¡No te pongas eso! Teaching How to Give Advice

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Abstract

Pragmatic competence is imperative to effectively communicate in a second language (L2). However, the performance of speech acts can be difficult to acquire, especially without pedagogical intervention. The goal of the current instructional sequence is to provide teachers with tools to educate students on the speech act of giving advice in Spanish. Through the use of pedagogical aids like Powerpoints and worksheets, the four-step lesson plan entitled *¡No te pongas eso!* utilizes strategies based in consciousness-raising, the Noticing Hypothesis, and interactionist theory. Students complete a written Discourse Completion Task to discover cultural and pragmalinguistic differences, analyze advice-giving strategies, participate in role plays, and finally review and re-do the activity. This lesson is flexible and includes direct, indirect, and softened approaches to advising, and can be easily adjusted to all levels of proficiency.

Keywords: L2 pragmatics, Spanish, speech acts, advice

Level: First-Year or Second-Year Spanish (ACTFL Novice High-Advanced Low, CEFR A2-B2)

Suggested Time: 52 minutes

Materials: PowerPoint Presentation, worksheets

Target Grammatical Structures: Imperative, subjunctive

Goal: To use different strategies for appropriately giving advice in Spanish

1 Introduction

The ability to perform speech acts in a foreign language (FL) is essential to pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence consists of a learner's ability to understand and produce communicative action and includes two types of knowledge, pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Pragmalinguistic knowledge includes the conventional resources to achieve communicative actions, such as lexicon, syntax, and the general grammar of a language, which someone can access during an interaction. Sociopragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, is the collection of norms based on the sociohistorical context pertaining to a situation and the effects of using certain pragmalinguistic expressions (Ishihara & Cohen, 2015; Taguchi, 2017). Both components of pragmatic competence are necessary to successfully perform in interactions, especially with regard to the execution of speech acts. For instance, when ordering food, a learner must have the pragmalinguistic knowledge of utilizing a hearer-oriented request, as well as choosing between the options of an imperative or an interrogative. Learners must also have the sociopragmatic consciousness that they are speaking to a stranger and should include formal second person conjugations to show respect and social distance. Using a speaker-oriented request or informal conjugations could result in an infelicitous exchange.

Previous research has measured learners' production and development of speech acts with pedagogical implications (Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2015; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Fujimori & Houck, 2010; Sessarego, 2021). Advice-giving is an important facet of interpersonal relationships that can build solidarity and promote positive interactions. The process of giving advice is an excellent practice in developing pragmatic competence as well. Inability to recognize and give advice and suggestions can lead to breakdowns in communication, and yield negative experiences for learners. Appropriate practices of giving advice can be taught to beginner-level

learners of Spanish and even adapted to higher levels by introducing more complex structures, such as the subjunctive. Formalized practice with realistic role play can aid students in gaining experience inside the classroom and transferring new skills to real world situations.

The aim of this instructional activity, entitled *¡No te pongas eso!* 'Don't put that on!', is to help learners of Spanish develop their pragmatic competence when delivering advice to a friend. Students are often not explicitly taught features of pragmatic competence, resulting in failed communication later when engaging with native speakers. The goals of this exercise are to raise learners' awareness of differences in pragmalinguistic choices and cultural standards, test their understanding of such concepts, and create opportunities for interaction. By providing guided practice and educating learners on the different aspects of pragmatics, learners will be better equipped and more confident in future cross-cultural encounters.

The structure of the remainder of this paper is as follows. Background and motivating factors are discussed in the second section. In the third section, the phases of the lesson and supporting materials are explained. A discussion of assessment will be provided in the fourth section, as well as possible extensions of the instructional activity in the fifth section. The sixth section concludes the paper.

2 Context

The lesson proposed here is designed for Spanish L2/FL classrooms. The teaching units target two proficiency levels; beginner learners will focus on (in)formal commands, while advanced learners will focus on the subjunctive mood as the appropriate pragmalinguistic tools utilized in the performance of advice-giving and suggestions. The act of giving advice is considered to be a directive speech act as it involves directing someone to perform or not perform a specific action in the future to hopefully benefit said addressee (Fujimori & Houck, 2010; Searle, 1969). Giving

advice can take place in a variety of situations including when trying on clothing or discussing romantic relationship issues. These are possible contexts that will arise in students' lives whether they are communicating in Spanish abroad or at home.

The second language acquisition theories that guide this activity are the Noticing Hypothesis, the Output Hypothesis, and the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Schmidt (1990; 1993; 2001). Schmidt (1990, p. 129) describes the Noticing Hypothesis as follows: "...noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake." Thus, in order for learners to acquire pragmatic knowledge, they must first notice the meaning through direct or indirect attention to its form (Ishihara & Cohen 2015, pp. 99-105). This can be accomplished through consciousness-raising and comparative analyses of English and Spanish. Consciousness-raising is an inductive exercise meant to draw attention to certain features so that a learner becomes more aware of the implications of such features. Explicit explanations of the different forms in each language can facilitate noticing (Ishihara & Cohen 2015, pp. 113-122). Cultural variation, reflected by the different degree of directness used in the United States and Latin America, should also be taken into consideration. After recognizing intercultural differences, it is important to test students' comprehension. The second theory, the Output Hypothesis, emphasizes the reasoning behind the practice and production of the pragmatic target. Students must apply the learned knowledge and pragmalinguistic resources in their output to further notice and adjust to any misunderstanding that may arise. The third theory, the Interaction Hypothesis, pertains to communicative production activities in which learners must participate and negotiate meaning with one another to achieve conversational goals. Interaction allows them to be exposed to more variety of input so that they attend to and notice the pragmatic forms as well (Ishihara & Cohen 2015, pp. 99-105). All of these theories guide the present instructional activity, as learners must first notice a feature in order to

be able to comprehend it, and then must practice the new information they were exposed to through production and interaction with an interlocutor. Consciousness-raising allows learners to notice the target structure more easily and consequently use it in an interaction. The application of these theories has been paramount in second language research and without the trial-and-error process of learning a linguistic feature and re-utilizing it, learners cannot truly develop and grow in a second language.

Research based on the notion of interlanguage has also influenced the development and execution of the proposed lesson plan. McConachy & Spencer-Oatey (2020) explain that there are divergences between L1 and L2 pragmatic competence with regard to awareness and judgments. Consciousness-raising activities serve as a valuable pedagogical strategy to make comparisons between realizations of speech acts in students' L1 and L2 (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020). The present lesson includes a consciousness-raising activity that guides students through an explicit comparison between L1 strategies and L2 appropriate pragmatic norms. Students specifically examine their tendencies when giving advice in Spanish and reflect on what adaptations they should make to perform a felicitous speech act in the L2/FL. Awareness of these differences aids students in avoiding negative L1 transfer (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020).

3 Curriculum, tasks, and materials

The selected tasks aim to (i) address differences between advice-giving in English and Spanish in order to avoid transfer from the L1, and (ii) promote consciousness-raising of cross-linguistic differences. This lesson consists of four steps: an activity to raise awareness, a comprehension check, a production task consisting of role plays, and a review of the grammatical structures, providing additional revisionary practice.

3.1 Consciousness-raising activity

This first task consists of a consciousness-raising activity in which learners are presented with the differences between advice-giving in English and Spanish.

Procedure (20 mins). Students complete a short written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of three situations (see Appendix A and PowerPoint in Appendix B). For example, learners first read materials that explain: "You and your friend are eating in a restaurant that is new to your friend, but that you frequent. You know the chicken is always good, but the fish can be soso. Your friend says they are going to order the fish. What do you say?" After completing the written DCT, the instructor explains the main differences in pragmalinguistic structures and sociopragmatic components of their usage between advice-giving in English and Spanish. It is important that the instructor highlights the fact that American English tends to lean towards indirectness when giving advice—regardless of the degree of imposition—whereas Spanish speakers prefer a more direct style. For instance, when giving advice on food options, a native Spanish speaker might say "Come el pollo" (Eat the chicken) while a native English speaker would say "Debes comer el pollo" (You should eat the chicken), which is less direct due to the presence of the modal verb. Native Spanish speakers also use fewer hedges or softeners like quizás 'maybe' and solamente 'just' to downgrade the degree of imposition of the advice. A discussion of each strategy and its description (i.e., direct, indirect, or softener) should be explained. The imperative and performative verbs are more direct, while hints or implicit suggestions are examples of indirect strategies. Softeners constitute another strategy that encompasses hedges and inclusive-we. It is important to show that in Spanish, informal and formal commands, the imperative (e.g., *¡Come!* 'Eat!' or ¡No comas! 'Don't eat!') and certain modals (e.g., necesitar que 'to need to,' tener que 'to have to,' and deber 'must') are useful direct strategies for giving advice (Borderia-Garcia, 2007). The stark differences with English indirect strategies should be emphasized (see slide 4 of PowerPoint in Appendix B). After being presented with differences between Spanish and English advice-giving, students will reflect on their written DCT answers and determine if they lean more towards the English or Spanish advice-giving strategies and what adjustments they should make in order to optimize cross-linguistic communication.

Theoretical intent. The purpose of this component is for students to reflect on their current advice-giving strategies. This activity helps students become more aware of the differences between English and Spanish advice-giving so that they can avoid negative transfer of their L1 English strategies to L2 Spanish (Borderia-Garcia, 2007). Consciousness-raising promotes the directing of cognitive processes to perceiving differences in features and structures. Such tasks are also motivated by Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, explained by Taguchi (2017).

3.2 Comprehension check

This task is a comprehension check that ensures that students know the differences between direct, indirect, and softened advice. The use of strategies at random without fully understanding their implications will only create confusion in future interactions. By providing an opportunity to double check their understanding, the chance of retention of the concepts is increased.

Procedure (8 mins). Students are presented with scenarios in which advice is given and decide whether the advice is direct, indirect, or softened, indicating the specific parts of the discourse they used to classify the type of advice (see Appendix C). The instructor goes over the situations and students' answers in plenum, asking students to share what specific information in the text demonstrates whether the advice is direct, indirect, or softened.

Theoretical intent. This activity is intended to ensure that students are able to recognize different strategies of advice-giving before they are expected to produce them, as learners must notice and attend to a form in order to learn it (Ishihara & Cohen 2015, pp. 99-105). If students

are unable to fully grasp the differences in advice-giving strategies, they cannot be expected to successfully produce target-like utterances.

3.3 Production task: Role plays

The production task consists of two role-plays in which learners practice giving advice. Role-plays serve to mimic real-world interactions and provide learners with practice in order to better prepare them to communicate with native speakers of the target language. By means of role-plays, learners practice turn-taking and impromptu planning, encounter real reactions of participants, and can compare experiences between different speakers (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013).

Procedure (16 mins). Students work in pairs to complete two role-play situations. The instructor hands out "papel A" and "papel B" to the respective partners (see Appendix D). Students read the first situation and then act it out in the role play. The first scenario involves two friends shopping for clothing inside Zara, a popular store in Spain. The students are provided with handouts of different clothing items to provide opinions, commentary, and most importantly – advice. Next, students do the same for the second situation but with roles reversed. The second scenario is an exercise in giving relationship advice, in which a friend advises another not to reunite with their ex. These situations ensure the same level of social distance and different levels of imposition. The instructor asks pairs to volunteer and demonstrate their role-play for the class. Before starting each role-play, the instructor asks the rest of the class to pay attention to the advice-giving strategies used. After observing each role-play, the instructor asks some volunteers to share with the class the advice-giving strategies that they identified.

Theoretical intent. Role-plays can provide authentic and interactive experiences while developing pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). This activity provides students with varied and contextualized opportunities to practice and identify advice-giving strategies. The

students produce output while interacting with one another using the previously noticed forms in meaningful ways (Ishihara & Cohen 2015, pp. 99-105).

3.4 Grammar review and re-do

This revision task is used to reinforce the usage of appropriate and more target-like pragmalinguistic resources.

Procedure (8 mins). The instructor goes over the target grammatical structure (which can vary by level). For beginner learners, an explanation of formal and informal commands, their conjugations, and usage with appropriate interlocutors should be addressed. More advanced learners can focus on the subjunctive mood, and its trigger phrases used in advice-giving only or in addition to imperative structures. Afterwards, the students should repeat one of their previous role-plays using the reviewed grammar.

Theoretical intent. The purpose of this part of the lesson is to further elevate learners' consciousness with more explicit instruction. Provided with a final guided practice which allows them to review and correct previous errors and to repeat one of the role-plays, learners can improve grammatical competence and have a higher probability of retention. This is accomplished by providing a guided opportunity for noticing new features and further clarifying established concepts (Willis, 2009).

4 Assessment

The validity of assessment is heavily debated throughout the language pedagogy field: Bardovi-Harlig (2013) explains that there are no global measures for L2 pragmatic proficiency and assessment of development should be appropriate to the design of the specific lesson. Further demonstrating the lack of consensus, Taguchi and Roever (2017) point out the lack of any large-scale test like the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or American Council for

Teaching Foreign Language Oral Proficiency (ACTFL OPI) that focuses on L2 pragmatics. Previous testing in pragmatics used multiple-choice questions which can be quite one-dimensional and may lack authenticity. DCTs were eventually developed and introduced, and while they provided opportunity for production, they lacked opportunity for interaction (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). The activities proposed in this lesson include measures to preliminarily verify students' comprehension and progress. However, evaluation of the success of an L2 pragmatic language task should be determined by an instructor, as should the achievement of communicative goals and, in the case of our activity, the successful completion of a speech act (Shehadeh, 2012; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Therefore, simple measures can be used, such as producing coherent advice during the role-play, external measurements of the grammatical forms used, and level of expansion of the topic. Such forms of assessment are examples of micro-level analysis of pragmatic competence (Cohen, 2019). In terms of macro-analyses of pragmatic competence, measures like the available pragmalinguistic repertoire or individual proficiency may limit some learners during this process: those who have a better grasp of the grammatical components may perform better, as they do not need to expend cognitive energy on learning new forms (Cohen, 2019). A sample rubric is provided below.

Advice Given	Grammar	Expansion
1 – Student delivered advice that did not make sense or failed to participate fully	1 – Student did not use any of the targeted grammatical structures (commands, subjunctive)	1 – Student failed to participate fully and used very limited communication and few sentences
2 – Student provided advice that was satisfactory	2 – Student used the focused grammar structures a few times, but used them partially incorrectly or only half the time	2 – Student communicated satisfactorily and provided enough information, but did not further expand
3 – Student gave excellent advice that was well-received	3 – Student used the intended grammar with correct	3 - Student used a variety of sentences, asked follow-up

by their conversation partner	conjugations most or all of	questions, and provided more
and resulted in a felicitous	the interaction	detail
interaction		

This type of assessment is easy to follow and offers comprehensible categories while providing students with confidence by creating simple, achievable goals. By utilizing the written answers from the previous DCTs and comprehension questions in combination with this rubric for oral production, an instructor can evaluate the overall development in pragmatic competence during the class period. The combination of assessments provides multi-dimensional measures of students' pragmatic competence that are reflective of traditional classroom evaluations, such as grammatical rubrics, and authentic/real-world communicative goals, such as giving advice.

This lesson was successfully piloted in a beginner-level and in an intermediate level (5th semester) Spanish class, and students were intrigued by the difference in directness between Spanish and English advice-giving. The students' reactions to this lesson testify the effectiveness and necessity to explicitly compare L1 and L2 advice-giving strategies, thereby supporting previous studies' suggestion for consciousness-raising activities (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020; Ishihara & Cohen 2015; Borderia-Garcia, 2007; Taguchi, 2017). By the end of the lesson, students were able to incorporate appropriate strategies for advice-giving in Spanish dialogues.

5 Extensions

As previously mentioned, these tasks can be modified according to different levels of proficiency and to specific grammatical targets. Instructors can address verb moods like the imperative and/or the subjunctive, the concept of social distance, and even pronoun usage. Beginning learners can focus on basic affirmative and negative commands, while advanced learners can dive into more intensive work with the subjunctive mood and dialectal differences. While more advanced learners

can synthesize and use language in creative and original ways, in our experience, it may be helpful to provide beginners with more concrete, pre-written dialogue options. Other situations (i.e., purchasing gifts, employment issues, cheating, etc.) could be considered and modified with different advice-giving conversations. Additional aspects to consider with respect to adaptations to this activity are the level of the learners and variation across different Spanish-speaking countries. It could be helpful to preface the lesson with the fact that strategies can vary between countries and speech communities. For example, in Mexico, negative interrogatives, such as ¿no has probado X? 'you haven't tried X?' are common. However, in Spain negative interrogatives are very rare (Borderia-Garcia, 2007). The steps of this lesson can also be altered in order to explore different dialects during the role-plays, discuss formality and the use of tense during the consciousness raising, and incorporate more authentic examples from corpora or popular media.

In this particular lesson, learners practiced advice-giving in situations featuring different interlocutors and contexts, such as significant others or friends. However, other situations could be devised in order to focus more on sociopragmatic awareness. These situations could vary the relationship with the interlocutor (e.g., extent of social distance) and the degree of imposition. In this way, students would have to take into account both relational and contextual dynamics, which could be an excellent extension to the current teaching activity.

6 Conclusion

The main goal of this instructional activity is to provide tools and examples of how to educate students on giving advice in Spanish. Our sample lesson and framework include four steps to ensure the development of pragmatic competence. Instruction should first begin with an activity to raise the consciousness of the learner, who should then be able to demonstrate their knowledge during the comprehension check. Thirdly, role-plays that mimic real-world situations should be

performed to give students the opportunity to implement what they have just learned. Finally, a review activity of the target grammar structures and cultural differences should be included and followed by a corrected repetition of an earlier role-play. These activities serve to increase the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence of learners so that, in the future, they can successfully give advice and offer suggestions in an authentic setting.

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Appendix A: Consciousness-Raising Activity

Written DCT: Lee las situaciones y escribe lo que tú dirías.

1. Estás en un restaurante con un/a amigo/a y ustedes no saben qué quieren comer. Visitaste este restaurante cinco veces ya. Sabes que el pollo es bueno pero el pescado a veces sabe raro,	Tu amigo/a dice: Creo que voy a pedir el pescado. ¿Qué vas a pedir?	Tú dices:
2. Mañana tú y tu amigo/a tienen un examen muy importante. Ya has estudiado mucho, entonces tienes mucha confianza. Sin embargo, tu amigo/a no ha estudiado nada. Hoy es la última oportunidad para estudiar.	Tu amigo/a dice: Vamos a un bar a cantar karaoke.	Tú dices:
3. No está lloviendo ahora, pero sabes que va a haber una gran tormenta pronto. Tu amiga está a punto de salir sin su paraguas. Crees que ella no ha escuchado sobre la tormenta.	Tu amigo/a dice: Me voy. Hasta luego.	Tú dices:

Appendix B: PowerPoint

Cómo dar consejos en español

- Parte 1: CON PIZARRITAS
- Lee las situaciones y escribe qué dirías.

Estás en un restaurante con un amigo y ustedes no saben qué quieren comer. Visitaste este restaurante cinco veces ya. Sabes que el pollo es bueno pero el pescado a veces sabe un poco raro.

Tu amigo dice: Creo que voy a pedir el pescado. ¿Qué vas a pedir?

Tú dices:

Mañana tú y tu amigo tienen un examen muy importante. Tú ya has estudiado mucho entonces tienes mucha confianza. Sin embargo, tu amigo no ha estudiado nada. Hoy es la última oportunidad para estudiar.

Tu amigo dice: Vamos a un bar a cantar karaoke.

Tú dices:

No está lloviendo ahora, pero sabes que pronto va a haber una gran tormenta. Tu amiga está a punto de salir sin su paraguas. Crees que ella no ha oído sobre la tormenta.

Tu amigo dice: "Me voy. Hasta luego."

Tú dices_______

* * * * * * * * *

Dar consejos: Inglés vs. Español

- Consejos
 - Directos
 - Suavizados
 - Indirectos
- Ejemplos
 - · Directo:
 - mandatos: No comas el pescado
 - subjuntivo: No te recomiendo que lo comas
 - modales: Debes comer el pescado. Tienes que comer el pescado.
 - Suavizados:
 - Me parece que debes pedir el pollo.
 - Condicional: Yo comería el pollo.
 - Nosotros inclusivo: Debemos pedir el pollo.
 - · Indirecto: Yo siempre pido el pollo.

¿Cómo creen que diferencian el español y el inglés en cuanto a los mandatos?

I would maybe try the chicken. I am not too sure about the fish

¿Qué tipo de consejos usaron ustedes?

- Miren sus respuestas a las situaciones
- ¿Son más parecidos a las estrategias del inglés o del español?

Di si estos consejos son directos, indirectos o suavizados y por qué.

- 1. Tu novio siempre se viste muy informal, pero mañana va a conocer a tus padres por primera vez. Van a comer en un restaurante elegante y quieres que se vista más formalmente. Le dices "Creo que debemos vestirnos muy bien mañana."
- 2. Estás visitando Quito, Ecuador con tu amigo y durante su primer día allá no saben a dónde ir. Tu amigo quiere ir al centro histórico pero tú quieres ir al mercado artesanal. Deciden preguntar a alguien en una frutería a ver qué les aconseja. Les dice "Vayan al centro histórico que es el lugar más bonito de Quito."
- 3. Notas que el perro de tu amiga come demasiada comida y que está más gordo ahora. Tienes miedo de que tenga un problema de salud muy grave si sigue comiendo tanto. Le dices a tu amiga "Mi gato comía mucha comida y ahora ni puede caminar."

Actuaciones

- Lee las situaciones y conversa con tu pareja
- Ten en mente las estrategias de dar consejos en español

Appendix C: Comprehension Task

Di si estos consejos son directos, indirectos o suaves y cómo sabes.

1. Estás visitando Quito, Ecuador con tu amigo y durante su primer día allá no saben a dónde ir. Tu amigo quiere ir al centro histórico, pero tú quieres ir al mercado artesanal. Deciden preguntar a alguien en una frutería a ver qué les aconseja. Les dice "Vayan al centro histórico que es el lugar más bonito de Quito."	a. Directo b. Indirecto c. Suave	¿Cómo sabes?
2. Tu novio siempre se viste muy informal, pero mañana va a conocer a tus padres por primera vez. Van a comer en un restaurante elegante y quieres que se vista más formalmente. Le dices "Creo que debemos vestirnos muy bien mañana."	a. Directo b. Indirecto c. Suave	¿Cómo sabes?
3. Notas que el perro de tu amiga come demasiada comida y que está más gordo ahora. Tienes miedo de que tenga un problema de salud muy grave si sigue comiendo tanto. Le dices a tu amiga "Mi gato comía mucha comida y ahora ni puede caminar."	a. Directo b. Indirecto c. Suave	¿Cómo sabes?

Answer Key:

- 1. Direct (use of imperative)
- 2. Softened (inclusive we, *creo que*)
- 3. Indirect (gives advice without referring directly to the current situation or current speakers by describing a similar situation)

Appendix D: Production Task—Role Play

Papel A: Instrucciones: Lee tu tarjeta con la información de tu papel. Piensa en lo que quieres decir. Después empieza la conversación con tu pareja.

- 1. Tu amig@ recién empezó a hablar con su exnovio y está pensando regresar con él. Ustedes acaban de empezar la universidad y su ex vive en el otro lado del país. Dale un consejo apropiado de qué debe hacer.
- 2. Estás yendo de compras con un/a amig@ y probando ropa. Estás emocionad@ porque te encanta esa prenda y quieres comprarla. Pero, quieres saber la opinión de tu amig@.

Papel B - Instrucciones: Lee tu tarjeta con la información de tu papel. Piensa en lo que quieres decir. Después empieza la conversación con tu pareja.

- 1. Hace dos años tuviste el mejor novio de tu vida y estabas súper enamorad@ de él. Terminaron porque fuiste a España a estudiar español por un año. Sin embargo, tu ex recién empezó a llamarte y ya hablan todos los días. Quieres regresar con él a pesar de que viven a mil millas.
- 2. Estás yendo de compras con un/a amig@ y probando ropa. Estás en los probadores con tu amig@ y lleva una prenda fea que no te gusta. Tienes que decirle que es horrible. Da un consejo en español de no comprar el vestido.