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Expressive Speech Acts in Educational e-chats

El uso de actos expresivos en chats educacionales

Abstract: The category of expressive speech acts has traditionally proven elusive of definition in contrast to other types of speech acts. This might explain why this group of speech acts has been less researched. The present paper aims to redress this imbalance by analysing the expressive speech acts performed by two groups of university students in two educational chats, carried out in English or in Spanish, respectively. The main purpose of the study is to find out if students express their emotions (and which emotions) when interacting online and, if the use of their mother tongue or not affects their performance of expressive speech acts in terms of frequency and type. To this purpose, Weigand's (2010) taxonomy of speech acts was followed, since it provides a more systematic delimitation of the traditional category of "expressive acts". Her distinction between emotives and declaratives was thus applied to the dataset under scrutiny. Results show that students opt for performing declarative acts but refrain from expressing their own emotions in an educational setting. As for the use of English or Spanish, no significant differences were observed, which reveals that the use of their mother tongue does not seem to affect the kind of acts performed.

Keywords: expressive speech acts, educational chat, English, Spanish

Resumen: Tradicionalmente, la definición de los actos expresivos ha sido menos concreta que la de otros actos de habla. Esto podría explicar por qué este grupo de actos de habla ha recibido menos atención. Este estudio tiene como objetivo equilibrar, al menos en parte, este desequilibrio mediante el análisis de los actos expresivos producidos por dos grupos de estudiantes universitarios en dos chats educativos, en inglés y español, con el fin de descubrir si los estudiantes

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expresan sus emociones (y cuáles) cuando interactúan online y si el uso de su lengua materna afecta su producción de actos de habla expresivos. Para ello, se ha utilizado la taxonomía de actos de habla propuesta por Weigand (2010) pues ofrece una delimitación más sistemática de los tradicionalmente conocidos como "actos expresivos". Su distinción entre actos "emotivos" y "declarativos" se ha aplicado a los datos a analizar y los resultados muestran que los estudiantes optan por producir actos declarativos pero limitan la expresión de sus emociones en un contexto educativo. En cuanto al uso del español o el inglés, no se observan diferencias significativas, lo que demuestra que el uso de la lengua materna en este contexto parece no afectar el tipo de actos de habla producidos.

Palabras clave: Actos expresivos, chat educativo, inglés, español

1 Introduction

In contrast to other categories of speech acts like directives, expressives still remain under researched (despite exceptions like apologies or compliments, which have received a great deal of scholarly attention[1]). In the last years, however, there seems to be a growing interest in expressive acts (Ronan, 2015) and the expressive function of language in general (Potts, 2007; Bednarek, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Riemer, 2013; Foolen, 2016, among many others). This paper is intended to contribute to this growing body of research on the expressive function of language by means of a data-driven approach to a corpus of naturally occurring computer-mediated communication (CMC henceforth) at a Spanish University with two groups of students: in group 1, the students' mother tongue (i.e. Spanish) is used as the language of instruction whilst in group 2, the language used for instruction is English (a foreign language for all the students, even if they are highly proficient). More specifically, I aim to answer the following research questions:

(a) Do students express their emotions when interacting online with their teacher? If so, what expressive speech acts are more frequently used?
(b) Does the use of their mother tongue (Spanish) or not (English) affect their performance of expressive speech acts in terms of frequency and type?

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1 Some seminal studies on apologies are those by Goffman (1971), Fraser (1980), Olshtain and Cohen (1983), Olshtain (1989), Holmes (1990), Davies et al. (2007), Jaworski (1994), Grainger and Harris (2007), among others. As for compliments, the bibliography is even more extensive and includes some classic studies like Manes and Wolfson (1981), Manes (1983), Wolfson (1981, 1983), Holmes (1988), Herbert (1989), Sifianou (1992, 2001), among many others.

It is hypothesized that, given the educational nature of the chat, expressives will be very low-profiled if not practically non-existent; especially so when there is a conspicuous presence of the teacher, which adds to the institutional (and relatively formal) nature of the interaction. As for the second question, the language used (mother tongue versus a foreign language) is expected to affect the frequency and type of expressive acts performed, given that bilingual speakers are expected to vary their emotions depending on the language they are using (Ervin-Tripp, 1973; Wierzbicka, 1997, 1999; Pavlenko, 2008, 2014; Pérez-Luzardo Díaz and Schmidt, 2016).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 focuses on defining expressive speech acts so as to delimit the scope of the present analysis. It also provides a taxonomy of the different types of expressive acts by previous scholars as well as trying to establish a more clear relationship between the types of expressives and the realm of emotions, introducing the distinction between "emotive speech acts" and "declaratives" established by Weigand (2010) in her dialogue games. Section 3 presents the methodology, paying attention to the participants involved in the study, the data-gathering procedure and the description of the corpus. Section 4 focuses on the data analysis. For the sake of clarity, this section has been subdivided into two. Section 4.1. deals with emotives and Section 4.2. focuses on declaratives. The paper closes with Section 5, where some conclusions and pointers to future research are offered.

2 Defining expressive speech acts

As opposed to other speech acts like directives, expressives seem to be more problematic when attempting to define them. Austin (1975) named "behavitives" all these acts having to do with social behaviour and attitudes (e.g. apologies). However, he also admitted they were a "miscellaneous" and "troublesome" group (Austin, 1975, p. 152). In his seminal taxonomy of speech acts, Searle (1976) renamed this category as "expressives", describing them as those speech acts whose illocutionary point is "to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (Searle, 1976, p. 12). In contrast with the other speech acts in Searle's taxonomy, expressives are characterised for their lack of direction of fit ––i.e. there is no match between the words and the world since the speaker is referring to her "inner" world rather than the "external" one. Despite their troublesome nature, there seems to be agreement on the fact that expressives deal with the

speaker's "inner" world, as reflected by other definitions which have also focused on the speaker's "underlying emotions" (Norrick, 1978), "state of mind, attitudes and feelings" (Taavitsainen and Jucker, 2010) or their "psychological attitudes" (Guiraud et al., 2011).

It could be argued that some expressive acts are, however, demanded by certain socio-cultural norms and may be expected by the interactants (e.g. greeting or thanking). Thus, the absence of these expected expressives can be perceived as marked and eventually lead to social disruptiveness, since they play a crucial role in facework –i.e. or social rituals in Goffman's terms (1967, p. 13). These socially expected acts also tend towards a higher degree of formulaicity (e.g. "I'm sorry for your loss" when expressing our condolences). In more recent years, however, this approach to socially expected speech acts has been heavily criticised by analysts who argue in favour of more fluctuant facework, created anew in each human interaction (e.g. Locher, 2004; Locher y Watts, 2005). Even if there is consensus about this, I also agree with Hernández Flores (2013, p. 181) that the undeniable fluid nature of facework does not impede the existence of certain patterns that interactants can identify and (partially) follow. In her own words:

> Sin embargo, en mi opinión, que el intercambio comunicativo se cree en cada ocasión no es óbice para que en él se adopten esquemas y modelos preexistentes. De hecho, el aspecto ritual no se puede obviar en estudios de cortesía diacrónica (Kádár, 2011, pp. 255–256), ni tampoco se puede dejar de reconocer en situaciones comunicativas que, por su carácter institucionalizado (juicios, programas de televisión, entrevistas), o por su frecuencia de aparición (encuentros sociales de visita entre amigos, por ejemplo), presentan un modelo de comportamiento definido y delimitado bien conocido (y repetido) por los miembros de la comunidad en sus interacciones (cf. Bernal, 2009; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, Lorenzo-Dus y Bou-Franch, 2010).[2]

The distinction between 'socially-expected' and more self-centred expressives is also partially reported by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson (2014, p. 125), who differentiate between social emotions and basic emotions. In their own words,

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2 However, in my opinion, the fact that communicative interaction is created on each occasion does not impede for schemes and pre-existent patterns to be adopted. In fact, the ritual aspect cannot be left aside in studies of diachronic politeness [Kádár, 2011, pp. 255–256], and it cannot either be denied in communicative situations which, given their institutionalised character [e.g. trials, TV programmes, interviews) or their frequency [e.g. social encounters between visiting friends] clearly show a defined and delimited model of behaviour, well known [and repeated] by the members of the community in their interactions [cf. Bernal, 2009; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, Lorenzo-Dus y Bou-Franch, 2010]. [my translation]

> Social emotions [are those] whose origin is connected with the situational or contextual factors involving an interactant, some of which will constitute *a stimulus for* or a *cause* of an emotion event. Basic emotions, such as fear, surprise or disgust, irrespective of the fact as to whether they are verbally and/or paralinguistically expressed or not, do not necessarily assume the presence of an interlocutor, although the degree of their socialization function does not need to be identical. (Their emphasis)

For Haverkate (1993), this distinction would correspond to the distinction between expressive acts centred on the speaker and those centred on the hearer, which tend to perform polite functions. According to Haverkate (1993, pp. 149–150), expressives centred on the hearer (e.g. expressing condolences, thanking, complimenting) outnumber expressives centred on the speaker precisely because of the polite functions they perform, even if the original 'emotional content' is still partially present. In his own words:

> Cuantitativamente, esta categoría [los actos expresivos centrados en el oyente] predomina con mucho a aquélla [los actos expresivos centrados en el hablante], que cuenta con relativamente muy pocos miembros. Algunos ejemplos son: lamentarse, avergonzarse y arrepentirse. Y aun, estos verbos se emplean frecuentemente para denotar un estado sicológico del hablante acarreado directamente por su relación con el oyente.[3]

Similarly, in her contrastive study of Spanish and German speech acts, Siebold (2008) exclusively focuses on expressives centred on the hearer (i.e. compliments, responses to compliments and apologies) whilst those focused on the speaker are not even mentioned. Barros García (2010) also focuses exclusively on expressives centred on the hearer, as prototypically polite acts (e.g. thanking, congratulating, apologizing, expressing condolences or compliments), mostly aimed at boosting the hearer's positive face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Following also Bravo's (2002, 2005, 2008) concept of *social effect* –i.e. the effects of a communicative activity on the socio-emotional climate of interactions –in combination with the direction of facework; Hernández Flores (2013, p. 182) distinguishes between a *positive, negative* or *neutral* social effect. In this case, hence, it would be considered a polite act since the speaker is directing positive facework towards the addressee. Such positive facework does, however, also affect the speaker's own (positive) face, in a bidirectional way (ibid.).

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3 Quantitatively, this category [hearer-centred expressives] outnumbers by far the other one [speaker-centred expressives], which counts with relatively few members. Some examples are to lament, to be ashamed and to regret. And yet, these verbs are often employed to express a speaker's psychological state directly triggered by their relation to the hearer. [my translation].

Interestingly enough, Weigand also considers these socially-expected expressive acts as a different type of speech act altogether; thus, she defines them as *declaratives*, since their main purpose is the creation of social rapport by means of politeness conventions and "mainly refer to routines of behaviour such as expressing congratulations, condolences, thanks or excuses [...] which do not express sincere feelings" (2010, p. 179).

Therefore, and given the problematic nature of Searle's category of "expressives", which could be inclusive of a myriad of unconnected acts (Verschueren, 1999; Carretero, Maíz-Arévalo & Martínez, 2014, p. 265), this paper will opt for Weigand's (2010) more specific definition of "emotives". In her dialogue games, Weigand (2010, p. 166) identifies a category of speech acts described as "emotive", since they "focus on the speaker's *emotional involvement*" (her italics). Emotives focus on the speaker's emotions; on his/her emotional involvement with the utterance itself and their function is to announce and/or express emotions. Therefore, this subcategory implies not just simple statements, but "emotional affect or being overwhelmed by emotions" (Weigand 2010, p. 166).

The distinction between emotives and declaratives has its expression in the linguistic realization of both categories. Thus, *declaratives* (like thanking, expressing condolences and so on) tend to be formulaic. In fact, Weigand (2010, p. 179) argues that, "due to their frequent use in everyday talk, shortened forms have been developed which confirm that they are mostly *empty routines* and have nothing to do with sincerity conditions" (my emphasis). Thus, she compares between apologies such as "sorry", where just the syntactic attribute is used and a real emotive like "I feel really sad" where the full copulative sentence is linguistically expressed. In the latter case, the reactive act would most probably be one of empathy or compassion (e.g. "I know how you feel" or "poor thing", respectively).

Another advantage to Weigand's classification is that she considers speech acts as parts of what she defines as "dialogue games". In other words, speech acts do not happen "in isolation" as Searle's (1969) taxonomy seems to suggest but as parts of discourse where both interlocutors initiate and react to what is respectively uttered. Hence, the reaction to emotives is expected to be empathy and compassion by the interlocutor (Weigand, 2010). Emotives, in contrast to other speech acts like declaratives, are not only truth-conditioned, but link that truth to the interlocutors' emotional side, to their feelings and opinions, expecting back empathy and/or compassion. Thus, emotives may not be specifically demanded by the social situation per se but, when/if they happen, they can lead to social rapport among the interactants. In other words, when the speaker 'opens up' to the hearer, she might also be implicitly

acknowledging that their degree of closeness has become suitable enough to do so and hence invite reciprocity on the hearer's part so as to increase their rapport by entering each other's private sphere. It must be acknowledged, however, that a miscalculated use of emotives might also be highly face-threatening for the hearer, who may perceive such openness on the speaker's part as an intrusion to share their own privacy, which they still might be unwilling to do (Weisbuch et al., 2009, p. 574).

However, it must be admitted that the distinction between emotives and declaratives is not as clear-cut as the above discussion might suggest. Thus, and even though it seems to ring true that declaratives are more context-bound than others (e.g. expressing condolences), each particular instance should be considered in its individual context. For instance, the expression of condolences is usually context-bound but not necessarily devoid of genuine feeling. Likewise, social norms –or just good manners –might dictate the speaker's explicit expression of liking a particular dish if invited to have a homely lunch even if they genuinely might not like it at all and produce a polite compliment. For example, in Spanish, the formulaic *perdona* ('excuse me') that precedes a request, as in *perdona, ¿tienes fuego?* ('excuse me, do you have a light?') and the contrite *perdóname, de verdad que no quería hacerte daño* ('please forgive me, I did not want to hurt you') are both triggered by the same verb (*perdonar*). However, whilst the first has become formulaic and lexically bleached as a polite mitigator of the request to avoid face-threatening the interlocutor, the latter retains its original 'emotional' meaning. In fact, they even translate differently in English, where the polite mitigator translates as 'excuse me' while the second one would correspond to 'forgive me'. Another example is the Spanish formulaic expression *Me alegro de verte* ('I'm glad to see you') which often accompanies either a greeting or a farewell to someone the speaker has not seen for a while. As in the previous case, this declarative also derives from the initial positive emotion *alegría* ('joy') to encounter an old acquaintance. It was its repeated use in similar contexts that eventually led to its formulization and "bleaching" of initial meaning. Hence, it could be argued that emotives and declaratives, rather than different categories, derive from the same etymological meaning, albeit specializing in different functions but still sharing their core semantic load, as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

Finally, it is also important to mention that, in the case of face-to-face communication, the expression of emotions can easily be supported by supralinguistic and non-verbal elements such as intonation, facial gestures or bodily posture, among others. Weigand (2010, pp. 166–167) points out the use of the exclamatory sentence type, intonation, interjections –e.g. 'oh', 'wow' –particles and routine phrases as typical devices in the performance of emotives. For
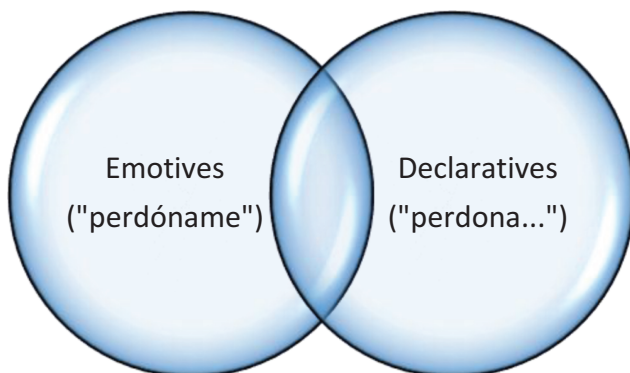
Figure 1: Common etymology of emotives and declaratives.

example, the expression "I am sorry" can be stressed as "I *am* sorry" to express emotion in contrast to "I'm *sorry*" or simply "sorry", which would act as an apology with a declarative function.

Likewise, Kallen and Kirk (2012) mention prosody as a crucial element to identify a speech act as emotive. However, these supralinguistic elements are mostly absent in CMC given its disembodied nature (cf. Maíz-Arévalo, 2013). In this case, typographical elements such as emoticons, capitalization, typographical repetition of letters, etc. might serve to underline the expression of emotions (Yus, 2011).

3 Methodology

The methodology adopted in the present paper combines a quantitative with a qualitative approach. The need to quantify also explains why the chosen unit of analysis is primarily the sentence rather than the discursive paragraph, more open to a qualitative analysis. However, "working at sentence level does not rule out the fact that speech acts are derived from the meaning of sentences as utterances in specific contexts of situation" (Carretero et al., 2014, pp. 271–272). As a participant, the context is well known to the researcher, which poses a clear advantage when analysing the data at hand.

3.1 Participants

The corpus on which this study is based consists in the online written interaction of two groups of undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in two

different courses at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. The first group consisted of last-year undergraduate students following an obligatory course on Pragmatics as part of their Degree in English studies. The second group involves a group of post-graduate students doing a Master's on literary translation. Although the groups might seem heterogeneous at first sight, they share more similarities than differences. Thus, the students of Pragmatics are in the final year of their degree and most of the master students were graduate students just the year before, being their ages practically the same (between 22 and 25). Secondly, all of them share a close relationship in their group and with their lecturer (also the author of the present paper). Finally, even if the Pragmatics group was initially larger in number than the master's one (with 50 students enrolled versus 25), the number of students who actually took part in the chat was 14, practically the same number as the master students, where 10 of them joined the online discussion. From the perspective of sociopragmatics, these interactions are especially interesting since they are multidirectional. In other words, the issue of directionality and social effect become even more complex given the "polilogic" nature of the interaction rather than "dialogic" (i.e. speaker/addressee) (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010). In this case, and even though the teacher may address only one of the students, the image of all the interactants is also affected, producing a multidirectional effect (Hérnandez Flores, 2013, p. 186).

As for gender, both datasets include mostly female students –i.e. 11 females versus 3 males in the pragmatics group and 7 females versus 3 males in the Master group, which renders the gender variable out. The most important difference, which also raises one of the research questions, is that the group studying Pragmatics uses English as the language of instruction whereas the Master students employ Spanish (their mother tongue) as the instructing language.

Finally, it is also important to point out that, in order to avoid unnaturally biased exchanges, the participants were not informed a priori of their participation in this research project; once the experiment was over, they were dutifully informed and asked for their consent, which they all provided. Likewise, and also to avoid any bias, all the interventions by the teacher/researcher have been excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, given the limited size of the corpus, it is also necessary to admit that the results cannot be taken as generalisations but rather as mere tendencies which the analysis of a much larger corpus might help to confirm.

3.2 Procedure

The data used in the present paper consists of two educational chats. Both chats were intended to revise previous theoretical concepts and do further practice,

the only difference being that the chat in English took place because of a student strike which kept the faculty locked and the Spanish one was due to the teacher's illness which deprived her of her voice. Students were told when the chat would take place and voluntarily chose whether to join it or not. The participation in the chat was not assessed as part of the final mark, so as to ensure it was really entered just by volunteering students. In both cases, it lasted for a couple of hours and I was in charge of monitoring it so as to follow a certain order. The teacher's presence, hence, was pervasive and domineered the conversational floor, with the highest percentage of conversational turns, as seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Chats' description.

Chats	No of participants	Length of chat	Conversational turns		No of words
Chat 1 (Pragmatics class)	1 teacher	120 minutes	*Teacher*	*Students*	5,704 words
	14 students		184 (42%)	255 (58%)	
			TOTAL: 439 turns		
Chat 2 (Master class)	1 teacher	120 minutes	248 (41%)	362 (59%)	6,448 words
	10 students		TOTAL: 610 turns		

Since the main interest of the paper lies in the speech acts produced by the students, only their interventions have been analysed. With regard to the number of words, the Spanish chat is slightly larger, which could be due to the more synthetic nature of English as a language. Besides, the students using English might feel less prone to participate as they are using a language which is not their mother tongue and in which they might feel less confident. In any case, the percentage of participation and the length of both chats were exactly the same.

3.3 Corpus description

As already mentioned, the corpus used in this paper comprises two synchronous chats, which render a total of 12,152 words. More specifically, chat 1 (Pragmatics class) consists in 5,387 words and Chat 2 (Master class) encompasses 6,309 words. The spontaneous nature of the sets has rendered naturally-occurring data on similar conditions. However, an important limitation is the fact that, precisely because of their being naturally occurring, the number of words in

each set is slightly different. This might be explained by the lower level of lexical density in the case of English in contexts such as the one at hand. In Halliday's words (1994, pp. 57–58):

> the nearer to the 'language-in-action' end of the scale, the lower the lexical density. Since written language is characteristically reflective rather than active, in a written text the lexical density tends to be higher; and it increases as the text becomes further away from spontaneous speech.

It can be argued that, even if apparently written in form, a chat is closer to the spontaneous and oral extreme of the written-oral continuum. This is also shown by the very use of the term "chat", defined by the Oxford English Dictionary[4] as "an informal conversation" in its primary sense.

Finally, it is important to repeat that the approach adopted has combined a quantitative and qualitative analysis, even if the quantitative side is reduced to tendencies given the limited size of the dataset. The identification of the examples has been manually carried out, following a detailed and fine-grained search for the different emotive acts. A manual search was favoured over an automatic once given that, even though specific search strings may be employed to search for patterns (Jucker et al., 2008; Jucker, 2009, p. 1622), a purely automatic search is likely to lead to overgeneralization and skipping of relevant examples, especially those examples which "which do not conform to the searched-for pattern" (ibid.). Furthermore, given the researcher's advantaged access to the context of situation, the analysis is negligibly limited by the deficiencies often signalled in the literature (Rühlemann, 2010, pp. 288–291; Weigand, 2010, pp. 27–28).

4 Data analysis

4.1 Emotives

As already mentioned, I shall consider emotives as those speech acts that communicate the speaker's emotions (and emotional involvement) as the initiative act, expecting the interlocutor's empathy or compassion as its reaction in the dialogue game. To this purpose, I will take Norrick (1978) and Guiraud et al.'s (2011) classification of positive and negative emotions –both basic and complex– as triggers of emotives. For example, according to Guiraud et al. (2011), negative

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4 Available at https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/chat

emotions include basic emotions like sadness and disapproval and complex ones like guilt, regret, disappointment or reproach. Apologies, for instance, can be originated because of guilt and regret, but may also cause sadness on the speaker and disapproval of her own actions (Goffman, 1971; Fraser, 1980). Considering the interaction between social effect and directionality (cf. Bravo, 2005; Bernal, 2007; Hernández Flores, 2005, 2013), apologies are also an attempt to restore the *ritual equilibrium* when this has been 'broken' by a previous action of the speaker's in detriment of the addressee. Thus, apologies appear as complex acts where both the speaker's and addressee's face(s) are at stake.

Guiraud et al.'s (2011) taxonomies of basic and complex emotions is illustrated by Figure 2:
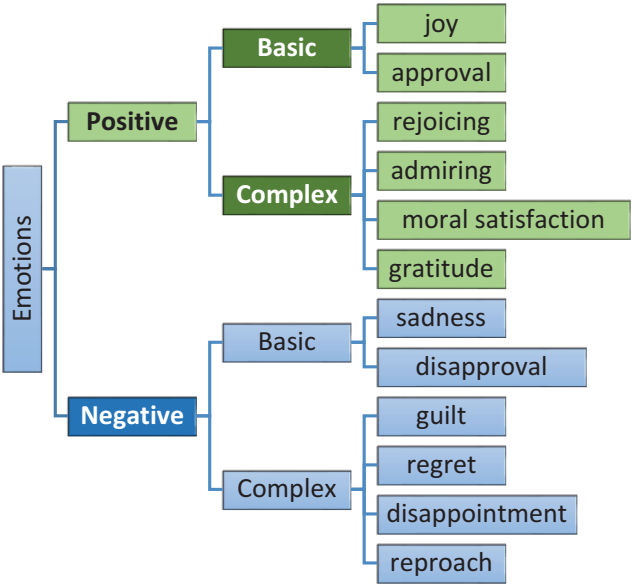

Figure 2: Classification of emotions (based on Guiraud et al., 2011).

As for their linguistic realization, emotives in the corpus tend to be linguistically performed by the following linguistic features, expecting to trigger in the interlocutor the reactive act of empathy or compassion:

(i)   Use of the exclamatory sentence (e.g. "how interesting!")
(ii)   Use of the copulative sentence to express the speaker's feelings and emotions (e.g. "I feel + adjective" / "I am + adjective")
(iii) Use of interjections (e.g. "oh", "damn")
(iv)   Use of emoticons to express emotions (e.g. I'm lost ☹)

For example, one of the students expresses a negative complex emotion (disappointment) with her understanding of the exercise by employing the following copulative sentence: "I'm awful with this", which is met by the expression of empathy and compassion "Don't worry, tomorrow we will see exactly what you are asking" to ease her. This would be considered a proto-typical case of emotive speech act in Weigand's terms. These acts where the speakers negatively focus upon their own face may, however, lead to a positive self-facework, since it allows the speaker to show a degree of modesty as well as allowing the other interactants to show empathy, hence reinforcing their own affiliative face as a considerate interlocutor, who takes into account the addressee's needs (cf. Kaul De Marlangeon, 2008; Hernández Flores, 2013, p. 189). In fact, if the speaker manages to get the understanding and empathy of their interlocutors, group rapport is also usually built up (cf. Alcaide Lara, 2008; Brenes Peña, 2009).

4.1.1 Emotive acts triggered by positive emotions

Liking, rejoicing, wishing the speaker's own welfare and expressing moral satisfaction (even 'boasting') might be considered as triggers of emotives, since they pertain to the expression of the speaker/writer's feelings. According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*,[5] "to like" is:
  (i)   to enjoy (something),
 (ii)   to get pleasure from (something),
(iii)   to regard (something) in a favourable way,
 (iv)   to feel affection for (someone) and
  (v)   to enjoy being with (someone).

In other words, 'liking' is clearly connected to positive emotions and to the category of 'affect' in appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005) and to the basic emotion of "joy" or "happiness", as in examples (1) and (2), where the participant expresses her joy to finally understand something she could not before:

(1)   me gusta mucho su traducción
      'I really like her translation'

(2)   entiendo, vale! ahhh genial
      'I understand, ok! Ahhh, great'

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5 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/like

Occasionally, Spanish participants resort to laughter to express their joy that their answer is correct, as in (3) below, where the student initially thought she had made a mistake but then realizes that her answer to the exercise is fine:

(3)   que susto! Jajaj
       'What a fright! Hahah'

As for other kind of emotives such as wishing their own personal welfare or expressing satisfaction for their own work, users refrain from performing these emotives. This may be mainly motivated by the maxim of modesty (Leech, 1983), since the expression of these emotives might be misinterpreted by the others as boasting and eventually lead to social disruption. In this case, the participants might also have been biased by the semi-public nature of the channel, where the teacher is conspicuously present and in control of the conversational floor. This is also in line with Ronan's results (2015), who did not come across any examples of expressing moral satisfaction either. On the whole, however, the number of emotives triggered by positive emotions is very low, with only 2 occurrences in the Spanish dataset and none in the English one. The transactional nature of the corpus under analysis might have also had a say in this scarcity, since the participants may not only refrain from opening up in front of a relatively unknown audience but also be more focused upon building up group rapport by other means –i.e. declarative acts.

4.1.2 Emotives triggered by negative emotions: expressing sadness/concern

According to Ronan (2015, p. 40), "a category that is less-frequently found in the corpus data is the expression of sorrow or feeling sad. [...] Norrick (1978, pp. 288–289) posits the expression of sorrow not on somebody else's behalf, but on one's own behalf, which he calls lamenting". In her study, Ronan only finds two examples of expressing sorrow or sadness on account of oneself. This replicates the English chat, where only one example has been found of a participant expressing concern about her lack of ability to do the exercise right:

(4)   I'm awful with this

It is worth mentioning that similar emotives are relatively more frequent in the Spanish chat, where we find six occurrences in which students publicly vent their concern about not understanding or finding contents difficult, as illustrated by examples (5) and (6):

(5)   Esto para mi [sic] es un misterio
      'This is a mystery to me'

(6)   no la tengo muy clara :/
      'I'm not very sure about it :/'

In (6), the participant even accompanies his concern with an emoticon emphasizing the previous message (:/). The same reasons may be underlying this scarcity; namely, the transactional nature of the corpus, the relatively unknown nature of the participants (especially in the chats), the teacher's presence (also in the chats) and, in the case of negative emotions, what Boucher and Osgood (1969) and Jing-Schmidt (2007) call the Pollyanna hypothesis, according to which: "Humans tend to 'look on (and talk about) the bright side of life [...] in the hope that we can verbally construct a safer world for ourselves" (Jing-Schmidt, 2007, pp. 422–423).

4.2 Declaratives

In this section, I will focus on Haverkate's expressive acts centred on the hearer and declaratives according to Weigand. The different subsections will thus be devoted to the declaratives triggered by positive emotions (i.e. thanking, complimenting, greeting, agreeing and wishing other's welfare) and negative emotions (i.e. apologies).

4.2.1 Thanking

Thanking is probably one of the declaratives more clearly formulaic and closely related to what is ordinarily understood as 'being polite'. Norrick (1978, p. 285) defines it as a speech act "where the speaker expresses positive feelings to the addressee, who has done a service to the speaker". For Guiraud et al. (2011), thanking involves the basic emotion of "joy" but also the complex emotion of "gratitude". Thanking is therefore socially expected on those occasions where the speaker has been done a service by the addressee and its absence may be perceived as markedly rude and socially disruptive, as thanking is a reactive act *par excellence* (Coulmas 1981 in Milà García, 2011, p. 16). This also explains why parents insist on teaching their offspring to say 'thanks' (Norrick, 1978; Greif and Gleason, 1980).

Expectedly enough, thanking appears in both chats in practically the same frequency. There are 19 tokens in the Spanish chat and 14 tokens in the English one which correspond to a ratio per word of 0.29% and 0.25%, respectively.

This might be explained by the teacher's presence. Students feel grateful for her time and help and markedly express their gratitude at the end of each chat, as illustrated by the examples below:

(7) thank you dor [sic] your time!
     for*

(8) Thank you Carmen

(9) Vale, pues muuuchas gracias por tu esfuerzo! :D
     'ok, then thaaaaanks a lot for your effort! :D'

(10) *Gracias!!*
     'Thanks!!'

As can be observed, the linguistic realization of "thanking" tends to be rather formulaic and simple (as in examples (8) and (10)), which might also explain why it is favoured by a fast pacing like the one imposed by the synchronous chat. However, students may also express their gratitude in an intensified way (as in example (9)), complementing it with the explicit expression of the thanked for token (i.e. the teacher's time or effort, as in the case of (7) and (9)). These results are in line with Milà García's study on the speech act of gratitude (2011, p. 30), where she points out that in an asymmetric situation between students and a teacher, where the teacher has done a favour to the student(s), the students opt for thanking in an intensified way.

Finally, it is also important to point out that the computer-mediated nature of the interaction seems to have a consequence (together with the asymmetric relationship between teacher and students, where the latter perceive the former as their superior in power). In fact, the 'disembodied' character of the interaction seems to make unavailable non-verbal means to express gratitude (e.g. a smile, a friendly touch on the arm, etc.), even if emoji may also be employed for these means. In fact, in Spanish face-to-face interactions the word 'thanks' may not necessarily be uttered in some contexts (Hickey, 2005, p. 327) and is often substituted for non-verbal expressions of gratitude.

4.2.2 Complimenting

Despite their apparent innocence, compliments have been extensively proved to be rather complex speech acts (Maíz-Arévalo, 2010), which can be genuinely

expressing the speaker's approval of the hearer but also acting as satellites of face-threatening speech acts such as directives or disagreements.

In contrast to a previous study of expressives in educational forums (Carretero et al., 2014), where compliments among peers –i.e. students to students- were pervasive; in the chats under analysis it is the teacher who compliments the students (in a positive evaluation of their answers, interventions, etc.). This is due to the different kind of activity; thus, in the forum the focus is on the students' collaborative work with an inconspicuous presence of the teacher as opposed to the chat, where the floor is teacher-controlled and the conversational turns follow the typical three-turn classroom schema: I (nitiation) + R(esponse) + Follow up (cf. Sacks et al., 1974; Tsui, 1994). Table 2 shows the distribution of compliments in both chats, and how they are clearly employed as a feedback mechanism by the teacher, which is why they have been excluded from the analysis proper, where only interventions by students have been taken into account.

Table 2: Frequency of compliments.

Corpus	No of tokens			Direction
		Teacher to student	Student to Student	Student to Teacher
English chat	N = 26 (100%)	22 (85%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (3.5%)
Spanish chat	N = 19 (100%)	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	0(0%)

With regard to the compliments produced by students themselves, the only token produced in the Spanish chat is an implicit compliment which can be also considered an emotive (see Figure 1), where the student expresses her liking of a translation by one of her classmates but without addressing her directly:

(11)   Me gusta mucho su traducción
       'I really like her translation'

As for the English chat, the compliments produced among peers (only 3 tokens) consist of very formulaic, often employing a single adjective ("good", "interesting"). This may be due to the fast rhythm of the chat, as commented on by one of the students in the only compliment from a student to the instructor. Interestingly enough, the compliment here is rather more elaborated, maybe because it is addressed to the teacher and because there is a face-threatening part to it ("a bit hazy"), ending it with a thanking:

(12)   Hahahaha—it was great, a bit hazy, but great. Thank you very much for this session, Carmen.

4.2.3 Greetings

As thanking, greetings are also socially expected acts whose absence may be marked and lead to social disruption. Interestingly enough, greetings are politeness routines which seem to be a universal phenomenon in human languages (Ferguson, 1976). Linguistically rather formulaic and simple, greetings may be argued to be pragmatically very convenient since they are "an easy and effective way to build rapport and keep communication fluent" (Carretero et al., 2014, p. 278; cf. also Goffman, 1971; Pinto, 2008).

As conversational openers, greetings are expected at the beginning of a gathering such as the chats. In fact, both chats invariably start with greetings, as illustrated by the following beginnings from the Spanish and the English chat, respectively, initiated by the teacher, as the one in control of the "conversational floor". Although the teacher's interventions have not been included in the analysis, they have been included in these examples so as to contextualise the students' own interventions:

(13)   Carmen (Teacher): Hola chicas, buenas tardes y gracias por conectaros. Esperamos un par de minutos más hasta que vayan conectándose el resto, vale? [...]
'Hello girls, good afternoon and thanks for connecting. Let's wait a couple of minutes until more people have connected, ok?'
Student: Hola
'Hello'
Carmen (Teacher): si os parece bien, comenzamos
'It is okay for you, we can start'
Student: Hola Carmen!
'Hello Carmen!'
(14) Carmen (Teacher): Morning everyone!
Student: Morning!
Student: Morning!!
Student: morning!
Student: Hello

Interestingly enough, the synchronicity of the channel makes communication faster, and greetings are performed just by the very first participants to join

the chat. This could explain why they are so scarce (2 in the Spanish chat and 4 in the English one) despite the relatively high number of participants. Thus, in both chats, greetings follow the same structure, the teacher greets first, opening up the "class". The rest of the participants, who join slightly later, refrain from performing any greeting at all maybe because the conversation proper has already started and they do not want to disrupt it by, in addition, arriving "late" and threatening their own positive face in front of the group.

The presence of the teacher in the chats also seems to play an important role to determine the formality of the greetings, especially in the case of the English chat, where more colloquial formulas like "hi!" are non-existent in contrast to more formal formulas like "good morning". This tendency, however, is not observed in the Spanish chat, maybe because "hola" is not considered as an informal but as a neutral greeting in contrast to "hi".

Farewells (or closing greetings) can also be considered extremely formulaic ways to close a conversation and their absence is likewise noticeable and likely to provoke social disruption. In the dataset under study, they follow a similar pattern to that of their opening counterparts mostly probably due to the same reasons (the teacher's control of the conversational floor and the fast pace of the conversation). Hence, both groups of students in the chats employ just one formula ("see you" or "hasta el miércoles") as their farewell on nine occasions in the English chat and just three in the Spanish one.

4.2.4 Agreeing

As pointed out by Ronan (2015, p. 33), agreement can be considered to correspond to Guiraud et al.'s category of "approval". The distinction between 'liking' and 'agreement' is that liking expresses a positive attitude "towards a person or thing" whilst agreement expresses approval of a proposition. In certain contexts, such as the ones at hand, where there is discussion, agreement can be socially expected. From the linguistic point of view, it is also highly formulaic. As for its number of tokens, agreement is one of the most frequent acts produced in both chats (45 tokens in the Spanish chat and 44 in the English one). As in previous cases, the synchronicity and fast pacing of the chats explains why agreement is expressed in formulaic and rather brief ways, such as by means of the performative ("I agree") or "me too", whilst longer formulas such as "I think so") are rarely used. This is illustrated by (15), where several practically successive answers (as indicated by the time) have been included:

(15)   11:30 Student: Me too
       11:30 Student: i agree
       11:31 Student: I think so
       11:31 Student: i also agree
       11:31 Student: me too

In the case of Spanish, the variety of formulas used to express agreement is more reduced, with only three ways to express agreement: "vale", "ok" and "de acuerdo". There is a clear preference for "vale" as a way to express agreement (29 tokens) as opposed to more formal and longer formulas like "de acuerdo" (with only 1 token). Interestingly enough, "ok" is also employed on 15 occasions. This could be due to the fact that these students are also proficient in English and, in fact, the subject they are studying is English-Spanish translation. As in the example above, (16) illustrates both uses in a synchronous sequence by four different students:

(16)   15:54 Student: ok
       15:54 Student: vale
       15:54 Student: ok
       15:54 Student: Vale

Although "vale" outnumbers "ok", this is still relatively frequent, also maybe because it is faster to type two letters as opposed to four. Curiously enough, there also seem to be personal preferences, since one of the students employs "ok" (occasionally with emoticons) on 6 out of the 15 occasions where it is used. Finally, Table 3 sums up the different ways to express agreement found in both chats:

Table 3: The expression of agreement in the English and Spanish chats: frequency.

English chat			Spanish chat
Expressions of agreement	**Ratio (n = 44)**	**Expressions of agreement**	**Ratio (n = 45)**
Ok	57% (n = 25)	Vale	64.5% (n = 29)
I agree	18% (n = 8)		
Me too	16% (n = 7)	Ok	33.3% (n = 15)
I think so	4.5% (n = 2)		
Sounds fine	2.25% (n = 1)	De acuerdo	2.2% (n = 1)
Right	2.25% (n = 1)		
TOTAL	**100% (n = 44)**		**100% (n = 45)**

4.2.5 Wishing others' welfare

There are not many examples of this speech act. The only five occurrences take place in the Spanish chat, right at the end. Occasionally, they may act in combination with farewell formulas, as illustrated by (17):

(17)   Gracias! Nos vemos el miércoles, mejórate ☺
       'Thanks! See you on Wednesday, get better ☺'

It is rather obvious that the teacher's illness and her teaching (albeit online) triggers these good wishes on the students' part, who appreciate her effort as shown by the fact that their good wishes are accompanied by thanking her. In the case of the other chat, there is apparently no reason why students should wish anybody's welfare.

4.2.6 Apologies

According to Guiraud et al. (2011), negative emotions can include basic emotions like sadness or disapproval and complex ones like guilt, regret, disappointment and reproach. When these negative emotions are related to the addressee, they can lead to the performance of speech acts like apologizing, condoling, disagreeing or reproaching. In the case of the first two, the speaker's aim is to either restore or boost the addressee's face by sympathising with them. Disagreement and reproach, on the other hand, pose a direct attack to the addressee's (positive) face, who is either opposed in their views or accused of a negative behaviour. In the dataset at hand, the only declarative of this type is apologies, with a few occurrences in both chats (3 in the English chat and 5 in the Spanish one).

In apologies, the speaker expresses negative feelings towards a patient-addressee to appease them (Norrick, 1978, p. 284). Apologies may also involve the speaker's guilt and regret for having committed a socially sanctioned fault. Linguistically, apologies may be realised by an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID henceforth) such as "I am sorry". According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Olshtain (1989), this IFID can appear in isolation or accompanied by different strategies (which may also be used on their own) such as:
  (i)   An offer of repair, i.e. "I'll pay for your damage"
  (ii)   an acknowledgement of responsibility, i.e. "It was my fault"
  (iii) an expression of lack of intent, i.e. "It wasn't my intention"
  (iv)   an expression of self-deficiency, i.e. "I didn't notice you"

   (v)   a statement of remorse, i.e. "I feel bad for that"
  (vi)   an expression of self-dispraise, i.e. "How clumsy (of me)"
 (vii)   a justification of the addressee, i.e. "I understand why you're upset"

In general terms, however, apologies are far from common in the data under scrutiny, with only two tokens in the case of the English chat, where students opt for the formulaic expression "sorry", as illustrated by (18) and (19), where students apologise for a previous mistake in their correction of the exercise (as in (18)) or a misspelling, as in (19):

(18)   the students, I mean. Sorry

(19)   11:12 Student: Be orderly, brief, avoy ambiguity and one more I don't
       remember
       11:13 Student: *avoid sorry

As for the Spanish chat, the number of tokens is slightly higher (with 5 occurrences). Curiously enough, students in the Spanish chat seem to opt for more implicit apologies, which they may occasionally combine with humour (as in 20). This might be explained as an attempt to preserve their own positive face, either by presenting their blunder in a positive light or by avoiding the performative ("lo siento"), which might sound too formal and too much of an apology, hence admitting a larger mistake. A similar explanation might account for their use of English as part of their apology, as illustrated by example (20):

(20)   Student: ups

Unfortunately, however, the number of apologies in the data is too scarce to offer a more quantitative approach, which limits this subsection to a more qualitative perspective.

5 Conclusions

The present paper has aimed to answer the following research questions, repeated here for the sake of clarity:
(a) Do students express their emotions when interacting online with their teacher? If so, what expressive speech acts are more frequently used?
(b) Does the use of their mother tongue (Spanish) or not (English) affect their performance of expressive speech acts in terms of frequency and type?

To answer these questions, a delimitation of the scope of expressives was carried out, taking Weigand's mixed game theory as a departing point of view. Hence, a distinction between emotives (i.e. where speakers express their emotions) and declaratives (i.e. polite acts expected in the particular interactional context) was established. It was hypothesized that, given the educational nature of the chats, emotives would be very low-profiled if not practically non-existent; especially so when there is a conspicuous presence of the teacher, which adds to the institutional (and relatively formal) nature of the interaction. As for the second question, the language used (mother tongue versus a foreign language) was expected to affect the frequency and type of expressive acts performed (especially in the case of emotives).

To that purpose, a corpus consisting in two chats by university students was gathered, one in Spanish and the other one in English. Both chats took place for 120 minutes and in both of them, the teacher/researcher's presence was conspicuous, with the control of the "conversational floor". This corpus allowed for a comparison between two different settings: students using their mother tongue (Spanish) to interact and students using a language different from their mother tongue (English) with educative purposes. From a socio-pragmatic perspective, the interaction is asymmetric and polilogic (cf. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010), which may play a crucial role both in the social effect and directionality of facework (cf. Bravo, 2002; Bernal, 2007; Hernández Flores, 2013; among others).

As initially expected, analysis of the data reveals that the transactional nature of the tasks also plays a crucial role in the kind of speech acts participants produce. Hence, emotives are extremely low-profiled as opposed to declarative acts. This is due not only to the transactional nature of the task and the fact that participants feel they are in a relatively formal context but also to the teacher's presence, which adds to the institutional nature of the interaction. On the whole, participants are more focused on ensuring a good rapport in the group and their relational facework. As a social activity among relative strangers, opening up and expressing their own emotions is hence avoided and only occurs occasionally, making these deviant cases especially interesting for the analyst. In fact, even these cases serve to boost rapport among the participants since they are immediately followed by similar "emotional outbursts" from their partners. This might be regarded as an interpersonal positive effect since it leads to a higher degree of affiliation in the group (cf. Bravo, 2005). With regard to declarative acts (e.g. thanking, complimenting, greeting, etc.), they are clearly more frequent as expected from the situational context the participants are engaging in.

As for the second question, the different language employed (Spanish versus English), the hypothesis is refuted since there are only two differences

when the chat is carried out in English or in Spanish. On the one hand, the students of the Spanish chat perform a slightly higher number of emotives triggered by negative emotions such as concern (6 versus 1 in English). These students are few in number in their everyday classes and might feel more at ease than the students of the English chat to vent away their concerns in public. On the other hand, the students in the Spanish chat are the only ones to wish the welfare of the interlocutor (in this case, the teacher). This, however, is not due to the language they are employing to communicate but to the situational context, since they know their teacher is ill and still has carried out the chat so that they did not miss the lesson. This lack of differences might also be due to the fact that the group of students using English might be applying other sociopragmatic uses related to their own L1 rather than to those of the L2.

Finally, I must acknowledge some serious limitations faced by the present study. First, the collected corpus might certainly benefit from being enlarged in the future since its limited size does hinder generalising results and only tendencies can be reported. Secondly, the contrast with more CMC channels in pedagogic contexts –e.g. email, blogs, etc. –might offer more data regarding the use and frequency of expressive acts in this particular institutional field (e. g. tertiary education). Third, this paper has offered a general overview of expressive acts but further research is needed on each individual expressive act in larger corpora. Indeed, understanding the complexity of emotions and their linguistic realisation is bound to open up further avenues for future research.

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