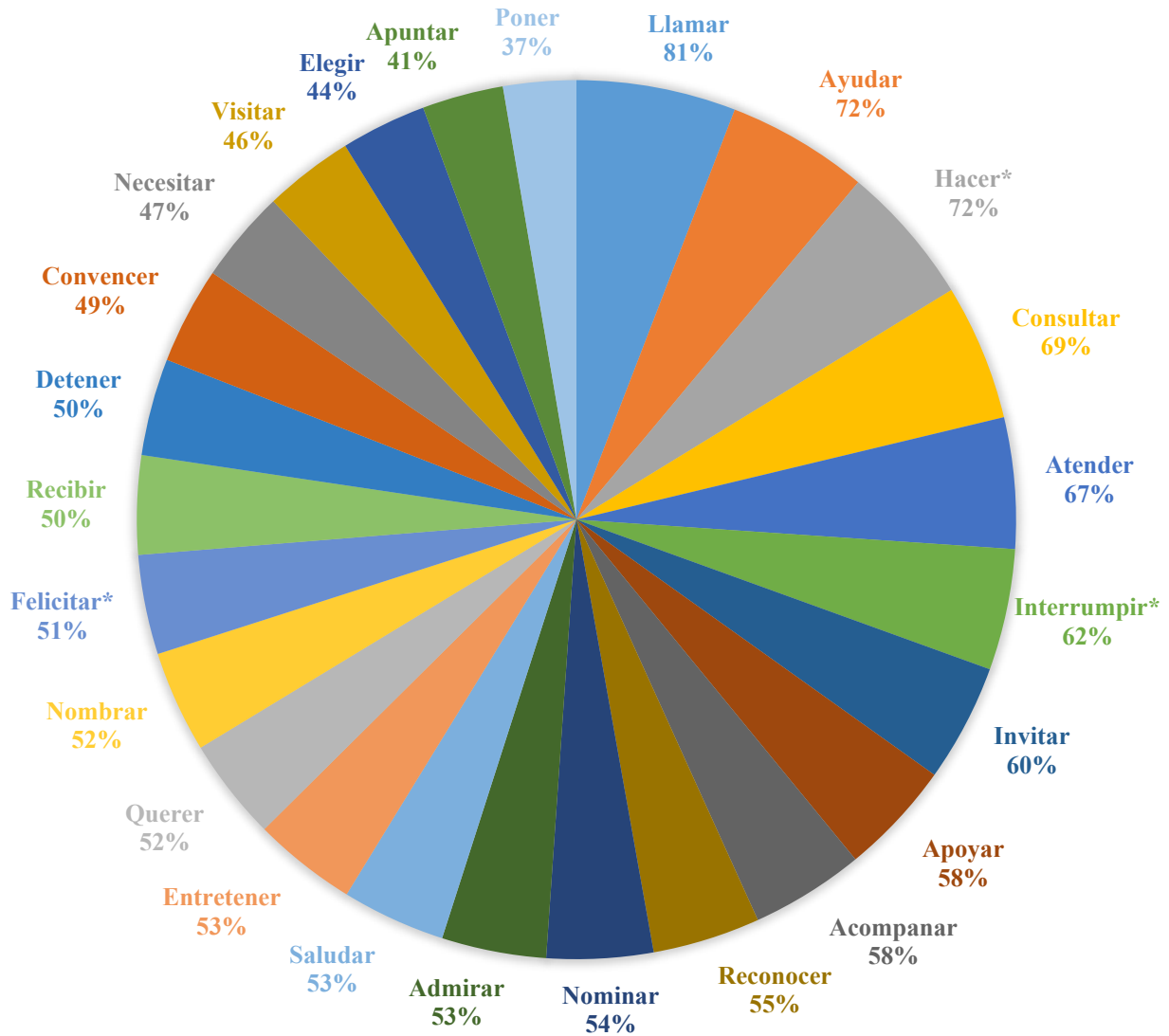
Importantly, a similar semantic association pattern emerges in **perception** data, supporting the proposed exemplars as cognitive networks: the verbs most acceptable with polite *leísmo* for the most part continue belonging to the semantic networks of **help/benefit** and **communication**.

The Acceptability Judgment Task overall shows very few verbs acceptable with just *lo* and disfavoring clitic optionality. The same verbs are most readily accepted with *le*, either as the only possibility or as one of two acceptable clitics, corresponding to high percentage rates in Figure 7.1.2.8 (reproduced from Figure 6.2.3.8 in Results’ Big Picture Descriptive Trends).

Two verbs not seen frequently produced in the role plays stand out as highly acceptable with *le*: *hacer [cambiar de opinión]* ‘make [change mind]’ (72% acceptable) and *interrumpir* ‘interrupt’ (62% acceptable). The common semantic link between these two verbs is the **imposition** inherent in the meaning, making these verbs semantically face threatening. The use of polite *leísmo* with these particular verbs begs the interpretation of **mitigation politeness**.

Figure 7.1.2.8

*Relative ranking of verbs by percent acceptability of *le* in the AJT (asterisks mark salient deviations from the production patterns)*



Perceptually, then, it is possible that a third semantic network emerges around the notion of imposition, but this connection is not a strong one, seeing how imposition verbs vary greatly in their clitic ratio and mostly in favor of *lo*. Of the verbs that show less than 50% acceptability with *le* in favor of *lo* are several imposition verbs, among others: *poner a cargo* ‘put in charge’, *apuntar* ‘note down, schedule’, *elegir* ‘elect’, *visitar* ‘visit’, *necesitar* ‘need’, and *convencer*

‘convince’. Extra care should be taken with the verb *hacer* ‘make’ in its deontic function, as it has been noted under ‘seeming’ *leísmo*: its action always applies to another verb, which may at times be structured as an infinitival clause whose subject is the direct object of the main clause. Therefore, its higher acceptability with *le* (72%) is likely influenced by these structural and interpretive factors. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the presence of imposition and the effect of seeming *leísmo* on the entire system, even if to a lesser degree. The Pragmatic perspective discusses the presence of polite *leísmo* in speech events of negotiation, characterized by mitigation.

These semantic associations are important for systematic language variation and change to establish the possibilities and the direction of change. The frequency factor is expected to affect the magnitude and speed of language change, explaining and predicting variable clitic behavior of the polite *leísmo* phenomenon.

Theta-Role Reanalysis Hypothesis. The analysis of individual verbs and their semantic classes reveals an interesting pattern of what looks like a **theta-role reanalysis** of the *ayudar* ‘help’-related verbs as taking a beneficiary object rather than a theme. According to this view, and in line with the Relative Transitivity hypothesis, arguments and their semantic roles contribute to the degree of agentivity of the subject and relative transitivity of the verb, which in turn affects the intention and the interpretation of *le* and *lo*. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the verb *ayudar* ‘help’ is the absolute leader and prototype for this variation. Historically and typologically, this particular verb often expresses dative relationship with its object as the beneficiary of the action (e.g. Russian *помогать ему* ‘help him-DAT’). Due to its changing nature in the history of Spanish, the option was initially to exclude this verb as problematic to the system, and an example of the so-called seeming *leísmo*, but it appears much

more informative and fair to recognize its place in the system of other verbs that now seem to take after it as their prototype. Specifically a semantic network of verbs synonymous with *ayudar* ‘help’ are implicated as open to polite *leísmo*: *apoyar* ‘support’, *atender* ‘assist’, *acompañar* ‘accompany’, forming a sort of an exemplar based on usage and cognitive associations (Bybee, 2010). Similarly, several verbs referring to actions done through communication may be seen as forming a semantic network with the verb *llamar* ‘call’: *consultar* ‘consult’, *invitar* ‘invite’, *felicitar* ‘congratulate’, and *saludar* ‘greet’. This emerging hypothesis, the **Theta-Role Reanalysis hypothesis**, in a way combines traits of the Relative Transitivity and Differential Object Marking by suggesting that a direct-object theme of these constructions is expressed and interpreted as a beneficiary or a recipient/addressee. Polite *leísmo*, therefore, marks the direct object as differentiated and less affected by transitivity, as well as endowing it with a more desirable role and implicit benefit. On the one hand, this analysis rescues ‘seeming’ *leísmo*, giving it its place in the variable system and highlighting it as an important locus of language change. On the other hand, linguistic analysis of lexical and semantic properties invites serious consideration of the speech act theory in form of the interactive nature and illocutionary force of some lexical items.

7.1.3 Linguistic Conditioning: How It Varies

The overview of the properties of the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* and its context have highlighted the significance of various linguistic factors in understanding its meaning and use. Generally speaking, then, **how is the polite *le* different from the polite *lo* linguistically?**

The answer is in subtleties around transitivity and indirectness. Verb semantics and frequency explain important features of the context of the phenomenon through focused

examination, which is not part of the multivariate logistic regression analysis. The statistical analysis further quantifies and establishes relationships among the subtle differences in the properties, context, and use of *le* over *lo* direct-object ‘you’ references. The found conditioning factors echo the theoretical perspectives discussed in defining the properties of polite *leísmo* and can be formulated as a directness-indirectness continuum, corresponding to two politeness functions at the focus of the next subsection. Figure 7.1.3.1 (adapted from Figure 5.4.1 of Analysis) summarizes the conditioning of polite *leísmo* that sets it apart from the etymological *lo* variant.

Figure 7.1.3.1

Polite leísmo conditioning on the hypothesized politeness continuum (adapted from Figure 5.4.1 of Analysis)

<= Face-enhancing politeness ===== Mitigation politeness =>

Theoretical Perspectives:

	<i>more transitive</i>	<i>less transitive</i>
• Relative Transitivity	<i>more salient</i>	<i>less salient</i>
• Saliency	<i>closest/immediate</i>	<i>farthest/distant</i>
• Iconic Distance	<i>direct</i>	<i>indirect</i>
• Indirectness-Politeness		

Factors:

linguistic	• Telicity	<i>telic</i>	<i>atelic</i>
	• Subject	<i>1st-person, singular</i>	<i>3rd-person/impersonal, plural</i>
	• Object	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
	• Polarity	<i>non-negated</i>	<i>negated</i>
	• Syntactic structure	<i>unmitigated declarative</i>	<i>interrogative, conditional</i>
	• Argument structure	<i>NP</i>	<i>NP + clause</i>
	• Clitic position	<i>pre-verbal, pre-auxiliary</i>	<i>post-verbal</i>
	• Verb morphology	<i>present, indicative</i>	<i>conditional, nonfinite</i>
	• Tense expression	<i>present</i>	<i>future, conditional</i>

The conditioning of polite *leísmo* falls partially into two categories of direct and indirect morphosyntactic structure, which are further explained as corresponding to different types of politeness. Syntactic directness is correlated with higher transitivity and higher salience, which is structurally expressed immediately preceding the verb as an attention-directing element and direct association with the action. Structural deviations from this prototype result in various degrees of intended and perceived indirectness.

The analysis of production and perception data together (Figure 7.1.3.1) reveal that polite *leísmo* is associated with **directness** because it is favored by telic verbs, singular subjects, non-negated sentences, pre-auxiliary clitic placement, and present verb morphology. On the other hand, another set of favoring factors suggest that polite *leísmo* at the same time participates in **indirect** structures: specifically, interrogative and conditional sentences, with conditional verb morphology, and with post-verbal clitic placement. This variable structural conditioning is not necessarily contradictory. Seeing polite *leísmo* as having traits of different structural and politeness mechanisms makes it a valuable multifunctional tool, capable of adapting to the context and serving multiple face needs of the interlocutors. Exactly how and why this happens is discussed through the following Pragmatics perspective.

7.2 Pragmatics of Polite *Leísmo*: Communicative Functions and Meaning in Context



Pragmatic perspective is helpful in understanding the meaning and functions of polite *leísmo* as a pragmalinguistic resource in Mexican communities. This perspective is built on the pragmatic concepts of meaning in context and dynamic construction of social relationships through language —the said and the implied (cf. Thomas, 1995). Meaning in context is understood as a combination of the illocutionary forces of

linguistic resources, speaker intentions, shared knowledge, and implicatures (Huang, 2014), among other resources at the interface between morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. At the same time, meaning and context are malleable and co-constructed in real time along with the relationship of the interactants. This dynamicity of interactive meaning construction takes the methodological form of role plays and contextualized acceptability judgments to elicit and to measure intentions and perlocutionary effects of polite *leísmo* on the formal, actional, and interactional levels (Schneider & Barron, 2008). The day-to-day typical interaction is perceived along the relational-transactional continuum, depending on the purpose of the exchange: either convivial or getting something done – often accomplishing both at the same time (Placencia, 2004). In fact, doing things with words is at the heart of the speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1968), which is why the study is largely designed on the pragmatic factors of speech event, the context of social domain, interlocutor relationship in terms of power and distance, and encoding reality and hypotheticity. Politeness is an overarching framework supporting either type of relational or transactional exchange as most appropriate and effective for the set purpose. Polite *leísmo*, then, is one politeness resource, among many others, to encode these complex linguistic-pragmatic-social relationships. These relationships are embodied in the concept of social deixis, which begins to elucidate the referential meaning and contextual functions of polite *leísmo*.

The Research Questions 1 and 2, concerned with the conditioning of polite *leísmo* in production and perception, propose to investigate the role of pragmatic or contextual factors. The Research Question 3 further poses the need to understand the meaning and functions of polite *leísmo*. This discussion subsection answers questions specifically about what polite *leísmo* means, how and why it is used differently from the etymological *lo*, and how these uses and

perceptions constitute politeness. The question about who uses it is further discussed in the following Sociolinguistics Perspective subsection. The guiding theoretical perspective taken here is the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis, as well as the distinction between positive and negative types of politeness, which are used to explain the politeness aspect of polite *leísmo*. The discussion concludes with how polite *leísmo* serves a dual-politeness function: face-enhancing politeness and mitigation politeness.

7.2.1 What It Means (in Context)

Referentially, polite *leísmo* means signaling social qualities and relationships of individuals relevant to discourse. This phenomenon is called **social deixis**, which is concerned with linguistically codifying social distance and power hierarchy of the interlocutors. As such, the meaning of deictic phenomena completely depends on context (Huang, 2007, 2014). Social deixis is a form of personal deixis, which is central to establishing deictic center and deictic projections in interaction as a focusing and defocusing strategy, mitigation, politeness, evidentiality, or some other implicature. While English is a relatively *I*-focused language, Spanish formulates many of the same ideas as *you*-directed. Polite *leísmo* is one such *you*-directed and *you*-encoding phenomenon.

For polite *leísmo*, it is particularly the social and relational context that defines the relationships established through interaction, which is further constrained by cultural context. Just as the T-V choice between *tú* and *usted* in interaction shapes relationships and constructs interlocutors' roles, so does the use of *le* over *lo* in addressing the interlocutor treated as *usted*, the formal 'you'. Polite *leísmo* has the power of deictic projection to encode politeness by

softening or enhancing the effects of illocutionary verbs on the hearer as well as modulating the focus on him or her.

Social deixis is one clear example of interactional meaning from the morphosyntax-pragmatics interface perspective. It is not the only one. Interactional meaning counts on multiple resources that code and decode intentions and interpretations (i.e. illocutionary and perlocutionary force of what is said). The illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) are a large group of such resources that signal meaning by way of specific words, syntactic structure, and intonation. Of the specific words, performative verbs are a special and most prototypical kind of a morphosyntactic tool to convey interactional meaning in context (cf. Austin, 2013; Thomas, 1995). This study considers that multiple morphosyntactic categories, such as verbs, nouns, and pronouns are conventionally constrained by structural, semantic, and pragmatic roles in discourse. And because polite *leísmo* is structurally embedded among these syntactic categories, its meaning is not independent of their meaning.

Several interface theoretical perspectives suggest that variation in these categories and their structure is subject to conventional implicatures by association, which gives them special meaning in context. Specifically, verbs express the main illocutionary force of the speech acts in interaction; nouns define the arguments and their relationship, such as agent-patient; and, finally, pronouns serve to establish deictic center and deictic projections, and this way create implicatures of social roles and relationships of the interlocutors at the time of interaction. This research specifically situates polite *leísmo* with intentional verbs as illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), the argument structure lowered in transitivity from agent-patient to agent-beneficiary/recipient relationship, and distinguishing social power and formality relationships.

Importantly, the meaning of polite *leísmo* is most easily discoverable by considering its **daily applicability along with the main communicative functions of language.**

7.2.2 How It Is Used

To speak of meaning in context, due focus must be given to the context: linguistic, situational, and social. The linguistic and social context of polite *leísmo* are defined in their corresponding Discussion subsections. Pragmatically, polite *leísmo* is seen affected by at least four contextual factors: speech event, social domain, interlocutor power, and the (ir)realis mood. Importantly, the conditioning effect of these factors on the clitic choice differs slightly between interactive oral speech and perceived acceptability. Consistently, polite *leísmo* is a resource used to negotiate and to offer some benefit to the interlocutor, such as help, attention, or services. Additionally, it is the interlocutor with some authority over the speaker that motivates the use of polite *leísmo* and thus highlights social hierarchy. The semi-conscious nature of the phenomenon and a fair dose of linguistic insecurity are possible causes for differences in conditioning of the other two factors. For example, only in production is the hypotheticity of expression encoded in polite *leísmo* through the irrealis mood of verb expression. However, this connection is unconscious upon close attention, as it is not significant in the perception study. While polite *leísmo* is consistently associated with formal social domain or register, it seems to spontaneously carry over to the more informal, solidarity discourse (in production), while consciously extending in the opposite direction, to traditional and ceremonial domains (in perception).

Logically, it is not difficult to imagine an extension from the central contexts outward in either direction. But can a formality resource serve the solidarity and the social distancing

function at the same time? Or is it a case of linguistic insecurity where reported attitudes do not necessarily reflect the reality? Can it be both? There is evidence to support both, but it is conditioned upon the purpose of the interaction in relational-transactional terms, where different face needs are highlighted.

Figure 7.2.2.1

Polite leísmo conditioning on the hypothesized politeness continuum (adapted from Figure 5.4.1 of Analysis)

<= Face-enhancing politeness ===== Mitigation politeness =>			
Theoretical Perspectives:			
• Relative Transitivity	<i>more transitive</i>	<i>less transitive</i>	
• Salience	<i>more salient</i>	<i>less salient</i>	
• Iconic Distance	<i>closest/immediate</i>	<i>farthest/distant</i>	
• Indirectness-Politeness	<i>direct</i>	<i>indirect</i>	
Factors:			
contextual	• Social domain	<i>informal, traditional</i>	<i>formal, traditional</i>
	• Speech event	<i>greeting, offer</i>	<i>negotiation</i>
	• Power/authority	<i>equals</i>	<i>subordinate to interlocutor</i>
	• (Ir)realis	<i>realis</i>	<i>irrealis</i>

Overall, the analysis of production and perception data together (Figure 7.2.2.1) suggests that polite *leísmo*, besides correlating with direct strategies, is associated with **face-enhancing politeness** because it is significantly more common in informal social interactions and in offers. This is the context where directness is taken as a sign of *confianza* ‘trust’ or otherwise desirable in order to benefit the interlocutor. On the other hand, another set of favoring factors suggest that polite *leísmo* at the same time participates in **mitigation politeness** along with indirect structures: specifically, expressing actions in irrealis mood and in formal social interactions, characterized by negotiation and subordination to the interlocutor. Those are the contexts with greater risk for personal and interlocutor’s good face where handling the situation wrong implies graver consequences for the speaker.

7.2.3 *Why It Is Used*

Results of the perception experiment highlight the positive relationship of polite *leísmo* with formality and politeness. The role of contextual formality in defining politeness is a common assumption. Formality of context is encoded in several contextual variables in the study design: social domain and interlocutors' power difference. Both production and perception studies of polite *leísmo* show structural and contextual correlations with variable syntactic directness. This syntax-pragmatics interface relationship is conceptualized in the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis that maintains that pragmatic meaning of an utterance depends on subtle variations in syntax. Namely, indirectness corresponds to lower transitivity, lower salience, and iconic distancing, among other conventional strategies. This structural-meaning connection becomes an indirectness continuum, corresponding to a politeness type continuum, to which we turn now.

Indirectness as Politeness. Previous literature on *leísmo* has offered several hypotheses as to the why of *leísmo* or polite *leísmo*. García (1975), Flores (2001, 2002), Flores and Melis (2007), and Aijón Oliva (2006) have argued for the function of *leísmo* to indicate greater agentivity of the direct object in relation to the subject and thus conveying a range of attitudes toward the referent, from personification/respect to objectification/degradation. These notions illustrate the strong connection between syntax and pragmatics, especially with respect to linguistic politeness and impoliteness. This connection is formulated in several theoretical perspectives that in one way or another correlate syntactic structure with subtleties in meaning: the Relative Transitivity hypothesis, the Salience hypothesis, the Iconic Distance hypothesis, and the Indirectness as Politeness hypothesis. In fact, the latter is seen as an overarching continuum hosting the other syntactic observations as manifestations of indirectness.

Pragmatic and sociolinguistic literature on politeness correlate syntactic indirectness with intentional politeness. Direct syntax and most literal expressions and interpretations of utterances are considered ‘bold-on-record’ and may therefore be face-threatening, depending on the speech act being performed (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, the negotiations in this study are clearly face-threatening due to the imposition of the speaker’s desire over the interlocutor with a transactional purpose. However, speech acts such as greetings, offers, and some invitations are mostly relationship-building, or relational, and focused on the benefit to the interlocutor (Hernández-Flores, 2004). Curcó (2007), for example, promotes the idea that Hispanic cultures use face-enhancing politeness through both direct and indirect means, as a culture focused on affiliation and solidarity needs more so than on autonomy needs. In either case, both mitigation and face-enhancement politeness perspectives contribute reasons to consider syntactic resources, and especially syntactic indirectness, to expression and perception of politeness of polite *leísmo*.

Previous research on indirectness helps us understand it as a wide range of morphosyntactic, lexical, structural, frequency, and even prosodic resources to deviate from the default, prototypical expressions in meaningful and efficient ways. This research has identified prototypical transitivity constructions as more direct in affecting the interlocutor in speech acts. Likewise expressing the illocutionary verb by directly conjugating it in the most expected morphological tense, mood, and aspect forms a more direct speech acts. On the contrary, cushioning the illocutionary verb with modal and auxiliary verbs, expanding the sentence with clausal adjuncts in addition to the direct object, playing with less common tense and mood morphology, negating the sentence, expressing it as a question or in conditional constructions reduce the illocutionary power of the verb, making the utterance more morphosyntactically indirect. Deictically, more direct constructions are expressed with subjects in first-person-

singular and objects also in singular terms, and so any shifts away from these configurations are seen as deictic projections of the deictic center, and therefore are considered indirect.

Interestingly, not all of the structural factors correlated with indirectness (i.e. subject person, object plurality, argument structure, and tense expression) show effect on polite *leísmo*. Only singular subjects, positive polarity, and present-tense verb morphology emerge as directness strategies in favor of polite *leísmo*. Interrogative and conditional sentence structure and conditional verb morphology, on the other hand, are the indirectness strategies that favor polite *leísmo*. This means that *le* shows features of both directness and indirectness strategies, and therefore is capable of expressing two different politeness functions: face-enhancing and mitigating politeness.

Politeness in Mexico. Cross-cultural research has shaped our understanding of politeness as a set of universal and culture-specific expectations in the day-to-day interactions within and across communities during the first wave of politeness research, and has narrowed in on the dynamic, constructivist, and relative nature of it during the more recent years (see Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021). It is important to distinguish that interactions range from transactional to relational goals, varying in imposition and often mixing the two, and that relationships vary in social distance, power, and formality or setting. This variability presents politeness as a continuum of situations and resources. This study distinguishes between mitigation politeness as the appropriate strategy in face-threatening interactions, such as negotiations and some invitations (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and face-enhancing politeness used for relational purposes, such as greetings and offers (Curcó, 2007; Hernández-Flores, 2004). These politeness effects are elicited, measured, and interpreted in interactional speech-act role plays and a contextualized AJT questionnaire of the perlocutionary force of variable clitic expressions.

Face-Enhancing Politeness. Face-enhancing politeness refers to solidarity building in the absence of any face threat, by primarily highlighting the social value of our interlocutors and focusing on benefiting and making them feel good about themselves (Hernández-Flores, 2004). This can be done through expressive speech acts and various positive-politeness strategies where invading someone's personal space can be viewed as desirable if that means including and benefiting the interlocutors, such as welcoming, helping, or taking care of them. Most direct evidence of this type of politeness with polite *leísmo* is found in that it is preferred in speech events of **offer** (a communicative event whose purpose is to offer something of benefit to the interlocutor). Linguistically, it is the **present-tense** verb morphology that predicts the use of polite *leísmo*, and it is precisely the present-tense morphology that indicates syntactically **unmitigated directness** characteristic of positive politeness. Finally, the preference for polite *le* in the **informal** domain in production calls for some reflection.

From the descriptive and frequency analysis, several performative verbs are shown to favor polite *leísmo*, as discussed in the Linguistics subsection of Discussion: *invitar* 'invite', *saludar* 'greet', and *felicitar* 'congratulate', among other performative and illocutionary force indicating devices. And since performative verbs in this study are directed at the interlocutor, the interlocutor can be viewed as more directly and fully affected by these verbs, especially seeing how telicity favors polite *leísmo*. However, these verbs are not typically face-threatening, and are further common in the informal social domain, calling for the interpretation that polite *leísmo* is at the same time a relational, *confianza*-building, and face-enhancing tool focused on the benefit to the interlocutor. A similar effect is seen for verbs that may be considered illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) indicating **help**: the prototypical leader *ayudar* 'help,' along with its

synonyms *atender* ‘assist,’ *acompañar* ‘accompany,’ and *apoyar* ‘support’ – all are *le*-favoring verbs in the production and perception studies.

Mitigation Politeness. Mitigation politeness is often associated with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) conceptualization of politeness through degrees of face threat, which must be mitigated in order to respect the interlocutor’s negative face needs or right for autonomy. This type of politeness, therefore, can be considered distancing by giving the interlocutor his or her space and freedom from imposition. This characteristic is also the cause of one of the biggest criticisms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework, especially due to their claim of universality found not to be faithfully representative of Hispanic cultures (cf. Curcó, 2007; Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021). There are multiple linguistic resources that may act as mitigators or softeners of imposition, from lexical (e.g. “just,” “a little”) to morphological (e.g. diminutive suffixes), to syntactic (e.g. conditional sentences), to suprasegmental (e.g. interrogative intonation of declarative sentences).

The mitigation function of polite *leísmo* is supported by correlations with several elements of face-threatening directive speech acts. It was discovered in this study that, of the conditioning factors for polite *leísmo*, the following can be classified as mitigation devices: **conditional** verb morphology (e.g. *llamaría* ‘I would call’), **if-conditional** and **interrogative** sentence structure as opposed to unmitigated declaratives, **irrealis** mood of the verbs (referring to hypothetical actions instead of those that can be observed). Additionally, the mitigation politeness is what is expected in imposing contexts, which is represented in this study by such favoring factors as the speech event of **negotiation** and the IFIDs indicating **imposition** (e.g. *hacer cambiar de opinión* ‘to make change mind,’ *convencer* ‘to convince,’ *interrumpir* ‘interrupt,’ and *detener/entretener* ‘stop/distract’), even though to a lesser extent than IFIDs of

benefit and communication. The fact that polite *le* is preferred with interlocutors who have **higher status or authority** over the speaker does not in itself imply imposition or need for mitigation, but it does highlight the social distance and therefore reinforces the unequal social hierarchy between speakers. Likewise formal and traditional social domains have nothing inherently face-threatening to them, and the study design carefully included relationally focused speech events in all social domains alike. However, **formal** (i.e. institutional) and **traditional** (i.e. ceremonial) social domains specifically exert additional social pressures on what are already socially distant relationships, contraposing them to familiar contexts (i.e. home and street) where *confianza* ‘trust’ relationships are more common. The use of a special social deictic resource in these contexts reflects this particular nature of these contexts. Finally, there is statistical support for the co-occurrence of polite *le* with **telic** verbs, which may be set apart from their opposites: telic verbs indicate completeness and fullness of effect of the action, implying a more fully affected direct object than typical of atelic verbs. The preference for the polite *le* with telic verbs, therefore, is consistent with the Relative Transitivity Hypothesis, and the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis, as it seems to mitigate the strength of the effect on the interlocutor in contexts of fuller affectation.

Coexistence of Both Politeness Functions. The co-occurrence of polite *leísmo* with direct and indirect strategies, as well as with face-threatening and face-enhancing speech acts, points to its multifunctionality and adaptability as a politeness resource. For example, the analysis of individual verbs and their semantic classes suggests a **theta-role reanalysis** of the ‘help’ verbs as taking a beneficiary object rather than a theme. If this reanalysis is indeed what is happening, then it can be considered another **face-enhancing function** of polite *leísmo* as its function is to more explicitly mark the benefit to the interlocutor. At the same time, by removing

the full transitivity effect by changing from transitive to intransitive construction, **mitigation**, or removal of the effect, automatically takes place. Here, we see both politeness strategies expressed by means of the same phenomenon.

It is important to note that the mentioned linguistic, pragmatic, and social factors are only a strategic selection of all possible factors. Some have been included in the design prior to the study while others were experimentally elicited and coded as outcomes of the study design. Therefore, it is not possible to claim that either mitigating or face-enhancing function of polite *leísmo* dominates the other since not all possible mitigating nor face-enhancing mechanisms are included in the study. What can be confidently said is that polite *le* indeed exhibits two types of politeness. In other words, it is capable of serving as a solidarity-building tool as well as a hierarchy-building or mitigating tool.

By de-emphasizing face threat, often inherent in transactional talk or face-threatening directive speech acts, it is possible to understand the richer continuum of social action, characterized by the predominance of relational talk in the absence of any real face threat (e.g., greetings, small talk, joking) (Curcó, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2015; Placencia, 2004). This is one explanation of why non-threatening speech acts of offers favor polite *leísmo*, to accompany the favoring effect of directive speech acts. Therefore, the essential assumption of crosscultural politeness research, as well as of Milroy and Milroy's (1993) alternative linguistic markets, is that politeness may be expressed differently based on the context and interlocutors' expectations, and that these differences may coexist, be expressed through a number of simultaneous strategies, and be strategically used to negotiate the various cultural norms and individual needs. This finding is consistent with Thomas's (1995) view of meaning in interaction as a dynamic

function of social and cognitive factors of speaker and hearer, and which is the focus of the third wave of politeness research (Mugford & Félix-Brasdefer, 2021).

Avoiding Saying ‘No’. This dual politeness function of polite *leísmo* is better understood by considering the general cultural trend in Mexico City of avoiding saying ‘no’ and hurting the other’s feelings or appearing rude. Multiple participant observations and personal conversations during the pilot and the main fieldwork for this study are revelational in the magnitude this cultural trait permeates the society. From disillusionment about the no-shows of those who had said a convincing ‘yes’ to participate in the study to humorous commentary on this culture from locals, immigrants, and on the national level, saying ‘no’ is appalling and a “heresy” that must be avoided. A middle-age male participant from Mexico City, who is an owner and a chef of a small café-restaurant, comments on the situation in which he had to negotiate with a doctor about a plan of action for his treatment, which was assumed to be very expensive:

ID	Spanish (original)	English (translation)
1184	De hecho aquí cuesta mucho trabajo decirle a un doctor este- “quiero pedir una segunda opinión”...	In fact, here, it is very hard to tell a doctor “I want to ask for a second opinion”
VF	Mhm	Mhm
1184	Puta, es así como... No mames, o sea!	[swear word], it’s like... [swear word], I mean!
VF	Aunque si quiera, pues no le dij[ces]...	Even if you want, you don’t [tell]...
1184	[O sea, aunque yo quisiera, es casi-casi así como-puta! Una herejía decirle a un doctor... “Güey, quiero...” o sea decirle al doctor, “déjame pedir una segunda opinión” porque es así como... impensable, no?	[I mean, Even if I wanted, it is almost-almost like-[swear word]! A heresy to tell a doctor... “Dude, I want...” I mean to tell the doctor, “let me ask for a second opinion” because it’s like... unthinkable, right?
VF	Mhm	Mhm
1184	Generalmente lo que haces es: “Ah, está muy bien, doctor”. Sales y dices: “Animal”	Generally, what you do is: “Oh, very well, doctor”. You come out and say: “Animal”
VF	(risa)	(laughter)
1184	Sí. Y te vas a ver- y te vas a ver a otro.	Yes. And you go to see- you go to see another.

It must be disclosed that this participant's recording is not fully transcribed and is, therefore, not included in the quantitative analysis of polite *leísmo*. Nevertheless, he was very passionate about his post-task commentary, which is partially transcribed here as a representative voice of his community. Unlike most participants, this man uses very little *usted* in favor of *tú*, which also translates into very low rates of polite *le*. In fact, the doctor scenario commented here is the only case of all twelve role plays in which he uses the *le* clitic. His commentary helps to understand what is going on in his mind while he does that.

Similarly to what this participant expresses about the impossibility of contradicting a doctor, multiple friends and colleagues have confessed that they prefer to promise to attend an event and then not show up for the sake of appearing agreeable in the moment. Being disagreeable, then, is seen as a stronger offense than breaking a promise. And so, many prefer to lose their positive face later than to offend the positive-face needs of the interlocutor now. This focus on the interlocutor's positive-face needs is precisely what characterizes the face-enhancing type of politeness.

This cultural preference for positive, face-enhancing politeness has multiple manifestations. Figure 7.2.3.1 is a screen capture of an electronic survey gauging family interest in attending several summer events, shared on Facebook by Kim Potowski, a linguist at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The image is shared with the following observation: “Registering kids for their summer camp in Oaxaca. Mexican pragmatics at its finest: there's no option to simply say ‘no’ [...]” (Potowski, June 5, 2019). The options offered as alternatives to ‘yes’ include *aún no se* [sic] ‘still not sure’, *lo estamos pensando* ‘we are thinking about it’, and *lo tomaremos en cuenta* ‘we will take it into account’. Just as the linguist observes, just saying

‘no’ is not an option. All alternatives to ‘yes’ express future potential, hypotheticality, and mitigation – similar concepts behind pragmalinguistic conditioning of polite *leísmo* (see the discussion of Linguistics of Polite *Leísmo*).

Figure 7.2.3.1

Family summer camp survey. June 5, 2019 (re-published by Kim Potowski in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics Facebook group)

¡Vive la experiencia con tus hijos!

¡¡El sábado más esperado del verano!!
¡¡¡¡¡Las familias más unidas se llevarán el trofeo!!!!
Sábado 13 de Julio de 10:00 am a 5:00 pm

¿Asistirá al sábado de papás? *

Claro, no me lo pierdo

Aún no se

Este año nos vamos a la sierra (sólo niños, 7 años en adelante)
¡Vive la experiencia de un fin de semana inolvidable! ¿Contamos contigo? (26 al 28 de Julio) *

Sí

Lo estamos pensando

¡¡¡¡También nos vamos un fin de semana al Luciernagario y a Sixflags!!!! (Todos invitados, sí, leyeron bien, también ustedes papás) (3 y 4 de Agosto) *

Nos apuntamos

Lo tomaremos en cuenta

Another culturally common way to say ‘no’ while appearing to say ‘yes’ is the word *ahorita*. In August, 2018, a French editorial Larousse carried out a campaign *Qué vivan las palabras mexicanas* (‘May Mexican words live on’) across Mexico by identifying and publicly displaying Mexicanisms of cultural importance and not easily defined by the dictionary. Among

these words is *ahorita*, which is a diminutive of *ahora* ‘now’ and which literally translates to ‘right now’. Figure 7.2.3.2 is a snapshot of Larousse’s promotional video (Ediciones Larousse, 2019, 0:55) focusing on a large definition of *ahorita* posted inside a Mexico City metro station Centro Médico. The definition reads:

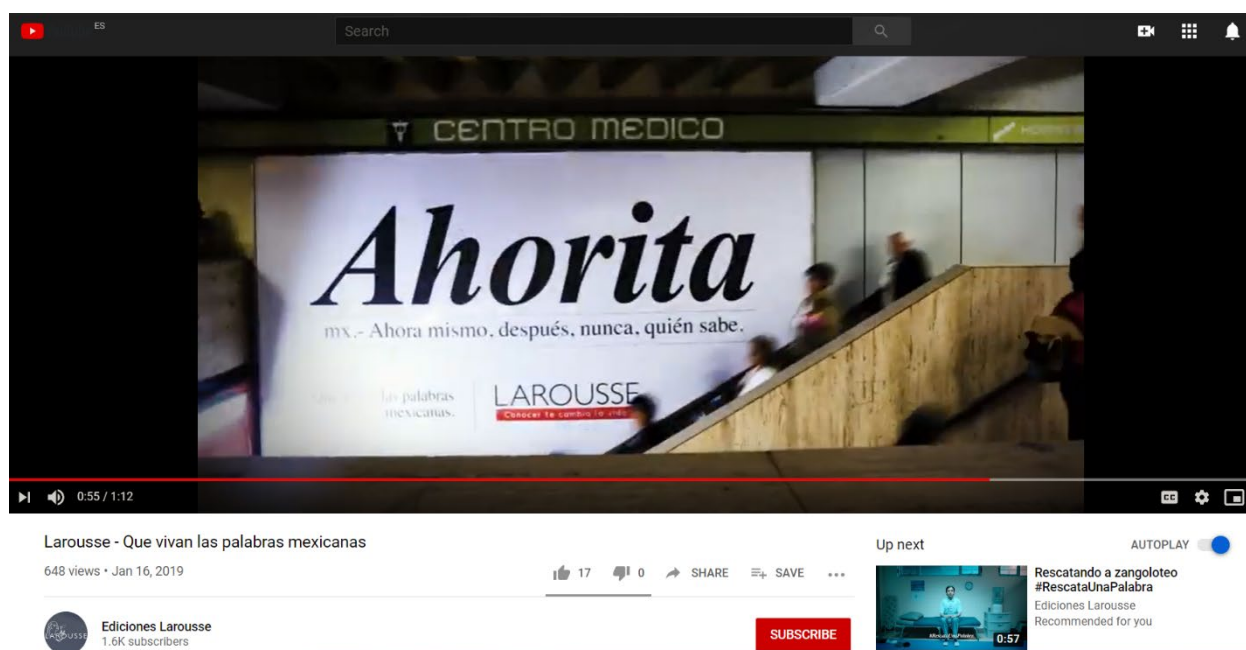
Ahorita

mx. – Ahora mismo, después, nunca, quién sabe.

Mx. – Right now, later, never, who knows.

Figure 7.2.3.2

Larousse’s campaign ‘May Mexican words live on’ in Mexico City, August, 2018



These informal observations of the linguistic landscape of Mexico City form part of the physical and experiential context of the participants’ lives, and the source of the language variation contributed to this research. While no formal methodology or analysis was applied to gather this informal data, it is impossible to ignore and is dishonest not to report, even if with significant disclaimers and calls for future research. Other elements of the linguistic landscape and informal

ethnography of polite *leísmo* in Mexico form part of the discussion of the Sociolinguistics of polite *leísmo*.

The pragmatic perspective on polite *leísmo* addresses aspects of its diaphasic variation through micro-social factors. Specifically, social domain, social power, the assumed social distance, and the level of imposition implied by the speech event are the micro-social factors that form part of the context of the interaction and require a range of politeness responses. While part of sociolinguistic variation on the micro-, interactional level of communities of practice, the macro-social factors are responsible for the more traditional diastatic variation at the focus of the sociolinguistic perspective.

7.3 Sociolinguistics of Polite *Leísmo*: Variation and Social Meaning



The micro-social factors discussed from the pragmatic perspective conform the more dynamic day-to-day contextual, diaphasic variation as part of the second wave (Milroy & Milroy, 1985) and then the third wave (Eckert, 2008) of variation research. This is where identities and specific social roles and attitudes take front stage. The classical first and still persisting wave of variation (Labov, 1972), however, is interested in macro-social stratification of the society for generalization purposes and to assess social meaning and potential language change. The **macro-social** factors considered in third-person *leísmo* research and extended to this research on second-person *leísmo* are speaker origin (Blas Arroyo, 1994), speaker sex (Blas Arroyo, 1994; Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1988), speaker age (Martínez Martín, 1984; Moreno Fernández et al., 1998), and social class (Klein-Andreu, 1993; Martínez Martín, 1984). Additional factors of education level and socioeconomic mobility are added as correlates of social class. This subsection answers the

questions about who uses polite *leísmo* and why they use it. It concludes by interpreting the meaning of social factors as contributing to the social value and meaning of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City.

7.3.1 Social Profile of Polite Leístas: Who Uses Polite Leísmo

The Research Questions 1 and 2 ask about social conditioning of variable production and perception of polite *leísmo*. The social profile of polite *leístas* specifically addresses the aspects of the population, their social lives, and social mobility in line with the outlined sociodemographics of Mexico City in the Global Perspective.

Population: Who Are the Polite *Leístas*. In order to understand the social value of a linguistic variable, it is important to understand who the users of it are — in particular, the early adopters and the innovators (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). Additionally, their significance is made even more salient by looking at the profile of those who don't vary. Perceptually, everyone in the study sample accepts polite *leísmo* at least sometimes, and that is where social factors most prominently stratify the community. Not so in production: very few social factors condition the production of polite *leísmo*, in favor of linguistic and contextual factors. Overall, active *leístas* represent 81% of the sample population, with 19% not showing evidence of polite *leísmo* in their speech. Higher acceptability rates than production rates speak for the largely subconscious nature of the phenomenon. Higher social conditioning of speaker attitudes toward polite *leísmo* reveal the importance of mobile and identity backgrounds of the participants, while in spontaneous interaction they seem to be rather blended in and accommodated to the rest of Mexico City. It is further interesting to recall that this social accommodation is most extensive in the more performative interactions characterized by telicity and therefore more directly affecting the

interlocutors, which is the most common linguistic context in this study. However, including the atelic expressions, among which are the cases of seeming *leísmo*, linguistic and social diversity become more prominent and stratified.

The social prototype of a polite *leísta* in Mexico City is a middle-aged woman, from low middle social class, with college or graduate education, who immigrated to Mexico City from another Mexican state. This prototype is not a single type of person but rather a composition of overlapping social features that are found to favor polite *leísmo* in this study (in fact, there are only three speakers with this exact profile in the production study, ranging from 11% to 20% in *leísmo* rate). It is the combination of these social characteristics in an individual that increase the odds of him or her to find polite *leísmo* useful in their daily life. These predictive trends are established with confidence, based on a survey of 107 participants in role plays and 92 participants in the Acceptability Judgment Task across age groups, education levels, and sexes who show at least some variation in the clitics in day-to-day speech acts. Specifically, the active polite *leístas* are characterized by sex, origin, and SES mobility. The endorsers of polite *leísmo* are stratified likewise across sex and origin, but also the socioeconomic class and education as correlates of social class, as well as by age.

Based on the common sociodemographic trends, the social prototype of a non-*leísta* is an older man with college education from Mexico City. It is true that not using the polite *le* in the role plays is not a definitive metric to say that these individuals would never use polite *le* under some other circumstances. However, the results of this research provide evidence to suggest that **women and immigrants from other states are more likely to be *leístas* than men in Mexico City, especially in the middle-age group.**

Origin. Research on third-person *leísmo* shows lower acceptability rate among bilingual Spanish-Catalan speakers rather than monolingual Spanish speakers in Valencia, Spain (Blas Arroyo, 1994). In Latin America, where third-person *leísmo* is said to not exist, García's (1975) comparative study observed more polite *leísmo* than third-person *leísmo* in Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, with only Ecuador reversing this trend, calling for hypotheses about language contact. The variable origin is conceptualized differently in this study, referring to the Mexican state where one grew up and therefore their **migration** status with respect to Mexico City. This turns out to be one of the strongest social predictors of polite *leísmo*: specifically, Mexicans from outside of the metropolitan center area produce and accept polite *leísmo* significantly more than the originals of the Valley of Mexico. This association makes polite *leísmo* at least a **geographical marker**, suggesting the alternative geographical markets (Milroy & Milroy, 1993) for polite *leísmo* across and within national borders. Other social factors, however, reveal that it is much more than that.

Sex. Research on third-person *leísmo* in Spain does not show sex as a conditioning factor of its use, given its status as a marker, but Blas Arroyo (1994) does find that females' perceptions of third-person *leísmo* in Valencia, Spain, are more positive than those of males. In this study of second-person *leísmo*, men are significantly less likely to be *leístas*, yet they significantly over-report their usage of polite *le*. Women, on the other hand, are the more typical users of polite *leísmo* and also leaders in perceiving it as polite. According to Lakoff (2015), traditionally, women's language is differentiated from "the standard" by indirectness, emotional expression, and conservatism (p. 80). Polite *leísmo* is certainly not a case of conservatism due to its non-etymological and prescriptively non-standard use. However, it is indeed found to be correlated with indirectness, as discussed in the Pragmatic perspective, making it a likely

stylistic marker. Different acceptability judgments by sex are, then, reflections of different perceptions of contexts, influenced by a number of factors that comprise individual speakers' sociocultural experiences (Lakoff, 2015, p. 83).

Age. *Leísmo* research has not so far seen any age significance, which is understandable in Spain where *leísmo* is a general phenomenon – neither a prestigious variant to be used by the middle-age speakers nor a change in progress to be used by the youngest population. Age remains not significant in the production part of this study, but becomes a significant predictor in the perception study. Specifically, it is the middle-age speakers who accept it. They are considered to be the **most socially mobile** age group being at the peak of their career lives, according to the linguistic market theory (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1980). At the same time, a cross-tabulation of the production sample by age, sex, and origin shows that younger females from other states produce more of polite *leísmo* than any other group, even if not statistically significant. This pattern hints at the place of young generations in social mobility and in language change as innovators (Milroy & Milroy, 1993).

Socioeconomic status. In third-person *leísmo* research, some social class effects are discovered by Klein-Andreu (1993), mediated by dialect: while third-person *leísmo* with reference to living entities is favored by all classes equally in Valladolid, Spain (90%), it is especially led by high social class in Logroño, Spain (38%). However, the general non-significance of social class in Spain is just another consequence of and predictor of *leísmo*'s marker status. What happens with second-person *leísmo* in Mexico is different: socioeconomic status unquestionably matters. However, different correlates and measures of it emerge as significant between production and perception studies. In production, it is speakers with no or high SES mobility that favor polite *leísmo*, while in perception it is the low-middle class and

educated speakers. Education level reflects the level of consciousness and availability of the phenomenon. Besides the factor of no SES mobility in production (subject to further research), all of these other characteristics once again point to a profile of **high social mobility**.

Social Lives: How Polite *Leístas* Live and Interact. The discussion of the social lives of the representative population revolves around the general decline of *usted* in Mexico, ceremonial or official language, and situational preferences that reflect changing social hierarchies.

Decline of Usted. The first overarching trend characterizing the day-to-day reality of Mexico City is the overall decline of the formal *usted* treatment in favor of the more generalized informal *tú*. This trend in Mexico has been previously noted by Orozco (2010) and is now confirmed by this study. Specifically, this evidence comes from the participants’ informal commentary, informal observations of the linguistic landscape of the city, and the situational preferences noted in the role-play speech where the choice of address terms varies without instruction.

One 43-year-old male participant from Mexico City, who is an owner and a chef of a small café, explains this social change in treatment and attitudes toward hierarchy as follows:

	Spanish (original)	English (translation)
1184	...En generación más jóvenes [sic] esta cuestión de hablar de <i>usted</i> o- esa- respeto en el habla o dar la jerarquía ya no se da tanto.	... In the young[er] generation this matter of speaking with the formal-‘you’ treatment or that respect in speech, or giving a hierarchy doesn’t happen as much anymore.

The same participant expresses nonconforming attitudes toward positions of authority and social inequalities in general, and consequently uses *tú* in most situational contexts. His data, unfortunately, do not yet form part of the oral corpus, but his post-task commentary is a valuable source of popular opinions, which he was passionate to share and are respectfully included here.

While this man does not identify with the ‘younger generations’ that he appears to criticize for lack of respect, he highlights age as an essential element demanding respect and echoes other participant voices that see *tú* as a tool for social equality and building of *confianza* ‘trust’.

These social changes certainly leave a mark on the linguistic landscape of the city. Figures 7.3.1.1 and 7.3.1.2 show the diachronic transformation of the web presence of the same well-known funeral home chain Gayosso and its flower services between 2014 and 2020.

Figure 7.3.1.1

Gayosso’s 2014 funeral flower service web page snapshot (Mendoza, 2014)

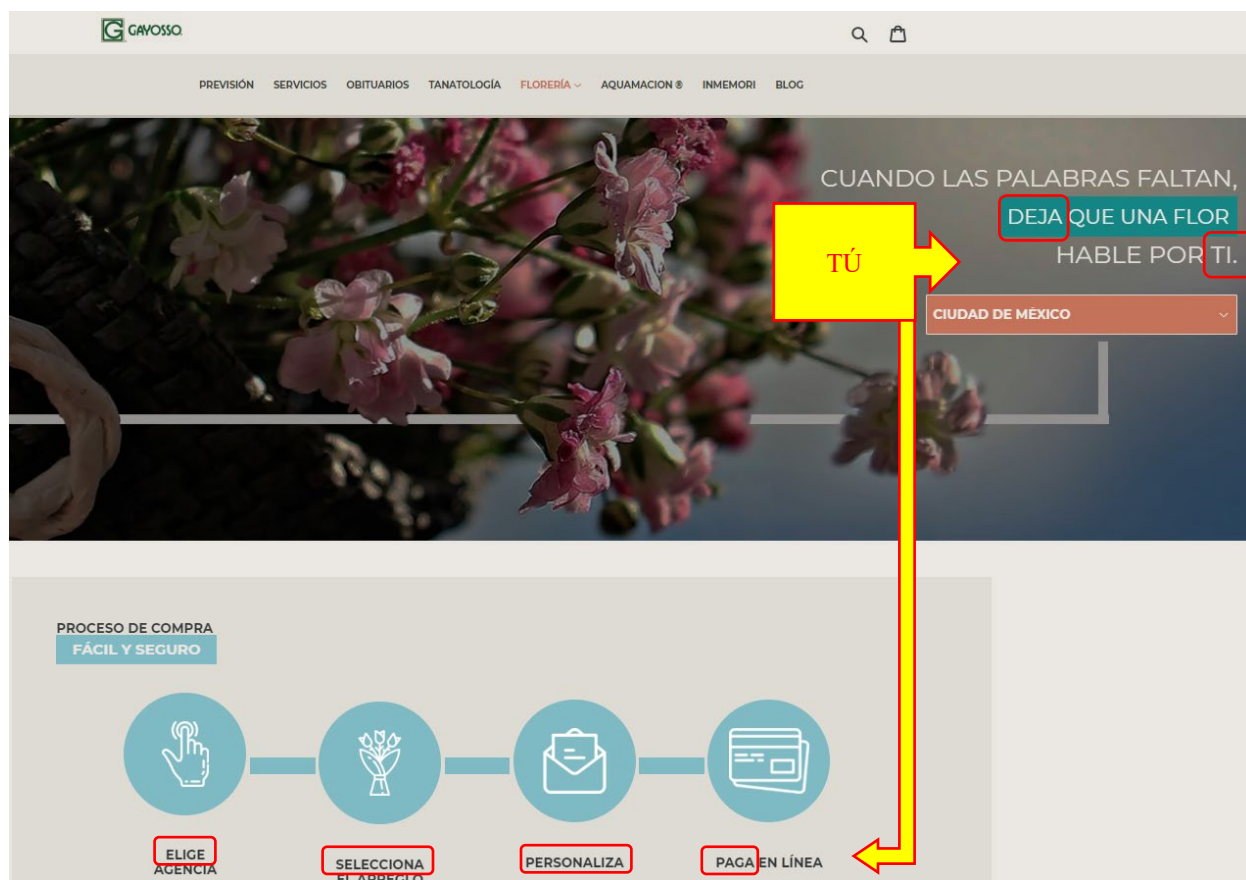


The service motto *Cuando las palabras faltan* (‘when the words lack’) and the steps for ordering the service are largely the same between 2014 and 2020, while the form addressing their clients shifts from the formal *usted* to the informal *tú* in the verb and clitic forms highlighted in the images. Interestingly, the former *usted*-directed website uses polite *leísmo* in two visible ways: *le*

ayudamos ‘we help you’ and *le guiamos* ‘we guide you’. It is also worth noting that funeral services belong to what this research calls ceremonial, ritualistic, or traditional social domain, embodied in the situational scenario 10 of a funeral, which may call for a special ritual politeness (e.g. Kádár, 2017).

Figure 7.3.1.2

Gayosso’s 2020 funeral flower service web page (Gayosso, 2020)



Ceremonial and Official Language. The results of the study consistently point to the formal social domain or register as the source of polite *leísmo*. Perceptually, it is also extended to traditional or ceremonial contexts, although spoken data does not provide evidence for this. One potential reason for that is the association of higher formality and ceremoniality with written registers. At this stage of research, the informal observations of the linguistic landscape of

Mexico City offer some support to this hypothesis. Specifically, polite *leísmo* is seen as embedded and hypothesized to be affected by rare traces of third-person *leísmo* and by official legal and government communications, which are most often written or written for speech.

Third-Person Leísmo. There is some evidence that third-person *leísmo*, characteristic of European Spanish is visually familiar to the Mexican audiences, mostly in written form. Several participants in role plays commented in their post-task interview that they were familiar with the *le* clitic from classical novels written by European authors. Additionally, from the researcher's own participant observation within Christian churches, an occasional third- and second-person *leísmo* slip through in formal and informal interactions. This atypical use for Latin America is seen inspired by the classic Reina-Valera Spanish translation of the Bible, originally produced in 1602 by a Spanish theologian. Even with the latest editions as recent as 2015, this Bible translation maintains many instances of mainly third-person *leísmo*. For example, this *leísmo* is illustrated with the verb *buscar* 'seek' in a passage from the letter to Hebrews 11:6, presented in two Reina-Valera translations as well as the etymological use in the Spanish international translation, along with its English international translation:

- *Empero sin fe es imposible agradar á Dios; porque es menester que el que á Dios se allega, crea que le hay, y que es galardoador de los que **le buscan*** (Reina-Valera Antigua, 1602)
- *Y sin fe es imposible agradar a Dios, porque es necesario que el que se acerca a Dios crea que él existe y que es galardoador de los que **le buscan*** (Reina-Valera Actualizada, 2015)
- *En realidad, sin fe es imposible agradar a Dios, ya que cualquiera que se acerca a Dios tiene que creer que él existe y que recompensa a quienes **lo buscan*** (Nueva Versión Internacional, 1999)


- And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (New International Version, 2011)

This observation invites two hypotheses for the adoption of third- and second-person *leísmo* in Christian contexts as, first, influenced by the commonly read versions of the Bible and, second, likely due to the specific co-occurrences of *le* with the connotation of reverence and awe toward God (sometimes the referent of the clitic, but not always). If this intuition is true, then this particular reverential style of speaking that polite *leísmo* encodes may be seen as ceremonial language (e.g. Kádár, 2017).

The city linguistic landscape is not rich in third-person *leísmo* except for one salient example. The Mexico City Government's *¿Le has visto?* ('Have you seen him/her?') posters of missing persons follow the same template visually and linguistically, with the third-person *le*. The images in Figure 7.3.1.3 are included from the posters photographed by the researcher in public spaces as well as from the researcher's online social networks during field work. While these posters are a clear visual proof of third-person *leísmo* in Mexico City, they are included here with much regret and condolences to the families and friends of the missing individuals. The author wishes to apologize and confess sincere ignorance of the real impact of such sensitive and heart-breaking matters and specific persons that are taken here as examples of a linguistic phenomenon. Being a sociolinguist, I understand that words in themselves are nothing and are never enough. As insufficient as it is, in a way to honor those missing and the suffering of their loved ones, as well as anyone potentially affected by identification, the images are presented on a page dedicated just to them to represent a minute of silence.

Figure 7.3.1.3

Missing individuals in Mexico City, 2018-2019, announced by the Mexico City Government's campaign ¿Le has visto? ('Have you seen him/her?')



¿LE HAS VISTO?
GOBIERNO DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, A 05 DE OCTUBRE DE 2019

NOMBRE: LEONARDO GARCIA FLORES

SEXO: HOMBRE **EDAD:** 14 AÑOS
COMPLEXIÓN: DELGADA **ESTATURA:** 1,65
TEZ: MORENA **CARA:** OVALADA
FRENTE: MEDIANA **NARIZ:** AFILADA
BOCA: MEDIANA **LABIOS:** MEDIANOS
CEJAS: POBLADAS **MENTÓN:** REGULAR
TIPO Y COLOR DE OJOS: GRANDES, CAFE OSCURO
TIPO Y COLOR DE CABELLO: LACIO, NEGRO


SEÑAS PARTICULARES:
LUNAR EN LA MEJILLA DERECHA, LUNAR EN LA BOCA Y CÍRCULO EN LA MANO DERECHA.

ROPA QUE VESTÍA:
CHAMARRA COLOR NEGRO, PANTALÓN DE MEZCLILLA COLOR NEGRO CON UN LOGO ROJO CON LA FIGURA DE UNA BOCA CON UNA LENGUA DE FUERA EN LA BOLSA DE LA DE ATRÁS, TENIS COLOR NEGRO CON BLANCO, BOINA COLOR NEGRO Y LENTES.

LUGAR Y FECHA DE EXTRAIVIO:
COL. PORTALES ALCALDÍA. BENITO JUAREZ EL DÍA 05 DE OCTUBRE DE 2019

NÚMERO DE EXPEDIENTE: AYO/3775/2019

PARA MAYORES INFORMES COMUNICARSE A LOS TELÉFONOS: 53-45-50-80 Y 53-41-50-80
www.pgj.cdmx.gob.mx
FISCALÍA ESPECIALIZADA PARA LA BÚSQUEDA, LOCALIZACIÓN E INVESTIGACIÓN DE PERSONAS DESAPARECIDAS (FIFEDE)
AV. JARDÍN 356, COL. DEL GAS, ALCALDÍA AZCAPOTZALCO, CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, C.



CDMX PGJ
¿LE HAS VISTO?
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, A 04 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2018
NOMBRE: CARLOS ARTURO SORÍA ROBLES

SEXO: HOMBRE **EDAD:** 48 AÑOS
COMPLEXIÓN: MEDIANA **ESTATURA:** 1.70 MTS
TEZ: MORENA **CARA:** OVALADA
FRENTE: MEDIANA **NARIZ:** ANCHA
BOCA: MEDIANA **LABIOS:** DELGADOS
CEJAS: POBLADAS **MENTÓN:** OVAL
TIPO Y COLOR DE OJOS: PEQUEÑOS, CAFE OSCURO
TIPO Y COLOR DE CABELLO: LACIO, CASTAÑO OSCURO

SEÑAS PARTICULARES: LUNAR EN LA NARIZ DE LADO DERECHO, CICATRIZ EN LA ESPALDA DE LADO DERECHO

ROPA QUE VESTÍA: SE DESCONCE

LUGAR Y FECHA DE EXTRAIVIO: CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, DELEGACIÓN MIGUEL HIDALGO, COLONIA ANAHUAC, 01 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2018

NÚMERO DE EXPEDIENTE: AYO / 4495 / 2018
ELABORÓ: TRABAJO SOCIAL

PARA MAYORES INFORMES COMUNICARSE A LOS TELÉFONOS: 53-45-50-80 Y 53-45-50-82
www.pgj.cdmx.gob.mx
CENTRO DE APOYO A PERSONAS EXTRAVIADAS Y AUSENTES (CAPEA)
DR. ANDRADE No. 103, COLONIA DOCTORES, DELEGACION CUAUHTEMOC, C. P. 06720



Viviana Elizabeth Garrido Ibarra

04/ 12/2018

¿LE HAS VISTO?

- *SEXO: MUJER
- *EDAD: 32 AÑOS
- *ESTATURA: 1.65 MTS
- *COMPLEXIÓN: DELGADA
- *CARA: OVALADA
- *NARIZ: CHICA
- *TIPO Y COLOR DE OJOS: MEDIANOS, CAFÉ OSCURO
- *TIPO Y COLOR DE CABELLO: QUEBRADO, TEÑIDO DE NEGRO
- *SEÑAS PARTICULARES: CICATRIZ EN ABDOMEN POR CIRUGÍA DE CESÁREA PADECE VITÍLIGO
- *ROPA QUE VESTÍA: PANTALÓN DE MEZCLILLA AZUL MARINO, CHAMARRA CON CAPUCHA NEGRA, TENIS NEGROS CON SUELA BLANCA, LLEVABA UNA MOCHILA NEGRA
- *LUGAR Y FECHA DE EXTRAIVIO: CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, DELEGACIÓN BENITO JUÁREZ, COLONIA MIRAVALLE, 30 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2018

Desaparecida desde el 30 de noviembre de 2018
Col. Miravalle, Del. Benito Juárez, CDMX.

Comunicarse a: 53-45-50-80 y 53-45-50-82

www.pgj.cdmx.gob.mx
No. De expediente: AYO/ 2018

Official, Legal, and Governmental Communications and Publicity. Official, legal, and governmental language register is typically found at the highest end of formality due to its written or written-for-speech nature. Official language is similar to ceremonial politeness in that it typically follows strict protocols and special language rarely used in common interactions. The missing person print announcements are one example of such official communication. Another example are the spoken political speeches and official public announcements.

For example, Mexico's president Manuel López Obrador uses ambiguous second/third-person *leísmo* in his televised address on Feb. 6, 2019, about ending corruption in INFONAVIT, the Institute of the National Housing Fund for Workers (TV Independiente, 2019, 0:00-0:40, own transcription):

“El tema que más nos importa es el de darles a conocer a los ciudadanos, sobre todo a los que tienen créditos en el INFONAVIT, de un programa que se va a implementar para ayudarles a que puedan tener sus escrituras”

‘The topic that is of most import to us is one of letting know to the citizens, especially all those who have credit with INFONAVIT, a program that is going to be implemented to help you/them to have your/their papers’

While it is not clear whether the referent of the *les* clitic are “the citizens” mentioned earlier or the audience whom the president addresses, its use is consistent with the findings of this research regarding the verb *ayduar* ‘help’ – the driver of both seeming and polite *leísmo*. Additionally, the ambiguity of reference toward the audience in such official context may just be another factor behind polite *leísmo* as ceremonial language, although at this point, this is just a speculation to research further.

Another official communication from the City Council of Cuicatlán, a small town in Oaxaca, Mexico, known for its Oto-Mangeuan indigenous roots and history, uses polite *leísmo* in a video-invitation published by the city mayor Maricel Mariscal Gaytán on her official Facebook page in December of 2018 (Figure 7.3.1.4). The verb *invitar* ‘invite’ is a performative verb of the speech act of invitation and corresponds to one of the *le*-governing verbs in this study.

How much of this non-normative use is due to the language-intetrnal factors, the generalized social spread of a linguistic marker, the official nature of the communication, or a history of language contact with a non-Indo-European culture? This study only begins to raise these questions and offer support for some of these hypotheses, but what it does best is pave the way for more research on these issues.

Figure 7.3.1.4

“The City Council of Cuicatlan [Oaxaca, Mexico] invites you[-formal]...” video published by the city mayor (Mariscal Gaytán, December 27, 2018)



The verb *invitar* ‘invite’ is also one of the verbs with the strongest cognitive association with *le* according to the pilot results and which has further presence in publicity and marketing in cultural and private circles. Figures 7.3.1.5 and 7.3.1.6 are poster invitations to cultural events, using polite *leísmo* in the constructions *le invita* ‘invites you-formal’ and *le invitamos* ‘we invite you-formal’. The private event *Noche Mexicana* ‘Mexican Night’ (Figure 7.3.1.6) is a patriotic Independence-Day event at a luxurious restaurant in the high-end area of the city, Polanco, representing highest social classes of Mexico City. On the other hand, the public photographic exhibition *Ecos del barrio* ‘Echoes of the neighborhood’ (Figure 7.3.1.5) is a volunteer-based, non-profit collective effort organized by several of this study’s participants who range from low middle to high middle social class, according to their sociodemographic data.

Two of the organizers of this Vaya Tacubaya collective, Dr. Lourdes Valtierra and Victor Barcenas, are pictured in Figure 7.3.1.7 in gratitude for their tremendous assistance with facilitating and giving publicity to this research around the Tacubaya area of Mexico City. It is also thanks to them that three of the twelve scenarios of this study are validated as real daily experience: the interactions with service providers of the Cartagena market, the live mariachi experience, and meeting citizens at a city hall.

The use of polite *leísmo* in both official publicities across social classes indicates its undeniable presence in the linguistic landscape of the city, but also hints at its association with written official language.

Figure 7.3.1.5

Public Facebook invitation (Expotacubaya, 2019)



Figure 7.3.1.6

Private invitation (Toledano, 2015)



Figure 7.3.1.7

Two of the Vaya Tacubaya Collective organizers, Lourdes Valtierra and Victor Barcenas, together with the research assistant David Bedolla and Valentyna Filimonova



Situational Preferences. Similar to the illustrated ceremonial language around funeral and official legal and governmental language, some situations are more prone to the use of *usted*, and among those, some are more favorable toward polite *leísmo* than others. The café owner and chef introduced earlier as participant 1184 uses very little *usted* in favor of *tú*, which also translates into very low rates of polite *le* (in fact, only in the role-play scenario with a doctor). What motivates him to choose *usted*, according to his voluntary commentary, are a combination of some ceremoniality and age of the interlocutor as a context of highest respect. Nevertheless, he also identifies the roles of a medical professional, an older priest, an experienced, older mariachi leader, a senior citizen, and an initially unfamiliar service provider as conducive to more formal treatment.

Across the spoken corpus, the highest use of *usted* in the role plays is indeed observed with **older** interlocutors, independently of social domain, familiarity, or speech event.

Traditional or ceremonial social domain and the interlocutor's status as someone ostensibly **older** or **higher in authority** are the common denominators among the top four role plays that together are responsible for almost 50% of all *usted*-DO clitics of the corpus. For example, the priest role is among the highest *usted*-DO favoring interlocutor profiles.

On the contrary, it is also curious to note that the two *compadre* ('co-parent') interlocutors are at the lowest end in the use of *usted* (and therefore, highest *tú* rates), also varying in social domain and speech event configurations. While *compadrazgo* 'co-parenting' has been identified as a context of a reciprocal V-V solidarity by previous literature (Álvarez Muro & Carrera de la Red, 2006; Vázquez Carranza, 2009), in Mexico, this tradition has been changing over time and geographically (Mendoza Ontiveros, 2010; Mintz & Wolf, 1950). So much so that it continually produces social commentary and sometimes criticisms for its

acquired connotation of financial responsibility. Not surprisingly it is being increasingly delimited to the close friends and family circles, characterized by the increasing familiarity and informality of relationships.

Linguistically speaking, the leveling of hierarchical relationships that characterize the change in the **godparenting** and **co-parenting** tradition are most directly reflected in the higher use of the informal 'you' in situations that used to trigger formal treatment. With less formal treatment, polite *leísmo* stops being a resource or diminishes in its use, often restricted to just a handful of verbs. If polite *leísmo* is a way to express these original hierarchies, then its stratification is likely affected by the stratification of the social changes taking place in Mexico, such as the godparenting experience across generational, geographic, and socioeconomic lines.

The profile of those leading change in the traditional relationships are young and higher educated speakers of Mexico City. Given the young average age of the city population of 33 years old, this is the population stratum that provides a reference point for many immigrants into the city. The middle-age *leistas* from other states are certain to experience these social changes in Mexico City and potentially accommodate their life styles, as suggested by low social conditioning of polite *leísmo* in the production study. However, this change in life style means reduction of social situations in which polite *leísmo* may be useful, but does not necessarily take away its power in other contexts, as evident from the more formal contexts with older and authority figures. The dynamicity and change of the social realities of the diverse city residents and of the city itself is better captured through the *leistas*' mobility profile.

Mobility: How Polite *Leistas* Reflect the Larger Society. The social value of polite *leísmo* is sought in the social profile of its users and the dynamics of their linguistic markets. The social profile of *leistas* in this study is an upwardly mobile one based on the factors of origin,

sex, age, and socioeconomic status. The additional factors of education and SES mobility further support this mobility hypothesis. These social factors define the workings of the social networks and how different social agents are able to innovate and adopt linguistic features in the actuation problem of language change (Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog, 1968) in Mexico City and in Mexico. The metropolitan Valley of Mexico is a socially dynamic society, characterized by intense internal, national, and international migrations, as well as educational and socioeconomic opportunities. The notion of the **alternative linguistic markets** suggests that just as the population characteristics vary from place to place, so do their life-work and contact realities, and so their corresponding linguistic behaviours acquire different values (Milroy & Milroy, 1985, 1993). Under this framework, the social evaluation of polite *leísmo* depends on **specific communities** and the dynamic nature of **social networks**, and that is precisely what this research reveals.

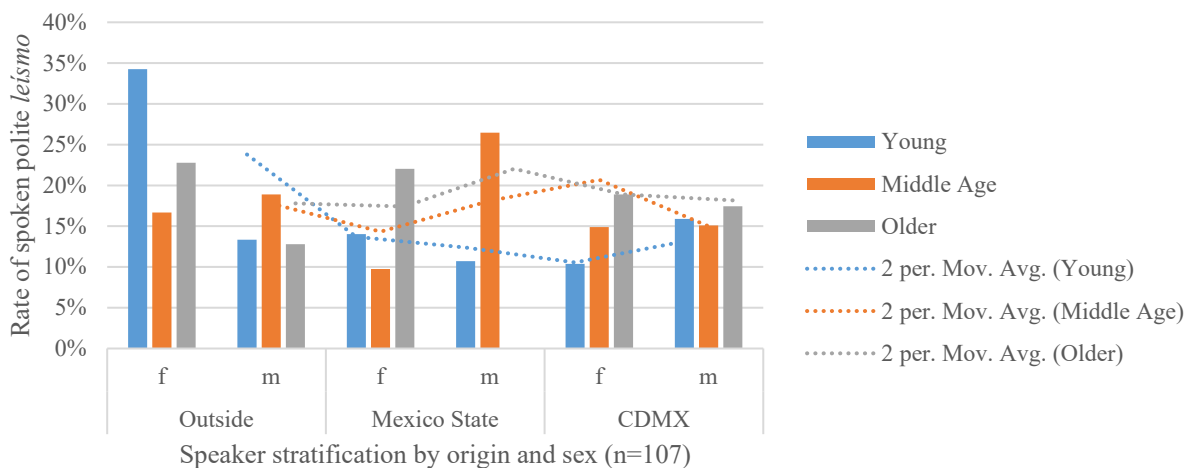
The **alternative linguistic markets** of polite *leísmo* can be geographically defined along the border lines of the Valley of Mexico and socially, along upward mobility lines. The most favorable market for polite *leísmo* are the socially mobile immigrants from outside of the Valley of Mexico. The **social prototype of a polite *leísta*** is some combination of middle-age, low-middle class, educated, female, and immigrant characteristics of Mexico City residents. Whatever the exact combination is, however, one thing is certain: a polite *leísta* is socially mobile in one way or another.

The geographically mobile, immigration profile corresponds to the role of language **innovators** in the social network theory of language variation and change (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). The innovators are characterized as peripheral members of the community, having ties outside and inside of the community circles, through which the outside innovations are able to be

passed down to the inner circles. In this study, the women of all ages and middle-aged men from other states are the peripheral members with the higher-than-average rates of polite *leísmo* (Figure 7.3.1.8).

Figure 7.3.1.8

Rate of spoken polite leísmo by speaker origin, sex, and age group (n = 107)



The **early adopters**, then, are natives of the Valley of Mexico (Mexico City or Mexico State) who have strong ties within their communities: older women and middle-aged men who show at least average rates (around 17% and above) of *leísmo* in their speech. While not pictured, some education, and particularly college education is a factor that serves these social agents to recognize the usefulness of an atypical linguistic feature such as polite *leísmo*.

As Figure 7.3.1.8 reveals, the one social profile with the highest spoken rate of polite *leísmo* are young female immigrants with 34%, compared to the sample average of 17%. The recent national education reforms not only set apart the youngest generation as the most educated, but also explain higher migrations for academic and career purposes and ultimately predict furthering of language change in generational progression. Age is an important factor in

determining the status of language variation as stable or in progress, and is discussed further as part of the social meaning of polite *leísmo*.

Focusing particularly on the social networks and the roles of innovators and early adopters, Milroy and Mirloy (1985) had proposed that novel linguistic variants spread through weak links between groups and strong links within groups. It was hypothesized that men are traditionally the innovators with weak inter-group links while women are typically more strongly embedded into their networks and act rather as the early adopters. In this research, **women** are the social agents on both sides, which speaks to the greater social mobility and versatility of social roles available in modern societies to both men and women. The only instance in which men significantly favor polite *leísmo* is in over-reporting their own usage on the Acceptability Judgment Task, while considerably lagging behind women in actual production. The significance of these gender patterns is further discussed in conjunction with the social value and meaning of polite *leísmo*.

The social profile of variable *leístas* in this study consists of the dynamic sociodemographic characteristics of the population, their social lives, and their mobility patterns. The social meaning of polite *leísmo*, as the ultimate question driving this research, must consider how this linguistic resource is useful for the social roles held and aspired to by these individuals of this community.

7.3.2 Social Value and Meaning: Why Polite Leísmo Is Used

To begin to answer the Research Question 3 about social meaning, the production-perception comparison highlights the role of conscious awareness on the use and evaluation of polite *leísmo*, as judged by the non-matching patterns in factors and in the directions of their effect.

Furthermore, it more clearly brings to light the role of the social agents behind this variation (females and immigrants) and the potential motivations for it (offering and negotiating). To recall, social meaning of a linguistic variable depends on the characteristics of the speakers themselves, their communities, their ideologies, and their relationships to their social networks. Most social values, other than overt prestige and stigma, are generally inferred from the use and perception of each phenomenon by particular social groups and their associated characteristics (gender, age, social class, etc.). This inference, however, must be carefully interpreted from the acceptability judgment and usage-based analyses as cognitive, perceptual, and attitudinal measures. This final sociolinguistic subsection of the discussion summarizes the social value and meaning of polite *leísmo* in terms of its usefulness for social mobility, language variation and change, and its social evaluation and attitudes.

Usefulness: A Social Mobility Projection Tool. The discovered multi-functionality of polite *leísmo* expressing two types of politeness (see Pragmatics of polite *leísmo*) is important as it explains why this tool is useful for social mobility: social mobility involves flexibility (linguistic and social), and the more flexible a linguistic tool is, the more useful it is for strategic social movement. Considering as well that all social relationships across cultures consist of a mixture of solidarity and autonomy needs, as shown by cross-cultural pragmatics research, having a tool that may serve both types of needs depending on situation can be quite handy and strategic.

The value of including a large, diverse, and socially stratified sample of population of Mexican participants is in that the resulting hierarchy and weights of social factors in the statistical analysis define the **social meaning** of polite *leísmo* with greater confidence. It allows the data to speak for itself. All of the social predictors of polite *leísmo* in this study point to

socially mobile groups: females, working-age adults, immigrants from another state, **low middle SES** representatives, none or **high SES mobility**, and those with **higher education**. It is just as notable to realize that groups that are culturally and historically more stable (men, low/high SES, no/low education, no geographic mobility) never appear preferring polite *le*, either because they are not aware of this tool or because they do not see it useful for their social lives. Given previous sociolinguistic research, it is most likely for both reasons (Milroy & Milroy, 1985, 1993).

We say that sociolinguistic variation simultaneously reflects and reinforces **social realities**. One ostensible reality of Mexico City and Mexico as a country is its growing social mobility landscape, in geographic and socioeconomic terms. Changing social roles and growing educational and professional opportunities that characterize Mexico City are reflected in the stratification of polite *leísmo* as a variant originating outside of these opportunities and adapting to these opportunities in creative ways. In Bourdieu's (1977b, 1986) terms, polite *leísmo* forms part of the linguistic symbolic capital around the peak of one's professional life in search of economic and social stability. In Milroy and Milroy's (1985) adaptation, this symbolic capital becomes available in the linguistic market of Mexico City due to its availability and value in the alternative linguistic markets outsourcing to it.

The effect of social factors is not uniform between production and perception of polite *leísmo*; and within production, it is practically nonexistent in the telic-only corpus of speech acts. The only factor that reliably conditions polite *leísmo* across tasks and corpora is sex: particularly, females. Besides this, the lack of social conditioning of polite *leísmo* in the telic-only corpus suggests its strong grounding in the more direct daily speech acts, corresponding to higher transitivity of illocutionary verbs. These interactions, then, form a sort of a **neutral base** for the

wider population to adopt it to other contexts according to its social stratification: atelic constructions of the more indirect speech acts now variably accept polite *leísmo* among socioeconomically and geographically mobile groups. The social identities that the phenomenon used to reflect, it now reinforces: polite *leísmo* reflects social mobility of its immigrant innovators and reinforces it in its early adopters in Mexico City. Seeing how socially and geographically mobile groups favor the use of polite *leísmo*, the phenomenon acquires a taste of **a social mobility projection tool**.

The mismatch between production and perception patterns, however, points to the largely subconscious nature of polite *leísmo*. This **low level of consciousness** suggests that the variation in the ‘you’ direct objects in Spanish is primarily a reflection of complex social realities, such as **accommodation** to the dynamic lifestyle through immigration and the pursuit of new economic opportunities. It is perhaps only now becoming a strategic tool to construct certain social realities, especially as it becomes available to speakers with growing access to education, as a result of education reforms, the internationalization of Mexico, and globalization more generally.

Language Variation Status: Change in Progress and Stable Variation. The fact that social factors gain more weight in acceptability of polite *leísmo* than in actual speech production requires thought and discussion about the **state of language variation and change**. It appears that addressing an interlocutor with some social distance is relatively uniform across Mexico City and that social differences are erased to a certain degree once one is in Mexico City, as a fitting-in strategy. For example, neither age nor education level play a role in the production of polite *leísmo*. Furthermore, the interactions carried out through the more direct speech acts, characterized by telicity, only show sensitivity among females, but are otherwise uniform across Mexico City population. In a way, this interactional context may represent a neutral base, a

standard, or a point of reference for polite *leísmo*. Lack of social conditioning suggests a profile of a **stable variation** in the day-to-day interactions, which nevertheless must be questioned due to the dynamic sociodemographics of the country.

Dumitrescu and Branza (2012) had suggested that polite *leísmo* is a language change in progress, the crucial predictor of which has always been the age factor. On the one hand, the younger generations are key in the reduction of social contexts in which *usted* is preferred to the informal *tú*, which guarantees lower polite *leísmo* rates in these particular contexts. On the other hand, this is the most mobile generation, ensuring more active migration and language contact across Mexico, which is sure to exhibit a natural maintenance effect on *usted* and by consequence on polite *leísmo*. The fact that this young, innovative generation disfavors polite *leísmo* raises the question about its potential disappearance. Nevertheless, it is seen adopted by the middle-age speakers for very functional reasons of social mobility and two different politeness effects. At this point, then, seeing this multifunctionality of polite *leísmo*, which is led and supported by women, who tend to be the early adopters of prestigious and positive stylistic variants, there is no serious risk of it disappearing anytime soon. In the absence of growth or disappearance signs, polite *leísmo* conforms to a stable age-graded variation scenario (Wagner, 2012). And yet, it does not exclude the possibility that some internal language change is happening to polite *leísmo*. The change in progress that is likely to affect polite *leísmo* is more specifically the innovations with respect to its functionality as a social mobility projection tool and a dual politeness strategy as it extends from telic to atelic contexts. That is where social stratification defines the variability and change in progress of the nature of polite *leísmo*. And just as Mexico City represents a microcosm of Mexico, the undeniable influence of the

alternative linguistic markets through migration and professionalization will continue to add value to useful sociolinguistic phenomena as symbolic capital and cultural practices.

Social Evaluation. The discussion about usefulness and stability of the phenomenon of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City goes hand in hand with the question about its social evaluation and attitudes. The assumption is that positive attitudes keep the variants afloat and contribute to stable and growing presence, while negative attitudes may result in stigma or in covert prestige in some specific contexts. The question about attitudes and perceptions, however, is methodologically tricky, because many of these attitudes are below the level of consciousness, and especially when the phenomenon itself is not very conscious. This is the case with polite *leísmo*.

Three lessons can be learned from the low rates of polite *leísmo* in simulated daily speech but high recognition and acceptability rates in perception: (1) polite *leísmo* is largely subconscious, (2) polite *leísmo* is not prestigious, and (3) polite *leísmo* is not stigmatized. The last two points grow out of the first one: prestige and stigma are highly conscious evaluations, and so they are either consciously avoided or intentionally emulated. Furthermore, prestigious variants tend to have higher presence in speech, which is not happening with polite *leísmo*. If not stigmatized, nor prestigious, then what is the social value of polite *leísmo*?

Two paradoxes help to answer this question. One is the paradox of hypercorrection or over-reporting the use of a phenomenon, as happens with men in the perception study. While men are shown to significantly disfavor polite *leísmo* in speech, they self-report their use significantly higher than women. This linguistic insecurity, resulting from syntactic ambiguity and the low conscious command of the phenomenon, is nevertheless an indication of a positive

attitude they hold. At the same time, these men do not view polite *leísmo* as necessarily more polite, which suggests that it has a covert prestige among this social group (Trudgill, 1972).

The second paradox about the social value of polite *leísmo* is the Gender Paradox (Labov, 1980), which states that women tend to lead in both the overt-prestige and the covert-prestige linguistic variants. The covert prestige has just been defended based on men's behavior. Women's leadership in favoring polite *leísmo* across the production and perception studies strongly supports the hypothesis of a positive evaluation of polite *leísmo* as a stylistic variant, even if not as an overtly prestigious phenomenon.

Based on these two gender-related observations, two types of social evaluations affect polite *leísmo*, and both are positive. While women are both the innovators and the early adopters of polite *leísmo* in Mexico, the type of prestige that drives innovation and early adoption varies. For the incomers, polite *leísmo* shows features of a marker of identity and **covert prestige** as an original from another part of the country who is now advancing in life in the national capital. For native and rather educated residents of the Valley of Mexico, it appears to be more of a **stylistic marker** associated with formality, politeness, indirectness, and aspirations of social mobility. Furthermore, the politeness functions of polite *leísmo* are what is possibly at stake in this innovation, and the effects of positive attitudes and social mobility certainly play a role in the social evaluation of the phenomenon right as it takes place.

The diverse experiences also cannot be ignored upon a more explicit and conscious reflection, such as the acceptability judgment of concrete forms in concrete contexts. Particularly, the prototypical linguistic contexts include high telicity and expressions of help and communication. This is where individuals' backgrounds and diversity shine more explicitly, especially when their socially mobile background is highlighted through educational and career

opportunities. Polite *leísmo* becomes a tool of socially and geographically mobile population around the midpoint of their lives. The higher perceptual acceptability, as well as gender differences in perception, make polite *leísmo* a **stylistic marker** and a **covert-prestige** variable for socially mobile strata, representing **alternative linguistic markets** of insiders and outsiders merging together to build a better life in Mexico City (Milroy & Milroy, 1985).

8. Concluding Thoughts

Figure 8.1

Mexico City Government's (Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, 2020) and small local business signs on the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19

EN COORDINACIÓN CON EL GOBIERNO DE MÉXICO Y CON BASE EN LOS PROTOCOLOS DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DE LA SALUD, ANTICIPAMOS LAS SIGUIENTES MEDIDAS:

1. EN COORDINACIÓN CON LAS 16 ALCALDÍAS Y OPERADORES PRIVADOS, SE POSPONEN LOS EVENTOS PÚBLICOS QUE NO SEAN INDISPENSABLES Y AQUELLOS CON UNA ASISTENCIA MAYOR A 1000 PERSONAS. LOS OPERADORES SE PONDRÁN EN CONTACTO CON QUIENES ADQUIRIERON BOLETOS PARA APOYARLES
2. PARA PROTECCIÓN DE LOS ADULTOS MAYORES, SE SUSPENDEN POR UN TIEMPO LAS AUDIENCIAS PÚBLICAS, Y MIENTRAS TANTO, CONTINUA LA ATENCIÓN EN: audienciaspublicas@cdmx.gob.mx
3. A PARTIR DE ESTA SEMANA SE FORTALECEN LAS MEDIDAS DE HIGIENE EN EL METRO, METROBÚS, RTP, SISTEMA DE TRANSPORTE ELÉCTRICO Y SE ORIENTA A QUE LO HAGAN DE LA MISMA MANERA LOS CONCESIONARIOS
4. HEMOS FORTALECIDO LA UNIDAD DE SANIDAD INTERNACIONAL DEL AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO
5. NO OLVIDES LAS MEDIDAS DE CUIDADO Y PREVENTIVAS, LAVADO DE MANOS, USAR GEL ANTIBACTERIAL, ESTORNUDO DE ETIQUETA, LIMPIAR SUPERFICIES, NO SALUDAR DE MANO NI DE BESO

The operators will get in contact with those who acquired tickets to support them

3rd-person leísmo

2nd-person leísmo

During this eventuality, the stationary shop Luna Azul will continue assisting you-sg-for from 12-6pm [Mon.-Sat.]. Please ring the bell of the yellow door. THANK YOU.

Durante la contingencia, **PAPELERIA LUNA AZUL** le seguirá atendiendo de 12-18 hrs. Favor de tocar el timbre de la puerta amarilla. **GRACIAS.**

8.1 Polite *Leísmo*: The Multi-Perspective Journey between the General and the Concrete

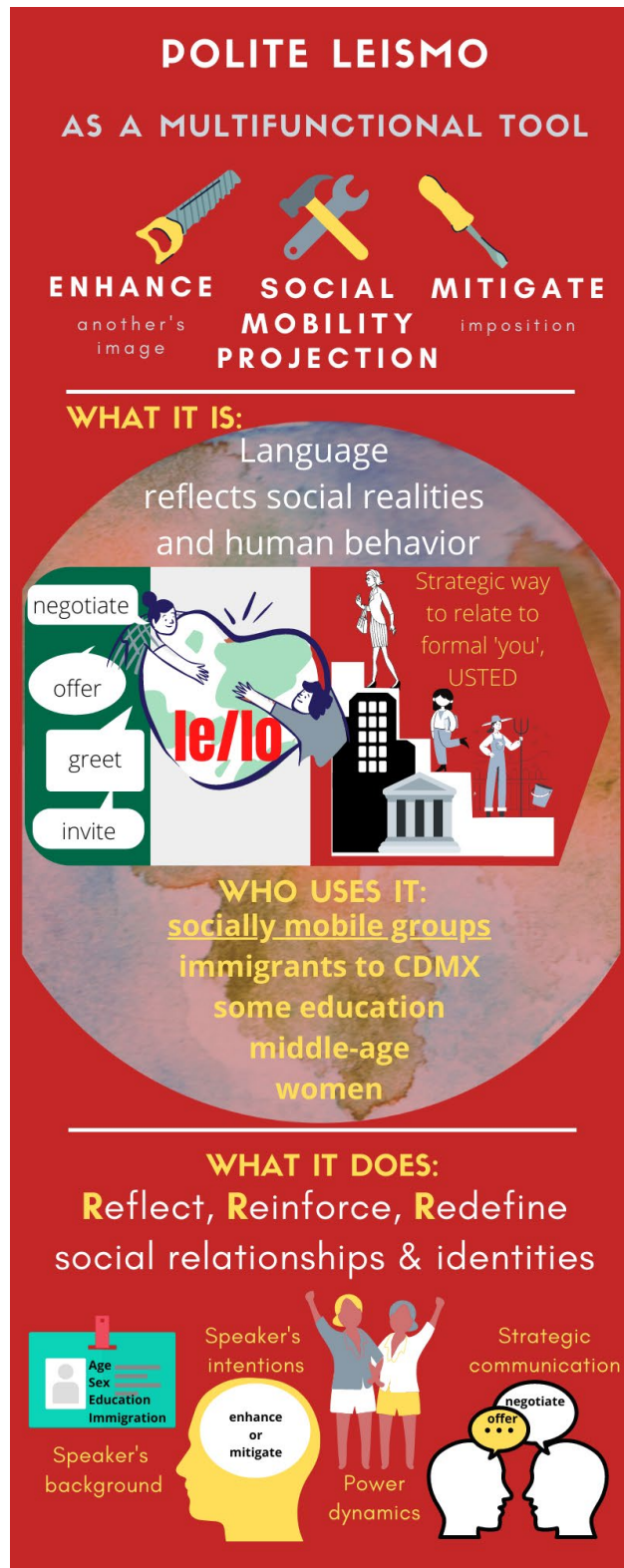
The conclusions of this research can be presented in different ways, just as the research itself has taken multiple perspectives and approaches to arrive at a better understanding of the nature and meaning of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. Going straight to the point, the conclusions can be presented visually in the infographic in Figure 8.2 for greater accessibility by general audiences or encapsulated in the following 30-second elevator pitch:

Polite *leísmo* is an illustrative example of a subtle morphosyntactic ambiguity capable of serving as a multifunctional politeness and social mobility projection tool, due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. It is a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social relationships and the speaker's identity within a community by softly signaling speaker's background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic communication through day-to-day speech acts.

Elaborating further, this study makes an important step in the direction of tackling the understudied complex sociopragmatic phenomenon of polite *leísmo* by reconciling the fields of morphosyntax and pragmatics through a combination of social, pragmatic, syntactic, and cognitive theories and methodologies. This is the first variationist sociolinguistic study with experimental pragmatic component, building on the few sociolinguistic studies that explore variation in the direct-object clitic use (e.g. Blas Arroyo, 1994; García & Otheguy, 1983; Klein, 1979), and is the first study to look at the production and perception of polite *leísmo* in interactive settings in search for its social meaning and value. The multifaceted approach of this research stems from the recognition that a sociolinguistic perspective on morphosyntactic phenomena cannot fully account for the social meaning of variation without taking into account diaphasic stratification, corresponding to contextual and pragmatic factors.

Figure 8.2

Infographic of study conclusions: Social meaning of polite leísmo



Taking advantage of the variational pragmatics framework, uncovering the nature and meaning of polite *leísmo* relies on the study of dynamic interaction in different speech events with consideration for formal, actional, and interactional levels of analysis (Schneider & Barron, 2008) as well as the perlocutionary effects of polite *leísmo* through a complementary perception study.

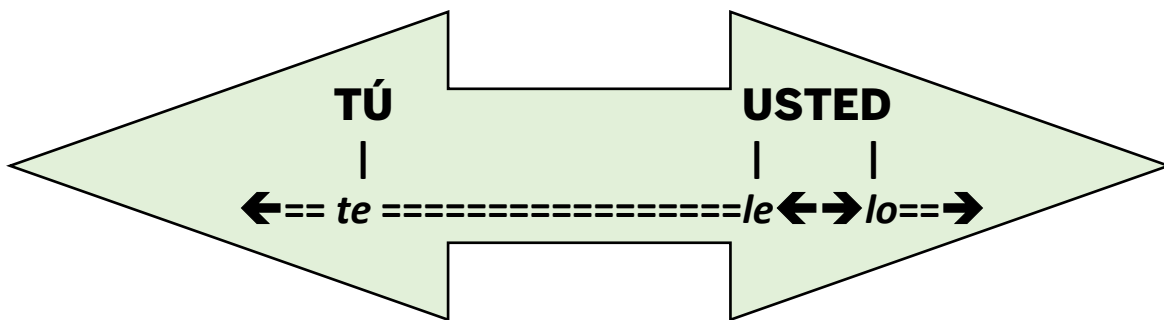
The complexity of the phenomenon and the realities it represents call for multiple perspectives, from more concrete to more general and vice versa. As such, a number of complementary theoretical frameworks allow to give meaning to the variation across the different factors under study. The syntax-pragmatics interface frameworks represent the most concrete and close-up perspective on the structure of language variation and include hypotheses of Relative Transitivity, Salience, Iconic Distance, and Indirectness as Politeness, with an additionally proposed theta-role reanalysis hypothesis. The further sociolinguistic theoretical approaches to language variation and change include alternative linguistic markets, linguistic accommodation, social networks, language attitudes, and gender paradox – allowing to contextualize language variation from the perspective of its speakers and hearers in their community. Finally, the more global and general perspective on cultural values (Schwartz, 1992) adds to the pragmatic theorization of different types of politeness, such as positive-affiliative and negative-mitigation politeness, to understand linguistic politeness as part of the cultural diversity (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Bravo, 1998; Curcó, 2007).

The research objective guiding this research, its questions, methodology, and analysis is the social value of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City. In other words, what raises curiosity is the communicative reason for having two options of expressing the formal ‘you’ in Mexican

Spanish: *lo* and *le*, where both are inherently polite by way of encoded formality, also known as social deixis (Figure 8.3, reproduced from Figure 2.3.5.1).

Figure 8.3

Variable 'you' treatment encoded in Mexican Spanish direct-object clitic continuum (reproduced from Figure 2.3.5.1)



At the conclusion of this research, the findings only scratch the surface and remaining questions far outweigh the available answers. What we know is that polite *leísmo* is an existing phenomenon in Mexico, but which is not as frequent in Mexico City as in other parts of the country. It is a familiar phenomenon, clearly associated with politeness and formality. It is commonly underused in the metropolitan speech in fitting-in and accommodation efforts but over-reported by men as a sign of covert prestige. Polite *leístas* are socially mobile groups, including (young) female immigrants from other states as the innovators and middle-age city women as local adopters, who have enough access to education to make the most use of this linguistic resource. The social patterns of production and perception of polite *leísmo* suggest its social value as an immigrant marker, a social mobility projection tool, and a dual-politeness resource. The phenomenon is seen to have a stable presence but undergoing functional changes to build hierarchical and equal social relationships through covert prestige and stylistic associations in a collectivist culture which is growing in individualistic orientation and

globalization. The journey to these conclusions has lessons of its own, which speak in the voices of the vibrant Mexico City community.

This final chapter recapitulates the voices and the perceptions of the day-to-day polite *leísmo*, leading to the understanding of its social value and meaning. The three research questions are answered for better understanding of the usage and perceptual landscapes of polite *leísmo* in Mexico City, and together contribute to answering the question about its social meaning and functions as the ultimate goal of this research project. In following the concrete-to-general perspective path taken up in this work, each research question reminds how each perspective contributes to the findings, particularly connecting the linguistic to pragmatic and to sociolinguistic implications. This work concludes with the more global and cultural implications that variable linguistic behavior may have for a modern society, a critical summary, and future directions available as a result of this research.

8.2 Usage Landscape of Variable Polite *Leísmo* in Mexican Interactions (Research Question 1)

Descriptive linguistics describes how people actually talk, and variationist approaches constantly show that people actually talk quite variably. This variability depends on a number of identity, circumstantial, cultural, and linguistic factors. Variation is the norm of all living languages as manifestations of the more general human behavior. A separate question is whether that variation is part of language change or of stable reflection of social stratification of the community. How any specific variable phenomenon is conditioned at any point in time holds answers to the nature of the phenomenon and its embeddedness in the larger linguistic system and in the culture of the

society at hand. The usage landscape of polite *leísmo* is the first approximation to understanding this larger question.

The first research question (RQ1) is focused on the usage landscape of polite *leísmo* in Mexican day-to-day interactions. How people actually use polite *leísmo* is reflective of who they are with respect to others, how they live and interact, and how these daily interactions reflect and define larger societal characteristics. This linguistic variation landscape adds a complementary angle to the dynamic sociodemographic profile of the country, in terms of population, mobility, and social lives, focused on Mexico City as a microcosm of Mexico (see Global Perspective section).

Taking the closest perspective at the produced polite *leísmo*, it is seen as a second-person formal direct-object clitic that very occasionally takes the place of the pronoun *lo* to refer to *usted* ‘you-formal’ in transitive constructions. Besides pronominally referencing the same person, both pronouns in variation share most structural properties, except that polite *leísmo* can differentially mark the role of the interlocutor as more of a beneficiary of the action, and is more frequently produced post-verbally and before a modal or auxiliary. Together with this iconic distance and salience level variation in the clitics, the transitivity of the verbs is seen affected in the direction of lower transitivity with *le* as opposed to *lo*. Speaking of verbs, polite *le* is a property of a few very specific verbs that are semantically connected to helping and communicating performative intentions.

These linguistic properties of polite *leísmo* in use are complemented by the functional perspective through its pragmatic conditioning. Two main functional effects involve modulating



attention to the interlocutor and to the action and intention expressed. *Le* differentially marks the ‘you’ as a beneficiary and regulates the intention and



the force with which the verb affects the interlocutor, invoking the Differential Object Marking phenomena as a hypothesis for further research. Specifically, the lowering of transitivity, conditional structure, and iconic distancing within the syntactic expression are manifestations of indirectness as a polite mitigation of the imposition potentially affecting the interlocutor through negotiation speech acts. At the same time, face-enhancing politeness is expressed with additional linguistic means of telic, singular, positive polarity, and present-tense expressions characteristic of the more direct performative utterances, especially in the *confianza*/trust-building offers and greetings with the interlocutor. These two complementary functions of polite *leísmo* make it an adaptable politeness tool that is helpful in diverse social interactions and relationships in daily life.

Finally, the bigger picture of polite *leísmo* usage is gleaned from macro-social stratification. Extending its use to atelic verbs is the linguistic innovation what shows social conditioning. The social agents behind this usage landscape have most of the following characteristics: females, socioeconomically mobile, with college or graduate education, and immigrants to Mexico City. The domain of use also ranges from informal to formal contexts, supporting the dual-function of polite *leísmo* and its adaptability to various social contexts and relational needs. Using polite *leísmo* with people of higher social rank highlights the conscious social stratification of the capital community and the importance of language accommodation for the inhabitants of and immigrants to the metropolitan center of Mexico. A polite *leísta* is, therefore, conscious of social stratification, socially mobile and adaptable to the alternative linguistic and geographic markets of their country by using multifunctional linguistic politeness.



The conclusion about the usage landscape of polite *leísmo* rests on the multivariate analysis of linguistic, contextual, and social factors explaining the found variation in speech. While polite *leísmo* is relatively infrequent in production, it is mainly sensitive to linguistic and contextual factors present in the contexts of formal and informal offers and negotiations, often in unequal-status relationships. It is seen to act as a dual mitigating and face-enhancing strategy, in correlation with several other linguistic-pragmatic tools expressing indirectness (i.e. verb morphology, sentence hedging, iconic distancing of morphosyntactic elements) and performativity (i.e. telicity, singular subjects, positive polarity). The social conditioning, however, is almost absent in the most performative, telic speech acts, suggesting sociolinguistic accommodation to the metropolitan speech as a fitting in effort. The less typical, atelic speech acts, however, betray the socially mobile identities of its users and show greater social stratification as well as the locus of ongoing language change.

8.3 Perceptual Landscape of Acceptability of Polite *Leísmo* (Research Question 2)

What people believe and actually do with language do not always coincide, especially when trying to fit into societal norms or make statements in favor of one's own position within the society. Research on attitudes and perceptions in linguistic variationist research is just as enlightening as it is in research on social inequalities in stratified communities. Stratification comes automatically with evaluations of strata with respect to each other. Variable linguistic phenomena, like polite *leísmo*, become associated with particular strata, either as behavior, artefacts, or cultural practices, and therefore symbolic capital. Depending on the direction of that social association and the personal positioning of the individuals with respect to those strata, people adopt or resist the phenomenon.

The second research question (RQ2) seeks these personal and community perceptions and evaluations of polite *leísmo* in day-to-day interactions in Mexico City. The much more significant social stratification of the reported acceptability of the phenomenon enhances the polite *leísmo* landscape within the dynamic sociodemographic profile of the country. Specifically, we see polite *leísmo* as definitely familiar across the society in spite of its modest use. In a way, this perceptual landscape helps to understand not only the community members' acceptability of the linguistic phenomenon, but also their self perceptions, and to a point, their perception of the larger society through the language lens. Specifically the social conditioning of variable acceptability of polite *leísmo* reveals the otherwise accommodating and blending-in social identities of the speakers as remembering where they come from and where they are going: immigrants participating in upward mobility through gender roles, educational opportunities, and professional and economic growth. No wonder that different experiences shape different perceptions, even if day-to-day linguistic behaviors tend to erase these differences on the surface. With these social realities in mind, the subtle variations in polite *leísmo* point to its added value for social mobility – whether actively expressed or perceived.

In order to arrive at these conclusions about the perceptual landscape of polite *leísmo*, the closer look at its linguistic conditioning reveals it as a resource that is highly available and equally acceptable as its etymological counterpart *lo*. Just as the production landscape suggests, perceptually polite *leísmo* is a property of a set of verbs semantically related to helping and communication, as well as some imposition, but to a much lesser extent. Structurally, it is much more acceptable in post-verbal positions, partially coinciding with the production patterns. Furthermore it correlates with telic, present-tense, and unmitigated syntactic structure.



Nevertheless, linguistic conditioning is found to be the least significant predictor of the acceptability of polite *leísmo*.



The pragmatic perspective highlights the greater weight of contextual factors on the acceptability and meaning of polite *leísmo*. Its higher acceptability in negotiations and offers in formal and traditional contexts, but especially so with interlocutors of higher status points to its association with the higher-stakes social relationships and interactions, while maintaining its relational usefulness. The syntax-pragmatic interface theories also help interpret the concrete linguistic patterns in connection to the more direct, *confianza*/trust-building speech events, such as offers that are meant to benefit the interlocutor and enhance their positive face.

Finally, the sociolinguistic perspective on the perception data reveals the hidden social identities, evaluations, and different life experiences of the socially mobile groups in the Valley of Mexico. Among those who more readily accept polite *leísmo* are the highly educated adults, mostly out of state, mostly females, and mostly representatives of the low middle class. Social factors prove to be the the most significant predictors of the acceptability of polite *leísmo* and remind us that “you can take the girl out of her hometown, but you can’t take the hometown out of the girl” (popular English saying). However, besides just signaling the origin of linguistic innovators, this social profile also reveals that the local adopters of this linguistic variable are sympathetic or at least culturally sensitive members of the society.



These conclusions are a result of a multivariate analysis of linguistic, social, and contextual factors. High level of familiarity, acceptability, and social stratification of polite *leísmo* perception contrast with its low rates and lack of social conditioning in speech. It is

confirmed as a device appropriate for offers and negotiations in formal contexts, but most acceptable as mitigating politeness of more performative and directly expressed speech acts (i.e. unmitigated sentences, telic verbs, post-verbal clitic). This is where social stratification is revealed the most and reveals the most about the social value of the phenomenon. Polite *leísmo* can be said to be a phenomenon reportedly available to immigrants and well educated adults from low middle class – the highly socially mobile stratum. The differences in sex stratification based on the judgment category reveal a complex social evaluation of polite *leísmo*: men over-report using it, while women lead in attributing greatest polite perlocutionary effect to it. The significance of these social differences for the social meaning and functions of polite *leísmo* is summarized next.

8.4 Social Meaning and Functions of Polite *Leísmo* in Mexico City (Research Question 3)

At the outset of this research, questions about language ideologies included the curiosity about the potential for polite *leísmo* to be a commodified resource or a target of discrimination due to its non-standard and seemingly subconscious nature. The largely subconscious nature of the phenomenon was assumed as corresponding to its grammatical meaning, evidenced by psycholinguistic literature and also confirmed by the mismatch between production and perception patterns in this research. At the outset of this research, we did not know whether polite *leísmo* participates in a change in progress or is part of stable variation. It is not uncommon for the lower middle class to lead changes in progress as the most upwardly mobile group, which must be traceable in both production and perception (Meyerhoff, 2006). These are questions behind the third research question (RQ3) of this dissertation and the ultimate goal of

this research: What are the social meaning and value of the variable polite *leísmo* in Mexico City?

While social class plays a role in production and perception of polite *leísmo*, albeit through different correlates, perceptual acceptability of polite *leísmo* far outweighs its production rates. Limited use and limited social conditioning of the production of polite *leísmo* point to it being a stable phenomenon undergoing internal, functional change, which varies across the country. Consistent with the low production rates of polite *leísmo* yet robust associations with politeness, the phenomenon is neither prestigious nor stigmatized in Mexico City, which safeguards it from discrimination and places limits on its use as a commodified resource. It is found to possess some **covert prestige** for the innovators (in correlation with the informal contexts and the males' overreported use yet no conscious association with politeness) and some **stylistic value** for the early adopters (in correlation with the more formal contexts and the females' reporting higher association with politeness). However, as a resource, it is found to be available mostly to the upwardly mobile strata. Polite *leísmo* is, therefore, a **social mobility projection tool** in Mexico City and at this point in history.



What allows polite *leísmo* to be a social mobility projection tool are the characteristics of its agents (innovators and early adopters) and its multifunctional politeness meaning: it can both

enhance the reputation of other community members and mitigate tensions with them. In other words, polite *leísmo* can express both positive and negative politeness, which together emphasize a range of social needs, from affiliation and acceptance to respect and autonomy. As a positive politeness strategy, polite *leísmo* appears



in directly phrased speech events, especially offers. As a negative politeness strategy, polite *leísmo* mitigates negotiations, and colors interactions with someone higher in authority.

Throughout the study, language is seen at the service of the ongoing social changes, such as the leveling of social hierarchies with the growing opportunity of social mobility, an increase in the informal and egalitarian *tú* treatment, and the changing cultural traditions and relationships (e.g. *compadrazgo* ‘co-parenting’). Once again sociolinguistic research shows how language is used to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social realities, among which are the speakers’ identity, intentions, power dynamics, and strategic communication.



These conclusions arise from the comparative examination of the linguistic, social, and pragmatic factors behind variable production and perception of polite *leísmo*. Specifically, these conclusions are based on the mismatch of low production rates without much social conditioning in contrast to medium-high acceptability rates of polite *leísmo*, which are socially stratified. And while perceptually, polite *leísmo* is favored more in directly expressed speech acts in high-stakes situations as mitigating politeness, its face-enhancing and affiliative function shines through in direct and indirect speech below the level of consciousness. Taking into account the more qualitative observations, this study suggests that polite *leísmo* is inseparable from the actions expressed as verbs in day-to-day interactions: particularly, the verbs semantically connected to helping and communicating intentions, such as *ayudar* ‘help’, *atender* ‘assist’, *llamar* ‘call’, *felicitar* ‘congratulate’, among others. The historical changes and the presence of third-person and second-person *leísmo* in a handful of official contexts serves as a backdrop for the stable presence of the phenomenon, but also for its ongoing internal change with respect to its functions and the extent of its applicability.

8.5 Global and Cultural Implications of Polite *Leísmo*: Critical Summary, Broader Impacts, and Future Directions

Critical Summary

The perspective kept throughout this work is the report of **polite *leísmo* as an illustrative example of a subtle morphosyntactic ambiguity capable of developing two politeness functions and serving as a social mobility projection tool, due to its position at the interface of morphosyntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. It is viewed as a half-conscious endeavor to reflect, reinforce, and redefine social relationships and the speaker's identity within a community by softly signaling speaker's background, intention, power dynamics, and strategic communication through day-to-day speech acts.** This work builds on previous literature that identifies and offers general observations of the phenomenon across the Spanish speaking world, and adds to it the close-up look at Mexico City and the detailed contextualization through linguistic, social, and pragmatic perspectives in order to understand its meaning and social value. While the experimental sociolinguistic and pragmatic methodologies, along with complementary theoretical approaches, allow to advance our knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon, they do not answer all of the questions. This section humbly recognizes the many unresolved problems and unanswered questions that pave the way for future research.



Polite *leísmo* is an example of a linguistic form with pragmatic function and meaning, which varies socially, and tells a story about the more general human behavior reflecting and defining a culture and the global state of affairs. It reminds us that language is part of human behavior (Bourdieu, 1977b; Giles, 1973,

2016; Giles & Ogay, 2007; Heller, 2010), cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Weber, 1978), social identity marker (Tajfel, 1974, 1978; Ochs, 1993), and a tool for reflection and perpetuation of ideals and social realities. The realities revealed by this research include life in Mexico City and its dynamic social structure. This life is seen as highly mobile, reflecting the geographic and social mobility of the current generations. The dynamicity of social practices and communication (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012) are passed on from the peripheral innovators (immigrants) to the centrally-positioned early adopters among the upwardly mobile, but more deeply embedded social groups of Mexico City (females, middle-aged, and middle-class original residents) (cf. Milroy & Milroy, 1985). Linguistic resources are, therefore, a valuable currency (Weber, 1978), identity and membership markers (Meyerhoff, 1996), and social mobility projection tools (Heller, 2010; Wagner, 2012) as a culturally appropriate accommodation response to the social context (Bell, 1984; Giles, 1973, 2016). Beyond the simple embodiment view of language (Bourdieu, 1977a), therefore, language variation is viewed constructively: as interactively constituted in specific situations and within culturally framed encounters (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2012). And the mismatch between production and perception patterns of variable linguistic phenomena manifests as linguistic insecurity (Meyerhoff, 2006; Preston, 2013; Trudgill, 1972) and reflects the **need for self-identification, belonging, and growth at the same time.**

It is not surprising that Mexico City has been growing in the individualistic orientation, in the midst of a collectivist culture and tradition in this era of globalization (Cienfuegos et al., 2016; Díaz-Loving et al., 2018). Mexicans' difficulty with saying 'no' and other inherently face-threatening situations (Curcó, 2007) on the one hand limits them, but also makes the citizens more creative and resourceful in their linguistic accommodation (Bell, 1984; Giles, 1973, 2016).

It is incredible to find how a single linguistic resource of polite *leísmo* is variably appropriated to reconcile the coexisting hierarchical and the solidarity-based living experiences of the individuals (Hernández-Flores, 2004). Just like the wider solidarity-deference treatment continuum between *tú* and *usted*, the variation in polite *leísmo* reflects the coexistence of positive and negative politeness values in Mexico (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987), highlighting its fuzzy geographical, economic, social, and situational borders of real-life contexts and experiences.

At the same time, however, this variation draws boundaries between those who have and those who do not have access to this resource through education. As the education reforms are changing this reality by extending compulsory education through college, greater internal migrations are expected, along with greater use of linguistic tools of social mobility. In the mean time, educational opportunities continue stratifying the society. While not intended to be taken out of context, this social inequality situation is reminiscent of the centuries-old wisdom shared by Jesus Christ: “To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them” (Matthew 13:12 NLT).

Taking into account these interdisciplinary and theoretical precedents, the global take on the lessons learned from polite *leísmo* reiterates how much language is a manifestation of human behavior. Specifically, just how much language is capable to reflect, reinforce, and even redefine social relationships in interaction. Just like polite *leísmo*, language is powerful to define our personal and group **identities within a community by signaling our background, intentions, power dynamics, and strategic communication through common day-to-day speech acts.**

Broader Impacts

The **broader impacts** of this research include potential contributions to a range of related disciplines within the academic world and beyond. Academically speaking, the crossdisciplinary approach to studying language variation through polite *leísmo* offers evidence of the interplay of language with multiple social factors and encourages cross-disciplinary collaboration with the humanistic social sciences broadly construed. As a natural outcome, academic value of this research should inform subsequent educational practices and tools, such as communication, language learning, marketing, and more. Outside of the academia, appropriate knowledge and use of polite *leísmo* is useful to many individuals and social institutions in our increasingly interconnected world. At the individual level, polite *leísmo* shows two different politeness functions and also serves as a social mobility projection tool. As a consequence, incorporating polite *leísmo* as linguistic currency into institutional communication practices –interpersonal and intercultural– can make these institutions more culturally sensitive, ethical, and successful. This applies to the spheres of management, user experience, media industry, and localization, among others. Sociolinguistics and pragmatics further benefit the development of technologies aimed at improving communication in contexts of cultural diversity and augmentative communication including for people with various language disorders. This can be achieved by incorporating the social significance of polite *leísmo* into assistive technologies, human-machine interaction, and translation, among other services.

Remaining Questions and Future Directions

While the focus of present research has been variation specifically in the formal ‘you’ treatment system, it is undeniable that the shifting continuum of solidarity-deference terms beginning with

tú affects the entire system distribution and meaning. The first obvious next step in continuing this line of research is to situate the formal ‘you’ variation within the wider scale of social distance relationships and compare the variable *usted* use with the use of *tú* in Mexico City and across the country.

One of the questions to continue investigating is about the **causes** of (polite) *leísmo*. It has been previously attributed to a variety of influences: contact with minority languages (de Granada, 1982; DeMello, 2002; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1994; 1999; Urritia Cárdenas, 2003), misinterpretation of polysemic and optionally ditransitive verbs (DeMello, 2002; Diccionario panhispánico de dudas, 2005; Fernández-Ordóñez, 1999; García, 1975; Parodi et al., 2012), grammaticalized and phonologically conditioned impersonal constructions with *se le* (DeMello, 2002; Parodi et al., 2012), and the less-understood courteous treatment (Aijón Oliva, 2006). This research definitely supports the systemic view of polite *leísmo* as part of a larger grammatical system as well as lexical and structural frequencies as reference points (Bybee, 2010). Language contact has not been tested due to the relatively low presence of indigenous languages in the daily life of the average Mexico City inhabitant, even though many of the first- and second-generation inhabitants have roots in the regions with higher language contact. The fact that it is the immigrant speakers that are the innovators in polite *leísmo* in Mexico City suggests that this is a real possibility and should be explored further in regions of higher language contact. This line of research would contribute to the field of variational pragmatics in terms of regional variation, shedding light on how polite *leísmo* might vary across Mexico.

The earlier **hypotheses** of *leísmo* had proposed that politeness is expressed in raising the animacy and agentivity status of the interlocutor as a participant in verbal action (García, 1975; García & Otheguy, 1977) or in the inclusivity of eliminating the gender marker from the direct

object (Aijón Oliva, 2006). The latter hypothesis cannot be fully tested due to the methodological design addressing specifically all male interlocutors, and therefore is left for future research. The agentivity hypothesis, however, is supported with multiple applications of Relative Transitivity as one correlate with syntactic indirectness. Relative Transitivity has also been connected to the Differential Object Marking phenomenon as another layer of meaning of polite *leísmo*, albeit in new, non-traditional terms, which are worth researching and testing further. However, it is also noted that transitivity is not unambiguously and unidirectionally connected to politeness, but rather it is the semantic meaning of the verb that sets up the situational needs. Highly transitive verbs can be polite if they express benefit to the interlocutor or they can be face-threatening if they express imposition. Several verbs have been identified as points of reference of polite *leísmo*: *ayudar* ‘help’ with its synonyms and *llamar* ‘call’ with a few other performative and communication verbs. The proposed semantic networks should benefit from a more focused examination in future studies, taking into account appropriate measures of frequency. It is the exploration of different speech events and a range of illocutionary verbs from the pragmatic perspective that now allows to understand that the politeness of polite *leísmo* goes beyond the expression of agentivity and gender neutrality of the direct object. Rather, it expressed two types of politeness depending on the action expressed through the verb: mitigation of imposition and face enhancement in the absence of imposition. This conclusion is in line with Curcó’s (2007) report on the importance of affiliation, positive-face needs in Hispanic cultures and several qualitative observations outside of the study design.

While multiple **linguistic correlates** of both types of politeness are discovered with help of the Indirectness-Politeness hypothesis, many more indicators may be tested in the future, and perhaps determining which of the two politeness types is predominant in the language overall.

Nevertheless, this predominance would only be meaningful considering the factor of situational context and social stratification, which defines, contextualizes, and directs language change in a given community, such as Mexico City. Larger and more representative **sociodemographic samples** will certainly present a more accurate state of affairs at any point in time, present or future. Other cities, states, and Spanish-speaking countries and contexts are likely to vary based on their own **socio-cultural and historical panorama**, adding to the research potential that never ceases.

Multiple methodological adjustments may be made to take this research further, from designing the study, to choosing the variables, to coding, to measurements, analysis, and theory-driven interpretation. Other **methods** of collecting naturalistic production and perception data may be used, including spontaneous interactions (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018) and perhaps psycholinguistic methods of self-paced reading or eye tracking. Whether processing can count as a measure of language perception is still an empirical issue. Psycholinguistic research shows that social and contextual information indeed affects processing of linguistic information and therefore must be taken into account (Casasanto, 2008; Dussias, Valdés Kroff, Guzzardo Tamargo, & Gerfen, 2013; Squires, 2013). The pilot study of the present research indeed suggests that perception and processing are not unrelated and that further research is needed to understand their relationship better. Alternatively or additionally to psycholinguistic methods, the present study calls for deeper usage-based approaches (Bybee, 2010) to model cognitive associations and make further predictions on frequency and semantic prototype effects through exemplars, such as that found for the verb *ayudar* ‘help’.

All experimental studies are just that: experimental. No experimental **design** is fault-proof, and the results must be viewed in light of the specific design of the role plays and the

acceptability judgment task used in this research. One improvement from the pilot design was to replace the researcher with a native male speaker as the interlocutor in the role plays. However, it became obvious that it was impractical to collect as much data with just one interlocutor, and so it turned into a challenge of the improved design. In spite of securing a number of trained interlocutors, it is important to recognize that they cannot practically match all of the described social characteristics of all characters, precisely due to the wide range of presented ages and relationships underlying the variable contexts. Additionally, some have shared a concern regarding the skin tone and indigenous roots and such sociolects as sounding more *fresa* vs. *naco* (the former is a stereotype of a snobbish well-off population, while the latter refers roughly to a stigmatized working-class or poor sector). These characteristics carry different social values and implicit or explicit biases in Mexico City and are therefore capable of affecting the speakers' performance. This is to be expected in any simulation activity, and a reminder is in order that all simulations rest on the participants' ability to visualize themselves in such situations. For the purposes of this study, care was taken to select highly familiar and natural situations, with options to adapt various elements, to help the participants visualize them more easily and act naturally because of it. How much these individual characteristics of the interlocutors affect the nature of participation and spoken data is another empirical question not tackled in this study. Similar cautions apply to gauging imagination, perception, attention, and honesty on such metalinguistic tasks as the used acceptability judgment questionnaire. Additionally, this variability in interlocutor and their character opens the future possibility of conducting item variation analysis for a better understanding of the changing social roles of godparents and co-parents, priests, mariachis, doctors, professors, and so on.

The large number of **variables** in this study, although with considerate limitations for statistical power¹¹, permits recognizing that language variation is conditioned linguistically, socially, and contextually all at the same time. It also paints a complementary picture by comparing the same factors across different types of data (uncontrolled oral and controlled perceptual) for a greater degree of confidence and understanding of the place and value of the phenomenon in the society. Nevertheless, finer focus on a smaller group of variables, or additional variables not taken into account here, is sure to expose the details that are missed by taking a survey of a large number of variables and do so with greater statistical accuracy. Such is the case of the selection and coding of speech events, which do not take into account the numerous exceptions, contradictions, and finer subdivisions in the real-world richness of offers, negotiations, greetings, invitations, and other speech goals. This study is a first step in providing an overview of several common real-world interactional possibilities by delimiting them in the described way and leaving much for future research. Future studies should do well by making informed and strategic selection and codification of variables for better interpretation, generalization, and prediction power of analysis.

The narrow focus on a **single phenomenon** of polite *leísmo* in this research is just one illustration of the complex interactivity between even the smallest elements of the grammatical system with the cognitive realm of meaning and perception and further social realities of a speech community. The conclusion of this study invites further research on the same phenomenon as well as on other interface phenomena, such as social deixis, in various communities and their languages. During the work with the phenomenon of polite *leísmo*, multiple observations spiked interest for future research that are not part of this study. Among

¹¹ See Summary of Constants and Variables subsection of Methodology.

them are the extension of *tú* treatment as a social equality action; the relationship between the rare 3rd-person *leísmo* and polite *leísmo*; avoidance of prototypically transitive constructions with formal ‘you’ (often through omission of direct object with several illocutionary verbs like *interrumpir* ‘interrupt’, *ayudar* ‘help’, and *apoyar* ‘support’) while maintaining prototypical transitivity with informal ‘you’; clitic doubling with explicit addition of *a usted* ‘you’; and the use of proxy communicative acts by positioning the speaker as a middle agent between the source of the intention and the target audience (e.g. Cohen & Levesque, 1990).

Interdisciplinary Lessons Looking Forward

The transdisciplinary, global message of this research, from its germination to the final product, is the value of **dialogue**. The **dialogue** and what happens in it linguistically and socially is what attracted this research. The **dialogue** put under the microscope, resulted in the focus on the 2nd-person direct-object clitics, as a microcosm of direct human interaction and negotiation of interpersonal relationships. The interactive complexity of this linguistic phenomenon has called for a **dialogue** among disciplines in order to shed light onto its interfacing aspects from linguistic, social, and pragmatic perspectives. Beyond the disciplinary takes, the dialogical nature of the linguistic phenomenon requires that data for this research come from a **dialogue**, informing the elicitation method of interactive role plays. Fieldwork and data collection itself also had to occur through attentive **dialogue** between the researcher and the community, in making connections, participant observation, and understanding of the community. This work, therefore, invites the readers to engage in this **dialogue** together with the author by considering this journey as a series of reality building questions and answers through multiple perspectives and voices of the society. After all, **dialogue** –both speaking and listening– is the best form of

activism and a tool for world peace. “You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry” (James 1:19 NLT).

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Appendix

Role Plays

N	Instrucciones
1	<p>Acaba de salir la noticia de que se recibirán nominaciones para reconocer al <u>profesor/director/gerente</u> más destacado de su <u>escuela/lugar del trabajo</u>. Usted conoce a un hombre que se merece el premio: su <u>profesor/jefe</u> favorito quien es un verdadero modelo a seguir. Entra a su oficina para mostrarle su apoyo y entusiasmo para que se gane el premio. Hable con él y exprésele sus intenciones de proponer su candidatura, sus razonamientos y sus buenos deseos.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nominar • apoyar • admirar • reconocer
2	<p>Usted visita a su <u>amigo/familiar</u> en su lugar del trabajo. Su <u>amigo/familiar</u> salió por un rato y en eso llega un cliente distinguido con mucha prisa. Nadie más está presente en ese momento, así que le toca asumir el papel de secretario/a. No está capacitado/a para hacer lo que hace su <u>amigo/familiar</u>, pero sí tiene acceso a su agenda/calendario. Aclárele amablemente lo que sí y lo que no se puede esperar de su visita.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • atender • ayudar • apuntar/agendar • acompañar
3	<p>Usted está en un consultorio médico porque su familia insistió en que se fuera a revisar por sus achaques. El médico está determinado a hacerle una tomografía computarizada del cuerpo. Ese estudio le parece demasiado caro y quiere evitarlo a como dé lugar. Trate de negociar con el médico, explicándole su preferencia por algún método alternativo para obtener su diagnóstico.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultar • interrumpir • convencer/hacer cambiar de opinión • llamar

4	<p>El lugar donde usted vive ha sufrido de muchos problemas con el <u>agua/luz/otro servicio</u> y usted ya ha tenido que ir varias veces a la delegación. Mientras está formado/a, se encuentra junto a un hombre mayor que siempre le ha recordado a su abuelo. Ambos tienen los mismos problemas y además le cae muy bien. Coméntele sobre <u>los 15 años/fiesta patronal</u> que pronto se va a celebrar en su <u>colonia/barrio</u> y dígame que es bienvenido.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitar • acompañar • recibir • saludar
5	<p>Un vecino suyo acaba de conseguir un trabajo difícil de conseguir y de mucha importancia. La verdad es un hombre muy bueno y querido y se lo merece. Por sus horarios diferentes, ustedes no se han podido ver desde el cambio, hasta que por fin hoy ve la puerta de su <u>casa/departamento</u> entreabierta y decide tocar y hablar con él. Él le abre muy contento.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitar • saludar • felicitar • querer
6	<p>Usted ha colaborado con un albergue para los afectados por el <u>sismo/huracán/desastre natural</u>. Imagine que su <u>tío/suegro/padrino</u> resultó afectado y necesita ayuda. Como usted conoce el lugar y a la gente que trabaja allí, tome la iniciativa de invitar a su <u>tío/suegro/padrino</u> para que vaya, explíquele cómo funcionan las cosas allí y cómo registrarse. Seguramente este gesto ayudará a fortalecer su relación.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apuntar/agendar • atender/recibir • invitar • ayudar

7	<p>Usted está en busca de un buen proveedor del <u>producto X</u>, y le recomendaron a un señor dueño de una distribuidora. Dicen que es el más honrado que hay, pero que no se compromete a largo plazo con nadie hasta no estar seguro de que el cliente sea serio y confiable también. Vaya a asegurarle que usted es un cliente cumplido.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elegir/poner a cargo • necesitar • llamar • consultar
8	<p>Su familia se prepara para una <u>boda/15 años/graduación/fiesta familiar importante</u>. Casi todos han cooperado en los preparativos, menos su <u>compadre/cuñado</u>. Realmente necesita su ayuda y experiencia para organizar todo a tiempo. Se topa con él en un lugar público y decide aprovechar la oportunidad para pedir su ayuda. Negocie con él, ofreciéndole ayuda con el proceso, con tal de que se responsabilice aunque sea por algo.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detener/entretener • convencer • elegir/poner a cargo • apuntar/agendar
9	<p>En los festejos del 15 de septiembre usted ve cantar a un grupo de mariachis y le parece el mejor que ha escuchado. No por nada es un grupo reconocido. En algún momento usted se encuentra enfrente del encargado del grupo y aprovecha para expresarle que le gustó. Trate de darle una buena impresión con un saludo y un cumplido.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saludar • reconocer • admirar • felicitar

10	<p>Un miembro muy mayor de su <u>parroquia/iglesia/barrio</u> acaba de enviudar y usted viene al velorio organizado por varias personas de la comunidad. Su mujer era su pareja de toda la vida y en los últimos años vivieron alejados de la mayoría de sus hijos y nietos. Usted se imagina lo afectado y desamparado que se siente y le habla para ofrecerle palabras de apoyo y prometerle ayuda y compañía en este momento tan difícil.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • querer • acompañar • apoyar • visitar/recibir
11	<p>Va a participar en la organización y la celebración de las Posadas Navideñas junto con varios parientes y vecinos. Quiere pedirle al sacerdote de la iglesia más cercana que forme parte de la procesión para dirigir la parte tradicional. Lo ideal sería que participara los 9 días, aunque puede ser difícil. Espere a que se desocupe después de la misa y solicite su participación a cambio de cualquier ayuda que necesite.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convencer/hacer cambiar de opinión • detener/entretener • ayudar • elegir/poner a cargo
12	<p>Llegó la hora de escoger al padrino de <u>su boda/bautizo de su hijo</u>. Quiere encontrar a una persona ejemplar, honrada, generosa y confiable. Piense en alguien que haya sido como un padre para usted. De este modo se sentirán más en familia. Encuentre un buen momento para hablar con él. Coméntele su idea, pero sin presionar porque este honor también implica mucha responsabilidad y compromiso.</p> <p>Use los siguientes verbos (en cualquier orden):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invitar • necesitar • recibir • nombrar

Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)

Acaba de salir la noticia de que se recibirán nominaciones para reconocer al profesor/director/gerente más destacado de su escuela/lugar del trabajo. Usted conoce a un hombre que se merece el premio: su profesor/jefe favorito quien es un verdadero modelo a seguir. Entra a su oficina para mostrarle su apoyo y entusiasmo para que se gane el premio. Habla con él y le expresa sus intenciones de proponer su candidatura, sus razonamientos y sus buenos deseos.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

	<i>me gustaría nominarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>me gustaría nominarlo</i>
<i>a.</i>			
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>			
	<i>voy a apoyarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>voy a apoyarlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>			
	<i>le admiro mucho</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo admiro mucho</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>			
	<i>se merece que le reconozcan</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>se merece que lo reconozcan</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>			
	<i>ojalá que le den el premio a usted</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>ojalá que lo den el premio a usted</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Usted visita a su amigo/familiar en su lugar del trabajo. Su amigo/familiar salió por un rato y en eso llega un cliente distinguido con mucha prisa. Nadie más está presente en ese momento, así que le toca asumir el papel de secretario/a. No está capacitado/a para hacer lo que hace su amigo/familiar, pero sí tiene acceso a su agenda/calendario. Le aclara amablemente lo que sí y lo que no se puede esperar de su visita.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

	<i>lamento avisarle que el encargado no se encuentra</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lamento avisarlo que el encargado no se encuentra</i>
a.			
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<i>puedo atenderle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>puedo atenderlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<i>le ayudo</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo ayudo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<i>puedo apuntarle para más tarde</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>puedo apuntarlo para más tarde</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<i>permítame acompañarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>permítame acompañarlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Usted está en un consultorio médico porque su familia insistió en que se fuera a revisar por sus achaques. El médico está determinado a hacerle una tomografía computarizada del cuerpo. Ese estudio le parece demasiado caro y quiere evitarlo a como dé lugar. Trata de negociar con el médico, explicándole su preferencia por algún método alternativo para obtener su diagnóstico.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>		<i>le quería consultar</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo quería consultar</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>		<i>disculpe que le interrumpa</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>disculpe que lo interrumpa</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>		<i>¿no hay manera de hacerle cambiar de opinión?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿no hay manera de hacerlo cambiar de opinión?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>		<i>voy a llamarle más tarde</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>voy a llamarlo más tarde</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>		<i>le agradezco su atención</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo agradezco su atención</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

El lugar donde usted vive ha sufrido de muchos problemas con el agua/luz/otro servicio y usted ya ha tenido que ir varias veces a la delegación. Mientras está formado, se encuentra junto a un hombre mayor que siempre le ha recordado a su abuelo. Ambos tienen los mismos problemas y además le cae muy bien. Le comenta sobre los 15 años/fiesta patronal que pronto se va a celebrar en su colonia/barrio y le dice que es bienvenido.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

a.		debe de pasarle lo mismo	(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)	debe de pasarlo lo mismo
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.		me gustaría invitarle	(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)	me gustaría invitarlo
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.		puedo acompañarle si quiere	(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)	puedo acompañarlo si quiere
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.		nos daría gusto recibirle	(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)	nos daría gusto recibirlo
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.		gusto en saludarle	(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)	gusto en saludarlo
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Un vecino suyo acaba de conseguir un trabajo difícil de conseguir y de mucha importancia. La verdad es un hombre muy bueno y querido y se lo merece. Por sus horarios diferentes, ustedes no se han podido ver desde el cambio, hasta que por fin hoy ve la puerta de su casa/departamento entreabierta y decide tocar y hablar con él. Él le abre muy contento.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>	<i>por fin puede visitarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>por fin puede visitarlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>	<i>paso para saludarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>paso para saludarlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>	<i>le quiero felicitar</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo quiero felicitar</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>	<i>¡es imposible no quererle!</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¡es imposible no quererlo!</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>	<i>su nuevo trabajo debe de gustarle mucho</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>su nuevo trabajo debe de gustarlo mucho</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Usted ha colaborado con un albergue para los afectados por el sismo/huracán/desastre natural. Imagine que su tío/suegro/padrino resultó afectado y necesita ayuda. Como usted conoce el lugar y a la gente que trabaja allí, toma la iniciativa de invitar a su tío/suegro/padrino para que vaya, le explica cómo funcionan las cosas allí y cómo registrarse. Seguramente este gesto ayudará a fortalecer su relación.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>	<i>quiero contarle de un albergue</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>quiero contarle de un albergue</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>	<i>le invito a que pase</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo invito a que pase</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>	<i>le apunto para mañana</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo apunto para mañana</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>	<i>ahí le atienden bien</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>ahí lo atienden bien</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>	<i>quiero ayudarlo</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>quiero ayudarlo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Usted está en busca de un buen proveedor del producto X, y le recomendaron a un señor dueño de una distribuidora. Dicen que es el más honrado que hay, pero que no se compromete a largo plazo con nadie hasta no estar seguro de que el cliente sea serio y confiable también. Usted va a asegurarle que es un cliente cumplido.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>		<i>acordamos elegirle a usted</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>acordamos elegirlo a usted</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>		<i>realmente le necesitamos</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>realmente lo necesitamos</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>		<i>le llamo el próximo lunes</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo llamo el próximo lunes</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>		<i>le consultamos en todo</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo consultamos en todo</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>		<i>le juro que puede confiar en nosotros</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo juro que puede confiar en nosotros</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Su familia se prepara para una boda/15 años/graduación/fiesta familiar importante. Casi todos han cooperado en los preparativos, menos su compadre/cuñado. Realmente necesita su ayuda y experiencia para organizar todo a tiempo. Se topa con él en un lugar público y decide aprovechar la oportunidad para pedir su ayuda. Negocia con él, ofreciéndole ayuda con el proceso, con tal de que se responsabilice aunque sea por algo.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>		<i>¿cómo le va?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿cómo lo va?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>		<i>me permito detenerle un rato</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>me permito detenerlo un rato</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>		<i>a ver si le puedo convencer de que nos ayude</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>a ver si lo puedo convencer de que nos ayude</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>		<i>¿qué tal si le ponemos a cargo de la fotografía?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿qué tal si lo ponemos a cargo de la fotografía?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>		<i>entonces le apuntamos para eso</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>entonces lo apuntamos para eso</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

En los festejos del 15 de septiembre usted ve cantar a un grupo de mariachis y le parece el mejor que ha escuchado. No por nada es un grupo reconocido. En algún momento usted se encuentra enfrente del encargado del grupo y aprovecha para expresarle que le gustó. Trata de darle una buena impresión con un saludo y un cumplido.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

	<i>quisiera saludarle</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>quisiera saludarlo</i>
a.	Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	<i>me uno a los que le reconocen como el mejor</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>me uno a los que lo reconocen como el mejor</i>
	Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	<i>no dejo de admirarlo</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>no dejo de admirarlo</i>
	Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	<i>le felicito por el show</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo felicito por el show</i>
	Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	<i>¿me permite tomarle una foto?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿me permite tomarlo una foto?</i>
	Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Un miembro muy mayor de su parroquia/iglesia/barrio acaba de enviudar y usted viene al velorio organizado por varias personas de la comunidad. Su mujer era su pareja de toda la vida y en los últimos años vivieron alejados de la mayoría de sus hijos y nietos. Usted se imagina lo afectado y desamparado que se siente y le habla para ofrecerle palabras de apoyo y prometerle ayuda y compañía en este momento tan difícil.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>	<i>le ofrezco mi más sentido pésame</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo ofrezco mi más sentido pésame</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>	<i>todos lo queremos mucho</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>todos lo queremos mucho</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>	<i>le acompaño en su dolor</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo acompaño en su dolor</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>	<i>permitanos que le apoyemos</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>permitanos que lo apoyemos</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>	<i>le recibimos en nuestra casa cuando quiera</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>lo recibimos en nuestra casa cuando quiera</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Va a participar en la organización y la celebración de las Posadas Navideñas junto con varios parientes y vecinos. Quiere pedirle al sacerdote de la iglesia más cercana que forme parte de la procesión para dirigir la parte tradicional. Lo ideal sería que participara los 9 días, aunque puede ser difícil. Espera a que se desocupe después de la misa y solicita su participación a cambio de cualquier ayuda que necesite.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

<i>a.</i>		<i>me permite entretenerle un rato</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>me permite entretenerlo un rato</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>b.</i>		<i>quisiéramos elegirle para la procesión</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>quisiéramos elegirlo para la procesión</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>c.</i>		<i>¿y no le convezno de que participe más días?</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>¿y no lo convezno de que participe más días?</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>d.</i>		<i>estamos felices de ayudarlo con lo que necesite</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>estamos felices de ayudarlo con lo que necesite</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>e.</i>		<i>puedo prometerle que no se arrepentirá</i>	<i>(a veces ésta, a veces la otra)</i>	<i>puedo prometerlo que no se arrepentirá</i>
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Llegó la hora de escoger al padrino de su boda/bautizo de su hijo. Quiere encontrar a una persona ejemplar, honrada, generosa y confiable. Piensa en alguien que ha sido como un padre para usted. De este modo se sentirán más en familia. Encuentra un buen momento para hablar con él. Le comenta su idea, pero sin presionar porque este honor también implica mucha responsabilidad y compromiso.

Indique sus preferencias y experiencias con las siguientes partes de la conversación, en vista del contexto:

a.		le cuento que pronto va a haber boda/bautizo	lo cuento que pronto va a haber boda/bautizo
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.		me gustaría invitarlo a que forme parte de la familia	me gustaría invitarlo a que forme parte de la familia
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.		sería un honor nombrarle padrino...	sería un honor nombrarlo padrino...
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.		le necesitamos	lo necesitamos
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.		le recibimos con los brazos abiertos	lo recibimos con los brazos abiertos
Yo diría:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He escuchado:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La más aceptable es:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suena más cortés en este caso:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

Indiana University Bloomington (IU)

PhD, dual major in Linguistics and Spanish November, 2020
with a concentration in Hispanic Linguistics

Dissertation Title: The Social Meaning of Variable Polite *Leísmo* in Mexico City

Committee: Manuel Díaz-Campos (chair), J. Clancy Clements (chair),
Julie Auger, César Félix-Brasdefer, Tania Leal (UNR)

Certificate in College Pedagogy, College of Arts and Sciences November, 2020

MA, Linguistics May 2015

MA, Spanish with a concentration in Hispanic Linguistics December 2013

Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Summer Institute, July 2017
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG)

B.A., Linguistics and Spanish (Honors) May 2011

GPA: 4.0

Honors Thesis: Effect of Affective Factors on the Process of Constructing Bilingual Identity

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC), Salisbury, NC May 2008

A.A., General Studies

GPA: 4.0

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OVERVIEW

2019	Research Assistant, “Language preservation and contact phenomena in a bilingual community in Mexico: Cuicateco and Spanish,” international project with Dr. Manuel Díaz-Campos, Indiana University (IU), and Dr. Marcela San Giacomo, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)
2018, Summer	Intern, Linguistic Society of America, Washington, DC
2018, Spring	Associate Instructor, Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, IU
2017, Fall	Associate Instructor, Sociolinguistics, Department of Linguistics, IU
2017–Present	Consultant to Robert Leonard Associates, Expert Forensic Linguists, New York
2015–Present	Research Assistant to Dr. Manuel Díaz-Campos, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, IU

2015, Summer	Spanish Instructor, IU Honors Program for Foreign Languages in Mérida, Mexico
2014–2018	Editing Assistant to Dr. Stuart Davis, Department of Linguistics, IU
2013–2017	Associate Instructor, Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, IU
2013–2018	Office Assistant, Department of Linguistics, IU
2013, Summer	Research Assistant to Dr. Maria Shardakova, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, IU
2012–2013	Research Assistant to Dr. Tessa Bent, Speech Perception Lab, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences, IU
2009–2010	Spanish Tutor, Department of Romance Languages, UNCG
2008–2011	Peer Tutor in Spanish, Math, Chemistry, Student Success Center, UNCG
2008–2011	Spanish and Math Tutor, Tutoring Center, RCCC

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS & APPLICATION

- Filimonova, V. (2020). Problem-Based Learning in introductory linguistics. *Language*, 96(1).
- Filimonova, V. (2020, January). *Social deixis and social reality of Mexico City: Variable perception and production of polite leísmo*. Poster presented at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America. New Orleans, LA.
- Díaz-Campos, M., Escalona Torres, J. M., & Filimonova, V. (2020). Sociolinguistics of the Spanish speaking world. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, 6, 363-388.
- Díaz-Campos, M., & Filimonova, V. (2019). Sociolinguistic variation. In F. Martínez-Gil & S. Colina (Eds.), *Handbook of Spanish phonology*. London: Routledge.
- Filimonova, V. (2019, October). *La variación en la deixis social y la cortesía en la Ciudad de México*. Talk presented at the annual national congress of Asociación Mexicana de la Lingüística Aplicada (AMLA). Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico.
- Filimonova, V. (2019, March). *Variation in production and perception of social deixis in Mexican Spanish*. Talk presented at the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese linguistics Brown Bag series. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Filimonova, V. (2018, August). *La variación en la deixis social: entre la gramaticalidad y la cortesía*. Talk presented at the Permanent Seminar “Relación entre factores lingüísticos y factores sociales: mutuas influencias.” Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Díaz-Campos, M., & Filimonova, V. (2018). Sociolingüística & Sociolinguistics. In J. Muñoz-Basols, E. Gironzetti & M. Lacorte (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of Spanish language teaching: Metodologías, contextos y recursos para la enseñanza del español L2*. London: Routledge.
- Filimonova, V. (2018, April). *Language & society: Research and awareness-raising campaign*. Talk presented at the Conference on Curricular Community Engaged Learning. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

- Filimonova, V. (2018, April). *PBL and achieving higher-order thinking objectives in introductory linguistics*. Paper presented at the 19th Annual Midwest Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning [SoTL]. Indiana University South Bend, South Bend, IN.
- Filimonova, V. (2018, February). *Text-to-speech technology in development of speaking fluency*. Teaching strategy presented at the annual Ignite session of Current Approaches to Spanish and Portuguese Second Language Phonology (CASPSLaP), Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Filimonova, V. (2017, July). *Polite leísmo and the place of psycholinguistic methodology in variationist study of morphosyntax*. Poster presented at the biannual Linguistics Society of America (LSA) Summer Institute, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.
- Filimonova, V. (2017, April). *Polite leísmo in Mexican Spanish: Sociopragmatic variation in processing*. Paper presented at the annual Linguistics Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL) 47, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.
- Filimonova, V. (2016). Russian and Spanish apologies: A contrastive pragmalinguistic study. *IULC Working Papers*, 15(2), 62-102.
- Filimonova, V., & Berkson, K. (2016, July). *Variable aspiration of Spanish coda /s/: Laboratory evidence and Stochastic OT modeling*. Poster presented at the annual conference on Laboratory Phonology (LabPhon 15), Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- Filimonova, V. (2016, April). *Grey Google matters or how native speakers actually talk*. Teaching strategy presented at the semiannual IU Foreign and Second Language Share Fair: Teaching for the real world, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Fedonkina, V. & Filimonova, V. (2015, February). *Exile and border identity: Linguistic evidence from leísmo in works of Cecilia G. de Gilarte*. Paper presented at the annual graduate student conference of Diálogos, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Elias, V., Filimonova, V., & Mojedano, A. (2014, November). *La alternancia de las formas del imperfecto de subjuntivo en español: Un estudio panorámico*. Poster presented at the annual Hispanic Linguistics Symposium, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- Elias, V., Filimonova, V., & Mojedano, A. (2014, October). *Prescription vs. praxis: The evolution of Spanish imperfect subjunctive*. Paper presented at the annual conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation, Chicago, IL.
- Fedonkina, V. & Filimonova, V. (2014). Exile and border identity: Linguistic evidence from leísmo in works of Cecilia G. de Gilarte. *Hiedra Magazine*, 3, 74-83.
- Filimonova, V. (2014). Variación en el uso de deber (de) en la Ciudad de México. *IULC Working Papers*, 14(2), 138-157.
- Filimonova, V. (2014, April). Russian and Spanish apologies: A contrastive pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic study. Paper presented at Pragmatics and Language Learning (PLL) conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

PROMOTING LANGUAGE & CULTURE

IU-UNAM Graduate Student Exchange, IU-UNAM

Fall 2018

- Participated in a semester-long graduate student exchange at UNAM for dissertation research
- As part of my dissertation research (220 interviews), established a wide and diverse network

- of contacts all around Mexico City, representative of its socioeconomic and cultural diversity
- Used established networks to build a community service opportunity for 7 UNAM and ENAH undergraduate students
- Collaborated with cultural centers, markets, schools, and businesses around Mexico City
- Contributed gained resources and knowledge to the IU Mexico Gateway upon return in Fall 2019

Community-Engaged Spanish Conversation and Composition, IU **Spring 2018**

- Designed and taught an advanced undergraduate course in Spanish Conversation and Composition, HISP-S308, with a community engagement component (<https://s308.weebly.com/>)
- Hosted professionally diverse presenters for class interviews with the Wells library services, Walter Career Center, CAPS, Chiricú cultural journal, La Escuelita Para Todos Hispanic school at the Monroe County Public Library, “Hola Bloomington” radio, and IU staff and graduate students
- Organized a radio show opportunity for my students on “Hola Bloomington” (Apr. 20, 2018)

“Language & Society” course and workshop, Bloomington, IN **Fall 2017**

- Designed and taught an award-winning service-learning section of advanced undergraduate Introduction to Sociolinguistics, LING-L315, at IU (www.l315.weebly.com)
- Promoted experiential learning and community service in partnership with the Monroe County Public Library’s VITAL services (Volunteers In Tutoring Adult Learners)
- Fostered community engagement and socially mindful student research through group projects
- Organized a community enrichment workshop “Language & Society” as a public showcase of student research

IU Honors Program for Foreign Languages-Merida, Mexico, IU **Summer 2015**

- Developed and taught an immersion course in Spanish Reading and Composition for 26 high school students from Indiana
- Acted as a student coordinator and a liaison between US and Mexican host families
- Coordinated choir program, wrote and directed the end-of-the-program musical

Lotus Blossom Bazaar, Bloomington, IN **March 2013**

- Volunteered as a Maya language representative at world languages tables for a family cultural weekend

Volunteers in Tutoring Adult Learners (VITAL) literacy program, Monroe County Public Library, Bloomington, IN **Nov. 2011–2018**

- Volunteered as a long-term, one-on-one English language tutor for local immigrant adults
- Promoted diversity awareness, literacy, and sociolinguistics in the local community

COLLABORATION & TEAM MANAGEMENT

Shut Up & Write, IU Mexico Gateway, UNAM **Fall 2019–Present**

- Lead weekly and open-to-public writing retreats to support an international community of academic and non-academic writers with US-established productivity strategies

Linguistic Society of America Student Ambassadors Initiative, LSA **Fall 2019–Present**

- Developed, registered, and coordinate an international cohort of 50 graduate students through listserv and social media to promote linguistics and the LSA presence at universities around

the world (<https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/student-ambassador-resources-0>)

Community Service at Laboratorio de Lingüística, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM **Fall 2018–Present**

- Recruit, train, and manage a cohort of 7 undergraduate students in linguistics, journalism, and ethnography from UNAM and Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH)
- Provide community service opportunity through collaboration on my dissertation research, including research ethics, field methods, data management, and transcription

International research in language documentation, IU/UNAM **Spring 2018–Present**

- Collaborate with Dr. Manuel Díaz-Campos (IU), Dr. Marcela San Giacomo (UNAM), and the Cuicatec community of Oaxaca, Mexico, on local language documentation and preservation
- Assist with research, collaboration, and strategic planning for incorporation of the Cuicatec indigenous language in the community for language revitalization and linguistic rights observance

***Celebración de la Diversidad Hispana* ‘Celebration of Hispanic Diversity’, La Palabra, City Church, Bloomington, IN** **March 2018**

- Co-ideated and organized a community resource fair and cultural celebration to support Hispanic families, independent from religious beliefs and affiliations
- Made community contacts and secured participation of 10 local service representatives, including legal, educational, and health resources
- Fostered community interaction of 60 attendees through personally designed ice-breaker games and an invited local Hispanic musician

Linguistics in Higher Education Committee, Linguistic Society of America (LSA) **Apr. 2017–Present**

- Volunteer as committee member on education policy and student issues
- Participate in virtual collaboration, decision making, and proposal drafting with 35 linguists around the United States

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Primer Taller: La diversidad lingüística del pueblo cuicateco, **May 2019**
Cuicatlán, Oaxaca, Mexico, IU-UNAM

- Collaborated with Dr. Manuel Díaz-Campos (IU) and Dr. Marcela San Giacomo (UNAM) on an IU-funded project around an indigenous language of Oaxaca
- Assisted in event planning and coordination between the collaborators at IU and UNAM and the Cuicatec community representatives, including the mayor
- Designed and co-directed a pedagogy-focused workshop with Gina Mejía (UNAM)
- Facilitated the logistics of all event workshops, cumulatively attended by over 100 participants

Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH), Mexico City **Fall 2018–Present**

- Serve as an official thesis advisor for an undergraduate student in linguistics
- Mentor, assess, and guide student research design, procedure, data analysis, and write-up

Linguistic Society of America (LSA) **Summer 2018**

- As a summer intern, provided communications support between the Society, its members, and general audiences through email, post mail, website updates, and social media

- Created and managed multiple databases of wide national and international scope: LSA member database, stakeholders in the issue of indigenous languages, linguistics programs and departments, linguistics student clubs, internal Book Exchange library, among others
- Trained and coordinated the work of 5 undergraduate student volunteers

LING-X490 “Alignment in L1-L2 Dialogue”, IU Spring 2018

- Designed an independent study course based on a former student’s interest in sociolinguistics in the community at the undergraduate level
- Mentored the student in conducting sociolinguistic diversity research and in academic publishing

“Intersections of Language & Law” Conference Panel, IU April 2018

- Founded, organized, promoted, and fundraised for a multidisciplinary panel of local experts, for an audience of 60
- Brought together IU experts in linguistics, computer-mediated communication, speech and hearing sciences, law, criminal justice, and forensic psychology for idea sharing and collaboration

Forensic Linguistics Club, IU 2017–2018

- Founded, organized, and shared professional and research experience at a student-run interest group around language and law, for both graduate and undergraduate students
- Built cross-disciplinary networks in a discipline currently non-existent at IU
- Hosted public film showing, reading groups, a hands-on workshop, an invited talk by a prominent forensic linguist from Hofstra University, and a local panel of experts

Active Learning Fair, Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese, IU 2017–2018

- Volunteered as founder and co-organizer of a semiannual teaching workshop for instructors of Spanish linguistics courses

Annual Spanish and Portuguese Song Festival, IU 2016–2018

- Served as the first graduate student organizer, event planner, PR, tech support, master of ceremony
- Conducted auditions for student competitors and guest performers
- Promoted experiential language learning through arts and community outreach

Grupo de Teatro Vida, Spanish theatre group, IU Fall 2016

- Assisted the director with play production, media design and advertising
- Promoted experiential language learning through arts and community outreach

American Pragmatics Association Conference, IU Fall 2016

- Volunteered as organizing committee member

Pragmatics and Language Learning Conference, IU Spring 2014

- Volunteered as organizing committee member

IU Foreign & Second Language Share Fair, IU

- Volunteered as organizing committee member and media coordinator Jan. 2014–May 2016

- Volunteered as Chairperson May 2014–May 2015

IULC Working Papers, Linguistics, IU

- Volunteered as Editor Jan. 2014–Jan. 2015
- Volunteered as Associate Editor Mar. 2012–Nov. 2016
- Supported dissemination of linguistic research among students and faculty
- Promoted local publishing opportunities with linguists across various IU departments

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

PR & Strategic Communication

Tv33 Televisión, Mexico City **January 2019**

- Participated as a guest on a special TV program on the Linguistics of Mexico and my dissertation research (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGM71XfMIJA&t=837s>)
- Supported professional and cultural enrichment of my Mexican student and participant collaborators by engaging them in a televised dialogue

YivakuRadio 105.1 FM, Oaxaca, Mexico **January/May, 2019**

- Served as a guest at a local radio together with Diego Mendoza (UNAM) on the topic of linguistic diversity of Mexico and the incorporation of the Cuicatec indigenous language in the community for language revitalization (January 15, 2019; May 31, 2019)

Newsletter, Department of Linguistics, IU **2017–2018**

- Edited and designed the biannual departmental newsletter using Adobe InDesign
- Conducted interviews and authored news pieces and articles for the newsletter

Invited Talks

February 28-29, 2020. “Pedagogical sequence for primary indigenous language education.”

Diplomado de formación de profesores bilingües de educación indígena (‘Certificate program for bilingual teachers of indigenous education’). Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) – Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca (IEEPO), San Juan Bautista Cuicatlán, Oaxaca, Mexico.

February 6, 2020. “Variación sociolingüística”. Seminar in sociolinguistic methods, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico.

February 27, 2019. “Sociolinguistic dissertation fieldwork in Mexico.” L700 Seminar: *Tools and Products: Moving from raw data to published work*, Department of Linguistics, IU.

November 16, 2017. “Problem-Based Learning approach to teaching linguistics”. AI workshop, Department of Linguistics, IU.

August 16, 2017. “Contemporary ideas about teaching and learning.” *CITL Teaching Orientation Workshop for Associate Instructors* (co-facilitated). Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

February 29-March 2, 2016. “Stochastic Optimality Theory” lecture series. *L712 Seminar in phonology: Gradience and variation in phonology*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

September 23, 2015. “Complexity Theory” Roundtable. *Interlocutor Individual Differences Symposium*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

October 11, 2013. “The new work harbor: Some reflections on the present.” *The Dept. of Linguistics 50th Anniversary Alumni Weekend*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

July 15, 2013. “Politeness: Rude Russians or overly polite Americans?” *SWSEEL Lecture Series*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Invited Newspaper Publications

- Spring, 2018 (Editor). *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington. http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/lingdept_newsletter_S2018-V4.26.18.pdf
- Spring, 2018. "An Evening of Music, Culture, and Community." *La Gaceta Internacional*. Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.iub.edu/~spanport/newsletter/2018-la-gaceta/department.shtml#song>
- Fall, 2017 (Editor). *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington. <http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/about-the-department/newsletter/>
- Fall, 2017. "Outstanding Young Alumna: Kate Scherschel." *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington. http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/lingdept_newsletter_F2017_final-1.pdf
- September 30, 2017. "Puerto Rican Migrations." *Enfoque* newsletter. The 100 Years of Migrations Conference. Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.indiana.edu/~clacs/about/enfoque/>
- May, 2017. "The Lucky 7th Annual Spanish & Portuguese Song Festival." *La Gaceta Internacional*. Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.indiana.edu/~spanport/newsletter/2017-summer/department.shtml#song>
- Fall, 2014. "Focus on Faculty: Associate Professor Sandra Kuebler." *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/newsletter/newsletter2014.pdf>
- Fall, 2013. "The New Work Harbor: Some reflections on the present." *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/newsletter/newsletter2013.pdf>
- Fall, 2013. "Outstanding Young Alumni: Cynthia Clopper." *Department of Linguistics Newsletter*. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. <http://www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/newsletter/newsletter2013.pdf>

RECORD OF REPUTATION

Fellowships, Honors, & Awards

- Elizabeth Dayton Award in Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Society of America, Washington, DC January 2020
- IU College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Research Fellowship 2019-2020
- IU-UNAM Graduate Student Research Fellowship, Mexico City Fall 2018
- IU Dept. of Linguistics travel grant to present at the Midwest Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Spring 2018
- Daniel Dinnsen Excellence in Teaching Award, Dept. of Linguistics, IU Fall 2017
- IU Dept. of Linguistics scholarship to attend the 2017 LSA Summer Institute at Kentucky University, Lexington, KY Summer 2017

- IU Dept. of Linguistics conference travel scholarship to present at LSRL 47 Conference, University of Delaware, Newark, DE Spring 2017
- Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL 47) student travel grant, University of Delaware, Newark, DE Spring 2017
- Teaching Recognition with High Distinction, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, IU Fall 2014
- Teaching Recognition with Distinction, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, IU Spring 2017, Fall 2015, Spring 2015, Fall 2013
- Dept. of Linguistics first-year graduate fellowship, IU 2011–2012
- Phi Beta Kappa, UNCG April 2011
- Tutor of the Year, Student Success Center, UNCG May 2010
- Outstanding Spanish Major award, UNCG May 2010
- Spicer Scholarship, Romance Languages, UNCG 2009–2011
- Gene and Pat Holder Scholarship, Romance Languages, UNCG 2009–2011
- Golden Chain Honor Society, UNCG November 2009
- Chancellor's List, UNCG Fall 2008–Spring 2011
- Outstanding Student of Class of 2008, Arts and Sciences, RCCC May 2008

Professional Membership

- Asociación Mexicana de Lingüística Aplicada (AMLA) August 2019–Present
- The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) February 2019–Present
- Linguistic Society of America (LSA) January 2017–Present