Prefabs and priming in second-person address in New Mexico and Southern Colorado

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ABSTRACT. This study examines second-person singular address (2S) forms in New Mexican Spanish to discover the reasons that a speaker produces one form over another. Four hundred and eighty nine tokens of 2S verbs were extracted in their context from the NMCOSS (Bills & Vigil 2008). Multi-variate analysis was performed on linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The factors affecting 2S form choice are: formulaic expressions occurring with high frequency, linguistic priming, and the genre of discourse. This study is the first to examine 2S address form usage in New Mexican Spanish quantitatively by examining both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

1. INTRODUCTION. It is common knowledge that there are multiple forms of address for second-person singular (2S) in Spanish, specifically, *tú, vos,* and *usted.* Recently, I investigated second-person address form usage in Cali, Colombia with the aim of comparing form usage across regions (Healey 2011). The current research comes at an opportune time as the Spanish of New Mexico and Southern Colorado has become a popular topic of late in the field of sociolinguistics due to the fascinating nature of the contact between Spanish and English in this area (c.f. Bills & Vigil 1999, 2008, Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011). The *vos* form is very uncommon in this dialect, thus this study will only be comparing usage of *tú* and *usted.* Examples 1 and 2 below demonstrate the nature of the variation found in second-person address form usage in New Mexico and Southern Colorado (NMCOSS, Bills & Vigil 2008).

(1)   *..Si **recuerdas** algo de .. curanderos o curanderas, si **recuerdas** algunos … cuentos de brujería, .. si -- **recuerdas** algunas cosas de la muerte, de velorios, o de funerales.*

'.. If **you (*tú*) remember** something about healers (m.) or healers (f.), if **you (*tú*) remember** some … stories about witchcraft, .. if -- if **you (*tú*) remember** some things about death, about wakes, or funerals.'

(4-2A2, lines 9-15)

(2)   *Cuando= .. **usted estaba** niña, qué le placticaban de la historia de= -- .. de= Colorado y de Nuevo México?*

'When= .. **you (*usted*) were** a girl, what did they tell you about the history of= -- .. of= Colorado and New Mexico?

(10-8A, 109-111)

This study examines second-person address (2S) forms in New Mexican Spanish with the aim of discovering linguistic and extralinguistic reasons that a speaker chooses one form over another. Previous research on Spanish has found social factors, involving the dynamics of power and

solidarity, to be the strongest influence in 2S form choice (Brown & Gilman 1960, Plasencia 1997, Solé 1978. Uber 2000). Interestingly, my recent study (Healey 2011) on 2S forms in Cali, Colombia found linguistic and cognitive factors, such as occurrence in prefabricated constructions (c.f. Bybee 2003, 2006, Travis 2006, Wilson 2009) and linguistic priming (c.f. Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011, Travis 2007), to be more significant than social factors.

      Comparing the New Mexican data with my previous *tú, vos* and *usted* study of data from Cali, Colombia will not yield equal results because the genre of discourse is different for each study (Cali: spontaneous conversation vs. New Mexico: sociolinguistic interview), and the status of Spanish in each place is different. In Cali, Colombia the population is generally monolingual in Spanish, whereas the New Mexican data has patches of code-switching, which is considered acceptable and often goes unnoticed in relaxed speech. However, the usage of prefabricated constructions and structural priming are the result of cognitive processes that are common to all humans, no matter the language that they speak (Bybee 2003, 2006, Croft & Cruse 2004, Goldberg 2003, Fillmore et al. 2006, Travis 2007, *inter alia*). Thus, I expect to find those processes at work in these data as well. In the following sections, this paper will show that structural priming, the use of formulaic expressions, and the genre of discourse significantly affect a speaker's form choice when addressing an interlocutor.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. EXTRALINGUISTIC FACTORS. Previous literature regarding 2S pronoun usage in Spanish pointed to social factors being the determinants of 2S form (Brown & Gilman 1960, Plasencia 1997, Solé 1978, Uber 2000). Brown and Gilman (1960) noted that the most relevant factors affecting 2S form are social, specifically that the choice between forms is based upon the speaker's perception of the dynamics of power and solidarity between themselves and the addressee. Speaking on the variation of 2S forms in Puerto Rico, Uber stated that "Power may be manifested by differences in age, profession, or perceived position between the speakers involved … Solidarity can refer to the degree of familiarity or intimacy between speakers" (2000:316), and in this way operationalized this notion for her study. The fascinating nature of the 2S form in Spanish also stems from the fact that most Spanish-speakers are aware of the social connotations expressed by using each form as conventionalized in the speech community. They have internalized the social norms associated with these forms as metalinguistic knowledge, which is why it is often difficult to explain to a native Spanish-speaker that the formal/informal distinction does not exclusively dictate their use. In the NMCOSS data many interviewees are retired and all of the interviewers are students, so the only social factors that this study tested for were gender, age and speaker role as interviewee or interviewer. It should be noted that although all of the interviewers are students they are not all in the same age group, and the same can be said for the interviewees—some are elderly and some are middle aged or young adults. This is relevant because it shows that the factor of speaker role is not confounded with the factor of speaker age. The factors I coded for are discussed in section 4.

2.2. LINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE FACTORS. In general, the previous research on pronouns and subject forms is divided into two schools: those who believe that the driving force behind form use is social (this mostly applies to 2S research) and those who believe it to be linguistic. In recent years it has become accepted that language is constantly emerging through use (Bybee, 2003, 2006, DuBois 2003, Hopper 1998, *inter alia*); which is to say that language is used for interaction. It is the different uses and the context in which the forms occur that change their meaning and form, and even the grammar of a language itself over time. Linguists who follow this theory have noted the way in which prefabricated constructions, or prefabs (Bybee 2003, 2006, Wilson 2009), tend to show little variation in form. According to the theory of Emergent Grammar (DuBois 2003, Hopper 1998, Bybee et al. 1994, *inter alia*), all language is behavior learned through repetition (Bybee 2003, 2006) and is made up of constructions which can be more or less lexically filled (Croft & Cruse 2004, Goldberg 2006, Fillmore et al. 2003, *inter alia*). The current study will investigate the way prefabricated constructions affect second person form choice based on this framework.

According to Torres Cacoullos and Travis (2011:3), "the linguistic factors consistently found to have an effect of the patterning of subject expression are switch reference, semantic class of verb, Tense-Mood-Aspect and person, while social factors such as age, gender and socioeconomic status are typically found to have no effect." In my study of 2S forms in Cali (Healey 2011), I also found linguistic factors to more significantly affect form choice, and since there were no other studies of 2S form which use multivariate analysis, it was decided that the same group of factors should be coded for in this study. Travis (2007) found that the genre of the data can often affect the rates of subject expression in Spanish. She found higher rates of *yo* expression in conversation than in personal narrative, but identical patterning. Specifically, the narratives had a high degree of subject continuity, while interactive conversation had much more topic-shifting and less subject continuity. This is important for the current study of *tú* and *usted* because second person address forms are used for interaction and will thus be much more common in spontaneous conversation than in narrative. In fact, a second hypothesis of this study is that the interview setting has affected the speakers' second person address form choice. This study advances previous research on second person address forms by considering the set of factor groups that may account for the variation together in multivariate analysis (Sankoff et al. 2005).

3. HYPOTHESES

(1) Certain formulaic expressions (prefabs) occur with such high frequency that they tend to be uttered in the same second person form.
(2) Second person form choice will be affected by priming, which means that the previous use of *tú* will prime the current use of *tú*, and the previous use of *usted* will prime the current use of *usted*.
(3) The genre of discourse will affect the overall patterning of second person address forms. In particular, because second person address forms are much more common and useful in interactive rather than narrative discourse, the linguistic and extralinguistic sub-contexts affecting 2S form choice will be easier to discover in spontaneous conversation, whereas the speaker and addressee roles found in the interview genre may obscure the effects of the more subtle influences.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY. In what follows, the above hypotheses were tested by applying the variationist method to the New Mexican and Southern Colorado Survey of Spanish (NMCOSS) (Bills & Vigil 2008). The key assumption of the variationist method is that discourse is characterized by a form-function asymmetry (Labov 1969, Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011). For this study, this means that there is variation between the 2S address forms *tú* and *usted* in this community, even though they both serve relatively the same function of addressing the speaker's interlocutor. However, although they both serve the same function, the usage of these forms is conditioned by the exact context that they occur in. This variability is structured and conditioned by both linguistic (cognitive and structural factors) and extralinguistic factors (sociodemographic factors) as they affect usage in context (Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011, Travis 2007). Therefore, we must observe the linguistic and extralinguistic conditioning of forms in variation in order to reveal the structure of discourse. This will show us which factors tend to co-occur, the relative frequency of their co-occurrence, as well as the linguistic context in which they occur (Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011). Thus, I am able to test the above hypotheses by operationalizing elements of the context into factors which can be examined in multivariate analysis to discover their interaction and relative magnitude of effect.

4.1. CODING. To identify the linguistic conditioning of 2S usage, 489 tokens of second person singular verbs were extracted from the NMCOSS (Bills & Vigil 2008) in their discourse context, excluding truncated tokens. All tokens were coded for the following linguistic factor groups: current 2S form (the dependent variable), 2S form (priming, both within the same speaker and across speakers, with no limit on Intonation Units (IUs) provided that there were no other 2S forms in between), realization (whether the pronoun was used with the verb or not), which verb it is (to test for formulaic expressions, if a particular verb (e.g. *mirar* 'to look')had more than 50% of its uses in the same 2S form), semantic class of verb, clause type, reported speech, and Tense-Mood-Aspect. These groups represent linguistic sub-contexts that are likely to affect the variability of form usage, and are a means to operationalize hypotheses about the constraints affecting second person form usage.

      Additionally, I coded for a number of extralinguistic factors: speaker role (interviewer/interviewee), speaker age, addressee age, speaker gender, and addressee gender. These extralinguistic factors were chosen due to past research on 2S forms that also used the sociolinguistic interview as the genre of discourse for analysis (Brown & Gilman 1960, Uber 2000, *inter alia*). All factor groups were simultaneously analyzed in Variable-rule analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff et al. 2005). The multiple regression procedure in Variable-rule analysis works to determine the factor groups which interact together and as a group account for the largest amount of the variation being studied in a statistically significant way (Sankoff 1988, Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011).

5. RESULTS

5.1. VARIABLE-RULE ANALYSIS. Table 1 presents the results from a Variable-rule analysis of factors contributing to the speaker's 2S form choice. The input (.779) indicates the overall likelihood that the variant (*usted*) will occur (the overall rate of *usted* use was 66.6%). The factor groups that had a significant effect on 2S form choice were: speaker role, previous 2S form in the discourse, and realization. Factors not listed in the table were not significant. Within each factor group, the ordering of the factor weights shows the direction of effect, which tells us which

factors favor/disfavor *usted* usage, based on whether the factor weight is over (favor) or under (disfavor) 0.5. We can see that the factors which favor *usted* usage were: if the speaker is an interviewer, if the previous 2S form used was *usted* or if there was no previous form at all (like at the beginning of a conversation, which was usually started by the interviewer), and if the current form is expressed. The factors which disfavor *usted* usage (and in this study would thus favor *tú* usage) were: if the speaker is an interviewee, if the previous 2S form used was *tú*, and if the current form is unexpressed. The range is the difference between the highest and lowest factor weight in each factor group, which indicates the relative strength (referred to as the magnitude of effect) of each factor group (Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011). We can see in the table that the speaker role has the largest magnitude of effect on *usted* usage, followed by previous 2S form and realization, respectively. The last column in the table shows the percentage of *usted* usage in each environment.

N=489 *Input= .779 (66.6% usted, 326/489)* *Log likelihood= -157.190*		
Factor	**Factor Weight**	**Percent *usted* (n)**
Speaker Role		
Interviewer	.790	93% (284/304)
Interviewee	.102	23% (42/185)
Range	*.69*	
Previous 2S Form		
Usted	.629	82% 258/315)
None	.513	84% (16/19)
Tú	.253	34% (52/155)
Range	*.38*	
Realization of Pronoun		
Expressed	.635	80% (111/139)
Unexpressed	.445	61% (215/350)
Range	*.19*	

TABLE 1. Variable-rule analysis of the contribution of factors selected as significant to *usted* usage p<.05 (p =0.032).

Each significant factor group will now be discussed in detail. For the first factor group, speaker role, *usted* was more likely to be used by the interviewer (factor weight .79) than by the interviewee (.10). This makes sense because the extralinguistic sub-context created by the interview genre creates a "dynamic of power and solidarity" (Brown & Gilman 1960, Uber 2000) which triggers the *usted* usage by the interviewer to show respect. Previous studies (Brown & Gilman 1960, Plasencia 1997, Solé 1978, Uber 2000) have found social factors such as speaker and addressee age, gender, and relative social status to trigger one 2S form over the other. These factors were not found to be significant in this study, which demonstrates the strength of the power dynamic in the interviewer-interviewee interaction. The status of the addressee as the interviewee seems to trump the effects of the other extralinguistic factors.

The second factor group selected as significant was previous 2S form. *Usted* was more likely to be chosen when the previous 2S form used was also *usted* (factor weight .63) than when the previous 2S form used was *tú* (.25). This can be seen in the following examples, where we see a previous *usted* usage favoring continued *usted* use within the same speaker (as in example

3) and a previous *usted* usage favoring continued *usted* usage across two different speakers (as in example 4).

(3)   A: *.. Ahora vamos a --*
                 Este=,
                 dígame *.. dónde* ***nació usted***.

            A: .. Now we're gonna --
                 Um=,
                 Tell me (*usted*) .. where **were you (*usted*) born**.

                                                           (20-1A1, 61-63)

(4)   ***A:*** *(H)Y este=,*
                 usted *ah* ***trabajaba*** *cuando= ..* ***estaba*** *más joven,*
                 [XXX].
            R: *[Eh=,*
                 yo trabajé],
                 por mi esposo.
                 Siempre.
                 siempre.
                 Él --
                 como le digo,
                 él --
                 él manejaba companías de tresquila. ((COMPAÑÍAS; TRASQUILA))
            A: *Ah=.*
            R: *No sé si* ***habrá oído decir usted*** *de --*
                 de tresquila.

            A: (H) And um=,
                 You (*usted*) ah **were working** when= .. **you (*usted*) were** younger,
                 [XXX].
            R: [Eh=,
                 I worked],
                 for my husband.
                 Always.
                 always.
                 He --
                 like I'm telling you,
                 he --
                 he managed shearing companies.
            A: Ah=
            R: I don't know if **you'll (*usted*) have heard** of --
                 of shearing.   (20-1A1, 625-639)

The effect of the previous 2S form on the current 2S form choice is known as structural priming. Structural priming is the cognitive effect "whereby the use of a certain structure in one utterance functions as a prime on a subsequent utterance, such that that same structure is repeated" (Torres

Cacoullos & Travis 2011:13). Priming in Colombian Spanish was also discovered in my previous study of 2S address forms (Healey 2011), as well as for 1S subject expression (Travis 2007). An example of structural priming across two speakers in Colombian Spanish is given below in 5.

(5) *Ángela: [2Pero **tú estabas**2] des- --*
        ***tú no te acuerdas**?*
    Santi: .. Pues,
        *Yo me acuerdo que sí me **pasaste**,*
        pero no me acuerdo a qué horas,
        ni nada.

    Ángela: [2 But **you** (*tú*) **were**2] awak- --
        You (*tú*) **don't remember**?
    Santi: .. Well,
        I remember that **you** (*tú*) **passed** me,
        but I don't remember what time,
        or anything.

                                                    (Travis 2005, Almuerzo, 435-440)

It can be seen from examples 3-5 that priming has a definite effect on 2S form choice. In Healey (2011), priming had the largest magnitude of effect, but in the current study the priming effect was overshadowed by the effect of speaker role. This is evidence that the genre of the discourse can affect the results of a study such as this.

The results for the third factor group, realization, indicate that *usted* usage was favored when the speaker chooses to express the 2S form with a pronoun (factor weight .64) rather than leave it unexpressed (.44). However, this factor group had the smallest magnitude of effect (range .19). This could also be a side-effect of the genre of the discourse because the interviewers were more likely to use *usted* out of respect for the interviewee and because the 3S form is ambiguous between *él, ella* and *usted* when used without a pronoun. In a context where *usted* would tend to be used, priming of *tú* may override the social norms dictating *usted* use. However, in cases where the social factors and linguistic factors are in competition priming will take effect unless the speaker has (perhaps unconsciously) decided to use a particular form with their interlocutor all the time, like the situation where an interviewer decides to use *usted* to address their interviewee. It is evident that the interviewers chose to use *usted* with the interviewees because they ask some specific questions in the *usted* form (e.g. *¿Cuándo aprendió usted español?* When did you learn Spanish?') that are the same for all interviewees. As we will see in section 5.2., the use of certain prefabricated constructions can trump both the social and the linguistic factors affecting 2S form choice.

5.2. PREFABRICATED CONSTRUCTIONS. It is vital to remember that some tendencies that emerge as significant in the data as a whole may be skewed by their occurrence in prefabricated constructions (prefabs) (Bybee 2003, 2006, Company Company 2006, Erman & Warren 2000, *inter alia*). Healey (2011) found several prefabs where the specific 2S form used in the expression made up more than 50% of the instances of that verb. The prefabs discovered in that study were: *mira* ('look'), *venga* ('come here'), *oiga* ('listen'), *ve* ('look'), *fíjate* ('watch out/check it out/look'), and *imagínase* ('just imagine'). The first thing to notice about these prefabs is that they are all imperatives and also almost all discourse markers used to take the floor. Thus, I expected to find imperative prefabs for these same verbs in New Mexican Spanish since they serve such a general discourse function.

For the current study, the following formulaic expressions were found (meaning that 50% or more of the instances of these verbs occurred in this form): *oiga* ('listen'), *mira* ('look'), *habla* ('you speak/talk'), *aprendió* ('you learned'). These are used despite previous uses of a different 2S form. However, *habla* and *aprendió* probably only appear to be prefabs because of the genre and subject matter; interviewers were required to ask the interviewees how they learned Spanish and some things about their speech. In fact, only 12.5% (3/24) of the *aprender* tokens are produced by interviewees and none of them are in the form *aprendió*. Likewise, only 15% (5/34) of the *hablar* tokens are produced by interviewees and none of them are in the form *habla*. Thus, the only *real* prefabricated constructions with specific discourse functions found in this study were: *oiga* with 68% (21/31) of the tokens of *oír* occurring in this form and *mira* with 60% (12/20) of the tokens of *mirar* occurring in this form. Examples of these prefabs are given in 6 and 7 below.

(6)   *D: ... **Oiga**,*
        y este=,
        y ahora qué hace?
        En qué trabaja?

        D: … **Listen (usted)**,
         and this guy=,
         and now what does he do?
         what does he do for work?

                                          (102-1A1, 327-330)

(7)   *P: [No quieren].*
        No quieren.
        *No quieren **oiga**.*
        % Dicen,
        [Pueden llevar] --
        A: *[I didn't want it] either.*
        P: *pueden --*
        pueden llevar al caballo a beber agua,
        but that don't mean he's gonna drink.
        A: *But if that water is not .. appropriate for our kids,*
        P: *<X Pos luego no X> --*
        Hay --
        como dijimos,

hay chavalos que sí quieren.
y otros que di- --
no más se= --
A: *Lo que pasa es que cuando van a la escuela,*
    tienen que dejar su cultura y su lengua.
P: *[Pos] --*
A: *[like] you and I?*
P: *Pos **mira**,*
    yo tengo --
    .. my nephew ahora,
    .. y es suerte.

P: [They don't want to].
    They don't want to.
    They don't want to **listen (*usted*)**.
    % They say,
    [They can bring] --
A: [I didn't want it] either.
P: they can --
    they can bring the horse to water,
    but that don't mean he's gonna drink.
A: But if that water is not .. appropriate for our kids,
P: <X well later no X> --
    There's --
    like we said,
    there's kids that do want to.
    and others that sa- --
    not more than= --
A: What happens is when they go to school,
    they have to leave behind their culture and their language.
P: [Well] --
A: [like] you and I?
P: Well **look (*tú*)**,
    I have --
    .. my nephew now,
    .. and he's lucky.

(88-1A3, 654-677)

As we can see from these examples, *oiga* and *mira* are clearly prefabs not only because these instances make up more than 50% of the tokens of their verbs, but also because their lexical meaning is mostly bleached in these instances and instead they have a specific function, that of being discourse markers used to take the floor and draw attention to what the speaker is about to say (c.f. Travis 2005 for a study of discourse markers in Colombian Spanish). Discourse markers have been shown to be "regulatory units," which control the flow of the conversation (Chafe 1994). The speakers in the above examples 6 and 7 are not actually telling their interlocutor to listen or look, but instead they are merely grabbing their attention and directing it to their next

utterance. Even stronger evidence that these are prefabs is the fact that in example 7 the same speaker uses both *oiga (usted)* 'listen' and *mira (tú)* 'look' to address the same interlocutor, showing that these discourse markers are mostly fixed in their 2S form and function, one in the *tú* form and one in the *usted* form. Because I also found the phrases *oiga* and *mira* in my previous study of monolingual Colombian Spanish, it is reasonable to propose that *oiga* and *mira* are prefabs used as discourse markers in many varieties of Spanish.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. In sum, the linguistic impact of structural priming and formulaic expressions has significant effects on second person form chosen by a speaker. The effect of structural priming is shown by the finding that a previous *usted* usage was much more likely to trigger current *usted* usage than if the previous 2S form was *tú,* both within one speaker and across speakers. The impact of formulaic expressions on second person form choice is that certain expressions, in particular *oiga* 'listen' in the *usted* form and *mira* 'look' in the *tú* form, will tend to occur specifically in these 2S forms and with particular discourse functions. In particular, these prefabs are discourse markers used to grab the interlocutor's attention and direct it to what the speaker is about to say. Also, the discourse markers *oiga* and *mira* may not follow priming effects or social 2S norms, and thus *oiga* may be used with someone to whom the speaker was just using the *tú* form, or with whom they normally use the *tú* form, and likewise *mira* may be used to grab the attention of an interlocutor with whom the speaker normally uses the *usted* form even if they just used the *usted* form with them.

Thus, the forms *oye (tú)* and *mire (usted)*, although they mean the same thing lexically as *oiga (usted)* and *mira (tú)*, are less likely to occur in this dialect for these discourse functions due to the automated cognitive procedures controlling these processes (c.f. Bybee 2003, 2006). The effects of priming and prefabs are cognitive in nature, with both aimed at reducing the mental work involved in interaction, and therefore these effects will be found both across different varieties of Spanish, and also cross-linguistically. The fact that my previous work (Healey 2011) on second person address forms in Colombian Spanish also found priming and prefabs to be statistically significant factors affecting 2S form usage corroborates this finding.

However, the key difference between my previous study and the current study is the genre of discourse. My previous study was based on spontaneous conversational data, whereas the current study is based on sociolinguistic interviews with long stretches of personal narrative. Interestingly, this genre difference was quite important. As was shown in the above sections, the most significant factor affecting 2S form choice in these data was whether the speaker was an interviewer or interviewee. An interviewer was much more likely to address the interviewee with the *usted* form than the *tú* form. This finding can be attributed to the "dynamics of power and solidarity" (Brown & Gilman 1960, Uber 2000) because in the (semi)formal setting of an interview the interlocutors are more likely to follow the social norms of their roles, with the interviewer showing respect to the interviewee by using the *usted* form with her/him. This is demonstrated by the large magnitude of effect exhibited by the factor group of speaker role. In future studies of second person address forms in New Mexico, it would be better to use spontaneous conversational data, where the regular patterns of natural discourse are most easily observed (DuBois et al. 1993, DuBois 2003, Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2011, *inter alia*). There are more opportunities for speaker change and second person address use between interlocutors in a conversation than in an interview eliciting large chunks of narrative; thus, it is logical that speaker roles would turn out to be the most significant factor of this study.

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