Cross-Cultural Negotiation: Touristic Service Encounters in Yucatán, Mexico

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1. Introduction

The genre of interaction known as service encounters has received significant attention from discourse analysts and researchers of pragmatics who have investigated various aspects of talk-in-interaction within this institutional context. Service encounters, or transactional interactions in which one person provides a good or service for another, can be analyzed from different perspectives, including the examination of the sequential organization of such interactions and how speakers negotiate openings, transactions, and closings (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2004); the realization of specific speech acts with special attention given to requests (Placencia, 2005, 2008); the negotiation of meaning in interethnic and cross-cultural interactions (Bailey, 1997; Callahan, 2006; Kidwell, 2000; Torras & Gafaranga; 2002); the use of politeness strategies (Ruzickova, 2007); and the inter- and intralinguistic pragmatic variation in service encounter interactions (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2004; Placencia, 2005, 2008). Service encounters constitute a noteworthy arena for the investigation of pragmatics and pragmatic variation due to their status as institutional, goal-oriented talk (Drew & Heritage, 1992) that consist of everyday interactions and that exhibit patterns that are often quite regular and are socially shared (Ventola, 1987).

The present study contributes to the literature on service encounter interactions and cross-cultural communication by examining cross-cultural service encounters realized between Mexican vendors of artifacts and souvenirs and their culturally and linguistically diverse customers in the open-air setting of Chichén Itzá, a famous tourist attraction in Yucatán, Mexico. The novel setting of a historic tourist site as the locus for interactions between mobile vendors and their potential, but often wary, clients (i.e., passing tourists) offers a unique look at this institutional context and contributes to our knowledge of Spanish pragmatics, pragmatic variation, and cross-cultural communication.

The present study is organized as follows: First, I review the literature on service encounters and establish a theoretical framework for the examination of intercultural institutional discourse. Next, I briefly discuss the objective of the current paper and the analytical framework adopted therein. This section is followed by a discussion of the methodology employed in gathering and analyzing the data. In the subsequent section, results are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings and their relation to the existent literature. Finally, I conclude the paper by considering the contribution of the current findings, some limitations of the current study as well as possibilities for future investigations.

2. Literature Review

Service encounters can be understood as everyday social interactions between a service provider and a customer who are in some service area (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2004; Merritt 1976). Although Merritt's (1976) position that the service provider must be "officially posted" is not borne out in the service encounters that comprise the current data, Merritt's assertion that such encounters must only be *oriented* to the transaction of service to be considered "service encounters," whether or

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not that transaction is consummated, aids in the classification of this study's data set as service encounters

Additionally, the goal-oriented nature of the transactional talk that comprises service encounters leads to their classification as "institutional interaction" (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Certain contexts and interactions, such as service encounters, can be considered institutional due to the manner in which the roles of their participants are made relevant to the activities around which the interaction is organized. For service encounters, then, the roles of the service seeker, or client/customer, and the service provider clearly delineate and identify the identities, responsibilities, and expectations of and for the participants as they pertain to the interaction at hand.

Although service encounter contexts vary greatly, service encounter interactions often follow a fairly regular pattern that can be generalized to various contexts. Kidwell (2000, pp. 20-21) offers an outline of the basic organization of service encounters understood generally. She represents their organization in the following way:

- 1. Opening
- 2. Request for service
- 3. Optional interrogative series
- 4. Provision, or not, of service
- Closing

This organization and its component parts will be revisited in the Results and Discussion sections with regards to the present data and in light of the contextual variables that influence interactional sequencing and speech act use.

The work of the last decade on service encounters, and especially that of service encounters conducted in the Spanish-speaking world, has, in large part, examined natural data and has generally focused on the request strategies and sequences employed by service encounter participants as well as the way in which service interactions are approached and conducted in different cultures. Although an exhaustive review of the literature is beyond the scope of the present paper, several studies that offer insight into what is known about service encounter pragmatics are briefly discussed, with special attention given to research on service encounters in the Spanish-speaking world.

Placencia (1998, 2005, 2008) offered detailed analyses of the pragmatic variation existent between different regions of the Spanish-speaking world with regard to service encounter request and politeness strategies. Placencia (1998) compared the degree of indirectness, the degree of formality, the completeness of request utterances, and the degree of deference exhibited in service encounter interactions in Ecuadorian and Peninsular Spanish. Placencia (2005) investigated and compared requests made in corner store transactions in Quito, Ecuador and Madrid, Spain. Similarly, Placencia (2008) examined pragmatic variation at an intranational level by exploring corner shop requests made in Quito and Manta, Ecuador. In all three studies, request and politeness strategies varied according to cultural and regional context by levels of directness, internal modification strategies used, orientation toward task, and/or deference conveyed.

Exploring service encounters in another cultural contexts, Ruzickova (2007) investigated requests and politeness strategies in Cuban Spanish, using natural data from a variety of service encounter contexts. Distinct from results found in some other Latin American contexts, Ruzickova encountered a predominate use of conventionally direct request strategies among Cuban speakers of Spanish. Ruzickova also found a preference for positive politeness, especially with regard to the use of in-group markers such as the informal address form tu, "pal" address forms, slang and group language, and the use of diminutives. Similarly, beyond the Spanish-speaking world, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) examined small shop service encounters in France in her analysis of opening and closing rituals, request strategies, and mitigation tactics employed by small shop customers and clerks in Lyons. She concluded that these interactions can be characterized by the use of a large number of "politeness formulae" including "conventionally indirect" requests, well-wishing, and thanking.

On a somewhat different research path, Placencia (2004) analyzed the non-transaction-oriented talk activities undertaken by shopkeepers in Quito, Madrid to build rapport with their recurring customers. She found that participants regularly engaged in talk activities that brought a personal

orientation to the institutional context and task-oriented transaction. According to Placencia, these talk sequences represented relation-oriented activities aimed at establishing and maintaining quality neighborhood relationships and connectedness. Similarly, Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2004) examined the closeness and/or distance exhibited between clothing and accessory shopkeepers and their customers in Montevideo, Uruguay and Quito, Ecuador. The authors encountered the use of various selling strategies in both Montevideo and Quito, including the disclosing of personal information, anticipating the customer's experience with the product, explaining the product, enumerating the product's attributes, and making an offer, among others. As a group, these studies constitute a rich body of knowledge about interactional patterns in service encounter contexts, especially within the Spanish-speaking world, and their foci, methodologies, and varied results encourage and guide the present exploration of Yucatecan touristic service encounters.

Also of great interest in pragmatic research is the intersection of service encounter interaction and cross-cultural communication. Bailey's (1997) seminal work examined how the cultural background and identity of an interaction's participants can influence how these speakers approach the communicative task of the service encounter. In his analysis of African American customers and Korean immigrant shopkeepers in New York City, the African American customers were found to display a more "socially expanded" approach to the service encounter in terms of the talk activities they deemed appropriate for the context, and the possible relationship between themselves and their shopkeeper interlocutors. They were found to often treat the interaction as a "sociable, interpersonal activity" as well as a business exchange. On the other hand, the immigrant Korean retailers demonstrated a "socially minimal" approach to service encounters and were described as being "interactionally reactive" rather than proactive. Bailey suggested that these different views on appropriate institutional behavior can be one source of interethnic tensions resulting from miscommunication. Kidwell (2000), on the other hand, demonstrates how the institutional context of a front desk service encounter in a university setting can function as a "shared background" that all participants in a cross-cultural exchange possess. Her study's participants are native English-speaking front desk attendants and non-native English-speaking students who seek their assistance. Despite cultural differences and a language barrier, it is the institutional context of the front desk service encounter that enabled, for instance, the front desk attendants to recognize and interpret various utterances as requests for service and to more efficiently provide that service. Applied to the present data, it is feasible that in the multicultural setting of a global tourist attraction, culturally variable orientations and approaches to service encounters may impact the interactions examined in the present corpus, as might the familiar context of an open-air, touristic service encounter.

Finally, also relevant to the present multilingual data, Callahan (2006) and Torras and Gafaranga (2002) discussed the linguistic components of cross-cultural interactions in the service encounter context. Callahan (2006) investigated language accommodation performed by bilingual shopkeepers in New York City. Employing seven fieldworkers who initiated service interactions in a variety of service contexts in which English and Spanish were both regularly used, Callahan described the tendency toward language accommodation, generally within their first turn, on the part of the bilingual service providers. Nonetheless, frequency and realization of language accommodation differed according to the age of the service providers, with younger Latino service providers being more likely to respond in English even if a request for service was made in Spanish. Torras and Gafaranga (2002) analyzed language alternation in trilingual (i.e., English, Spanish, Catalan) service encounters in Barcelona and suggested that such code alternation was performed by speakers as a "practical social action" that serves various medium-related functions including medium selection, medium repair, and medium suspension. For these authors, the choice of linguistic code can be influenced by a variety of ideological and political factors external to the service transaction. Nonetheless, the "language preference" demonstrated in these interactions serves as a categorization device through which participants establish social identities for themselves and others as they pertain to the interaction. Given the cross-cultural and multilingual nature of the present study's interactions, similar explorations of the linguistic code choices made by participants are warranted.

These previous studies, then, provide the impetus and foundation for the present examination of cross-cultural service encounters in a touristic setting in southern Mexico. The present study expands and complements this body of literature with its analysis of a multicultural and multilingual service

encounter context. Additionally, the data, collected in situ in Yucatán, Mexico, provide information about service encounter interactions in a region of the Spanish-speaking world that has received relatively little attention in the pragmatics literature.

3. Objective and Analytical Framework

The present study examines the organization and negotiation of cross-cultural and multilingual service encounters between artifact and souvenir vendors and their tourist customers in the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico in order to offer an account of the sequential, contextual, and linguistic features that influence such interactions. Specifically, I investigate 1) the general sequential organization of these service encounter interactions, 2) the actional moves made by participants, and 3) the strategies (e.g., phatic communication, language alternation, explanation) employed by speakers to achieve desired outcomes.

To examine these aspects of the touristic service encounters, I adopt Schiffrin's (2006) discourse analytical model and focus on two of her planes of discourse: act structures and the participation framework. Act structures refer to the "sequences of actions performed through speech" (p. 196) including greetings, compliments, requests, warnings, refusals, and hints, and the adjacency pairs that often describe their sequential realization. The participation framework refers to the "way that people organize and maintain an interaction by adopting and adapting roles, identities, and ways of acting and interacting" (p. 195). Analysis of this plane of discourse includes consideration of all aspects of the relationship between an interaction's participants. Schiffrin's model is particularly appropriate for the current study because it offers an integrated way of analyzing naturally-occurring discourse that incorporates elements from both conversational analysis and discourse analysis, and allows for the consideration of the sociocultural context of talk-in-interaction.

4. Method

4.1. Data and Participants

The data for the present study come from more than 55 hours of audio-recordings of service encounters that took place within the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico during June 2010. The participants in this study are two male artifact vendors who sell their products in Chichén Itzá. Both men are in their 30s, live in the nearby town of Pisté, Mexico, and are native speakers of Yucatec Maya and Spanish. As revealed in the recordings, both men also possess relative fluency in several other languages—including English, French, and Portuguese—which they use to communicate with the various international customers that pass their stands daily. Like the hundreds of other vendors who sell their wares inside Chichén Itzá, these two men are unlicensed vendors who arrive to the archaeological site daily to set up makeshift tables on which they sell carved wooden masks, ceramic replicas of Chichén Itzá's famous pyramid, and obsidian souvenirs.

Because of the manner in which the data were collected, as described in the next section, little information is known about the customers with whom the vendor-participants interacted in the data.

4.2. Data Collection

In order to obtain recordings of natural service encounters, these two artifact vendors wore digital audio-recorders and lapel microphones for five full workdays each during June 2010. The vendors were conscious of and consented to the recordings. Customers were not made aware of the recording device and consent was not received from them. This procedure was approved by the Institutional Review Board based on the public nature of the interactions and the assumption that these interactions could have been easily overheard by anyone in the vicinity (see also, Shively, 2008). The vendor-participants were asked to leave the recorder running during the entire day, but were instructed on how to operate it so as to allow them to avoid recording certain portions of their days if desired. Neither vendor stopped the recordings more than once per day; Alfredo obtained roughly 6-8 hours of

recordings per day while Enrique¹ obtained 3-6 hours per day. From these 12 days of recordings, six days were selected at random (three from each vendor) and the interactions present in their recordings were transcribed according to conventions adapted from Schiffrin (2006) (see Appendix A). The resulting corpus consists of 40 interactions: 19 of the 40 interactions come from Alfredo's recordings; the other 21 come from Enrique's. Additionally, 13 are complete interactions (meaning a transaction took place; eight from Alfredo and five from Enrique) and 27 are incomplete (meaning that the interaction did not result in a transaction; 11 from Alfredo and 16 from Enrique. See Appendix B for full transcriptions of one complete and one incomplete transaction). These interactions were then analyzed with regard to the sequential organization, act sequences, and buying and selling strategies they exhibit.

5. Results

This section is organized following the planes of discourse outlined by Schriffin (2006). I first discuss results pertaining to the act structures observed in the data. Next, I examine the participation framework as revealed through the participants' roles and identities, as well as their language choices, throughout the interactions.

5.1. Act Structures: Sequential Organization and Actional Moves 5.1.1. Openings

The service interactions recorded in Chichén Itzá exhibit a variety of opening sequences, a few examples of which are described and presented below. The vast majority of these sequences (i.e., 30 out of the 40 analyzed interactions) appear to be initiated by the vendor who often calls out to passing tourists and works to encourage them to approach his table of goods. Unfortunately, the present data do not include video-recordings, which could offer information about the non-verbal actions that might also serve to open the service encounters. For example, given the language barriers that often exist between the customers and vendors in this touristic service encounter context, passing tourists' gaze, or their approach to the table could easily initiate an interaction and serve to open the lines of communication. Nonetheless, from the audio-recorded data used for the present analysis, it has been observed that the vendor generally utters the first verbal turn of the opening sequence.

Opening sequences often consisted of one or several of the following components: a greeting, a solicitation for a request or an offer, and a medium selection sequence. Example (1) demonstrates a simple greeting sequence followed by an immediate request for price²:

(1) 1 Enr: Hola señorita. 2 C: Hola:. A cuánto?

In Example (2), on the other hand, the vendor (Enrique) opens the service encounter with a greeting, an offer solicitation, and the first pair part of a medium selection sequence (understood as a sequence in which the language to be used in the interaction is determined by participants, either implicitly or explicitly):

- (2) 1 Enr: Hola. Buen precio señorita? Puede preguntar sin c-.. Hay otro más
 - pequeña atrás. Mira, más pequeña. (2s) De España? (2s) Habla español?
 - 3 C: Sí.

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¹ The names presented here are pseudonyms used to protect the confidentiality of the vendor-informants.

² In all transcription excerpts, "Enr" refers to the vendor Enrique, "Alf" to the vendor Alfredo and C to the anonymous customer. Customers are numbered if the interaction involved more than one. Conversations were transcribed as heard; although grammatical inconsistencies are present in the transcriptions, it should be remembered that these are interactions between speakers of many different languages and that, even for the Spanish-speaking vendors, Spanish may not be their first or dominant language.

In the few exchanges initiated by the customer, the first turn is almost always a request for price information as in Examples (3) and (4) below.

- (3) 1 C: /?/..cuestan los animales?
 - 2 Alf: A veinte pesos parejo señor. Sea grandes o chicas. O tres piezas por cincuenta.
- (4) 1 C1: Qué cuesta?
 - 2 Enr: Cuál señorita?
 - 3 C2: Ésta de /?/
 - 4 Enr: Ah esta tunkuul.
 - 5 C2: Tunkuul.

In general, however, opening sequences were initiated by the vendor and typically accomplished the acts of greeting and selecting the medium for the conversation.

5.1.2. Requests

Unlike in much of the previous literature on service encounters, the service encounters included in the present corpus contain very few explicit requests. Due the specific context of an open-air touristic setting where prices are known to be negotiable and where potential customers' orientation to the larger context is one of tourism, browsing, and sightseeing, rather than making explicit requests for goods or services, customers request information about the prices of the items in which they are interested. Example (5) demonstrates how such a request for information may be realized:

- (5) 1 Alf: Habla español?
 - 2 C1: Sí, a cómo salen estos?
 - 3 Alf: A veinte pesos señorita.
 - 4 C2: Y estos?
 - 5 Alf: Parejo.

In this instance, the vendor opens the interaction with the first pair part of a medium selection to which the customer replies in the affirmative. Immediately after, the customer requests information about the price of particular items in which she is interested.

In cases in which the customers do not make an immediate request for price information, the vendors often utter several "request solicitations" or "offer solicitations" to encourage customers to ask about prices. These request and offer solicitations are illustrated in Example (6) and take the form of questions and requests for information that encourage customers to answer in a way that indicates interest and could initiate a negotiation sequence.

- (6) 1 Enr: Hola. (3s) Buen precio señor. (3s) Habla español?
 - 2 C: Sí.
 - 3 Enr: Más barato si habla español. De qué parte noh visita?
 - 4 C: España.
 - 5 Enr: Espa[ña
 - 6 C: [Valencia
 - 7 Enr: Valencia: Alguno que le ha gustado? Colgantes? Algo para la chica? (4s). Esa?
 - 8 Le sale por trescientos ochenta

In this example, after greeting the customer and engaging in a medium selection sequence, Enrique encourages the customer to express interest and to inquire about the price by his series of request solicitations in line 7. We can infer that during the pause, the customer indicated non-verbal interest in an item, a gesture which Enrique interpreted as a request for price. He subsequently responds to this request with price information in line 8. Examples of offer solicitations will be provided in the next section.

5.1.3. Negotiation sequences

After requesting price information, the customer and vendors often (i.e., in 19 out of the 40 interactions) entered into a negotiation sequence. In fact, the vendor's response to the request for information was often interpreted as an offer that initiated a sequence of bargaining and negotiation. This negotiation typically followed one of two patterns. According to the first pattern, an offer was generally made on the part of the vendor. This offer was then explicitly refused by the customer. So as to not lose the potential sale, the vendor often then solicited an offer from the customer in order to encourage the customer to propose his or her own new offer. Example (7) illustrates this offer-refusal-offer solicitation sequence. In this example, Enrique is negotiating with two Portuguese-speaking customers.

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(7) 1 C: Eh? Cuento?
2 Enr: Cientu i tenta
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2 Enr: Cientu i tenta pesos. Pesos, no ma..no, no dólares

3 C2: Cuánto?
4 C1: Cientu tenta
5 C2: [Noo!

6 Enr: [Pero cuánto pa..cuánto vas pagar caballero. Cuánto señorita? Cuánto va as

7 gastar? 8 C1: /?/

9 Enr: Más o menos!10 C2: Dez..deiz pesos

11 Enr: Dez peso! Dez dólares. Ciento veinte. Dez dólares.

12 C1: Não ((says something in Portuguese to C2))

13 Enr: Cuánto tiene? Cuánto?

14 C2: /?/ peso

15 Enr: Cuánto tiene amigo?

16 C1: /?/

17 Enr: Veinte pesos?! No hay nada de veinte pesos amigo.

(6s)

18 Enr: Hasta luego.

Here, line 1 contains the request for price information, which is answered in line 2. This response to the request is interpreted by the customer not only as an answer to her question, but also as an offer, as evidenced by her refusal of the named price in line 12. After this refusal, C1 does not offer a new price; so, Enrique tries to encourage her to do so in line 13 with the offer solicitation "Cuánto tiene? Cuánto?" The customer's response to this offer solicitation could not be understood on the recording; nonetheless, it can be inferred from the sequence that C1 offered veinte pesos. To this offer, Enrique utters an explicit refusal in line 17 and the negotiation sequence and entire interaction is closed in line 18.

The second pattern for negotiation often observed in the data is a series of offers and counteroffers. Example (8) contains several instances of this *offer-counteroffer* pattern.

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(8) 1 Alf: ¿Cuál le gusta [amigo? 2 C: [Cuánto?
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3 Alf: Ah, a ochenta pesos. Normalmente las doy a ciento veinte. En ochenta pesos me

4 da, puro madera.

5 C: Ese?

6 Alf: Eso es más económico. Este es de piedra, le cuesta a cincuenta pesos. Cuántos

7 quieres llevar de éstas? /?/ no pesan, a llevar la madera

8 C: Tren pesos 9 Alf: Cuánto?

10 C: Treint.

11 Alf: Treinta? Hmm, mira, a cuarenta la de piedra.

12 C: Free dolárs 13 Alf: Three dollar? 14 C: Tree dolárs.

15 Alf: Look, give me six for ún. Six for one.

16 C: No...no.

17 Alf: Alright, not two not three; I take it for five for each. Five dollar for each.

18 C: Five dos? 19 Alf: [No

20 C: [Five dollars, dos?

21 Alf: No, nah. For uno, five dollar for uno. This is good price. This is /?/.

This interaction is opened with a request solicitation uttered by the vendor, Alfredo. This request solicitation is immediately followed by requests for price information on the part of the customer in lines 2 and 5, which are each answered by the vendor in lines 3 and 6. Given that the customer does not react to these price responses with either a refusal or a new offer, Alfredo tries another request solicitation in lines 6-7. Rather than responding directly to the vendor's request solicitation, the customer proposes an offer in line 8. The response to this offer comes in line 11 in the form of a counteroffer that only implies refusal of the initial offer by suggesting a new price. This counteroffer, then, serves as the second pair part to the original offer, but also serves as a first pair part to a new adjacency pair sequence. The customer responds with a counteroffer of his own in line 12, which is then countered again by the vendor in line 15. Only in line 16 is the previous offer explicitly refused. The sequence then begins again with an offer proposed by Alfredo in line 17, countered by the customer in line 18, and refused by Alfredo in line 19. The same offer is made again by the customer in 20 and refused by Alfredo in 21 who, again, makes an offer of his own. The customer and vendor follow the offer-counteroffer pattern for several more lines before the interaction comes to an end with no completed transaction 3.

5.1.4. Confirmation of sale

During and following often extensive, several-turn negotiation sequences, it becomes necessary to confirm that a customer desires the product for the last-named price in order to close the sale. Nonetheless, in the absence of explicit requests, vendors must often resort to alternative interactional methods to end negotiation and to initiate the completion of the transaction. One frequently observed conversational move is the vendors' acknowledgement of an implied request. In these cases, the vendor utters a declaration that implies the occurrence of a request on the part of the customer and is intended to confirm the sale of the item in question. An example of an acknowledgement of an implied request is exhibited in line 4 in Example (9):

(9) 1 Enr: Sí tiene la pirámide, el Chac mol. Y el calendario

2 C: Oh sí.

3 Enr: S.. le puedo dar un mejor precio. Claro. La primera venta del día.

(Cs talk in Portuguese between themselves- 4s))

4 Enr: Le pongo en una bolsita.

(3s)

5 C: Cuánto vale?

In the above example, Enrique attempts to close the sale by suggesting in line 4 that a request has been made on the part of the customers. He acknowledges this implied request by declaring that he

³ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, the negotiation and bargaining sequences arguably constitute the most interesting and research-worthy aspect of the present corpus. Nevertheless, the purpose of the present paper is to offer an overall description and analysis of these interactions; a specific and in-depth exploration of the bargaining sequences will be the focus of a separate study.

will put the item in a bag for the customer. In this particular instance, this strategy does not immediately result in a sale, but does encourage the customer to request information about the price of the item, initiating a negotiation sequence.

A similar move is used to accept an offer made by a customer in Example (10) below:

```
(10) 1 C2: Three-sixty. It's es trescientos sesenta
2 Enr: Dólar tiene? [O
3 C1: [No
4 Enr: O pesos?
5 C2: Pesos
6 Enr: Bueno démelos. Se la pongo en la bolsa.
7 C1: (to C2) I'll pay you as soon as I get back..
8 C2: Ok so trescientos sesenta
9 Enr: Ok
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In this example, the italicized utterance in line 6 serves to confirm the offer made in line 1, acknowledging the unuttered request for the product that the offer implied.

5.1.5. Closings

Perhaps due to the open-air setting of these service encounters and to their placement within the larger context of a tourist attraction that people visit primarily to explore the archaeological remains of an ancient Maya settlement, most of the service encounters included in the present analysis do not contain closing sequences. In fact, only 16 out of 40 interactions included conversational moves that served to close the interaction. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the interactions that included closings were the *completed* service encounters in which an actual transaction took place. Such an example of a closing sequence following a completed transaction is illustrated in Example (11):

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(11) ((audible wrapping of product in plastic))
1 Alf: ...Aquí tienen, /?/?
2 C3: Gra[cias
3 C1: [Gra[cias
4 Alf: [Muchas gracias. Que tengan buen día.
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In this example, a three-turn thanking series leads up to the vendor's well-wishing in the final turn, which serves to close the interaction.

It can be inferred from the corpus of recordings that many of the interactions that do not contain verbal closing sequences ended when customers simply moved away from the vendor's table, perhaps passing on to view the next vendor's wares. Nonetheless, one of the vendors, Enrique, also appears to intentionally leave his incomplete service encounters open, perhaps so as to leave available the option for a later sale. Example (12) demonstrates Enrique's resistance to explicitly closing his service interactions.

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(12) 1 Enr: Pesos. No, pero hay descuento para usted. No es el precio final. Eso es de seiscientos ochento. Más grande.
3 C: Ah, no traemos tanto.
4 Enr: Cuánto tiene amiga? Cuánto me ofrece?
5 C: Ay, no. Muy poquito. Gracias.
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6 Enr: Aproveche! España va bien! Buen precio. Algo de plato.

In this interaction, the customer refuses Enrique's offer solicitation and moves to close the encounter in line 5. However, rather than following the customer's move to close the interaction, Enrique attempts to keep the interaction going with remarks that encourage the customer to take

advantage of his prices, in line 6. Line 6 is the final line of the interaction, suggesting that the customer walked away.

5.1.6. Summary

Considering the previously described act structures, a general sequential organization for these service encounters can be suggested. Differing slightly from the basic organization offered by Kidwell (2000), two principal patterns of sequential organization emerged in the present data. The first pattern can be described with the following organization of speech act sequences:

- 1. Optional greeting
- 2. Medium selection sequence
- 3. Request for price information
- 4. Negotiation sequence
- 5. Confirmation of sale
- 6. Provision, or not, of service
- 7. Optional closing

The interactions that exhibit this pattern generally included a request for price information on the part of the customer either as the opening sequence or immediately following the opening sequence. Service encounters that did not exhibit this immediate request for price information generally followed the second pattern:

- 1. Optional greeting
- 2. Medium selection sequence
- 3. Series of request/ offer solicitations
- 4. Request for price information
- 5. Negotiation sequence
- 6. Confirmation of sale
- 7. Provision, or not, of service
- 8. Optional closing

The service encounters that followed this pattern differed from those described first in that between the medium selection sequence and the request for price information, vendors often encouraged the request for price through a series of request and/or offer solicitations. The manner in which this basic organizational schema differs from that of Kidwell (2000) will be examined in more detail in the Discussion section.

5.2. Participation framework: Participant identities, roles, relationships, and language choices

5.2.1. Linguistic code

Given the cross-cultural nature of the service encounters included in this study, the choice of linguistic code was an important part of the interactional sequence. Tourists from around the world visit Chichén Itzá every day, and vendors inside the archaeological zone must be linguistically aware and flexible so as to attract and interact with customers who may or may not speak Spanish. Attention to linguistic code was observed throughout the data in two main conversational actions: 1) medium selection and 2) language accommodation (defined here as adopting the linguistic code choice of the interlocutor).

Medium selection sequences were previously mentioned in the description of the service encounters' openings. These sequences generally occurred at the beginning of vendor-initiated interactions and consisted of an explicit question posed by the vendor about the language spoken by the customer (see Examples [2] and [6]). Nonetheless, medium selection also sometimes took place implicitly, with vendors uttering phrases most often in both Spanish and English in order to offer both

possibilities and to observe the medium selected by the customer on their next turn. One such example of implicit medium selection is Alfredo's series of opening utterances in Example (13):

- (13) 1 Alf: Hola, hola, ¿cuál le gusta? Which one you like here. Good price. (4s) Halo señor.
 - 2 (2s) Which one you like here? You like one a /?/ (12s) Which one you like, mir?
 - 3 Special price for you not too much here.

When the customers in this interaction finally engage with Alfredo after several more turns on his part, they respond to him in English. These medium selection sequences allow for participants to propose and establish the language in which the service encounter will be conducted and suggest to the other participants the language in which they are most comfortable. They also provide information about social identity as it pertains to the interaction at hand, categorizing participants according to likely ethnic origin and suggesting possible motivations for their presence in Chichén Itzá (e.g., vacation, business, afternoon trip, honeymoon, etc.). In some cases, when the medium was not selected explicitly and the native language of the customer was not readily apparent in his or her accent or utterances, code-switching and language alternation *became* the selected medium, as in Example (8) above.

Related to medium selection was the prevalence of accommodation made on the part of the vendors to the customers' choice of linguistic code. In the interactions included in the present corpus, vendors follow the customers' lead and accommodate to their choice of linguistic code usually within their next turn at talk. Even when the customer switched languages in the middle of an interaction, the vendor generally tailored the language of their next turn at talk accordingly. Example (14) demonstrates this language accommodation on the part of Alfredo in his interaction with two native English-speaking women, one of whom attempts to speak in Spanish intermittently throughout the interaction.

- (14) 1 C1: Ok I'll give you thirty dol..thirty doll..uh
 - 2 C2: Yeah, s[o
 - 3 Alf: [Four hundred fifity, no? Mexican money
 - 4 C2: But, but we need to go un bajo porque uh, cuatro um uh ciento cincuenta es más
 - 5 que treinta dólares.
 - 6 Alf: No, le digo el costo de cincuenta se la dejo por los cuarenta. El cuarenta dólares
 - 7 amer..eh.. americanos para pesos son como quinientos pesos cuatrocientos
 - 8 cuarenta dólares.
 - 9 C2: Sí, si, me me um usted dice uh treinta dol.. dólares, en esto caso es
 - 10 C1: Más
 - 11 C2: Uh..cuatrociento
 - 12 Alf: Para, mire, cuatrocientos cincuenta pesos, si usted me ofrece cuatrocientos
 - 13 cincuenta pesos, para en dólares, son como treinta y...como treinta y ocho más o
 - menos, no llega ni a cuarenta dólares.
 - 15 C2: Uh..um. Queremos treinta dólares.
 - 16 Alf: Pero qué moneda tiene? Americanos o mexicanos?
 - 17 C1: No. mexicano
 - 18 Alf: Cuánto...cuánto me ofrece en precios mexicanos? Eso-
 - 19 C2: Well, treinta ss..em..uh trescientos ochenta
 - 20 Alf: Mm- hmm más o menos. Mire, pónme cuatrocientos. Por por como treinta y
 - dos, treinta y tres dólares. [Maybe thirty-three
 - 22 C1: [That's too ...that's all we have
 - 23 Alf: I give you four hundred Mexican money

In this exchange, vendor and customer speak in English for several turns. Then, during the negotiation sequence, C1 switches to Spanish midway through her turn in line 4. Alfredo follows her lead in his next turn (line 5) and the conversation continues in Spanish for several more turns. In line 19, C1 utters her first word in English, but then finishes her turn in Spanish. Accordingly, Alfredo

takes his next turn (lines 20-21) in Spanish, but, at the end, repeats the last part in English. C1 takes Alfredo's offer of a code-switch and takes the floor with her next turn (line 22) in English.

5.2.2. In-group discourse

Beyond establishing the medium for the interaction, one of the vendors, Enrique, uses information about the cultural and linguistic identity of his customers to encourage their interest in his products through the use of in-group discourse. When his customers are Spanish-speaking, he promises them cheaper prices due to their linguistic preference for and abilities in Spanish. Additionally, he assures them that for others, specifically "gringos", the prices he quotes are much higher. Take example (15):

- (15) 1 Enr: Hola. Buen precio señorita? Puede preguntar sin c-.. Hay otro más pequeña atrás. Mira, más pequeña. (2s) De España? (2s) Habla español?
 - 2 C: Sí
 - 3 Enr: Más barato si habla español.
 - 4 C: Sí.

In this sequence, after establishing that his interlocutor speaks Spanish, he promises a cheaper price for those who speak Spanish, communicating a sort of privilege to the customer for her status as a member of the in-group.

In example (16), Enrique takes the in-group discourse even further:

- (16) 1 Enr: Puede verlas sin compromiso. He dicho que para Chile mah..más barato.
 - 2 C1: Cuánto /?/?
 - 3 Enr: Quinientos cincuenta le dejo a la señorita.
 - 4 C1: Quinientos cincuenta.
 - 5 Enr: Para los gringos pido setecientos cincuenta. Pero ya para ustedes pues ya es un
 - 6 poco menos.. doscientos menos.

In this example, not only does Enrique establish the customer's Chilean origin as a feature that connects him to the in-group (line 1), he also shows evidence that acceptance into the in-group is a privilege by sharing with this customer information about the higher price he offers to those not part of the group (lines 5-6).

5.2.3. Phatic communication

Finally, Enrique also employs phatic communication—or "small talk"—to engage potential clients and maintain their interest in his products. In addition to conversational moves regarding the transaction in progress, Enrique asks questions about customers' country of origin and reasons for visiting Chichén Itzá, and introduces conversation about the weather as well as Maya cultural and linguistic facts. Example (17) illustrates this inclusion of phatic communication within the service encounter interaction:

- (17) 1 Enr: De qu...eh..primera vez Chichén Itzá?
 - 2 C2: Sí:
 - 3 Enr: Sí, le gusta?
 - 4 C2: Li:ndo, hermoso.
 - 5 Enr: Sí, luna de miel, me imagino?
 - 6 C2: No, no no más solo de vacaciones
 - 7 Enr: Solo de vacaciones, practicando.
 - 8 C3: Allí treinta pesos

In this example, in the middle of the service encounter interaction, Enrique asks the customers if it is their first time in Chichén Itzá (line 1), if they like it (line 3) and if they are on their honeymoon

(line 5). Rather than restricting the talk to task-oriented topics, Enrique branches out and brings a sense of personal connection to his approach to the service encounter. This use of phatic communication, however, is only found in Enrique's interactions and not of those of Alfredo.

6. Discussion

This section discusses the results of the present study in light of previous studies on service encounter interaction and cross-cultural communication. The touristic service encounters analyzed in the present study exhibited many of the same characteristics of service encounters in small corner shops, bakeries, pharmacies, university setting front desks, and the other service encounter contexts studied in previous research on this institutional context (Placencia, 1998, 2005, 2008; Ruzickova, 2007; Kidwell, 2000). Nonetheless, they also exhibited several significant differences. Most striking, perhaps, is the absence of explicit requests for goods or services in Chichén Itzá touristic service encounters. Due to the necessity of inquiring about and negotiating the price of goods for sale as well as the customers' orientation to the larger sightseeing context, the present service encounters are centered around speech act sequences like request and offer solicitations and requests for price information. As such, the basic organization proposed by Kidwell (2000) was modified slightly to include these speech act sequences in place of requests, and to add the negotiation sequence and confirmation of sale.

Similar to Kidwell (2000), the present service encounters demonstrate the importance of the institutional context in helping the participants interpret conversational moves, especially when the vendor and the customer(s) do not share a first language. For example, given the open-air, bargain-style service encounter context, customers interpreted the response to their requests for price information not just as the provision of information, but also as an opening offer to which they usually responded either with an explicit refusal or a counteroffer. While the approaches to and perspectives on service encounters may have been different according to the social and cultural norms of the multicultural participants (Bailey, 1997), the shared knowledge of the standard practice for this institutional interaction aided in the negotiation of meaning and the interpretation of different conversational moves.

Beyond sequential organization, the service encounters also evidenced the use of various strategies previously described in the literature for establishing, encouraging, and maintaining particular roles, identities, and relationships of and between customers and vendors. The choice of linguistic code was an important component in the studied interactions, with explicit medium selection often occurring in the opening sequence of the encounter. This "practical social action" (Torras & Gafaranga, 2002) allowed participants to establish from the first few turns of interaction where they were coming from and in what language they hoped to conduct the service transaction. Vendors, for their part, were also quite adept at accommodating to the customers' language choices. Similar to Callahan (2006), vendors accommodated to their clients' choice of code typically within their next turn, even when a change in code took place mid-interaction. The data were also examined for strategic uses of code choice, especially on the part of the vendors (i.e. whether vendors switched to their first language during negotiation sequences in order to obtain greater control over the direction of the transaction). However, no such evidence was found; instead, vendors appeared to follow carefully their customers' medium selections.

Finally, one of the vendors, Enrique, expanded upon medium selection sequences to ask customers where they were from, why they were in Mexico, whether they had visited Chichén Itzá before, and to offer information about Maya culture and language as well as about the weather of the region. He used the responses he received from customers not only as part of a selling strategy (Ruzickova, 2007; Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2004) in which he often suggested to the customers their belonging to a privileged "in-group" to whom he would give a special price, but also as a means of engaging with customers and adding a personal touch to the transactional discourse. Unlike in Placencia (2004) where the customers and vendors know each other from the *barrio* and have relatively frequent contact, the vendor in this study appears to add a similar "orientation to 'personalness'" to his institutional discourse despite the likelihood that he will likely never encounter the same customers more than once. As Placencia (2004) describes, the kinds of rapport-building

activities exhibited in her study (and by Enrique here) are less likely to occur in service encounter interactions where there is no regularity of contact. Indeed, the other vendor included in this study, Alfredo, does not exhibit this same tendency toward phatic communication with customers. As such, it remains to be seen whether these rapport-building activities are a characteristic of the personal style of a particular vendor or are more widely employed by other vendors in the service encounter context described here.

7. Conclusion

The present study examined the sequential, contextual, and linguistic features that characterize touristic service encounters within the famous archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá in Yucatán, Mexico. The setting was a relatively novel one within service encounter research in Spanish and, as such, permitted the comparison of the present encounters with those from more frequently described service encounter contexts. Additionally, the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic nature of many of the presently examined encounters has lead to the analysis of the linguistic and contextual resources employed in the negotiation of intercultural communication.

Although the data presented constitute a rich source of information on cross-cultural service encounter interaction, much is lost without the inclusion of visual and gestural aspects of communication and negotiation. Future research of service encounters, especially of an intercultural nature, would benefit greatly from the use of video-recordings. Of course, ethical and practical constraints on the gathering of visual data make video-recorded data difficult to acquire.

Finally, given the growing literature on pragmatic variation between varieties of Spanish, an avenue for future research includes the investigation of service encounters in similar touristic settings in other parts of Mexico and/or other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Although the institutional context of the service encounter provides a common base for the organization of interactions, fascinating variation is sure to exist in the realization of speech acts, in the type and frequency of selling strategies, and in the patterns of negotiation observed in other parts of the world and in other varieties of the Spanish language.

Appendices

Appendix A

Transcription conventions (adapted from Schiffrin, 2006, p. 175)

- . sentence-final falling intonation
- , clause-final intonation ("more to come")
- ! exclamatory intonation
- ? final rise
- ... pause of ½ second or more
- [overlapping speech
- : elongated vowel sound
- = at right of line indicates segment to be continued after another's turn; at left of line indicates continuation of prior segment after another's turn
- /?/ inaudible utterance
- (()) transcriber comment

Appendix B

Full transcriptions for example incomplete and complete transactions.

Example incomplete transaction:

- 1 Alf: ¿Cuál le gusta [amigo? 2 C: [¿Cuánto?
- 3 Alf: Ah, a ochenta pesos. Normalmente las doy a ciento veinte. En ochenta pesos me da, puro

13 14

15 C:

That's evil?

4 madera. 5 C: Ese? 6 Alf: Eso es más económico. Este es de piedra, le cuesta a cincuenta pesos. ¿Cuántos quieres llevar de éstas? /?/ no pesan, a llevar la madera 8 C: Tren pesos ¿Cuánto? 9 Alf: Treint. 10 C: 11 Alf: Treinta? Hmm, mira, a cuarenta la de piedra. 12 C: Free dolárs 13 Alf: Three dollar? Tree dolárs. 14 C: 15 Alf: Look, give me six for ún. Six for one. 16 C: No...no. 17 Alf: Alright, not two not three; I take it for five for each. Five dollar for each. 18 C: Five dos? 19 Alf: [No [Five dollars, dos? 20 C: 21 Alf: No, nah. For uno, five dollar for uno. This is good price. This is /?/. 22 C: Four dolár? 23 Alf: Five. [five 24 C: [Four four dolár, [uno 25 Alf: [Cinco, cinco... cinco 26 C: Four 27 Alf: Take ah dis one for four 28 C: [laughs] 29 Alf: Take ah dis one for four 30 C: Ah no 31 Alf: This is too heavy, this too heavy, this is stone. And that one is /?/ wood. This is more 32 good. 33 C: /?/ 34 Alf: Yes, and the wood is more [difficult. 35 C: [Four dolár 36 Alf: Five 37 C: Four dolár uno 38 Alf: Sorry. 39 C: No worry Example of complete interaction: 1 Alf: Hola, hola 2 C: 3 Alf: ¿Le gusta alguno? Mira, así lo podemos...observar. ¿Cuál le gusta? ¿Habla español? (2s) Por favor? Please? 5 C: Mm hmm (2s) Okay. 6 Alf: Have a that way. Have a others. (2s). Which one maybe you like it? (2s) Have a oth[er 7 C: This one 8 Alf: This? (4s) eh? 9 C: How much? 10 Alf: For this one, it's uh, three hundred fifty pesos 11 C: Three hundred fif[ty pesos 12 Alf: [yeah. Maybe I buy two piece, I give you a little bit uh off the cost

price. This is very good. This is hand a make it that one, that much uh work. And this

one..and the the men represent, look at this one the eagle.

- 16 Alf: Yes, please.
- 17 C: That's all evil?
- 18 Alf: This is more. This is fi /?/ here.
- 19 C: That's evil? You like evil? Looks like firebird to me.
- 20 Alf: Eagle that one represent the Mexico, look.
- 21 C: 'S gonna bring me bad luck?
- 22 Alf: 'cuse me?
- 23 C: Is it gonna bring me bad luck?
- 24 Alf: uhh
- 25 C: (laughs)
- 26 Alf: I have more for this. I have other two here look. And this one and the men and the
- 27 symbol /?/ and this one the offerent Maya. (3s). Which one you like it maybe?
- 28 C: I don't know!
- 29 Alf: I have others. The other one, the blue one.
- 30 C: This has the scary guy on it.
- 31 Alf: I have other complete the warrior. This is uh represent and the fortune god. No?
- Represent here?
- 33 C: (to other C) You think we'll survive the year 2010 if I get one a these?
- 34 C2: I dunno
- 35 Alf: And buy only one, maybe two?
- 36 C: (laughs)
- 37 Alf: Yeah, two more cheaper. Look at this one, the yellow.
- 38 C: I like that one.
- 39 Alf: Look...umm... and the cost price on three...on three umm..or maybe this one? (2s) This
- 40 is here, please. (3s).
- 41 C: There
- 42 Alf: He's the same this one and the=.
- 43 C: He's cute.
- 44 Alf: and the fortune god for this one.
- 45 C: The fortune god?
- 46 Alf: Yeah.
- 47 C: The fortune god.
- 48 Alf: /?/
- 49 C2: Keep Rachel warm.
- 50 Alf: You like that one?
- 51 C: (laughs)
- 52 Alf: Look, umm. I give you three hundred for this one.
- 53 C: Three hundred?
- 54 Alf: Yes. Free plastic /?/
- 55 C: (talk to each other). Alrighty, thank you.
- 56 Alf: This too much for you for three hundred? (to other vendor)A cómo los dah [tú?
- 57 C: [How much?
- 58 Alf: Lady! This too much for you for three hundred. I give you for two fifty now.
- 59 C: Two fifty, ok
- 60 Alf: Two fifty. This is...two fifty now. Yes. (3s). Ok? Only twenty American for you.
- 61 (Cs talking amongst themselves) (15s)
- 62 C: Two hundred pesos is all I got. It's all he'll give me!
- 63 Alf: Two hundred...two hundred pesos is ah maybe um seventeen dollars. (maya/spanish to
- other vendor) You have a two dollar more?
- 65 C: I don't think so.
- 66 Alf: Give me two dollar more señor, twenty pesos.
- 67 C: Two dollar more?
- 68 Alf: Yeah
- 69 C3: I don't have any more, that's it.

70 C: Ok. Sorry.

71 Alf: Se lo das? Ok, take it for two hundred.

72 C: You will?
 73 Alf: /?/ la bolsa.
 74 C: Alright.
 75 (wrapping)

76 Alf: (whispered) Aquí está.

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