

## Examining how Spanish students of Tourism reply to online complaints<sup>1</sup>

### Análisis de cómo los estudiantes de turismo españoles responden a quejas online

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**Abstract:** *As future service providers, students in the Degree of Tourism need to adequately perform in their L2 in very specific professional settings. One of them is that of service encounters, whose mediated nature has become predominant nowadays. The present study aims to contribute to the existing body of research on the review response genre by analyzing how Spanish students of tourism respond to a group of complaints from TripAdvisor (Vásquez, 2011; Zhang and Vásquez, 2014). This will be done by placing the focus on the moves (Ho, 2017a) employed by the students, as well as the sequence in which they are used. The ultimate goal is to determine if these potential service providers' selection of moves and their order coincide with those normally used by actual hotel representatives (Ho, 2017a).*

**Keywords:** interlanguage pragmatics; mediated service encounters; English for specific purposes; tourism; complaints

**Resumen:** *Como futuros proveedores de servicio, los estudiantes del Grado en Turismo tienen que saber expresarse adecuadamente en su L2 en contextos profesionales específicos. Entre ellos están los encuentros de servicio, cuya naturaleza mediatizada ha ganado auge en los últimos años. Este estudio busca contribuir a la literatura existente sobre el "review response genre" al analizar cómo los estudiantes de turismo españoles responden a un grupo de quejas de TripAdvisor (Vásquez, 2011; Zhang y Vásquez, 2014). El enfoque se pondrá en los "moves" (Ho, 2017a) empleados por los estudiantes, así como en la secuencia elegida. El objetivo final es determinar si tanto la selección de "moves" de estos proveedores de servicio en ciernes como su orden coinciden con aquellos que usan normalmente los proveedores de servicio (Ho, 2017a).*

**Palabras clave:** pragmática de la interlengua; encuentros de servicio mediatizados; inglés para fines específicos; turismo; quejas

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## 1. Introduction

In the globalized world we live in, being able to communicate in languages other than our own is increasingly necessary. This is particularly so for professionals in the tourism industry, as they are in permanent contact with customers of different nationalities, languages and cultures. As future service providers, students of Tourism need to be prepared to adequately perform in their L2 in any specific professional setting of said industry.

The present work sets the spotlight in one of those settings when mediatized: *service encounters* (Placencia, 2008; Félix-Brasdefer, 2015). More specifically, it aims to contribute to the research on the *review response genre*, which has mainly studied responses to negative reviews on TripAdvisor (Vásquez, 2011; Zhang and Vásquez, 2014). For this, the study will examine the performance of Spanish L2 students majoring in Tourism when engaged in a mediated service encounter in the hospitality industry context. The focus will be placed on the *moves* (Ho, 2017a, 2017b) employed by the students as they reply to the online complaints, as well as the sequence in which they are used. Ultimately, it seeks to explore if these potential service providers' selection of moves and their order coincide with those normally used by actual hotel representatives (Ho, 2017a).

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP, henceforth) research on service encounters has tended to focus on the learners as customers (e.g. Bataller and Shively, 2011; Shively, 2011, 2013), but the study of L2 learners as service providers has been scarcer. There are a few studies that examine the discourse of L2 students while engaged in face-to-face service encounters (Martínez López and Padilla Cruz, 2012; Padilla Cruz and Martínez López, 2017). However, to the best of our knowledge, the present work is the first one in the field to focus on students of Tourism as online service providers.

## 2. Service Encounters

A service encounter can be defined as “a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with a service” (Shostack, 1985, p. 243). Therefore, it involves any interaction between customers and service providers which is relevant to the offering of an essential service (Voorhees *et al.*, 2017, p. 270). As such, service encounters can be regarded as ‘moments of truth’ (Normann, 1984) that have an effect on the relationship between companies and their customer base. This effect can either be positive or negative depending on the way companies handle the issues that may arise (Beaujean *et al.*, 2006, p. 64). This is so because the experience during the encounter is what makes the customer perceive and assess the overall quality and satisfaction of the provided service (Bitner *et al.*, 1990, p. 72; Voorhees *et al.*, 2017, p. 270).

Since the 1990's, service encounters have attracted the attention of linguists from different fields, including variational (Placencia, 2008; Félix-

Brasdefer, 2012), cross-cultural (Solon, 2013; Félix-Brasdefer, 2015) and interlanguage pragmatics (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012; Shively, 2013). These studies have examined different aspects of linguistics, such as speech acts (García, 2007; Salazar and Orts, 2018), (im)politeness (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2005; Carmona-Lavado and Hernández-López, 2015) or discourse markers (Mancera Rueda and Placencia, 2011), mostly in on-site encounters. However, with the rise of the new-technologies, mediated service encounters are gaining ground (e.g. Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005 and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich and Bou-Franch, 2019<sup>2</sup>). Part of the research on mediated service encounters has focused on the *review-response genre*, which will be briefly introduced in the next section.

### 3. The Review Response Genre

The Review Response Genre is a subfield of Genre Analysis, which draws upon the Genre Theory of the English for Specific Purposes approach (Ho 2017a). It examines responses given by hotel representatives in online platforms, such as TripAdvisor (e.g. Vásquez, 2012). This genre has mainly focused on negative reviews (Vásquez, 2011; Zhan and Vásquez, 2014) and their impact (*cf.* work on eWom [electronic word-of-mouth]: e.g. Zhang *et al.*, 2010; Zhang and Vásquez, 2014; Kuo and Nakhata, 2019), as they are more influential than positive ones (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009). Additionally, some studies have also explored the impact that the hotel's responses have on customer satisfaction (e.g. Gu and Ye, 2014).

One of the aspects studied by literature on this genre are its components. Several studies (Davidow, 2003<sup>3</sup>; Levy *et al.*, 2013<sup>4</sup>; Sparks and Bradley, 2014<sup>5</sup>) have identified the different moves and features that are present in the responses given by hotel representatives. These scholars proposed their own organizational structures of the moves used in the genre, but it was Ho (2017a) who examined which of the moves were obligatory/optional and which their sequence was. The present work aims to expand on Ho's work by focusing on students of Tourism.

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<sup>2</sup> See also the volumes of Hernández-López and Fernández-Amaya, 2015 and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich *et al.*, 2019

<sup>3</sup>Davidow (2003) identified six dimensions: timeliness, facilitation, redress, apology, credibility and attentiveness (*cf.* Davidow 2003, p. 232 for the definitions).

<sup>4</sup> Levy *et al.* (2013) identified eight response strategies: active follow-up, apology, appreciation, compensation, correction, explanation, passive follow-up and a request for future patronage.

<sup>5</sup> Sparks and Bradley (2014) grouped statements ["forms of managerial responses" (p.719)] into three categories which they called "triple A typology": Acknowledgement [thank, appreciate, apologize, recognize, admit, accept and dismiss], Account [excuse, justify, reframe, penitential and denial] and Action [investigate, referral, rectify, policy, training, direct contact and compensate].

## 4. Methodology

The present work seeks to examine how Spanish learners of *Inglés para el Turismo* (English for the Tourism Industry) respond to online reviews. For this, responses to a writing task were analyzed adopting a quantitative approach, and results were verified with Fisher's Exact Tests. The study intends to answer the following research questions:

- 1a. Which moves are used by Tourism students in their responses to online complaints?
- 1b. In which order do Tourism students use these moves?
2. Do these moves and their sequence coincide with those used actual hotel representatives employ?

In order to answer these questions, Ho's (2017a) framework of obligatory and optional moves will be taken both as a starting point and a comparative basis.

### 4.1. Participants

The present study aims to analyze the pragmatic performance of twenty students of L2 English in the Degree of Tourism at Universidad de Sevilla: four men (20%) and sixteen women (80%)<sup>6</sup>. The students were enrolled in the course *Inglés I para Turismo* (English I for the Tourism Industry) during the academic year 2020/21, and 95% of them were Spanish<sup>7</sup>. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 20, the average age being 18.95. Participants had been learning English for 11-16 years<sup>8</sup>, and 70% held an English Official Certification<sup>9</sup>. Finally, only 10% had experience in the touristic sector.

### 4.2. Corpus

In order to collect the data for the present study, a writing task was developed to serve as a simulation of a mediated service encounter. The controlled service encounter was administered through the university's platform in a PDF document which contained the following:

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<sup>6</sup> All participants signed a consent form before participating in the study.

<sup>7</sup> One of the participants was born in England, but she came to Spain when she was four. Since she grew up in Spain and has been enrolled in the Spanish educational system since she was young, her participation was considered for this study on Spanish students of Tourism.

<sup>8</sup> 20% for 16 years; 20% for 15 years; 10% for 14 years; 30% for 13 years; 10% for 12 years and 10% for 11 years.

<sup>9</sup> 5% held an A2 *Cambridge English*; 25% held a B1 [10% *Cambridge English*, 5% *Trinity* and the remaining 15% did not specify the type of certification]; 30% held a B2 [5% *IELTS*, 10% *Cambridge English* and 15% non-specified]; 5% has a C1 [did not specify]; and the native speaker [5%] held an IGCSE advanced.

- i) a space for participants to write their names: identifiers needed to be collected so that they could receive the corresponding compensation for their participation<sup>10</sup>. Nonetheless, the identity of the students was anonymized by replacing their actual names with pseudonyms.
- ii) a set of instructions: participants were instructed to imagine they worked as hotel representatives for the Talbott and that they were in charge of replying to negative reviews former guests had left on TripAdvisor.
- iii) two prompts: two reviews from TripAdvisor which were selected by doing several shifts of all the reviews in the *average*, *terrible* and *poor* categories of the Talbott Hotel, a four-star hotel in Chicago with a rating of 4.5/5, up to 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Only these categories were scanned because the aim was to select a *competence-based accusation*, related to the hotel service, and a *morality-based accusation*, related to the good faith of the staff (Fuoli and Paradis, 2014)<sup>11</sup>.
- iv) a space for the students to give their responses.

Twenty writing tasks were examined for the present work. Therefore, the total number of responses constituting the data amounted to 40, with a total number of words of 4612 [average length of 115.3 words/response].

### 4.3. Method

Drawing on Ho's (2017a) work, a *move* was considered "a section of a text that performs a specific communicative function" (Biber *et al.* 2007, p. 23). To identify the moves present in the corpus, a content analysis of the writing tasks was carried out using the software MAXQDA2020. This analysis was done by coding the moves in two levels (Dörnyei. 2007) following Ho's (2017a) framework of moves and submoves (see Fig. 1). Coded in a way that indicated their communicative function, the moves corresponding to Level 1 coding were labelled as *submoves*, and the higher-order moves corresponding to Level 2 coding were labelled as simply *moves*. This division ultimately allowed for the examination of how many of Ho's (2017a) obligatory and optional moves were used by the L2 students.

Based on his analysis of 300 reviews, Ho (2017a) concluded that there are three obligatory moves in the review response genre -*Acknowledging Problem*, *Expressing Feeling* and *Thanking Reviewer*- and five optional moves -*Continuing Relationship*, *Denying Problem*, *Greeting*, *Recognizing Reviewer's Value* and *Self-Promoting*. This distinction was made based on the percentage of occurrence in the corpus of TripAdvisor responses the author analyzed. That is, those moves

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<sup>10</sup> This consisted on extra points in their final mark, the amount of which was decided by the professor of the course.

<sup>11</sup> The third type of accusation [*benevolence-based*] identified by Fuoli and Paradis (2014) was not included in this study.

which recorded a 60% or above occurrence in the responses were considered to be obligatory, and those which recorded an occurrence which was lower than 60% were considered optional.

Move	Submoves
Acknowledging Problem	Empathize; Rectify; Apologize; Indicate Awareness of Problem; Explain Cause of Problem; Show Understanding of Reviewer's Situation
Continuing Relationship	Encourage Future Private Contact; Encourage Future Visit
Denying Problem	Challenge Reviewer's Decision; Frame Problem as Isolated Incident; Rebut; Suggest or Recommend; Highlight Hotel's Facility or Service; Emphasize Hotel's Practice or Mission
Expressing Feeling	Expressing Positive Feeling; Expressing Negative Feeling; Expressing Wish
Greeting	
Recognizing Reviewer's Value	
Self-Promoting	Echo or Consolidate Reviewer's Positive Comment; Mention Hotel's Practice, Facility or Plan
Thanking Reviewer	Thank the Reviewer for (Detailed) Sharing/Positive Feedback/Stay or Patronage

Fig. 1: Broadly based on Ho's (2017a) Framework of Moves and Submoves

Additionally, Ho's sequence of obligatory moves (see Fig. 2) was used to further investigate if the L2 students used obligatory moves in the same sequence as actual hotel representatives.

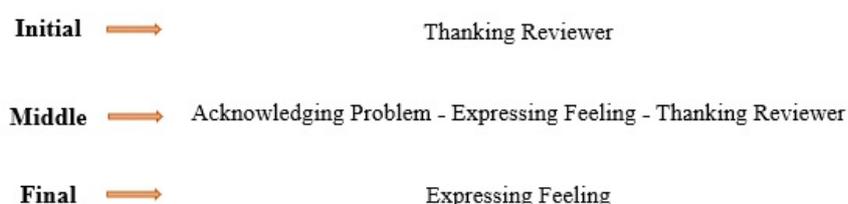


Fig. 2: Broadly based on Ho's (2017a) Sequence of Obligatory Moves

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1. Selection of Moves

The MAXQDA analysis showed that all the moves and submoves described by Ho were used by the L2 students. In addition, it also showed that several extra moves and submoves which are not part of Ho's framework were also employed by the participants in a lower scale [these additional moves will be discussed further in section 5.1.2]. Including these, and taking into account

that in some responses there were multiple instances of a particular move, a total of 351 submoves were used, which in turn resulted in 357 moves<sup>12</sup>.

### 5.1.1. Obligatory and Optional Moves

The move that was used the most in the gathered corpus was *Acknowledging Problem*. Ho's first obligatory move appeared in 92.5% of the corpus [37 responses]. The other two obligatory moves, *Expressing Feeling* and *Thanking Reviewer*, were also used in more than half of the responses: the former appeared in 60% of the corpus [24 responses], while the latter appeared in 67.5% [27]. Results seem to coincide with Ho's (2017a) division, but the Fisher's Test showed that differences within the group are significant<sup>13</sup>. Optional moves were used in a lower percentage, as would be expected. However, some of them presented a percentage which was equal to or higher than 60%, which contrasts with Ho's results. The analysis showed that *Continuing Relationship* was used in 67.5% of the responses [27], *Denying Problem* appeared in 25% [10], *Greeting* appeared in 82.5% [33], *Recognizing Reviewer's Value* in 32.5% [13] and *Self-Promoting* in 50% [20]. Hence, *Continuing Relationship* and *Greeting* seem to be obligatory in this corpus. However, once more, p-value makes it difficult to reach a conclusion, as differences with *Expressing Feeling* indeed are significant.

### 5.1.2. Additional Moves

The analysis showed that a total of five moves and five submoves, which did not appear in Ho's corpus [see Figure 1], were employed by the participants of this study. Following the current trend in *genre studies* (e.g. Ho, 2017b), moves were labelled according to their communicative function (Biber *et al.*, 2007).

The first additional move to be identified was *Compensating Reviewer* (adapted from Levy *et al.*, 2013), followed by *Stating Identification*, *Investigating Problem*, *Signing-off* and *Signing* (all adapted from Van Herck *et al.*, 2021). Whenever participants gave some sort of compensation to the reviewer, the move was labelled *Compensating Reviewer* [7 responses, i.e. 17.5%]. When participants introduced themselves, it was categorized as *Stating Identification* [2, i.e. 5%], and the moves that indicated that the hotel was going to investigate what happened were identified as *Investigating Problem* [8, i.e. 20%]. Finally, whenever participants would use closing pleasantries, the move was coded

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<sup>12</sup> *Recognizing Reviewer's Value* was only included in the counting of moves because it does not have any submoves. On the other hand, it must be noted that in the cases of *Acknowledging Problem* and *Denying Problem*, quantitative results of the submoves are higher than those of the moves. This is so because those submoves that were adjacent and served to achieve a higher communicative function were labelled together as their corresponding higher-order move: either *Acknowledging Problem* or *Denying Problem*.

<sup>13</sup> The results of the different Fisher's Exact Tests carried out cannot be illustrated nor discussed in depth due to space limitations.

*Signing-off* [17, i.e. 42.5%], and those moves which consisted on a signature were labelled *Signing* [13, i.e. 32.5%]. Looking at the frequencies of use, all the additional moves could be considered to be part of Ho's (2017a) optional move category<sup>14</sup>.

As for the submoves, it was observed that in some instances participants would simply say "thanks" or "thank you" without explaining why they were thanking the reviewer. This was coded *Thanking Reviewer without Detailing*. It was also noted that they made use of two types of *Greeting*: one where they employed the name of the reviewer, which was labelled *Personal Greeting*, and one where they only said "Hello" or "Dear Customer", which was categorized as *Impersonal Greeting*. In addition, the *Investigating Problem* move was subdivided into *Conveying that the Hotel will Take Action* and *Committing to a Follow-up*. The former referred to all instances where the participant would show that the hotel was going to do something to solve the problem, and the latter was used to code segments in which the hotel promised to be in contact, such as "You will receive news of us soon".

## 5.2. Sequence of Moves

The sequence of the moves used by the participants in their responses was worked out manually by i) listing the moves used in each response and their sequence and ii) counting which moves recorded the highest frequency in each of the positions (Ho. 2017a). This manual listing revealed that (1) the longest number of moves employed in the corpus added up to seventeen [mean number of moves per response of 8.35] and (2) the longest number of positions added up to twelve [average number of positions of 7.67]<sup>15</sup>. When a move had the highest frequency of use in several consecutive positions, these were grouped into one. For instance, *Acknowledging Problem* recorded the highest frequency in positions 3-7, so those five positions were counted as one and considered to be "third".

First, an initial outline of the sequence of all the moves -both obligatory and optional- in each of the responses was sketched. This was done following Ho's (2017a) classification, as our division is just tentative. This initial observation allowed for the creation of a sequence outline of all the moves used by the participants in general. And second, since one of the aims of this study is to examine the use that students of Tourism make of Ho's obligatory and optional moves, two other outlines were sketched: one of obligatory moves and

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the Fisher's Exact Test showed contradicting results for these moves as well. It is acknowledged that a larger number of responses would be needed in order to confirm the proposed hypothesis in all three cases.

<sup>15</sup> It is to be noted that in several instances, a sentence expressed two communicative functions and that, in others, two moves were linked in a sentence. In these cases, the moves were considered to occupy the same position. For instance, a position could be occupied by both an *Acknowledging Problem* and a *Compensating Reviewer* moves.

another one of optional moves. Finally, in order to classify the moves into “Initial”, “Middle” and “Final”, positions 1-2 were considered to be “Initial”, and positions 9-12 were considered to be “Final”<sup>16</sup>, which leaves positions 3-11 to be “Middle”. To illustrate this, keeping up with the example above, the 3-7 grouped position of *Acknowledging Problem* constituted the first move in the “Middle” position. The general outline of all the moves that were employed resulted as follows:

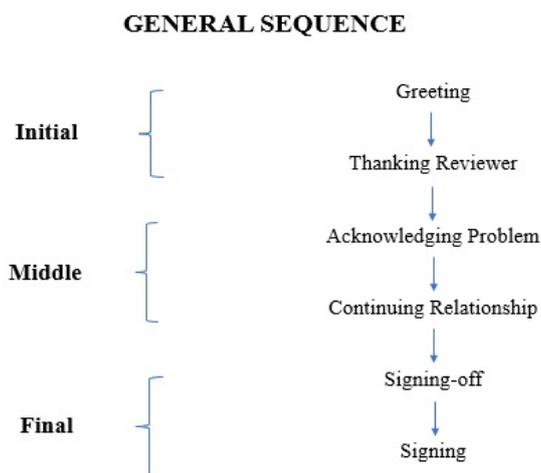


Fig. 3: General Sequence of the Moves Employed by the Students

Hereafter, the sequence outlines of the obligatory and optional moves will be discussed separately in more depth.

### 5.2.1. Sequence of Obligatory Moves

After the manual listing and counting, the first obligatory move to be used was *Thanking Reviewer*. It appeared in nine of the twelve positions and its highest frequency was in second position (in 17 responses, i.e. 42.5%). The next obligatory move was *Acknowledging Problem*, which was found in nine of the positions and recorded its highest frequency in the fourth one (in 18 responses, i.e. 45%). Finally, *Expressing Feeling* appeared in eight of the positions and its highest frequency of use was in the third one (in 11 of the responses, i.e. 27.5%). Fig. 4 shows the frequencies of obligatory moves in each of the positions:

<sup>16</sup> The decision to consider positions 9-12 as “Final” was made after doing the manual counting of the moves in each of the positions. The general outline served as guide to make the division of Initial-Middle-Final, as the only moves present in positions 9-12 were expressions that communicate closing: *Signing-off*, *Signing* and *Thanking Reviewer*.

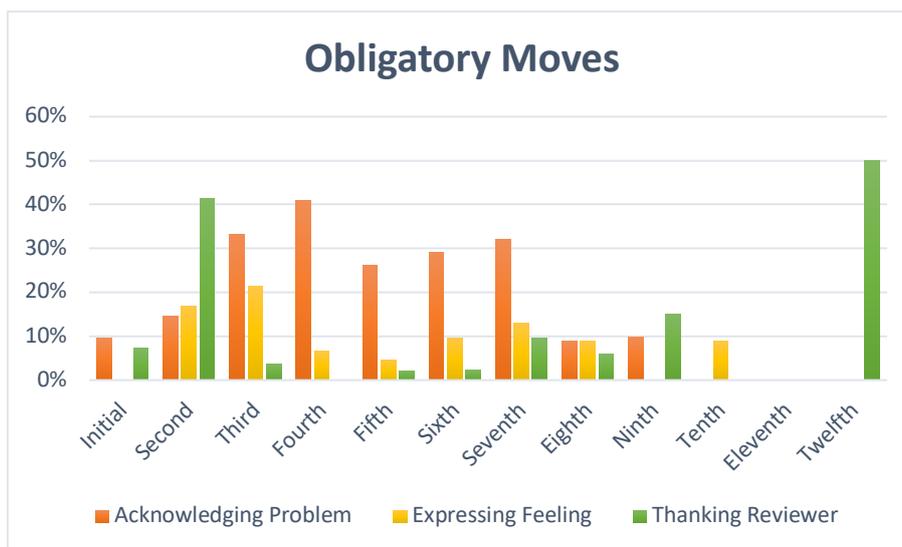


Fig.4 Frequency of Use Based on the Position (Obligatory Moves)

As explained above, when a move recorded the highest frequency in consecutive positions, those positions were grouped into one (see Fig. 5). Following this, an outline of the sequence of obligatory moves was drawn out, based on Ho’s structure of Initial-Middle-Final (see Fig. 6):

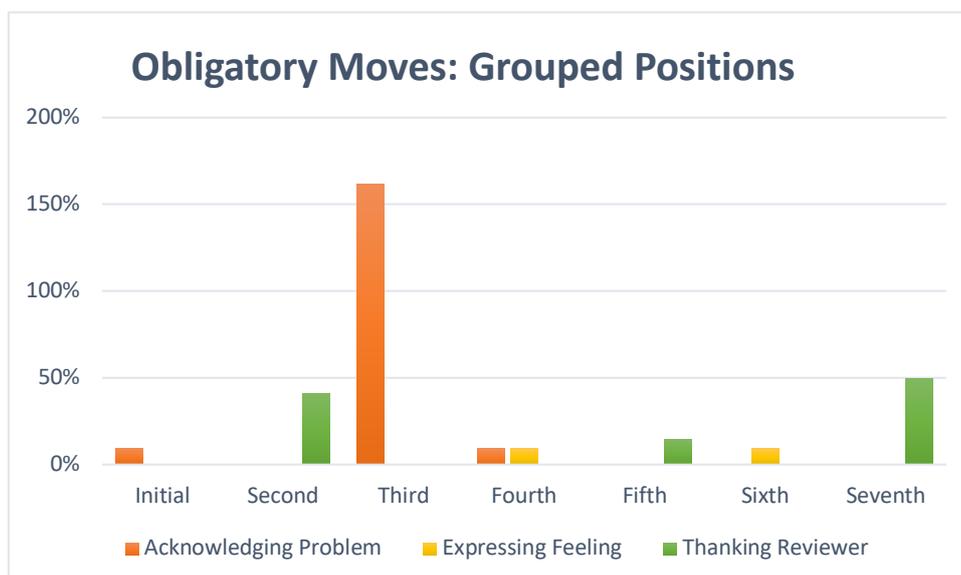


Fig. 5: Frequency of Use in Grouped Positions (Obligatory Moves)

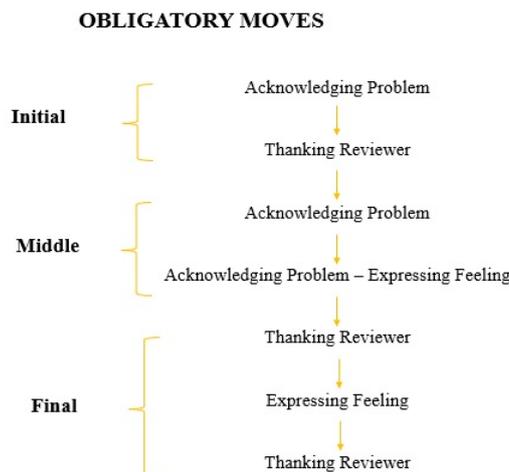


Fig. 6: Sequence of Obligatory Moves Employed by the Students

Ultimately, when compared to Ho's (2017a) sequence, we can see that there are only slight differences in the sequence of moves used by actual hotel representatives and that of the students of Tourism who participated in this study: a) *Thanking Reviewer* is used in "Final" position instead of "Middle"; and b) *Acknowledging Problem* is also used in "Initial" position. A complete response is shown below to illustrate the sequence of obligatory moves in the *review response genre* when written by L2 Tourism students [Caleb]:

- (1) Dear Bonnie. **(2-Thanking Reviewer)** Thank you for reviewing The Talbott Hotel and your experience as well. **(3-Acknowledging Problem)** Firstly, I understand the problem street noises can be during nighttime. We've been wanting to find a solution to this problem for our customers not to be annoyed by this sounds, but due to the closeness to the main street, it can be difficult to provide a proper remedy. **(4-Expressing Feeling)** Secondly, we are so sorry to hear your disappointment about our hygiene measures. We always make sure our rooms are crystal clear so each customer gets their room as clean as it should be. **(6- Acknowledging Problem)** We will be taking note on your comments so this error does not repeat itself again. **(7-Thanking Reviewer)** Thank you again for your feedback, we look forward for to you give us another chance in the future.

### 5.2.2. Sequence of Optional Moves

The quantitative analysis of the optional moves in each of the positions (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 8) showed the following: the move that recorded the highest frequency of occupying initial position was *Greeting* (in 33 responses, i.e. 82.5%), while that in second position was *Recognizing Reviewer's Value* (in 5 responses,

i.e. 12.5%)<sup>17</sup>. These two moves were considered to be “Initial” moves (see Fig. 9), the former being used in one of the positions, and the latter in seven. *Denying Problem* was used in seven of the positions, and its highest frequency was in the fifth and sixth positions (in 10 responses, i.e. 25% each). *Self-Promoting* also appeared in seven positions, and its highest frequency was in the fourth one (in 8 responses, i.e. 20%). Finally, *Continuing Relationship* appeared in seven positions as well, and it recorded its highest frequency in the eighth one (in 13 responses, i.e. 32.5%).

Regarding the additional moves identified, *Compensating Reviewer* was used in four positions, and its highest frequency was in the fifth one [3 responses, i.e. 7.5%]. *Stating Identification* appeared in only one position and recorded its highest frequency in second position [in 2 responses, i.e. 5%]. *Investigating Problem* appeared in seven positions, and its highest frequency was both in the fifth and sixth positions [in 3 responses, i.e. 7.5% each]. Finally, *Signing-off* and *Signing* appeared in six positions, the former recording its highest frequency in ninth position [in 5 responses, i.e. 12.5%] and the latter in the tenth one [in 4 responses, i.e. 10%].

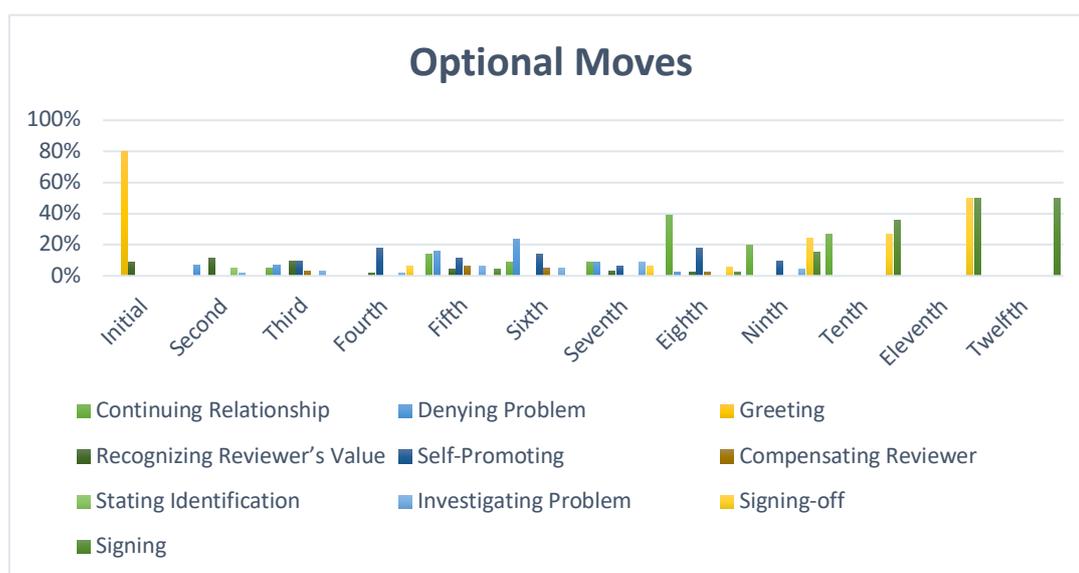


Fig. 7: Frequency of Use Based on the Position (Optional Moves)

<sup>17</sup> This move also recorded its highest frequency in third position [in 33 responses, i.e. 82.5%].

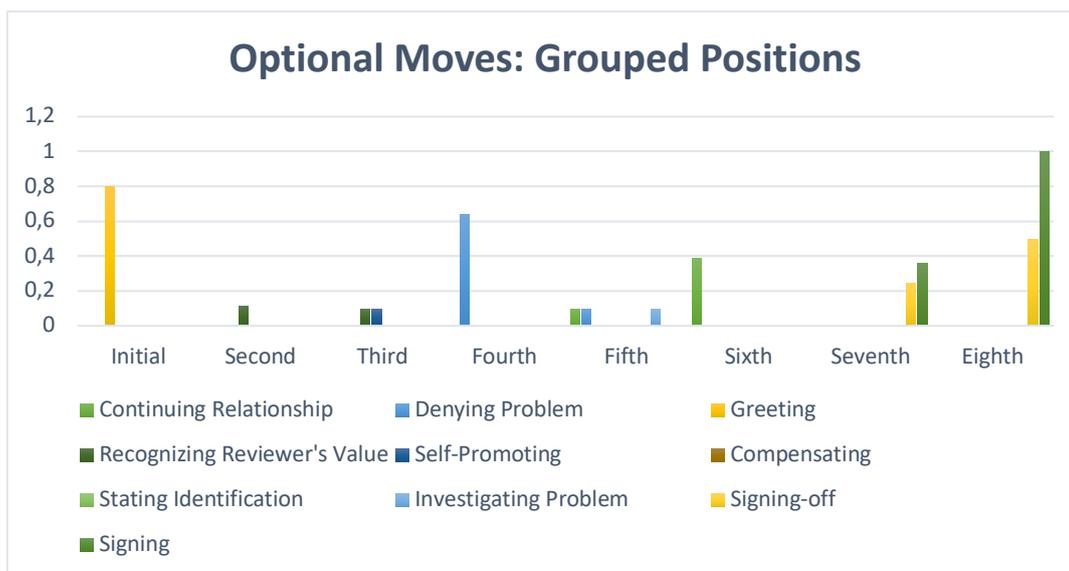


Fig. 8: Frequency of Use in Grouped Positions (Optional Moves)

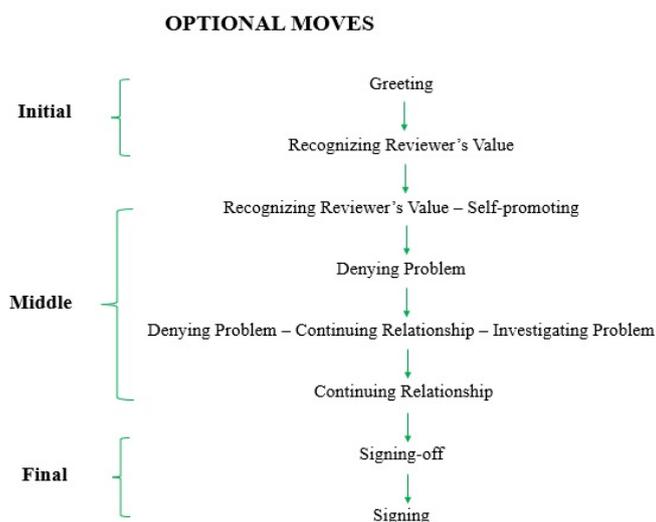


Fig. 9: Sequence of Optional Moves Employed by the Students

## 6. Conclusion

After the analysis, it was observed that the L2 students used all the moves and submoves in Ho's (2017a) Framework. Additionally, they also employed five moves and five submoves which did not appear in Ho's corpus. The moves were labelled *Compensating Reviewer*, *Stating Identification*, *Investigating Problem*, *Signing-off* and *Signing*, following Biber *et al.*'s (2007) definition of *move*. These additional moves could be added to Ho's 'optional' category, as their frequency of use was <60%. Nonetheless, the Fisher's Test showed that differences are not significant in some cases, so results are just tentative. In the same way, two of Ho's optional moves- *Continuing Relationship*

and *Greeting*- recorded a frequency of >60%. Consequently, both moves could be regarded as 'obligatory' and thus be moved to said category. Nonetheless, the Fisher's Exact Test showed that these results are not conclusive either, so a larger number of responses would be needed for this to be ascertained. On the other hand, only slight differences with regards to the sequence of 'obligatory' moves were observed. This suggests that the communicative performance of Tourism students in Spain does not differ much from that of actual hotel representatives. Hence, it is expected that Spanish students of Tourism would perform adequately in their L2 in a real professional context.

However, strong conclusions cannot be reached, as the corpus under study was fairly small: a larger database would help explore if other L2 students follow the same pattern. Similarly, the paper did not look at the reasons for and the implications of the obtained results, nor did it examine the influence that the differing proficiency levels of the participants may have had on their responses. Instead, this study represents a first step in the study of the communicative behavior of Spanish students of Tourism in the context of mediated service encounters. Finally, further research could investigate why Tourism students used certain 'optional moves' in such high frequency [as if they were 'obligatory'], but not others; as well as examine how they manage relationships with the reviewers in their responses: that is, the type of rapport orientation they adopt.

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