Title: AN INVESTIGATION INTO ASSESSING ESL LEARNERS PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AT B2-C2 LEVELS

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO ASSESSING ESL LEARNERS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AT B2-C2 LEVELS

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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DECLARATION

I, Edit Ficzere, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

An investigation into assessing ESL learners' pragmatic competence at B2-C2 levels

I confirm that:

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Abstract

As the number of overseas students and employees in English-speaking countries has increased exponentially over the last decade, the importance of pragmatic competence in the successful social integration of L2 speakers has been highlighted and the need for assessing it has become more pressing. Most currently available pragmatic tests are based on Speech Act Theory as a theoretical framework and use discourse completion tasks as test instruments. However, both of these have been criticized lately for overlooking the importance of the discursive side of pragmatics, which requires the use of on-line processing skills (see e.g. Roever, 2011).

The aim of this research was, therefore, to contribute towards the assessment of B2-C2 level learners' pragmatic competence in extended oral discourse by identifying some criterial features defining the level of B2-C2 ESL learners' pragmatic competence and by examining the extent to which a monologic and a dialogic task format allows these learners to display aspects of their pragmatic competence.

Data were collected from thirty international university students at B2-C2 levels with a range of L1 backgrounds, who performed four monologic and two dialogic test tasks. This was then followed by a semi-structured interview to gain the participants' perspectives on the given contexts. Performance of the tasks was video recorded, transcribed and analysed quantitatively, using selected coding categories from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Barron (2003), as well as qualitatively using a Conversation Analytic framework.

The results indicate that with increasing language competence ESL learners used a wider range of pragmalinguistic devices and used them more frequently. The data from the semi-structured interviews also highlighted that with increasing proficiency there was a greater depth of analysis of the different contexts. However, the comparison of participants' evaluation of the contexts and their actual language use indicated that only C2 level participants had the capacity to adjust their language to reflect their pragmatic intentions.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CA	Conversation Analysis
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for languages
D5	Dialogic task 5
D6	Dialogic task 6
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
H	Hearer
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L1	First language
L2	Second language
M	Mean
M1	Monologic task 1
M2	Monologic task 2
M3	Monologic task 3
M4	Monologic task 4
MR	Main request
R	Request
S	Speaker
SA	Speech Act
SD	Standard deviation
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

In this modern world of globalization, there are an increasing number of people who explore new worlds and settle in other countries. The movement of people also means the movement of cultures and ideologies, which is often reflected in language use. This is a particularly pertinent issue in the case of the growing number of international students in UK universities, which is the target context of the present study (see Section 1.3). The English language becoming a lingua franca (e.g. Jenkins, 2007) does make this human transition somewhat easier, however it is questionable whether simply the knowledge of linguistic form (i.e. syntax and semantics) is sufficient for people in these diverse communities to understand each other well. This phenomenon has been investigated from different perspectives; for example, in the field of sociology research has started to focus on the notion of intercultural communication and investigate how newcomers communicate socially and whether this influences their assimilation (e.g. Geraghty and Conacher, 2014), whilst in the field of linguistics linguists have identified an area of language use in communication that creates a link between language form and its social function, namely pragmatics (e.g. Leech, 1983; Canale, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1984).

Perhaps the mostly widely used definition of pragmatics is that of Crystal (1997, p.301), who defines it as "the study of language from the point of view of *users*, especially of the *choices* they make, the *constraints* they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on *other participants* in the act of communication". Yule (1996, p.3), somewhat similarly, defines pragmatics as the study of speaker *meaning*, the language choices they make depending on the given *context* (considering social/physical *closeness* and shared knowledge with the listener), and how the listener interprets what *is* or *is not* communicated. These definitions indicate that the study of pragmatics includes the study of language in terms of how it is used in a social context, more specifically, how speakers' language choices are informed by their knowledge of specific social variables (e.g. social distance, power) and what impact these may have

on the co-participants. Possessing such knowledge about communication and being able to act upon it is what is generally called pragmatic competence. Purpura (2004, p.86) makes a useful distinction between pragmatic knowledge and competence, describing the former as "a set of informational structures that are built up through experience and stored in long-term memory", and the latter as "the capacity to use these informational structures in some way". In other words, competent speakers draw upon and use their existing linguistic and social information when taking part in communication. However, what this linguistic and social information constitutes and how these two relate exactly is still under debate.

Despite all the efforts to define this ability, questions keep emerging regarding what exactly constitutes pragmatic knowledge/competence and how pragmatic features fit in with other linguistic features. For example, Eslami-Rasekh (2005, p.199) argues that although pragmatic competence has been identified as part of communicative competence, generally defined as language users' knowledge of linguistic forms and their ability to use these in social context (e.g. Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990 – also see Section 2.2), "there is a lack of a clear, widely accepted definition of term". As a result, a unanimously accepted definition of pragmatics does not at present exist (Roever 2011, 2013), which raises concerns when attempting to teach, assess or even simply describe such ability.

Perhaps because of the lack of a specific definition and the fact that existing definitions provide a rather broad framework for what exactly is being investigated under the rather broad term 'pragmatics', there has been a 'flurry of research' (Roever, 2006, p.229) over the past decades. A number of different pragmatic domains have been researched (i.e. cross-cultural pragmatic differences – see Section 2.4, L2 pragmatic development and instruction – see Section 2.4, L2 pragmatic assessment – see Section 2.7) as well as a variety of pragmatic features within these domains (e.g. speech acts, conversational routines, implicatures). The largest scale research project investigating cross-cultural pragmatics was that of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), which identified a number of pragmalinguistic features in requests and apologies using the Speech Act (SA) framework based on Searle's speech act theory (1969, 1975) and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). This theoretical framework approached pragmatic competence from the speaker's point of view and put the emphasis on the speaker's intention without considering the role of the hearer (H) in the

interaction. There were a great number of studies using this framework to identify L2 pragmatic features related to grammar (e.g. Yamashita, 1996; Trosborg, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009) and lexical/phrasal pragmatic features (e.g. Barron, 2003; Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995).

However, in recent years the SA framework has been criticized for overlooking the importance of the discursive side of pragmatics (Kasper and Roever, 2005; Roever, 2011) and as a result research focus has shifted to interactional features characterizing L2 pragmatic competence, such as sequential organisation of speech (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012; Hassall, 2003; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2005, 2006; Lee, 2009), while using a conversation analytic (CA) framework.

As well as research into pragmatic features in L2 speakers' speech much research has investigated the development of these features with the increase of proficiency (e.g. Hassal, 1997; Takahashi, 1996; Roever, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Timpe, 2013). Some argue that the development of pragmatic features is the result of increased proficiency (e.g. Hassal, 1997; Taguchi, 2005, 2007; Timpe, 2013) and therefore develops in a linear fashion, while others are of the opinion that such development occurs mainly due to the length of stay in the host environment (e.g. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Takahashi, 1996; House, 1996; Roever, 2005), indicating that development is non-linear.

There have also been studies investigating the assessment of L2 pragmatic knowledge. Earlier studies mostly employed speech act theory and discourse completion tasks (DCTs) as test instruments (e.g. Hudson, Detmer and Brown, 1995; Yamashita, 1996; Liu, 2006). However, some recent studies experimented with assessing pragmatics in extended discourse using a CA framework (e.g. Youn, 2013, 2015; Ikeda, 2017) with monologues and role-plays as test instruments. Whilst their approach was innovative as the discursive nature of interaction was taken into consideration, their analysis of how, and the extent to which, pragmalinguistic features were employed by various proficiency level L2 speakers was somewhat impressionistic – a limitation acknowledged by Youn (2013).

Another methodological limitation of many studies investigating pragmatic competence is that they tended to group advanced learners under one big umbrella. However, based on the researcher's own experience as a lecturer in Tertiary Education there are likely to be significant differences within such a large group (i.e. Common European Framework of Reference - CEFR C1 and C2) (Council of Europe, 2001), and how or the extent to which pragmatic features are used in speech may better distinguish between these two levels. If there is indeed linear development, as discussed earlier, it would be useful to see the varying degrees of pragmatic feature usage at either end of this proficiency band. More research would, thus, be beneficial to examine whether the pragmatic competence of L2 learners at the lower end of the advanced level (i.e. C1 learners) differ from that of learners at the higher end of the same level (i.e. C2 learners). As a result of the CEFR programme facilitating communication between language teachers, language testers and test score users by providing them with a common language to describe learners' language profiles and the English Profile programme further refining English level descriptions, criterial features of pragmatic competence have started to emerge (e.g. englishprofile.org; Council of Europe, 2017) but these are still few in number and somewhat general. Therefore, more empirical studies to investigate micro features of learners' output to identify criterial features of learners' pragmatic competence is necessary so that they could be incorporated in assessment criteria, scales, teaching materials and there could be positive washback in classrooms with more focus on these features.

To summarize the main insights gained from the literature:

- the number of foreign students in UK Tertiary Education has increased, however, despite its everyday use in academic context, pragmatic competence is currently not assessed as part of tests used for admission purposes,
- a range of pragmalinguistic features have been identified using SA framework and politeness theory,
- the SA framework has been criticized for focusing only on the speaker's output and looking at their language production in isolation
- CA framework has been used successfully to investigate how L2 pragmatic competence operates in extended discourse whilst also taking the hearer's input into consideration

- studies using CA framework highlighted the importance of linguistic features and called for more research into investigating this area of pragmatic competence
- advanced learners tended to be grouped together in studies regardless of whether they were at the higher or lower end of this spectrum.

1.2 Goals of the current study

Based on the insights gained from the above-mentioned previous studies, the current study aimed at exploring specific pragmatic features prevalent in L2 learners' speech at B2-C2 levels. More specifically, its aim was to (1) investigate which pragmatic features, with regards to sequential organization and pragmalinguistic devices (i.e. syntactic and lexical/phrasal) were prevalent and elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks and (2) analyze how these pragmatic features were utilized differently by learners at these proficiency levels. Monologic and dialogic task formats were selected specifically as these instruments are more discursively oriented than DCTs, thus allow the investigation of the discourse side of pragmatics as opposed to merely of speech acts (SAs). The broader construct, including both sequential-organisation and linguistic features, and the meticulous analysis of pragmatic features can allow for a firmer conclusion regarding L2 speakers' pragmatic competence. As noted earlier, descriptors for pragmatic competence are still somewhat lacking and proficiency tests do not fully cover the construct of pragmatics in extended discourse (Roever, 2011). Consequently, it is hoped that the identified micro features could contribute towards evidence-based scale descriptors for B2-C2 pragmatic competence, which in turn could prove useful for decision-making either in assessment or teaching contexts.

In addition, the current study attempted to (3) investigate subtle differences in pragmatic competence amongst higher proficiency learners in academic context already possessing a greater degree of free cognitive capacity to pay attention to the contextual variables (e.g. age, social standing), as opposed to focusing merely on formulating language, upon which language choices are made in social context. It is hoped that the extent to which linguistic choices are based on B2-C2 speakers' evaluation of the context would be better understood as a result of the study, which aspect to date is a much less researched aspect of

studies investigating L2 pragmatic competence. This element is intended to feed primarily into language assessment but also into language education, as it could potentially raise practitioners' awareness of the importance to highlight the connection between language choices in an L2 and social context, in order to understand/achieve pragmatic meaning.

Therefore, the present study focused on some of the under-explored areas in the pragmatic field and findings are expected to fill the research gap identified by Youn (2013) and Ikeda (2017) in order to aid teaching and assessment practitioners in their practices.

1.3 Setting of the study

As noted earlier, the number of overseas students in British Tertiary education has increased over the past decade and social integration as well as success in academic achievement is important for their study-abroad experience (e.g. Tan and Simpson, 2008; Teichler, 2004; Singh and Jack, 2018; Jones, 2017). However, both social integration and academic success require pragmatic competence in order to handle the various contexts faced every day during their stay. For example, in academic life they have to be able to communicate with lecturers and classmates on a day-to-day basis. This means they have to be aware of what language is appropriate to use and with whom, in other words they need to possess pragmatic competence. Assessing such competence is not explicitly incorporated into standardised English tests used for admission purposes, such as IELTS or Trinity ISE. This is partly due to the previously mentioned lack of research into criterial features of pragmatic competence. The present study, therefore, aimed to focus on such features within the UK academic context.

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The rest of this paper comprises four chapters. Chapter 2 provides details of the underlying concepts in relation to pragmatic competence by reviewing the relevant theoretical concepts and constructs. It discusses some challenging issues in assessing L2 pragmatic competence and concludes with the research questions.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in the study, including a detailed description of the pilot studies leading to the design of the research instruments used in the main study, the research participants, the implementation of the study and finally the data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings. Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter, summarizing the key findings, discussing the limitations and the implications of the study and providing suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This section gives an overview of the existing different notions of pragmatic competence, the different frameworks for communicative competence that include pragmatics, as well as some details of the research that has gone into this field investigating pragmatic competence.

2.1 Different notions of pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence (also called pragmatic ability) has been defined in different ways (see Section 1.1), although, as stated previously, a unanimously accepted definition does not at present exist. It is therefore necessary to summarise the different conceptualizations of pragmatic competence in various studies (Table 2.1) in order to arrive at an accepted definition in the present study. Please note that a short version of this literature review has been published (Willcox-Ficzere, 2018).

Table 2.1: Summary of different notions of pragmatic knowledge

	Thomas (1983, p.92)	***Leech (1983, p.10)***	***Canale (1983)***	***Faerch & Kasper (1983, 1984)***
Pragma-linguistic knowledge	'ability to use language effectively…'	***pragmalinguistic knowledge***: available linguistic devices (syntactic + semantic choices) for performing communicative acts. Includes: directness/indirectness, pragmatic routines, range of modification devices to intensify/soften communicative act.	***appropriateness of form***	***declarative pragmatic knowledge:*** knowledge of contextual factors and corresponding linguistic devices
Socio-pragmatic knowledge	'…in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context.'	***sociopragmatic knowledge***: focuses on relationship between linguistic choices/interpretation and the context of social interaction. Refers to: status, social distance, degree of imposition	***appropriateness of meaning***	
Other				***procedural pragmatic knowledge:*** *includes: goal formulation and context analysis, verbal planning and monitoring execution* '…selects and combines parts of declarative knowledge for the purpose of reaching specific communicative goals, observing constraints imposed by language processing in real time…' (1984:215)

The notions of pragmatic competence provided by Thomas (1983), Leech (1983) and Canale (1983) are very much in line as they all maintain that linguistic knowledge (i.e. Leech's 'pragmalinguistic knowledge' and Canale's 'appropriateness of form') and contextual knowledge (i.e. Leech's 'sociopragmatic knowledge' and Canale's 'appropriateness of meaning') combined together form pragmatic competence. The former generally refers to the linguistic devices available in a language in order to achieve particular communicative goals (e.g. using conventional indirectness for making a request: 'Could you send this letter?' and linguistic resources such as modal verbs), whereas, the latter refers to how these linguistic devices should be used in particular social contexts. For example, knowing one's personal rights/obligations and the social rules (e.g. how/when to approach someone of higher/lower social standing) within a speech community would inform a sociopragmatically competent L2 speaker whether to be conventionally indirect or choose a more direct approach. Thomas's (1983, p.92) description, besides the ability to produce pragmatically appropriate language (i.e. 'use language'), also includes reference to the ability to comprehend such language (i.e. 'understand language in context'), which naturally can only be displayed in context, unlike grammatical competence, which she believes exists independently of context (i.e. 'abstract or decontextualized knowledge').

The first component of Faerch and Kasper's (1984) definition is *declarative pragmatic knowledge,* which is a combination of Leech's (1983) pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge as it includes both, the knowledge of social contextual factors and the knowledge of linguistic functions that correspond to the given context. However, the second component, *procedural knowledge,* in their model is new addition and its function is to use aspects of 'declarative knowledge' to achieve communication goals, while producing language under the constraints of real time (Faerch and Kasper, 1984, p.215). In other words, they also add on-line processing skills to context analysis and verbal planning, thus implying not only the existence but also the importance of a hearer (H) when considering pragmatic competence. Indeed, as they (ibid.) suggest, social interaction does not exist without H and speakers' communicative goals can only be achieved by (1) taking their existing relationship with H into consideration before making an utterance, and (2) considering H's communicative input before responding. This, in turn, would imply that as well as being in possession of social knowledge and linguistic devices, speakers also set themselves communicative goals and constantly

monitor, adjust and sequence their linguistic output in accordance with H's responses while engaged in online communication. Consequently, it is believed that besides contextual awareness and linguistic ability on-line processing skill is also a vital contributor to pragmatic competence in extended oral discourse.

A number of definitions mention 'act' when describing pragmatic competence. For example, Liu (2006, p.9) explains the function of one of the components of pragmatic competence, which she calls 'knowledge of a pragmatic system', by saying that it encompasses various linguistic resources 'available to individuals for performing various acts'. Some argue (e.g. Roever, 2011; Kasper, 2006; Sickinger and Schneider, 2014) that simply performing speech acts does not cover all that is required under pragmatic competence as in communication people not only perform speech acts but they also react to and negotiate them, thus, creating whole speech sequences. In other words, speakers'/learners' ability to participate in the whole of the *discourse* should also be included in the definition of pragmatic competence.

On closer examination of these notions of pragmatic competence, it is noticeable how similar they are to aspects of interactional competence. In fact, there have been several attempts to specify how L2 Pragmatic Competence differs from Interactional Competence (e.g. Young, 2019; Galaczi and Taylor, 2018), especially since the appearance of discursive pragmatics, which highlighted the importance of evaluating L2 pragmatics within interaction (Roever, 2011; Kasper and Ross, 2013). As discussed above, most scholars define pragmatic competence as the ability to adjust language use to speakers' evaluation of contextual variables, which involves employing various linguistic resources (e.g. Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983), whilst also adhering to patterns in sequential organisation in extended discourse (Kasper, 2006; Roever, 2011), in order to achieve their communicative goal. This means that pragmatic intentions and subsequent linguistic choices may be set individually, however these intentions are achieved in interaction with the listener actively participating and potentially changing the course of verbal action as well as influencing their linguistic choices. Therefore, speakers' original pragmatic intentions may not change entirely in interaction (e.g. make a request), but the way they get there might alter due to the listener's input (e.g. a listener's indication of dispreferred response may prompt the speaker to use more pre-expansion, more mitigation).

It is sometimes assumed that IC simply incorporates pragmatic features, however, Young (2019, p.93) argues that they are different phenomena and that "IC goes beyond the pragmatic competence of a single participant". Table 2.2 presents a summary of the abilities underlying Interactional Competence and Pragmatic Competence identified by and generally agreed upon by various scholars (based on Young, 2019; Galaczi and Taylor, 2018). As the definitions show, both focus on the interaction between speaker and listener. However, while the main focus of interactional competence lies on the co-constructed nature of the conversation and views the outcome of the interaction as mutual achievement, pragmatic competence seems to focus more on the individual's linguistic or discourse choices (Young, 2019). This might explain why Interactional Competence can only be examined in face-to-face contexts, while Pragmatic Competence can also be analysed in written form (e.g. messages, e-mails, monologues). It may also be a reason why research into the micro features of the former tend to concentrate mostly on speakers' movements in relation to their listener, while research into the latter seems to focus more on linguistic features (Table 2), which may characterize individual cognition and pragmatic decision-making whether in oral or written form. Discursive pragmatics is, thus, a relationship between these two competencies involving speakers' conscious decision regarding the linguistic form, based on the given social context, and their management of the jointly co-constructed interaction. Interestingly, there have been an increasing number of calls in IC to fine tune its construct for example by including linguistic resources (e.g. Young, 2019; Galaczi and Taylor, 2018), while in the field of pragmatics attempts have been made to encourage the inclusion of interactional features in the construct (e.g. Roever, 2011).

Table 2.2: Interactional competence versus pragmatic competence based on Young (2019) and Galaczi and Taylor (2018)

Interactional Competence (IC)	**BOTH**	**Pragmatic Competence**
Definition: The ability to co-construct interaction, which goes beyond individual ability (He and Young, 1998; Young, 2008) as the resources are used/accomplished mutually (McNamara and Roever, 2006)	(1) Resources used to construct meaning. (2) Interpretation of linguistic choices by the listener.	*Definition*: The study of the relationship between (1) meaning of utterance reflected by language choices speakers make based on their knowledge of social context and (2) the effect of their language on the listener (Crystal, 1997; Yule, 1996)
Typical features: (1) Spoken feature (2) Understanding of pragmatic meanings of communicative acts: what and how to say (3) Awareness of individual roles in the interaction and context and ability to co-construct meaning: 'resources are deployed	(3) Spoken feature (4) Linguistic choices in context	*Typical features*: (1) Spoken or written feature (2) Convey and understand pragmatic meaning: by 'choices between linguistic forms' (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p.2) ALSO knowledge of contextual factors and corresponding

mutually and reciprocally by all participants' in order to achieve 'mutual intentionality and sharing of mental state' (Young, 2018, p.96); 'dynamic two-way influence of the interlocutors has now become central to the construct of IC' (Galaczi and Taylor, 2018). (4) Participating in 'specific discursive practice', which include engagement in spoken interaction in context (socio-culturally significant to speakers' of a community) repeatedly (Young, 2018, p.96)		linguistic devices + goal formulation and context analysis, verbal planning and monitoring execution (Faerch and Kasper, 1983) (3) Sequential organisation of speech co-constructed by participants (Kasper, 2006; Roever, 2011)
Interactional *microfeatures investigated* within the construct e.g.: ▪ topic initiation ▪ topic shift ▪ listener involvement ▪ holding the floor (e.g. pausing) ▪ assigning conversational rights (e.g. questions, syntactic means) ▪ collaboratively developing topics across turns ▪ use of deixis and ellipsis for between-turn cohesion ▪ use of vague language ▪ sequencing practices in speech acts, where 'face' is involved: use of 'face-saving pre sequences' to avoid dis-preferred responses (Pomerantz, 1984) ▪ non-verbal features (e.g. laughter, posture, gaze, gestures) (Ducasse and Brown, 2009; May, 2011)	(5) Sequential organisation of speech and speech acts	*Features investigated* within the construct e.g. ▪ production and recognition of Speech Acts (e.g. request, apology, complaint) ▪ production and recognition of Conventional expressions or routine formulae ▪ comprehension of implicature ▪ the use of pragmalinguistic devices: e.g. syntactic as well as lexical/phrasal choices ▪ the development in the use of pragmalinguistic devices in L2 speech ▪ relationship between grammatical and pragmatic development ▪ sequential organisation of speech (e.g. pre- and post-senquences) ▪ openings and closings

Pragmatic competence and intercultural communication/competence also share some common attributes (e.g. Lazar et al., 2007), especially with what intercultural communication calls 'savoir-faire' or know how. Intercultural communication means/involves communication among members of various cultures possessing different cultural norms and expectations. It has been generally noted, that lack of pragmatic competence can cause intercultural misunderstandings. The question raised is whether such misunderstanding is caused by language accuracy issues or by lack of pragmatic competence (i.e. using inappropriate linguistic forms in particular social contexts). It has been argued that inaccurate language use is quite often tolerated by L1 speakers, whereas, pragmatically inappropriate language use is often not (Thomas, 1983). It is generally assumed by L1 speakers that other cultures have similar or the same cultural norms thus, the underlying behaviour behind language use is the same. For example, people complain about the same issues to the same degree and in the same way, or we are polite in the same way, which would of course mean that the notion of appropriate behaviour is universal. Therefore, any verbal behaviour that violates these norms is frowned upon (e.g. Barron, 2003), which is often not the learners' intention as they simply try to map/transfer their L1

norms onto the L2 society (O'Keeffe et al., 2011, p.101). This leads to the issue of 'appropriacy' in the field of pragmatics. On the one hand it can be argued that explicit guidance should be given to learners in L2 classrooms (Thomas, 1983, pp.109-110) but to what extent should learners be expected to adjust to L2 social norms, if at all, remains unclear. L1 speakers may not want L2 speakers to claim membership of their community (House and Kasper, 2000) and equally L2 speakers may not want to claim membership, thus retaining/creating some kind of L2 identity. Indeed, as House (2007, p.19) states "an intercultural speaker … is a person who has managed to develop his or her own third way, in between the other cultures he or she is familiar with". In addition to issues related to L2 identity, it is also worth noting that the evaluation of appropriacy may differ amongst individual members of the same L1 speech community.

2.1.1 Appropriacy and pragmatic norm

Appropriacy, however, is a key concept in the field of pragmatics and as such cannot be ignored. It was Hymes' (1972) influential theory of communicative competence that made the term 'appropriacy' widely accepted as the fundamental basis of his theory was knowing "whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated" (1972, p.281). This definition also seems to imply that evaluating communicative competence without considering the social context within which such communication takes place is meaningless. As social contexts and social interaction are the central focus of pragmatics, it is understandable why the term 'appropriacy' is an essential part of definitions (e.g. Canale's 'appropriateness of meaning'). Kasper and Ross (2013, p.5) argue that, "social and cultural appropriateness anchors communicative competence firmly in the social word and enables relevant descriptions of the target use domain in language assessment contexts". Whilst this is true, it is not without issues arising when it comes to L2 speakers' performance either in teaching or assessment settings. For example, the decision regarding the appropriateness of an utterance is rather subjective and even speakers within the same L1 speech community might disagree, which can result from differences in personality or social background rather than language (McNamara and Roever, 2006, p.57).

Benchmarking is indeed an issue that is very controversial but all the more important and widely discussed. Timpe et al. (2015), amongst others, believe that there must be some benchmark against which L2 pragmatic comprehension and production can be evaluated. They propose a model within which this might be possible to achieve. Influenced by Taguchi's (2012) definition of pragmatic competence, they propose two criteria, 'grammaticality and well-formedness' and 'accuracy and appropriateness'. The former referring to the grammatically accurate use of pragmalinguistic features while the latter relates more to the sociopragmatic features of an utterance, namely accurate comprehension of interlocutors' pragmatic intention and appropriate production of the speakers' own pragmatic intention. They claim that "contextual constraints of interlocutors, communicative action, communicative genres, and ethnographic norms and strategies of a speech community" (p.27) would all be part of the evaluation of accuracy and appropriacy in their theoretical framework. This would also mean that the more contextual information is given to L2 speakers the more they would be able to make pragmatically appropriate evaluation of the context and adjust their language accordingly. It is true that contextual information does inform speakers regarding what linguistic choices to make, however, judging the appropriacy of these depends on the expectations/norms of the co-participants and thus show individual variation even within the same L1 speech community. They advocate the use of corpora to determine pragmatically appropriate language behaviour but that would still not avoid the same issue, namely that there is a range of different language choices/behaviour depending on contextual variables, not to mention social variables (e.g. gender, social class, age, region). This might indicate that the development of appropriate measures for assessing pragmatics, especially in high-stakes tests, must be preceded by awareness-raising of the available language choices (and the consequences of their use) in a range of contexts in language classrooms. This could perhaps enable L2 speakers to create 'their own' benchmark in that hopefully they will be able to make informed language choices according to what they intend to achieve in that particular situation and create their 'third way' that House (2007, p.19) talks about. A word of caution, this 'third way appropriateness' might differ somewhat from what is socially acceptable behaviour/speech in a particular L1 language community.

To summarise, research seems to indicate that pragmatic competence combines *social awareness* and *linguistic ability*, which allows speakers to produce socially and linguistically appropriate utterances in a

given context in order to conduct social interaction successfully. Language users, therefore, must be able to not only consider and select but also "combine elements from these two areas in accordance with [their] illocutionary, propositional and modal goals" (Kasper, 1989, p.39), or as Roever (2011, p.471) argues, "competent speakers of a target language can recognize a situationally appropriate speech style and produce it, indicating through their use of linguistic features that they recognize the social rules and norms of the speech event". This would indicate that L2 learners need to be aware of both linguistic and social/contextual rules. Note that 'awareness' is emphasized here, as the latter is considered highly culture specific and whilst linguistic devices can be taught/assessed and learned relatively objectively, L2 social rules/values that accompany these linguistic choices on the other hand, as Thomas (1983) argues, are filtered through L2 learners' beliefs about the world. Such sensitive/personal process perhaps should not be interfered with and to what extent these language choices that carry social values/ideology are used must be the learners' choice (e.g. Ficzere, 2010). Therefore, 'appropriacy' as a term is considered highly subjective (even within one culture) which, in some contexts, might require a substantial amount of flexibility in L2 teaching and assessment. In fact, the interlanguage research field has responded to such differing notions of L2 pragmatic norms by adopting a more descriptive approach to data, in an attempt to avoid evaluating utterances, as opposed to the 'difference=deficit' hypothesis that has been used for a long time (House and Kasper, 2000, p.104). There might be a case to argue that, instead of a prescriptive approach 'this is how we do it here', adjusting language according to L2 speakers' own intentions (i.e. achieving intended impact on H), whilst also considering/responding to H's input, and making informed choices based on the given context is what we should be aiming at when teaching and assessing pragmatic competence.

Since pragmatic competence is so intertwined with other areas of language ability it is important to view it in relation to the other areas of communicative competence within the theoretical models of Communicative Language Ability (CLA). The notion of communicative competence partially originated from Leech's (1983) research on the importance of meaning in use, and as a result, in a number of CLA models, pragmatic competence has been included as one of the main components. The following section examines the most influential of these models.

2.2 How pragmatic competence relates to the other elements of communicative competence (Theoretical models of CLA)

Although there are several models of communicative language ability only three main models include pragmatic competence as a component, namely Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language ability and Purpura's (2004) theoretical model of language ability. Later versions all elaborate on these original models. Although these main models have been influenced by different theories from sociology, sociolinguistics and anthropological theories, they are essentially based on Hymes' (1972) theory and, therefore, embrace the idea that competence (individual trait) is separate from performance (Kasper and Ross, 2013).

Canale and Swain's (1980) model was one of the first models that incorporated the idea of appropriate language use in context. In their view, language competence was the combination of grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence, thus highlighting the importance of both knowledge of linguistic forms/rules and knowledge of contextual information. Canale (1983) (Figure 2.1) later elaborated on this model by adding a fourth component, which he called 'discourse competence'. In his framework 'grammatical competence' includes only linguistic elements, whilst 'sociolinguistic competence' includes elements such as the role of participants, their dialects, their mutually shared information, and their communicative goal. These elements also inspired, and can thus be found in, later models describing pragmatic competence (e.g. Bachman, 1990).

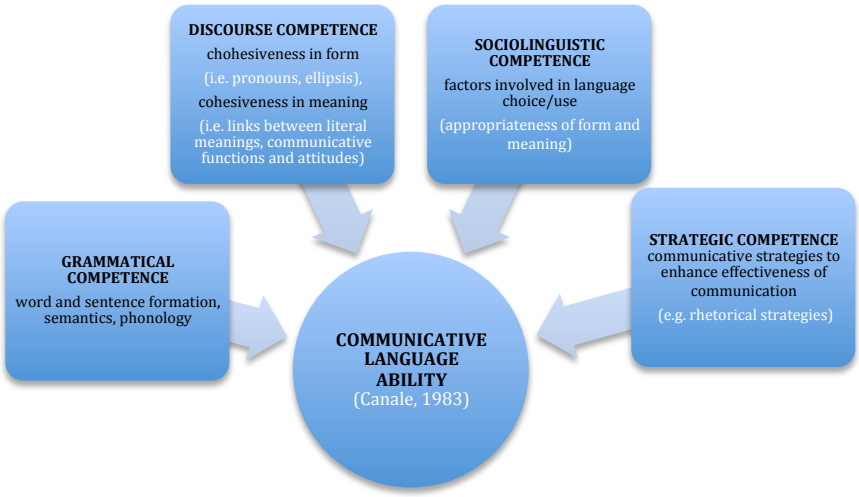

Figure 2.1: Canale's (1983) model of Communicative Language Ability (CLA)

As published previously (Willcox-Ficzere, 2018), Bachman (1990), building on this earlier research, developed a model for communicative language ability, within which he includes pragmatic competence and organisational competence as the two main branches of language competence. In his model, organisational competence includes recognition and knowledge of linguistic signals used for structuring language orally and in writing. Pragmatic competence on the other hand includes knowledge of the relationship between linguistic signals and the contexts within which they can be used. His model, consistent with Canale (1983), also distinguishes between the ability to form linguistically accurate oral or written speech (i.e. organisational competence) and the ability to use this language appropriately in context (i.e. pragmatic competence). His pragmatic competence, consisting of speakers' ability to consider *contextual factors* when attempting to produce socially appropriate utterances in communication (i.e. sociolinguistic competence) and speakers' knowledge of *language functions* (i.e. illocutionary competence), is consistent with Leech's (1983) distinction.

Bachman's model was later expanded by Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010). In the new models they still distinguish between language competence (i.e. included in organisational competence, pragmatic competence) and the ability to use such competence, the latter including both metacognitive strategies (i.e. goal setting, appraising, planning) and cognitive strategies. Pragmatic knowledge is subdivided into functional knowledge (previously called 'illocutionary competence'), consisting of knowledge of speech acts and functions (i.e. 'instrumental functions': ask others to perform an action e.g. request/command;

'interpersonal functions': establish/develop/change interpersonal relationships e.g. compliment, apologise) (Bachman and Palmer, 2010, p.47) on the one hand, and sociolinguistic competence, consisting of contextually appropriate language use, on the other. In other words, language users need to know "how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goal" (i.e. functional knowledge) and "how utterances or sentences are related to features of the language use setting" (i.e. sociolinguistic knowledge) (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.68). Therefore, pragmatic competence incorporates language use/functions in context, which individuals employ to achieve their communicative goal. One of the strengths of their model is that, as Timpe et al. (2015, p.14) point out, they draw attention to both "the language use context and the individual in context". Their use of 'functions', however, has been heavily criticized by Ross and Kasper (2013, p.8), who argue that this term lacks the "inbuilt sequential structuring of actions", and tends to imply isolated utterances. This, they argue, results in a lack of focus on the sequential organisation of the interaction and would need to be compensated by models for interactional competence. They also support McNamara and Roever's (2006) argument when stating that the model lacks theoretical underpinning on how the social dimension contributes to the environment in which language is used and "analysis of a language use situation in the target domain becomes rather a matter of the individual language user's cognitive processing and representation" (Ross and Kasper, 2013, p.6). Such failure to recognise the social dimension, they argue, may interfere with measuring/evaluating the appropriateness of the linguistic act in a given context (ibid). While their argument has some merit it also leads back to the question raised previously (see 2.1.1) related to how to benchmark/measure appropriacy when even L1 speakers differ in their opinion in this regard.

Based on Bachman and Palmer's (1996) work/model, Purpura (2004) developed his framework in which grammar and pragmatics are closely combined. He criticized their model for the lack of detail on how grammatical and organisational knowledge equip speakers to understand and create meaning, which in his view plays a central role when defining language knowledge, within the constraints of a particular context and his model was an attempt to repair such lack. Thus, Purpura's (2004) model proposes that the two interrelated components of language knowledge, namely grammatical and pragmatic knowledge, contribute to creating meaning in communication. He believes that grammatical meanings are "derived both from the

meaning of the words arranged in syntax and the way in which the words are used to convey the speaker's intention", while pragmatics is "a domain of extended meanings which are superimposed upon forms in association with the literal and intended meanings of an utterance" (Purpura, 2004, p.74-75). Therefore, he claims, grammatical meaning provides the basis of pragmatic meaning and the latter may alter the former by providing contextual variables (e.g. relationship between interlocutors, speakers' evaluation of the given sociocultural context). This means that context provides vital contribution to comprehending and constructing meaning. For example, the 'literal meaning' of the utterance 'That's a great hat.' is to give information (i.e. 'literal meaning') while its 'intended meaning' is praise, which also provides 'pragmatic meaning' in that it expresses politeness and perhaps gives some indication about the closeness of the relationship between the interlocutors. The same utterance, however, might convey very different meanings in different speech communities (i.e. in some African culture the intended meaning is 'request for action': 'I'd like it.'), thus evoking a different response from the interlocutor (i.e. instead of 'thanks' the hat is handed over). This raises the issue of the role of the interlocutor, which is included in Purpura's (2004) model through Brown and Levinson's (1987) variables (i.e. social distance, relative power, degree of imposition) and politeness theory.

Purpura (2004) argues that grammar and pragmatic meaning are very closely intertwined, which belief is clearly reflected in his model. He contends that speakers select specific grammatical forms in order to convey their intended meaning, but the meaning hearers may map onto the same grammatical form might not be the same. Nevertheless, these choices are intentional and based on the speaker's knowledge of how a particular grammatical form conveys the intended meaning in a given context. Taking up his argument Green (2004) attempted to identify the potential influence of syntax, tense, aspect and pronunciation on pragmatic meaning. In addition, research undertaken employing Conversation Analysis provides some support for Purpura's claim, at least in the case of L1 speakers. For example, Vinkhuyzen and Szymansky (2005) found that in service encounters customers influenced the employees' response by employing different grammatical forms (e.g. declarative, interrogative). However, although this inseparable link between language knowledge and pragmatic meaning has been generally accepted, there is still little empirical evidence regarding how L2 speakers utilize their knowledge to understand and construct pragmatic meaning (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

Taguchi's (2012) model is one of the most recent empirically grounded models. She uses Bialystok's (1993) model of language proficiency, focusing on 'analysis of knowledge' and 'control of processing', as the basis for her definition of pragmatic competence, alongside with the elements constituting language ability in Bachman and Palmer's (1996, 2010) model. Thus, pragmatic knowledge is conceptualized as the ability to interpret 'speech intentions' accurately, produce them appropriately (i.e. analysis of knowledge' in Bialystok) and comprehend/construct pragmatic meaning fluently online (i.e. 'control of processing' in Bialystok). Therefore, this model, as well as focusing on both comprehension and production, similarly to Faerch and Kasper (1984, p.215), also highlights the importance of 'language processing in real time' when defining pragmatic competence.

Summary: Although these models of pragmatic competence differ in many respects, they also share some common components (Figure 2.2), namely that pragmatic competence combines the speaker's ability to:

- *employ different linguistic resources to create meaning* (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Purpura, 2004), in other words their ability to use linguistic devices from their existing repertoire in order to constantly decode/encode meaning during communication knowing that utterances may have different layers of intended meaning, which might differ from the literal meaning,
- *co-construct meaning in interaction*, implying that this meaning is co-constructed by interlocutors by for example adjusting and sequencing turns, a concept that is also shared with IC, although there has been criticism that this aspect is somewhat underspecified in the models and does not reflect the constantly evolving nature of communication (e.g. Kasper and Ross, 2013),
- *use language appropriately in a given context*, thereby implying that language use is dependent on the variables of a given communicative situation (e.g. physical surrounding, relationship between interlocutors), which variables influence speakers' language choices and these linguistic choices, in turn, constantly influence the context between interlocutors. As Timpe et al. (2015, p.21) claim, "the production and interpretations of utterances are constrained and mediated by context, while context is also created by encoding and decoding of meaning".

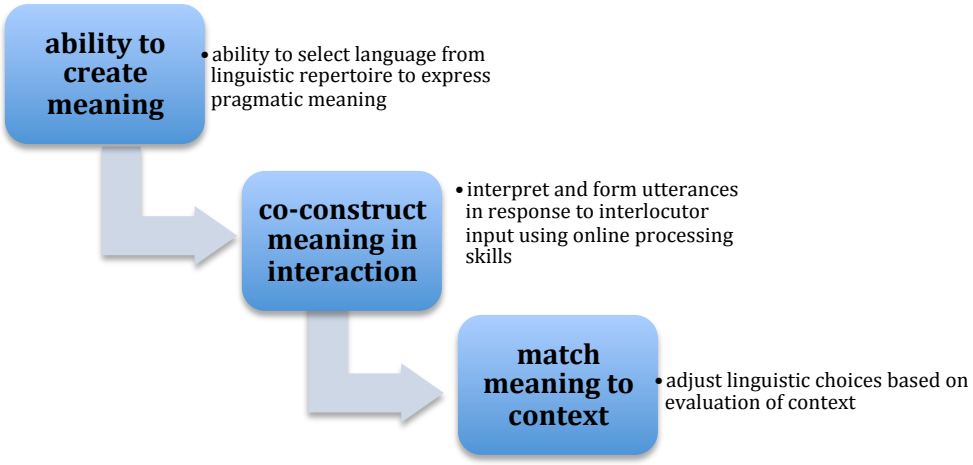

Figure 2.2: Pragmatic competence according to the main models of CLA

To summarize, according to literature the **core features of L2 pragmatic competence** combine speakers' ability to formulate their individual goals, evaluate the given social context and select linguistic forms (i.e. syntactic, semantic devices) that reflect such context evaluation in order to achieve set goals. These abilities can manifest themselves in both written and oral form. However, **pragmatic competence in spoken interaction** (i.e. CLA models) includes additional features, namely speakers' ability to understand/interpret the interlocutor's evaluation of the given context, reflected in their use of linguistic signals, and constantly act upon this interpretation by adjusting their own language production in interaction. This would mean that pragmatic competence is co-constructed and is constantly evolving throughout the interaction. The one feature that, I believe, is missing from this list is (1) L2 speakers' awareness of the conscious use of pragmatic features in social context in order to achieve their own pragmatic goals and (2) their ability to verbalize such conscious awareness when it comes to language use in context. This is a vital feature as, while such process might often be subconscious in an L1, it is much more of a conscious process in an L2 and requires speakers' willingness to learn/observe pragmalinguistic features in an L2 and their use in context, subsequently select these for their own intended purposes in either written or oral communication.

Implications for the present research

Overall, pragmatic competence is viewed here as (1) located in the interaction whilst also being the speakers' individual trait brought to the interaction, including both internal (e.g. individual intentions/expectations) and external factors (e.g. view/understanding of contextual variables), and (2) constantly negotiated between the speakers in the process of co-constructing meaning, resulting in (3) their expectations/goals being continuously aligned/re-evaluated during the interaction.

As the present study aims to investigate L2 speakers' oral pragmatic competence when making requests (1) in monologic tasks, not involving H's immediate response, and (2) in dialogic tasks, involving H's immediate and constant input, L2 pragmatic competence in this study is understood to be learners' ability to:

- *evaluate the given social context*
- *plan verbal speech production based on such context evaluation by:*
    - *organizing speech sequentially, more specifically in the present study: anticipating/planning some preliminary interactional work before the request is verbalized (e.g. by including a reason for the request)*
    - *possessing grammatical knowledge* (i.e. syntax, morphology, semantics, phonology) *and producing language which manifests such knowledge*
    - *adjusting utterances to own evaluation of the given context*
- *co-construct meaning while constantly decoding/encoding utterances in real time using online processing skills* (i.e. in dialogic tasks)
- *show pragmatic awareness by verbalizing own thought processes regarding the evaluation of context, which are subsequently reflected in language choices*

The following section will look at some frameworks, which could allow the investigation of such abilities in L2 speakers' speech.

2.3 Frameworks for analysing data for evidence of development in Pragmatic Competence

Analysing and assessing pragmatic ability does pose a challenge. There have been ongoing debates regarding to what extent such ability derives from L2 learners' language competence and to what extent they are constantly emerging in the course of a conversation (e.g. Kasper, 2004; Cohen, 2008). In the case of the former pragmatic abilities can be used as a set of tools when needed in a conversation, thus placing a heavy emphasis on language ability. However, in the case of the latter they are contextually dependent and cannot be analysed/understood without the other co-participant's actions/responses, thus examining pragmatic ability from an interactional competence perspective, and placing the emphasis on the importance of the co-constructed nature of conversation rather than on individual pragmatic knowledge as such (as elaborated on in 2.1). This means that in the course of interaction, participants constantly try to make sense of what is said and construct the conversation from moment to moment using their social knowledge and knowledge of routinized procedures (Hall and Pekarek Doehler, 2011).

The following section presents on theories that underlie these two different perspectives on pragmatic ability.

2.3.1 Speech Act Theory

This theory has been the most widely used for investigating speakers' pragmatic competence, based on Austin's (1962) theory, later further developed by Searle (1969, 1975). Austin (1962) claimed that people use language to do things with, his classification of utterances included locutionary acts (actual words used), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intention behind word choice) and perlocutionary acts (the effect these words have on the hearer). Searle (1969) developed his idea further and distinguished between 'locution' (i.e. proposition) and 'illocution' (i.e. illocutionary force). His illocutionary acts, the exact quantity of which were not identified, were based on typical communicative functions (i.e. representatives, directives, expressives, commissives and declaratives) (1975). For example, people often state what they believe to be true (i.e. representatives / 'It is sunny today.'), how they feel (i.e. expressives / 'I'm so sorry!'), what they intend to do (i.e. commissives / 'I'll get some milk.') or they might get someone to do something (i.e.

directives / ‘Can you buy some milk?’). Illocutionary acts were also accompanied by illocutionary force indicating devices (e.g. word order, mood, aspect, intonation), which aid the listener in evaluating the illocutionary force in an utterance. Austin believed that illocutionary force indicating devices could be altered (e.g. a statement could become a question), thus changing the force of the message. This in turn would result in changes in the interpretation of the message. Moreover, a distinction was made between direct and indirect speech acts, according to which if a grammatical structure matches the function (e.g. declarative used to make a statement: ‘It’s warm today.’) they are classed as direct speech acts, but if it does not (e.g. declarative used to make a request: ‘It’s really warm in here.’ – meaning ‘open the window’) they are classed as indirect speech acts.

Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1969, 1975) work was heavily criticised by, for example, Labov and Fanshel (1977), who argued that the illocutionary force attached to the same utterance might be very different. Although Kasper (1989) believes that the signalling nature of linguistic devices within utterances prevents ambiguity when evaluating these in terms of illocutionary force, the exact illocutionary force of a number of utterances might still be unexplained and regional differences are still unaccounted for. As Thomas (1983) argues, in order for effective interpretation of utterances to take place, speaker and hearer must have a shared world of norms and communicative breakdown occurs when this differs and expectations are not mutual. The speech act theory has also been criticized for focusing on isolated sentences and not taking the context into consideration. Flowerdew (1990), for example, questions its usefulness as it provides no explanation of how the individual utterances contribute to the whole meaning of the conversation. Thomas (1995), on the other hand, accepts that some speech acts might seem to have a similar function (e.g. request, order – hearer is asked to do something) but argues that taking contextual factors (e.g. psychological) into consideration reveals their somewhat different functions. In addition, the place where an utterance appears in the conversation can also influence its function/meaning (Schegloff, 2007). As Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) argue, counting strategies can only give information about how often certain strategies are used ignoring how exactly they are used in conversation. Kasper (2006), as well as Kasper and Ross (2013), highlight the importance of analysing speech acts in interaction using a more discursive approach. They advocate conversation analysis as a better alternative for speech act research.

2.3.2 Conversation Analysis (CA)

In order to determine CA's effectiveness in speech analysis, the interactional features under its investigation and its method of analysis of spoken data need to be examined. Originally, CA was a sociologically based rather than a linguistically based approach. Traditional CA examines naturally occurring conversations and it focuses on "how coherence and sequential organisation in discourse are produced and understood" (Levinson, 1983, p.286) as participants follow certain rules to construct their speech turn by turn (Jacoby and Ochs, 1995). As Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) states, the main analytical questions that CA is concerned with are, firstly, how participants interpret utterances and respond accordingly when their turn comes and secondly, how the speech sequences are created. This means that meaning is interpreted as it emerges through the sequential nature of talk building up to, for example a speech act (e.g. request), or constructing participants' communicative activity. It is worth noting that CA's explanation of the interaction is not based on the physical surrounding, the interlocutors' social relationship or their individual characteristics (Seedhouse, 2004). However, it does place an emphasis on the linguistic form, as Seedhouse (2004, p.234) states "although CA's main interest has been in how social acts are performed through language, it has always been interested in the reflexive relationship between grammar and interaction and the domain of pragmatics". This would mean that analysis is based on what language participants produce in a given context, and is thus data-driven (Ten Have, 2007). In other words, CA not only analyses how speakers structure their speech in order to achieve their communicative goals in social interaction, evaluates the hearer's responses and forms their own response accordingly, but it also considers linguistic factors/choices in co-participants' speech.

Research employing a CA framework looks at the micro features of interaction such as turn-taking, topic management, sequential organization and repair. In data analysis CA focuses on participants' meaning making and tries to demonstrate that co-participants attended to some feature of talk in that particular moment rather than using pre-determined categories or codes. More and more researchers (e.g. Gonzalez-Lloret, 2010; van Compernolle, 2013) argue that CA could be used effectively to analyze speech acts (SA) in interaction since it investigates action as and when action *emerges* during the talk without predetermining the speakers' intentions. As Levinson (2006) argues:

> Although conversation analysis (CA) largely eschews overtly intentional metalanguage, CA's central tenet is that a theory of interactive discourse should be built on the participants' own interpretations and classification of phenomena – that's to say, it's actually more cognitive (more honestly concerned with the mental worlds of participants) than most of the rival theories of discourse analysis. (Levinson, 2006, p.86)

While on the surface CA does seem to be a better alternative than speech act theory for the examination of pragmatic competence, its use in pragmatics research can not be justified without looking at some pertinent issues. As stated previously, traditional CA avoids explaining an interaction by contextual variables (e.g. social relationship between speakers), while in most interlanguage pragmatics research elicited data and task/participant variables need to be controlled in order to investigate their impact on selected features of language. In addition, interlanguage pragmatics research involves the analysis of second language data, adding another layer to the analysis, namely that L2 speakers also bring L1 social knowledge and expectations into the conversation, which may or may not be shared with the L2 speech community. The constraints on changing contextual variables and examining their impact on language use might make the use of traditional CA for the purposes of examining L2 pragmatic competence somewhat questionable. However, the recently emerged field of applied CA (ten Have, 2007; Richards and Seedhouse, 2005) does allow contextual factors (e.g. setting, participants) to be taken into consideration and to examine how these might influence some aspects of the interaction in institutional contexts (Heritage and Clayman, 2010).

Quantification in CA is a rather controversial issue (Lazaraton 2002, p.82-87) and traditionally not allowed (Jefferson, 1993), therefore, many argue against its use. For example, Schegloff (1993) warns that quantification may lead to perhaps misleading conclusions regarding the interactional phenomenon in question due to incomplete understanding of the context within which the data occurs, therefore, it should not replace analysis. However, Heritage (1995, p.404) believes that quantifying CA data may help to analyse interactional cases involving specific social or psychological categories. Indeed, social status and imposition, investigated in the present research, are likely to belong to this group. Therefore, the quantification of

interactional features should effectively complement qualitative data analysis, potentially resulting in deeper insight into interaction. Additionally, in the field of speaking assessment, quantification of CA data is indeed successfully used (e.g. Jaiyote, 2017; Nakatsuhara, 2013). Therefore, it is believed that applied CA could be effectively used for L2 pragmatic data analysis (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012).

2.3.3 Conversational Analysis versus Speech Act Theory

Having examined the different features of these conversational frameworks, it is obvious that although they both examine language as action, they differ in several aspects. First, CA views speech acts as actions developed through a sequence of turns in the conversation with all the participants contributing to their formulation (Schegloff, 2007), which means they only emerge as actions (or patterns) afterwards. Conversely, SA theory views speech acts as static with the speaker as the active and the hearer as the mostly passive participant. Consequently, actions reflect the speaker's intention without considering how the hearer's contribution may have influenced this action. Secondly, CA puts adjacency pairs as its main unit of analysis and suggests that this turn-taking process (Schegloff, 2007) enables participants to organize their interaction. For example, it enables participants to notice whether their intention was accepted or not, which in turn results in participants working together towards achieving mutual understanding. On the other hand, SA theory has the actual speech act (e.g. request) as a unit of its analysis, implying that it is the speaker who is in control and although acknowledging the existence of perlocution does imply that there is a hearer, this co-participant's contribution to the conversation is somewhat sidelined in the analysis. Finally, SA framework advocates discourse completion tasks (DCTs), which allow control of the contextual variables, thus resulting in better examination of selected features of language use. CA on the other hand advocates naturally occurring data, which allows closer examination of speakers' meaning making in the constantly evolving process of conversation. However, it needs to be added that the recently emerged applied CA does make allowances for contextual variables when analysing data.

To sum up, although both frameworks have their unique advantages, CA would better allow the analysis of the *sequential* organisation of speech leading up to the intended SAs (in the present study SAs refer

specifically to utterances containing requests/apologies), while also reflecting on how the listener's responses contribute to developing the communicative act (in the present study this includes pre-/insert- and post-expansion), as well as the speakers' *online processing* skills. In addition, it would better enable the analysis of how contextual factors might contribute to the explanation/evaluation of the interaction and how the choice of linguistic form may influence the interaction.

Implications for the present research

It has been concluded that a conversation analytic framework would better allow the examination of sequential organisation and online processing skills. Therefore, applied CA will be used to examine these elements of pragmatic competence, alongside the SA framework, which is believed to shed more light on pragmalinguistic features employed by speakers.

2.4 Empirical research into pragmatic ability

There has been increasing interest in empirical research of pragmatics since the late 1980s. Some research investigated ***cross-cultural pragmatics*** (i.e. how different cultures differ in terms of pragmatic features in language) (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) while others investigated ***interlanguage pragmatics***, which is according to Kasper and Rose (1999, p.81), "the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge" and has, in fact, developed from the former.

Perhaps the most influential research in *cross-cultural pragmatics* was the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). CCSARP examined cross-cultural differences in the realization of requests and apologies using the speech act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) as its unit of analysis. The study was also built on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as their three contextual factors, namely degree of Power, Social Distance (i.e. being a member of a specific social group or not) and Imposition (i.e. how demanding a request might be for the hearer), were varied in the social contexts provided in tasks. Using written DCTs as their research instrument, CCSARP researchers developed coding categories for the different strategies used by participants and classified their responses accordingly.

Nine request strategies were identified as well as different syntactic (i.e. syntactic downgraders which soften the force of request by syntactic choices) and semantic choices (i.e. lexical/phrasal downgraders which soften the force of request by lexical/phrasal choices; lexical/phrasal upgraders which increase the impact of the request), by which the head act (i.e. request phrase) can be modified and which can differ across languages (see Appendix 9). Cross-cultural differences were identified based on examining the frequency of particular strategies used in the given cultures.

The other main line of empirical research within pragmatics is *interlanguage pragmatics research* focusing mainly on the realization of speech acts (i.e. range of strategies and linguistic forms used to convey illocution) by L2 speakers and native speakers. In addition, it examines pragmatic failure, explained by Thomas (1983, p.94) as "…H perceives the force of S's utterance as other than S intended s/he should perceive it", and distinguishes between pragmalinguistic failure (i.e. pragmatic force assigned to an utterance by an L2 speaker is different from the force assigned by a native speaker, or perhaps mistakenly transferred from L1) and sociopragmatic failure (i.e. being unaware of culturally appropriate linguistic behaviour assumed/expected in a social context) (Thomas, 1983, p.99). Speech act theory acted as a theoretical basis for much research into interlanguage pragmatics; thus components of speech acts were classified as various syntactically and semantically based strategies. The frequency of these strategies in learners' speech was compared at various proficiency levels and based on the differences in their use of these strategies L2 learners' pragmatic development was evaluated. A similar method will be used in the current research to investigate interlanguage pragmatics.

Within the domain of interlanguage pragmatics, several features (e.g. speech acts, implicature and routine formulae) have been investigated. Amongst actual *speech acts*, request and apology have been the most widely researched but some research also investigated refusals (e.g. Taguchi, 2007), compliments, advice (e.g. Matsumura 2001, 2003, 2007), complaints (e.g. Trosborg, 1995) and disagreements (e.g. Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Felix-Brasdefer (2007a) investigated requests in Mexican Spanish and also looked at how the length of residence in the target community affects the realization of refusals (2004). Barron (2003) also researched the acquisition of refusals (as well as requests) longitudinally in a study abroad context. Jung

(2004) focused on apology while Matsumura (2001) focused on advice using a quantitative approach. The most commonly used research instrument was DCTs but a few other instruments have also been used, for example role-plays and multiple-choice tests. Another pragmatic feature of investigation was *implicatures* (i.e. indirect language use). For example, Bouton (1994, 1999) longitudinally examined the development of ESL learners' knowledge of implicature. He adapted Grice's (1975) implicature definition and distinguished between idiosyncratic implicature (e.g. 'Can I use your pen?' – 'It's on the table.') and formulaic implicature (e.g. topic change when a speaker changes topic in order to answer a question; indirect criticism through praise when a speaker praises an irrelevant section of the whole 'How was the party?' – 'The costumes were interesting'). Taguchi (2005, 2008) continued this line of research and also looked at the time participants needed to respond to implicatures. A further line of enquiry was *routine formulae* (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2006, 2008, 2009; House, 1996; Wildner-Bassett, 1986) which, according Coulmas (1981), are set expressions used in a specific context for a specific purpose. Research into this area investigated how teachable formulas are and whether with more exposure L2 learners' knowledge significantly increases.

A more recent line of research focused on the more discursive side of pragmatics and undertook the investigation of the *sequential organisation* in L2 speech. For instance, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) examined the sequential organisation of requests in different proficiency level learners' language. They found that higher proficiency learners are in control of the conversation to a greater extent by producing more first pair parts rather than relying on the interlocutors to do the same. Their research prompted Hassal (2013) to re-examine previous research (i.e. Trosborg, 1995 and Hassal, 2003) and compare results of the same data analysed by using first a speech act and then a conversation analytic framework. He concluded that the latter framework shed new light on the same data, and his results correlated with those of Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2012). He also remarked that using such a framework is more effective as it does not rely on pre-determined categories (e.g. hint), thus assuming speaker's intentions without evidence, and also takes the interlocutor's behaviour into account (i.e. the impact it has on the speaker's production).

Within interlanguage pragmatics research much attention has been paid to the acquisition process of pragmatic features in an L2 and how such acquisition and development can be measured. It is this area of research that the next section will be focusing on.

2.4.1 Research into measuring L2 Pragmatic development and acquisition

Bialystok (1993) claims that there are two cognitive processes involved in acquiring pragmatic competence; acquiring knowledge/understanding of L2 pragmatic features and acquiring control over the use of these features. To what extent these hinder L2 speakers in the development of pragmatic competence is still under debate. Hassal (2003, p.1906) argues that L2 learners produce pragmatically inappropriate utterances not because their knowledge is inaccurate or lacking but because they are unable to produce them appropriately in real time, while Kasper and Rose (1999, p.86), for example, believe that L2 learners possess the same range of SA realization strategies as L1 speakers but they differ in the way these are formulated linguistically when adjusting them to specific social contexts. Thus it seems that both linguistic and time constraints contribute to the slow development of, or at times the failure to display, pragmatic competence.

There is also very little agreement on the sequence of acquisition of pragmalinguistic features. Development is believed to take place in a range of pragmatic features albeit not always simultaneously. Some researchers (e.g. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996, p.159) believe that such features are learned in no particular order, while other research does indicate some patterns of development. Some also argue (e.g. Hassal, 2003, p.1906) that development is probably linked to the development of grammatical competence whilst learners transfer these less and less from their L1 as their linguistic proficiency increases. Consequently, a number of pragmatic features have been examined in this respect. There has been research investigating the development of specific speech acts (e.g. request, apology), the development of pragmalinguistic devices within speech acts (e.g. upgraders, downgraders), while somewhat less research focused on discourse features and sociopragmatic features. However, measuring pragmatic development is far from straight forward as it is unclear what is a common measurement scale (e.g. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). Bardovi-Harlig (2013, p.77) observes that, “in the past 20 years researchers have not sought a common metric by which development can

be measured, but rather have utilized multiple measures". This might perhaps indicate how problematic it is to find a universal measurement for pragmatic development.

In order to better understand what might influence the construction of such universal measurement, the following sections (2.4.1.1 and 2.4.1.2) will provide an overview or research investigating L2 Speech Act realization and the development of pragmalingustic features within these Speech Acts.

2.4.1.1 L2 Development in Speech Act realization

In the field of speech acts, Roever (2006) found that the knowledge of speech acts increased with proficiency. He compared two groups of participants, one studying in an L1 and the other in an L2 environment and his data showed that more proficient learners in both groups performed better. Trosborg (1995) compared different proficiency level groups and found that lower level learners often relied on 'want' statements, whereas, more proficient learners, similarly to native speakers, tended to use more conventionally indirect strategies. Other research (e.g. Trosborg, 1987; Rose, 2000; Shardakova, 2005) also concluded that knowledge of speech acts increases with proficiency. The question arising is whether 'knowledge' in itself leads to production and whether learners who are able to recognize certain speech acts are also able to produce them appropriately in the relevant context and modify their utterances based on the given social context (i.e. taking power, social distance and imposition into consideration).

A somewhat less researched area is the development of implicatures. Bouton's (1999) research indicated that knowledge of implicatures increased with exposure rather than proficiency. However, Roever (2006) pointed out that Bouton's research examined only one group of learners studying in an L2 environment and there was no unexposed group to compare the results with. Research on the development of implicatures in L2 learners' speech is yet inconclusive.

A popular line of research is the developmental path of conversational routines (also called formulae, conventional expressions). Roever (2006) found that exposure rather than proficiency affected knowledge of

routines. In his research the exposed group scored much higher than the unexposed group in the knowledge of routines in the multiple choice discourse completion tasks (MCDCT). He argues that knowing routines only requires learners to memorize pre-fabricated chunks so even low-level learners are able to acquire them generally easily. However, he admits that the written task format in his research may have had an effect on learners' performance as the routines were written and the given context made clear. Indeed, in naturally occurring oral discourse even the comprehension of some of these formulae might pose a difficulty for L2 learners. In his other research (2012) he also found that the length of stay in the target speech community influenced the knowledge of formulae. For example in his data the following progress was noticeable:

- *Hello. Nice to meet you.* (all learners)
- *Say that again, please.* (first 2 months)
- *Can I leave a message?* (by the end of 3 months)
- *Here you go.* (around 1 year)
- *Can I get you anything else?* (2 years)
- *Do you think you could make it?* (not learned by sample)

Therefore, he argues that the only skill needed for learning formulas is to recognize/imitate a combination of words; the meaning of individual words comprising the formula being unimportant. This would mean that higher proficiency learners do not have an advantage when it comes to acquiring routine formulae. While this claim has some merit, one could argue that with the length of stay, proficiency also increases, therefore, the acquisition of some formulae learned after a longer period (e.g. *Can I get you anything else*?) could also be due to increased proficiency. Indeed, the acquisition of a complex formula, such as '*Do you think you could make it?*', could be rather daunting for a low proficiency learner.

Bardovi-Harlig (2009) found that with higher proficiency authentic conventional expressions (e.g. Be quiet.) were more accepted, recognized and produced than modified responses (e.g. *Be silent.)*. In addition there were noticeable differences in recognition and production. For example, some learners' level of both recognition and production was high but there were also learners who despite scoring fairly high on recognition scored low on production (e.g. could recognize *'I'm just looking.'* but did not produce it in the relevant context). There were a few conventional expressions (e.g. *That {'d/would} be + adj*) in her data that

native speakers commonly recognized/produced but amongst her participants only advanced learners were able to do the same, albeit to a much smaller degree. The data also showed grammatical differences in learners' speech production. For instance,

- level 3 (low-intermediate) learner's production: *I'm sorry for I'm late*.
- level 4 (intermediate) learner's production: *I'm so sorry to being so late*.
- level 5 (upper-intermediate) learner's production: *I'm sorry to come late*.
- level 6 (low-advanced) learner's production: *Sorry, I'm late*.

Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011), perhaps not unexpectedly, found more development and less L1 influence in the use of formulae with increased proficiency. Barron (2003) also noticed a decrease of non-L2 like routine forms (e.g. '*You're very kind. 'Oh, that's kind of you*.') in learners' speech after a prolonged period of stay in the target speech community as well as an increase in the use of pragmatic routines. This seems to indicate that accuracy in the production of these formulas might also be related to increased proficiency, which partially contradicts Roever's (2012) claim, namely that exposure rather than proficiency influences the acquisition of these formulae. Acquisition may perhaps also be influenced by not only length of stay but by factors related to frequency of use as well as language related issues (e.g. length of utterance, grammatical complexity, closeness of form/meaning to L1, idiomaticity – for example, 'here you go' or 'I can't make it.' might be rather challenging as the literal meaning of words is very different from the actual meaning of the phrase). Trosborg (1995) made an interesting observation when finding that high proficiency learners displayed near-native strategies in requests but not in complaints. She argues that one possible explanation might be that requests are highly conventionalised and indirect, whereas, complaints are much less routinized and learners have to find their own expressions. Therefore, she argues that highly routinized formulas are easier to learn.

Overall, research tends to indicate that the acquisition of formulas may be partially due to the length of stay in the target speech community and partially to proficiency level. However, research into confirming the linear development of pragmatic routines, implicatures and speech acts is as yet inconclusive.

2.4.1.2 Development of pragmalinguistic features within speech acts

The syntactic and lexical elements that contribute to the formulation of individual speech acts have also been widely researched in order to investigate their development in L2 speakers' language production, as discussed in 2.4.

a. Upgraders

These are defined as lexical/phrasal modifications, which intensify the impact of utterance on the hearer. For example, in the statement 'This room is *terribly* dirty.' the adverb 'terribly' is used to intensify the complaint being made, thus, prompting the hearer to act upon it. Trosborg (1995) found that with increasing language control there is increased use of modification (p.430) and also that upgraders appear later than downgraders in learners' speech. Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) findings also indicate that more intensification was used at higher proficiency levels.

b. Downgraders

There has been much more research into modification in terms of downgraders. These are modality markers mitigating the illocutionary force by means of syntactic choices (e.g. tense, aspect) or lexical/phrasal choices (e.g. politeness markers such as 'please' and hedgers such as 'kind of'). Faerch and Kasper (1989) found that there was lower frequency and variety of syntactic and lexical downgraders in L2 than in L1 speech, however, contextual sensitivity to choice of directness level was still noticeable in L2 usage. They also noticed that learners preferred to modify requests lexically without using syntactic downgraders. One reason for this was perhaps that downgraders are internal modifications and their use tends to require higher proficiency level in terms of syntactic knowledge. House and Kasper (1987), somewhat similarly, found that in specific situations L2 speakers opted for higher levels of directness in requests than L1 speakers and used fewer syntactic downgraders. This might have been due to their sociolinguistic knowledge but in some cases may have also indicated the transfer of L1 norms into L2 language use. Barron's (2003) research supports these findings as she found that learners tended to underuse modality markers. For example, there was a lack of syntactic downgraders even over a time period in learners' speech, which in some cases could have led to

potential pragmatic failure. However, she also noticed that over time there was a gradual increase in the complexity of syntactic downgraders, perhaps indicating that language proficiency does indeed play a part in their acquisition. Moreover, her findings showed that lexical/phrasal downgraders increased (most noticeably in refusals) over time and learners started to make more L2-like choices. In addition, learners began to use 'bitte' (i.e. in English 'please') over time in an embedded position, which again could suggest that grammatical improvement does have some kind of influence on the usage of pragmalinguistic features. Trosborg's (1995) research would also support this claim as she found that with a higher degree of proficiency more internal modifiers appeared in learners' speech, although the improvement was moderate. She argues that the reason for syntactic downgraders appearing prior to lexical/phrasal downgraders (apart from such simple routines as 'please') in her data may have been that they are more routinized than lexical/phrasal downgraders. As well as that, they are probably taught more explicitly in EFL classrooms (e.g. 'Would you mind if I + past tense?' is taught whereas the use of 'possibly' might not be). Trosborg (1995, p.429) also argues that the efficient use of downtoners implies higher pragmatic competence, as well as higher language proficiency, than the use of politeness markers since politeness markers are extra-sentential and thus do not require much psychological planning capacity on the syntactic level.

c. Grammar & pragmatic development

One argument is that growth in grammatical knowledge leads to growth in pragmatic competence. Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000), for example, longitudinally investigated how modality was used in oppositional talk. They found the early emergence and wide usage of 'maybe' / 'I think', whereas, the emergence of 'could' / 'would' in production was only noticeable six months later in L2 speech. It could be argued that this was the result of classroom instruction (i.e. could/would are taught much later) or another possible explanation might be that 'maybe'/'I think' are somewhat more lexical choices and their meaning/concept could be similar in many other languages (thus can easily be translated), whereas modal verbs might not exist in a number of languages (e.g. Hungarian, Polish). These stages of acquisition, Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (ibid.) argue, affected learners' choice of expressions of modality in oppositional talk (i.e. they tended to use easier lexical forms). According to Meisel-Clahsen-Pienemann's (1981) 'complexification hypothesis', the acquisition of syntactic structures in English as L2 language follows the order of

complexity. Trosborg's (1995) findings also seem to support this theory as in her data the appearance of internal modifiers correlated to increased linguistic competence as syntactic devices emerged before lexical/phrasal downgraders. These findings may indeed point to some kind of developmental sequences in the acquisition of pragmatic features.

Regarding grammatical development in producing formulas, Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) study found that there was some development across levels. For instance, higher proficiency learners accepted/produced L2-like forms (e.g. *Be quiet*.) more than modified responses (e.g. *Be silent!*). She argues that the use of conventional expressions could be due to level of proficiency and pragmatic knowledge as well as to a certain degree the length of stay in the L2 culture. Yamashita (1996) also found that overall proficiency level may have an affect on the acquisition of pragmatic competence (e.g. syntax – the use of passive in politeness). However, Roever (2012) claims that the acquisition of routine formulae is more influenced by the length of stay in the L2 culture. While this claim might have some merit, in terms of language acquisition, quantity (i.e. length of stay) must always be complemented by quality (e.g. consciously paying attention to language features, having conversations with L1 speakers) otherwise acquisition is unlikely to take place.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) found that there was a U-shaped curve in the length of utterances produced by different proficiency learners. Low intermediate and advanced level learners tended to use shorter utterances in requests whereas high intermediate level learners tended to use longer utterances. House and Kasper (1987) as well as Faerch and Kasper (1989) also confirm this phenomenon regarding verbosity amongst intermediate level learners. Stemmer (1981), somewhat similarly, also found that intermediate learners tended to use complete sentences as a response (i.e. repeat the interlocutor's whole phrases) rather than shortened forms (e.g. ellipsis). Kasper (1981 in Barron, 2003) gives examples of learners' preference for phrasing the offer more explicitly using a longer form (e.g. '*Would you like to drink a glass of wine with me?*' as opposed to a shorter and perhaps more informal form (e.g. '*How about a glass of wine?*'). This, she argues, may be due to their lack of knowledge regarding grammatical form or perhaps to the fact that they try to ensure the interlocutor's understanding. Whilst this is true, it could also be argued that L1 transfer may

influence production. For instance, 'Would you like' seems to translate relatively easily into many languages, however, 'how about' may be more abstract semantically and of course it is more informal.

Overall, research seems to indicate that without more advanced grammatical knowledge some pragmatic features cannot really be acquired and there is some kind of development in the acquisition of syntactic/semantic pragmatic features. Therefore, it was decided that the current research could and would focus on the development across proficiency levels.

2.4.2 Sociopragmatic development and structuring speech

As well as investigating pragmalinguistic development some researchers also looked at the sociopragmatic aspect of development, including adjustment of language and structuring speech according to context (also see section 2.4).

Cook (2001) argues that competent L2 speakers can recognize and produce a situationally appropriate speech style and L2 linguistic features indicate that they recognize the social rules and norms of the speech event. This may indeed be true, however, as some researchers claim there is a difference between EFL and ESL learners' development in sociopragmatic skills, namely that the former tend to be much slower than the latter (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Matsumura, 2001, 2003). As a result, EFL learners are less effective in adjusting their speech according to the given social/power constellation in a specific context (Rose, 2000). Other research also suggests that the acquisition of pragmalinguistic features in speech acts is much faster than the acquisition of their sociopragmatically appropriate use in context (i.e. variation of speech act realization in context). Trosborg (1995, p.428) argues that, "only when learners have acquired a wider range of communicative strategies and modificational devices can they begin to deliberately select strategies and markers according to the demands of the social situation". She found that only advanced learners were able to adjust their language by varying internal modification according to the social context, but only to a certain extent. Rose (2000) also found that Cantonese students in her study consistently used conventionally indirect request strategies without taking the context into consideration and adjusting the form accordingly, similarly

to learners in Schmidt's (1983, p.155) study who did not adjust speech act realization to the given more/less formal contexts. These findings all correlate with Trosborg's (1995), indicating that the acquisition of pragmalinguistic features precedes the ability to adjust their use to social context, which in turn implies/requires a higher level of proficiency. This is probably not surprising as such competence would require (1) the knowledge of both syntactic and lexical/phrasal pragmalinguistic features, (2) the ability to evaluate social variables (e.g. power), (3) the knowledge of how these variables affect language in L2 and (4) in the case of spoken discourse the ability to produce speech acts comprehensibly and swiftly. Such complex ability, one might assume, can only be based on a very high degree of proficiency at the very least.

Research investigating the use of external modification (or supportive moves) in an L2 also indicated that there is some, albeit not significant, development in this regard. This term is used in discourse analysis referring to supportive moves that often precede requests in order to provide support for the proposition and at the same time show politeness. Trosborg (1995) found that in her data all groups showed shortcomings in both requests and complaints, however, with increasing proficiency learners displayed somewhat better ability to support requests. The function of external modification is to convey politeness and generally most learners showed lack of ability in the use of moves that would have influenced the tone of politeness, the only exception being higher proficiency learners who were slightly more aware of the need to justify their complaints (e.g. give supportive reasons).

2.4.3 Development in the organization of speech

Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury (2004), through a one-year longitudinal study, investigated sequential organization and turn structure in disagreements using the speech act framework. Their results indicated a development in structuring speech across multiple turns as leaners tended to delay their response containing a refusal. Felix-Brasdefer (2010), investigating the same feature in role-plays and using the same framework found similar features in L2 learners' speech. Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) experimented with a conversation analytic framework to analyse the sequential organization of L2 learners' speech. They found that the presence, length and sequencing of pre-expansions (i.e. turns leading up to the actual request)

distinguished learners at different proficiency levels. More advanced learners tended to control the conversation by producing more first pair parts, whereas less proficient learners relied on the interlocutor more to initiate and repair. Prompted by their study, Hassal (2013) also re-examined results of previous studies (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Hassal, 2003) using a conversation analytic framework and found that they show similar results. Thus he concludes that the basic mechanism for conducting conversations is similar in numerous L1 and L2.

2.4.4 Development and L2 proficiency

Overall, research seems to indicate that there is indeed development in the recognition and production of various pragmatic features. A pertinent question arising is whether pragmatic development occurs simultaneously with language development. According to Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) hypothesis, since more proficient learners are less hindered by language difficulties they have the cognitive capacity to pay attention to pragmatic features. This is congruent with Levelt's (1989) cognitive theory, further elaborated by Field (2011), regarding enhanced automaticity in lower-level processes to free up capacity to deal with higher operations, including online monitoring.

Some researchers (e.g. Hassal, 2003) support this opinion but there is other research (e.g. Takahashi, 1996) indicating that it is familiarity with context rather than proficiency level that has a much bigger impact on pragmatic transfer. Whilst this may be true, it can also be presumed that pure familiarity with context may not lead to swift pragmatic production or even comprehension of a situation if language use is complex (i.e. syntax, lexis, phonology). On the other hand, one could also argue that lack of familiarity with context but high language proficiency may result in quicker analysis of language and eventually context.

The issue that has been raised by many (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2013) is whether such development is the result of interlanguage (e.g. lexical knowledge) development and whether there is parallel development between L2 learners' pragmatic competence and their linguistic competence. In other word, does the acquisition of, for example, the knowledge/use of modal verbs or tenses, which can all carry pragmatic meaning, make

learners more aware of their pragmatic function and enable them to use such knowledge effectively in social life. Although some believe this is not the case, or at least not in the development of all pragmatic features (e.g. acquisition of formulas, Roever 1996), others are convinced that it is. Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000), for instance, found that modality in low proficiency learners' speech appeared relatively later than some other lexical chunks, which could perhaps be explained by the timing of their introduction in the language syllabus. Moreover, it does indeed seem reasonable to assume that in order to produce speech one also needs to be able to, for example, decode phonological features (e.g. pronunciation, hesitation), possess aural comprehension skills and do it quickly in real time in the case of online communication (e.g. Taguchi, 2005, 2007), which skills have been proven to increase with proficiency.

It is also equally important to note that some pragmatic acts (e.g. complaints, refusals) are inherently more complex (as well as more 'face' threatening), therefore, generally acquired later not only in L2 but also in L1. For example, Trosborg (1995, p.430) found that learners' use of external modification in complaints develops towards the L2 norm later than in requests, which, she argues, could be due to the less conventionalized nature of complaints, and points to a higher degree of cognitive capacity needed on the learners' part. This would also mean that formulating speech acts and sequentially organizing speech is often based on 'patterns' that learners can observe and imitate. This in turn, raises another issue, namely the relationship between the length of study in the target setting and increase in proficiency, as these have been identified as the two most influential factors in L2 pragmatic performance (Roever et al., 2014). Some argue that the intensity of language instruction is more important than the length of stay in the host environment (e.g. Dietrich et al., 1995, p.277), while others are of the opinion that when it comes to pragmatic development the length of stay is more important than proficiency level (e.g. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985). More recently, however, more and more research suggests that it is indeed proficiency that enhances the development of pragmatic ability (e.g. Rose, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998, Grabowski, 2013) and "the length of stay is not a reliable predictor" (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p.230). Increased proficiency does indeed indicate that higher proficiency learners are in possession of a wider range of language features (e.g. structures, lexis) than lower proficiency learners. Moreover, it could also be argued that one can live in the target speech community for an extended period of time without consciously paying attention to and

noticing language or indeed pragmatic features. This would be in accordance with Schmidt's (1995) noticing hypothesis, according to which there are two levels of awareness, (1) awareness of linguistic form and (2) awareness of context, thus the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge would involve both noticing and understanding of a linguistic phenomenon in social context.

Implications for the present research

Thus far it has been demonstrated that pragmatic development is more closely related to proficiency than to length of stay in an L1 speaking country. In addition, potentially useful focus of analysis to determine L2 pragmatic competence may be:

- speech act of request (more conventionalised)
- pragmalinguistic features within speech acts (syntactic, lexical/phrasal, some routines)
- structure speech (e.g. sequential organisation)

Finally, speech produced by higher proficiency L2 learners speech is believed to be richer in such features, therefore would better allow for their analysis than speech produced by lower proficiency L2 learners.

The following section will provide an overview of literature on the above listed, namely the speech act of 'requests' and pragmalinguistic, as well as sequential organisation, features within.

2.5 The speech act of 'REQUESTS'

Requests are one of the most studied areas in interlanguage pragmatics for a number of reasons. On the one hand, their high frequency of occurrence in real life makes them easily observable and also proves their importance. On the other had, they reflect knowledge of social conventions and speakers' awareness of the consequences of their linguistic action on H. As Ervin-Tripp (1981, p.195) expresses it, they "do more than one thing at a time. They affect the activities of the partner. At the same time, inevitably, they convey a social interpretation which defines the relation of the speaker and the hearer". This also implies that their inherently longer sequences (i.e. speakers build up to requests by providing e.g. reasons for request) allow an insight into speakers' interactional skills, as they require speakers to manage conversations whilst adhering

to the social/personal variables. Finally, a lot of research has gone into the linguistic features of requests (e.g. Levinson, 1983; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1987; Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Faerch and Kasper, 1989) as requests can be realised in many syntactic forms and modified lexically in a number of ways. As a result, some argue (e.g. Levinson, 1983) that in order to understand their pragmatic force examining the context within which they occur is essential.

One of the main lines of research, both theoretical and empirical, in this area investigated the cross-cultural preferences in request realisation (e.g. House and Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1989; Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Barron, 2008). The most influential of these was the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), which used Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness-theory as a theoretical basis. Although there is some empirical research that supports the distinction between the three main levels of directness in requests identified in their theory (i.e. direct, conventionally indirect, non-conventionally indirect requests), the actual number of sub-strategies is still under debate. The CCSARP identified nine different sub-strategies for requests according to directness, as well as different types of syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders/upgraders modifying the force of requests (Table 2.3), but there is other research that suggests that there might be 18 different request types (e.g. Aijmer, 1996, pp.132-133). Most research into the speech act of requests adhere to the framework developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), who place these strategies on their previously described scale of directness and claim that for speakers of many languages conventionally indirect strategies are the most polite (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987, p.131). However, there is research that suggests this might not be the case in a number of languages (e.g. Russian, Polish) that view direct requests as more polite. For example, Lubecka (2000) conducted a comparative study of Polish and English requests and found that imperative forms when verbalising requests are much more frequent in Polish than in English, although interrogatives were the most common form in both languages. Ogiermann (2009), who compared request formulation in four languages (English, German, Russian and Polish), also found that requests are ranked according to different levels of directness and their illocutionary force (i.e. intended meaning/force) is softened by internal (syntactic and lexical) modification. This indicates that the way requests are formulated or indeed evaluated differ across languages, hence their acquisition may cause difficulties for L2 speakers.

Table 2.3: Summary of CCSARP categories of request strategies

Request strategies	**Syntactic downgraders** Mitigate force or request internally by syntactic choices	**Lexical and phrasal downgraders** Mitigate force of request internally by lexical/phrasal choices (optional)
▪ **Mood derivable**: often imperative but also infinite forms (e.g. Leave now.) ▪ **Explicit performative**: illocutionary intent is explicitly named using illocutionary verb (e.g. I'm asking you to leave.) ▪ **Hedged performative**: illocutionary verb modified by e.g. modal verbs (e.g. I must ask you to leave.) ▪ **Locution derivable**: illocutionary intent is directly derivable from semantic meaning of locution (e.g. You'll have to leave now.) ▪ **Want statement**: expresses speaker's desire that event should come about (e.g. I want to borrow your notes.) ▪ **Suggestory formula:** illocutionary intent is phrased as suggestion by using routine formula (e.g. How about some cleaning?) ▪ **Preparatory:** contains reference to preparatory condition for feasibility of request (ability, willingness, possibility) (e.g. Can I borrow your book?) ▪ **Strong hint:** illocutionary intent is not immediately understood from locution (e.g. Will you be going soon?) ▪ **Mild hint:** no elements in locution are of immediate relevance to intended illocution (e.g. You've been busy. Meaning: Clean the kitchen!)	▪ ***Interrogative*** (e.g. 'Can you give me a hand?') ▪ ***Negotiation of a preparatory condition:*** addressee can be willing to carry out requested act (e.g. 'You couldn't give me a hand, could you?') ▪ **Subjunctive** (e.g. 'Might be better if you were to leave now.') ▪ **Conditional** (e.g. 'I would suggest you leave now.') ▪ **Aspect** (e.g. ' I'm wondering if I could come with you.') ▪ **Tense** (past tense forms with present time reference e.g. 'I was wondering if you could.') ▪ **Combinations of the above**	▪ **Politeness marker:** - bid for cooperative behaviour (e.g. please) - involve hearer (e.g. do you think) ▪ **Understater:** underrepresent stated affairs in proposition (e.g. 'Could you tidy up a bit?) ▪ **Hedge**: adverbials to avoid precise propositional specification to avoid potential provocation (e.g. 'I'd kind of like to get a lift if that's ok.') ▪ **Subjectivizer**: expressing subjective opinion, thus lowering assertive force of request (e.g. 'I wonder if you would give me a lift.') ▪ **Downtoner**: modifiers used to modulate impact on hearer (e.g. 'Could I possibly borrow your notes?') ▪ **Cajoler:** establish or restore harmony (endangered through request) between interlocutors *(e.g.* 'You know, I'd really like you to work harder on this.') ▪ **Appealer:** to appeal to hearer's understanding (e.g. 'Clean up the kitchen, dear, will you?') ▪ **Combinations of above** **Upgraders**: Increase the impact of request ▪ **Intensifier**: intensify certain elements of proposition (e.g. 'The kitchen is in a *terrible* mess.') ▪ **Commitment indicator**: indicate degree of commitment *(e.g. 'I'm sure* you won't mind giving me a lift.) ▪ **Expletive** (e.g. 'Clean that *bloody* mess up?') ▪ **Time intensifier** (e.g. 'You'd better do it *right now*.') ▪ **Lexical uptoner**: part of proposition with negative connotations (e.g. 'Clean up that *mess*!) ▪ **Determination marker**: indicating heightened degree of determination (e.g. 'I've explained myself and that's that!') ▪ **Repetition of request** (e.g. 'Get lost! Leave me alone!')

Another line of interlanguage studies research has been investigating the request acquisition and development of L2 learners (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Barron, 2003; Hassal, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007b; Ogiermann, 2009). A substantial amount of research has investigated the acquisition of requests, and found

that L2 speakers' knowledge seems to develop from one-word expressions to more complex phrases using more lexical/phrasal mitigation and more complex syntax (e.g. Kasper and Rose, 2002; Barron, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007b). While this tends to indicate that there is development in the acquisition of requests, there is other research that indicates that foreign language learners' sociopragmatic development is not as obvious as second language learners' and they are less capable of adjusting their language to the given context (i.e. taking Power, Distance and Degree of Imposition into consideration) (Rose, 2000). This would mean that any research investigating research should select one group or the other rather than a mix of EFL and ESL learners.

2.5.1 Analysing requests using CA

In 2.3.2 the main theoretical background and the reasons why CA could be used effectively to examine speech acts have already been given. Therefore, the aim of this section is to provide examples and details of research that has successfully employed CA to study requests. To sum up its method of investigation, CA focuses on the sequential organization of speech acts, which is built around a main adjacency pair - 'request – acceptance/rejection' in the case of requests (Schegloff, 2007). Optionally, adjacency pairs can be preceded (pre-expansion) and followed by moves (post-expansion) but moves can also be inserted between them (insert expansion). Requests are often preceded by other moves, which indicates that they are considered to be dispreferred actions, whereas, for example, offers would be preferred actions and may not often be preceded by a number of modifying moves (Schegloff, 2007).

There have been a number of empirical studies investigating requests using a conversation analytic framework. For example, Taleghani-Nikazm (2005, 2006) examined requests in conversations in German while Lee (2009) examined the sequential organization of requests in calls made to an airline. Much less research has gone into L2 speakers' competences in the sequential organization of their requests. Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) investigated advanced German learners' abilities in terms of the sequential organisation of requests and found that it was very similar to native speakers in this respect. Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) compared different groups of proficiency learners and found that not only did more advanced

learners used more supportive moves (especially pre-expansion) than less proficient learners but that the sequential organization of requests also had an impact on the interlocutors, namely that the interlocutors took a more controlling role (e.g. by using more first pair parts) with beginners and let more advanced learners control the conversation much more taking on a more passive role themselves. They (ibid) concluded that L2 learners develop from a passive role relying on the interlocutor to navigate the conversation, to a more active role by making supportive moves before the request to prevent rejection of it. Al-Gahtani and Roever (ibid) also noted that interlocutors gauge learners' ability by this skill and respond accordingly (i.e. taking a more active role if necessary by providing more first pair parts and repair), which in turn demonstrates to L2 learners what features of conversation are expected when making requests.

2.5.2 Pragmalinguistic resources within requests

As already indicated in 2.4.1, most research results indicate that internal modification (i.e. syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers) in requests appears at a later stage of L2 pragmatic development due to the high degree of processing complexity required (e.g. Rose, 2000, p.48; Trosborg, 1987, p.164).

2.5.2.1 Syntactic and lexical/phrasal modification

These are regarded as internal modification (i.e. modification within the request form) and their role is to modify the illocutionary force of requests by means of syntactic (e.g. tense) or semantic choices (e.g. hedgers). The CCSARP identifies seven different types of syntactic downgraders, eight types of lexical/phrasal downgraders and seven types of upgraders in requests (Table 2). These have been commonly used in pragmatic research to identify linguistic elements that are tied to pragmatic functions in the formulation of requests.

Regarding L2 acquisition, syntactic downgraders are believed to be first learned and to appear in requests as they are often part of request routines (e.g. Would you mind if…), which fact, as Trosborg (1995, p.247) argues, might make them easier to learn. In addition, they are presented in most English language

coursebooks, therefore learned, as part of chunks. Lexical/phrasal downgraders, on the other hand, are acquired and integrated later not only because they are optional elements in requests but also because they are not often presented and taught explicitly in English language coursebooks (Ficzere, 2010). Politeness markers (e.g. please) are the easiest to use, thus, they are often the first lexical/phrasal downgrader to be learnt in requests (Ellis, 1992, p.429), while downtoners (e.g. Could I possibly…) are believed to be acquired much later (e.g. Dittmar and Terborg, 1991, p.359) as they are often only optional elements in request formulas (Trosborg, 1995). In addition, as Trosborg (1995, p.429) points out, they lack explicit meaning and are syntactically more complex to use due to their embedded position.

2.5.2.2 Conversational Routines (CR)

Another aspect of requests is that the main act tends to be expressed by a set phrase or routine expression (e.g. Would you mind + verb?). The importance of learning/using routine expressions in L2 speech has long been highlighted in research. House (1996, pp.227-228), for example, claims that "from a sociolinguistic point of view, it is important to learn routines at any learning stage because they embody the societal knowledge that members of a given community share… routine formulas are thus essential in the verbal handling of everyday life". However, defining how these routines can be identified has been proven very difficult. Even the term itself has caused considerable controversy as illustrated by the variety of names used. Formulaic language in pragmatics is still referred to by a variety of names: formula, pragmatic routines, conversational routines, situation-based utterance, conventional expression, which are often used interchangeably.

Coulmas' (1981) term Conversational Routines (CRs) and his work in the early 1980's created the main interest in CRs and his definition is still used as a basis for further work in the field of Applied Linguistics (e.g. Kecskes, 2002; Wray, 2002). According Coulmas CRs are:

> Highly conventionalized prepatterned expressions whose occurrence is tied to more or less standardized communication situations. We have at our disposal a large stock of these

> expressions, for all kind of occasions […]. While most of them, except for one-word formulae such as *hi, hello, yes, no, right, well*, etc., display grammatical structure, a great many of them are simultaneously either on the brink of lexicalization or have turned into fixed idiomatic units of the lexicon already. (Coulmas, 1981, pp.2-3)

Although this definition has been criticised by scholars (e.g Bladas, 2012; Wray, 2002) it highlights some features, which are commonly used in Applied Linguistics. First of all, they are related to a specific communicative situation. In other words, they are so strongly linked to communicative situations that, as Kecskes (2002, p.104) claims, one can evoke the other. For instance, when we hear 'Could you please' we know that a request will follow. In other words, when identifying CRs it is the situation that needs to be remembered rather than the actual meaning of the words used. They can, as Schmitt (2004) argues, help to make discourse more fluent as speakers simply have to recall them from their repertoire of ready-made phrases. This would also indicate that more advanced ESL learners have more of these in their repertoire due to having been exposed to them or instructed in their use for longer. Secondly, CRs are lexically fixed to some degree. 'To some degree' should perhaps be emphasized as it allows for at least some variation in form. For example, '*if that would be possible*' and '*if that's okay*' can both be possible alternatives when formulating requests, however, '*if any possible*' would indicate that the user has not mastered the routine yet. In addition, when defining the lexical attributes of formulaic language, House (2009) mentions specific sequences of words (e.g. *you know*), whilst Manes and Wolfson (1981) refer to set linguistic (i.e. syntactic) sequences such as [noun phrase + looks + (very) adjective]. Interestingly, the former (i.e. '*you know*') is also classified as a pragmalinguistic device under downgraders (i.e. 'cajoler') in Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989), thus raising the question of where in fact it belongs. Finally, CRs might be idiomatic to some extent, as translating the individual lexical elements or analysing the interlanguage grammar may not provide an insight into their pragmatic function. Taking '*I can't make it*.' as an example, an L2 learner would need to memorise it as a chunk alongside its pragmatic function. Kecskes (2000, p.612) also points out that they differ from verb phrases since they contain pragmatic information.

The definition provided by Myles et al (1998, p.325) draws on Coulmas' definition in that when identifying conversational routines they refer to their formulaic (i.e. lexical/grammatical) fixed nature and their relation to communicative situations. In addition, they add phonological features (i.e. fluently articulated and nonhesitant). Their list of features includes the following:

- at least two morphemes in length
- phonologically coherent (fluently articulated and nonhesitant)
- used repeatedly in the same form
- situationally dependent
- community-wide in use

The first two aspects refer more to pronunciation features and thus perhaps require expert knowledge of the language. With relation to the acquisition of pronunciation features, Wray (2002) claims that L2 learners first acquire formulas as a sequence of individual words and will eventually be stored in the brain as a single chunk once the acquisition process is complete, which process makes their retrieval quicker and more similar to native speakers, while others believe that L2 learners start with memorizing whole chunks and only later are these broken down into individual elements. The third aspect of the definition provided by Myles et al focuses on form (i.e. lexical and grammatical features) and the final two on social knowledge. As Bardovi-Harlig (2012) states, their definition includes context and not only pragmatic roles. This is particularly important as it gives information not only about 'what' is said but also about 'in what context' it is appropriate. For example, '*Could you possibly*…?' is community-wide in use to make requests but it would not be appropriate in certain contexts (e.g. teacher asking a student to do their homework, unless it is used ironically).

Other definitions link formulas explicitly to their pragmatic roles. For example, Kecskes (2010) claims that conversational routines (e.g. *anyway*) are used in a variety of social contexts but Situationally Bound Utterances (SBUs) (e.g. *Nice to meet you?*) are linked to specific pragmatic contexts (e.g. introductions). However, this would still leave some doubts as to their use as '*Anyway, nice to meet you'* could also be an

appropriate utterance in some circumstances. Would this mean that '*anyway'* was an SBU in this context but CR in other contexts?

However, there are a number of issues when it comes to defining CRs. In terms of context, defining whether a particular CR is related to a specific communicative situation is complicated. As Bladas (2012) argues, Coulmas' (1981) definition gives no explanation for how an item is related to a communicative situation and what sort of linguistic/pragmatic information is needed in order to identify this link. In the same way, identifying whether a routine is lexically/morphologically fixed also raises questions. For example, the formulae '*I wonder if you could…*' can be modified lexically (e.g '*I wonder whether you could…*' or '*I wonder if you might be able to…*') so could these also be regarded as routines. Manes and Wolfson (1981) posed the same question when finding that some expressions used in compliments could be changed both semantically and syntactically (e.g. *'I love your hair.'* / *'Your hair looks nice.'*). Their storage and retrieval also cause controversy. Wray (2002), for example, points out that both terms 'formula' and 'routine' imply that these expressions are learned and retrieved whole, however, as Bardovi-Harlig (2009) points out, this claim may not refer to L2 leaners' knowledge and it is still problematic in interlanguage pragmatics research. The fact that an utterance is phonologically coherent/fluently articulated/nonhesitant might better describe expert users and they almost invariably also differ in the way they articulate utterances. Wray (2002) points out the difficulty in identifying conversational routines and formulaic forms in general. She argues that, "identification [of formulaicity] cannot be based on a single criterion, but rather needs to draw on a suite of features" (2002, p.43).

Regarding the acquisition of CRs, higher proficiency learners recognise and perhaps accept authentic conventional expressions (e.g. '*Be quiet*.'), therefore, they produce these more than different versions of the same response (e.g. '*Be silent.*') (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). Their appearance in L2 speech could be an indication that learners are trying to adjust to norms in the target community, which might also indicate that resisting their use may mean that these norms are in collision with learners own cultural norms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012).

In conclusion, existing definitions of CRs, which include features such as fixed lexical forms used in specific communicative situations and are phonologically coherent, although useful, have not provided enough clarity in distinguishing between CRs and other formulaic forms. Nevertheless, they have been used quite successfully, although as Bladas (2012) argues, often based on intuition, in the context of L2 learning (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2006).

In order to investigate the speech act of 'requests', besides analyzing the features of interests within, it is also vital to understand the extent to which different task formats allow an insight into their use. The next section provides an overview of this.

2.6 Task formats employed to elicit pragmatic features

Selecting an appropriate task format is essential when attempting to elicit pragmatic features in language that could generally reflect natural language use. In fact, Bardovi-Harlig (2013) highlights the importance of designing/evaluating the effectiveness of different task types and designing tasks that allow the study of implicit/explicit knowledge as important areas in pragmatics research. When making decisions about which task format to employ for eliciting data, the consideration of two main aspects, namely validity and reliability of the instrument, has been emphasised. Validity "refers to the degree to which an instrument (e.g. written discourse completion tasks [WDCTs] or role- plays) measures what it intends to measure, and consequently allows adequate interpretation of the results" (Felix-Brasdefer, 2010, p.43). Therefore, it relates to the appropriacy of the task content. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to how consistently the task format measures the construct. When it comes to eliciting and analysing pragmatic data, observation of spontaneous speech would perhaps best allow analysis of natural conversational features, thus providing validity. However, generalisation of this type of data collection is limited due to the uniqueness of each conversation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012, Kasper and Rose, 2002), thus jeopardising reliability.

Another aspect worth taking into consideration is the type of knowledge spontaneous conversations elicit. Ellis (2004, p.238) argues that tasks imitating spontaneous conversations tend to elicit implicit knowledge

and since in such tasks there is little possibility of monitoring on-line planning of speakers' own speech, they provide limited opportunity for speakers to use explicit knowledge. The question arising is whether speakers have more opportunity to use explicit knowledge in tasks that mostly differ from spontaneous speech, and if that is indeed the case, whether the features displayed in this speech are still natural enough to draw conclusions regarding speakers' pragmatic competence.

A further issue to consider is that pragmatic data needs to be comparable, which can only be achieved by manipulating certain variables (e.g. social relationship, power constellation) in the tasks. This is hardly possible when observing spontaneous conversation, which by its nature cannot be 'manipulated'. Some other task formats might be suitable for such need (i.e. changing variables) perfectly but may not elicit natural data.

Such dilemmas may explain the existence of a range of task formats that attempt to simulate natural conversation whilst also allowing the manipulation of contextual variables, in order to ensure comparison of data. Some of the most commonly used tasks are discourse completion tasks (DCTs), elicited discourse, role-plays and verbal reports. The following is a summary of some of the main advantages and disadvantages of each.

2.6.1 Discourse Completion Tasks

This task format has been widely used in pragmatics research as it allows for a fairly high degree of standardisation and makes the comparison of participants' responses relatively easy. In addition, their easy administration (Billmyer and Varghese, 2000, p.517) to a large group of participants is also in its favour. Kasper and Roever (2005) also argue that it is an effective format to test pragmalinguistic knowledge since it does provide information about test takers' knowledge about the formulation of a particular speech act. In fact, Roever (2006) used written DCTs to test L2 pragmatic knowledge, claiming that the use of such instrument eliminated pressure, potentially causing performance errors, which would have existed under online conditions. Such results might indeed help to predict what test takers might be able to produce in real

life, although it has to be reinforced here that it is only a predicament. He developed 12 DCT items, based on the empirically based classifications in Hudson at al. (1995), to test several speech acts (i.e. request, apology, refusal). Each task included the description of the context and a rejoinder, the latter in order to limit the number of potential responses, thus aiding the rating process. He found that his items distinguished between test takers (further elaboration on pragmatic assessment to follow in 2.7) and the test instrument was generally practical and reliable, although the study needed to be replicated to confirm results. Therefore, it seems that written DCTs do work to some extent when examining test takers' knowledge of speech acts, but test takers' pragmatic performance may well differ when it comes to producing speech online. This would mean that assessing L2 pragmatic competence, as opposed to pragmatic knowledge, would require a different instrument.

Besides administrative issues, contextual matters (i.e. the quality/reliability of data elicited) also need to be considered. It has been argued that DCT responses generally reflect the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms of different cultures (e.g. Beebe and Cummings, 1996, p.75; Kasper, 2000, p.329). Many also claim that by including sufficient contextual information in DCT tasks a higher degree of validity of the results is ensured. While this may be true, what is a sufficient amount of contextual information and how processing a relatively large amount of such information may influence speech production, is unclear. Moreover, as Weir (2005, p.103) states, when talking about testing speaking ability, "In terms of validity there is a strong case for testing spoken language performance directly, in realistic situations, rather than testing hypothetical knowledge of what might be said". This is, indeed, the case when assessing pragmatic competence in speaking.

In addition, it has also been highlighted that the restrictive format (i.e. only a limited number of turns can be elicited) of DCTs does not allow the examination of extended discourse and the sequential organisation in such discourse, let alone providing an opportunity to see what effect utterances have on the interlocutor (e.g. Golato, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2010; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012). Likewise, DCTs are unable to reflect the dynamic, co-constructed nature of social interactions due to their simulated nature (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan, 2010) nor to elicit authentic speech. Since the present research set out to investigate exactly such

features (i.e. sequential organisation, co-constructing the interaction), the use of DCTs was, therefore, eliminated.

2.6.2 Monologic tasks

Another task type much less frequently used in pragmatic research is monologic tasks. They are somewhat similar to oral DCTs in that they require the production of one turn only, however, this turn is much more structured sequentially and contains several speech segments (e.g. providing explanation, reason for request). Regarding the use/effect of monologic tasks, Levelt (1989, p.107) argues that their completion requires learners to use both macro-planning (i.e. anticipated speech act) and micro-planning (i.e. role and formulation of utterances). On the one hand, their use is advantageous as extended planning time is given to speakers, which helps to enhance the effectiveness of the planning stage. This means that there is time for the generation of ideas whilst also considering the given context. Speakers can pre-plan their utterances, thus, possibly resulting in more conscious syntactic/lexical choices and consequently greater fluency. On the other hand, as Field (2011, p.103) argues, planning time might not always result in more accurate production, especially if too much time is allowed for planning, which instead of aiding may confuse the speaker as to which linguistic choices might best express their intended meaning. Perhaps there is a case to argue that if test participants are allowed to control the length of their own preparation time, this problem may be lessened. Overall, as monologic task format seemed to elicit the type of pragmatic information aimed at (i.e. sequential organisation of speech, use of pragmalinguistic devices and their adjustment to the given context), it was chosen for the purposes of the present study. In order to avoid the issue raised by Field (ibid.), it was decided that study participants would be allowed to control their own planning time before monologic tasks, which involved the realistic task of leaving a message on the answerphone. Further details on this will be provided in the Research design chapter 3.3.2.

2.6.3 Dialogic task: Elicited discourse

More recent studies have used elicited discourse, alongside role-plays, which is a structured way of collecting data and has been used extensively in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research (e.g. Long,

1983) as well as in developmental pragmatics research. For example, Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury (2004) used emotion cards (Rintell, 1989) when investigating L2 learners' ability to disagree. Whilst this task format seems to be a useful way of eliciting a generally natural conversation, it is less widely used due to its limitation in allowing the examination of learners' speech in different contexts (i.e. differing social roles) (Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012). As one of the aims of the present research was to examine how participants adjusted their language according to context, the use of this task format was decided against.

2.6.4 Dialogic task: Role-play

Another widely used task format to investigate different speech acts is role-plays (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007b; Taguchi, 2007). They elicit spoken data while simulating communicative situations, where two interlocutors take on specific roles under specific conditions (Kasper, 2000). There are two different types, namely open (i.e. the outcome of the conversation is not predetermined) and closed role-plays (i.e. participants have to use given prompts, thereby, some kind of guidance/limitation regarding content is provided).

Both types have been used extensively, although the latter perhaps somewhat more commonly, in interlanguage pragmatics research, for example, to investigate L2 learners' knowledge of requests (e.g. Felix-Brasdefer, 2007a; Taguchi, 2007), apology and complaint (e.g. Trosborg, 1995) as well as routine formulae (e.g. House, 1996). Role-plays have been used to analyse L2 development in the acquisition of requests. For instance, using this task format, Trosborg (1995) found that higher proficiency learners approximated native speakers much more closely (i.e. used more conventionally indirect strategies) than low proficiency learners (i.e. used more 'want' type statements). Felix-Brasdefer (2007b), using the same format, also found similar development (i.e. more indirectness strategies) in learners' of Spanish language use. The fact, that both studies yielded similar results might provide some evidence for not only the development of such pragmatic features, but perhaps also for the effectiveness of this task format in terms of comparability.

This task format has also been employed in studies focusing on pragmatic assessments (e.g. Hudson et al., 1995; Yamashita, 1996; Okada, 2010; Kasper, 2013; Ikeda, 2017). Hudson et al. (1995) used role-plays (eliciting: request/apology/refusal) providing role-play cards with a scenario for learners and allowed interlocutors to act freely without any scripts, only the target speech act was indicated to learners (e.g accept request). Studies specifically focusing on the assessment of L2 requests have also used this task format successfully. For instance, Grabowski (2013) investigated the construct validity of a role-play test measuring grammatical and pragmatic knowledge at different proficiency levels. Okada and Greer (2013) used role-plays successfully in Oral Proficiency Interviews and found that interviewers have similar strategies (i.e. when attempting to elicit a relevant response) when co-constructing interaction with candidates. This may indicate that such task format could be used for comparing pragmatic competence at different proficiency levels as well as for the comparison/analysis of the structuring/co-construction of interactions.

Overall, role-plays seem to have been employed effectively for the analysis of pragmatic features in both pragmatic development and assessment. It has also been highlighted that, contrary to elicited discourse, role-plays allow for the examination of learners' speech in different contexts as the contextual variables (e.g. Power, Social Distance, Imposition) in the task can be altered whilst keeping the research goal in mind. Moreover, this task format provides the opportunity to elicit extended discourse. Van Compernolle (2011, p.118) advocates the use of role-plays and argues that proficient test-takers can display L2 competence (e.g. grammar, lexis) and also exhibit their "knowledge of what constitutes acceptable, appropriate and/or recognizable contributions to this form of activity". It must be noted, however, that role-plays are not without fault either. Felix-Brasdefer (2007a) rightly argues that they might not elicit all the language features that natural data may yield as participants' attitude is influenced by the absence of real consequences of their speech production. Conversely, learners may also produce speech that is much richer in language features than their natural conversation would be as they are aware that their speech-production is being investigated (Al-Gahtani, 2010). Nevertheless, role-plays reasonably closely imitate natural conversations, as participants do need to consider the role given to them and attempt to produce language that could generally indicate what they might produce in real life. Besides, they enable researchers to elicit extended discourse, which

resembles, although does not fully imitate, natural data whilst also allowing for some degree of standardization and comparability.

There is one more important aspect to take into consideration in terms of using role-plays, namely the cognitive load imposed by them. As they require the constant monitoring of speakers' own online performance (see section 2.4.2.3 for more elaboration on this) as well as instant responses to interlocutors, the cognitive capacity needed is significantly higher than, for example in either DCTs or monologic tasks. It is generally accepted that constant planning takes place before, while and after a turn is taken. This means that speakers simultaneously listen as well as plan while the interlocutor is speaking and while they are formulating their own turn. The latter involves a complex skill, as speakers have to construct their utterance grammatically, lexically and phonologically as well as "plan ahead conceptually, taking adequate account of where the present turn is leading or how the listener has reacted" (Field, 2011, p.87). This is indeed a skill that needs to be highlighted as important when eliciting/assessing L2 speakers' pragmatic competence in extended discourse, especially because the online nature of dialogic task formats (such as role-plays) means that there is much less time available to match the grammatical/pragmatic appropriacy of utterances to the speaker's own intended meaning while, at the same time, also constantly interpreting the interlocutor's meaning. This would place a much heavier cognitive load on participants, as they constantly alternate their roles in the course of the conversation between speaker and listener. This could, however, potentially distinguish between different levels of competence in L2 speakers. As Field (2011) states,

> Higher levels of competence could then be characterised by evidence of monitoring for pragmatic effectiveness as well as for linguistic accuracy. (Field, 2011, p.97)

This is especially true when we consider how discursive an interaction can be and how often participants might change the course of the conversation (ibid.)

Due to the existence of the numerous difficulties related to the use of different types of role-plays in pragmatics research, there have been some comparative studies investigating the quality of data yielded by

each and ways to develop them. One such study was conducted by Dahl (no date, cited in Kasper and Dahl, 1991), who compared three different sets of data gathered by authentic interactions, scripted and open role-plays. The hypothesis was that more pragmatic features (e.g. hedging, elaboration etc.) would be produced in open than in scripted role-plays. Findings indicated that generally open and scripted role-plays elicited similar features to authentic interactions, although they still contained fewer pragmatic features (e.g. speech-acts, turns) than the authentic data. However, scripted role-plays contained more words and speech acts than authentic ones, which would support Al-Gahtani's (2010) claim, that L2 speakers use more language features when being conscious of their speech production being analysed. Dahl (ibid) concludes that role-plays might not be fully representative of authentic interaction as the amount of talk in them depends on interlocutor relationship, which determines the degree of directness. Therefore, it was suggested that in order to gain more reliable data for the assessment of pragmatic competence, role-plays needed to be designed more effectively by reducing the memory load required by instructions (i.e. not too many details given and these to be presented in a logical order), which reduction would possibly increase the amount of learners' talk. It was also highlighted that in order to make role-plays more authentic participants should retain their own identity, although the result might be less predictable conversational behaviour (ibid). Another solution could be mirroring the given role as closely as possible to speakers' real life roles. This would lessen the cognitive load required to process contextual information, consequently freeing up time to plan and produce language that would reflect real life much more closely. For example, if I am a teacher, it takes less cognitive processing to step into a teaching role and imagine what I would say in a context, even if some contextual variables (e.g. social) slightly differ from real ones (e.g. talking to an interlocutor acting as a parent, whose social position I might be unclear about), than if I had to step into the role of businessman.

To summarise, each task format has its own advantages and disadvantages. Table 2.4 presents these in the first two columns, and it provides some potential solutions to some of the disadvantages in the last column. While DCTs allow for a higher degree of standardisation and comparability they may not elicit entirely natural data and do not allow the examination of extended discourse. On the other hand, the use of monologic and dialogic tasks does make the examination of extended discourse possible and they resemble real life discourse much more closely, but the comparison of participants' speech production may prove to be

much more difficult. However, it is clear that monologic and dialogic tasks would serve the purposes of the present research much better as they allow the analyses of extended discourse in a generally realistic context.

Table 2.4: A summary of highlighted features of DCTs, monologic and dialogic task formats.

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Overcoming some issues
DCTs	▪ allows for high degree of standardisation ▪ makes comparison of participants' speech easy	▪ questionable whether it elicits natural data thus validity is jeopardised ▪ providing sufficient contextual information that is easily comprehensible ▪ no interaction ▪ does not allow the examination of extended discourse ▪ does not reflect the co-constructed nature of social interaction ▪ preparation time allowed ▪ no feedback from interlocutor (e.g. signs of misunderstanding)	▪ mirror real life contexts as closely as possible ▪ unresolved ▪ unresolved ▪ unresolved ▪ give one task at a time requesting instantaneous response ▪ unresolved
Monologic tasks	▪ allows for examining extended discourse ▪ allows for examining the structure of discourse ▪ allows for planning language (greater display of pragmalinguistic devices observable?)	▪ no interaction ▪ preparation time allowed ▪ no feedback from interlocutor ▪ recording format may prevent learners from producing natural language ▪ self-monitoring and repair is reduced ▪ no co-construction of message between interlocutors (Swain 2001)	▪ allow participants to control own preparation time ▪ use device that might resemble real life as much as possible (e.g. mobile phone)
Dialogic tasks	▪ resembles real life discourse more closely ▪ provides opportunity to observe the co-construction of conversation (e.g. signalling understanding, misunderstanding etc.)	▪ cognitive aspects: rapid response might be required, thus any extra cognitive load imposed by task instructions may influence natural/authentic thought processing ▪ not entirely authentic as there is power imbalance	▪ reduce the memory load required by instructions (i.e. limited number of details given and these to be presented in a logical order) ▪ participants should retain their own identity or least given role that they can easily identify with / close to their real life identity

2.7 Assessing pragmatic competence

The field of language assessment cannot be ignored when pragmatic competence is discussed as it played a vital role in highlighting the importance of and analyzing L2 pragmatic competence. One of the goals of

language assessment is to operationalize the findings of empirical studies into L2 ability (e.g. in relation to pragmatic knowledge) to make practical use of theories (e.g. Bachman, 1990) defining such ability, which can be of benefit to, amongst others, test takers, test developers and language educators. With regards to pragmatic competence, this field has, in fact, also made significant contributions to identifying the construct as well as to experimenting with different task formats that can effectively tap into this knowledge. This section is a brief overview of previous attempts at tapping into assessing L2 pragmatic knowledge.

The earliest studies focused on speech acts and politeness. For example, Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995) investigated the knowledge of three speech acts: request, refusal and apology employing a range of DCTs (e.g. oral, written) as well as role-plays and two types of self-assessment as test instruments. There were a number of spin-off studies (e.g. Yamashita, 1996; Liu, 2006) using modified versions of their instruments to assess L2 pragmatics. This phase was followed by another which, having revised the test construct, included components such as implicature/routine formulae besides speech acts and involved participants with different first language backgrounds (Roever, 2005, 2006). Roever was also the first researcher to analyse test taker's interview data using qualitative methods and combined the analysis of their test performances with their background information. He also raised the issue of whether pragmatic knowledge was more influenced by proficiency or by longer exposure to L2 settings. The recent developments in L2 pragmatic assessment are due to criticism regarding the test instrument (e.g. DCTs) and the construct itself, as these do not reflect the co-constructed nature of conversation, within which pragmatic competence operates and which also involves the listener as an influential interactant (Roever, 2011; Kasper and Ross, 2013). As a result, a few recent empirical studies were conducted to examine the discursive side of L2 pragmatic competence within an interactional framework, investigating features such as sequential organisation in interaction (e.g. Youn, 2013, 2015; Ikeda, 2017).

Youn (2013, 2015) assessed test takers' abilities, within a university setting, based on five assessment criteria: (1) Content delivery, (2) Language use, (3) Sensitivity to situation, (4) Engaging with Interaction and (5) Turn Organisation. Her data came from role-play and monologue tasks performed by a large number of L2 speakers (i.e. 102 participants), which was subsequently analysed for the purposes of assessment. As a

result of the large data set, the reported L2 features were somewhat generalized, providing only an impressionistic overview of interactional features rather than individual differences regarding specific features of speech. Nevertheless, her data provided insightful implications regarding L2 pragmatic development (in terms of the five assessment criteria) across proficiency levels. Her study not only confirmed other empirical research findings into L2 interactional competence but it was also an indication that pragmatic competence can be successfully investigated within a broader construct involving interaction (Kasper, 2006; Roever, 2011).

Youn's (2013, 2015) research also provided a springboard for other investigations. Ikeda (2017) employed the same broad construct of discursive pragmatic competence and investigated L2 pragmatic competence in a university setting. Similarly to Youn's instrument, his research instruments included both, monologue and role-play tasks, but there was also a self-assessment task added. However, unlike in Youn's study, participants' actions in the role-play tasks were not prescribed and they were allowed to develop the conversation as they wished in order to ensure that participants' performance was similar to what they would have done in real life. In fact, the self-assessment task was aimed at eliciting their views on whether this was indeed the case. The six assessment criteria (i.e. Social Actions to Achieve the Communicative Goal, Facility with the Language, Language Use to Deliver the Intended Meanings, Language Use for Mitigation, Engagement in Interaction and Turn Organization) were designed based on Youn (2013) but with a greater focus on linguistic elements. The mixed-method design of the study was intended for language assessment purposes. His thorough CA analysis of participants' speech generally confirmed and elaborated on Youn's (2013) findings with regards to L2 interactional features and also indicated a strong connection between the development of L2 pragmatic competence and proficiency. According to the data, pragmatically competent L2 speakers':

- sensitivity to the given situation was high, enabling them to adjust their action in order to achieve communicative goal (e.g. by negotiating, proposing solution),
- language to express pragmatic meaning was smooth, clear and fluent (e.g. sound, intonation, stress),

- ability to control linguistic resources to deliver the intended pragmatic meaning was high (e.g. pragmatically accurate use of lexical/syntactic choices)
- language to mitigate imposition was varied (e.g. could, would, I wonder)
- engagement with the interlocutor was active, resulting in the co-construction of meaning (e.g. by using clarification, acknowledgement tokens),
- turn organisation was smoothly adjusted to pragmatic demands within the discourse.

Whilst his results highlighted the fact that interactional resources enable higher proficiency learners to manage pragmatic demands, rather than simply produce individual speech acts, and provided useful insights into L2 pragmatic language use, a microanalytic approach examining individual differences in linguistic features combined with CA would have resulted in a less impressionistic description of these features. In addition, such approach could have also provided an insight into whether pragmalinguistic devices were employed to differing degrees by individuals, thus reflecting their evaluation of the given social context. His quantitative analysis of the self-assessment task showed a moderate correlation between test-takers' own perceptions of performance and their pragmatic abilities, but if this quantitative analysis had been combined with qualitative data, the conclusions made about participants' assessment of their own performance would have been more convincing as open comments could have revealed the relationship between test-takers' analysis of each task context and their language choices. In addition, some criteria, for instance the one specifying varied ways of mitigating imposition, could have also included setting the degree of modification against test takers' intentions, rather than simply analysing variation in form.

Despite some shortcomings, both Youn (2013) and Ikeda's (2017) research was significant as they (1) indicated the effectiveness of both monologue and role-play tasks when investigating pragmatic competence in circumstances close to real life, (2) empirically demonstrated the effectiveness of analysing pragmatic competence within a wider interactional construct and (3) highlighted a number of interactional and language features employed in L2 speech to manage pragmatic demands. However, it was beyond the scope of these studies to conduct a microanalysis to investigate the pragmalinguistic features in individuals' language use and whether these choices were consciously based on participants' analysis of the various task contexts.

Conducting such analysis would be important in order to further develop existing L2 proficiency descriptors. Attempts have already been made at including pragmalinguistic features in some descriptors. For instance, the language requirements for ISE III or GESE (Trinity College London, 2009) mention the use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, such as intensifiers (e.g. completely) and 'vague and imprecise language' (e.g. a bit more), although these are listed under lexical repertoire without reference to the context or pragmatic reason for their usage. These linguistic elements are undoubtedly signs of L2 pragmatic competence, but these descriptors would nevertheless need further refinement and a wider range of examples to specify pragmatic competence at different proficiency levels. The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) descriptors also refer to some aspects of pragmatic use of language. For example, the descriptor for C2 level sociolinguistic appropriateness includes 'appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly' (p. 29) and pragmatic descriptors describing C2 'propositional precision' include 'Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations). Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.' (p.31). But how this is materialized in actual language use is somewhat underspecified. Overall, it is argued here that proficiency descriptors describing pragmatic competence should be further refined by providing empirically designed descriptors.

2.8 Summary

2.8.1 Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has reviewed central topics related to the notions of pragmatic competence, frameworks within which such competence may be analysed and research that has gone into the investigation of L2 pragmatic competence. Firstly, notions of pragmatic competence (e.g. Leech, 1983; Canale, 1983; Thomas, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1984) were described, highlighting that definitions of pragmatic competence moved from involving only linguistic and social knowledge to also including ability to organize speech sequentially

as well as to monitor speakers' own performance on-line in extended discourse in order to conduct social interaction successfully. Appropriacy and pragmatic norm have also been discussed, concluding that setting L1 norms for L2 speakers is highly debatable as even within an L1 society different norms exist. It was suggested that for L2 speakers setting and achieving their own communicative goals is perhaps more important and realistic.

Some theoretical models of communicative competence (e.g. Canale and Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Purpura, 2004) have also been described and a definition of L2 pragmatic competence has been arrived at and it was stated that pragmatically competent L2 learners in this study are able to:

- evaluate the given social context
- plan verbal speech production based on such context evaluation by:
    - organizing their speech sequentially, more specifically in this study: anticipating some preliminary interactional work (e.g. by including a reason for the request) before the speech act (in this study: request) is verbalized
    - possessing grammatical knowledge (i.e. syntax, morphology, semantics, phonology) and producing language which manifests such knowledge
    - adjusting utterances to own evaluation of the given context
- co-construct meaning while constantly decoding/encoding utterances in real time using online processing skills (i.e. in dialogic tasks)
- show pragmatic awareness by verbalizing their own thought processes regarding the evaluation of context, which are subsequently reflected in language choices

It was stated (section 2.2) that pragmatic competence is viewed here as (1) located in the interaction whilst also being the speakers' individual trait brought to the interaction, including both internal (e.g. individual intentions/expectations) and external factors (e.g. view/understanding of contextual variables), and (2) constantly negotiated between the speakers in the process of co-constructing meaning, resulting in (3) their expectations/goals being continuously aligned/re-evaluated during the interaction.

It was highlighted that the last element on this list, namely the ability to show pragmatic awareness by verbalizing speakers' own thought processes regarding context evaluation, is not at present viewed as part of L2 pragmatic competence in the literature, thus, not investigated empirically. However, this element is considered to be important, especially since co-constructing meaning in the present study is included in the conceptualization of pragmatic competence. Such lack of empirical investigation into speakers' thought processes, or at least not through interviews that would allow speakers to elaborate more on their own conscious evaluation of social context and of decisions regarding language use, needs to be rectified. One of the purposes of the present study was therefore to fill this gap by conducting semi-structured interviews after language production in an attempt to collect empirical evidence that the ability to recall and analyze own thought processes is indeed part of L2 pragmatic competence and their language production needs to be compared against this when measuring or attempting to understand to what extent L2 speakers adjust language to the given context.

Secondly, literature was reviewed on the frameworks within which this competence can be analyzed. This involved 1) Speech Act Theory and 2) Conversation Analysis. It was highlighted that Speech Act Theory has been heavily criticized (e.g. Thomas, 1995) for looking at utterances in isolation and ignoring how the meaning of an utterance can alter depending on context and where it is placed in a conversation. Conversely, CA views speech acts as actions that are developed through several turns (Schegloff, 2007) and also takes the hearer's contribution to this act into consideration. Therefore, it was concluded that a conversation analytic framework would be more suitable for the examination of L2 pragmatic competence as it allows analysis of sequential organisation of L2 speech and L2 speakers' online processing skills while also taking the hearer's contributions into consideration. Thirdly, literature on empirical research into pragmatic ability and the measurement of L2 pragmatic ability has also been reviewed. It was found that the two main lines of research involves cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics looking at many different pragmatic features, such as speech acts, implicatures and routine formulae. In terms of L2 pragmatic development and acquisition it was highlighted that although opinions on linear development of pragmatic competence differ, research seems to indicate that with increasing proficiency pragmatic competence also

tends to develop possibly due to the increasing cognitive capacity of L2 speakers. It was, therefore, concluded that pragmatic development is related to proficiency rather than purely the length of stay in an L1 speaking country and some potential features of analysis for L2 pragmatic development could involve:

- speech act of request (more conventionalized)
- pragmalinguistic features within speech acts (syntactic, lexical/phrasal, routines)
- structure speech (e.g. sequential organisation)

It was pointed out that these features might be more apparent in higher rather than in lower L2 proficiency learners' speech. Some potential task formats have also been reviewed that would allow the examination of the pragmatic features highlighted above. It was noted that although each task format involves risks of differing degrees. In the case of DCTs the disadvantages outweigh the advantages as research indicates that this task format may not elicit natural data, thus jeopardising validity. In the case of monologic and dialogic tasks, they may elicit more natural data, however, reliability and comparability of participants' speech might be problematic.

Finally, although there have been some welcome developments in recent years regarding the assessment of pragmatic competence, little microanalysis to inform rating descriptors has been conducted. Admittedly, overly detailed descriptors might not be always useful for raters to use in real time, however, it is believed that detailed descriptors would be important for both teaching and diagnostic purposes. Therefore, another aim set out to be achieved by this research was conducting microanalysis of pragmalinguistic features in participants' speech.

2.8.2 Raised Issues

The studies reviewed in this chapter seem to have raised three important issues to be considered when examining L2 pragmatic competence.

The first issue is that the norm against which pragmatic competence is to be measured is far from simple

(See section 2.1.1). Much research highlighted the problems with native speaker norms as even within the same speech community there are differences regarding what is appropriate to say in a specific situation (e.g. McNamara and Roever, 2006). It was, therefore suggested that as House (2007) claims L2 speakers should be allowed to create their own 'third way' and make linguistic choices in accordance with their individual intentions. The question arises regarding what indicators there are that an L2 speaker is making conscious rather than random linguistic choices? How do we know that L2 speakers are doing with their words/utterances what they set out to achieve whilst also taking their interlocutor's responses into consideration? Would it be enough to simply ask participants (i.e. interview or questionnaire), thus taking an etic viewpoint or should we combine this with an emic perspective by looking at the performance of social actions as embedded in the sequential organization of speech (Seedhouse, 2005)?

Secondly, the literature has shown enough evidence that DCTs are lacking when it comes to analyzing L2 speakers' pragmatic competence in context and in extended discourse. Although there is much support for the use of role-plays due to their co-constructed nature, the question remains whether these allow sufficient evidence, in terms of pragmatic features in speech, to distinguish between differing levels of pragmatic competence amongst L2 speakers? Combining role-play tasks with monologic tasks, in order to highlight proficiency related L2 pragmatic features using a CA framework, has already been trialed and been proven to be effective (e.g. Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017) but microanalysis of specific pragmalinguistic devices in the different formats is still needed. Therefore, this study will adapt a microanalytic approach alongside with a CA framework in order to develop evidence-based scale descriptors rather than impressionistic scales.

Thirdly, is it really proficiency that determines L2 pragmatic development or is it simply the length of exposure to L1 culture/language? If it is proficiency, than even those highly proficient L2 speakers with limited length of stay in the target community would be able to exhibit their pragmatic competence. In addition, could culture, gender, age impact pragmatic competence more than proficiency?

Therefore, it is necessary to have a closer examination of speech produced in the above mentioned task formats (i.e. monologic tasks, role-plays) by L2 speakers at different proficiency levels and with differing

personal background (i.e. age, gender, L1, nationality). The present research will attempt to fill this gap in the literature and to offer a better understanding of the above issues by investigating how and which pragmatic features (i.e. pragmalinguistic devices, sequential organization) are employed in extended discourse in L2 speech and whether these features reflect the speakers' intentions.

2.8.3 Major Research Questions

Based on the above review, the present study addresses four major research questions related to B2-C2 level ESL learners' pragmatic competence. Considering the pragmatic features reviewed in 2.4 and 2.5, the research will examine the impact of proficiency on their use in extended discourse in two different task formats.

The main research questions of this study are:

RQ 1.1 What *features of pragmatic competence* in terms of sequential organisation are elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks?

RQ 1.2 What *features of pragmatic competence* in terms of pragmalinguistic devices are elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks?

RQ 2. To what extent and in what ways are these *pragmatic features utilised differently by B2-C2 level learners?*

RQ 3. To what extent do B2-C2 level learners *adjust linguistic choices to the given context*?

The first two questions explore the pragmatic features in L2 speech, with regard to sequential organisation (see sections 2.3.2, 2.4.2 and 2.5.1) and pragmalinguistic devices (see sections 2.4.1.2, 2.5.2.1 and 2.5.2.2), which are elicited by the two different task formats (see sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.4), whilst also examining whether both formats elicit the same or similar features. Task design in Pilot study 1 and Pilot study 2 will be discussed in 3.2, while task design in the main study will be discussed in 3.3.2 in greater detail.

The third question explores the differences in how these pragmatic features are utilized by different

proficiency level learners (see 2.4 for detailed discussion on pragmatic ability), while the fourth question investigates whether and how L2 learners at different proficiency levels adjust their linguistic choices to the given context and do this in accordance with their individual intentions (see 2.1.1 for detailed discussion on appropriacy and 2.4.2 on sociopragmatic development).

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This study consisted of three phases: Pilot study 1, Pilot study 2 and the Main study. Pilot study 1 and Pilot study 2 aimed at identifying the appropriate task formats to be employed as well as noticing/selecting common pragmalinguistic device categories apparent in L2 speech, whereas the Main study aimed at identifying differences in speech production at the three different proficiency levels CEFR B2-C2 as well as confirming the effectiveness of the selected task formats and contexts in eliciting pragmatic features.

To answer the research questions identified in chapter 2, a mixed-methods design within a Conversation Analytic framework was employed, where the qualitative analysis of interactional features and interview comments was complemented with the quantitative analysis of interactional features and interview comments. This method was chosen in order to allow the analysis of the complex processes involved in assessing social context and producing L2 speech that reflects such assessment. Stimulated verbal recalls allowed the examination of thought processes involved in participants' analysis of the given social contexts, while the descriptive analysis of speech produced allowed an insight into the outcome of these thought processes. Figure 3.1 below is an illustration of the overall research design that will be elaborated on in this chapter. In this convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2014, p.570) quantitative and qualitative data has equal priority (i.e. QUAL + QUAN) in collection, analysis, and interpretation and the two forms provide a more holistic understanding of the results.

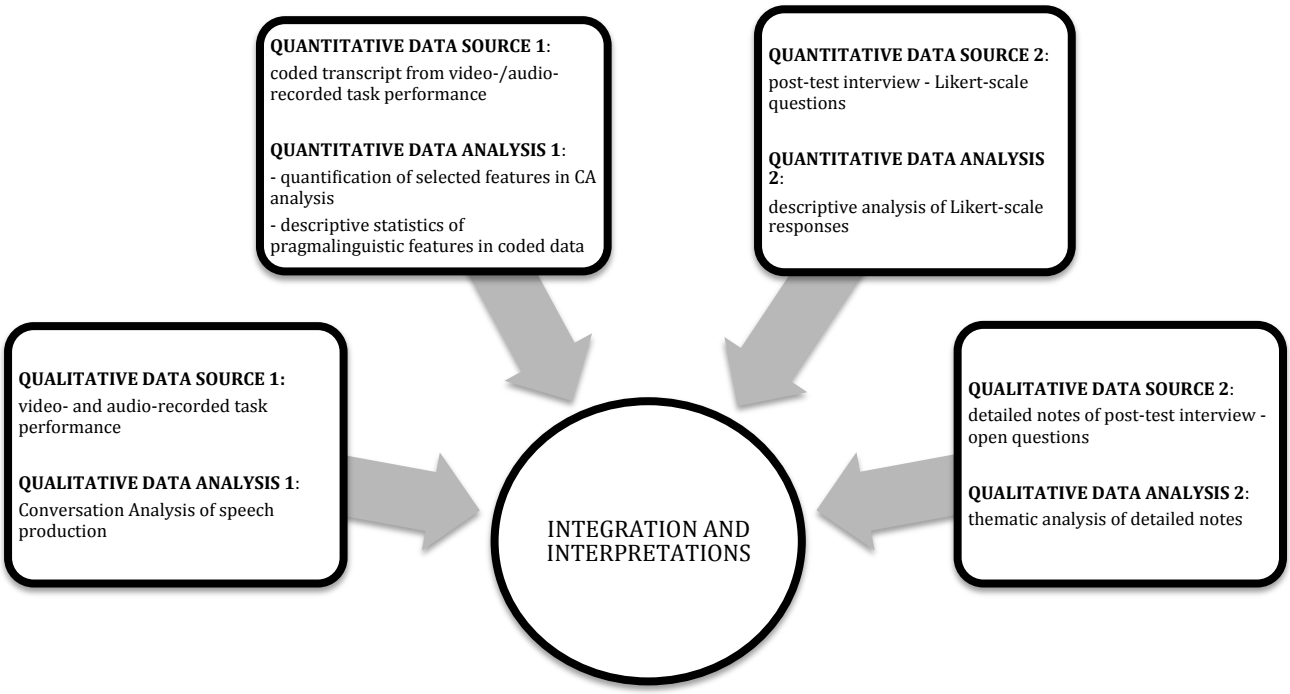

Figure 3.1: Research design

This chapter first presents the overall research design in Section 3.1, which is followed by a description of the two pilot studies (i.e. Pilot study 1 and Pilot study 2) in Section 3.2. Finally, Section 3.3 will give specific details of the Main Study regarding the participants, the task formats and interlocutor frame employed, the data collection and the methods of analysis.

3.1 Method

The present study used Conversation Analysis as the overarching framework for data analysis as CA examines language and linguistic forms employed from a social perspective and focuses on how communicative acts are organised during interaction (also see Section 2.3.2). In other words, it focuses on social context, the sequential organisation of talk and how linguistic forms 'are used to embody and express subtle differences in social actions with social consequences' (Seedhouse, 2005, p.252). These features make CA suited to research the complex area of L2 pragmatic competence.

In CA, sequence organization centres around adjacency pairs, which are the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984, p.256). These are paired utterances, where the production of the first pair part (e.g. a request) prompts the production of the second pair part (e.g. agreeing to perform the request). If it is not produced immediately, its delayed production may require an explanation. Thus, it follows that sequence organization in CA analysis requires at least two speakers taking part. However, performing monologic tasks in the present study required the involvement of only one speaker, although it is argued here that these tasks inherently implied the expected response (albeit delayed) of a second interactant (e.g. agreement to a request). As the present study focused specifically on interactional work leading up to the actual request and as participants' interactional moves (e.g. providing an account) to build this phase revealed similarities in both task formats, this study adopted an alternative terminology 'preliminary interactional work' instead of 'sequence organisation' so that it could be used for the analysis of both task formats.

Another CA terminology that requires an explanation for the purposes of the present study is 'unmotivated looking'. In CA terminology, this involves being free/open to discover patterns in the conversation and conduct an inductive search of the data to prove that these patterns are consistently produced and understood by participants (Heritage, 1988, p.131). If such details are analyzed in depth we can gain a better understanding of the emic logic of the interaction. Thus, 'unmotivated looking' requires the complete absence of predetermined theoretical assumptions (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998). However, based on Galaczi (2014), the present study employed some conversational and pragmalinguistic categories (e.g. problem statement, account; intensifiers, downtoners) highlighted as important in past research (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012; Blum-Kulka et al, 1989) but these were employed as analytical features of interest rather than pre-determined categories and it was only through analyzing their use in the data that conclusions about their use were drawn.

CA does not normally allow researchers to analyze intention when interpreting utterances as the analysis primarily focuses on the details of the interaction rather than on external features, such as interactants identity (e.g. age, gender) or their intended verbal action. According to Seedhouse (2018, p.69) 'the basic aim is to establish an emic perspective, i.e. to determine which elements of identity are relevant to the

interactants at any point in the interaction … participants are seen to talk an identity into being or out of being'. This would imply that in the case of interpreting interactants' intentions, it is context that is used to inform our understanding of their intent. However, the present study added interview data to better interpret the reasons behind participants' utterances. Although, as will be described later in Section 3.2.2, interview data has its limitations, for example that people may not always be aware of their own thought processes, or that researchers may make inferences that does not fully capture participants' thought processes, it was employed in this study as it was believed that it would generate much richer data (Kormos, 1998) by allowing participants to reflect on their own speech behavior.

Finally, a brief account of CA and Applied CA is in order. As has already been mentioned before, CA is concerned with the detailed analysis of language in interaction. It looks at how speakers interact with each other by looking at sequence organization, turn taking and repair. By doing so it aims to examine how groups of people use language to create and live their social world. Applied CA (Richards and Seedhouse, 2005) is the application of CA to institutional talk, such as schools and hospitals, in order to reveal how these institutions work and whether improvements can be made to their services based on such analysis. In order to conduct their analysis this field of CA needs to allow contextual factors (e.g. setting) to be considered and quantification to be used (also see Sections 2.3.2, 3.3.4.b). According to Heritage (1995, p.404), quantification is 'successful in relation to well defined elements of talk and with respect only to a relatively limited range of goals'. As pragmatic language use within an educational institution was considered such a goal, quantification of interview data (e.g. number of instances/participants mentioning their interactional partners' 'potential attitude to their verbal action' was quantified) was used to support qualitative findings (see Section 3.3.4.b).

3.1.1 Mixed-methods research

This study employed a mixed-methods design, involving both qualitative and quantitative analysis of, on the one hand, speech produced for different oral tasks, and on the other, verbal reports from participants. Such method was selected as it allows a more in-depth examination of:

- speakers' assessment of social contexts in an L2 culture and potential L1 cultural influence on this decision,
- language production prompted by such analysis to achieve speakers' individual pragmatic intentions
- S's response to H's input and adjustment of their own choice of 'speech action' in accordance with H's input

than a single-method design. By mixing qualitative and quantitative methods a deeper insight can be gained into L2 speakers thought processes, which is more qualitative, and their speech production, which is more quantitative when analysing individual language features but more qualitative when analysing how they organise their speech sequentially in the evolving nature of conversation. As Sandelowski (2003) states, one of the main purposes of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods is to understand a complex phenomenon, to which category L2 pragmatic language use certainly belongs, more fully by looking at it from different perspectives. Mertens (2005) specifically advocates mixed methods when examining complex social contexts while Greene et al. (1989) also highlights its usefulness when attempting to gain a fuller understanding of a phenomenon that has not only differing but also interrelated aspects. This is particularly true for examining pragmatic competence as the interactants' evaluation of the given social context, which takes place cognitively, determines language production and this, in turn, is influenced by the interlocutor's input. Moreover, in the case of L2 speakers there is the additional element of their level of linguistic competence. In other words, we are examining (1) awareness of social context (2) cognitive decision-making regarding the action to be taken in that context, (3) linguistic output and (4) ability to comprehend interlocutor input and (5) act accordingly. Such complex process would require diverse data analysis methods that can clarify and elaborate on all these aspects. Pragmatics research tends to be generally diverse in terms of research methods, with some research employing mainly quantitative methods (e.g. Roever, 2013, Taguchi, 2005) while others favoring qualitative methods (e.g. Seedhouse, 2013; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012) to examine L2 pragmatic competence. Recently, there have been some studies using mixed-method designs that combined the analysis of L2 language production with the analysis of interlocutors' perceptions on this speech production (e.g. Savic, 2018; Renkwitz and Sickinger, 2018). However, there have been few studies to date employing mixed-methods design to analyze pragmatic features in extended oral discourse (e.g. Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017) and complementing such analysis with qualitatively examining

speakers' own perceptions on their language use to investigate the relationship between speakers' thought processes and their speech production. Angouri's (2012) study is a useful example of combining the qualitative analysis of recordings in a business context with post-analysis interview data. Although her research relates more closely to the field of sociolinguistics, it is believed that such approach to understanding participants' view of the context within which their utterances appear can be a useful tool in the field of pragmatics.

The qualitative approach can provide rich data on thought processes involved in pragmatic decision-making as well as on some of the outcome of such decision-making regarding the sequential organisation of speech. It can identify, on the one hand, how speakers make decisions regarding social context, and on the other hand how these decisions are materialized in speech production regarding the sequential organization of speech. Such approach also allows both etic and emic perspectives to be taken into consideration. According to Pike (1967, p.37) "the etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system" whereas "the emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system". In the present study the qualitative analysis of the interview data aimed to provide an etic perspective on language use, whereas the qualitative analysis of speech production for the six tasks were intended to complement this with an emic perspective. The latter in CA means getting "the perspective from within the sequential environments in which the social actions were performed" (Seedhouse, 2005, p.252). Complementing this, the quantitative approach can provide generalisability in terms of what is produced in the given context and what is an observable linguistic outcome of complex thought processes. It also ensures that the results are replicable (Bryman, 2001, p.29).

Angouri (2010) also highlights the benefits of mixed-method research in the field of workplace-related research. She explains that, as the aim of such research is (1) to identify language use patterns and (2) to study spoken/written discourse employees/employers are involved in, it has both pedagogic (i.e. language use) and real-life (i.e. spoken/written discourse) relevance. Although she advocates this method for the research areas of language for specific purposes and sociolinguistics, these two areas of relevance (i.e. pedagogic and real-life) are closely related to what the present research is concerned with. Combining

quantitative and qualitative approaches aids reliability, since by analysing verbal report responses qualitatively it is possible to identify some of the thought processing that goes into decision making, thus have real-life relevance, while by analysing preliminary interactional work in speech and pragmatic features (i.e. preliminary interactional work, linguistic features) quantitatively it is possible to identify how consistent speakers at B2-C2 proficiency levels are in employing these features and how consistently they are able to adhere to their individual pragmatic decisions, thus have pedagogic relevance.

Overall, the present study employed a mixed-methods design, which was considered the most effective way of answering the research questions posed in Chapter 2 as it allows the identification of the thought processes behind pragmatic decision-making, by gathering verbal reports, as well as the outcome of these thought processes, by gathering data regarding pragmalinguistic features of speech produced in different task contexts. Quantitative data can provide useful micro-linguistic perspectives on how selected pragmatic features of language are used, while qualitative data can provide perspectives on the overall discourse structure and how the different speech events are viewed and carried out by each participant. Such combined approach is essential when examining the complex issue of pragmatic competence, where actual speech production cannot be understood without taking into consideration L1 cultural as well as individual cognitive thought processes that go into pragmatic decision-making.

3.2 Pilot study methodology

Two pilot studies were undertaken in preparation for the main study. In Pilot study 1, eight international university students filled in a task sheet including 10 DCT and 4 monologic tasks. They then reported on their decision making as well as the effectiveness of these task contexts. Following Pilot 1, several amendments were made to the task design and task formats. In Pilot study 2, six international university students orally performed 4 monologic as well as 2 dialogic tasks, and reported on their thought processes and effectiveness of the task formats. Several new amendments were then made to the task instructions. The details of these two pilot studies and how they contributed to shaping the final research design will be discussed in 3.2. The main study was undertaken with 30 participants at B2-C2 proficiency levels. After

performing 4 monologic and 2 dialogic tasks, using the amended task specifications based on the two pilot studies, they reported on their thought processes during the performance of these tasks in a simulated recall. The procedures employed in this Main study will be discussed in 3.3.

3.2.1 Pilot 1: Research methods

a. Aims

The aims of this phase was to confirm which task format (i.e. written DCT or monologic task) elicited more pragmatic features in terms of pragmalinguistic devices and preliminary interactional work, in order to establish which pragmalinguistic devices (selected categories from the CCSARP, 1989) were salient in ESL learners' language production, and to identify the specific situations that participants often encounter in their university life, which could in later phases be used for task design. The DCT task format had been chosen for this phase of the study as, although criticised lately for not allowing the examination of extended discourse and the sequential organization, which includes preliminary interactional work, in such discourse (e.g. Felix-Brasdefer, 2010; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012), in this initial phase of the research it offered administrative ease as well as an opportunity to gain some initial insight into the pragmalinguistic/sociopragmatic norms of different cultures (e.g. Beebe and Cummings, 1996, p.75; Kasper, 2000, p.329).

b. Participants

Eight international (Table 3.1) university students took part in this Study. The average age was 24.1 (median 23.5 and SD 2.15) so a fairly homogenous group in this regard. Regarding proficiency levels, one third of the participants had an overall IELTS grade of 7.0 (approximately at CEFR C1) while the rest ranged between 5.5 and 6.5 (approximately at CEFR B2 according to the IELTS-CEFR comparison table available at https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/common-european-framework). Participants came from a range

of L1 backgrounds, although the majority (3 out of 8) were Chinese. In terms of gender, there was some balance but male participants were in the minority (3 out of 8).

Table 3.1: Pilot 1 participants

Student ID	L1	Age	Gender	Proficiency level
S1	French	23	M	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S2	Russian	22	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S3	Chinese	23	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S4	Arabic	29	M	IELTS 6.5 (CEFR B2)
S5	Chinese	24	M	IELTS 6.5 (CEFR B2)
S6	Hindi	25	F	IELTS 6.5 (CEFR B2)
S7	Chinese	22	F	IELTS 5.5 (CEFR B2)
S8	Thai	25	F	IELTS 5.5 (CEFR B2)

c. Data collection

A written task sheet (Tables 3.2 and 3.3 and Appendix 1) was devised, which contained 10 DCTs (adapted from Roever, 2006) (see section 2.6 for further information on Roever, 2006 and section 2.6.1 for further information on DCTs) eliciting a range of speech acts (request, apology, complaint, thank and refusal) and 4 self-devised monologic tasks eliciting request and apology. The administration of these tasks was subsequently followed by a written questionnaire (Table 3.4 and Appendix 1), which aimed at eliciting suggestions from participants for commonly encountered situations in a university setting. These suggestions would inform task design in the pilot/main study.

Table 3.2: Tasks in Pilot study 1

	DCT TASKS			**MONOLOGIC TASKS**		
	Speech Act	***Power constellation***	***Imposition***	***Speech Act***	***Power constellation***	***Imposition / severity?***
Item 1	Apology	S=H	High	Apology + request	S<H	High
Item 2	Apology	S<H	High	Request	S=H	Low
Item 3	Request	S=H	Medium	Apology	S<H	High
Item 4	Request	S<H	High	Apology	S=H	Medium
Item 5	Complaint	S>H	Medium			
Item 6	Apology	S=H	Low			
Item 7	Thank	S<H	Medium			
Item 8	Warning	S=H	Low			
Item 9	Refusal	S>H	Low			

Item 10	Request	S<H	Medium			

Table 3.3: Sample tasks in Pilot study 1

DCT task	Monologic task
You borrowed a laptop from your friend Eva but you accidentally spilled coffee over it. You are returning the laptop to Eva. *You say:*	You have a university essay deadline approaching. You are not ready because you have been ill for weeks. You need to get an extension on the deadline urgently. You decide to call the professor in his office. Unfortunately, he is not there so you leave a message. *You say:*

Table 3.4: Sample questions from the written questionnaire

Questionnaire
1. Which type of task was more difficult 1 or 2? Why? 2. Are these situations realistic? Do they happen to you in real life?

d. Data analysis

The data was analysed quantitatively based on the following categories: appropriacy, preliminary interactional work, linguistic devices and conversational routines used in speech. Conversational routines were identified as a type of linguistic device since they are often learned as chunks in and outside language classrooms. Data analysis included the following steps:

- To investigate appropriacy an intuitive decision was made by the researcher.
- To investigate preliminary interactional work some categories related to CA (Schegloff, 2007) were used (e.g. projecting upcoming request). The different features were then identified and analysed quantitatively.
- To analyse the range of linguistic devices quantitatively CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et. al., 1989) coding categories (i.e. intensifier, hedger, lexical upgrader) were employed. For the purposes of this pilot study only the categories that the majority of the participants used to carry out the given tasks were selected. Data was analysed quantitatively (i.e. mean of occurrence per person per task) and the results on the DCT tasks were then compared with those on the monologic tasks.

- To identify conversational routines Myles et al. (1998, p.325) definition was applied, according to which conversational routines: contain at least two morphemes, are phonologically coherent, used repeatedly in the same form, situationally dependent and community-wide in use. These were also analysed quantitatively (i.e. mean of occurrence per person per task).

e. Results and their consequences for the Main study

Table 3.5 presents learner use of pragmalinguistic features in both, monologic and DCT tasks, providing first the mean of occurrence per person per task (M) and the raw number of types and tokens (T/T). The results indicated that monologic tasks elicited pragmalinguistic features more effectively, the mean number of occurrence being generally higher in these tasks. For example, the mean number of intensifiers used in participants' speech at IELTS 7 more than tripled in monologic tasks (highlighted in yellow) and while this difference was not as significant in CR use, it was still noticeable with the mean number increasing from 1.13 in DCTs to 1.75 in monologic tasks. It was also noted that although intensifiers did not differ very much across levels, the most frequent ones being *so / really / very*, in the monologic task IELTS 7 students employed a somewhat wider range including '*completely'* and '*totally'*. Thus this task seemingly differentiated more amongst the three different proficiency levels.

Table 3.5: Descriptive statistics of pragmalinguistic devices in Pilot study 1.

	MONOLOGIC TASKS									**DCT TASKS**								
	intensifiers		*lexical uptoners*		*downtoners*		*hedgers*		*CRs*	*intensifiers*		*lexical uptoners*		*downtoners*		*hedgers*		*CRs*
	M	T/T	M	T/T	M	T/T	M	T/T	M	M	T/T	M	T/T	M	T/T	M	T/T	M
IELTS5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.5	.1	2/2	.05	1/1	-	-	-	-	.4
IELTS6.5	.42	3/5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.33	-	-	.06	2/1	-	-	.06	1/2	1.03
IELTS 7	.75	4/9	-	-	0.08	1/1	.08	1/1	1.75	.2	3/6	.06	2/1	-	-	.1	1/3	1.13

There were also noticeable differences in the amount of elaboration used in participants' speech. It was noted that in the monologic tasks participants with IELTS 7 consistently produced longer speech, especially in situations involving unequal power constellation, by including more preliminary interactional work. Level 6.5 students also included some but not so consistently, while IELTS 5.5 participants included almost none.

Such difference was much less noticeable in DCT tasks where responses were generally shorter at all three levels.

Overall, differences were found in the way DCTs and monologic tasks elicited learners' pragmatic competence at different proficiency levels. It was concluded that although both task formats elicited the use of similar pragmalinguistic devices (e.g. intensifiers, hedgers, conversational routines), monologic tasks allowed more proficient learners to use a wider range of these devices and provided a better opportunity for learners to display their ability to use elaboration in speech, thus distinguishing different level learners more clearly.

As a result of Pilot study 1 the following common pragmalinguistic devices in participants' language use were identified: intensifiers, lexical uptoners, hedgers (Table 3.6) and Conversational Routines (e.g. Do you mind if I + verb?). It was also observed that monologic tasks were noticeably more successful in eliciting preliminary interactional work (e.g. including reason for a request) in learners' language. Regarding task situations, participants identified 3 task situations (out of 14) as common in their university life (i.e. getting an extension on an assignment, borrowing a book, collaborating on a university project) and suggested three new contexts (i.e. problems with flatmate, getting explanation for exam results, getting more explanation about essay instructions). This seemed to indicate that perhaps the most common speech act participants encountered in university life was request. As a result, it was decided that the pilot study 2 tasks would mainly focus on *eliciting requests* and would be based on the identified *six contexts*.

Table 3.6: List of pragmalinguistic devices based on Blum-Kulka et al (1989)

	Definitions and examples
Lexical/phrasal downgraders (soften the force of R)	▪ **Hedge**: adverbials to avoid precise propositional specification to avoid potential provocation (e.g. 'I'd *kind of* like to get a lift if that's ok.')
Lexical/phrasal upgraders (increase the impact of R)	▪ **Intensifier**: intensify certain elements of proposition (e.g. 'The kitchen is in a *terrible* mess.') ▪ **Lexical uptoner**: part of proposition with negative connotations (e.g. 'Clean up that *mess*!)

3.2.2 Pilot 2: Research methods

a. Aims

The aim of this phase was to (1) confirm/refine task designs for the main study (2) confirm the effectiveness of the selected monologic/dialogic task formats and (3) establish what features of pragmatic competence, in terms of preliminary interactional work and pragmalinguistic devices, are elicited by these task formats (RQ1.1 and RQ1.2). This section will provide more details on the research methods and the main results of Pilot study 2. It is acknowledged here that the results of Pilot study 2 have previously been published (Willcox-Ficzere, 2018).

b. Participants

Data was collected from 6 international university students studying in the UK (Table 3.7). Their proficiency levels ranged from B2 to C2 (two students at each level), which were based on their IELTS and TOEFL scores using the Cambridge English conversion table (Cambridge English, IELTS-CEFR comparison table available at https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/common-european-framework) to correlate IELTS to CEFR and the TOEFL conversion table (TOEFL) to correlate TOEFL to IELTS and CEFR (TOEFL, 2010 available at www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/linking_toefl_ibt_scores_*to*_ielts_scores.pdf) and also on their teachers' judgement. The latter was employed to confirm proficiency as IELTS and TOEFL scores did not always reflected true proficiency level, as a result of for example, time elapsed between their exam and the time of the current study

Table 3.7: Pilot 2 participants

Student ID	L1	Age	Gender	Proficiency level
S1	Thai	34	F	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S2	Japanese	21	F	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S3	Arabic	29	M	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S4	French	23	M	TOEFL 94 (CEFR C1)
S5	Czech	24	F	TOEFL 116 (CEFR C2)
S6	Romanian	22	M	TOEFL 110 (CEFR C1 in 2010 – 4

				years prior to study; judged as C2 by his teacher)

The average age was 25.5 (median: 23.5) with only one participant being slightly older (34). The gender division was equal (3 males and 3 females), however, there was an unequal representation of genders at the different proficiency levels with 2 female participants at B2 and two male participants at C1 levels. All L1s were different, however, at B2 level both participants were from Asian and both C2 level participants were from European countries. One of the C2 participants had TOEFL scores that equalled CEFR C1, however, as this grade was awarded 4 years prior to the present study, a trained examiner identified her level of speaking to be C2 using the CEFR descriptors for speaking at C2.

c. Data collection

The instrument in this pilot study consisted of a speaking task and a semi-structured interview. Participants performed the monologic tasks alone, with a few seconds preparation time given, and the dialogic tasks with the researcher. Monologic tasks were audio recorded and the dialogic tasks were audio and video recorded. This was followed by a semi-structured interview with each participant, where, due to participants' preferences regarding not to be recorded in this part, detailed hand-written notes were taken based on a pre-devised questionnaire.

Having considered the advantages/disadvantages of monologic and dialogic tasks listed in the literature (Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.4), it was decided that in Pilot study 2:

- both monologic and dialogic task formats would be used in order to elicit pragmatic competence under two different conditions, one that allows for somewhat more planning (monologic) and another that requires online processing skills (dialogic) in extended oral discourse. This would also mirror real life, as speakers have to operate and display their pragmatic competence under both conditions.
- the length of task instructions would be kept to a minimum,
- participants would, to a certain degree, retain their own identity in the different contexts (i.e. student / class-mate / flat-mate).

Subsequently, the speaking task contained four monologic tasks (leaving a message on an answerphone) and two dialogic tasks (having a conversation with the interlocutor in an assumed role) (Tables 3.8, 3.9 and Appendix 2). All the tasks were self-devised (based on students' suggestions during Pilot study 1) and elicited requests and apologies (Tables 3.8, 3.9). The tasks were put together to reflect the most common power constellations (i.e. H has more power: professor-student; both interlocutors have the same level of power: flatmates, classmates) and degree of imposition in a university setting.

Table 3.8: Tasks in Pilot study 2

	MONOLOGIC TASKS				***DIALOGIC TASKS***	
	Task 1	***Task 2***	***Task 3***	***Task 4***	***Task 5***	***Task 6***
Speech act	Request	Request	Apology + Request	Apology	Request	Request
Power constellation	S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H
Imposition	high	high	high	high	high	high

Table 3.9: Sample tasks in Pilot study 2

Monologic task	**Dialogic task**
You have a university essay deadline approaching. You are not ready and you need to get an extension on the deadline urgently. You decide to call the professor (Prof. Taylor) in his office. Unfortunately, he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.	You have just got one of your essays back with a very low mark. You are surprised because you expected a much higher mark, so you decide to ask the professor (Mr Willson) to explain the reason.

The task requirements for the two task formats were designed to be as comparable as possible and the order of task prompts were counter-balanced to avoid potential order effect (Nakatsuhara, 2012). Task instructions were recorded on cards but also explained orally by the researcher. The researcher, who was also the interlocutor, did not use scripts in the dialogic tasks and followed a flexible approach to mirror the evolving nature of conversation. Nevertheless, some principles and guidelines were followed to offer flexible, but standardised interlocutor input. According to these guidelines:

- In Task 5 H (interlocutor) was to ask for an explanation for S's request (i.e. why they thought they deserved a higher mark) and to provide the same justification (i.e. why S did not get a higher mark)
- In Task 6 H (interlocutor) was to accuse S (i.e. they do not do enough cleaning either).

- Throughout the conversation special care was taken to avoid using vocabulary above B2 (according to English Vocabulary Profile), to use only short and simple sentence structures reflecting the nature of oral language, and keep a natural but moderate speed of speech. This was also to prevent the interlocutor input from posing unnecessary high listening demands upon the candidates.
- Whenever possible, an effort was made to use same phrases across different participants.

This was followed by a retrospective verbal interview with the participants in order to explore their perception of the different contexts. During retrospective verbal interviews speakers describe their thoughts, actions or motives for actions either while taking part in an activity or after completing it. They are widely used in research as they aim to provide a deeper insight into speakers' belief about what they pay attention to or consider important in the course of, for example, communication. The assumption is that people are aware of their own subconscious thoughts. However, as Dornyei (2007, p.147) argues people may not always know the thought processes behind their actions/thoughts, therefore they can only say what they believe to be true, which might not always closely reflect what they actually do. This can be one of the drawbacks of self-reporting. In addition, as Zheng (2009, p.217) argues, as the researcher needs to make inferences from what was actually said verbal reports cannot always fully capture speaker's thought processes. In other words, verbal reports pose a double layer of difficulty. On the one hand, research participants may not be aware of or have a slightly distorted view of their own actions, and on the other, researchers may further distort this view by adding their own interpretation to it. This could cast doubt to the clarity or reliability of these reports and whether they really help researchers understand speakers' inner thoughts. However, despite such doubts, it was never doubted that people are able to recall at least some of their thoughts or thought processes via verbal reports (Ericsson, 2002) and as Kormos (1998) states, this method can really aid our comprehension of cognitive processes behind language production. Moreover, in the field of pragmatics it may bring us closer to understanding the thought processes in applying social knowledge, and speakers' individual evaluation of such knowledge, that may underlie language choice. Kormos (1998) also highlights how verbal reports can generate richer data, thus increasing the reliability of data and Felix-Brasdefer (2008) is in agreement when stating that such verbal reports increase the validity of the instrument as they allow participants to reflect on their speech behaviour retrospectively. In addition, Dornyei (2007, p.136) believes that this type of interview

is “suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon … but does not want ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent’s story”. This method has also gained more momentum recently in the field of L2 pragmatic research (e.g. Savic, 2018; Renkwitz and Sickinger, 2018).

Regarding the timing of these interviews, researchers agree that the shorter time elapses between doing an action and reporting on it the more effective these interviews are. According to Ericsson (2002) the shorter the interval is the easier it is to recall thought processes. Therefore, in the present study interviews took place straight after task completion in an attempt to try to gain a generally accurate recollection of participants’ inner thoughts/evaluation of the tasks.

In order to gain a deeper insight into learners’ thoughts, a ‘non-mediated verbalisation’ method (Green, 1998, p.6) was used and few questions had been pre-designed. However, some stimuli in the form of prompts related to each task context were provided in order to aid participants’ memory (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Participants were able to elaborate on certain ideas or change the course of conversation should they wish to and plenty of time (30-40 mins) was allocated for the interviews in order to avoid participants feeling under pressure, especially since the interview was conducted in an L2 (i.e. English).

A challenge that this method entails is that, as Dornyei (2007, p.139) warns, many people object to being recorded and prior to the interview participants should be consulted. As research of this nature had to be consistent in terms of data collection, it was not possible to make individual and perhaps different decisions about recording each interview session. Therefore, based on participants’ negative feedback from Pilot study 2 (See Section 3.2.2), and in order to create a relaxed atmosphere that allowed participants to express deep and at times confidential thoughts, it was also decided that these interviews would not be audio or video recorded. However, the researcher took detailed notes of the content during the interview and these notes were typed up immediately after the sessions in order to capture as many details as possible in a comprehensible manner.

The interview outline (Table 3.10 and Appendix 3) contained four questions based on a Likert-scale (i.e. demographic information, pragmatic information and task content) and some open questions, which focused on participants' experiences and behaviours, opinions and values as well as their feelings (Patton, 2002). It was pre-devised in order to make sure that the information obtained in the interviews was comparable to some degree.

Table 3.10: Semi-structured interview grid

	POWER **S<H / S=H / S>H**	**IMPOSITION** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very low – very high**	**FAMILIARITY** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **not familiar – very familiar**	**DIFFICULTY** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very easy – very difficult**
Monologue 1 *(extension)*				
Monologue 2 *(project work)*				
Monologue 3 *(revised essay)*				
Monologue 4 *(borrowed book)*				
Role-play 1 *(low marks)*				
Role-play 2 *(flatmate)*				

NOTES:

The first interview was video recorded, however, the participant indicated that they had found this slightly disturbing and in consecutive interviews participants were first consulted and as a result, the recording of this part was abandoned. Indeed, this resulted in participants being visibly more relaxed and open during the interview. However, it also restricted the researcher to handmade notes, therefore meticulous note taking was ensured (as mentioned above).

d. Data analysis, results and some implications for the Main study

The research investigated the pragmatic features of appropriacy, elaboration (pre- and post-expansion), pragmalinguistic devices (e.g. intensifiers, hedgers, downtoners, understaters and conversational routines)

employed in speech in order to carry out speech events. Conversational routines were identified as a type of linguistic device.

All recordings were transcribed following CA conventions (Heritage, 1984). Data was analysed first qualitatively using CA to examine the preliminary interactional work of speech events as a whole and then quantitatively, to identify the amount of preliminary interactional features used and the linguistic devices to perform these speech events. Data analysis consisted of four different stages.

Firstly, a general decision was made by the researcher regarding appropriacy, which was complemented by a more detailed analysis of the sequence openings and closings in particular. Secondly, the preliminary interactional work of speech was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively using Schegloff's (2007). This was followed by the quantitative analysis of linguistic devices using selected coding categories (i.e. intensifier, hedge, understater, downtoner as indicated in Appendix 1) from CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et. al., 1989) as well as from House and Kasper (1981). This involved calculating the mean of occurrence of pragmalinguistic devices in the data (i.e. number of uses of each pragmalinguistic device ÷ the number of participants ÷ the number of tasks) and type/token of these devices at each level separately in monologic and dialogic tasks. For the purposes of this research only those categories that corresponded to the linguistic devices employed by the majority of the participants were selected. Finally, the retrospective verbal interview data was analysed both quantitatively (i.e. questions using Likert scale 1-5) and qualitatively (i.e. open questions) in order to gain an insight into the decisions behind participants' language use. Likert-scale (1-5) questions were used to elicit how they evaluated power, social distance, imposition in the task situations and to understand how difficult/familiar these situations were to them. Subsequently detailed notes were taken of the comments participants made and coded regarding whether they were related to tasks or cultural issues.

The results of the qualitative analysis of preliminary interactional work in speech indicated that both monologic and dialogic tasks allowed participants to elaborate, while the quantitative analysis of the different features in preliminary interactional work showed some differences in the amount of elaboration at

the different levels. For example, as Excerpt 3.1 illustrates, in dialogic task 5 (S<H) the C2 participant used preliminary interactional work (i.e. thanking, problem statement in lines 3, 5, 7), which was followed by the actual request (lines 9-10). This expansion provided very specific facts to make their argument more valid; this seemed to be lacking at the other two levels. It was also noted that although B2 participants also used preliminary interactional work they tended to use more repetition either to buy time and formulate their thoughts or to search for linguistic options (see Excerpt 3.2, lines 5, 6, 9,10).

Excerpt 3.1: Sample of C2 participant (ID: S5) speech production in Dialogic Task 5

1.	S5:		*Professor (surname)*
2.	I:		*Yes, how can I help you?*
3.	S5:	→	*The last assignment↑ (.) I was looking at it (.) and e::rm (0.4). Thank you very much for giving me*
4.			*the feedback (.) a::nd erm (0.4) >I was just wondering< (.) if I could learn a little bit more about why*
5.		→	*(0.3) >you know< (0.2) the grading was (0.3) so low?*
6.	I:		*M:::*
7.	S5:	→	*I was little surprised I must (.) I must [say]*
8.	I:		*[M:::]*
9.	S5:		*I thought that I::: hit on the on the important areas of the assignment so::: >it would be great< if you*
10.			*could explain (.) perhaps why the grade was (0.3) as [low=]*
11.	I:		[*yeah]*
12.	S5:		*=as it was?*

Excerpt 3.2: Sample of B2 participant (ID: S1) speech production in Dialogic Task 5

1.	S1:		*Professor (first name). Do you have a few minutes?*
2.	I:		*Yes?*
3.	S1:		*Because I want to ask you about my score↑ we have done (.) last week?*
4.	I:		*Mmm.*
5.	S1:	→	*Because I thought I did (0.3) quite well↑ and I quite sure that my answer (0.3)*
6.		→	*it's correct (.) it's good, but however my score is quite low↑*
7.	I:		*Mmm.*
8.	S1:		*>Could you please< explain, or give me feedback about the question?*
9.		→	*Because I want to improve (.) if my idea (.) my answer about the question is not*
10.		→	*correct (.) yes (.) I want to correct it. It's good for me to improve and for the next*

11. *(.) exam*

In addition, the data showed that in both dialogic tasks B2 level participants produced considerably more speech than the interlocutor (highlighted in red in Table 3.11) and used somewhat longer turns than their C1 and C2 counterparts. According to the 'waffle' phenomenon, higher level L2 learners (i.e. intermediate and above) tend to be more verbose (i.e. make more supportive moves) than their lower level counterparts in order to ensure effective communication (Edmondson and House, 1991, p.274). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986, p.174) go even further when claiming that this verbosity increases with proficiency, as lack of linguistic resources no longer restricts language use. The present findings partially support this claim; however, they also seem to indicate that highly proficient learners (i.e. C1 and C2 levels) may also take the social variables into consideration when judging the amount of speech appropriate in any given context. However, it could also be argued that gender or personality difference might have affected the amount of speech produced by Pilot study 2 participants, as both B2 participants were female, while three out of the four C1/C2 participants were male. Consequently, although gender is not within the focus of this study, in order to avoid any potential impact of gender the decision was made to provide gender balance at each level in the Main study. Another observation was that participants at all three levels produced more speech than the interlocutor in Task 6 involving unequal power constellation than in Task 5 involving equal power constellation. This might have been an indication of their sensitivity to the context as in this task H was asked to perform their wish (i.e. do more cleaning in the house) and to the given equal power constellation (S=H).

Table 3.11: Speech production in dialogic tasks in Pilot Study 2

	Task 5 (S<H)						**Task 6 (S=H)**					
LEVEL	**B2**		**C1**		**C2**		**B2**		**C1**		**C2**	
ID	**S1**	**S2**	**S3**	**S4**	**S5**	**S6**	**S1**	**S2**	**S3**	**S4**	**S5**	**S6**
Amount of speech by participant	**62.5%**	**61.5%**	51.70%	49.43%	50.65%	56.25%	**77.83%**	**75.70%**	60%	56.50%	63.45%	68.77%
Number of turns in conversation	22	49	23	20	30	21	20	29	37	42	25	26

Results of the quantitative analysis of the pragmalinguistic devices employed also provided some useful insights not only into participants' pragmatic competence but also into what pragmalinguistic features of

pragmatic competence the different tasks elicited. Table 3.12 presents participants' use of pragmalinguistic devices, showing the mean use per person per task (M) and raw number of types and tokens. The reason for including the latter here is that the actual type/token ratios are not always useful indicators as they can be affected by text length and the number of tokens considered in some cases. Regarding the use of the different pragmalinguistic devices, the data showed that dialogic tasks elicited more of these than monologic tasks. Another observation was that with increasing proficiency participants generally tended to make more extensive use of such devices, although this increase was not consistent across all the different types of pragmalinguistic devices. For example, in dialogic tasks more intensifiers were used by B2 than either C1 or C2 participants or in monologic tasks C1 participants used fewer CRs than the other participants (highlighted in yellow). Therefore, the decision was made that in the Main study closer attention needed to be paid to the quality of use, in other words how they are used, and not only to their sheer quantity.

Table 3.12: Descriptive statistics of pragmalinguistic devices in Pilot study 2.

	MONOLOGIC TASKS										**DIALOGIC TASKS**									
	intensifiers		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*hedgers*		*CRs*		*intensifiers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*hedgers*		*CRs*	
	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT	M	TT
B2	2.5	5/20	-	-	-	-	.12	1/1	1.5	5/12	6.5	6/26	.25	1/1	-	-	1.75	2/7	12.75	25/51
C1	-	-	-	-	-	-	.25	1/2	1.12	7/9	3.5	5/14	.5	2/2	1	1/4	1.25	2/5	10.5	30/42
C2	2.87	6/23	-	-	-	-	.62	2/5	3.87	12/31	4	7/16	1	3/4	1.25	2/5	1.75	1/7	14.75	56/59

The quantitative analysis of pragmalinguistic devices partially confirmed the categories that emerged in Pilot study 1, however, the following amendments were also made (Table 3.13):

- to the category of lexical/phrasal downgraders, understaters and downtoners needed to be added as they were also noticeable in participants' speech
- the category of lexical uptoner was withdrawn as there were minimal instances of its usage in participants' speech production.

Table 3.13: Summary of changes in pragmalinguistic device categories

Categories based on Pilot study 1	**Categories withdrawn**	**Categories added**
Lexical/phrasal upgraders: ▪ intensifiers ▪ lexical uptoners	▪ lexical uptoners	

Lexical/phrasal downgraders: ▪ hedgers		▪ understaters ▪ downtoners
Other pragmalinguistic choices: conversational routines (CR) using Myles et al. (1998, p.325): (a) used repeatedly and always in the same form (b) situationally dependent (c) communitywide in use		

Stimulated verbal interviews have also proven to be an effective method to gain some insight into participants thought processes. Open responses were categorised according to whether they were related to task type or culture (Table 3.14). The questionnaire format using prompts allowed the researcher to ask questions related to specific issues whilst also allowing the conversation to be flexible and diverge when necessary, which in turn made it possible to raise issues related to participants' belief about the given social contexts as well as the effectiveness of the task formats. The quantitative analysis of the questions using Likert scale provided an insight into participants' perception of the given social context. In addition, they also provided invaluable participant feedback on the shortcomings of the different task formats, indicating that more contextual information would allow participants to make better judgements on language use.

Table 3.14: Sample of participant comments in Pilot study 2

Comments: task types	**Comments: culture**
▪ Role-play is easier because there is a 2-way communication and you get instant response. ▪ Rarely leaves voice-mail because I like to see the reaction and change message based on gestures and facial expression. ▪ I think more about language in voice mail but not so much in role-play. ▪ More prompts would make me argue more	▪ In Europe people are more direct and one has the right to say things; ▪ in Thailand respect is the most important. ▪ These situations are difficult because of personality and culture. ▪ In UK and Japan people say everything the long way. ▪ The British say OK but maybe it's not OK.

Overall, the results of both qualitative and quantitative analysis generally confirmed that both task formats allowed (1) participants to display their pragmatic competence in terms of sequentially organising their speech as well as employing pragmalinguistic devices (RQ1.1 and 1.2) and (2) the researcher to examine differences in the use of pragmalinguistic devices amongst the three different proficiency levels (RQ2). The mixed-method approach has proven effective in providing quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient data to examine L2 pragmatic competence. However, a number of considerations were to be made for the main study. Fist of all, individual variation, although expected, occasionally seemed significant, as there were only

two participants representing each proficiency level. This meant that if the verbal behaviour of one participant at a proficiency level differed from the other, the difference might have seemed very large (e.g. one participant used hedgers whereas the other did not) and out of proportion. This needed to be rectified by recruiting more representatives at each proficiency level in order to ensure validity. Secondly, differences in the amount of speech production were noted, which may have been due to L1 or gender influence. Providing a balanced representation of L1s and genders at each proficiency level may perhaps reveal whether such difference could be due to proficiency, rather than these two factors. Finally, a number of participants made references to the contextual information available, thus suggesting that more details would have aided them in their linguistic choices. Therefore, the following amendments were to be made in the Main study:

- the number of participants to increase to 10 at each level in order to enhance validity
- gender/L1 groups to be equally represented at each level to avoid generalisations regarding proficiency when perhaps the language difference results from gender/cultural differences
- a revised version of the tasks to be administered providing more contextual information in the task descriptions in order to allow participants to make informed choices regarding language use, using an expert judgement session to revise and standardize the six tasks in order to ensure a similar level of cognitive demand required by the tasks.
- the two task formats will not need to be changed but Pilot study 2 results indicated that requests provided more extensive data for analysis than apologies, therefore, this speech act to be the focus of each task

3.3 Main study

The focus of the main phase was to investigate both task format and proficiency related issues as the aim was to identify to what extent and in what ways these pragmatic features were utilised differently by B2-C2 level learners (RQ2) and to what extent they adjusted linguistic choices to the given context (RQ3) as well as confirming Pilot study 1 and 2 results regarding the effectiveness of the two task formats in terms of eliciting pragmatic features (RQ1.1 and RQ1.2). Research stages for this phase included:

1. administering the two task formats to 30 ESL learners, at CEFR B2-C2 levels, studying at UK universities with all test sessions audio and video recorded and transcribed
2. analysing the data quantitatively (using selected pragmalinguistic features based on previously identified pragmalinguistic features in Pilot study 1 and 2) and qualitatively using a Conversation Analytic framework (Schegloff, 2007)
3. conducting stimulated verbal interviews with participants directly after completing the tasks
4. analysing the post-interview data quantitatively (Likert-scale questions) and qualitatively (open questions)
5. exploring whether and to what extent candidates at the three different proficiency levels adjust their language to their own perception of the given context.

As highlighted at the beginning of section 3, quantitative and qualitative type of data was collected via participants' audio- and video-recorded speech performance on six oral tasks and participants' own accounts of their perspective on the task situations through retrospective verbal interviews. The two types of data were analysed separately using a mixed-method design for each part (i.e. speech production in tasks, stimulated verbal interview). Participants' speech production was analysed quantitatively by quantifying (as discussed in 2.3.2 in Chapter 2) the number of pragmalinguistic devices (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and features of preliminary interactional work employed in their speech, and qualitatively by examining the preliminary interactional work of their speech (Schegloff, 2007). The result of the semi-structured interview was also analysed quantitatively (Likert-scale questions) and qualitatively (open questions).

3.3.1 Participants

Participants were recruited from UK universities based on their proficiency level, L1 background, age and gender through the researcher's own contacts. The sample size was somewhat restricted by the availability of resources to collect and analyse mainly qualitative data, which, according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, (2004) is more time consuming than quantitative data. As the sample size of thirty participants is considered to be feasible to perform detailed microanalysis within the limited timescale of the current project, as well as

gaining sufficient insights into different pragmatic abilities and views, while it also satisfies the minimum sample requirements, data was collected from 30 international university students (table 3) (for a more detailed biodata see Appendix 4). Most participants spoke a different L1, which belonged mainly to European, Asian or Arabic language families. They were all studying at a UK university at the time of the study. Their proficiency levels ranged from B2 to C2 (ten students at each level), which levels were based on their IELTS and TOEFL scores using the Cambridge English conversion table to correlate IELTS to CEFR (Cambridge English) and the TOEFL conversion table (TOEFL 2010) to correlate TOEFL to CEFR (For more information on their L1s and their proficiency levels, see Appendix 4). A trained Cambridge Examiner was asked to confirm their levels by using the CEFR scales for overall spoken interaction (Table 3.15) while watching their performance on two monologic and one dialogic tasks. Those features most influencing her decision-making are highlighted in yellow. On three occasions this was extended to watching participants' speech production for all the tasks. As a result, the following changes were made to proficiency levels:

- One participant's (ID: S21) level was upgraded from IELTS 8 (equivalent of C1), which was awarded 2 years prior to the present research) to C2;
- another participant's (ID: S24) level, who had TOEFL speaking score (30), was confirmed as C2;
- the level of another participant (ID: S8) (IELTS 6.5) was queried due to fluency/accuracy issues and after a discussion with the researcher was settled at the high end of B2 rather than C1.

Table 3.15: CEFR scales for overall spoken interaction (Adapted from Council of Europe, 2001)

	CEFR descriptors	
C2	▪ *Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.* ▪ *Can convey **finer shades of meaning** precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide **range of modification devices**.* ▪ ***Can backtrack and restructure** around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.*	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No
C1	▪ *Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly.* ▪ *Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing **gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions**.* ▪ *There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a **conceptually difficult subject can hinder** a natural, smooth flow of language.*	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No
B2 (2)	▪ *Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the **relationships between ideas**.* ▪ *Can communicate spontaneously with **good grammatical control** without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants*	Yes/No Yes/No

	*to say, adopting a **level of formality appropriate to the circumstances**.*	
B2 (1)	▪ *Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible **without imposing strain on either party**.* ▪ *Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and **sustain views clearly** by **providing relevant explanations and arguments**.*	Yes/No Yes/No

The participants' age ranged from 19 to 54 (median: 23.5) with only one participant being somewhat older (54) (Table 3.16). The age range was also generally very similar at the three different proficiency levels with median 21.5 at B2, 24.5 at C1 and 23.5 at C2. The gender division was equal (15 males and 15 females), however, there was a slight discrepancy at C1, where there were 4 males and 6 females, and C2 levels, where there were 4 females and 6 males.

The participants had a relatively similar educational background (in that they all progressed to university education level), however, there were differences in the length of residence in an English speaking country, which ranged from 2 months to 5 years. On average, C2 participants spent the longest while B2 participants the shortest length time in an L1 speaking country. However, the standard deviation indicates that within the C2 group there were significant differences, while the B2 and C1 groups were much more homogenous in this regard. While this could be viewed as a limitation in this study, I believed that if those C2 learners who have had less exposure to the L1 culture in real life (i.e. not through TV or the Internet) could still use pragmatic features successfully, it could indicate that pragmatic competence is more related to language proficiency than length of stay.

Table 3.16: Summary of participants' biodata

	B2	**C1**	**C2**
N	10	10	10
Age (years)	19-33 (median: 21.5; SD: 3.85)	20-39 (median: 24.5; SD: 4.75)	21-54 (median: 23.5; SD: 9.53)
L1	Japanese / Thai / Slovakian / 2 Chinese / 2 Turkish / Italian / Arabic / Spanish	3 Arabic / Swahili / 2 Spanish / Russian / Nepali / Polish / German & Italian	2 Arabic / 2 German / Urdu / Polish / Temne / Hindi / French / Chinese
Gender	5 males; 5 females	4 males; 6 females	6 males; 4 females
Length of residence in L2 speaking	Mean: 9; Median: 5.5; SD: 8.63	Mean: 12.2; Median: 9; SD: 10.81	Mean: 50.4; Median: 42; SD: 31.2

country (month)			
IELTS Speaking (or equivalent) score	5.5-6.5	7-8	9

As this data demonstrates, the participants' characteristics across the three levels were controlled and, thus made generally comparable, in order to minimise the possibility of these variables confounding the findings of the present research.

3.3.2 Speaking task design

For the purposes of this study six speaking tasks (task descriptions revised after Pilot study 1 and 2) were employed. The research instrument consisted of four monologic tasks (leaving a message on an answerphone) and two dialogic tasks (having a conversation with the interlocutor in an assumed role) (Table 3.17). All the tasks elicited the speech act of request although in two monologic tasks an apology could also be included (its inclusion, however, was not explicitly required in the task instruction). The tasks were designed to reflect real situations in the participants' university life and were confirmed and suggested by participants in Pilot 1. They were also designed to vary the influence of two context variables, namely power constellation (i.e. S<H: hearer has more social power: professor-student; S=H: both speakers have the same level of social power: flatmates, classmates) and degree of imposition (high / low). The latter was kept generally high in all the tasks with only minor differences, which, in fact, depended on the participants' perception of the specific context in question.

Table 3.17: Task specifications

Mode	**Monologic**				**Dialogic**	
	Task 1	**Task 2**	**Task 3**	**Task 4**	**Task 5**	**Task 6**
Speech act	Apology + REQUEST	REQUEST	REQUEST	Apology + REQUEST	REQUEST	REQUEST
Power constellation	S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H
Imposition	high	high	high	high	high	high

The task prompts were developed based on findings from Pilot studies 1 and 2. The findings of these two Pilot studies resulted in the following modifications to the task specifications:

- they were created on subjects which had been suggested by university students and were similar to situations most students might have encountered on a number of occasions in university life,
- they did not require specialised vocabulary or knowledge.

It has been highlighted previously that the cognitive load required by tasks should remain low, thus, lengthy instructions including several variables should be avoided and the content should have a logical order (Kasper and Dahl, 1991). Field (2011, p.78) also argues that complex tasks can have an impact on performance and "the more difficult the task, the more attention the speaker gives to handling it and the less will be available for the delivery of speech". Consequently, some adjustments had been made to the final task instructions during an expert judgement session in order to ensure that cognitive processing required by each task was of equal difficulty. Two speaking assessment researchers, both of whom have a PhD in Language Testing and a wide range of experience in developing and validating speaking tests, have been invited to review and refine the test tasks in light of the Pilot study 1 and 2 results with the researcher acting as a facilitator. Table 3.18 presents the main points of feedback considered by the panel from Pilot study 1 and 2 and the main decisions made:

Table 3.18: Pilot study 1 & 2 feedback considered in order to adjust written task instructions for the Main study

Feedback from Pilot study 1 & 2	**Decision made for the Main study**
Regarding task content, six situations have been identified as common in university life in Pilot study 1 and 2: getting an extension on an assignment, borrowing a book, collaborating on a university project, problems with flatmate, getting explanation for exam results, getting more explanation about essay instructions.	These were to remain the same.
Pilot study 2 results indicated that requests provided more extensive data for analysis than apologies.	This speech act should be the main focus of each task.
The researcher highlighted the fact that requests could involve both: granting and performing a wish.	These had to be equally represented in the tasks.
In Pilot study 2 participants highlighted the fact that more contextual information would have made them alter their language use.	Tasks needed to provide more contextual information in the task descriptions in order to allow participants to make informed language choices.
	Standardising the six tasks also needed to ensure that a similar level of cognitive demand was required by all the tasks.

The following is a summary of the decisions agreed by the three participants in this session. Regarding the content and task instructions in *monologic tasks*, it was decided that:

- the main focus of all 4 monologic tasks would be 'request' although 2 tasks (with differing degree of power constellation S<H, S=H) would also include an element of 'apology'
- all tasks would include a reason provided for the request in order to minimise cognitive demands related to *conceptualisation* (Levelt, 1989; Field, 2011), which could prevent some learners to display their full pragmatic competence regarding preliminary interactional work and pragmalinguistic devices
- the reasons provided for the requests would be categorised under: legitimate and semi-legitimate reasons
- two tasks would focus on asking the hearer to perform a wish (e.g. prepare presentation slides) and the other two on asking the hearer to grant a wish (e.g. allow an essay extension).

Table 3.19 provides a summary of how the monologic task instructions were constructed. Throughout the study monologic tasks will be referred to as M1 (Task 1), M2 (Task 2), M3 (Task 3) and M4 (Task 4). Overall, efforts have been made to give succinct but informative contextual information and present ideas in an orderly way, thus, reducing the potential cognitive overload and attempting to ensure that task instructions interfere as little as possible with participants' speech production. It was hoped that such task specifications would ensure participants' focusing more on linguistic and pragmatic features of the language rather than on generating ideas in varied contexts.

Table 3.19: Summary of monologic task instructions and their structure.

	SITUATION	PROBLEM + reason	SOLUTION	ACTION	parameters
M1	You have a university essay deadline tomorrow.	You are still not ready because you have been ill.	You need to get an extension on the deadline today.	You decide to call Professor Taylor in his office but he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.	S<H Apology + REQUEST: H to grant wish (allow extension) Legitimate excuse provided
M2	You are working on a presentation (to be given	She still has not done the 'Introduction' slides because she is	You need to make sure that she finishes them	You decide to call her but she is not answering so you leave	S=H REQUEST: H to perform wish

	tomorrow) with another student, Jane.	very slow.	today.	a message on her answer phone.	(create slides)
M3	You last assignment is due in one week.	You are worried because you are not sure whether you have understood the task correctly.	You really want your professor's opinion on your draft.	You decide to call Professor Willson in her office but she is not there so you leave a message on her answer phone.	S<H REQUEST: H to perform wish (give feedback) Semi-legitimate excuse provided
M4	You borrowed a book from a classmate (Jim) and promised to give it back in a week.	It has been 3 weeks and you still have the book because you have been moving house. Jim has sent you a message saying that he needs it.	You need the book very much for another day.	You decide to call him but he is not answering so you leave a message on his answer phone.	S=H Apology + REQUEST: H to grant wish (allow S to have book) Semi-legitimate excuse provided

Regarding the content and task instructions in *dialogic tasks*, it was decided that:

- the main focus of both dialogic tasks would be 'request'
- both tasks would include a reason provided for the request in order to minimise cognitive demands related to conceptualisation, which could prevent learners from displaying their full pragmatic competence regarding sequential organization and pragmalinguistic devices
- both tasks would focus on asking the hearer to perform a wish (e.g. clean the flat). It is expected that this type of communicative act would result in more communicative moves (e.g. preliminary interactional work) during the conversation, thus, allowing the researcher to examine more extensive discourse.

Table 3.20 provides a summary of how the dialogic tasks were constructed. Throughout the study dialogic tasks will be referred to as D5 (Task 5) and D6 (Task 6). The task requirements for the two task formats were, thus, designed to be as comparable as possible, apart from the interactive aspect of the dialogic task. Further details of task instructions can be found in Appendix 5.

Table 3.20: Summary of dialogic task instructions and their structure.

	SITUATION	PROBLEM + reason	ACTION / SOLUTION	parameters
D5	You have just got of your essays back from Professor Willson.	You are surprised at the very low mark given because you believe you followed the instructions carefully.	Ask the professor to explain the reason.	S<H Request: H to perform wish (explain mark) Semi-legitimate reason

				provided.
D6	You are sharing a flat with another student, Janet.	She is very untidy and never cleans any of the communal areas. This has been bothering you for months.	Ask her to do more cleaning.	S=H Request: H to perform wish (clean more) Semi-legitimate reason provided.

3.3.3 Data collection procedure (including Ethics)

As previously stated, the main data collection was preceded by Pilot studies 1 and 2 (section 3.2). During Pilot study 1 some pragmalinguistic devices as well as potential task situations for the main study had been identified and during Pilot study 2 the effectiveness of the task formats had been confirmed as well as the selection of pragmalinguistic devices.

Data collection for the Main study took place between November 2015 and October 2016. Participants were recruited through the researcher's contacts based on selected criteria (section 3.3.1). They were contacted by e-mail and once they agreed to participate, a time was arranged to meet each one of them individually. Each session lasted for approximately 50 minutes, depending mostly on how long the interview lasted, during which time both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. First the speaking tasks were conducted which was followed by the retrospective semi-structured verbal interview. The following is a detailed account of the three stages of data collection.

Stage 1: General information

Participants were informed that (1) data would be used only for research purposes, (2) their identity would be anonymised when the research is presented, and that (3) they would be able to withdraw from the participation at any point. This was followed by the researcher's explanation of the procedure, namely that participants would first complete six speaking tasks and would then take part in an interview. Participants at this stage were not told what aspects of language would be analysed in order not to influence their speech

production. Subsequently, participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent form. Detailed information regarding this procedure is provided below under the subtitle 'ethics'

Stage 2: Speaking tasks

The four monologic tasks were performed individually, and the 2 dialogic tasks were conducted with the researcher in order to eliminate variability between interlocutors. The tasks were presented orally, however, participants also received a printed version of the instructions to read. If and when required, a brief clarification of the task context was given. Participants performed the monologic tasks alone, with preparation time given but without fixed length (i.e. it was controlled by the participants themselves and lasted on average for about 5-10 seconds each), and the dialogic tasks with the researcher acting as the interlocutor, without preparation time provided. Reportedly, planning time in paired tests can have adverse effects. Nitta and Nakatsuhara's (2014) findings showed that the provision of pre-task planning time for paired discussion tasks resulted in less interactive discourse by test-takers and resembled two parallel monologues. The order of task prompts was counter-balanced based on Nakatsuhara (2012) in order to avoid a potential order effect (see Appendix 7). The interlocutor did not use scripts in the dialogic tasks; instead a generally flexible approach was employed in order to mirror the evolving nature of conversation. However, some principles and guidelines were still employed to offer flexible, but standardised interlocutor input (Table 3.21). In high stake tests an interlocutor frame is used in order to ensure that test-takers receive very similar interlocutor input (Taylor, 2003, p.3) as differences in this input may impact the grade given. While the present study was not aimed at imitating a high stake test, comparable interlocutor input needed to be ensured as differing input could have had influenced 'the interaction and discourse' (Ross, 1998, p.335), which was the central focus in this study. Differing interlocutor input, therefore, may have posed risks to the construct validity of the tasks, leading to different performance (e.g. Brown, 2003; Nakatsuhara, 2008).

Table 3.21: Interlocutor guidelines

Prior to speech production
- give instructions orally for each task - allow participants read written instructions - allow participants ask questions regarding task context (if any)
During speech production

Monologic Tasks:	*Dialogic Tasks:*
▪ monitoring from a remote location while participants record own speech for monologic tasks in order to make participants feel more relaxed ▪ do not intervene while participants are recording speech	▪ in Task 5 H (interlocutor) was to ask for justification of S's request (i.e. why they thought they deserved a higher mark) and to provide the same explanation for lower mark given (i.e. most important sources were left out from the essay; advice given: prioritise sources/information in future) ▪ in Task 6 H (interlocutor) was to accept that not enough cleaning was done but to accuse S (i.e. they do not do enough cleaning either)

All test sessions were video and audio recorded using a small video camera and a small Sony IC Recorder. In addition to video recording, a hand-held IC Recorder was used to audio record speech production for monologic tasks in order to simulate a real phone. The participants operated it themselves; started and stopped it when they were ready. All participants seemed to be comfortable operating it especially because this allowed them to control the preparation time before speech production, which they would have probably also done in real life (i.e. speakers often take a few seconds to prepare their speech before recording it).

Task completion lasted for approximately 20-25 minutes. This time range of course varied slightly, as the time spent on each task was not controlled by the researcher but left to the individual to decide how much time they needed. This was to imitate real life as closely as possible, where in both contexts (i.e. leaving a message on the answer phone, having a conversation) speakers control their own time. It was felt that imposing time limits may have prevented the researcher capturing participants' true ability to organise speech sequentially and to bring a conversation to a natural halt. In addition, in Pilot study 2, it was noted that not only was the amount of time spent on task completion generally similar, lasting between 20-25 minutes, but it also allowed more competent participants to display their full ability to control the conversation. Overall, no participant used more than 25 minutes while completing the six tasks.

The audio clips were saved on an Apple laptop running Windows Media Player.

Stage 3: Semi-structured interviews

All test-takers were asked to take part in a semi-structured retrospective verbal interview immediately after the completion of the tasks, which aimed at exploring participants' perception of task situations. Some

stimuli in the form of prompts related to each task context were provided so as to aid participants' memory (Gass & Mackey, 2000). As discussed in 3.2.2, the interview method and data have their limitations. Some argue that people are not always conscious of their own thoughts (e.g. Dornyei, 2007), while others (e.g. Zheng, 2009) believe that researchers have to make inferences of what was actually said, which may not always capture speakers' thought processes in their entirety. However, many believe (e.g. Ericsson, 2002) that people are generally able to recall their own thought processes and this method can really aid our comprehension of cognitive processes behind language production (Kormos, 1998). In order to gain a deeper insight into learners' thoughts in the present study, an attempt was made to limit the number of pre-designed questions and participants were able to elaborate on certain ideas or change the course of conversation. Many people may object to being recorded (Dornyei, 2007, p.139), therefore, based on participants' negative feedback in Pilot study 2 (see section 3.2.2), these interviews were not audio or video recorded. However, the researcher took comprehensive notes of the content during the interview and these notes were typed up immediately after the sessions in order to capture participants' thoughts as accurately as possible (see Appendix 10 for sample notes).

The effectiveness of the interview format and questionnaire (Appendix 6) had been trialed and confirmed during Pilot study 2 (see Section 3.2.2) and the only modification made to the form was the inclusion of simplified questions to ensure that participants understood the categories used (e.g. power/imposition). As a result, the outline for the interview used the same Likert-scale as Pilot study 2 and consisted of:

- demographic information;
- perceptions of the pragmatic information (power, imposition) of each task
- perceptions of the content (familiarity, difficulty) of each task
- cultural notes (comments on L1 and L2 cultural, linguistic similarities/differences)

The initial questions focused on the learners' personal background (e.g. nationality, university studies, length of English studies), followed by a focus on their view of the specific task contexts and gradually leading to more cultural issues and potential pragmatic difficulties in their L2. The aim was to move from a larger culture specific view of the task contexts to a more language-focused view related to their pragmatic

understanding in order to get an insight into how their culture and view of task contexts may (or may not) have influenced their language use.

Each interview lasted for on average 20-25 minutes.

Ethics

Ethical approval was permitted for the present research from the University of Bedfordshire in July 2014. During the recruitment stage each participant was given verbal information regarding the purpose of the study. In order to comply with ethical standards, informed consent was obtained prior to data collection by reiterating the same information verbally. Subsequently, participants were provided with an information sheet containing details of research participation and asked to sign an informed consent form to confirm their willingness to proceed. They were also asked to raise any issues or concerns regarding participation.

Each participant was assigned a unique ID, thus, protecting anonymity. This code then replaced their names on all forms, including participants' bio-data and speech transcriptions. Those participants' details who requested information about the completed project were recorded on a password protected spreadsheet. All the video- and audio recordings, transcriptions, interview notes were saved on a password protected laptop.

3.3.4 Data analysis

Following data collection the data was transcribed, based on Heritage's (1984) CA notations (Appendix 8), and coded. Transcriptions for one participant at each level were checked by an external editor. There were some minor points raised (e.g. the way word stress was indicated) but these were easily resolved. Based on the literature review, the following had been established to be the focus of analysis in the present study:

1. Learners' competence in sequentially organising speech with specific focus on preliminary interactional work. Analysis: QUAL + QUAN

2. Learners' use of pragmalinguistic devices (i.e. syntactic forms; selected lexical/phrasal downgraders and upgraders). Analysis: QUAN
3. Learners' use of selected conversational routines in the realisation of requests. Analysis: QUAN
4. Learners' view on the task contexts. Analysis: QUAL (answers to open questions) + QUAN (answers to Likert-scale questions)

The following is a description of the way the qualitative and quantitative data analysis was conducted when analysing speech produced for the six tasks and participants' reflection on the tasks and their own speech production during the retrospective semi-structured interviews.

a. Qualitative analysis

Two data sources in the present study have been analysed qualitatively, (1) participants' speech produced for the six speaking tasks and (2) their responses to open-ended questions in the semi-structured interview. The following is a detailed description of details regarding the former first, then the latter. Details of the analysis of the qualitative data can be found in Section 4.

Speech produced for speaking tasks

As described in 2.3.2 CA is a sociological approach that focuses on the analysis of spoken interaction and provides in-depth information about what is going on in the discourse. It aims to:

> discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk, with a central focus on how sequences are generated. (…) the objective of CA is to uncover the tacit reasoning procedures and sociolinguistic competencies underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organised sequences of interaction. (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, p.14)

The sequences mentioned above are essential aspects in CA analysis. Each participating speaker's utterance is regarded as an action that contributes to the development of sequences through which the interaction unfolds. Conversational organization is investigated from the insider's point of view, thus taking an emic perspective. Although the present research employed categories established by previous research (e.g. pre-sequencing), thus known before the data analysis, however, conclusions about their actual use were only drawn as they emerged through the analysis.

It has also been highlighted in the literature review chapter (2.3.2), that traditional CA uses naturally occurring data for analysis and avoids using contextual variables to explain the interaction, whereas the recently emerged field of applied CA (ten Have, 2007; Richards and Seedhouse, 2005) does allow for contextual factors to be taken into consideration. Seedhouse (2005, p.262) argues that "sequential location is a major part of … context" and depending on where an action (e.g. gaze aversion) or language feature (e.g. vowel marking) appears in the sequence can be a significant factor in creating context, moreover, interactants may change the structural organisation of sequences to indicate their evaluation of a given context. Therefore, contextual variables in the present study, including differing degrees of social power and imposition, were purposefully varied in the different tasks not only to elicit speakers' skill to adjust language to context but also to ensure some degree of validity by arriving at consistent task constructions. This approach also allowed for the comparison of data as required by interlanguage pragmatics research. It is acknowledged, however, that as a result, the tasks designed for the purposes of this research might differ somewhat form naturally occurring data. Despite this fact, the present study did aim to discover how the participants co-constructed the request sequence and what differences were noticeable in the different proficiency groups in this respect.

Empirical studies of requests using CA have already been carried out successfully to provide a deeper insight into requests used in everyday life (e.g. Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006) and in institutional talk (e.g. Lee, 2009; Vinkhuyzen and Szymansky, 2005). In recent years, more and more language testing (e.g. Kasper, 2013) and developmental studies (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012) have successfully used CA to examine pragmatic competence in addition to a large body of literature on speaking assessment with a CA approach (e.g.

Galaczi, 2014; Gan, 2010; Lam, 2018; Nakatsuhara, 2011). The use of this framework has provided deeper insight into pragmatic competence (e.g. how sequential organisation enables more proficient learners to drive a conversation). A more detailed discussion on this can be found in 2.5.1.

One important issue to consider when using CA is coding, which, according to Lazaraton (2002, pp.82-87), is rather controversial. However, without its use investigating the preliminary interactional features of talk common to each proficiency level would be impossible and, as Pilot study 2 results indicated, analysing data with CA can be a useful complement when examining pragmatic competence. Therefore, in the present study a series of steps had to be taken to identify the selected categories in terms of preliminary interactional work before requests. According to CA a request sequence is based on the main adjacency pair, which in this case is 'request-acceptance/rejection' (Schegloff, 2007). Speakers approach the actual verbalisation of this speech act using multiple turns being aware of the possibility of their request being refused (Schegloff, 2007). There are optional elements to the main adjacency pair that can precede it (i.e. pre-expansion - or the terminology this study employed: preliminary interactional work), can be inserted between the different parts (i.e. insert-expansion) or can follow it (i.e. post-expansion).

Identifying the main request (MR) played an important role in the analysis; therefore involving a second coder in the coding process was necessary. Firstly, six of the 30 speaking task scripts (the production of 2 participants at each level) were given to a university lecturer in English Language, whose primary task was to identify the MR in each of these. For example, in excerpt 3.3 the participant (ID: S21) stated the MR in line 3 but then in line 5 went on to repeat it possibly to emphasise its importance. Therefore, the utterance in line 14 (Table 3.22) was coded as the MR, whereas the utterance in line 16 was coded as request repeated (R). The MR was also modified by a lexical/phrasal upgrader 'really' to heighten the impact of the request therefore this modifier was listed in the lexical/phrasal upgraders column. The syntactic forms (SF) and conversational routines (CR) employed were also coded in the column highlighted in grey. It was also indicated whether these SFs were in the MRs or not. For example, in Table 3.22 NMR stands for 'not main request'.

Excerpt 3.22: Sample coding of M3 (ID: S21)

1. *Hello professor Willson.*
2. *Erm I've just completed my draft on (.) the last assignment that's due the end of the week.*
3. *It would be really nice if you could (.) go over my draft with me.*
4. *Erm I'm a bit (.) unsure about certain parts of the (.) essay.*
5. *If you could give me any guidance that would be great and helpful.*
6. *As it's our last assignment I really want to score well on this.*
7. *Hope to hear soon from you. Bye. Have a good evening.*

Table 3.23: screenshot of Excel spreadsheet used for monologic task coding (ID: S21)

	ID	CEFR	TASK	CA CODING	TEXT	SYNTACTIC DOWNGRADER (SD)	SD & SA code	LEXICAL/ PHRASAL UPGRADERS	LEXICAL/ PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS: POLITENESS MARKER & SUBJECTIVIZER	HEDGE	UNDERSTATER	DOWNTONER	CAJOLER
12	S21	C2	3	~~greeting~~	Hello professor ~~Willson~~								
13	S21		3	PRE: account	~~Erm~~ I've just completed my draft on (.) the last assignment that's due the end of the week.								
14	S21		3	MR	It would be really nice if you could (.) go over my draft with me.	It would be really nice if you could (.) go over my draft with me.	COND COMB.PAST + ~~CRApp~~	~~really~~					
15	S21		3	POST: problem statement	~~Erm~~ I'm a bit (.) unsure about certain parts of the (.) essay.								
16	S21		3	R	If you could give me any guidance that would be great and helpful.	If you could give me any guidance that would be great and helpful. (NMR)	COND COMB.PAST + ~~CRApp~~ (NMR)						

This was then discussed with the researcher to compare results. Despite minor differences all MRs were confirmed and agreed on. Secondly, the same monologic transcripts were divided into units of analysis individually. This was based on categories identified in Pilot 1 and Pilot 2 (i.e. opening, closing, projecting upcoming request, problem statement, account) 93% of agreement was reached. Dialogic tasks were also double coded based on the same categories indicating 88% of agreement. After a discussion on the differently coded units an agreement was reached on which coding category would be used for the units in question. In light of this discussion, every utterance in the data was coded, according to its function in the request sequence and when new functions appeared, previously coded transcripts were re-coded in order to ensure consistency (Table 3.22). As a result of this coding process, it would be plausible to suggest that the categories identified for the sequential organization of requests are valid.

Data coding was followed by data analysis in order to answer research questions RQ1.1, RQ2 and RQ3.2. In

order to arrive at an unbiased description (without the influence of literature) and understanding of the interaction, speech production was heard repeatedly during the analysis. This, in turn, can lead to the discovery (Levinson, 1983, pp.286-294; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p.73) of not only the recurring features of sequential organisation but also to a deeper understanding of the ways participants at different proficiency levels alter the sequential organization of speech in order to show sensitivity to context and how this may aid them in achieving their communicative goal. This also indicates the use of inductive methods for the qualitative analysis, which have also been complemented by the results of the quantitative analysis. Such mixed approach was employed as quantitative analysis has its limitations when speakers' pragmatic competence is judged; namely, simply using a large quantity of various pragmalinguistic devices may not indicate the pragmatic competence of a speaker without examining the actual context (i.e. to see what is happening in the discourse) within which these devices are used. CA analysis also involved examining how different types of syntactic forms were used in differing contexts as this may indicate awareness/consideration of the contextual variables and the speaker's ability to match their utterance to their understanding of these.

Semi-structured interview: answers to open questions

The researcher's extensive notes on the participants' responses to open-ended questions were carefully recorded (Tables 3.23 and 3.24) and coded. Following Saldana (2015, p.61), first the researcher's detailed notes were coded using an open coding strategy. This is a flexible and inductive approach, whereby codes are allowed to emerge from the data rather than relying on pre-existing codes.

Table 3.23: screenshot of Excel spreadsheet used for participant feedback coding for open questions

	Nationality	Age	Sex	IELTS	in UK	general comments re culture	SP	TD
S11	Saudi	24	M	sp 7.0	16 mths		HOW to say something took longer than 'what' to say: thought about formality and get to point quickly	both task equal difficulty

Table 3.24: screenshot of Excel spreadsheet used for participant feedback coding for D5

	SC	SC - comments	Imp.	Imp. Comments	Familiar.	Familiar. comments.	Diffic.	Diffic. Comments
S11	S<H		4	my original intention is 'give me a higher mark'	3		1	because of role-play it was easier 'I know you' / you have confidence in yourself / you have a point to start
S12	S<H		4	feels like questioning their knowledge / at home I wouldn't ask	1		4	feels like questioning their knowledge / at home I wouldn't ask

Although there were some categories that emerged from Pilot study 2 (see section 3.2.2.), new codes/categories also emerged, which were compared to previously defined codes/categories (Table 3.25). As much as it was possible segments of participants' own language was used for assigning/naming codes, thus allowing the nuances in their evaluation to filter through into the analysis. However, this had to be complemented by the researcher's own terms, where participants' language either did not lead to clear codes or a simplification was needed in order to avoid a large number of codes. For instance, in order to simplify categories, the following two speech segments (amongst others) '*if pushed she might feel angry and that causes conflict' (S13)* and '*He might ask 'why didn't you start earlier'? (S19)* were classified under 'referring to interlocutor's potential attitude/reaction' based on researcher interpretation. Although inter-coder reliability was not considered necessary, owing to the very simple and straightforward nature of the coding scheme, but three coded interviews were also looked at by another researcher confirming its accuracy.

Table 3.25: Coding categories for open question responses in semi-structured interviews

CATEGORIES FOR CONTEXT EVALUATION	CATEGORIES FOR OTHER COMMENTS
Referring to interlocutor's potential attitude/reaction	Task difficulty: TD
Referring to interlocutor's general responsibility	Speech preparation: SP
Referring to the nature of the relationship	Adjusting language: AL
Referring to own responsibility/rights	
Referring to mutual responsibility	
Consequences of action	

After the final categories were decided on, responses were used for the interpretation of imposition identified by participants' and subsequently, their language use in the speaking tasks.

b. Quantitative analysis

The two data sources submitted to quantitative analysis were, (1) participants' speech produced for the six speaking tasks, including both quantification of selected CA features as well as providing descriptive statistics of pragmalinguistic features, and (2) their responses to Likert-scale questions in the semi-structured interview. Means and medians were generated as descriptive statistics, rather than inferential statistics, due to the considerable variations in the data at times resulting from the small sample size of the study (N = 10 per level). This may be considered a limitation, however, this was regarded a reasonable trade off for the detailed analysis gained from the small data set. The following is a description of details regarding these in the same order. Details of the analysis of the qualitative data can be found in Section 4.

Speech produced for speaking tasks: quantification of CA

As noted earlier, quantification in CA is a rather controversial issue (Lazaraton, 2002, pp.82-87) and many argue against its use. For example, Schegloff (1993, p.114) warns that quantification may lead to hasty and perhaps misleading conclusions regarding the interactional phenomenon in question due to incomplete understanding of the context within which the data occurs, therefore, it should not be used as a 'substitute for analysis'. However, Heritage (1995, p.404) believes that quantifying CA data may help to analyse interactional cases involving specific social or psychological categories. Indeed, social status and imposition, investigated in the present research, are likely to belong to this group. Therefore, the quantification of interactional features should effectively complement qualitative data analysis, potentially resulting in deeper insight into interaction. Additionally, in the field of speaking assessment, quantification of CA data is indeed successfully used (e.g. Jaiyote, 2017; Nakatsuhara, 2013; Galaczi, 2014). In the present study, the completion of data coding in terms of conversational features was followed by calculating the frequencies of occurrence by individual participants for the features of pre-sequencing (e.g. providing an account).

Speech produced for speaking tasks: pragmalinguistic devices

Descriptive statistics of pragmalinguistic devices included syntactic and lexical/phrasal categories (Figure 3.2). Syntactic categories were based on Barron (2003), while lexical/phrasal categories were based on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and House and Kasper (1981).

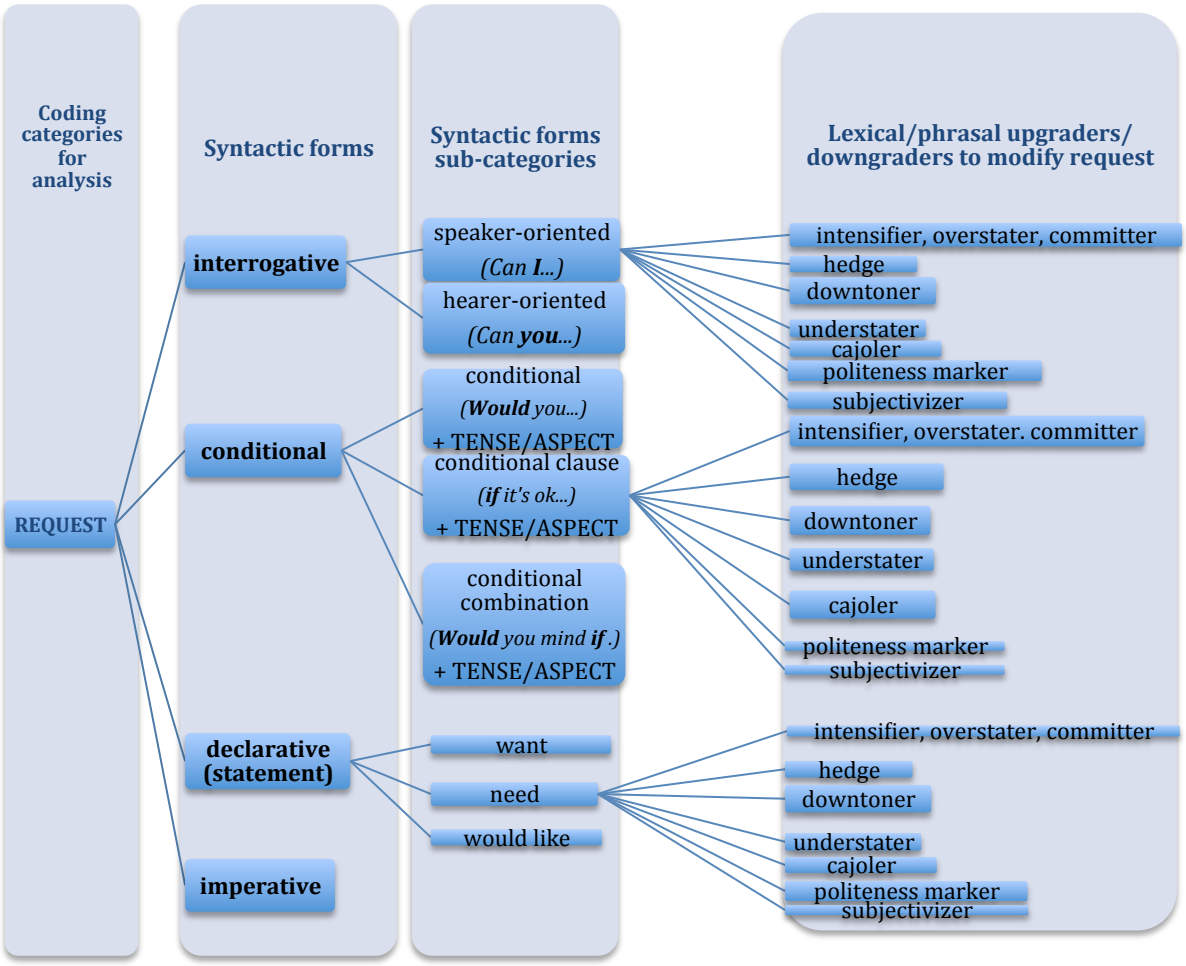

Figure 3.2: Overview of pragmalinguistic categories selected for analysis in Main study

The lexical/phrasal pragmalinguistic features identified during Pilot 1 (i.e. hedgers, intensifiers) and Pilot 2 (i.e. downtoners, understaters) provided the basic coding categories for the lexical/phrasal upgraders and downgraders in the main study (Table 3.26). The quantity of intensifiers, first noted in Pilot 1 (see 3.2.1), showed a significant increase in Pilot 2 (see 3.2.2), possibly as a result of more extensive speech production. The main study data confirmed the validity of the category and also highlighted the need for the expansion of the category as overstaters and committers were frequently noted in more proficient learners' speech. Similarly, hedgers had been present in all three studies and their quantity also increased with the amount of

speech produced. The main study involved an even more rigorous selection of pragmalinguistic devices as they were identified separately in the MRs and in all the speech acts including repetition of request, thanking and apologising. Any linguistic devices that were not used to modify these speech acts (e.g. excuse: I just had two days to prepare this essay.) were removed from the coding. It was also decided that intensifiers repeated twice would only be coded/calculated once (e.g. It's very very important that you…) in order to avoid overestimating sheer quantity over quality.

Table 3.26: summary of lexical/phrasal pragmalinguistic categories identified in Pilot study 1, in Pilot study 2 and in Main studies

	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
LEXICAL/PHRASAL UPGRADERS: 1. intensifier 2. overstater 3. committer	1) adverbial modifier to intensify certain elements of the proposition 2) adverbial modifier overrepresenting the reality in the proposition to increase the force of the utterance 3) sentence modifier to indicate S's heightened degree of commitment to the proposition	1) The kitchen is in a terrible mess. (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka et al 1989) / Very, so, such, quite, really, just (House and Kasper, 1981) 2) Absolutely, terribly (House and Kasper, 1981) 3) certainly, obviously (House and Kasper, 1981)
LEXICAL/PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS: 1. hedge	Adverbial to avoid precise proposition in order to prevent potential provocation of such precision.	• I'd kind of like to go home now. (CCSARP) • Kind of, sort of, somehow, and so on, more of less, rather (House and Kasper, 1981)
2. understater	Adverbial to underrepresent the stated act in the proposition.	• Could you tidy up a bit? (CCSARP) • A little bit, a second, not very much (House and Kasper, 1981)
3. downtoner	Modifiers used to lessen the impact on the hearer.	• Could you possibly help me? (CCSARP) • Just, simply, possibly, perhaps, rather (House and Kasper, 1981)
4. cajoler	Type of gambits used to increase or restore harmony between the interlocutors.	• You know, you see, I mean, actually (House and Kasper, 1981)
5. politeness marker	Expression aiming to bid for cooperative behaviour	• Please (CCSARP)
6. subjectivizer	Expressing subjective opinion regarding the act in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of the request.	• I wonder (CCSARP)
CONVERSATIONAL ROUTINES		• [I'm (adverbial) sorry] • That'd be great: [That {'d/would} be +adj] Bardovi-Harlig (2009)

Conversational Routines were another type of lexical/phrasal linguistic device highlighted in the pilot studies. To identify these, initially Myles et al's (1998, p.325) definition was chosen, according to which CRs are (1) at least two morphemes in length, (2) phonologically coherent, (3) used repeatedly in the same form, (4) situationally dependent and (5) communitywide in use. However, this definition had proven to be

rather ambiguous when trialled during a seminar with a panel of four experts in language assessment and two PhD candidates (Postgraduate Forum, CRELLA Research Institute, 8 November 2017). Panel members were presented with the above definition and the research background on CRs. They were then put into two groups of three and given a selection of language samples *(e.g. Can you is it possible that can you...? I would like to ask you about… Would you mind to…)* and were asked to agree on whether these could be classified as CRs based on the given definition. The subsequent discussion clearly highlighted that participants within the same group often could not agree on the classification due to the vagueness of the descriptors. Some of the questions posed during the session were:

- What is 'phonologically coherent' exactly?
- 'Communitywide in use' but in which community?
- How frequent do they have to be?
- How much can grammatical accuracy interfere with the classification?

Therefore, it was decided that the definition for CRs in this form would be abandoned. The researcher then looked at previous research, investigating and successfully identifying CRs in requests as well as Pilot study 2 data to see if any of these were apparent in speech. Two formulas were identified as significantly present in the data that matched Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) research on conventional expressions, namely 'I'm sorry.' and 'That {'d/would} be + adj.'. The former was considered relevant in the present research since apology was identified as a potential target speech act in two monologic tasks (i.e. M1 and M4, also see 3.3.2), while the use of the latter seemed to distinguish particularly native speakers but also advanced learners very clearly from less proficient learners in Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) study (see section 2.4.1.1 for more detailed discussion). In Pilot study 1 [I'm (adverbial) sorry] appeared in each participant's speech with the mean occurrence (per person) of 1.5 at B2; 1 at C1 and 6.5 at C2, while the mean occurrence of [That {'d/would} be + adj] was 0 at B2, 1 at C1 and 2.5 at C2 levels. Literature on formulas (e.g. Schmitt and Carter, 2004) point out that such expressions may show lexical or syntactic variability. For example, 'That'd be great.' could also be phrased as 'That'd be wonderful.' thus, varying lexical choice. This adaptability was taken into account when coding the data hence 'That ['d/would/'ll/will] be [great/wonderful/nice etc]' were all acceptable phrases to express the same idea/function. Similarly, 'I'm sorry' could also be intensified and

become 'I ['m/am] [so/really/very/awfully etc.] sorry.' Variations in tense were also admitted when accurate/natural as well as non-contracted forms (e.g. that would; I am). Consequently, it was decided that these two formulas would be closely examined in the Main study data but using an inductive approach in case of the emergence of the same formula in somewhat different forms or of other formulas.

When investigating the development of L2 requests Barron (2003) noted syntactic variation in the formulation of this speech act and as a result developed coding categories (based on Blum-Kulka et al, 1989) for these (Table 3.27). A number of these syntactic categories used to express requests (i.e. interrogative forms 'Can I …?', conditional structures 'Would you mind if I …?') as well as two other syntactic variations to formulate requests (i.e. statements 'I want to…', imperatives 'Please explain…') were noted in Pilot 2 data (Table 3.28). As can be seen, their use showed some differences at the different proficiency levels, with C2 participants using mainly conditional structures (i.e. 62.5% of MRs included it), while the other two levels tended to favour interrogatives and statements. Therefore, these syntactic categories were included in and confirmed during the analysis of the Main study data (Table 28).

Table 3.27: Final categories for syntactic forms in requests

Interrogative	*Can you tidy the kitchen?*
Conditional Conditional + conditional clause	*Would you give me a pen?* *It would be great if you could do some more cleaning.*
Statement: - 'want' - 'need' - 'would like'	 *I just want to discuss my grade.* *We need to talk.* *I would like to borrow your book.*
Imperative	*Give me a chance to rewrite this essay.* *I'm asking you to give me a chance to rewrite this essay.*

Table 3.28: Syntactic forms and their usage in request formulation identified in Pilot 2 (based on Barron 2003).

	B2 (% of MRs including form)	**C1**	**C2**
interrogative *(e.g. Will you tidy the kitchen?)*	30%	55%	12.5%
conditional (e.g. Would you …?) **conditional clause** *(e.g. So, if you could just...)* **conditional combination** *(e.g. If you don't mind would you..?)*	30%	15%	62.5%
statement	40%	7%	12.5%
imperative	-	23%	12.5%

It needs to be noted here that although pragmatic competence does include the ability of selecting appropriate language for the right context, it was not the intention of this research to grade these grammatical choices according to lesser/greater effectiveness, only to evaluate their general appropriateness in the given context and to identify speakers' preferences regarding their use.

Syntactic forms were extracted from the transcription of participants' speech following this list of criteria:

- the request form matched one of the syntactic patterns
- language borrowed from the written task instructions was included as it could only contain lexical elements (i.e. there was no hint in the instructions regarding the syntactic form of the request)
- syntactic forms containing grammatical inaccuracies were included as it was in the researchers' intention to notice any syntactic development across levels in this respect

Overall, request formulation was coded according to syntactic and lexical/phrasal linguistic devices employed. The former provided the main syntactic form of the request and included

- interrogative (speaker/hearer oriented),
- conditional (conditional, conditional clause, conditional combination, which could be further varied by different tense/aspect choices),
- statement (want, need, would like)
- and imperative forms,

whereas the latter allowed modification of requests and included upgraders (i.e. intensifiers, overstaters, committers NOTE: as overstaters/committers (1) were used either in very low numbers or (2) seemed to be used for very similar reasons i.e. to intensify proposition, they were not coded separately but coded together with intensifiers under the term 'upgraders') and downgraders (hedgers, downtoners, understaters and cajolers). The manual extraction of these features consisted of the three stages: identifying, coding and reviewing.

a. Identifying

The researcher first looked through the transcribed data and initially highlighted the above pragmatic features (i.e. preliminary interactional work, syntactic forms, lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders), in order to confirm previously identified categories in Pilot studies 1 and 2.

b. Coding

The transcribed data was recorded on Excel spreadsheets, which contained, in the case of monologic tasks: a line number, a student ID, CEFR level, task number, CA coding, a meaningful chunk of language (i.e. phrase or sentence) that had a specific function in the preliminary interactional work of speech (e.g. giving an account), syntactic forms (SF) phrase/sentence, syntactic form (SF) code (Table 3.29), individual lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders (Table 3.30), and in the case of dialogic tasks: a line number, a student ID, CEFR level, task number, CA coding, a turn (i.e. an utterance that elicited a response – Eggins & Slade 1997), syntactic form (SF) which could be a phrase or sentence, SF code and individual lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders.

Table 3.29: Summary of coding syntactic pragmalinguistic devices and Conversational Routines (CR) in requests

	Type	Code	Example
1.	Interrogative	Int	*(e.g. Can you tidy the kitchen?)*
2.	Conditional	Cond	*(e.g. Would you give me a pen?)*
3.	Conditional Clause	Cond. Cl.	*(e.g. So yes, if that's possible.)*
4.	Conditional Combination	Cond. Comb.	*(e.g. It would be great if you could do some more cleaning.)*
5.	Statement: 'want'	STWT	*(e.g. I just want to discuss my grade.)*
6.	Statement: 'need'	STND	*(e.g. We need to talk.)*
7.	Statement: 'would like'	STWL	*(e.g. I would like to get an extension.)*
8.	Imperative	Imp	*(e.g. Please, give me a chance to rewrite this essay.)*
9.	CR: appreciation	CRApp	*That'd be great: [That {'d/would} be + adj]* *I really appreciate it.*
10.	CR: apology	CRApo	*[I'm (adverbial) sorry]*

Table 3.30: screenshot of Excel spreadsheet used for monologic task coding

	ID	CEF	TA	CODING	TEXT	SYNTACTIC DOWNGRADERS (S	SD & SA code	LEXICAL/ PHRASAL UPGRADERS: INTENSIFIER	LEXICAL/ PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS : politeness marker / subjectivizer (FPP)	LEXICAL/ PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS : HEDGE	UNDERSTATER	DOWNTONER	CAJOLER
12	S1	B2	1	GREETING + INTRO	Hello (0.1), this is (first name). Erm I'm taking the (0.1) Thursday course,								
13	S1		1	PRE: account	and (0.3) I've been sick (0.2) erm fo::r (0.1) three (0.1) weeks and (0.2) I (0.2)								
14	S1		1	PRE: problem statement	I couldn't do (0.1) my homework (0.3) so much,			so much (in reasoning)					
15	S1		1	Fb (REQUEST)	so:: can I just (0.2) extend (0.1) a little bit the deadline (0.2) extend the deadline please.	Can I just extend a little bit the deadline (0.2) extend the deadline please?	INT				a little bit	just	
16	S1		1	POST: offer	E::rm (0.3) I promise (0.1) I will try hard on it (0.1) so:: please.								
17	S1		1	CLOSING	Thank you.								

In the case of syntactic forms allowances were made for variations in tense and even grammatical accuracy. Although it is acknowledged here that this may have led to somewhat generous interpretations of proficiency, but according to the trade-off hypothesis (Skehan, 2009), a speaker may sacrifice one dimension of language competence (e.g. accuracy) in order to perform better in another dimension (e.g. fluency). As the aim of this research was to investigate pragmatic competence rather than purely linguistic competence and it was decided that although grammatical inaccuracies (e.g. determiner, preposition error) were noted in the formulation of requests, it was the meaningfulness/pragmatic appropriacy of syntactic forms that would override this potential lack of linguistic competence.

c. Reviewing and refining

Finally, the extracts were reviewed again to ensure consistency in coding. The spreadsheets were later sent to the second coder (university lecturer teaching English) to check the accuracy and consistency of coding. The second coder independently selected the speech production of two participants from each level and checked that (1) language matched the coding categories assigned by the researcher in terms of syntactic forms and lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders and that (2) coding categories were applied consistently. It was then confirmed that the coding categories could effectively be applied.

This coded data was then subjected to descriptive quantitative analysis with regard to syntactic forms and lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders.

In addition to counting the number of types and the total number of syntactic forms, the production rates were calculated for each identified syntactic form in each task at all three levels (number of uses of specific structure ÷ number of uses of total forms x 100). For example, if 32 MRs out of the 40 MRs identified in monologic tasks at B2 level included statements, it meant that [32 ÷ 40 x 100] 80% of all requests included statements. This calculation was conducted in order to facilitate comparison of production of syntactic forms at different proficiency levels. As has been pointed out before, allowances were made for variations in tense and even accuracy when coding these linguistic devices, which may have led to somewhat generous

interpretations regarding language proficiency. It is also acknowledged here that examining simply the quantity or accuracy of syntactic forms may not indicate pragmatic or even linguistic development as the same syntactic form can be used in various ways/context and still be appropriate. In other words, there is no one-to-one match when it comes to choosing particular syntactic forms for particular contexts.

The descriptive analysis of syntactic structures in MRs was followed by the quantitative analysis of lexical/phrasal modifiers used not only in MRs but also in all other requests and apologies (in future, I will refer to the latter as SAs). This was in order to examine to what extent participants' may have attempted to adjust the request form to the given context. The following measures were compared across the three proficiency levels and across the six tasks. A brief definition and notes are provided after some measures.

a) Mean frequency and Standard Deviation (SD) of *all lexical/phrasal modifiers in MRs* was calculated at each level and in each task. Mean frequency: [number of uses of all targeted modifiers in the main R ÷ number of participants at a level].
b) Mean frequency and SD of the *individual types of lexical/phrasal modifiers in MRs* was calculated at each level. Mean frequency: [number of uses of each individual lexical/phrasal modifier in main R ÷ number of participants ÷ number of tasks]
c) The next stage included the calculation of *type/token ratio* as well as looking at the raw number *of modifiers in MRs*. Lexical variables are frequently calculated by type/token ratio. Type means the number of different words in a text, while token represents the total number of words in a text. It is believed that it is possible to increase the difficulty of a task by increasing the type and number of words in speech. TT (type-to-token) ratio is calculated by diving the number of different words (type) by the total number of words (token). Higher TT ratio would, thus, indicate a greater variety of lexical items in speech and perhaps higher proficiency level. While on the whole this may be true, it has also been pointed out that this ratio is largely dependent on text length (Richards, 1987). In the case of the present research, it was also noted that the type/token ratio did not always give an accurate picture of a participant's competence in terms of using lexical/phrasal modifiers, which was at times due to the somewhat low frequency of some of these pragmalinguistic devices. For example,

a high type/token ratio (i.e. 1 ÷ 1 = 1) may have been arrived at when one type of downtoner (e.g. perhaps) occurred once in a monologic task at B2 level, and a relatively low type/token ratio (4 ÷ 20 = 0.2) may have been arrived at when four different types of downtoner occurred 20 times, which would clearly indicate higher competency. For this reason, although type/token ratio was calculated, it was always examined together with the actual raw numbers of lexical/phrasal pragmalinguistic devices.

d) The *type/token ratio* was also calculated for *all the lexical/phrasal modifiers* (e.g. used in apology) occurring in monologic and dialogic tasks.

e) *Mean frequency and SD of all lexical/phrasal modifiers in MRs* [i.e. number of uses of all targeted modifiers in the MR ÷ number of participants at a particular level] was calculated in each task and at each level. This was then compared to the *mean imposition* identified by participants at each level in order to attempt to examine the relationship between language use (i.e. softening request) and participants' view of imposition in the given context. The assumption was that in contexts where imposition was evaluated as high there would be more modification (i.e. to soften the force of request).

f) *Production rates for each type of lexical/phrasal modifiers* were calculated in each task for each level (i.e. number of uses of lexical/phrasal modifiers in main R ÷ number of participants at a level x 100) in order to examine the extent to which different proficiency level participants have varied these modifiers and whether this may have been a conscious choice (i.e. according to the different power constellations: S<H; S=H).

g) *Mean frequency and SD of CRs* were also calculated (i.e. number of target language use ÷ number of participants).

Research indicates that the number of words uttered is a useful indicator of participants' role in the conversation. For example, O'Sullivan and Nakatsuhara (2011) found that this might indicate participants' domineering role in interaction. Examining the number of words used in speaking might also provide an insight not only into the development of L2 proficiency but perhaps into pragmatic ability as it could indicate how more proficient learners may be able to 'drive' the conversation more by quantitative dominance or

alternatively by saying less to give a conversational partner space to talk. Therefore, speech division between the speakers (i.e. participant / interlocutor) was calculated in dialogic tasks for each task at each level (i.e. number of words by B2 participants ÷ total number of words x 100) as well as the number of turns.

Speech produced for semi-structured interviews: Likert-scale questions

Participants were asked to judge social constellation, imposition, difficulty and their familiarity with each task context on a Likert scale of 1 to 4. Mean frequency and SD was calculated for each criteria at each level and in each task (see section 3.2.2 for more info on interview questions and grid).

Summary

The present research utilised both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse, on the one hand, participants' speech production in six oral tasks and, on the other, their evaluation of social context in these tasks. These methods were selected because they allow the investigation of (1) cognitive processes involved in pragmatic decision-making (in terms of content and language) as well as of (2) the linguistic output based on such decisions. The analysis of verbal report data complements data analysis from speech production in the speaking tasks as it reveals speaker choices behind linguistic output, which would otherwise be concealed.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

In accordance with conventions in CA-based studies, this chapter will present illustrative examples of language production, which representatively demonstrate differences in preliminary interactional work and pragmalinguistic devices at each proficiency level. Interpretation and elaboration on the findings will generally be interspersed throughout this chapter but will be mostly provided when comparing the different pragmatic features across proficiency levels. As described in the Methodology chapter the quantitative and qualitative analysis of participants' speech production for the six oral tasks were complemented by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of participants' own reflections on the social contexts involved in these tasks, as expressed during the subsequent retrospective interviews. Alongside findings from existing literature, the analysis of their evaluative comments will also be used to explain and elaborate on certain aspects of their speech production.

a. Analysis of speech production in the six oral tasks (RQ1.1, RQ1.2 and RQ2)

The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to examine the preliminary interactional work in speech, which was identified as one of the main features of pragmatic competence (sections 2.2 and 2.3.2), and to answer RQ1.1 regarding whether this feature of pragmatic competence was elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks as well as RQ2 regarding how this feature was utilized differently by B2-C2 level learners. These findings are described and discussed in 4.1. The purpose of the quantitative analysis of speech, using descriptive statistics, was to examine pragmalinguistic devices in requests, identified as another main feature of L2 pragmatic competence (sections 2.2 and 2.5), and to answer RQ1.2 regarding whether this feature was elicited by the two task formats and RQ2 regarding how B2-C2 participants differed in the utilization of these devices in speech. As described in section 3.3.4 no inferential statistics were performed due to the small sample size of the study (N=10 per level). These findings are described and discussed in 4.2.

b. Analysis of retrospective interview data (RQ3)

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview data was employed in order to gain an insight into the connection between language use and speaker intention. The findings of this analysis are referred to in both 4.1 and 4.2 when attempting to explain language produced for the oral tasks. Comments from the semi-structured interviews are also employed extensively to answer RQ3 (i.e. adjustment of speech to social context), which, although referred to throughout the analysis/discussion of speech production in both task formats, is discussed in greater detail in 4.3, where parallels are drawn between the analysis of speech production and the analysis of speakers' view on social context.

c. Preliminary analysis of data

In order to interpret results, frequent references will be made to (1) speech production, (2) degree of imposition and (3) participants' comments on own language use throughout this chapter. The following is a summary of this information.

Table 4.1 presents the overall descriptive statistics of the data including the mean (per person per task), median and standard deviation (SD) of (1) the amount of speech produced in both task formats, as well as (2) the number of turns produced by the participants in dialogic tasks. Overall, speech production generally increased with proficiency in both task formats. Although in monologic tasks the average speech production at B2 was slightly higher than at C1, with the mean number of words produced (per person per task) being 96.82 and 94.07 respectively, higher SD at B2 (i.e. 38.33 at B2 as opposed to 28.41 at C1) indicates that there were bigger individual differences amongst B2 participants in this regard. In dialogic tasks the gradual increase in speech production was more easily noticeable as the mean number of words produced per person in this task increased from 176.05 at B2, to 218.45 at C1 and 265.25 at C2. SD statistics indicate that the three groups were slightly more homogenous in terms of speech production in monologic tasks. As the last column of Table 4.1 shows, similarly to the amount of speech produced, the mean number of turns also increased with proficiency in dialogic tasks from mean occurrence of 11.4 at B2 to 12.5 at C1 and 15.65 at C2.

Table 4.1: overall descriptive statistics of participants' speech production

	MONOLOGIC TASKS		*DIALOGIC TASKS*			
	No. of words		*No. of words*		*No. of turns*	
	M/median	SD	M/median	SD	M/median	SD
B2	96.82 / 81.25	38.33	176.05 / 180.75	50.46	11.4 / 10	2.99
C1	94.07 / 94.37	28.41	218.45 / 196.5	79.91	12.5 / 10.75	4.26
C2	137.82 / 130.5	53.51	265.25 / 264.25	55.77	15.65 / 15	5.98

Table 4.2 shows participants' evaluation of imposition in the six tasks. This data suggests that there were similarities but also a number of differences, at times significant, in participants' perception of the degree of imposition involved in the different task contexts. For instance, the mean imposition identified in M3 and M4 was fairly similar across levels (i.e. approximately 2.2 and 3 respectively, on a Likert-scale of 1-4), but in M2 it varied greatly with B2 participants identifying it as reasonably high (i.e. mean: 2.7) while C2 participants identifying it as the lowest across the tasks (i.e. mean: 1.6). This data will be used throughout this chapter to interpret results, but especially when analyzing pragmalinguistic devices and discussing language adjustment in section 4.2. Language adjustment will be discussed in each section but will be summarized and further elaborated on in 4.3.

Table 4.2: overall descriptive statistics of participants' evaluation of imposition in the six tasks

	MONOLOGIC TASKS								*DIALOGIC TASKS*			
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*D5 (S<H)*		*D6 (S=H)*	
	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD
B2	2.8 (3)	.4	2.7(2.5)	1.25	2 (2)	1.054	3 (3)	.471	2.4 (2)	1.075	2.5 (3)	1.18
C1	2.9 (3)	1.2	2 (2)	.94	2.2 (2)	.79	3 (3)	.94	2.9 (3)	.876	2.4 (2)	1.075
C2	2.5 (3)	1.18	1.6 (1)	.84	2.2 (2)	.92	3.3 (4)	1.059	2.4 (2.5)	1.35	2.7 (2.5)	1.6

As well as the quantitative data regarding imposition, participants' also made a number of open comments on each task context. These comments were coded under six categories depending on whether they referred to:

- the interlocutor's potential reaction to the request
- the interlocutor's general responsibility
- the nature of relationship between speakers
- their own responsibility and rights
- mutual responsibility
- the consequences of their action/request.

The following is the presentation and discussion of findings related to (1) the preliminary interactional work in speech produced for the oral tasks, starting with monologic and continuing with dialogic tasks, (2) pragmalinguistic devices employed in speech produced first for monologic then for dialogic tasks. The chapter concludes with summarising and drawing parallels between speech production and participants' intentions based on their view of the social contexts in the given tasks to gain an insight into whether (3) language was adjusted according to participants' intention.

4.1 Preliminary interactional work in speech

This section will present the results of Conversation Analysis (CA) specifically focusing on the preliminary interactional work in speech. It will start with reporting on and discussing the analysis of speech production in monologic tasks at each level (4.1.1), including a comparison of how this feature is utilized across the different proficiency levels (4.1.1.4), and continues with the description of the same feature in dialogic tasks at each level (4.1.2), similarly including a comparison of preliminary interactional work in this task format across levels (4.2.1.4). The section finishes with a comparison between different proficiency level leaners' speech production, in terms of organising speech sequentially, in the two task formats.

Overall, participants at all three levels used elaboration to varying degrees in both power constellation tasks (S<H, S=H). However, there were several differences in the features of elaboration and how they were used. Preliminary interactional work seemed to be generally more structured in most participants' speech while the amount and structure of post-expansion varied. The following is the detailed description and discussion of these findings.

4.1.1 Preliminary interactional work: Task and Level Comparison in monologic tasks (RQ1 and RQ3)

This section presents and discusses the analysis of preliminary interactional work in participants' speech produced for the four monologic tasks at each level (B2: 4.1.1.1; C1: 4.1.1.2; C2: 4.1.1.3) and concludes

with a summary and comparison of preliminary interactional work at the different proficiency levels (4.1.1.4). In order to interpret and discuss findings, interview data (e.g. Table 4.2) will be used alongside secondary sources. As described in section 3.3.2 the four monologic tasks (Table 4.3) will be referred to as M1, M2, M3 and M4.

Table 4.3: Summary of monologic task instructions and their structure.

	SITUATION	PROBLEM + reason	SOLUTION	ACTION	PARAMETERS
M1	You have a university essay deadline tomorrow.	You are still not ready because you have been ill.	You need to get an extension on the deadline today.	You decide to call Professor Taylor in his office but he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.	S<H Apology + REQUEST: H to grant wish (allow extension)
M2	You are working on a presentation (to be given tomorrow) with another student, Jane.	She still has not done the 'Introduction' slides because she is very slow.	You need to make sure that she finishes them today.	You decide to call her but she is not answering so you leave a message on her answer phone.	S=H REQUEST: H to perform wish (create slides)
M3	You last assignment is due in one week.	You are worried because you are not sure whether you have understood the task correctly.	You really want your professor's opinion on your draft.	You decide to call Professor Willson in her office but she is not there so you leave a message on her answer phone.	S<H REQUEST: H to perform wish (give feedback) Semi-legitimate excuse provided
M4	You borrowed a book from a classmate (Jim) and promised to give it back in a week.	It has been 3 weeks and you still have the book because you have been moving house. Jim has sent you a message saying that he needs it.	You need the book very much for another day.	You decide to call him but he is not answering so you leave a message on his answer phone.	S=H Apology + REQUEST: H to grant wish (allow S to have book) Semi-legitimate excuse provided

Data analysis was conducted following CA's unmotivated look, and highlighting several elements included in participants' speech produced for monologic tasks. The elements emerging from the analysis were, in fact, very similar to those that emerged in the pilot study data. For example, Excerpt 4 is a typical example of speech produced for monologic tasks. As this excerpt exemplifies, participants generally tended to include a greeting (line 1), projected the upcoming request (line 2) (e.g. Schegloff, 1980; Roever & Kasper, 2018), provided an account (line 3) as a justification for the request (e.g. Schegloff, 2007; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012), as well as problem statement stating the problem or lack of action why the request was made (line 4) (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012), verbalised their request (line 5), included a reason with future reference for this request (line 6) and closed the conversation (lines 7-8).

Excerpt 4: M2 – Finishing project work, S=H, sample of C1 speech (ID: S14)

1. *Hello Jane. I hope thi::s message will find you well.,*
2. *I'm just calling about the introdu::ction (.) for our presentation*
3. *>as you know< e::rm (.) it's due fo::r tomorrow (.)*
4. *a::nd we still haven't received (.) your part*
5. *so:: if you can plea::se finish it today*
6. *(.) so that we can give it tomorrow (our) time.*
7. *Thank you very much and I hope I hear from you soon.*
8. *Bye bye.*

4.1.1.1 B2

Figure 4.1 gives an overview of the amount and types of preliminary interactional work in monologic tasks at B2. The horizontal axis represents the different preliminary interactional features, while vertical axis represents the percentage of participants employing these features, regardless of how many times each feature was used. The MR here is referred to as 'R'. As can be seen, some common elements included in preliminary interactional work were projecting upcoming request, problem statement and account, however, these were used to differing degrees in the four tasks.

Projecting upcoming request was slightly random as 80% of B2 participants included it in M2, it was omitted in M1 and M4, while only 20% added it in M3. Its inclusion in M2 might be explained by the relatively high (i.e. 2.7 see Table 4.2 above) mean imposition identified in this task, which may have prompted B2 participants to approach this request more cautiously in order to pre-empt a potential refusal on H's part. Problem statements also seemed to be employed to differing degrees as they were commonly included in tasks involving unequal power constellation (M1 and M3) but to a much lesser degree in tasks involving equal power constellation. A similar pattern was observable regarding accounts, as they were included to a great extent in M1 and M4, 100% and 90% respectively, but none at all in the other two tasks. The facts that in M2 H had to perform a wish (i.e. finish the introduction slides) rather than grant a wish, and in M3 they

were asking their professor for help (i.e. have a look at their draft) may explain why participants felt that providing an account was unnecessary. However, it is worth noting that in the latter task only 60% of the participants included some kind of preliminary interactional work, which is slightly unexpected as this task included unequal power constellation, what is more they were asking their professor to grant a wish (i.e. help with their draft). A partial explanation for this could be the slightly lower imposition identified in this task (second lowest amongst all the tasks) and also that in the subsequent interview 30% of the participants commented on the fact that 'It's his job' and 'He must help me'.

These findings seem to be partially consistent with Youn (2015), who found that low intermediate level learners tended to produce requests quite abruptly without pre-requests. Her study involved only low intermediate learners, but it seems that this tendency continues to B2 level to a certain extent. Such abruptness, due to lack of preliminary interactional moves, in less proficient learners' speech was also observed by Ikeda (2017). Likewise, Trosborg (1995) also noticed that less proficient learners were less aware of the need to support for their requests. However, it is worth noting that in the present study B2 participants' speech did seem to contain at least some support their requests and the varying degrees of support in the different tasks may suggest some conscious decision-making, possibly based on their own evaluation of the given context, regarding the amount of preliminary interactional work to be used.

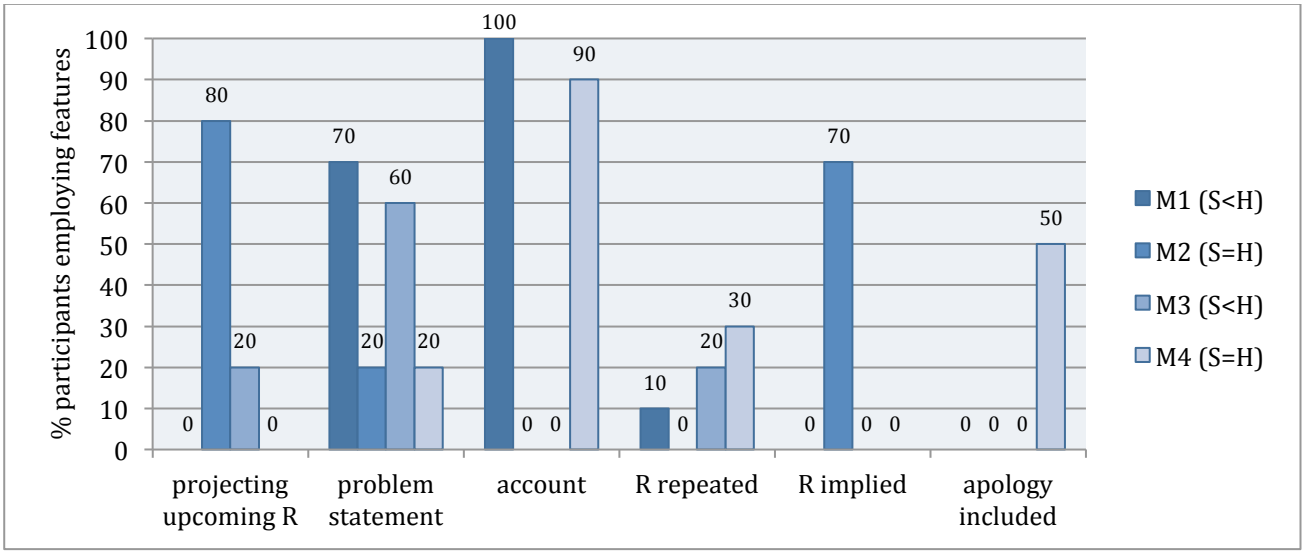

Figure 4.1: Percentage of B2 participants employing sequential organization features in Monologic Tasks

Regarding the actual request element, it has been noted that a small number of participants repeated their request by using the same linguistic form a number of times. For example, in Excerpt 4.1 after producing the problem statement in line 3 and the request in line 4 (highlighted) the participant repeats the request again in line 5. The reason may have been to reinforce the request but it could also have been used to buy time in order to formulate ideas. Interestingly in M2 (S=H) the majority of participants only implied their request (Excerpt 4.2, line 3), which could be due to the relatively high imposition (mean 2.7) that had been assigned to this task, although a number of participants who assigned lower imposition (i.e. 1 or 2) to this task also opted for implying their request. Another speech act, apology was also included in M4 but only by 50% of the participants. They possibly felt that not returning a book on time was their fault and an apology was in order. Indeed, comments such as 'need to keep promise' (ID: S5) and 'feel guilty' (ID: S8) in the subsequent interview might support this explanation.

Excerpt 4.1: M2 – Finishing project work, S=H, sample of B2 speech (ID: S7)

1. *Hi Janet. I've been (.) trying to call you since (0.1) yesterday but (.) you didn't answer me.*
2. *I hope is everything okay (.) bu::t (.) >as you know< we (.) have a presentation tomorrow*
3. *a::nd (0.1) you didn't do your task a::nd (0.2) the:: deadline is (.) tomorrow.*
4. ➔ *I wanna be sure that you finish the introduction, because you duty (.) is to do introduction.*
5. ➔ *Erm I wanna be sure (.) if you finish (.) or not (0.1)*
6. *please call me >as soon as possible< because you know it is very important, because it is my last year a::nd I need to pass*
7. *my (0.1) e::rm lessons.*
8. *Please, call me back (.) okay? See you.*

Excerpt 4.2: M2 – Finishing project work, S=H, sample of B2 speech (ID: S8)

1. *Hello Jane. This is (first name).*
2. *I tried to call you before but you didn't answer (0.1).*
3. ➔ *I would just like (0.1) wondering if you::: finished the:: (.) introduction slides for tomorrow?*
4. *Because we need to make sure that (0.2) we have (0.1) done a good job.*
5. *A:::nd just let me know >as soon as possible< if you (didn't) and if you:: need help.*
6. *Feel free to contact me or call me. See you. Thank you.*

With regard to the transition between the different sequential elements of the messages, it is worth noting that the way some B2 participants structured and linked their speech in monologic tasks seemed to be somewhat abrupt in places. In Excerpt 4.3, for instance, the B2 participant opens with a greeting, provides a brief account in line 2, half abandoning the verbalization of the problem (i.e. *so:: my essay*), and expresses the request in line 3, thus leaving it to the interlocutor to make the connection and supply the ideas. There are attempts to link ideas linguistically (see conjunctions highlighted) but perhaps due to limited cognitive capacity to do both tasks, evaluate the social context and formulate/verbalise thoughts accordingly, at the same time and under time pressure (even though no time restriction was set for this task), smooth and logical transition between ideas may have suffered. The stretched syllables in conjunctions (e.g 'so::' in line 2 and 4) may also suggest that the reason for their usage was not just simply linking ideas but also gaining time for formulating thoughts. The latter may have involved both, searching for ideas and searching for language (e.g. lexical/grammatical encoding), but as it was not possible to gain an insight into their thought processes in this regard, I am not differentiating the two in the present study.

Excerpt 4.3: M1 - Late essay submission, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S5)

1. *Hello (0.1) Taylor. I'm (firstname).*
2. ➔ *Because I:: (0.1) was ill (.) so:: (0.1) my essa:::y,*
3. *can I got a:n (0.2) extension (0.1) on (0.1) >my essay deadline< today?*
4. ➔ *So:: (0.2) yeah >can you ring me< (0.1) after you (.) heard this (.) message? Thank you very much.*

Such pressure for time is also noticeable in Excerpt 4.4, where after the opening line the participant starts to provide an apology in line 2 but does not complete its verbalization or leaves it to the interlocutor to add the missing information. There are attempts to link this apology with the account provided in lines 3-4 and also to link this account with the request in line 5 linguistically (highlighted), however, the conjunctions, besides being repetitive, are not always logical and perhaps used more as fillers in order to gain time to formulate ideas. Similarly to speech in Excerpt 4.3, they are often uttered with a stretched sound (i.e. a::nd in lines 3, 5) and followed by a pause, which may be an indication of such use.

Excerpt 4.4: M4 – Borrowing a book, sample of B2 speech, S=H (ID: S4)

1. *Hey bro, this is (first name).*
2. ➔ *E:::rm (0.1) sorry about this (.)*
3. ➔ *cause I'm (0.1) just keep moving my house (.) a:nd (.) I (didn't) promise ( ) back I return your book in time.*
4. *And (0.1) it's almost been like (.) three weeks*
5. ➔ *A::nd (0.1) is it any possible that (0.1) you borrow me a book (.) just for another day (.) one more day?*
6. *I promise (.) I will return it (.) after another day.*
7. *Very thanks bro (0.1) like (0.2) if you if you (.) feel free (0.2) just (0.1) call me or something.*

This may suggest that at B2 level speakers are probably aware of the need to structure (i.e. using preliminary interactional work) and link their speech (i.e. using conjunctions), however, perhaps most of their cognitive capacity is used for formulating ideas and language clearly/accurately, and as a result they are unable to do this smoothly under time pressure. Field (2011, p.102) argues that due to the different degree of cognitive processing required, tasks that allow planning time result in better cohesion and coherence, including less repetition and hesitation, in L2 speakers' speech especially at higher proficiency. I would add that the degree of cognitive processing is even more demanding when producing language in social context as, besides achieving clarity of language use (e.g. I want to borrow your book for another week.), speakers need to carefully consider the impact of their utterance on the listener (i.e. in the example above, this may sound like a command) in order to achieve their pragmatic intention. As in the case of B2 participants in the present study, despite being given time to prepare their speech for monologic tasks, cohesion and coherence may have suffered as a result of making greater efforts to structure speech in a way that the message was conveyed clearly and in the right manner.

4.1.1.2. C1

The amount and type of preliminary interactional features employed by C1 participants in monologic tasks can be seen in Figure 4.2. Similarly to B2 participants, there were differences in the degree to which features of preliminary interactional work was was used in C1 speech. Projecting the upcoming request was a bit random as all C1 participants included it in M2, however it was included to a much lesser degree in the other

monologic tasks. On the other hand, although problem statement was included in all the tasks, it was only used by one third of the participants. Providing an account was noticeably more common as 80% of the participants included it in all the tasks apart from M2. As previously mentioned, in this task H was asked to perform a wish (i.e. finish the introduction slides) as opposed to granting a wish, which could possibly explain the lack of any account given in the latter task. In M4 an apology was included by 60% of the participants, although 40% did not include it. In their evaluation of the context in M4, a number of C1 participants frequently referred to their own responsibility (e.g. 'he needs it so I'm selfish' ID: S19) or H's potential attitude (e.g. if you were in a similar situation you'd be angry' ID: S12), which may explain the decision to include an apology in their message.

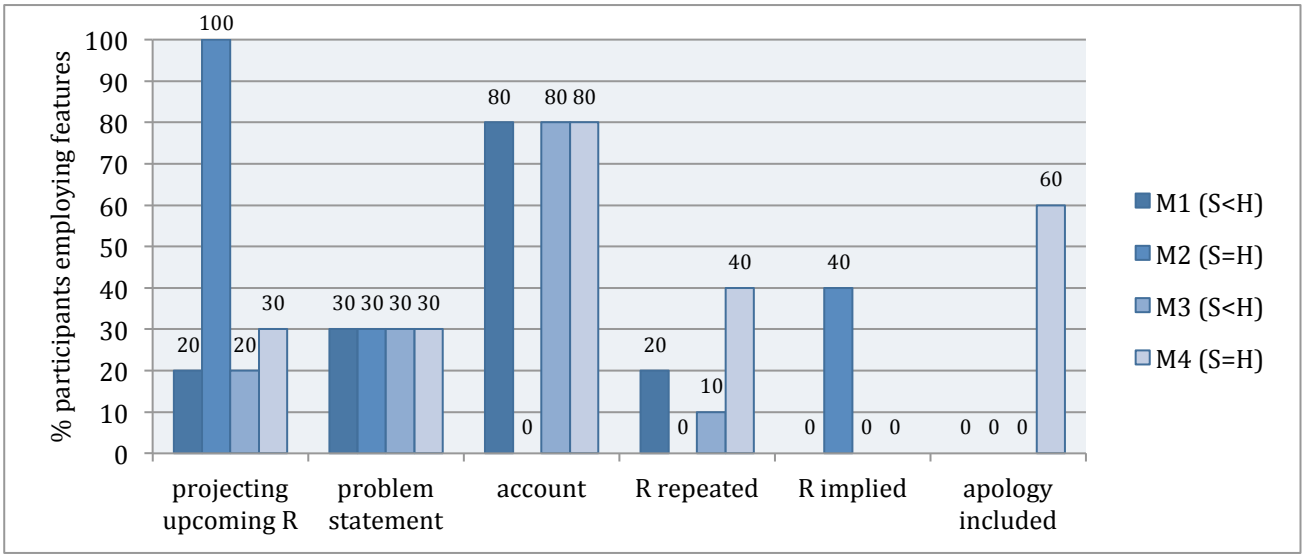

Figure 4.2: Percentage of C1 participants employing features of preliminary interactional work in Monologic Tasks

On the whole, speech was generally structured at this level, with most participants using several preliminary interactional features before formulating the MR. For example, in Excerpt 4.5 the participant opens with a greeting (line 1) and provides an account (line 2) as well as a problem statement (line 3) before verbalizing the MR in line 4 and closing the message in line 5.

Excerpt 4.5: M3 – Helping with draft, S<H, sample of C1 speech (ID: S18)

1. *Hi professor Willson*

2. *My last assignment is due in one week*
3. *a::nd I'm not sure whether I've understood the:: (0.2) the task correctly.*
4. *So, could you please call me back a::nd (.) erm I'd really appreciate your opinion about it.*
5. *Thank you.*

Naturally, there were individual differences in the way C1 participants structured their speech in monologic tasks but it was noticeable how, unlike at B2 level, thoughts were generally complete and there was less need for the interlocutor to make inferences. For instance, Excerpt 4.6 shows how the participant structured their speech by producing a problem statement in line 2 before verbalizing the request in line 3. However, in their speech there was a bit of repetition noticeable as they produced another problem statement in line 5 after the request before emphasizing the value of H's help (line 6) and closing the message (line 7).

Excerpt 4.6: M3 – Helping with draft, S<H, sample of C1 speech (ID: S15)

1. *Good afternoon professor Willson. Erm it's (first name) from your class.*
2. *E:rm I'm I'm just having a bit of a trou::ble (.) with the assignment (.) that is due next week.*
3. *A::nd I would really appreciate if you can give me (.) my dra::ft with your comments. A::nd (.) I would really appreciate if*
4. *you ( )*
5. *I'm not quite sure about the task itself*
6. *and your comments will be really really valuable for me.*
7. *Thank you very much.*

With regard to the actual request element, similarly to B2 participants, a number of C1 speakers also repeated their requests in their messages. This was especially noticeable in M4, where 40% of participants did the same. However, in C1 speech such repetition seemed to be used more as a framework with the request being repeated towards the end of the message, as seen in Excerpt 4.7. In this excerpt, the participant provides an account (line 2), a problem statement (line 3) and shows awareness of H's situation (line 5) before verbalising the request in line 6. The participant then goes on to providing a reason for their request before repeating the request again in line 8. This seems to be a conscious choice to structure speech and bring the message to a close (line 11) rather than a way to buy time in order to formulate their next thought.

Excerpt 4.7: M4 – Borrowing a book, S=H, sample of C1 speech (ID: S11)

1. *Well (.) listen mate,*
2. *the thing is (0.1) I've been moving my stuff (0.1) changing my accommodation,*
3. *a::nd I wasn't (0.1) haven't done with all the book yet*
4. *so::: would it be possible please (0.1)*
5. *I know that you're pretty curious about it and you need it sooner than later,*
6. ➔ *but would it be possible please just to leave it with me just for a couple of days*
7. *as I need it (0.1) now a::nd it's really important to do like erm get some stuff from it and like erm have some sort of citation from from the book and add it to my (0.1) reference.*
8. ➔ *So (0.1) so >would it be possible to< (.) leave it for a couple of days?*
9. *I I really appreciate it mate if you (.) if you agree to that*
10. *a:::nd thank you so much.*
11. *I wish you a nice day. Bye bye.*

Similarly to B2 participants, in M2 (S=H) many C1 speakers only implied the request. For instance, in Excerpt 4.8 the participant produces a problem statement in line 2 and continues with what was probably intended to be the request in line 3. The offer in line 4 does indeed suggest that, although not verbalised explicitly, the speaker's assumption was that the required action (i.e. completing introduction slides) had not been carried out at the time of speaking.

Excerpt 4.8: M2 – Finishing project work, S=H, sample of C1 speech (ID: S13)

1. *Hey Jane,*
2. *I was e::rm (0.1) I was calling you because I'm a little worried about the introduction that is due tomorrow.*
3. ➔ *I would like to check if you're done with it.*
4. *If you're not, please let me know if you need any help. I would definitely ( ) would like to help you,*
5. *so that (.) we can finish tomorrow.*
6. *Please call me. Bye.*

In terms of the transition between ideas, there tended to be generally smooth transition between preliminary interactional work, request and closing in C1 participants' speech. For example, the participant in Excerpt 4.9 opens with a greeting, produces an account in line 2 using '*so*' to link it with the problem statement in

line 3 and using the same conjunction again to link the problem statement with the request in line 4. Not only is speech generally logically structured by using preliminary interactional moves but these moves are also linked by the use of conjunctions, albeit the same ones. This may indicate C1 participants' ability to structure their speech both logically, by employing preliminary interactional moves, and linguistically, by using conjunctions at appropriate places. Such ability is unlikely to be the result of purely linguistic advance, the repetition of some conjunctions (e.g. 'so' in Excerpt 4.9) would in fact suggest otherwise, but could possibly indicate increased cognitive capacity left, after formulating ideas/language, to handle these two aspects of speech at the same time under time pressure. This finding would again support Field (2011, p.102), who argues that tasks with planning time given result in more coherent speech with less repetition due to the lower level of cognitive processing required. He also believes that "this in turn might lead to setting the bar for fluency at a higher level". It would seem that, overall, C1 participants in this study may have reached such 'higher level' to a certain degree, at least in terms of producing generally coherent and cohesive speech, and they were able to achieve this whilst at the same time also assessing social context within which their speech was set. Coherence was reflected in the logical organisation of their ideas (e.g. by including account, problem statement in a logical order), while cohesion was achieved by linking their ideas using cohesive devices. Although cohesive devices may not strictly be considered part of pragmatic competence, however, their use influences H's understanding of the communicative situation, thus contributing towards the speaker's achievement of their communicative goal, which is one of the key concepts in pragmatics.

Excerpt 4.9: M1 - Late essay submission, sample of C1 speech, S<H (ID: S14)

1. *Good afternoon Mr Taylor. I hope you're fine.*
2. *Erm I'm just (0.1) erm calling you to let you know that I've been really sick (.) these couple of days (.)*
3. ➔ *so (.) I couldn't prepare for my assignment.*
4. ➔ *So >I was wondering if< (.) if it's possible for me to get an exte::nsion (.) for the deadline*
5. *at least until I get better (.) a::nd I can prepare properly for the assignment.*
6. *Thank you very much and I hope I see you soon. Bye bye.*

4.1.1.3. C2

Figure 4.3 presents the amount and type of preliminary interactional work included in monologic tasks by C2 participants. As can be seen the majority of participants included a fair amount of preliminary interactional work. Similarly to B2 and C1 participants, projecting upcoming request was included in M2 by the majority of participants but it was also included in the other three monologic tasks although to a somewhat lesser degree. On the other hand, problem statement was mostly included in all the tasks. Fifty percent of the participants included it in M1, M2, M3 and 20% included it in M4. The low level of its inclusion in M4 might be due to participants' assumption that by giving an account of what is going on in ones' life (i.e. moving house) may imply the consequences, which in this case meant S not finishing the book. An account was included to a great degree (90% of the participants included it) in all the tasks apart from M2. As mentioned previously, in this task H was asked to perform a wish (i.e. finish the introduction slides) and it was unnecessary for S to give an account of what they have or have not done.

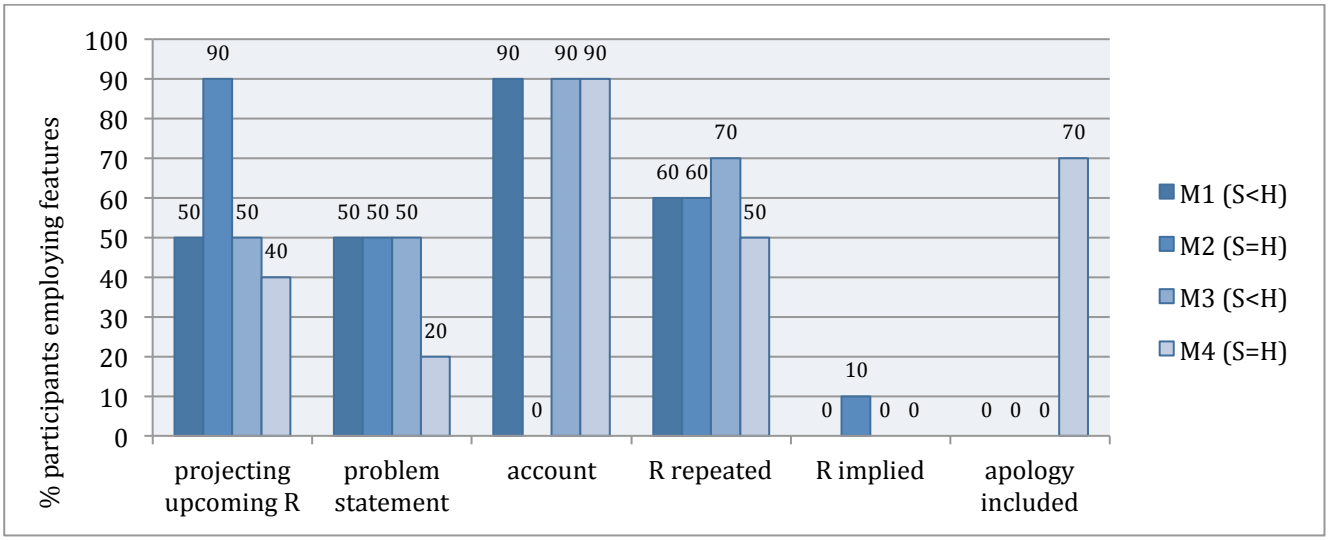

Figure 4.3: Percentage of C2 participants employing features of preliminary interactional work in Monologic Tasks

Speech was generally well structured at this level with the majority of participants employing a number of preliminary interactional moves before verbalizing their request. Excerpt 4.10 is a typical example of how C2 participants structured their message by including several features of preliminary interactional work, here for example (1) an apology in line 2 (2) an account in line 3 and a problem statement in line 4, leading up to the request (line 5), some post-expansion (lines 6-7) and closing (lines 8-9).

Excerpt 4.10: M1 - Late essay submission, sample of C2 speech, S<H (ID: S21)

1. *Hello professor Taylor.*
2. *I'm really sorry,*
3. *I haven't been attending class because I've been (gravely) ill.*
4. *I know the deadline is very close and I cannot finish my essay.*
5. ➔ *It would be very kind of you if you could (0.1) extend my deadline.*
6. *I'll try to work as hard as I can on the essay for now and I'll still submit the incomplete version (.) just in case to get any ( )*
7. *but it would be really nice if you could extend my deadline a little bit longer.*
8. *Thank you professor Taylor.*
9. *Have a good evening. Bye.*

In terms of the actual request element, more than half of the participants repeated their requests in all the monologic tasks. Repetition was used quite naturally, expanding slightly on the MR and using similar but not exactly the same wording. For example, in Excerpt 4.11 the participant starts with an introduction in line 1, gives a reason for the call in line 2 and verbalizes the request in line 3. This is followed by an account (line 4), a problem statement (line 5) and the request is repeated again in line 7 almost as if to remind the speaker again what the aim of the message was. It was also noted that the repeated request contained additional information (i.e. specifying the length of the extension requested: 'until next Monday'), in an attempt to elaborate on and clarify the original request.

Excerpt 4.11: M1 - Late essay submission, S<H, sample of C2 speech (ID: S30)

1. *Good morning professor Taylor, this is erm (firstname) from the Applied Linguistics Department.*
2. *I I was ca::lling (.) to:: see::*
3. ➔ *if it's possible to get an extension fo::r the essay that was due tomorrow.*
4. *Erm I I >need that extension basically because< I've been ill for (0.1) the pa:st week (.) or so.*
5. *E::rm a::nd I (.) rea:lly tried (.) but I wasn't able to do much for the essay.*
6. *E::rm (.) I:: do have (.) a doctor's note with me so::: erm*
7. ➔ *I wa:::s really hoping you could (.) grant me (.) an extension e::rm until e::rm maybe next Monday, if that's okay with you.*
8. *If you can call me ba:ck about tha:t or I I call again erm erm later to try and catch you.*
9. *Thanks very much. Bye.*

Unlike C1, but especially B2 participants, in M2 (S=H) very few C2 participants (10%) implied the request and requests were almost always expressed explicitly. The lowest mean imposition (i.e. 1.6) across the levels and comments such as 'she hasn't done her work so I have to push her' (ID: S23) might indicate that this was perhaps a conscious choice. In Excerpt 4.12, for example, the participant, having provided a problem statement (line 3) and a reason for the request (line 4-5), states very clearly what they would like H to do (line 6). It is interesting to note the use of 'okay?' (lines 9 and 12), which often serves the purpose of closing a sequence (Schegloff, 2007), but in this case may have also aimed at checking H's approval of the stated proposition. Post expansion also includes a statement of appreciation (line 10), which seemed to be a common feature in C2 speech. This correlates with Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) findings, who investigated the use of Conversational Routines, 'That'd be great' being one of them, and in her data such expressions were much more commonly used by native speakers of English than by L2 learners. The frequent use of such expressions by C2 participants in the present data could also indicate that more proficient learners are more aware of their communicative function in social contexts. Notice also the participant's attempt to show that their concern to complete the presentation is mutual (i.e. '*we should really get a good mark*') in line 5. Such finding is very much in line with Ikeda (2017), who noted a similar feature in his monologue task data.

Excerpt 4.12: M2 – Project work, S=H, sample of C2 speech (ID: S25)

1. *Hey Jane. This is (first name).*

2. *I'm calling you about the presentation, which is to be given tomorrow,*

3. *e::rm I've just noticed that you (.) still haven't finished your introduction parts of the slides.*

4. *I just ( ) this is quite crucial that you do it since (.) first of all this is the introduction, second of all,*

5. *this presentation is sixty percent of the coursework so:: e::rm yeah we should really get a good mark on it (.)*

6. *so:: if you could just make sure that you finish finish it today, a::nd we don't leave anything to chance (.) for tomorrow.*

7. *Also (.) we could have some time to actually try to (.) make a presentation before (.) before*

8. *we actually have to do it tomorrow.*

9. *Okay?*

10. ➔ *>That would be great.<*

11. *So:: erm let me know when you're finished (.) a::nd then (.) we could arrange that meeting and practice it all.*

12. *Okay?*

13. *Have a nice day. Bye.*

Regarding the transition between the different elements of speech, there tended to be a smooth transition between preliminary interactional work, request and closing in C2 participants' speech. For example, in Excerpt 4.13 the participant opens with a greeting, produces an account in line 2 before stating the request in line 3. The different moves in this message are linked linguistically (highlighted in yellow). This may indicate C2 participants' ability to structure their speech and also their linguistic competence (i.e. use of conjunctions) as well as increased cognitive capacity to pay attention to such detail. Although according to the CEFR (2001) the conjunctions highlighted in the excerpt are typical of only A2 language proficiency, I would argue that as (1) their use was natural and logical, (2) they were produced instantly under the cognitive demands involved in online processing and (3) suit the semi-formal style of such oral communication (i.e. leaving a message on an answer phone), they were indicative of higher proficiency in this study.

Excerpt 4.13: M3 – Feedback on draft, sample of C2 speech, S<H (ID: S28)

1. *Hello professor Willson, this is (firstname).*
2. *I've been trying to call you (.) to ask you about my assignment.*
3. *A::nd I wanted to ask about your opinion on my draft*
4. *but you're not picking up, (.)*
5. *and I'm really worried about my assignment as it's due in one week.*
6. *So:: can you please (0.1) erm call me back when you can (.) so that I get your opinion on my draft,*
7. *because I really want to get a good grade on this test.*
8. *Thank you.*

Thus, it seems that participants at C2 level employed preliminary interactional work, tended to repeat their request, either to emphasize its importance or to remind H again of the main reason for their message, and used conjunctions at appropriate places to link their ideas logically.

4.1.1.4. Comparison of preliminary interactional work in speech at B2-C2 levels in monologic tasks

On the whole, all three levels used expansion to a greater or lesser degree (Figure 4.4). It was noted that with increasing proficiency the amount of preliminary interactional work also seemed to increase. Regarding the type of expansion, there were some similarities. For example, participants at all three levels chose to include an apology in M4, where they were at fault for not returning a book, or did not include an account in M2, where they were asking their classmate to do their duty (i.e. finish the slides for a presentation). In terms of the overall structure of the message, a noticeable difference was that significantly more C2 participants tended to repeat their request, which possibly served the purpose of reinforcing the importance of the request. The same feature was also noticeable in B2 and C1 participants' speech but used to a much lesser degree. Besides, the linguistic form of the repeated request generally remained the same at C1 but especially at B2, while it varied at C2.

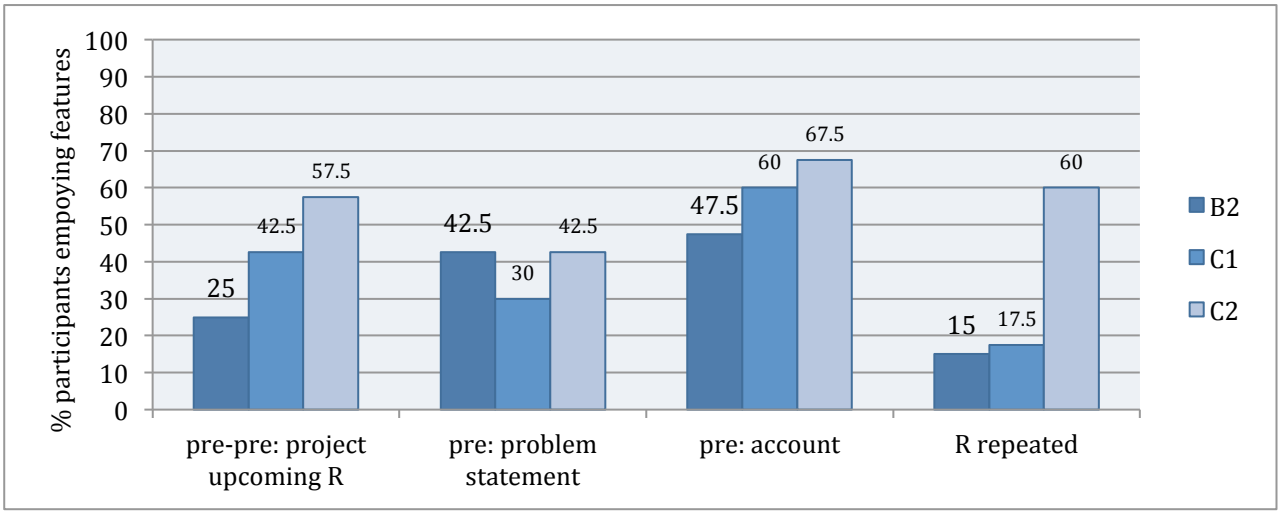

Figure 4.4: Percentage of participants employing features of preliminary interactional work in monologic tasks (total use per task)

In terms of the overall structure, participants' messages appeared to be generally structured at all three proficiency levels. It was noted that the way some B2 participants structured and linked their speech in monologic tasks seemed to be somewhat abrupt and at times it was necessary for the interlocutor to make inferences as their ideas were not fully formed or completed linguistically (see 4.1.1.1), while this was not the case at either C1 or C2. In addition, in C1 and C2 participants' speech there tended to be a smoother linguistic transition (i.e. using conjunctions) between preliminary interactional work, request and closing, thus enabling H to better understand the logical transition between the various moves. It was argued that such differences in linking ideas may have been partially due to participants' differing linguistic abilities but perhaps also to the differing levels of cognitive capacity to produce speech on-line.

Summary of elaboration in monologic tasks

Based on the data gathered, the following observations have been highlighted regarding the elaboration of speech in monologic tasks:

- Amount of preliminary interactional work: C2 participants tended to use preliminary interactional features, including preliminaries to preliminaries or pre-pres (Schegloff, 2007), to project the upcoming request most consistently followed by C1 and B2 participants (Figure 4.4). Trosborg (1995), using the speech act framework, found that different proficiency level learners' speech in general lacked support for requests (e.g. give an account / reason). However, her data showed that there was some development with increasing proficiency and that advanced learners were much more aware of the need to use external modification in order to exhibit politeness. The CA framework employed in the present research seems to indicate a somewhat similar trend regarding the increase in the amount of expansion that is employed to support the actual request. The present finding is also consistent with other research (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012; Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017) highlighting increasingly more natural and more elaborate preliminary interactional work in speech as proficiency develops.
- Linking ideas: With increasing proficiency there was smoother transition between the different speech segments due to the use of conjunctions.
- Apology: In M4 where 'apology' was an optional element 70% of C2 participants included it as opposed to 60% of C1 participants and 50% of B2 participants. In the subsequent interview participants at all three levels equally frequently referred to their own responsibility (e.g. 'I'm guilty.' (ID: S4); 'I'm selfish.' (ID: S19); 'It was my fault.' (ID: S23), which may perhaps indicate that rather than unawareness, it was limited cognitive capacity left that prevented some B2 and C1 participants from including an apology in their message.
- Requests: In all four tasks C2 participants tended to repeat the request using a slightly reformulated version of the original format as part of post-expansion towards the end of the message (see Excerpt 4.11) much more often than the other two levels. This seemed to have given a somewhat natural frame to their message (i.e. stating request initially then reminding H again what the request was before closing the message). On the other hand, B2 participants' speech contained frequent

repetition, which feature in less proficient L2 speakers' speech has already been pointed out by Ikeda (2017).

4.1.2. Preliminary interactional work: Task and level comparison in dialogic tasks (RQ1,RQ3)

These two tasks required the participants to conduct face-to-face conversations with an interlocutor (here the researcher) in two different social contexts, one involving unequal power constellation (referred to as D5), where they had to ask a professor to explain the low grade given, and another one involving equal power constellation (referred to as D6), where they had to ask their flatmate to do more cleaning (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Summary of dialogic task instructions and their structure.

	SITUATION	PROBLEM + reason	ACTION / SOLUTION	parameters
D5	You have just got of your essays back from Professor Willson.	You are surprised at the very low mark given because you believe you followed the instructions carefully.	Ask the professor to explain the reason.	S<H Request: H to perform wish (explain mark) Semi-legitimate reason provided.
D6	You are sharing a flat with another student, Janet.	She is very untidy and never cleans any of the communal areas. This has been bothering you for months.	Ask her to do more cleaning.	S=H Request: H to perform wish (clean more) Semi-legitimate reason provided.

Two discernible parts emerged from the data, which were common in all the conversations produced for D5, (1) the actual request part, which was followed by (2) a phase of clarification. Excerpt 4.14 demonstrates a generally typical example of this. As can be seen, after the initial greeting (lines 1-3) and go-ahead response (line 4), the request is verbalised in line 5, the same turn in this participant's speech also includes an account (lines 5-6: *I followed your instruction (0.1) how it's written on the paper*), a repetition of the request (lines 6-7*: it would be very helpful if you can (0.2) erm (0.2) if you can say your opinion (0.1) why I get lower mark*) and a reason for such request (line 8: *after that I can (.) I can improve (0.1) my essay, for next time*). This phase is followed by a phase of clarification of the issue through several turns clarifying the problem (lines 9-18) and stating what to do in future in order to avoid it (line 19) before closing the conversation (line 22).

Excerpt 4.14: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S3)

1.	S3:	*Hello=*
2.	I:	*Hello*
3.	S3:	*=Professor*
4.	I:	*How can I help you?*
5.	S3:	*I'd like to ask (0.1) why I got (.) the lower mark? I thought I would get the higher mark (.) because I followed*
6.		*your instruction (0.1) how it's written on the paper? That's why (0.1) it would be very helpful if you can (0.2)*
7.		*erm (0.2) if you can say your opinion (0.1) why I get lower mark?*
8.		*And after that I can (.) I can improve (0.1) my essay, for next time.*
9.	I:	*Mmm. Okay. I remember your essay (.) quite clearly actually. It wasn't too bad. The main problem was that you*
10.		*forgot to mention (.) two key authors, two key theories. Smith and Jones are basic basic theories in this field (.)*
11.		*and unfortunately you did not mention them.*
12.	S3:	*A::nd do you think it's important for this (.) essay, if I mention these two (0.1) professors, it will (.) I will get the*
13.		*better mark?*
14.	I:	*Erm, yes, definitely in future (.) what you need to do is (.) you need to look at your sources and you have to*
15.		*identify which ones are really important and which ones are not so important. So:: you select your sources.*
16.	S3:	*Yeah, sometimes it's quite difficult to decide (.) which one is really important (.) and which not because each*
17.		*person is quite different (.) and they have a different opinion (.) on this topic ( ) that's why (.) that's why I maybe*
18.		*chose this person a:nd not (.) that person.*
19.	I:	*Yeah, I I think you should just sort of check it with somebody. You can check it with me if you're not sure=*
20.	S3:	*Mmm*
21.	I:	*=but yeah*
22.	S3:	*Okay. That's right. Thank you so much.*

On the other hand, data analysis highlighted three discernible parts in all the conversations produced for D6, (1) a phase of disagreement leading up (2) to the actual request and finally (3) a phase of finding a solution, as demonstrated by Excerpt 4.15. In this excerpt the participant opens with projecting the upcoming request (line 1) and after the go-ahead response (line 2) they start to build up the conversation through a number of turns, including several problem statements (e.g. line 3: *you never do the cleaning*) in response to H's blocking (e.g. line 4: *I did it last week*), until they reach the actual request (line 8: *could you please< try to do (.) a little bit more (.) next time).* This phase is then followed by a phase discussing a possible solution (lines 10-25) before closing the conversation (lines 26-28).

Excerpt 4.15: D6 – Problem with flatmate, sample of C1 speech, S=H (ID: S18)

1.	S18:	*Hey Janet. We need to talk.*
2.	I:	*Yeah? Why?*
3.	S18:	*E::rm we've been living with each other (.) for some time a::nd you never (.) you never do the cleaning.*
4.	I:	*I did it last week.*
5.	S18:	*Bu::t actually (.) it's still dirty, it's not it's not good enough, I think. You never (.) you never clean up the:: erm*
6.		*(.) common area.*
7.	I:	*But erm as I said, I did it last week.*
8.	S18:	*Yeah, I completely understand that, however, erm >could you please< try to do (.) a little bit more (.)*
9.		*next time?*
10.	I:	*Yeah, but you see, you have assignments and I have assignments as well, so sometimes we're just so busy that*
11.		*it's not possible to do it all the time.*
12.	S18:	*I completely understand that, however, (0.1) yea:h (.) it's difficult to share a flat together if you're not (.)*
13.		*cleaning (.)after yourself. A::nd erm we need to find a (.) compromising here.*
14.	I:	*Yeah, well, we can find a compromise. I mean, I don't want to have a bad relationship, but I don't know what*
15.		*that would be. As I said, sometimes I'm just so busy so::*
16.	S18:	*Actually (.) I just need a kind of promise that (.) you're just gonna pay (.) more attention to to cleaning next*
17.		*time.*
18.	I:	*Well, okay, I'll try (.) as much as I can a::nd (.) see what happens.*
19.	S18:	*Yeah, well for now it's enough for me, however, I'd really like you to to improve this part of ( ) living together.*
20.	I:	*Okay. As I said, I don't want any conflicts or any[thing]=*
21.	S18:	*[Yeah]*
22.	I:	*=that's the last thing I need. So I I'll try [and]*
23.	S18:	*[I mean] it's not that problematic (0.1). I'm just like erm it's just a*
24.		*favour I'd like to ask you to::*
25.	I:	*Okay, all right. As I said, I'll try and see what happens.*
26.	S18:	*( ) flatmate Janet, I say. Thank you.*
27.	I:	*That's all right. That's okay. So see you later.*
28.	S18:	*See you.*

The following section presents the analysis of the data in terms of elaboration used in the two dialogic tasks at the three different proficiency levels.

4.1.2.1. B2

Figure 4.5 presents the overall use of preliminary interactional work by B2 participants in dialogic tasks. As can be seen, the majority of B2 participants used some kind of preliminary interactional work in each task before verbalising their request. However, it is interesting to note that while all B2 participants included preliminary interactional work in D6 involving equal power constellation, only 80% did the same in D5 involving unequal power constellation. The fact that the mean imposition identified in the latter task was slightly lower 2.4 (median: 2), as opposed to 2.5 in D6 (median: 3) could perhaps be a possible explanation for this. However, it is not possible to generalise as, for example, one B2 participant made a comment 'I'm angry.' (ID: S4) when evaluating the context in D5, nevertheless, they still included some preliminary interactional work in their speech. Problem statements seemed to be generally widely used in both tasks, while projecting upcoming requests was more commonly employed in D6 (i.e. by 70% of participants) than in D5 (i.e by 40% of participants). On the other hand, accounts were included to a somewhat lesser degree in both tasks.

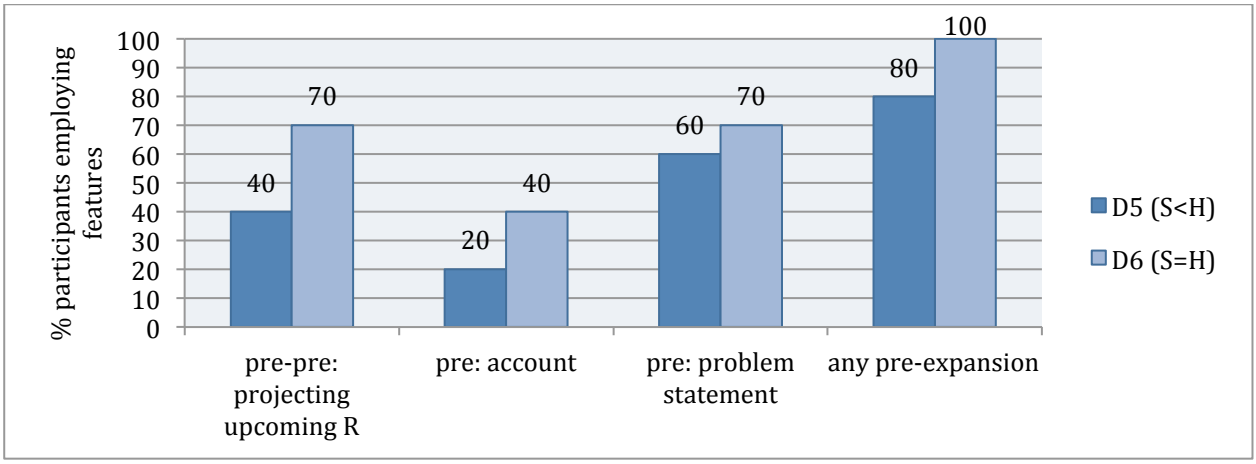

Figure 4.5: Percentage of B2 participants employing preliminary interactional work in dialogic tasks

The mean number of turns leading up to the MR was 4.4 (median: 5) in D5 and 6.2 (median: 3) in D6. Seemingly more turns were used in D6, which task involved equal power constellation, however, increased SD, 2.5 in D5 as opposed to 5.43 in D6, indicates that there were bigger individual differences in this task.

The majority of conversations included 3 to 5 turns before the MR was verbalised but one conversation in D6 involved as many as 17.

Most B2 participants included at least some preliminary interactional work before formulating their request. For instance, in excerpt 4.16 the participant, after some hesitation and hedging (e.g. Erm:::), possibly as a result of anticipating that the upcoming request will likely to receive a dispreferred second pair part (Schegloff, 2007), opens with an apology and a problem statement (line 3) and continues with the request in lines 4-5. It is interesting to note the appearance of repetition (lines 4-5), which seems to be used for softening the request.

Excerpt 4.16: D6 – Problem with flatmate, sample of B2 speech, S=H (ID: S1)

1.	S1:		*Hi Janet.*
2.	*I:*		*Hiya.*
3.	*S1:*		*Ah. (0.2) Erm:::: (0.4) hah, huh (0.4). I'm sorry if I bother you bu::t (0.1) you're not cleaning (.) anything in*
4.		➔	*communal areas a::nd (0.2) we have to (0.2) clean together as (0.2) friendly flatmate (.) I think (0.1) so::: (0.2)*
5.		➔	*>can you just< (0.1) yeah, sometimes, sometimes (0.1) it's okay to clean sometimes so:: (0.1) can you just clean?*

Some B2 participants included more preliminary interactional work but structured this phase slightly unnaturally as the lead up to the request was rather prolonged. For example, in Excerpt 4.17, the participant after the go-ahead response in line 2 continues with preliminary interactional work to provide an account (lines 3 and 5) and to state the problem (line 7). However, this participant produces three somewhat incomplete turns (lines 3, 5 and 7), relying more on the interlocutor to prompt the clarification of the utterance in line 6, before actually verbalizing the final request in line 9. This is consistent with Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2012) findings, namely that lower level L2 learners rely more on the interlocutor to initiate.

Excerpt 4.17: Disappointment with essay result, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S2)

1.	S2:		*Good morning Professor Willson.*
2.	*I:*		*Good morning. How can I help you?*
3.	*S2:*	➔	*I have (.) I've got my feedback*

4. *I:* *Yes.*

5. *S2:* ➔ *from you? for (.) about my essay? I would like to ask you how (.) could you like (.) marking crite::ria?*

6. ***I:*** *Yes?*

7. *S2:* ➔ *Because (.) like (.) my grade (0.1) is (.) a bit (.) lo::w?*

8. *I:* *Mmm.*

9. *S2:* *Can you give me like your criteria of marking my essay?*

Some B2 students sounded slightly abrupt as a result of including very little preliminary interactional work. For example, in excerpt 4.18 the greeting is directly followed by the request (line 1), only after the interlocutor's request for repair in line 2, does the participant clarify the context by producing a problem statement in line 3.

Excerpt 4.18: D5 – Disappointment with essay result, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S9)

1. *S9:* ➔ *Excuse me professor. Can you explain for me (0.1) what is my (.) mistake?*

2. *I:* ➔ *I'm sorry?*

3. *S9:* ➔ *I think that (0.1) I deserve more than this mark. Why you give me like this?*

4. *I:* *Erm oka::y this is about your last essay?*

5. *S9:* *Yes.*

Likewise in Excerpt 4.19, the participant opens rather abruptly in line 1 without any preliminary interactional work and only after the interlocutor's request for repair (line 2) produces a problem statement in line 3. However, after this initial problem they respond appropriately to the interlocutor's blocking (lines 6, 8 and 10) using some hesitation and hedging to signal their understanding of H's dispreferred (Schegloff, 2007) response in the previous turns (lines 5 and 9). It is interesting to note how they attempt to appeal to H's empathy in line 16 and soften their tone towards the end of the conversation when reinforcing their request (line 18).

Excerpt 4.19: D6 – Problem with flatmate, sample of B2 speech, S=H (ID: S3)

1. *S3:* *Excuse me. Do you do this (.) the same at home?*

2. *I:* ➔ *I'm sorry?*

3.	S3:		*I mean that you don't clean everything. (0.2) For example, if you're in the kitchen (0.1) and there's like (.) dirty*
4.			*plates and so on. Why you don't clean?*
5.	I:		*I do clean. I think I cleaned last week too.*
6.	S3:	➔	*Oh, but you can look now (.) in the kitchen, everything is ( ) and everything is dirty there.*
7.	I:		*But, you know, you probably have your mugs there as well.*
8.	S3:	➔	*Oh no. Every time I I finish something (.) I put (.) I will ( ) clean or just put to the washing (0.1) dishwasher.*
9.	I:		*I think I do enough cleaning, as I said, even last week I cleaned.*
10.	S3:		*Yeah, erm, have you ( ) some problems or issues with somebody else about [this]=*
11.	I:		*[No, no]*
12.	S3:		*=situation?*
13.	I:		*Never.*
14.	S3:		*Or have you ever lived with somebody else?*
15.	I:		*I have lived with my parents. So:: I've never had a problem.*
16.	S3:		*And e::rm how do you feel (.) for example if you imagine that I'm you and you are me? This situation?*
17.	I:		*I don't know how you feel. I think the flat is reasonably clean, you know (0.2) it's okay:: (0.1) it looks okay to me.*
18.	S3:		*I think (0.2) it's not okay but okay please (0.1) you can next time to clean. I you something finish (0.2) it's ( ) I*
19.			*feel more comfortable in this room house.*

It has been noted that not all B2 participants responded to H quite so well. In fact, the majority of B2 participants seemed to be following their own 'agenda' with seemingly little response to the interlocutor's input. For example, in Excerpt 4.20 after the interlocutor's problem statement in line 1 although the participant acknowledges the problem in line 2 they still keep going back to other problems with the essay (lines 4, 6) in order to finally conclude that the grade will not change (line 8).

Excerpt 4.20: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S6)

1.	I:		*They are not in your assignment basically. They're not even in your bibliography.*
2.	S6:		*I see.*
3.	I:		*And I:: (0.1) that that was the problem.*
4.	S6:	➔	*I tried to be ( ). And how about (0.1) my introduction introduction? It is enough? Good [o::r]*
5.	I:		*[Yeah, yeah]*
6.	S6:	➔	*A::nd how about my grammar?*
7.	I:		*Ye::s, your introduction was fine, your grammar was generally fine as well.*
8.	S6:	➔	*But, just (0.2) e::rm >I don't have enough idea< it means (0.1) I can't get ( ) mark?*

9. I: *I think (.) I think (0.1) as I said, the low mark is because you forgot to mention very important sources. And in*
10. *this topic (.) that's given to you (.) they're just very important. If you don't mention them, it just feels (0.1) that*
11. *you (.) don't know the subject area very well.*

Similarly, in Excerpt 4.21 after a short pre-pre to project the upcoming request (line 1) the participant produces the request (lines 3-4) and several turns are made to clarify the problem. After the interlocutor's blocking of the request several times (lines 5, 8, 12-13, 23) the participant continues with some hesitation (e.g. *yea:::h* in lines 6, 9, 16 and 19), thus acknowledging H's blocking, but their subsequent problem statements seem to come across as repeated accusations (e.g. see in **bold** in lines 6, 9, 17, 19, 21) perhaps partially due to language use (e.g. '*It's still a mess*.' '*your things is (.) all over the place*'). Notice the length of this phase and the similarity of turns (i.e. repeated: blocking, problem statement/clarification) and there seems to be a lack of initiative on the participant's part to bring this phase to a halt, especially when at times the interlocutor's hesitation (e.g. lines 18, 20) does not really prompt any more clarification or problem statements. It is not until H finally provides the expected second pair part (granting the request) in line 25 that the interaction enters the next phase. It is interesting to note that H's second pair part in line 25 is still dispreferred, signalled by the hesitation, but this is finally picked up by the participant as they make a hesitant suggestion for a future solution including a downtoner ('maybe') in line 26.

Excerpt 4.21: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of B2 speech, S=H (ID: S2)

1. S2: *Yeah (.). Hi Janet. I've got like (0.2) a serious problem (.) to talk with you (0.1)*
2. I: *ye::ah.*
3. S2: *about. You're not clean enough? (0.1) the kitchen a::nd (living room) untidy? (0.2) I would like (0.3) mo::re*
4. *cleaning?*
5. I: *But I have. I cleaned last week*
6. S2: ➔ ***Yea:::h but (0.1) it's still (0.2) a (.) me:ss (0.2) dirty?*** *I would like you (.) to be (0.1) mo::re (0.2) tidy? things*
7. *(0.1) and more (.) organise.*
8. I: *I I think I'm tidy enough.*
9. S2: ➔ ***Yea::h but (0.1) it's not that (.) enough? Like (.) compared to me?***
10. I: *Mmm.*
11. S2: *Yes. We're flatmates (0.1) we need to (.) help each other? (0.1) to do the [cleaning]?*
12. I: *[Yeah] but you you leave some*

13. things around as well.
14. S2: (0.3) ye:s
15. I: your cups, (.) your dirty cups?
16. S2: ➔ Yea:::h (0.2) but (0.1) sometimes (.) I'm in a hurry? (0.1) to ( ) to my morning class? So:: it's one cup (0.1) **but**
17. **your things is (.) all over the place.**
18. I: Mmm.
19. S2: ➔ Yea:: (0.1) **especially in the (0.1) bathroom?**
20. I: Mmm.
21. S2: ➔ I think you like (0.2) or maybe you have like (.) hair fallings? I think (.) **you need to do like (0.1) pick up some**
22. **hair** fallings (0.2) from the sinks? so the water not ( ) the sink.
23. I: Mmm. But it's true for your hair too.
24. S2: ➔ But **I'm always cleaning (.) after I finish (.) my shower?** I always (.) clean up.
25. I: (0.2) Mmm. You know I'll try (.) but I think (.) I do sort of clean and try to be tidy.
26. S2: Maybe (0.1) you need to like (.) cleaning maybe (0.2) toilet? (.) maybe three times a month?

A typical feature of B2 participants' speech in D5, involving unequal power constellation, was that the turns often tended to be quite long. For example, in Excerpt 4.22 the participant produces almost a short monologue including the request (line 5), an account (lines 5-6), repetition of the request (lines 6-7) and reason for the request. In addition, even when they provide a problem statement and explanation (lines 16-18) it is unnaturally elaborate.

Excerpt 4.22: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of B2 speech, S<H (ID: S3)

1. S3: Hello=
2. I: Hello
3. S3: =Professor
4. I: How can I help you?
5. S3: ➔ I'd like to ask (0.1) why I got (.) the lower mark? I thought I would get the higher mark (.) because I followed
6. ➔ your instruction (0.1) how it's written on the paper? That's why (0.1) it would be very helpful if you can (0.2)
7. ➔ erm (0.2) if you can say your opinion (0.1) why I get lower mark? And after that I can (.) I can improve (0.1) my
8. essay, for next time.
9. I: Mmm. Okay. I remember your essay (.) quite clearly actually. It wasn't too bad. The main problem was that you
10. forgot to mention (.) two key authors, two key theories. Smith and Jones are basic basic theories in this field (.)
11. and unfortunately you did not mention them.

12. S3: *A::nd do you think it's important for this (.) essay, if I mention these two (0.1) professors, it will (.) I will get the*
13. *better mark?*
14. I: *Erm, yes, definitely in future (.) what you need to do is (.) you need to look at your sources and you have to*
15. *identify which ones are really important and which ones are not so important. So:: you select your sources.*
16. S3: ➔ *Yeah, sometimes it's quite difficult to decide (.) which one is really important (.) and which not because each*
17. ➔ *person is quite different (.) and they have a different opinion (.) on this topic ( ) that's why (.) that's why I maybe*
18. *chose this person a:nd not (.) that person.*

Overall, data showed that B2 participants generally included some preliminary interactional work but the way they structured it at times sounded a bit abrupt, forcing the interlocutor to request repair, or was slightly too prolonged. It was also noted that a number of B2 participants followed their own agenda and seemed to somewhat ignore H's input.

4.1.2.2. C1

Figure 4.6 shows the different features of preliminary interactional work as well as the usage of these features by C1 participants. Overall, it was noted that some kind of pre-expansion had been included by the majority of participants in both tasks, 90% of them included it in D5 and 80% in D6. Noticeably, problem statements were the most widely used preliminary interactional features, 80% of participants including these in both tasks, followed by statements projecting the upcoming request, especially in D5, and accounts somewhat less commonly used.

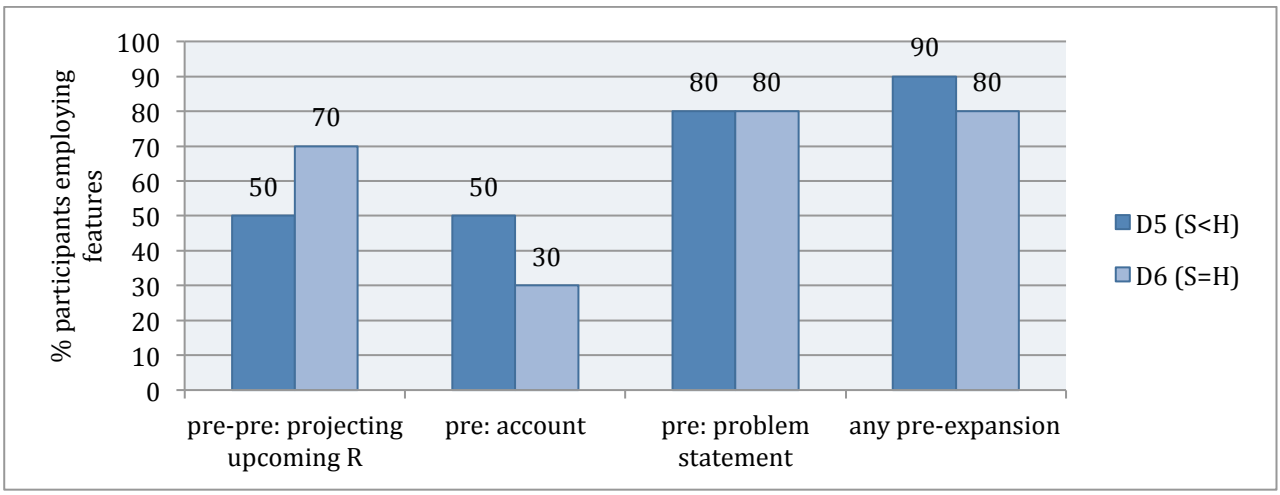

Figure 4.6: Percentage of C1 participants employing preliminary interactional work in dialogic tasks

There was a noticeable difference in the number of turns pre-empting the MR as there were almost twice as many turns used in D6 (mean: 8.2 / median: 7) than in D5 (mean: 4.8 / median 5). This is interesting as the mean identified imposition was, in fact, higher in the latter (i.e. 2.9) than in the former (2.4).

Generally, C1 participants structured their preliminary interactional work smoothly without the interlocutor having to ask for repair. For example, in Excerpt 4.23, the participant opens with a greeting in line 1 and after the go-ahead response produces an apology and projects the upcoming request in line 3 before verbalizing the request (in bold). This is followed by an account and problem statement (line 4) before the request is repeated (in bold) giving this phase some kind of a frame. It is also worth noting how the participant attempted to link their ideas linguistically (highlighted).

Excerpt 4.23: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of C1 speech, S<H (ID: S12)

1. *S12:* *Hello professor Willson.*
2. *I:* *Hi (firstname). How can I help?*
3. *S12:* *I I'm so sorry for bothering you. It's that I saw the marks on my essay a::nd* ***I would like to know why? Because***
4. *I followed all the instructions carefully and I think I (0.1) deserve a (.) higher mark.* ***Why do you think (.) it's***
5. ***not?***

Another example of preliminary interactional work structure is Excerpt 4.24, where the participant opens with a greeting and projects the upcoming request in line 1 and after the go-ahead response produces an account and a problem statement in lines 3-4 and 6-7 before verbalizing the request in line 9. Similarly to Excerpt 4.23, ideas are generally linked linguistically and there are noticeable signs of the participant listening and responding to H when in line 8 the participant refers back to what H had said before verbalising their request.

Excerpt 4.24: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of C1 speech, S=H (ID: S18)

1. S18: *Hey Janet. We need to talk.*
2. *I:* *Yeah? Why?*
3. *S18:* *E::rm we've been living with each other (.) for some time a::nd you never (.) you never do the*

4. *cleaning.*
5. I: *I did it last week.*
6. S18: *Bu::t actually (.) it's still dirty, it's not it's not good enough, I think. You never (.) you never clean up*
7. *the:: erm (.) common area.*
8. I: *But erm as I said, I did it last week.*
9. S18: ➔ *Yeah, I completely understand that, however, erm >could you please< try to do (.) a little bit more (.)*
10. *next time?*

On the whole, the majority of the C1 participants tended to signal that they were listening to their interlocutor and responded to their turns. For example, in Excerpt 4.25, they respond to H's blocking statement in lines 10-11 with a problem statement (line 14) and an account (line 17-18) before closing this phase with reinforcing their request in line 21. Notice the participant's way of showing sensitivity to some of H's turns exhibiting features 'dispreferred' (Schegloff, 2007) responses. For instance, in line 4 H's possible hesitation is understood and responded to by some hedging (i.e. 'erm') in line 5 before extending the idea by giving more specific details, also in line 24 an offer is made in response to H's hesitant response. It is also worth noting that it is the participant to produce a new first pair part in line 21, which introduces a new phase (lines 22-30), namely of trying to solve the issue. However, interestingly, after this introduction it is H who seems to be driving the conversation slightly more by producing a sequence closing third in line 32 and initiates closing the conversation in line 34.

Excerpt 4.25: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of C1 speech, S=H (ID: S16)

1. S16: *Janet, I need to speak with you.*
2. I: *Right?*
3. S16: *E::rm this is something has been bothering me (.) for some time.*
4. I: *Mmm.*
5. S16: *Erm, erm (0.1) I need to talk to you about the kitchen.*
6. I: *Oka::y?*
7. S16: *Erm (0.1) you don't really clean it well. You keep (.) you keep the dirty plates (.) the::re. The foo::d (0.1) on top*
8. *of them (0.1) it dries. You should at least wash it with water a::nd so: it doesn't (.) so if someone wants to use the*
9. *place it doesn't (.) it becomes easier to clean (.) them.*
10. I: *I cleaned last time. You know, last week, I remember I did a big cleaning. I cleaned up here everything that was*
11. *in the kitchen.*

12. S16: *But last wee::k (0.1)=*
13. *I:* *Yeah*
14. S16: ➔ *=But the other days you're (0.1) you're not doing it.*
15. *I:* *But you leave dirty stuff around as well. I saw you leaving your mug and a plate in the kitchen, I don't think it's*
16. *only me.*
17. S16: ➔ *Erm I do clean my stuff bu::t (0.1) ( ) erm I do clean my stuff, I always clean my stuff. That's only when I was*
18. *sick I couldn't, and tired, I couldn't do that but I always clean my stuff.*
19. *I:* *But that's the thing isn't it, that we're both studying (.) and sometimes there're assignments. You're busy, I'm*
20. *busy so:: I do leave stuff around but it's not just me, is it?*
21. S16: ➔ *Yeah (0.1) but I would appreciate it if you (.) give it more effort to do that and clean (0.1) after yourself.*
22. *I:* *Well, you know, I'll try as much as I can but it's (.) sometimes we're so busy and we just have to go to lectures.*
23. *(0.2)*
24. S16: ➔ *Okay, so: (.) how about it we split (.) the work between us?*
25. *I:* *Mmm.*
26. S16: *I could (.) I could do like (.) Monday, Wednesday, Thursday (.) I'll be doing the dishes, and the other days you'll*
27. *be doing it.*
28. *I:* *Oka::y, well, you know we can try, we can try. See how it works.*
29. S16: *And we try to stick to it. And if there's a day that you're busy I can switch with you (0.1) and vice versa.*
30. *I:* *Yeah, that sounds reasonable. I mean I don't want to have a bad relationship so::*
31. S16: *Yeah.*
32. *I:* ➔ *Okay. Why not, let's try and see how it works.*
33. S16: *Okay.*
34. *I:* ➔ *All right. See you then.*
35. S16: *Okay.*

On the other hand, in D5 involving unequal power constellation they were not so prepared to drive the conversation. Overall, most C1 participants tended to confirm their understanding of the interlocutor's explanation for the low mark but seemed to rely on the interlocutor to finalize the issue. They also frequently looked 'backwards' (i.e. explaining why they did/didn't do something) rather than suggesting a solution for the future. For instance, in Excerpt 4.26 the participant confirms their understanding of the problem by re-phrasing the problem statement in line 8 and also adds an account (lines 8-9), thus implying the need for more clarification of the problem. After the interlocutor's elaboration on the problem statement (lines 10-11)

the participant accepts this by referring back to the assignment (line 12) and it is the interlocutor who refers forward and suggests a solution for the future with the next turn (line 14).

Excerpt 4.26: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of C1 speech, S<H (ID: S14)

1.	S14:	*Erm we::ll, erm (0.2) I have followed all the instructions (.) in the assignment bu::t (0.1) and I was expecting a*
2.		*little bit (.) more in the mark that (.) I've got. So:: can you please explain to me (.) based on what criteria you*
3.		*have assessed my my assignment?*
4.	I:	*Well, I actually remember your assignment quite well. Erm you had some some good ideas there, however, there*
5.		*was one big problem with it. You know (.) there're two main theories a::nd two main sources in this field, it's*
6.		*Smith and Jones, and neither of them was mentioned in your assignment. And they're really basic (.) you've (.)*
7.		*everything starts from there.*
8.	S14:➔	*So: it's the (.) basically it's the (I didn't) use those two sources a::nd my:: assignment (.) >I believe that I've*
9.		*found like< (.) better sources than those, that's why I I didn't use them in the first place.*
10.	I:	*Well, you used quite a few, and some of them were good but not as important as these two. So basically you used*
11.		*some, they were good, but not as important as these two.*
12.	S14:	*Okay, I guess that it was my:: (.) research that was a little bit bad, that's why I didn't find those two sources.*
13.		*Yeh.*
14.	I:	*Yeah, so::: in the future you need to consider and maybe prioritise the sources that you're using.*
15.	S14:	*Oka:y. Thank you very much.*
16.	I:	*Is that all right? Does that explain?*
17.	S14:	*Yeah.*
18.	I:	*Okay, all right. All right then.*
19.	S14:	*See ya.*

Overall, C1 participants provided a mostly structured preliminary interactional phase leading up to the MR and they also generally responded to H's input. In terms of driving the conversation, they seemed to be more in control in D6 involving unequal power constellation, while in D5 they relied more on the interlocutor in this regard.

4.1.2.3. C2

Figure 4.7 elaborates on the usage of preliminary interactional features by C2 participants. Overall, it was noted that almost all the participants included some kind of preliminary interactional work in both tasks, 100% of them included it in D5 and 90% in D6. Problem statements and accounts were both widely used preliminary interactional features, whilst statements projecting the upcoming request were used slightly less often.

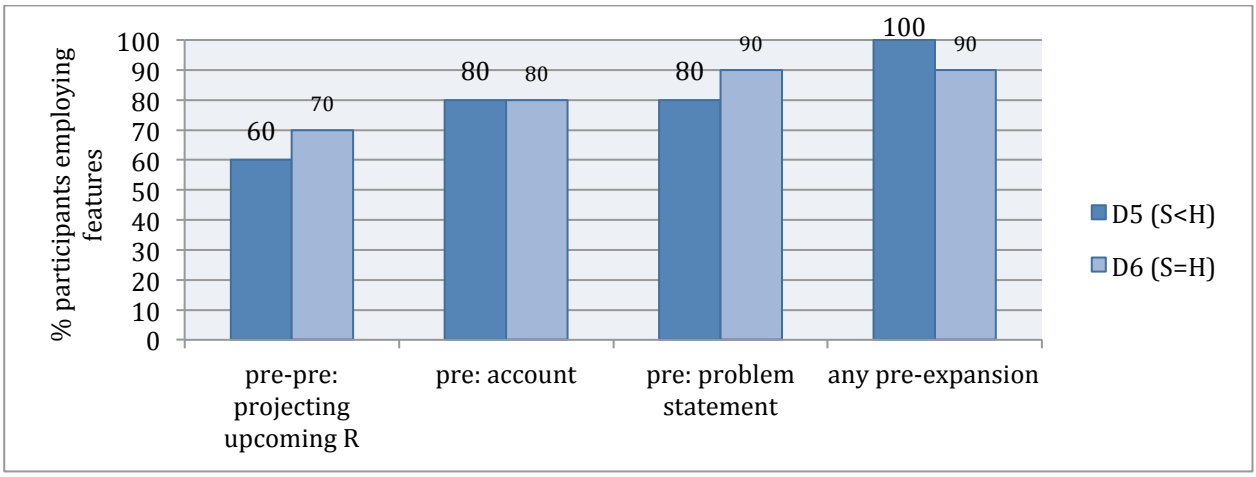

Figure 4.7: Percentage of C2 participants employing preliminary interactional work in dialogic tasks

Regarding the number of turns leading up to the MR, there was a significant difference between the two tasks, with the number of turns being almost three times as many in D6 (mean: 11.2 / median: 8 see Table 4.2 at the start of this section) than in D5 (mean: 4 / median: 4). However, SD in the former task (i.e. 9.727) indicates that there were substantial differences between participants. Nevertheless, the tendency to use more turns was noticeable across the whole level.

Generally, C2 participants structured preliminary interactional work quite naturally in both tasks. A typical example of C2 speech production is Excerpt 4.27, where the participant opens the conversation with a greeting and a pre-pre (line 1). After the go-ahead response a problem statement is produced in line 6, which is followed by the actual request (lines 6-7) and an account (lines 7-8) to back up the request. The speech is quite naturally linked using conjunctions (lines 6-7 in yellow).

Excerpt 4.27: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of C2 speech, S<H (ID: S29)

1.	S29:	*Hi professor Willson. >I was wondering if you have a couple of minutes to talk to me<*
2.		*about the (.) assignment tha::t (.) we had to give in=*
3.	I:	*Yea:::h, okay.*
4.	S29:	*=yesterday.*
5.	I:	*Of course. Go ahead.*
6.	S29:	*So:: I I've noticed that you gave me a:: (0.1) pretty low mark? A:nd >I was just kind of*
7.		*wondering<why that is (0.1) as I:: do think that I've kind of ( ) all the instructions*
8.		*that you gave us? [So:::]*
9.	I:	*[Mmm]*
10.	S29:	*Did I go:: (.) did I do something wrong? Did I not follow the right instructions o::r (0.2)*

Another example of this is Excerpt 4.28, where the participant opens the conversation with a greeting and after the go-ahead response continues with a pre-pre in line 3 and a problem statement in lines 3, 4 and 6. This is followed by an account in line 6 and some kind of 'face-work', showing sympathy for H's situation, in lines 7 and 9, before verbalizing the request in lines 12, 13 and 15.

Excerpt 4.28: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of C2 speech, S=H (ID: S22)

1.	S22:	*So: Janet.*
2.	I:	*Yeah?*
3.	S22:	*We've been living together since erm a couple of months now and erm I've started to notice that (0.1) ou::r*
4.		*bathroom, as well as the kitchen,=*
5.	I:	*Mmm.*
6.	S22:	*=have been kind of (.) left untidy after you've used them, which I've picked up the ( ) and cleaned them for now,*
7.		*which is okay*
8.	I:	*yes?*
9.	S22:	*because we both come from different backgrounds and different (0.1) I guess we're raised differently, but in the*
10.		*future I'd like to, if it continues, (0.1) I guess erm (0.1) the accommodation o::r*
11.	I:	*yes.*
12.	S22:	*living conditions (.) >I'd like you to< (.) how about a little more (.) or even institute a plan in when and where*
13.		*somebody should e::rm=*
14.	I:	*mmm*
15.	S22:	*=clean the communal areas?*

In terms of responding to H's input, C2 participants generally tended to show they were listening to the interlocutor by frequently rephrasing what they needed to do as well as by using phrases to confirm understanding, such as 'that makes sense'. For example, in Excerpt 4.29 the participant confirms their understanding of the interlocutor's explanation by simple phrases in line 11 (*Oh, fair enough)* and 16 (*that makes sense, yes)*, while in line 13 and 23 they rephrase the explanation.

Excerpt 4.29: Disappointment with essay result, sample of C2 speech, S<H (ID: S22)

1.	S22:	*Mrs Willson. I was very surprised on (.) receiving the grade for this (0.1) recent essay (.) or exam a::nd*
2.		*>I would just like to< (0.2) be (0.1) given some reasons or justifications on ( ) (.) why this low mark was*
3.		*achieved.*
4.	I:	*Mmm. Okay. Well, I remember your essay, and actually it wasn't (0.1) very (.) bad at all. You know, you had*
5.		*some good ideas in there, however, there was one big problem with it. You know in this field (.) there are two*
6.		*main theories, two main [authors]=*
7.	S22:	*[Mmm]*
8.	I:	*=that you need to mention because they're basic, it's Smith and [Jones]=*
9.	S22:	*[okay]*
10.	I:	*=erm basically in your work you didn't mention them, neither of them (.) and that was the biggest problem.*
11.	S22: ➔	*Oh, fair enough.*
12.	I:	*Mmm. Okay. So, does that help?*
13.	S22: ➔	*Sure it helps. I mean the (0.1) (I must) state the obvious. If it was the central part of giving a good answer then*
14.		*(0.1) I obviously missed on (.) mentioning them.*
15.	I:	*Yeah, that's right. So: in future you need to prioritise your [sources]=*
16.	S22: ➔	*[Okay,] that makes sense, yes.*
17.	I:	*=<I would say>. Okay, all right. Is that all? Can I help you with anything [else]?*
18.	S22:	*[Do you] have any other (.) feedback*
19.		*on the work I've given?*
20.	I:	*No, no, it's fine. I mean you've done quite a bit of research, I can see you've read around so you're in=*
21.	S22:	*Yes*
22.	I:	*=so you're aware of a lot of [areas]*
23.	S22: ➔	*[so] most of the deduction was given ( )*
24.	I:	*yes, that's right*
25.	S22:	*okay*

26. I: *it was*
27. S22: *( ) mentioned*
28. I: *okay, so yeah, my only suggestion is for future to (.) prioritise your sources.*
29. S22: ➔ *Yeah, that makes sense. Well, thank you.*
30. I: *You're welcome. Bye.*

Another noticeable feature of many conversations at this level was that as well as showing their understanding of the given clarification most C2 participants also developed the conversation further by producing a new first pair part (FPP) based on this clarification. For example, they often initiated a solution for future, rather than waiting for the interlocutor to finalize the issue or make suggestions. Interestingly, this was the case in both tasks including equal and unequal power constellation, which distinguished C2 participants from C1 participants who tended to control the conversation only in an equal social context. For example, in Excerpt 4.30 after acknowledging (line 9) the explanation given by the interlocutor (lines 6-8), using similar phrases/strategy (i.e. 'that's completely understandable') as the participant in Excerpt 4.29 (i.e. 'that makes sense'), they produce another first pair part in the form of another request in line 9-10 and another in lines 15-16. Also notice how H's contribution in line 14 was extended by the participant when after thanking H they asked for H's help in future when deciding the value of sources (lines 15-16).

Excerpt 4.30: D5 - Disappointment with essay result, sample of C2 speech, S<H (ID: S24)

1. S24: *Excuse me professor. Do you think you have a minute to discuss my essay?*
2. I: *Yes.*
3. S24: *Becau::se I had a really ( ) time writing it and I thought I did really well so:: I was really disappointed with my*
4. *grade, and >I was just wondering if you could tell me< what I did wrong o::r have (another) chance to rewrite*
5. *it?*
6. I: *Well, erm, I remember your essay. You had some really good ideas but unfortunately you forgot to mention one*
7. *crucial author a::nd his theory in this field, a::nd that was the biggest problem. I mean (.) it's basic, his ideas*
8. *are basic in this field so::*
9. S24: ➔ *Okay, all right. That's completely understandable to me. Do you think in that case (.) you could maybe give me*
10. *another chance (.) to rewrite the essay using that theory?*
11. I: *Well, unfortunately, it's all been finalised now (.) the marks all the marks, however, it's not the end of your*
12. *course. You know, you could still work on it (.) and in future, I would say, just prioritise your sources.*
13. S24: *Okay.*

14. I: *You know, who is important, who isn't so important.*
15. S24: ➔ *Okay. Thank you for the feedback, and next time maybe I can come to you before (.) >if that would be possible*
16. *for me< to:: really decide on the authors (I should) mention?*
17. I: *Of course, feel free to do so.*
18. S24: *Okay.*

Another generally common feature of C2 speech in this task was the way they often softened their approach after listening to the interlocutor and perhaps responded to their sensitivity. For instance, in Excerpt 4.31 after projecting the upcoming request in line 3 the participant produced hedging and a number of 'face saving' statements in lines 5 and 10 even before verbalising the request. Notice how these utterances often follow turns that exhibit features of 'dispreferred' responses on H's part (Schegloff, 2007): delay through hesitation (lines 9, 14: 'Mmm' were identified as hesitation marker rather than response token here as the following turn e.g. 'this is not a criticism' seemed to indicate that the participant also judged them to be sign of hesitation before a 'dispreferred' response) and account giving a reason for the disagreement (line 19). Subsequently, the participant produced a problem statement in lines 15-17, which utterance was possibly meant to be an implied request. It is interesting to note the existence of another softening expression following this in line 17-18. When this implied request was blocked the participant responded by accepting their own responsibility in line 20 by saying *'I'm not saying I'm clean'* and made a polite request in line 23 (i.e. *'please bring that to my notice'*), which possibly served the purpose of encouraging cooperation and joint future action.

Excerpt 4.31: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of C2 speech, S=H (ID: S26)

1. S26: *Janet e::rm*
2. I: *Yes?*
3. S26: *Can I talk to you in private?*
4. I: *Yeah, of course.*
5. S26: ➔ *Erm (0.1) please this is no offence (0.1) a::nd you're my friend a::nd erm now we're living together as*
6. *[flatmates]=*
7. I: *[Mmm.]*
8. S26: *=and I just have some concerns (0.1) relating to the flat where we're living.*
9. I: *Mmm.*

10. S26: ➔ *Erm >this is not criticism< as I said to you. It's (0.2) just so that we can live as good people in a (mutual) way*
11. *the respectful [way]=*
12. I: *[Okay]*
13. S26: *=dignified way. Or more importantly (.) hygiene problems healthwise.*
14. I: *Mmm.*
15. S26: ➔ *I noticed you don't clean after yourself, after you've used the kitchen. And I noticed (0.2) (in) the kitchen*
16. *sometimes (.) when you cook (.) things are not properly cleaned? And you left things on the ( ) not washed a:nd*
17. *(0.2) jam could spread all over the kitchen? So:: I I'm not criticizing you, I just thought I should bring that to*
18. *your notice?*
19. I: *I I think it's not just my dirty dishes actually. It's yours' too, I mean I've seen you leaving some stuff around.*
20. S26: ➔ *Yea::h (0.1) erm (0.1) unless you (set) one or two examples because (0.1) I (.) I'm not saying I'm clean but I like*
21. *cleaning after I've used things.*
22. I: *Mmm.*
23. S26: ➔ *So:: maybe next time (.) please bring that to my notice.*
24. I: *Mmm.*

Also in Excerpt 4.32, after a fairly prolonged greeting phase (lines 1-6) and hedging *(*Line 7: *'Okay. All right. E:rm I'm about to say something not very nice. I hope you don't mind. E:::rm),* potentially used as mitigation before a request that is likely to be dispreferred by H, the participant produces an account and a problem statement in lines 8-9 before verbalizing the actual request in line 10. After the interlocutor's insert expansion of blocking the request (lines 12-13), the participant provides an acknowledgement of a common human attitude as a potential face-saving device (line 14 – *'I'm sure we we all (.) do that'*) before adjusting the request slightly and proposing a possible collaborative action (line 15). Similarly, after a hesitant response by H to a suggestion in line 29, the participant re-states the request in a much softer way in line 30, again expressing it as a mutual concern/action by using the pronoun 'we', and continues emphasizing collaboration by expressing appreciation and future benefits of such cooperation (line 35-36), if the proposition is accepted. Notice the number of overlaps in speech also indicating collaboration.

Excerpt 4.32: D6 - Problem with flatmate, sample of C2 speech, S=H (ID: S30)

1. S30: *Hi Janet.*
2. I: *Hi.*
3. S30: *How are you today?*

4. I: Not too bad. Yourself?

5. S30: Not bad as well. How's how's your classes?

6. I: Yeah, yeah great. Fairly busy but yeah, they're great.

7. S30: ➔ Okay. All right. E:rm I::: (0.1) I'm about to say something not very nice. I hope you don't mind. E:::rm I:::'m

8. primarily (.) a person who's quite erm quite obsessed with cleaning. Erm and I find that e::rm erm some of the

9. communal areas that we share in this <a::re a little bit untidy>? So::: I in (.) it's been sort of going on for for

10. quite a few months now so:: >I was wondering whether< you:: (.) could (0.1) help (0.1) doing something about

11. it?

12. I: Well, you know, I did I did some cleaning last week for (.) you know. Quite a bit of cleaning, erm a:nd erm I

13. don't think it's just me. I mean I've seen you leaving dirty dishes [around].

14. S30: ➔ [Yeah], no no no. I'm sure we we all (.) do

15. that. But >I was just wondering whether we could< (.) maybe (.) sort of e::rm (0.2) make an effort together and

16. maybe (.) work out a [schedule]=

17. I: [Mmm]

18. S30: =so that this place (.) can be kept (.) cleaner.

19. I: Mmm

20. S30: It's really for for the comfort [of]=

21. I: [Mmm]

22. S30: =Both of us.

23. I: Yeah, I I know I mean I don't want to have a bad relationship because of [this]=

24. S30: [Mmm]

25. I: =but I also know, okay, schedule is fine, but you know how busy we are, you [know],=

26. S30: [mmm]

27. I: =with assignments and all sorts of [things]=

28. S30: [okay]

29. I: =a::nd erm so I don't know how that would work. I mean (0.2)

30. S30: ➔ E::rm >would you mind giving it a try<? We could (.) just just draft a a schedule and see how it works, whether

31. it works. If if it [doesn't] =

32. I: [Mmm]

33. S30: =then we can work out something else maybe?

34. I: Okay, we::ll, you know, we can try and see:: [( )]

35. S30: ➔ [I really] appreciate it. Because, yeah it'll (.) I think it'll just make the

36. place much nicer and we'll [enjoy]=

37. I: [Yeah, yeah]

38. S30: =living here more.

39. I: *Okay, yeah, okay. Let's see how it works.*

40. S30: *Okay. Thank you very much.*

Overall, data showed that C2 participants structure their speech fairly smoothly providing ample preliminary interactional work that leads to the MRs. They also show they are listening to H not only by responding accordingly but also by showing sensitivity to H's feelings by softening their approach/language. In addition, they tend to control the conversation more in both power constellations by producing more first pair parts, thus looking ahead rather than waiting for H to initiate.

4.1.2.4 Comparison of preliminary interactional work in speech at B2-C2 levels in dialogic tasks

The present data indicated that similarly to the monologic tasks C2 participants tended to be the most consistent in using preliminary interactional work in both tasks (Figures 4.8, 4.9) with more C2 participants including pre-pres, accounts, problem statements than C1 but especially B2 participants. This supports Al-Gahtani's and Roever's (2012) as well as Hassall's (2013) findings, namely that the amount and sequencing of pre-expansion differentiates between L2 proficiency levels, with more proficient learners employing more pre-expansion and first-pair-parts, thus being more active in driving the conversation. Youn (2015) also found a similar increasing trend in pre-expansion when analysing L2 speech produced in role-plays and noted that low intermediate level participants frequently launched into the request sequence rather abruptly. The same trend was noted in B2 level participants' speech in the present study, which contained somewhat less preparation preceding the request, such as ascertaining H's availability or providing an account, than C1 and especially C2 speech. It might be assumed that B2 speakers were simply unaware of the necessity of such groundwork, however, as some other research highlight (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012; Hassal, 2013), the presence of some degree of pre-expansion in less proficient L2 speakers' speech demonstrate that they are aware of the need for groundwork before a request is made but their proficiency may be a hindrance to act upon this knowledge. Lack of proficiency also results in cognitive overload for less proficient L2 speakers in face-to-face interaction, as both receptive and productive skills are called upon at the same time when structuring speech and they are less able to access their existing pragmatic knowledge in real time

(Bialystok, 1993). Thus, lower proficiency combined with less cognitive capacity left to focus on pragmatic features may explain the greater difficulties B2 participants were experiencing when structuring speech in dialogic tasks.

In addition, it is also worth noting that the amount of preliminary interactional work differed slightly in the two tasks at all three levels in my data, with slightly more preliminary interactional work included in D6 than in D5. This might indicate that learners at these levels do consider the given social context and may act differently depending on their evaluation of the context. Indeed, in the subsequent interview participants at all three levels referred to the serious consequences of their actions in D6 (S=H). Comments included, for instance, '*close relationship affects life*' (ID: S6 / B2), '*have to live with her*' (ID: S15 / C1) and '*The task is not imposing but the consequences can be damaging. How the flatmate interprets it can be imposing*' (ID: S30 / C2). Perhaps there is a case to argue that the amount of preliminary interactional work frequently depends on the given social context. Therefore, investigating the amount of preliminary interactional work in L2 learners' speech should be combined with investigating their evaluation of the given social context before drawing conclusions about pragmatic competence.

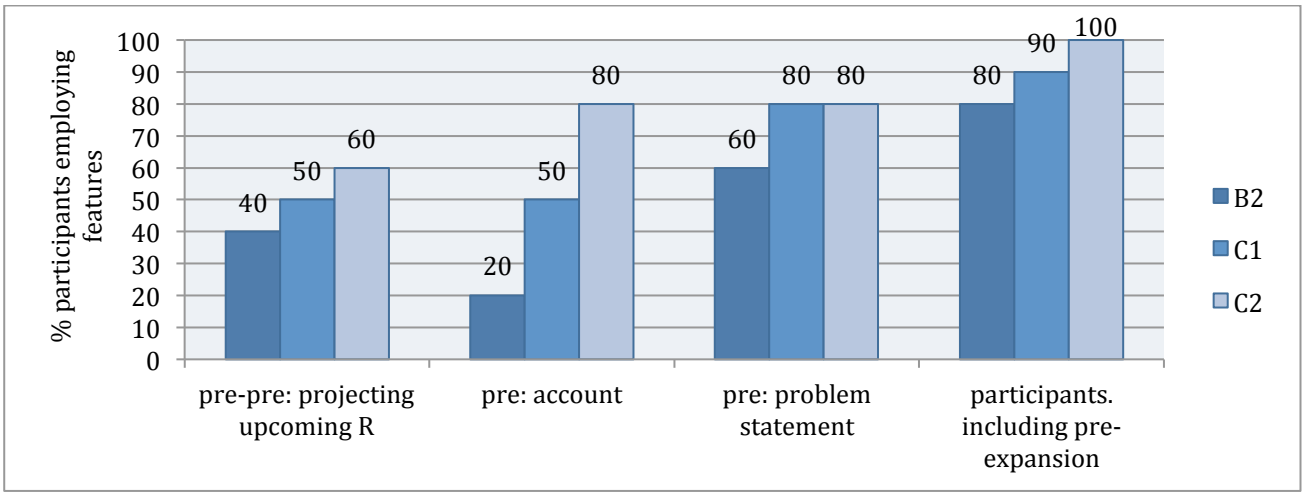

Figure 4.8: Percentage of participants including features of preliminary interactional work in D5

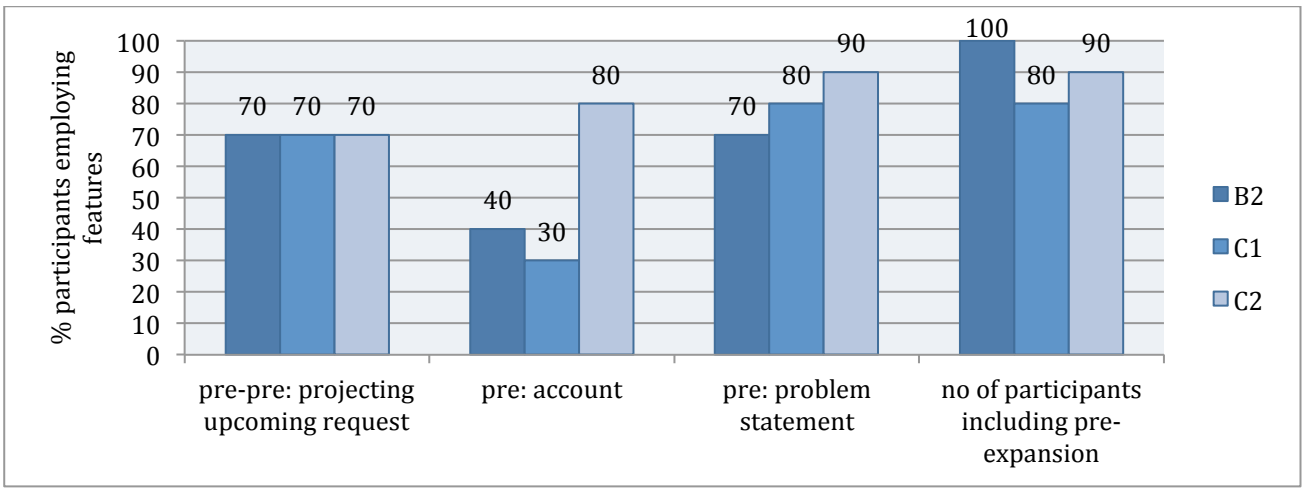

Figure 4.9: Percentage of participants including features of preliminary interactional work in D6

In terms of the amount of speech produced, C2 participants produced the most in both tasks, followed by C1 and B2 participants (Figure 4.10). Median numbers also show a gradual increase of speech production with proficiency in both task, however, SD indicates that there were some differences in individual performances at each level (Table 4.5). There was a difference in speech division in D6 as all participants took on a leading role and produced almost three times as much speech as the interlocutor. This was possibly an indication of their evaluation of the context (i.e. equal power constellation, asking interlocutor to perform their wish), which perhaps prompted participants to be the initiator in the conversation. On the other hand, in D5 it was only C2 participants who produced slightly more speech than the interlocutor. This might perhaps indicate that they felt either more competent linguistically or confident socially to discuss the issue at hand (i.e. why their mark was low) in the given power constellation (i.e. S<H).

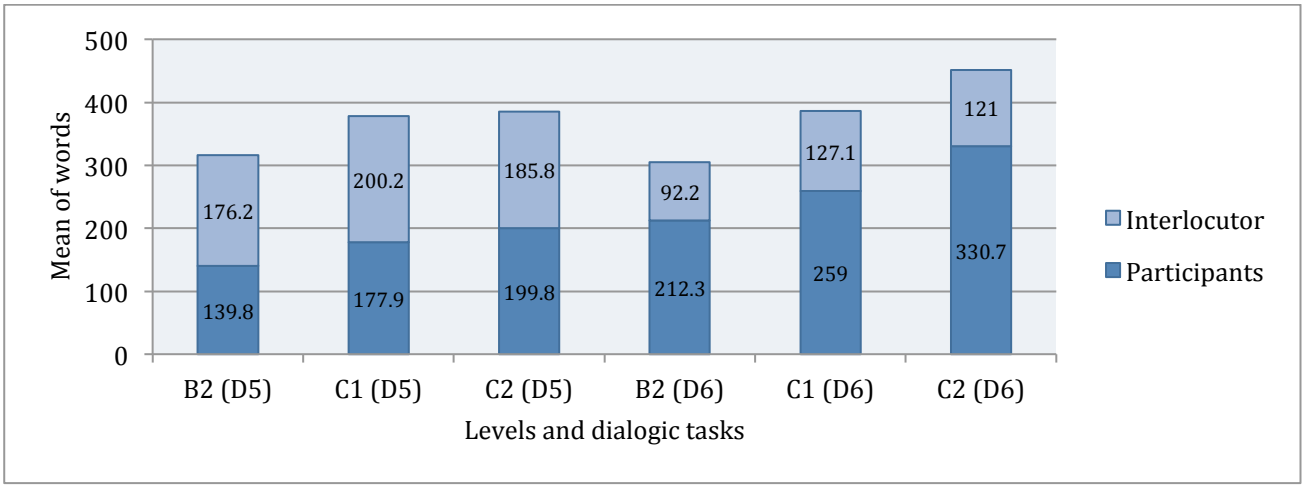

Figure 4.10: Mean of words produced per person in dialogic tasks

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics of words produced in dialogic tasks

	D5		*D6*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	139.8 / 126	55.944	212.3 / 202	67.790
C1	177.9 / 152.5	92.342	259 / 240.5	75.483
C2	199.8 / 188.5	72.336	330.7 / 303	83.06

The conversations produced for D5 were generally similar at each level in terms of the number of turns (leading up to the MR) produced (Table 4.6), although it was noted that C2 participants produced slightly fewer turns (mean: 4 / median: 4) than their B2 (mean: 4.4. / median 5) or C1 (mean: 4.8 / median: 5) counterparts. This is interesting, considering the fact that they, in fact, produced the most speech in this task. When closer examining speech production it seems that, compared to D6, turns in this task were slightly longer at each level. Turns still included the necessary preliminary interactional features (e.g. problem statement, account) but in one turn rather than across several turns, and participants tended to verbalize their request fairly early on. The given context may perhaps be an explanation of this phenomenon as professors (i.e. H's given role) are generally busy, and according to Grice's (1975) co-operative principle of manner one needs to be brief, I would argue, especially in such context. Conversely, in D6 (S=H) there seemed to be a noticeable increase with increasing proficiency in the number of shorter turns taken to reach the actual request (Table 4.6). This is consistent with some other research findings. For example, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) observed that high intermediate level learners produced longer utterances than advanced level learners, which observation was also confirmed by Faerch and Kasper (1989) and House and Kasper (1987). Similarly, Galaczi (2014) also found that more proficient learners used more frequent shorter turns and suggests that the frequency and length of turn may relate to L2 development. Whilst this is probably true, I would also add that the length of turns could also be influenced by the given task context. For example, when speakers are in a hurry or are talking to someone busy (e.g. bus driver, busy shop assistant), requests are often verbalised without too much delay and pragmatically competent speakers are able to make informed decisions regarding the number of turns to be used before uttering the proposition. The present data could be an indication that C2 level learners may have somewhat more freed up cognitive capacity to better adhere to this aspect of interactions. In other words, if a given situation is considered possibly 'face-threatening' higher proficiency L2 speakers may make a conscious decision to opt for a more cautious

approach regarding structuring their discourse using several shorter turns. It is believed that this should be considered when assessing pragmatic competence.

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics of turns leading up to the MR in dialogic tasks

	D5		*D6*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	4.4 / 5	2.503	6.2 / 3	5.432
C1	4.8 / 5	3.326	8.2 / 7	6.477
C2	4 / 4	3.018	11.2 / 8	9.727

When analysing the total number of turns employed by participants, the present data clearly shows that with increasing proficiency there was a noticeable increase in turn taking in both tasks (Table 4.7). For example, in D6 the mean of turns was 11.2 (median 10) at B2, 13 (median 12.5) at C1 and 15.8 (median 16) at C2. It is worth noting that there was hardly any difference between the two tasks in this regard and participants at each level produced generally similar number of turns in both contexts. For example, at B2 the mean of turns was 11.6 (median 10.5) in D5, whilst it was 11.2 (median 10) in D6. However, it needs to be admitted that SD also increased slightly with proficiency indicating that at higher levels there were bigger individual differences in this respect.

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics of total turns taken by participants in dialogic tasks

	D5		*D6*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	11.6 / 10.5	3.627	11.2 / 10	3.705
C1	12 / 10	6.218	13 / 12.5	2.867
C2	15.5 / 12.5	8.553	15.8 / 16	5.329

Finally, it was noted that C1 and C2 participants tended to show they were listening and responded more to the interlocutor's turns. They also displayed more empathy and sensitivity to H's perspective. This is very much in line with other research (e.g. Youn, 2013; Youn, 2015; Ikeda, 2017). Youn (2015), for instance, noticed the same trend when examining different proficiency ESL learners' speech production in role-play tasks. In her data, more advanced participants hedged more (e.g. by utterances such as 'ah' or a long pause) in contexts viewed as problematic. Likewise, Ikeda (2017) observed utterances by advanced participants implying that the given concern was mutual between the interlocutors in order to prompt collaboration and

show sensitivity to H. In the present data C2 speakers also employed a number of longer expressions (e.g. 'Okay, that makes sense.'; 'That's completely understandable.'), especially after H's 'dispreferred' responses (Schegloff, 2007), for the same purpose. C1 and C2 participants were also better able to build on H's turns by, for example, giving more specific details, thus consistent with other research findings (e.g. Lam, 2018; Galaczi, 2014).

4.1.3. Comparison of preliminary interactional work in speech at B2-C2 levels in the two task formats

Based on the data gathered, a number of observations have been highlighted regarding features of elaboration in speech across the different tasks:

- Regarding preliminary interactional work, it was noted that overall there was a gradual increase in the amount of preliminary interactional work employed with increasing proficiency in both task formats. It was also highlighted that C2 participants tended to use preliminaries to preliminaries or pre-pres (Schegloff, 2007) to project the upcoming request most consistently followed by C1 and B2 participants.
- In terms of structuring speech, data showed that more proficient learners were better able to link their ideas linguistically with the use of conjunctions in both task formats. Perhaps this is expected as it could be assumed that more advanced learners would have had more input and practice in the use of conjunctions. Besides, as Field (2011, p.97) argues, cognitive capacity increases with proficiency and, as a result, more advanced learners are more capable of planning ahead both conceptually and linguistically.
- Analyzing speech production in dialogic tasks revealed some interesting pragmatic abilities. The data indicated that not only did speech production and the number of turns employed increase with proficiency but C2 level learners also seemed to better adjust the number of turns necessary before the request verbalization according to the given context, as they tended to employ more turns in situations considered face threatening.
- Speech produced for dialogic tasks also gave an insight into another area of pragmatic competency, namely being able to listen and respond to H. While a number of conversations at B2 showed a

parallel pattern of interaction (Galaczi, 2008), where speakers seemed to follow their own plan and ignored H's input/response, conversations at C1 and C2 revealed a much more collaborative design. For instance, C1 speakers often signaled their understanding (e.g. 'okay'; 'yeah but') and C2 speakers went even further by also showing sensitivity to H's input (e.g. 'I'm not criticizing you.'; 'I'm not saying I'm clean.'). Interestingly, this feature of 'talking at' and 'talking to' H has also been noted in assessment context and test takers' ability to involve others in the conversation affected raters' evaluation positively (May, 2011, p.137). May (2011) went even further and suggested that responding to the partner was a sign of understanding, thus, provided proof of their listening comprehension. Whilst this claim may have some merit, a word of caution is necessary as in some cases the ability to listen and respond in a cooperative manner might also be an individual trait or perhaps conscious decision rather than a sign of interactional competence. Indeed, even L1 speakers' responses may contribute to a parallel pattern of interaction in some cases, which is unlikely to be an indication of their lack of comprehension.

4.2 Pragmalinguistic devices

Table 4.8 and 4.9 contains the overall descriptive statistics (per person per task), including mean (M) median (med.) and standard deviation (SD), of pragmalinguistic device use in both task formats at each level. The data shows that a range of pragmalinguistic devices, including different syntactic forms (Table 4.8) as well as lexical/phrasal modifiers (Table 4.9), has been employed to a greater or lesser degree at each level. In terms of syntactic forms, it is worth noting that B2 participants equally frequently used interrogatives and conditionals, while C1 and C2 participants' preferred choice of syntactic forms were conditional structures. Imperatives, on the other hand, were rare at each level. With regards to lexical/phrasal modifier use, B2 participants seemed to produce the fewest of these in almost all categories, C2 participants produced the most, while C1 usage was at times similar to B2 (e.g. in using hedgers and understaters) and at other times to C2 usage (e.g. using downtoners). Increasing standard deviation figures also imply that there was greater variation amongst advanced learners in terms of lexical/phrasal modification use. However, this was expected as not only was their speech production greater than their B2 counterparts but they were also likely

to be in possession of a wider linguistic repertoire, based on which more individual pragmalinguistic choices could be made with regard to the extent of modification.

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics of syntactic forms in all tasks

	SYNTACTIC FORMS ACROSS TASKS							
	interrogatives		*conditionals*		*statements*		*imperatives*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	.38 / .16	.18	.38 / .16	.22	.3 / .16	.16	.15 / 0	.11
C1	.3 / 0	.18	.41 / .16	.17	.21 / .08	.12	.18 / 0	.11
C2	.16 / 0	.11	.61 / .33	.24	.2 / 0	.12	.05 / 0	.08

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifiers in all tasks

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE ACROSS TASKS													
	upgraders		*hedgers*		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	1.3 / .5	.56	.1 / 0	.1	.25 / 0	.26	.06 / 0	.06	.55 / .25	.17	.6 / .16	.29	.16 / 0	.16
C1	2.46 / 1.16	.62	.38 / .08	.31	.48/ .16	.23	.01 / 0	.03	.63 / .33	.25	1.41 / .66	.71	.61 / .16	.35
C2	3.51 / 1.5	1.14	1.21 / .5	.54	.25 / 0	.17	.28 / .08	.18	.78 / .33	.34	1.58 / .66	.72	.58 / .08	.48

Opening and closing forms, as exemplified through the excerpts in section 4.1, were generally used appropriately at all levels. However, in the monologic tasks a few B2 participants addressed H or closed the conversation in S<H power constellation tasks slightly less appropriately as the form was either more typical in written style (e.g. *'Dear Taylor…Best regards.')* or was slightly awkward *(e.g. 'Hello Taylor.'*), but this trend was not consistent across the whole level. No C1 or C2 participant displayed similar trends in either openings or closing and some of the C2 participants even used a more elaborate closing formula occasionally (e.g. '*I'm sorry for any inconvenience this might have caused.'*). These findings are consistent with Takenoya's (2003), who investigated the production of address forms amongst American learners of Japanese using DCTs, and found that although higher proficiency learners were more competent in this respect, the difference was not significant.

The following section will provide the quantitative findings and analysis of pragmalinguistic devices first in monologic tasks (section 4.2.1) then in dialogic tasks (section 4.2.2) in order to answer RQ1.2, RQ2 and RQ3. The section concludes with an overall comparison and discussion of pragmalinguistic devices in the two task formats in section 4.2.3.

4.2.1 Pragmalinguistic Devices: Task and Level Comparison in Monologic Tasks *(RQ1.2, RQ2, RQ3)*

The purpose of this section is to provide the quantitative analysis of participants' speech production in monologic tasks. Findings regarding the use of syntactic forms followed by lexical/phrasal modifiers at each level are described first. The section concludes with a comparison and discussion of the findings regarding pragmalinguistic device use across levels. For the definition of each pragmatic device and the ways in which these devices were selected for this research, see Sections 3.3.4 and 3.2.2 respectively.

4.2.1.1 B2

Syntactic forms

The syntactic formulation of the MRs in monologic tasks showed some variation at B2 (Figure 4.11). Data shows that conditional structures were the most widely used with 40% of the MRs containing them, followed by interrogatives (e.g. Can you clean more?) and statements (e.g. You need to clean more.) with 25% each. The least commonly used syntactic forms were imperatives (e.g. Clean more.). However, the mean and SD statistics (per person per task) for each syntactic form (Table 4.10) indicate that there were at times noticeable individual differences (e.g. interrogatives, imperatives).

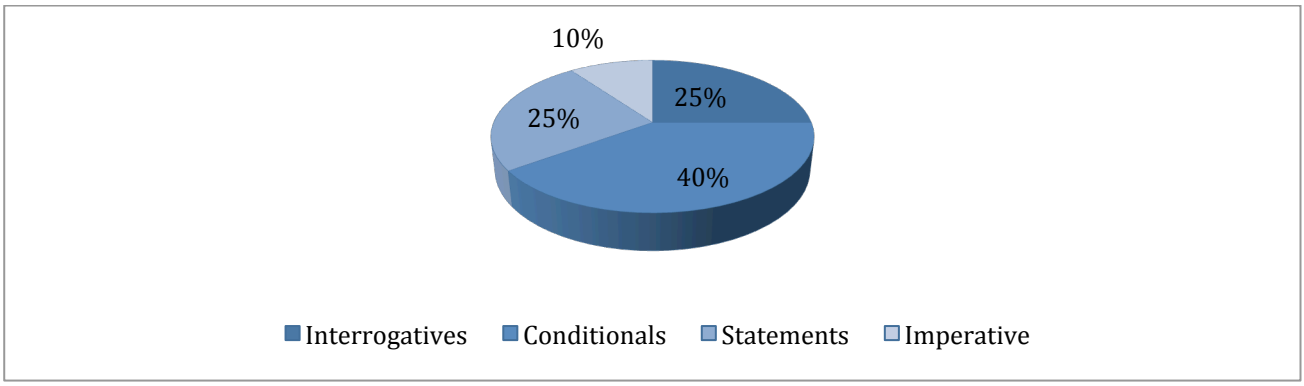

Figure 4.11: Division of syntactic forms in monologic task MRs at B2

Table 4.10: Descriptive statistics of syntactic forms in all tasks (per person per task)

	SYNTACTIC FORMS IN MONOLOGIC TASK MRs AT B2			
	interrogatives	*conditionals*	*statements*	*imperatives*
Mean	.3	.5	.37	.12
Median	.25	.5	.25	0
SD	.3	.33	.24	.17

Figure 4.12 shows the distribution of these forms in each monologic task. For example, in M1 45% of MRs were formulated by interrogatives, another 45% by conditional structures and 10% of them involved statements. In order to hypothesize about how goal oriented the use of these structures may have been in the different tasks a number of observations can be made based on the data.

- Imperatives were mostly employed in M2 where participants had to ask H to perform a wish (i.e. complete the slides for the group presentation). Thus, although the social constellation was equal (S=H) the power constellation may have been evaluated as unequal (S>H) by participants, which perhaps prompted them to be more forceful with their language choice. On the other hand, the mean imposition identified for this task was almost the same (2.7 see Table 4.2) as for M1 (2.8) or M4 (4) and higher than M3 (2), which would seem to contradict the previous assumption.
- Conditionals were generally widely used in all four monologic tasks. The highest percentage of MRs were formed with their use in M3 (40%) and M4 (42%), while in M1 they were employed to the same extent as interrogatives (45%) and in M2 to the same degree as statements and imperatives (31%). Thus, it seems that overall this structure was B2 participants' preferred choice of syntactic forms but they appeared to make some conscious decisions regarding the usage of these structures depending on their own assessment of the given context.
- Statements rarely appeared in M1 involving unequal power constellation but, surprisingly, used frequently (i.e. by 33% of the participants) in M3 with the same power constellation.
- Interrogatives were generally used in all tasks apart from M2 where participants had to ask H to perform a wish (i.e. complete the slides for the group presentation). This again may be an indication of at least some conscious decision-making regarding syntactic choices amongst B2 participants.

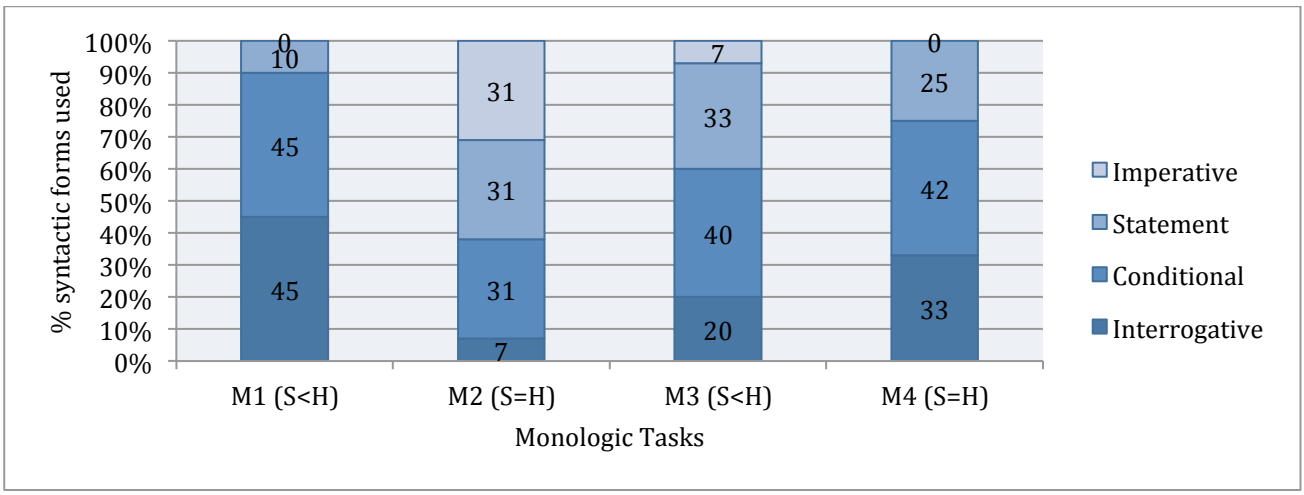

Figure 4.12: Distribution of syntactic forms in MRs at B2

Lexical and phrasal modifiers

The present data also shows that alongside selected syntactic forms a range of lexical and phrasal upgraders/downgraders was employed not only in MRs but also in other utterances that appeared to have the force of a request or apology or utterances that seemed to have an impact on reinforcing or softening the impact of the MR. For example, the phrase 'it really help me (.) if you told me (.) your opinion' (ID: S3) seemed to be used in the given context as a reason for the MR whilst referring to implied future consequences (i.e. 'I'll be able to write a better essay in future') and the intensifier 'really' was likely to be used in this case to increase the impact of the MR. Moving from the leftmost column to the right, Table 4.11 gives the lexical/phrasal modifier categories (for the definition of each category, see section 3.3.4 and Appendix 10) while the row beneath indicates whether the figures below refer to the quantity of modifiers in MRs or all SAs (i.e. here: all request, apology and thank you forms; as defined in Section 3.3.4). The next four rows show the mean occurrence per person in each monologic task and the last row presents the mean occurrence per person per task. According to the figures, hedgers alongside subjectivizers (e.g. I wonder) and cajolers (e.g. You know) were the least used or frequently omitted, while the other modifiers were employed to a somewhat greater extent.

The quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers employed in MRs and their quantity in all the SAs shows some similarities.

- Politeness markers (e.g. please) and downtoners (e.g. possibly) appeared in all tasks but, interestingly, mostly in M2 (in grey) involving equal power constellation and in which task H was asked to perform the speaker's wish (i.e. finish the slides). On the other hand, fewer of them were employed in M1 and M3 involving unequal power constellation, which social variable would have perhaps prompted the need to increasingly soften the force of requests.
- Understaters (e.g. a bit) were mostly used in M3 (mean of 0.7 in all SAs) involving unequal power constellation. However, when looking at their total uses, they were also frequent in M4 (i.e. not returning a book on time and requesting to keep it longer), the former involving unequal and the latter equal power constellation. Participants' comments regarding the sensitive nature of the context in M4 may explain this relative frequency as they often referred to their own responsibility and H's needs (e.g. S5: '*he needs it too'*).
- The reasonably frequent appearance of upgraders was noticeable in all monologic tasks apart from M2.

Table 4.11: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifier use at B2

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE													
	upgraders		*hedgers*		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*	
	SAs	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*
M1	1.7	-	-	-	.2	.2	-	-	.2	.2	.3	.3	.1	-
M2	.5	.1	-	-	.6	.4	.1	.1	.1	.1	.6	.5	.6	-
M3	1.3	-	.1	-	.2	.1	.1	.1	.7	.3	.4	.2	.1	-
M4	1.5	-	.2	-	.3	.2	-	-	.7	.1	.4	.1	.2	-
Mean (/person /task)	1.25	.02	.07	-	.32	.22	.05	.5	.42	.175	.42	.27	.25	-

Relationship between imposition identified and the use of modifiers

In order to gain a better understanding of whether the use of these modifiers was in accordance with participants' intention, their quantity and use were compared to the imposition identified by B2 participants. It might be assumed that the higher the identified imposition was in a task the more lexical/phrasal modifiers would be employed, especially downgraders, to soften the force of the request. Table 4.12 shows that at B2 level the identified imposition ranged between 2 and 3, with M3 (S<H) having the lowest (mean: 2, median: 2.5) and M4 (S=H) the highest imposition (mean: 3, median: 3). On the other hand, the level of imposition

identified in M1 and M2 showed only a relatively small difference (mean 2.8 / median 3 and mean 2.7 / median 2.5 respectively). The low imposition identified in M3 was somewhat unexpected as this task involved unequal power constellation. Likewise, the seemingly small difference between the imposition in M1 and M2, was also surprising as not only was the power constellation different in these two tasks but also the social distance (i.e. M1: student-professor; M2: classmate-classmate). On the other hand, M4 being identified with the highest imposition was anticipated as although this task involved equal power constellation the given context implied a sense of 'guilt' (i.e. forgot to return the borrowed book on time) on the part of the speaker. There was some difference also in the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers used in these tasks with M4 containing the most (mean: 3.3, median: 2.5), M3 containing somewhat fewer (mean: 2.9, median: 2) and M1/M2 containing the least (mean: 2.5, median: 2).

Table 4.12: Descriptive statistics of imposition identified and all lexical/phrasal modifiers used in monologic tasks at B2 (M per person)

	IMPOSITION IDENTIFIED								**LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER QUANTITY**							
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*M1 (S<H)*		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*	
	M/med.	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*
B2	2.8/3	.4	2.7/2.5	1.25	2/2	1.05	3 /3	.47	2.5/2	2.12	2.5/2	1.43	2.9/2	2.02	3.3 /2.5	2.26

When comparing the identified imposition with the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers (Figure 4.13), a somewhat contradicting picture emerges (NB: no correlation test was employed due to the small sample size of the study: N=10 at each level, but an overall pattern will be evaluated with visual representations). Even though M3 had been identified to have the lowest imposition, modifier usage (2.9) in this task was higher than in either M1 (2.5) or M2 (2.5), where higher imposition had been identified. Although the median was the same (2) in all three tasks, the indication is still the same, namely that there was a slight mismatch between imposition and modifier use in B2 participant's speech produced for these tasks. Overall, the data seem to indicate that modifiers tended to be used slightly randomly in some tasks and perhaps not always exactly in accordance with B2 participants' intention.

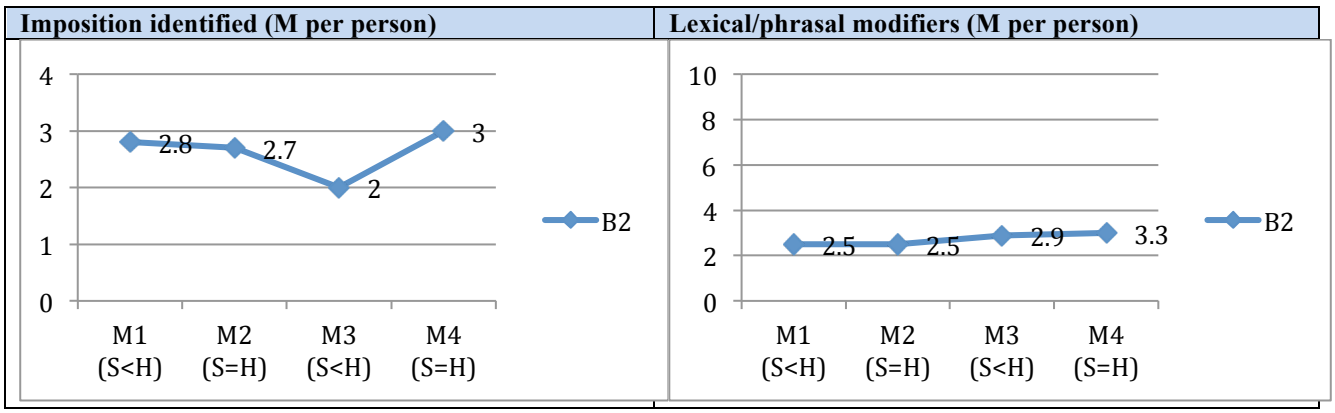

Figure 4.13: Relationship between mean imposition identified and the mean lexical/phrasal modifiers at B2

The examination of participants' comments may perhaps shed some light on their evaluation of the contexts and the linguistic choices they had made. Regarding M1 and M3, both involving unequal power constellation, it seems that participants made a distinction between the two. When evaluating the imposition in M1 40% of the participants referred to their own situation and rights (e.g. S10: '*I have a reason to ask.*' S6: *'I have an excuse.'*). On the other hand, in the evaluation of M3 30% of the participants referred to H's general responsibility (e.g. S8: '*It's his job.' S9: 'He must help me*.'). Therefore, it seems that although in M3 the social constellation was unequal, participants felt that due to the more business like nature of the context, they did not need to be overly polite. This could explain why the mean imposition identified in M3 was lower. In light of this, it is all the more puzzling that the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers was somewhat higher in this task (mean: 2.9 per person, median: 2) than in M1 (mean: 2.5, median: 2). For instance, as discussed above, more than three times as many understaters, which aim is to soften the force of the request, were used in M3 (mean: 0.7) than in M1 (mean: 0.2) (See Table 40). Regarding M2 and M4, involving equal power constellation, again participants appeared to have made a distinction in their assessment. When justifying the slightly lower imposition in M2 (mean: 2.7, median: 2.5), 40% of the participants made reference to H's general responsibility (e.g. S7: '*It's her task.' S8: 'It's their job.*'), while in M4 60% of the participants mentioned their own responsibility (e.g. S5: '*He needs it too.' S4: 'Delayed already so I'm guilty*.') in order to justify the higher imposition (mean: 3, median: 3). Such comments may explain the differences in the identified impositions and also in language use, as they employed noticeably fewer modifiers in M2 (mean 2.5, median 2) than in M4 (mean 3.3, median 2.5).

Overall, the data describing B2 participants' pragmalinguistic choices in monologic tasks highlighted the following features:

- The most commonly used syntactic forms were conditional structures. It was also noted that syntactic forms tended to vary slightly in the four tasks, which, it was argued, could be an indication of at least some degree of conscious decisions-making based on the given social context.
- The quantitative data displaying lexical/phrasal modifier use and the qualitative data describing their assessment of the given contexts seemed to suggest that, although the different social contexts had been considered and attempts had been made at adjusting language to the given context, language use at times may have been slightly contradictory to B2 participants' own intention.

4.2.1.2 C1

Syntactic forms

On the whole, C1 participants employed a variety of syntactic forms in the different monologic task MRs (Figure 4.14). The most widely used were conditional structures with 47% of MRs including these, followed by interrogatives (20%) and statements (19%). Conversely, the least often occurring syntactic forms were imperatives (14%). Their inherent nature of implying a threat to H's face, thus potentially causing confrontation, may explain their low frequency in the given contexts.

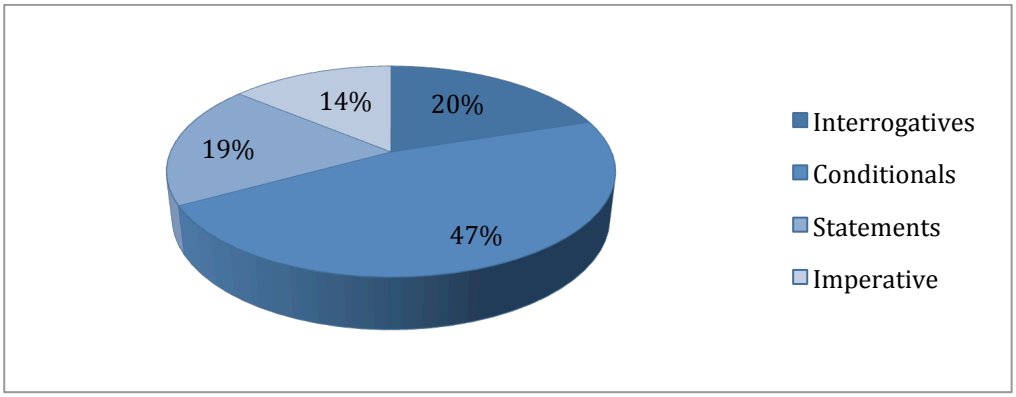

Figure 4.14: Division of syntactic forms in monologic task MRs at C1

Figure 4.15 presents how these syntactic forms were used to formulate the MRs in the four monologic tasks. The numbers represent the percentage of the different forms in each task. The analysis resulted in a number of observations:

- Conditional structures were the most widely used in all monologic tasks apart from M3, where their quantity (31%) equaled the quantity of interrogatives.
- Imperatives were mostly employed in M2 and M3, with 27% of MRs included these in the former and 23% of them in the latter task. As discussed in 4.2.1.1, their use in M2 may be caused by the specific context as participants had to get H to perform their wish (i.e. finish the slides) but it was somewhat surprising in M3 involving unequal power constellation. However, at a closer inspection of all MR utterances containing imperatives in M3, it was noted that 100% of them were lexically/phrasally modified to soften the force of the request.
- Statements were mainly used in M1 (23%) and M4 (25%), with the former involving unequal, while the latter equal power constellations.
- Interrogatives appeared in all tasks to a relatively small degree but were mostly employed in M3 where participants had to ask their professor for help.

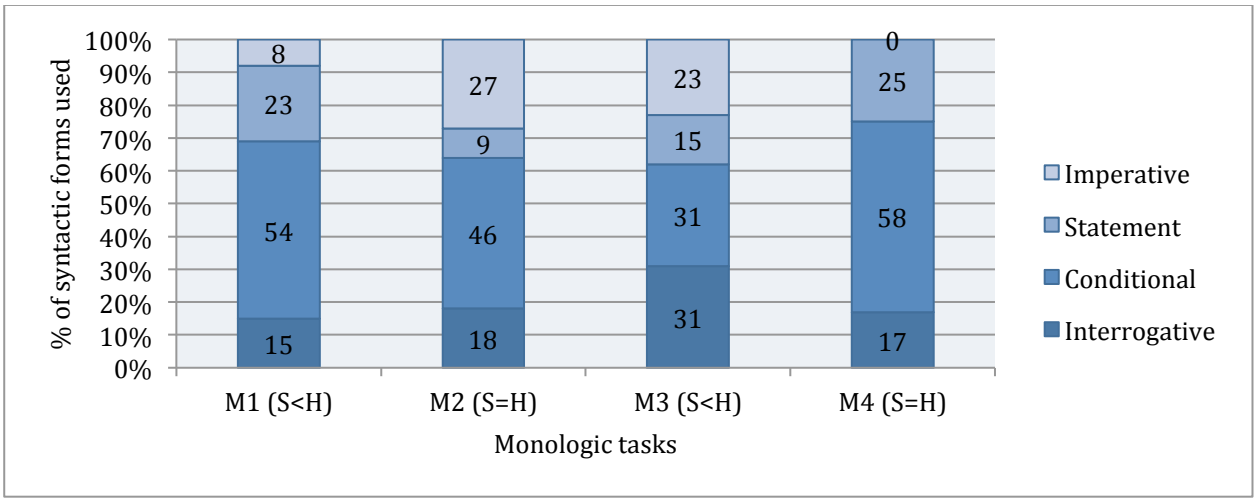

Figure 4.15: distribution of syntactic forms in MRs at C1

Lexical and phrasal modifiers

There was a reasonably wide range of lexical/phrasal modifiers employed in monologic tasks at C1. Table 4.12 presents their quantity (i.e. mean occurrence per person) in MRs and also in all SAs in each monologic task. The last row provides their overall quantity (i.e. mean occurrence per person per task) in all four monologic tasks. According to this data, the most commonly used modifiers (highlighted in grey) in all SAs were upgraders (mean: 2.1) followed by understaters (mean: 1.12) and downtoners (mean: 1.02). Hedgers as well as politeness markers and cajolers were employed to a much smaller extent, while subjectivizers were rare (mean per person per task 0.02).

Table 4.12: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifier use at C1

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE															
	upgraders		*hedgers*		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*		*CRs*	
	SAs	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs (appreciation)*
M1	2.5	.3	.1		.4	.3	.1	.1	.1	.1	1	.4	.1		.5	.2
M2	1	.2	.2		.9	.7			.1		.8	.1	.7		.1	
M3	1.8	.4	.2	.1	.3	.1			.9		1.4	.6			.8	.4
M4	3.1	.2	.4		.7	.3			.5	.3	.6	.3	.1		1	.1
Mean (/person /task)	2.1	.27	.22	.02	.57	.35	.02	.025	1.12	.1	1.02	.35	.22		.6	.17

This data shows a number of similarities in the quantity and use of lexical/phrasal modifiers employed in MRs and in all the SAs.

- The quantity of politeness markers was highest in M2 (mean: 0.9) and M4 (mean: 0.7) both involving equal power constellation, whereas their usage was less frequent in M1 (mean: 0.4) and M3 (mean: 0.3) involving unequal power constellation. A somewhat similar tendency was noted when analyzing the use of these modifiers in MRs as politeness markers were mostly employed in M2 (mean: 0.7), although their use seemed to be slightly less common in M4 MRs (mean: 0.3). This could be somewhat puzzling but an examination of how politeness markers were used in these tasks may provide an insight. According to Barron's (2003) findings, 'please' can be used for dual purposes, it can serve as a politeness marker but it can also act as an intensifier. A closer inspection of a number of requests in the present data showed that the latter use might have, indeed, been the present participants' intention. Some indications of this hypothesis were, on the one hand, the

intrasentential position of 'please' within the syntactic structure (e.g. M2/S11: '*E::rm (0.1) >would it be possible please< (.) to finish it today?'*; M4/S17: *'So could you please (0.2) like (.) give me one more day.'*; M2/S16: '*Erm (.) please (.) try to finish it.'*), and on the other hand, its stressed nature.

- Downtoners were made use of more extensively when formulating MRs in M1 (mean: 0.4) and M3 (mean: 0.6). The same tendency was noted when examining the quantity of downtoners in all SAs, as they were mainly employed in M1 (mean: 1) and M3 (mean: 1.4). This could imply a conscious effort on C1 speakers' part to soften the force of request due to the unequal power constellation in these tasks, but in light of participants' evaluation of imposition being noticeably lower in M3 (2.1) than in M1 (2.9), their frequent use in M3 was somewhat unexpected.
- The majority of understaters appeared in SAs included in M3 (mean: 0.9) and in M4 (mean: 0.5).
- An increased use of upgraders in M1 (mean: 2.5) and M4 (mean: 3.1) SAs were noted, both tasks requiring participants' to appeal to H's understanding and help. On the other hand, their quantity in MRs produced for the four different tasks was not dissimilar.
- Generally frequent use of cajolers (mean: 0.7) was noted in M2, where speakers had to appeal to their classmate's sense of duty (i.e. finish presentation slides). The function of cajolers is to increase or restore harmony between interlocutors, possibly endangered through the request, so their appearance in this context seems to be quite natural.
- Finally, CRs expressing appreciation appeared in MRs in participants' speech. While these were absent in B2 speech production, C1 participants made some use of them (mean: 0.17 per person per task) especially in M1 (mean: 0.5) and M3 (mean: 0.8). This is consistent with Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) data, which shows that the CR 'That'd be + adj' was only recognized widely and produced to some extent at advanced levels in L2 learner speech while it was frequently used in native speakers' speech. The same trend was observable in this data, however, it is acknowledged that some slightly different forms of this CR (e.g. *I'd / I would appreciate it if …; It'd / it would be great if …*) were also accepted due to their frequent occurrence. It is also worth noting that these CRs were mostly used in M1 and M3 involving unequal constellation, thus seemingly consciously by C1 participants.

Relationship between imposition identified and modifiers used

Table 4.13 reports the imposition identified and the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers used in monologic tasks at C1. The left hand side of the table gives figures (mean per person, median, SD) regarding the identified imposition, while the right hand side contains figures describing the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers (mean per person) used in each task. According to the data, at C1 the identified imposition ranged between 2 and 3 (mean per person) in the four monologic tasks. Overall, somewhat lower imposition was identified for M2 (mean, median: 2) and M3 (mean: 2.2, median: 2) than for M4 (mean, median: 3) and M1 (mean: 2.9, median: 3). SD indicates that participants were generally homogenous in their ratings, apart from M1, where the difference in participants' evaluation of the context was slightly more noticeable (SD: 1.2). Interestingly, the level of imposition identified in M2 (S=H) and M3 (S<H) showed very little difference (mean 2 and 2.2 respectively). The low imposition identified in M3 was somewhat unexpected as this task involved unequal power constellation. On the other hand, the reasonably high imposition identified in M4 (mean: 3), involving equal power constellation, was anticipated as the given context implied a sense of 'guilt' (i.e. forgot to return the borrowed book on time) on the part of the speaker. The quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers also varied in the four tasks; M4 containing the most (mean: 5.4, median: 5) and M2 containing the fewest (mean: 3.4, median: 4) of these. Thus, it seems that C1 participants assessed each monologic task context slightly differently in terms of imposition and used lexical/phrasal modifiers to differing degrees.

Table 4.13: Descriptive statistics of imposition identified and all lexical/phrasal modifiers used in monologic tasks at C1

	IMPOSITION IDENTIFIED								**LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIERS USED**							
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*M1 (S<H)*		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*	
	M/med.	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*
C1	2.9 / 3	1.2	2 / 2	.94	2.2 / 2	.79	3 / 3	.94	4.3 / 4.5	2.94	3.7 / 4	2.05	4.6 / 5	2.27	5.4 /5	2.22

When comparing the identified imposition with the mean quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers used (Figure 4.16 and Table 4.13), the figures seem to indicate that modifier quantity tended to follow the degree of imposition. For example, M2 had been identified as having the lowest imposition (mean/median: 2) and, similarly, the quantity of modifiers employed in this task was also the lowest (mean: 3.7, median 4). On the other hand, the extensive use of modifiers in M4 (mean: 5.4, median 5) appeared to reflect the high degree of imposition identified in this task (mean/median: 3). One slight discrepancy seemed to be that there was a

mismatch between the higher level of imposition identified in M1 (mean: 2.9, median: 3), as opposed to in M3 (mean: 2.2, median: 2), and the lower degree of lexical/phrasal modification here (mean: 4.3, median 4.5) than in M3 (mean: 4.6, median: 5). Nevertheless, the similarity between the level of imposition and the degree of modification is clear from the graphs, which perhaps indicate at least some degree of purposefulness of language use to reflect pragmatic intention at this level.

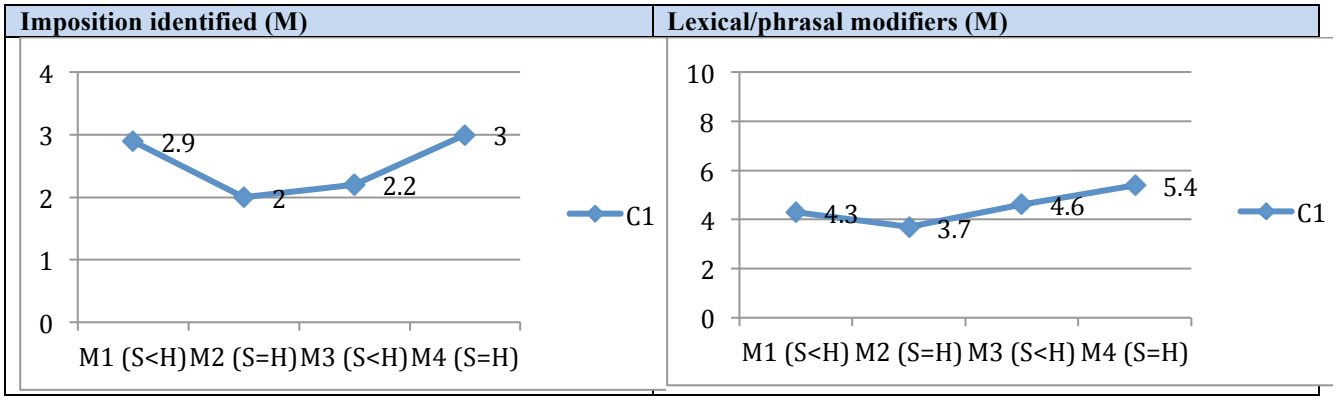

Figure 4.16: Relationship between imposition identified and lexical/phrasal modifier use at C1

The examination of participants' comments also seemed to support the suggested intentional use of modifiers in monologic task contexts. Participants generally made similar comments in their evaluation of M1 and M3, both involving unequal power constellation. When evaluating the level of imposition in M1 30% of the participants referred to H's responsibility (e.g. S11: '*He has obligations with marks.' S15: 'He doesn't have to do it.*'), while 20% referred to H's potential response (e.g. S19: '*He might ask 'why didn't you start earlier?')* and also to their own responsibility (e.g. S17: '*I waited for the last moment*'). Somewhat similarly, in the evaluation of M3 50% of the participants made reference to H's potential attitude (e.g. S14: *'In UK tutors are happy to help.' S17: 'He's already explained and I'm asking her again.')*, whereas 30% of the participants referred to H's general responsibility (e.g. S19: '*It's annoying but it's his job.*'), and 20% to some consequences of the request (e.g. S15: *'He'd have to spend extra time on it'*). Such comments indicate that in both contexts participants felt that not only H's responsibility but also H's potential response to the request influences the imposition. Nevertheless, this still does not explain the noticeably lower mean imposition in M3 (mean: 2.2) than in M1 (mean: 2.9). It also appears to be contradictory to the fact that there was greater lexical/phrasal modification in M3 (mean: 4.6) than in M1 (mean: 4.3). In fact, almost 50% more downtoners were produced in M3 than in M1. Regarding M2 and M4, involving equal power constellation,

participants made a similar distinction to B2 participants. When justifying the much lower mean imposition in M2 (mean: 2) than in M4 (mean: 3), 60% of the participants made reference to H's general responsibility (e.g. S14: '*She's obliged to do it.'* S19: *'She should've done it before.*'), while in the justification of the higher imposition in M4 (mean: 3) 60% of participants included references to their own responsibility (e.g. S20: '*It's my fault.'* S16: *'I was supposed to do it.*'). It is also worth noting the depth of the analysis, which is apparent by the appearance of comments referring to the nature of the relationship (e.g. M2 – S16: *'My classmate and we know each other.*') as well as to H's potential feelings showing empathy (e.g. M4 – S12: *'if you were in a similar situation you'd be angry.'*) and to language issues (e.g. M2 – S15: *'my message might be ignored so wanted to sound indifferent',* S16: *'softer to a friend than to a stranger'*). Possibly due to such careful consideration of the different social contexts, language choices do indeed follow the identified level of imposition in these tasks as considerably fewer modifiers were employed in M2 (mean: 3.7, median: 4) than in M4 (mean: 5.4, median: 5).

Overall, the quantitative data describing C1 participants' syntactic form use revealed that in monologic tasks conditional structures were the most commonly used syntactic forms at this proficiency level. It was also highlighted that the use of different syntactic structures in the four tasks tended to vary, which could be a sign of conscious decision-making based on the differences in monologic task contexts. Similarly, the comparison between the level of imposition identified in the four tasks and the degree of lexical/phrasal modification noticeable in participants' speech suggests that C1 participants assessed these contexts in great depth, considering not only H's potential attitude but also speakers' relationship, and made a generally good attempt at adjusting language to their own evaluation of the given contexts.

4.2.1.3. C2

Syntactic forms

Figure 4.17 reports on the range of syntactic forms employed in the different monologic tasks at C2. The data shows that conditional structures were used overwhelmingly, 65% of all MRs formulated with their use.

Statements and interrogatives were employed much less frequently, with only 15% and 12% of MRs involving these respectively. Similarly to B2 and C1 data in this regard, the least used syntactic forms were imperatives with 8%.

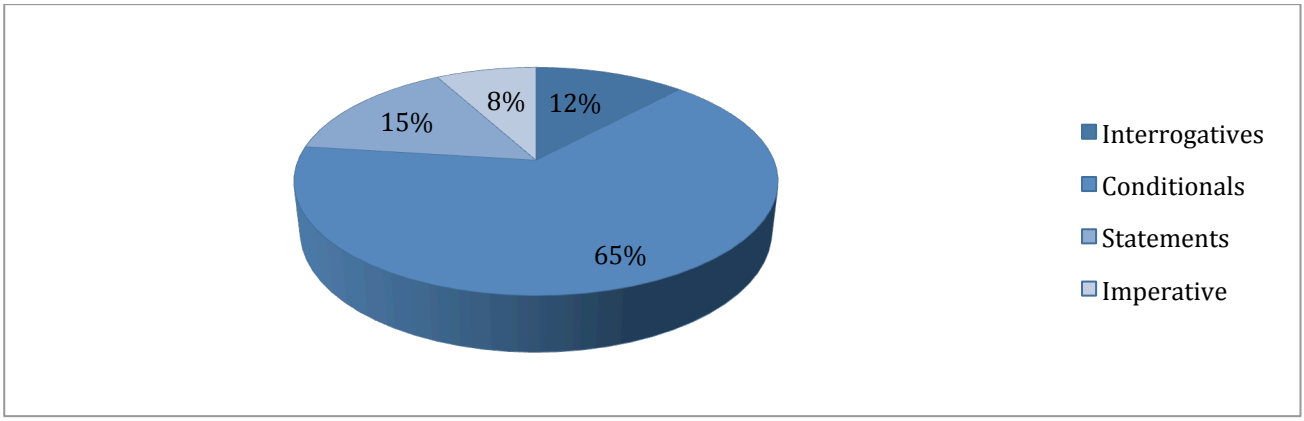

Figure 4.17: Division of syntactic forms in monologic task MRs at C2

The analysis of the use of these syntactic forms in MRs formulated for the different tasks (Figure 4.18) led to the following observations:

- Conditionals were the most frequently occurring structures in all four tasks. For instance, as many as 76% of MRs contained them in M1.
- An increased use of imperatives was noticeable in M2 (18% as opposed to 8% in M1 and M4) where participants had to ask H to perform their wish (i.e. finish the slides).
- Most statements were employed in M3 and M4. 15% of MRs in M3 and 25% in M4 contained statements as opposed to only 8% in M1 and 9% in M2.
- Interrogatives occurred most often in M3 (in 31% of MRs), where participants had to ask for help (i.e. with their draft).

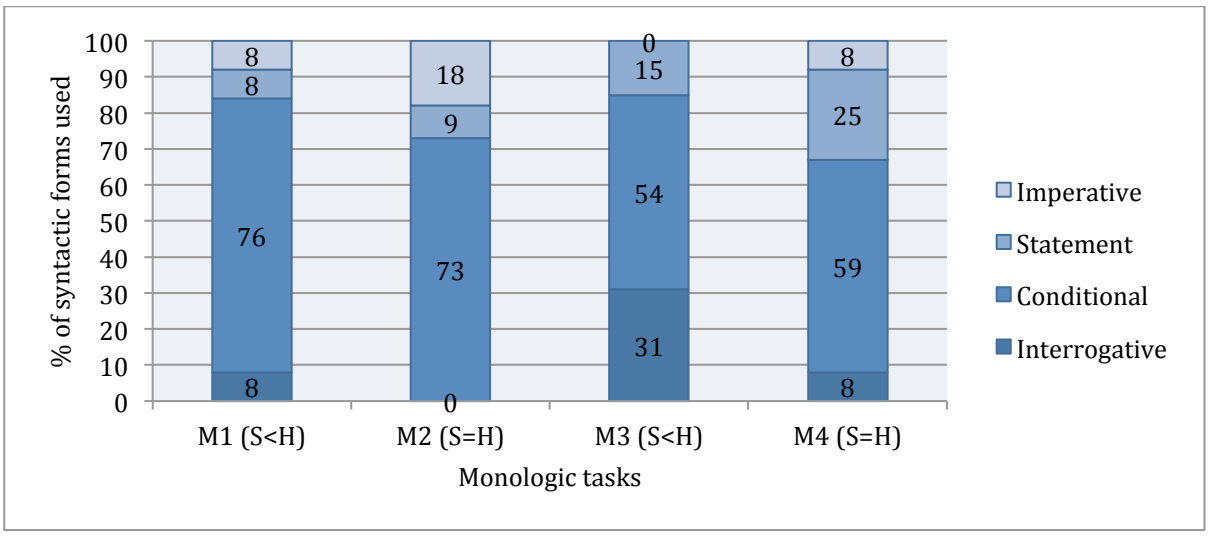

Figure 4.18: distribution of uses of syntactic forms in MRs at C2

Lexical phrasal modifiers

Table 4.14 presents the quantity (i.e. mean per person) of the different lexical/phrasal modifiers employed in each task by C2 participants. All the figures show the mean per person apart from the last row where the mean was calculated per person per task. At this level, upgraders were the most frequently used modifiers with mean of 3.15 per person per task, followed by downtoners (0.92) and hedgers (0.62). Politeness markers (i.e. please), understaters and cajolers were employed to a generally small extent with a mean of 0.3, 0.5 and 0.32 per person per task respectively. It is worth noting that when looking at the total quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers in Table 4.14, examples of each category can be found in each task. Moreover, MRs also frequently contained modifiers.

Table 4.14: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifier use at C2

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE															
	upgraders		*hedgers*		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*		*CRs (appreciation)*	
	SAs	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*	*SAs*	*MRs*
M1	4.6	.5	.5		.2	.2	.3	.2	.5		1.4	.4	.2		.6	.2
M2	1.8	.5	.4		.4	.2			.3		.7	.2	.6	.1	.4	.2
M3	2.9	.4	.4		.4	.2	.5	.5	.5	.1	1	.7	.2	.1	1	.3
M4	3.3	.3	1.2	.1	.2		.2	.2	.7	.3	.6	.2	.3		2	.1
Mean (person / task)	3.15	.42	.62	.02	.3	.35	.25	.02	.5	.1	.92	.37	.32	.05	1	.2

Based on the data in Table 4.14 a number of observations can be made regarding the use of these lexical/phrasal modifiers in each task:

- Most downtoners were noted in M1 and M3, both in MRs (i.e. mean: 0.4 and 0.7 respectively) produced but also in all SAs (i.e. mean: 1.4 and 1 respectively). Perhaps the unequal power constellation in this task prompted participants to increasingly soften the force of their request.
- Upgraders were used to a similar degree in MRs formulated for the four tasks. However, when looking at their use in all SAs, their increased use is noticeable in M1 (mean: 4.6), where S had to appeal to their professors' understanding/help, and M4 (mean: 3.3) where S had to acknowledge their own mistake (i.e. returning a book late).
- Understaters were also frequently employed in M4 MRs (mean: 0.3) and SAs (mean: 0.7), which context required S to minimize the impact of their request (i.e. borrowing a book for longer than expected) since returning the book late was their own 'fault'.
- A slightly more frequent use of subjectivizers, in both MRs and in all SAs, was observed at this proficiency level than at B2 and C1.
- An increase in the number of hedgers was also observable in all four tasks but especially in M4 SAs (mean: 1.2) where participants identified the highest mean imposition (3.3).
- The increase in the use of cajolers (mean: 0.6) was noticeable in M2, where S had to appeal to their classmate's sense of duty.
- Similarly to C1 speech, CRs expressing appreciation were frequently employed by C2 participants when formulating the MRs, in fact, they were used in slightly greater numbers overall (mean per person per task: 0.2). As pointed out previously in 4.2.1.2, this is consistent with Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) findings, namely that CRs are mainly recognized and produced at advanced levels. The present data also indicates that even within the advanced level (i.e. C levels) their usage seems to increase with proficiency.

Relationship between imposition identified and modifiers used

Table 4.15 is a summary of C2 data with relation to the imposition identified (left side of table) and the lexical/phrasal modifiers used (right side of table). The table provides the mean, median and SD figures per

person. As can be seen, the mean imposition ranged from 1.6 (median: 1) in M2 to 3.3 (median: 4) in M4, showing a somewhat wider range than either at B2 or C1 levels (i.e. mean: 2-3). M2 was identified as having the lowest (mean: 1.6, median: 1), while M4 as having the highest level of imposition (mean: 3.3, median: 4). M2 and M3 also showed a noticeable difference in this regard (mean: 1.6 and 2.2 respectively). Such variation in their assessment of the four tasks is worth noting, particularly because even though two tasks (e.g. M1 and M3 OR M2 and M4) involved the same power constellation the level of imposition differed significantly. The degree of lexical/phrasal modification also varied noticeably in the four tasks with M4 containing the most (mean: 6.5) and M2 the least (mean: 4.2).

Table 4.15: Descriptive statistics of imposition identified and all lexical/phrasal modifiers used in monologic tasks at C2 (M per person)

	IMPOSITION IDENTIFIED								**LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIERS USED**							
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*M1 (S<H)*		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*	
	M/med.	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M /med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*	*M/med.*	*SD*
C2	2.5 / 3	1.18	1.6 / 1	.84	2.2 / 2	.92	3.3 / 4	1.05	7.7 / 7	4.73	4.2 / 3	3.29	5.9 / 5	3.03	6.5 /4	4.42

The relationship between the level of imposition and lexical/phrasal modification (mean per person) is presented in Figure 4.19. It is worth noting how the degree of modification seems to reflect the level of imposition, in other words, if the latter is higher the former also seems to show an increase. For instance, M2 had been identified to have the lowest imposition (mean: 1.6, median: 1) and the quantity of modifiers used in this task was also the lowest (mean: 4.2, median: 3). On the other hand, M1 had been identified to have higher imposition (mean: 2.5, median: 3) than M3 (mean: 2.2, median: 2), consequently, the number of modifiers in the former task (mean: 7.7, median: 7) was also higher than in M3 (mean: 5.9, median: 5). One slight discrepancy seemed to be that despite the highest level of imposition in M4 (mean: 3.3, median: 4), lexical/phrasal modifier quantity, although generally high, was not the highest (mean: 6.5, median: 4). One explanation could be the equal power constellation in this task, which may have impacted participants' decision regarding their extensive use. Overall, the figures suggest that lexical/phrasal modification tended to be used quite purposefully and in accordance with C2 participants' intention.

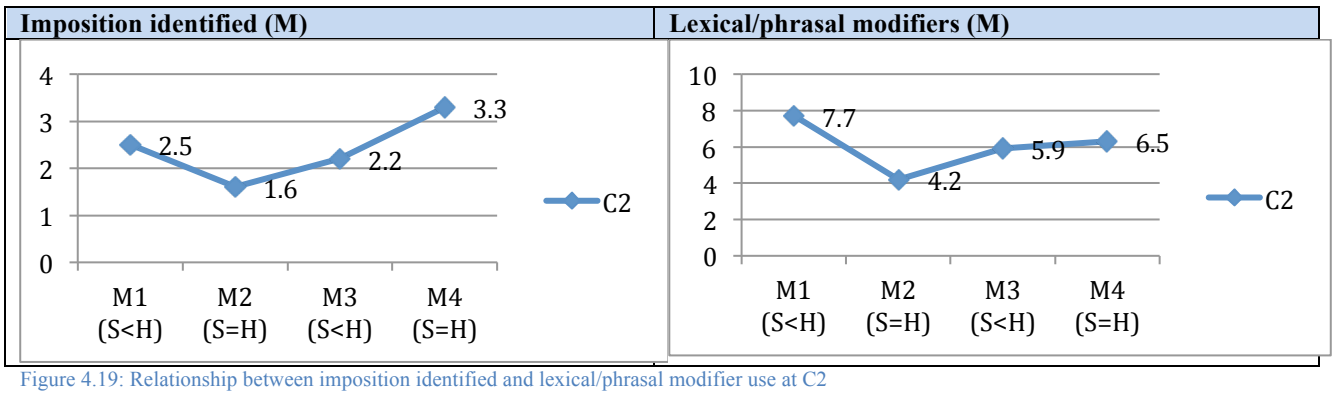

Figure 4.19: Relationship between imposition identified and lexical/phrasal modifier use at C2

The analysis of C2 participants' comments in the semi-structured interview did provide some insight into their evaluation of the different contexts and perhaps, as a result, their linguistic choices. Although both M1 and M3 involved unequal power constellation, participants seem to have made a distinction between the two contexts. Somewhat differently from B2 and C1 participants, when evaluating the imposition in M1 40% of C2 participants referred to their own rights or responsibilities (e.g. S26: '*There're academic rules and you have to obey them.'* S27: *'I've got a reason, illness*.'), another 40% made reference to H's potential response (e.g. S23: '*What if the professor will say 'no'?'* S24: *'He might think it's just an excuse.*'), while only 10% referred to H's responsibility (e.g. S28: '*It's his job.'*). Somewhat similarly, in the evaluation of M3 50% of the participants made reference to H's potential attitude/response (e.g. S23: *'They'll probably say 'yes' as they have office hours.'* S30: *'Professors are usually very busy.')*, thus anticipating the potential consequences or outcome of their requests. On the other hand, 20% of the participants referred to H's general responsibility (e.g. S25: '*It's ok to ask for academic help. It's his job.*'). All in all, participants identified slightly different mean imposition in M1 (mean: 2.5, median: 3) and M3 (mean: 2.2, median: 2) and their language use seemed to mirror this evaluation as they employed noticeably greater degree of lexical/phrasal modification in M1 (mean: 7.7, median: 7) than in M3 (mean: 5.9, median: 5).

Regarding the other two tasks, M2 and M4, involving equal power constellation, participants made a similar distinction as B2 and C1 participants. When justifying the much lower imposition in M2 (mean: 1.6, median: 1), 60% of the participants made reference to H's general responsibility (e.g. S25: '*It's her task.'* S26: *'She should know when the deadline is.*'), while for the justification of the much higher imposition in M4 (mean: 3.3, median: 4) 50% of participants included references to their own responsibility (e.g. S23: '*It was my fault.'* S25: *'I haven't kept my promise*.'). Such differences in the evaluation of the context seemed to be

reflected in C2 participants' language use as significantly more lexical/phrasal modifiers were employed in M4 (mean: 6.5, median: 4) than in M2 (mean: 4.2, median: 3).

It is also worth noting the greater depth of their analysis of the different contexts at this proficiency level including several comments related to the consequences of their communicative act (e.g. M2 – S30: *'It's a potentially damaging accusation which can damage work relationship.'*) as well as to the nature of the relationship (e.g. M4 – S29: *'A friend will understand.*') and language issues (e.g. S26: *'I was wrong so tried to use soothing words'* S28: *'I thought about the language to make the professor feel sorry.'*). Such comments appear to indicate that in C2 participants' view imposition was perhaps most influenced by H's potential response to the request. This shows foresight and anticipation with regard to the potential outcome of the situation and could also support the finding discussed earlier (see section 4.1.2.3) in relation to C2 participants being able to drive the conversation more by producing more first pair parts, co-constructing the interaction more and looking ahead to find a mutually agreeable solution. Such foresight could also potentially aid these learners and influence their decisions regarding language selection (e.g. more linguistic caution needed/included if H is thought to object to the request). Possibly due to such careful consideration of context and language, language use does indeed reflect the identified impositions at this level in all monologic tasks.

Overall, the quantitative data describing C2 participants' use of syntactic forms revealed that in monologic tasks conditional structures were by far the most commonly used at this proficiency level. It was also noted that there was a slight increase in the use of some other syntactic forms in some of the tasks, where the given context may have justified their use (e.g. imperative in a context when making a firm request in an equal social and power constellation). It was also highlighted that the degree of lexical/phrasal modification seems to closely reflect the level of imposition (i.e. quantity of modifiers increased with higher imposition). The analysis of the different task contexts also showed greater depth and frequently referred to H's potential attitude, thus hypothesizing the potential outcome of the communicative act, and also language. Therefore, it was suggested that C2 participants seemed to adjust language use to their own intentions generally effectively.

4.2.1.4 Comparison of pragmalinguistic devices at B2-C2 levels in monologic tasks

Table 4.16 presents a summary of syntactic forms in MRs produced for monologic tasks across the three proficiency levels. The statistics show the mean occurrence as well as the median and SD figures per person per task. The data reveals that all syntactic forms have been employed to some degree at all three levels, however, a number of trends have been noted with regards to their usage. Firstly, conditional structures appeared to be the most common choice at all three levels, although with increasing proficiency they became gradually more extensively integrated in the formulation of MRs. It was also noted that the increase in their quantity was noticeably bigger between C1 and C2 (mean: 0.52 and 0.72 respectively) than between B2 and C1 (mean: 0.5 and 0.52 respectively). On the other hand, a reverse tendency was visible in the case of interrogatives and statements. The figures show that the mean number of interrogatives decreased from 0.3 at B2 to 0.27 at C1 and 0.12 at C2, a similar decline was noticeable in the use of statements. This supports Trosborg (1995), who found that the tendency to rely on 'want' statements decreased with increasing proficiency. Such findings are also in line with the 'complexification hypothesis' (Meisel-Clahsen-Pienemann, 1981), according to which the acquisition of more complex syntactic structures follows the order of the complexity of these structures. Finally, imperatives were employed to a much lesser degree than the other syntactic forms at each proficiency level. With closer examination of the data it was obvious that they were mainly used in M2 involving equal social constellation, where participants had to ask a classmate to perform their wish (i.e. finish the presentation slides).

Table 4.16: Descriptive statistics of syntactic forms in monologic MRs

	SYNTACTIC FORMS IN MONOLOGIC TASKS							
	Interrogative		*Conditional*		*Statement*		*Imperative*	
	M / med.	SD	M /med.	SD	M / med.	SD	M / med.	SD
B2	.3 / .25	.3	.5 / .5	.33	.37 / .25	.24	.12 / 0	.17
C1	.27 / .12	.32	.52 / .5	.18	.2 / .25	.19	.22 / .25	.18
C2	.12 / 0	.17	.72 / .75	.29	.15 / 0	.21	.07 / 0	.16

Although the types of syntactic structures employed were similar at all three levels, they differed greatly in terms of complexity. Table 4.17 provides some examples of syntactic variation at each proficiency level. The

data revealed that, amongst C2 participants there was a tendency to use more grammatically complex forms in terms of tense and aspect (e.g. *I have been wondering whether...*). Likewise, C1 participants also opted for some slightly more complex forms in this respect (e.g. *I was wondering if ....*), whereas B2 participants often employed the most basic form (e.g. *I'm wondering if...*?). This is in line with other research that highlighted the tendency amongst more proficient learners to use more complex syntactic structures, such as '*I was wondering if*' (e.g Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017; Barron, 2003), and less proficient learners to rely on simple structures, such as '*Can you'* (e.g. Ikeda, 2017) or 'want' statements (e.g. Trosborg, 1995). However, my data also indicates that B2 learners' syntactic knowledge and competence enabled them to employ, besides simple statements or interrogatives, syntactically more complex conditional structures as well to formulate requests. Indeed, 40% of MR utterances were created with the use of conditional structures at B2 (Figure 4.11), although it was noted that tense and aspect remained generally simple in these utterances, and conditionals containing past tense were only employed at C2 in greater numbers. Perhaps there is a case to argue that their complex nature allows only more proficient learners to access them with ease and produce them with accuracy in online processing. In addition, a gradual increase in the lexically/phrasally modified (e.g. by downtoners such as '*possibly'* - highlighted in blue) MR utterances was also observed at C1 but especially at C2. While on average only 55% of MRs had been lexically or phrasally modified at B2, this rate was 69% at C1 and 83% of C2 levels, thus showing a noticeable increase. This is very much in line with Trosborg (1995), Barron (2003) and Bardovi-Harlig (2009), who also noted an increasing trend in the use of lexical/phrasal modification in requests as speakers' language proficiency developed.

Table 4.17: Sample of syntactic variation in request formulation across levels

	B2	**C1**	**C2**
Interrogative (can)	*Can I…?*	*Can I please…?*	*Can I ask for possibly…?*
Interrogative (could)	*Could you please…?*	*Could you just…?*	*Please could you just…?*
Conditional	*I would like to…*	*Of course, I'd like to…*	*I'd at least like…*
Conditional clause	*I'm wondering if…*	*I was wondering if…*	*I've been wondering whether…*
Statement	*I need…*	*I just need to…*	*I actually need…*
Imperative	*Please, let me know…*	*Just let me know…*	*I mean just let me know…*
CR expressing appreciation		*I'd really appreciate (your opinion)* *That would be of big help.*	*I'd really appreciate it if that was possible.* *That would be absolutely great.*

Differences were also observed in the degree of lexical/phrasal modification produced in monologic tasks. Generally, an increasing trend was noted in their quantity with the development of proficiency, although this was not the case in all categories. Table 4.18 presents their overall quantity showing the mean, median and SD figures per person per task. Data shows that the number of intensifiers jumped from the 1.25 at B2 to 3.15 at C2, although it is acknowledged here that there were at times significant differences amongst C2 participants in this regard, as indicated by the high SD (2.25). Such increase in the use of upgraders would support other research in this area, such as Trosborg (1995) and Bardovi-Harlig (2009), who also noted the same tendency in more advanced L2 speakers' speech. Such findings may suggest that although a range of intensifiers in L2 are learnt quite early on (e.g. intensifiers such as 'very' are taught at beginner level), their pragmatic use to intensify the force of a particular speech act (e.g. request) gradually increases with proficiency. Likewise, the quantity of most downgraders (e.g. hedgers, subjectivizers, downtoners) showed an increase with proficiency. However, the number of politeness markers seemed to fluctuate across the three proficiency levels and eventually decreased slightly at C2. To some extent this is in line with Trosborg (1995), who found that the efficient use of downtoners are more typical of advanced L2 learners' speech than the use of politeness markers as the latter are used extra-sententially, thus requiring less syntactic planning capacity. It is worth noting that higher SD figures frequently indicate the greatest difference amongst C2 participants. This might imply the effect of planning time in this task format, which may have allowed some participants to display a bigger array of pragmalinguistic devices than they would have without this time.

Table 4.18: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifier use in all SAs in monologic tasks

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE IN MONOLOGIC TASKS													
	upgraders		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*hedgers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	1.25 / .87	.97	.32 / 25	.52	.05 / 0	.1	.07 / 0	.16	.42 / .37	.28	.42 / .37	.40	.25 / .12	.31
C1	2.1 / 2.25	.97	.57 / .5	.35	.2 / 0	.07	.22 / 0	.32	.4 / .5	.26	.95 / 1.12	.72	.22 / .25	.18
C2	3.15 / 2.25	2.25	.3 / .25	.32	.25 / .25	.2	.62 / .5	.56	.5 / .5	.45	.92 / .62	1.07	.32 / 0	.78

In terms of the range of these lexical/phrasal modifiers, there was a difference between the proficiency levels. Such difference was most noticeable in the use of upgraders. Table 4.19 provides the raw numbers of types and tokens of upgraders in monologic tasks. Although type-token ratios are added for comparative purposes, it should be noted that they are not always useful indicators as they can be affected by text length and the number of tokens considered in some cases (Richards, 1987). The data shows that with increasing

proficiency not only the number of modifiers increased noticeably but also their range. C2 participants used more than twice as many as B2 and almost 40% more than C1 participants. Bardovi-Harlig's (2009) findings also highlighted such increasing trend in the use of upgraders with increased proficiency. In the present study, it was also noted that besides the quantity of upgraders their range also showed an increase with proficiency.

Table 4.19: Type/token ratio of upgraders in monologic tasks

	UPGRADERS		
	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	7	50	.14
C1	12	84	.14
C2	20	127	.16

Although the most commonly employed of these modifiers were the same, their range gradually increased. Table 4.20 shows that *'really'* was the most frequent upgrader all three levels, its quantity amounting to 44% of all upgraders at B2, 54% at C1 and 41% at C2, followed by *'very'* and *'so'*. The range of this basic core of upgraders seemed to widen with proficiency. In C2 speech there were also instances of '*obviously'*, '*completely'*, although admittedly not all C2 participants employed these, and even the basic range of upgraders used with the same base adjective tended to vary (e.g. *really/very/so* <u>*happy*</u>) within their speech. On the other hand, C1 participants and especially B2 participants seemed to rely on a somewhat narrower range.

Table 4.20: Descriptive statistics of division of upgraders in monologic tasks

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL UPGRADER USE IN MONOLOGIC TASKS								
	so	very	really	quite	at least	obviously	completely	just	other
B2 (tokens: 50)	17%	31%	44%	-	-	-	-	-	8%
C1 (tokens: 84)	14%	19%	54%	2%	4%	-	-	-	7%
C2 (tokens: 127)	7%	19%	41%	6%	6%	8%	2%	2%	9%

The quantity and range of downgraders also showed an increase with proficiency, although this increase was not always as significant as in the case of upgraders. On the whole, C2 participants used the greatest number and widest range, followed by C1 participants and finally B2 participants.

There was limited hedging observed but the use of hedgers seemed to increase with proficiency, with C2 participants using 8 times and C1 participants 3 times as many as B2 participants (Table 4.21). In addition, C2 participants used the widest range, including *'sort of', 'kind of'* as well as *'just'*, the latter being the most common type of hedge across levels. Although the type/token ratio seems to be the highest at B2 level, this might not reflect the true level of proficiency in this case.

Table 4.21: Type/token ratio of hedgers in monologic tasks

	HEDGERS		
	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	3	3	1
C1	5	9	.55
C2	10	25	.40

Regarding understaters, a similar trend was noticeable, namely that with increasing proficiency the quantity and range of understaters (i.e. *'just', 'a bit'/'a little bit'* and *'some')* also increased (Table 4.22). However, it needs to be added that the difference across levels was not as noticeable, neither in quantity nor in range, as in the case of hedgers.

Table 4.22: Type/token ratio of understaters in monologic tasks

	UNDERSTATERS		
	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	5	17	.29
C1	6	16	.37
C2	5	21	.23

On the other hand, the difference in the quantity and range of downtoners employed in monologic speech was somewhat clearer (Table 4.23). B2 participants used the fewest (token=18) and a fairly narrow range, C1 participants used more than twice as many (token=38) and a slightly wider range, and although C2 participants used slightly fewer downtoners than C1 participants (token=36) their range was wider (Table 4.24). Such finding is consistent with Trosborg (1995:429), who argues that the efficient use of downtoners implies higher pragmatic competence as their embedded position in syntax does not lead to swift automatic

recall and requires more planning capacity on the part of the speaker. The present data also indicates that the planning capacity B2 participants possessed enabled them to start using downtoners already to soften the force of requests, but the likely increase in such capacity allowed C1 and C2 participants to employ these more extensively for such purpose.

Table 4.23: Type/token ratio of downtoners in monologic tasks

	DOWNTONERS		
	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	3	18	.16
C1	4	38	.10
C2	6	36	.16

Table 4.24: Descriptive statistics of division of downtoners in monologic tasks

	DOWNTONER USE IN MONOLOGIC TASKS						
	just	maybe	may	perhaps	might	possibly	others
B2 (18)	72%	22%	6%	-	-	-	-
C1 (38)	82%	8%	-	5%	5%	-	-
C2 (36)	49%	28%	-	-	11%	6%	6%

Regarding cajolers their use was minimal and almost non-existent in monologic tasks with B2 participants using none, but even at the other two levels they occurred only once at C1 and twice at C2. This may be explained by the nature of the task (i.e. leaving a message on the answer phone), which may not naturally lend itself to using cajolers extensively.

Another interesting lexical/phrasal modification feature noted was the use of CRs showing appreciation (Table 4.25). The present data showed that they were absent in B2 speech, while their mean occurrence was 1.6 at C1 and 2 at C2; median and SD figures also show that their quantity was greater with smaller individual inconsistencies at C2. At C1, speech produced for M1 and M3, both involving unequal power constellation, contained the majority of these CRs, whilst at C2 the majority of these CRs were employed in M4, where participants identified the highest level of imposition (see Figure 4.19). This seems to support some other research (e.g. Barron, 2003; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos, 2011) highlighting that the likelihood of noticing and employing CRs is higher amongst advanced learners,

although it is slightly contradictory to some other research (e.g. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Roever, 2012), claiming that such pragmatic development might be more related to the length of stay in an L1 speaking country rather than proficiency level. In addition, Barron (2003) suggests that there is non-linear development when it comes to the grammatically accurate use of CRs, which could mean that proficiency may not be the main influence when it comes to their acquisition.

Table 4.25: Descriptive statistics of use of CRs showing appreciation in monologic tasks (per person)

	CRs showing appreciation IN MONOLOGIC TASKS					
	M1	*M2*	*M3*	*M4*	***Total***	
	M	M	M	M	**M / med.**	**SD**
B2	-	-	-	-	-	-
C1	.4	.1	.8	.3	**1.6 / 1**	**1.95**
C2	.5	.3	.5	.7	**2 / 1.5**	**1.69**

Admittedly, in this research C1 and C2 speakers had been in the UK (or another L1 English speaking country) significantly longer on average than B2 participants (i.e. 9 months at B2, 12.2 at C1 and 50.4 at C2). Nevertheless, the use of these particular CRs did not always seem to reflect the length of stay. For example, neither S26 nor S29 C2 participant employed them in monologic tasks and yet, the former had stayed significantly longer in the UK at the time of the study (i.e. 108 months) than the latter (i.e. 12 months). Their use, in this case, could perhaps be more attributed to individual choice rather than the lack of knowledge. On the other hand, some other C2 and C1 participants tended to use these CRs generally equally widely, despite differences in their length of stay in an L1 speaking country. Grammatical accuracy, however, showed some differences as shown in Excerpts 4.33 and 4.34. C2 participants' production tended to be more grammatically accurate (e.g. Excerpt 4.34: *'That would be of great help.'*) and seemingly more L2 like than C1 participants' speech (e.g. Excerpt 4.33: '*I will really really appreciate it')*. This supports one of Barron's (2003, p.198) claims stating that "lexical and syntactic problems which learners experience in their use of L2 pragmatic routines decrease with time in the target speech community, increasingly taking an L2-like form", although it somewhat contradicts her other claim regarding the non-linear development of grammatically accurate production of CRs. The present data showed that accurate production of this particular type of CR (i.e. showing appreciation) seemed to to increase with proficiency. Perhaps there is a case to argue that, although the length of stay may be influential (e.g. Roever, 2012), the acquisition of more

complex CRs and their grammatically accurate use may be more enhanced by the level of proficiency than by the length of stay, in particular at the highest proficiency levels (i.e. C1 and C2). Besides, as mentioned previously, the present C1 and C2 participants also seemed to use them strategically, in other words more frequently in contexts where higher imposition was identified. This could perhaps be an indication that they were aware of the pragmatic function of these CRs (i.e. consideration for H's 'face'). Kasper and Rose (2002, p.230) argue that the 'length of stay is not a reliable predictor' for the development of L2 pragmatic abilities, and it does not seem to be the case of these particular CRs.

Excerpt 4.33: Sample of C1 speech (CRs)

- I will really really appreciate it. (ID: S12)
- I would really really appreciate it if you can extend me the deadline (ID: S16)
- That would be wonderful if you accept it. (ID: S11)
- If it's possible, that would be great. (ID: S14)

Excerpt 4.34: Sample of C2 speech (CRs)

- I'd really appreciate it if that was possible. (ID: S22)
- That would be absolutely great. (ID: S24)
- it would be great if I could keep it for one more day (ID: S25)
- if I could have it just one more day please that'd be great (ID: S30)

Overall, the present findings related to the development of pragmalinguistic devices are consistent with much research, and indicate that due to the more demanding processing skills involved, internal modification (i.e. syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders) only appears later in the process of pragmatic development (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Rose, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). Not only do they appear later but the present data also seems to suggest that they are used gradually more extensively and more variedly with increasing proficiency.

Adjusting language to context and to speakers' own intentions

Overall, participants at each level made somewhat similar evaluations about the imposition in the different monologic tasks (Table 4.26 and Figure 4.20). M4 was identified as involving the highest level of imposition (highlighted in grey). A large number of comments made in the semi-structured interview suggest that this was due to the fact that, despite the equal power constellation, the context involved an element of personal guilt (i.e. forgot to return a borrowed book). All three levels identified the degree of imposition in M1 (S<H) and M3 (S<H) similarly, with M1 slightly higher as it involved asking a 'favour' from the interlocutor while M3 only involved simply asking for an explanation. B2 participants differed in their evaluation of M2, in which context they felt the imposition was fairly high (i.e. mean: 2.7), whereas C1 and C2 participants felt the imposition here was the lowest (i.e. mean: 2 and 1.6 respectively). It is worth noting that the evaluation of the imposition level showed the widest range at C2 (i.e. mean: 1.6 – 3.3), while this range was somewhat smaller amongst C1 and B2 participants (i.e. mean: 2 – 3). It is believed that this might perhaps suggest a deeper level of context analysis at C2.

Table 4.26: descriptive statistics of participants' evaluation of imposition and total lexical/phrasal modification

	IMPOSITION								*LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE*							
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*M1 (S<H)*		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med	SD	M/med	SD
B2	2.8 / 3	.4	2.7 / 2.5	1.25	2 / 2	1.05	3 / 3	.47	2.5 / 2	2.12	2.5 / 2	1.43	2.9 / 2	2.02	3.3 /2.5	2.26
C1	2.9 / 3	1.2	2 / 2	.94	2.2 / 2	.79	3 / 3	.94	4.3 / 4.5	2.94	3.7 / 4	2.05	4.6 / 5	2.71	5.4 /5	2.22
C2	2.5 / 3	1.18	1.6 / 1	.84	2.2 / 2	.92	3.3 / 4	1.05	7.7 / 7	4.73	4.2 / 3	3.29	5.9 / 5	3.03	6.5 /4	4.42

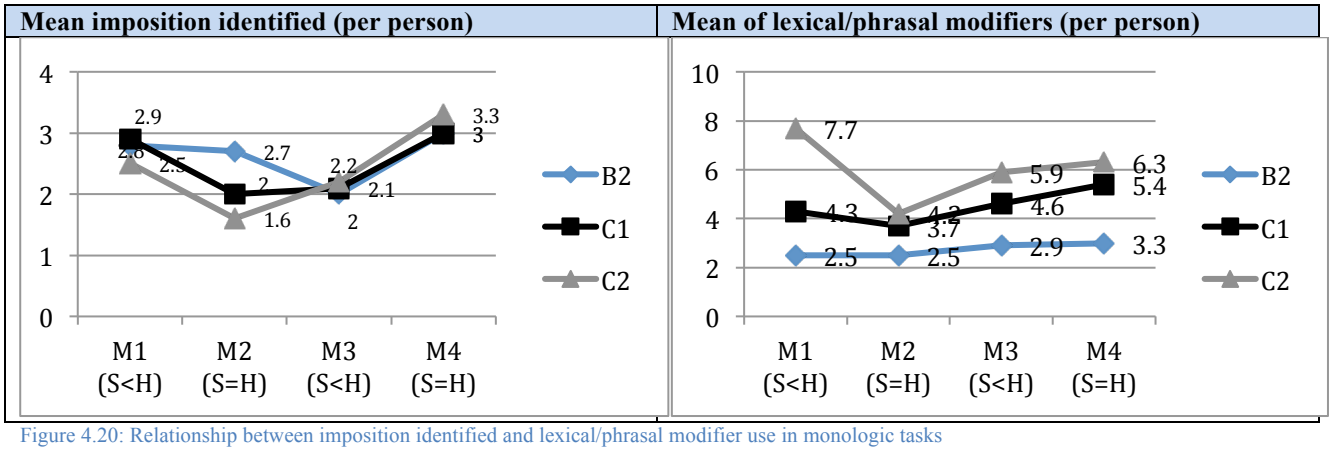

Figure 4.20: Relationship between imposition identified and lexical/phrasal modifier use in monologic tasks

The comparison between participants' evaluation and their performance revealed some noteworthy features. It can be assumed that higher level of imposition would entail a greater degree of lexical/phrasal modification in order to soften the force of the request. The right hand side of Table 4.26 and Figure 4.20

reports on the descriptive statistics of the degree of lexical/phrasal modification across the proficiency levels. The data shows that lexical/phrasal modification level was fairly even in all four monologic tasks at B2, with the modifier quantity being the same in M1 and M2 (mean: 2.5) and only slightly higher in M3 (mean: 2.9) and in M4 (mean: 3.3). In contrast, their quantity in C1 participants' speech generally tended to vary and follow the degree of imposition identified in these tasks. For instance, the least modification was noted in M2 where the lowest level of imposition was identified. The only discrepancy was speech production in M3, which included a higher degree of modification than speech produced for M1, involving a higher level of imposition according to C1 participants' assessment. Likewise, C2 speech revealed similarities between the level of imposition identified and modifier quantity, the only difference being M4, where, contradictory to the high level imposition identified, somewhat less lexical/phrasal modification was employed. One could argue that the equal power constellation in M4 may have prompted C2 participants not to be overtly polite/cautious with their language use. In fact, comments such as *'A friend will understand.'* (ID: S29) could justify such assumption, although another comment stating that *'I was wrong so tried to use soothing words'* (ID: S26) could contradict such claim. However, at closer examination of speech production (Excerpt 4.35) in M4 by the latter participant (i.e. S26) it was observed that by 'soothing words' the participant may have meant apologising extensively in lines 2, 6, 8 (highlighted in yellow) and/or promising to take action in line 7.

Excerpt 4.35: Sample of C2 speech (ID: S26)

1. *Oh, hi (first name). (First name) here.*
2. *I'm so sorry erm I couldn't come to the phone when you called and missed your call.*
3. *I called regarding the book I borrowed erm from you a::nd I know (.) I should've given back (.) returned the book to you ( ) past two or three days ago,*
4. *but unfortunately, because I really really need this book I need some important information from the book (.)*
5. *and I want to borrow it for another day*
6. *so:: I'm really sorry I was not able to give it back to you.*
7. *But I'll try as best as possible, probably the day after tomorrow, after I've read this chapter, then I'll take the book back to you.*
8. *I'm sorry for any inconvenience this might have caused.*

The analysis of the type of modification in monologic tasks highlighted that the different types of lexical/phrasal modifiers seem to be employed to the same extent at B2, while their use showed more variation at C1 and C2. For instance, the differing degree in the use of downtoners in the different monologic tasks is worth noting. The first four columns in Table 4.27 present the quantity (mean, median, SD per person) of downtoners in each monologic task, whilst the final column gives the total quantity of downtoners per person per task. The data shows that in speech produced at C1 and C2 noticeably more downtoners (i.e. to soften the force of R) appeared in M1 and M3 (S<H) than in M2 and M4 (S=H). In addition, when comparing these two levels, downtoner quantity seems to be more closely reflecting the identified degree of imposition in C2 speech. In other words, utterances in M1 contained more downtoners (mean: 1.4) than M3 (mean: 1), where the identified level of imposition was lower. Conversely, C1 participants used more downtoners in M3 (mean: 1.4), where the identified level of imposition was lower, than in M1 (mean: 1). However, it is acknowledged that median figures at C2 were the same in both tasks and SD was slightly bigger in M1 suggesting that individual speech production at C2 in this respect was slightly more varied in this task. In fact, there was one participant (ID: S24), who employed considerably more downtoners in M1 than other C2 participants. This participant had spent seven years in the UK by the time of the study and observed the frequent use of downtoners in different social contexts throughout this period. As they stated in the subsequent interview '*The British overstate polite sentences and I personally adapted to that style and do it subconsciously now*' (ID: S24). To some extent, this supports researchers (e.g. Roever, 2012) claiming that the length of stay in an L1 speaking country does influence the acquisition and development of pragmatic features. Besides, I would add that not only does L2 speakers' appropriate usage of such features develop but also they are more able to make personal and conscious decisions regarding the use of these features, as it seemed to be the case here.

It is argued here that such ability to observe, use and indeed make conscious linguistic choices regarding language use in social context shows advanced pragmatic competence close to that of L1 speakers'. Such ability goes beyond merely more extensive use of modifiers, indeed some might be inclined to employ less than others, and enables L2 speakers to decide whether to include these at all or to what extent according to

their own evaluation of the given context. At least, this is believed the case when no interaction is involved, as in the present monologic tasks.

Table 4.27: Descriptive statistics of downtoner use in monologic tasks

	DOWNTONER USE IN MONOLOGIC TASKS									
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		***OVERALL***	
	M / med.	SD	M / med.	SD	M / med.	SD	M / med.	SD	**M** / med.	**SD**
B2	.3 / 0	.48	.6 / 0	.84	.4 / 0	.69	.4 / 0	.69	.42 / 0	.67
C1	1 /.5	1.24	.8 / .5	.91	1.4 / 1.5	1.17	.6 / .5	.69	.95 / 1	1.03
C2	1.4 / 1	1.77	.7 / 0	.1.05	1 / 1	1.15	.6 / 0	1.07	.92 / 1	1.28

Indeed, when comparing participants' comments (Excerpts 4.33 – 4.35) regarding their evaluation of the different contexts, it was noticeable that with increasing proficiency there tended to be an increasing depth of analysis as more and more comments related not just to their own or H's responsibility but also to H's potential attitude/reaction. It seems that as if by anticipating H's potential response/attitude C1 and C2 participants may have tried to anticipate the potential outcome of their request (see 3.3.4 for details on data coding).

Excerpt 4.33: Sample of B2 comments regarding imposition in M1

- I have an excuse. (ID: S6, S7) – category: own responsibility/right
- It is important for professor to respect schedule. (ID: S8) – category: H's potential attitude/reaction

Excerpt 4.34: Sample of C1 comments regarding imposition in M1

- He has obligations with marks. (ID: S11) – category: H's general responsibility.
- It's a favor and he's not obliged. (ID: S14) – category: H's general responsibility.
- He might ask 'why didn't you start earlier?'. (ID: S19) – category: H's potential attitude/reaction
- I waited for the last moment and he's already set the deadline. (ID: S17) – category: own responsibility/right

Excerpt 4.35: Sample of C2 speech (CRs)

- It's my obligation. (ID: S22) - category: own responsibility/right
- What if the professor will say no? (ID: S23) – category: H's potential attitude/reaction
- He might think it's just an excuse. (ID: S24) – category: H's potential attitude/reaction
- I've got a reason (ID: S27) - category: own responsibility/right

- It's his job. (ID: S28) category: H's general responsibility.

Overall, the following features have been highlighted by the monologic data:

- In terms of syntactic forms, the preferential use of conditional structures tended to increase with proficiency, while the quantity of interrogatives and statements declined.
- The analysis of lexical/phrasal modifiers suggested an increase in their quantity and range with proficiency. Iwashita et al. (2008) came to a similar conclusion regarding general vocabulary use when investigating 200 test takers' spoken performance using Vocabprofile. This may suggest that regarding the acquisition of lexical elements of pragmatic knowledge there might be a similar learning pattern to general vocabulary acquisition.
- The amount of lexical/phrasal modification seemed to reflect the identified level of imposition increasingly more closely at C1 and C2.
- Regarding participants' evaluation of the task contexts, it was observed that the depth of analysis of the different contexts seemed to increase with proficiency.

4.2.2 Pragmalinguistic Devices: Task and level comparison in Dialogic Tasks (RQ2 and RQ3)

This section provides an account and analysis of participants' speech production at each level first in terms of syntactic forms followed by lexical/phrasal downgrader use, and finishes with the analysis of language adjustment to participants' evaluation of the context.

4.2.2.1 B2

Syntactic forms

Figure 4.21 reports on the variety of syntactic forms observed in the two dialogic tasks at B2. The majority of MRs (i.e. 52%) was formed with the use of interrogatives, while the other three syntactic structures were significantly less common. It is worth noting that the preferred syntactic choice shifted from conditionals in monologic tasks to interrogatives in these tasks. Such shift could perhaps be an indication that the recall of

syntactically simpler structures, such as interrogatives, may be easier in online processing, hence less proficient learners may be inclined to rely on these more.

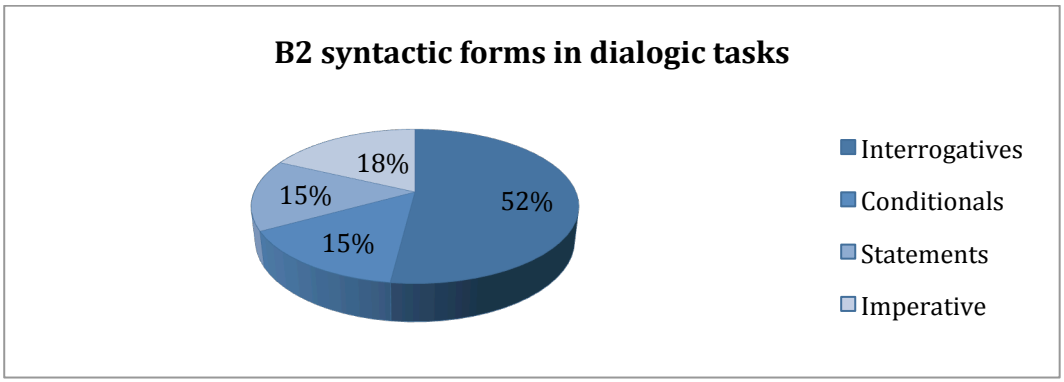

Figure 4.21: Division of syntactic forms in dialogic task MRs at B2

The analysis of their use in the different tasks (Figure 4.22) led to a number of observations. Firs of all, interrogatives were the most common form in both tasks, but especially so in D5 (64%) where the task was to request information from the interlocutor (i.e. explain the low mark given for their essay). On the other hand, their quantity noticeably decreased and they were replaced by imperatives (30%) and conditionals (20%) in D6, involving equal power constellation, where the task prompts involved requesting H to perform a wish (i.e. do more cleaning). It is difficult to draw any final conclusions but such change in syntactic forms may suggest that there was at least some attempt to adjust syntactic form to context at B2.

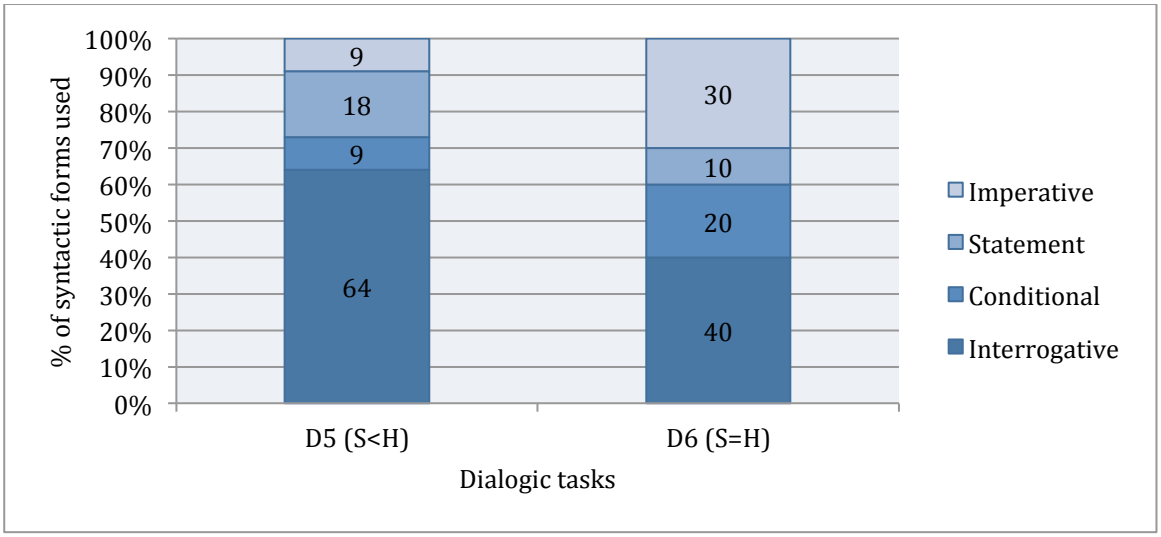

Figure 4.22: distribution of syntactic forms in MRs at B2

Lexical and phrasal modifiers

Table 4.28 presents the range and quantity of lexical phrasal modifiers displayed in all SAs produced first in each dialogic tasks (mean per person) then in the two tasks combined (mean per person per task). The data shows that upgraders were the most frequently employed lexical/phrasal modifier at this level, with the mean occurrence of 1.4 (per person per task), followed by downtoners (mean: 0.95) and understaters (mean: 0.8). All other modifiers were rare (e.g. hedgers, subjectivizers) or absent (i.e. cajolers). Their use also showed some variation in the two different tasks. While downtoners and understaters were much more extensively employed in D6 (S=H), upgraders appeared more frequently in D5 (S<H) (see 3.3.4 for the definition of each device category).

Table 4.28: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifiers in all SAs at B2

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE						
	upgraders	*hedgers*	*politeness markers*	*subjectivizers*	*understaters*	*downtoners*	*cajolers*
	M/person	M/person	M/person	M/person	M/person	M/person	M/person
D5 (S<H)	1.8		.1	.2	.4	.5	
D6 (S=H)	1	.3	.1		1.2	1.4	
Overall *(M/person/task)*	1.4	.15	.1	.1	.8	.95	

Relationship between imposition identified and modifiers used

The comparison of lexical/phrasal modifier use with the identified degree of imposition revealed that there were no significant differences in the two tasks in these respects. Table 4.29 shows that both the mean imposition identified and modifier quantity were slightly higher in D6 than in D5. Such similarity was not unexpected, despite the differences in power constellation, as although D6 involved equal power constellation it also involved making a potential face-threatening act (FTA) on the part of the speaker (i.e. asking a flatmate to clean more). On the surface at least, these statistics suggest that modifier use tended to reflect the degree of imposition at B2.

Table 4.29: descriptive statistics of mean imposition and modifier use (mean per person)

IMPOSITION	*MODIFIER USE*

	D5 (S<H)	*D6 (S=H)*	*D5 (S<H)*	*D6 (S=H)*
Mean	2.4	2.5	3	4
Median	2	3	3	4
SD	1.075	1.18	1.763	2.211

In their analysis of the different contexts B2 participants expressed that they generally felt to be in control of both situations. Their comments reveal that this was due to the equal power constellation in D6 and the nature of the context in D5. In the latter, the roles tended to be regarded somewhat more business like similar to those of retailer/consumer. For instance, when evaluating the context in D5 a number of participants referred to H's general responsibility (e.g. S8: '*it's his job*'; S10: '*you have right to ask'; S4: 'I'm angry.'*), which could perhaps explain the relatively small degree of downtoner and greater degree of upgrader use. On the other hand, in their evaluation of D6, a number of comments related to the nature of their relationship with H (e.g. S6: '*flatmate is just like a brother*'), also to H's general responsibility (e.g. S7: '*It's their duty*.'; S10: '*if you live with someone respect rules*') and some of their comments implied reference to language use (e.g. S6: '*you don't have to be polite with them… be direct*'; S9: '*I'm telling her'*). It was interesting to note that despite such views of being 'in control' of the situation, a relatively large number of understaters and downtoners were employed in their speech to minimise the impact of their request in this task.

Overall, the quantitative analysis of speech production and the qualitative analysis of comments evaluating the context in dialogic tasks seem to indicate that B2 participants considered the two different contexts and made an attempt at adjusting language to this evaluation.

4.2.2.2 C1

Syntactic forms

Similarly to B2 speech, a range of syntactic forms was displayed in C1 speech when formulating MRs in dialogic tasks (Figure 4.23). Interrogatives provided the syntactic form for 35% of these requests, closely followed by statements and conditionals with 25% and 20% respectively. Imperatives were rare, which was

somewhat expected, as their tendency to imply a threat to H's face may prompt speakers to avoid them in order to avoid confrontation.

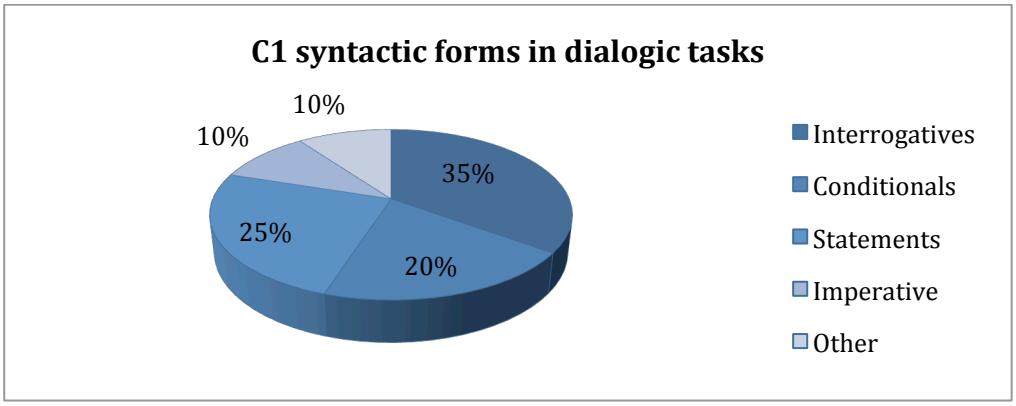

Figure 4.23: Division of syntactic forms in MRs at C1

The analysis of syntactic form usage in the two dialogic tasks highlighted a number of similarities but also some differences (Figure 4.24). Most importantly, interrogatives seemed to be the most extensively employed, with 40% of MR forms in D5 and 30% in D6 involving them. This is different from monologic tasks where most MRs were constructed with the use of conditional structures. As argued before in relation to B2 speech, perhaps the online nature of this task, requiring instantaneous decisions, may have had an effect on syntactic choices at this level. As interrogatives in general are syntactically less complex structures (e.g. Can you + infinitive), they might be easier to recall in online processing. Conditional structures were employed to an equal degree (20%) in both tasks but somewhat less frequently than interrogatives and statements. On the other hand, imperatives appeared only in D6, which task involved asking H to perform S's wish. To what extent these were conscious syntactic choices is difficult to speculate, with the only exception perhaps being the use of imperatives in D6.

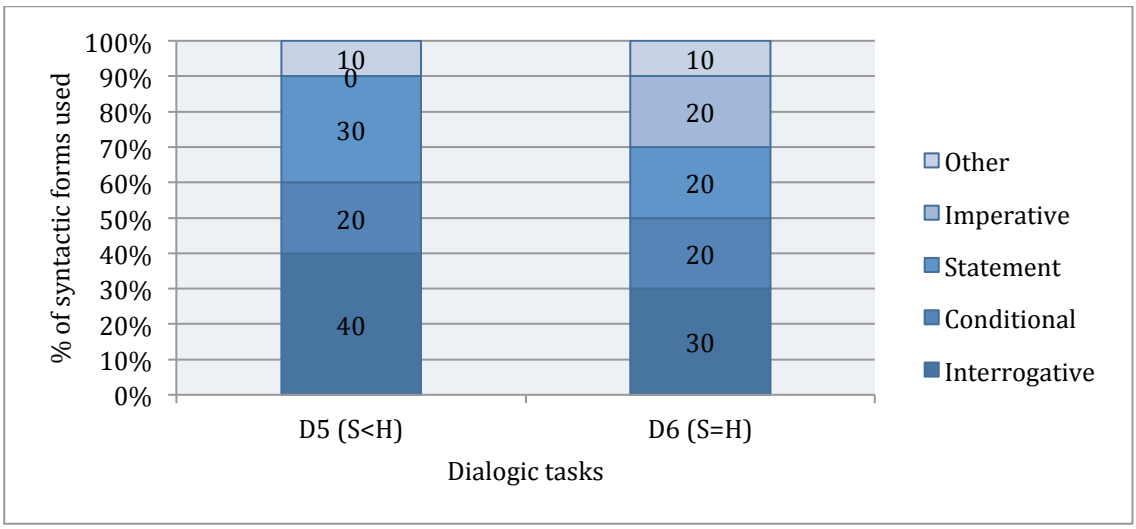

Figure 4.24: distribution of syntactic forms in MRs at C1

Lexical and phrasal modifiers

Overall, a substantial amount of modification was noted in speech at this level. The mean of modifiers employed in D5 was 7.5 per person (median: 5, SD: 6.45), while it was slightly higher 10.6 (median: 10, SD: 6.81) in D6. However, SD statistics indicate that there were noticeable differences amongst participants with some using modifiers to a much greater extent than others. Table 4.30 reports on the quantity of each type of lexical/phrasal modifier employed in C1 speech. Figures for the two dialogic tasks (first two rows) give the mean per person, while the last row provides the mean per person per task. The data exemplifies the existence of a range of lexical/phrasal modifiers in SAs produced by C1 participants whilst completing the tasks, the only exception being subjectivizers, which were absent in their speech. Upgraders and downtoners appeared frequently, with mean occurrence of 3.2 and 2.35 per person per task respectively, whilst other modifiers were rare and subjectivizers were completely absent.

The data also reveals some differences in terms of their usage in the two tasks. For instance, downtoners were used generally extensively in both tasks but especially in D6 (mean: 3) perhaps in an attempt to lessen the impact of the potentially face threatening act of asking a flat mate to clean more. Likewise, understaters were employed in greater numbers in D6, their mean quantity per person being almost twice as much (mean: 1.4) as in D5 (mean: 0.8). On the other hand, upgraders were equally frequent in both tasks. It is worth noting the appearance of cajolers, whose function is to restore harmony between the interlocutors, in C1

speech. Their use was especially noticeable in D6, in which task they had to appeal to someone socially equal (i.e. flatmate), their mean occurrence per person being three times as much (2.1) as in D5 (0.7). However, admittedly such frequency was not entirely equally distributed amongst all C1 participants (median: 2.5, SD: 1.72). Hedgers were present in both tasks to an equal degree (mean: 0.7).

Table 4.30: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifiers in dialogic tasks at C1 (mean occurrence per person)

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE						
	upgraders	*hedgers*	*politeness markers*	*subjectivizers*	*understaters*	*downtoners*	*cajolers*
D5 (S<H)	3.3	.7	.3	-	.8	1.7	.7
D6 (S=H)	3.1	.7	.3	-	1.4	3.0	2.1
Overall *(M/person/task)*	3.2	.7	.3	-	1.1	2.35	1.4

Relationship between imposition identified and modifiers used

The figures in Table 4.31 reveal that the identified imposition was slightly lower in D6 (mean: 2.4) than in D5 (mean: 2.9), while interestingly there was a reverse tendency in modifier quantity as it was noticeably higher in D6 (mean: 10.6) than in D5 (mean: 7.5).

Table 4.31: descriptive statistics of mean imposition and modifier use (per person)

	IMPOSITION		**MODIFIER USE**	
	D5 (S<H)	*D6 (S=H)*	*D5 (S<H)*	*D6 (S=H)*
Mean	2.9	2.4	7.5	10.6
Median	3	2	5	10
SD	.876	1.075	6.45	6.81

Participants' comments in relation to their evaluation of the two contexts suggest that in D5 they predicted a potential FTA (i.e. offending the interlocutor), which called for caution, while in D6 they felt much more in control due to the equal social and power constellation. Their evaluation of imposition in D5 was largely justified by references to H's potential reaction or interpretation of the request. Comments included, for example, '*it feels like questioning their knowledge' (ID: S12); 'he's already checked the paper so probably doesn't want to correct it' (ID: S16)* and *'I'm questioning his grading' (ID: S19)*. These comments seem to suggest that unless some 'diplomacy' is used this request may receive a dispreferred response (Schegloff, 2007), thus, result in a potential FTA. However, the number of lexical/phrasal modifiers, such as understaters

or downtoners employed in this task (Table 4.30), was seemingly low to lessen the impact of such FTA, if this was indeed participants' intention. When justifying the lower imposition in D6, a number of comments focused on H's general responsibility (e.g. S:15: *'she has to clean and can't get away from it'; S17: 'It's a basic task and she should understand.')* and to mutual responsibility *(e.g. S11: 'It's a common goal'; S13: 'both responsible')*. Despite such views of being 'in control' of the situation, still a relatively high number of lexical/phrasal downgraders (Table 4.31) were employed in participants' speech in this task. Thus, this data seems to suggest that participants' intention and their lexical/phrasal modifier use seemingly contradicted each other in this task.

4.2.2.3 C2

Syntactic forms

Overall, a variety of syntactic forms were observable in C2 speech in dialogic tasks (Figure 4.25). Somewhat differently from the other two levels, the majority (40%) of MRs was formed with the use of conditional structures while interrogatives and statements were less often employed.

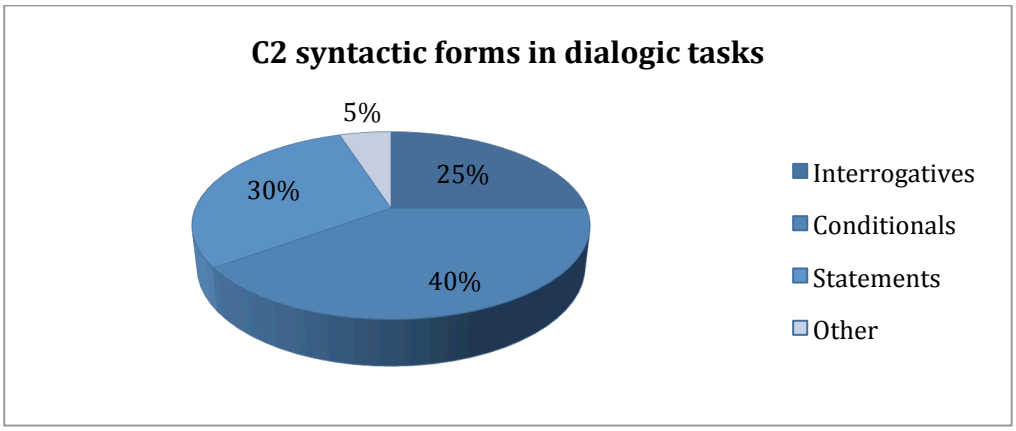

Figure 4.25: Division of syntactic forms in MRs at C2

The comparison of their use in the two tasks (Figure 4.26) also revealed that conditional structures were equally widely used in both tasks with 40% of MRs involving them. It was interesting to note the total absence of imperatives. They tended to be increasingly employed by B2 and C1 participants in D6 but seemed to be replaced by statements instead at C2. Such a choice, whether made consciously or

subconsciously, could be the result of participants' anticipation of the potentially damaging impact of this syntactic option on H, as the consequences of committing an FTA in face-to-face interactions are possibly greater than in non face-to-face communication. An example of the category of 'other' is 'I I've noticed that you gave me a:: (0.1) pretty low mark. A:nd >I was just kind of wondering< why that is' (ID: S29). This could be categorised as a statement but not one of the categories selected (i.e. want; need; would like – see 3.3.4) in this study.

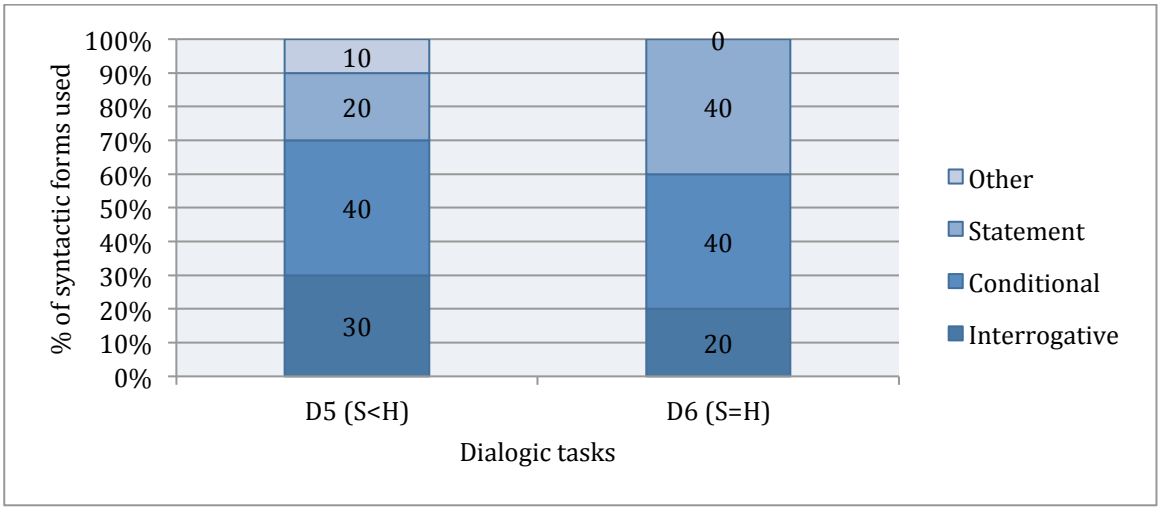

Figure 4.26: distribution of syntactic forms in MRs at C2

Lexical/phrasal modifiers

The amount of modification was the highest in dialogic tasks at this level, with the mean occurrence of 25 and median of 22.5 per person. Table 4.32 provides the statistics describing the amount of modification (mean per person) of each modifier in the two tasks separately, as well as their overall quantity (mean per person per task) in the two tasks combined. Somewhat differently from B2 and C1 participants, almost all lexical/phrasal downgraders had been used to some extent, with upgraders being the most frequent (mean per person per task: 4.25) followed by downtoners.

Table 4.32: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifiers in dialogic tasks at C2

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE						
	upgraders	*hedgers*	*politeness markers*	*subjectivizers*	*understaters*	*downtoners*	*cajolers*
D5 (S<H)	3.4	1.8	.3	.6	.8	1.5	.7

(M/person)							
D6 (S=H) *(M/person)*	5.1	3.0	-	.1	1.9	4.3	1.5
Overall *(M/person/task)*	4.25	2.4	.15	.35	1.35	2.9	1.1

The data in this table also shows that their quantity in the two tasks differed slightly as generally more modification was noted in D6 than in D5. For instance, the number of downtoners and understaters were significantly higher in the former task. Likewise, although upgraders were frequent in both tasks their quantity was greater in D6 (mean: 5.1) than in D5 (mean: 3.4). It is worth noting the significant increase in the use of hedgers (mean: 5.1) and cajolers in D6 (mean: 1.5), which seems to suggest that participants may have anticipated a dispreferred second pair part (Schegloff, 2007) and potential face threat in this task.

Relationship between imposition identified and modifiers used

According to Table 4.33, the mean imposition was slightly higher in D6 (mean: 2.7) than in D5 (mean: 2.4), although the same median (2.5) indicates that the two contexts were considered to be fairly similar in this regard by C2 participants. On the other hand, there were significant differences with regard to the quantity of modifiers employed in the two tasks as conversations produced for D6 contained almost twice as much lexical/phrasal modification.

Table 4.33: descriptive statistics of mean imposition and modifier use

	IMPOSITION		*MODIFIER USE*	
	D5 (S<H)	*D6 (S=H)*	*D5 (S<H)*	*D6 (S=H)*
Mean	2.4	2.7	9.1	15.9
Median	2.5	2.5	7	15.5
SD	1.35	1.06	5.21	4.30

The analysis of their evaluation of these contexts indicated that in D5 participants felt their request was reasonable and they had the 'right' to make it, while in D6 they seemed to be mindful of committing a potential FTA. The slightly higher imposition in D6 was often justified by referring to H's potential reaction/interpretation of the request (e.g. S25: '*You're telling someone that they're messy and dirty.'; S30: 'How the flatmate interprets it can be imposing.*') and also to their own responsibility/attitude (e.g. S27: '*I felt egoistic for wanting to oppose her.*'). Such depth of analysis seems to imply careful consideration of the

context, including H's role/feelings, almost as if trying to anticipate H's potential verbal reaction in order to plan their own response to it. Their comments also indicate a need for a high degree of tact in this context, which seems to be supported by participants' increased use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, especially of downtoners and hedgers (Table 4.32). The justification for the somewhat lower imposition in D5 included frequent comments related to H's general responsibility and their own 'rights' (e.g. S28: *'It's his job to do it.'*; S27: '*It's a basic request.'*; S22: '*She should be able to justify the decision as I'm paying for the service.*'), in fact 70% of participants made comments along these lines. On the other hand, 20% of the participants also considered the delicate nature of the task as well, for example by saying that '*It's a very delicate situation and can be taken as a complaint.' (S30)*. Such view of the context by the majority may perhaps explain why lexical/phrasal modifiers (e.g. understaters, downtoners) were used to a considerably lesser degree than in D6 (Table 4.32). Overall, the quantitative and qualitative data suggests that lexical/phrasal modification may have been guided by participants' evaluation of the different contexts.

4.2.2.4 Comparison of pragmalinguistic devices at B2-C2 in dialogic tasks

Overall, a range of syntactic forms (Table 4.34) as well as lexical/phrasal modification (Table 4.35) was employed in speech produced for the two dialogic tasks at each level, although to slightly differing degrees.

A major difference in relation to syntactic choices was the use of conditional and interrogative structures. A generally consistent use of conditionals was observed at C2 (mean: 0.8) in both tasks (Table 4.34), with 40% of MRs formulated with their use (Figure 4.27), while interrogatives were much less frequent. Conversely, C1 and especially B2 participants' MRs contained mostly interrogative structures (mean: 1.1 and 0.7 respectively) and conditionals were employed to a lesser degree (Table 4.34). This is very much in line with Bialystok's (1993) argument, according to which the acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge also involves control over the use of this knowledge, and L2 speakers often find the swift recall of appropriate utterances in online processing difficult. The present data also seems to suggest that although participants at the two lower proficiency levels (i.e. B2 and C1) were able to access a variety of syntactic forms to formulate requests in dialogic task, these may have been different from the ones they would have selected had planning

time been provided. In addition, as Faerch and Kasper (1989) rightly argue L2 speakers tend to use fewer types of syntactic structures and less often than L1 speakers, although the present data also indicates that the range and frequency of more complex syntactic forms (e.g. conditional structures) increases with proficiency (see Table 4.35).

Another observation regarding such syntactic forms was made in relation to statements. The present data showed that their quantity, interestingly, seemed to have increased slightly with proficiency (see Table 4.34). Such finding is somewhat contradictory to some other research, such as Trosborg's (1995), who noted lower level learners' reliance on 'want' statements and their decrease in more proficient learners' speech. However, a close examination of the statements in C2 speech in the present data revealed that not only were these invariably lexically/phrasally modified, possibly to lessen the impact of the request on H, but that they mostly occurred in D6 involving equal power constellation. It is, therefore, argued here that when assessing L2 pragmatic competence syntactic forms used for formulating requests need to be analysed alongside lexical/phrasal modification within syntax and also in view of the given context (e.g. social constellation).

Table 4.34: Descriptive statistics of syntactic forms in dialogic MRs (per person)

	SYNTACTIC FORMS IN DIALOGIC TASKS							
	Interrogative		*Conditional*		*Statement*		*Imperative*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	1.1 / 1	.99	.3 / 0	.67	.3 / 0	.48	.4 / 0	.69
C1	.7 / 0	.94	.4 / 0	.48	.5 / 0	.67	.2 / 0	.4
C2	.5 / 0	.7	.8 / 1	.78	.6 / .5	.69	-	-

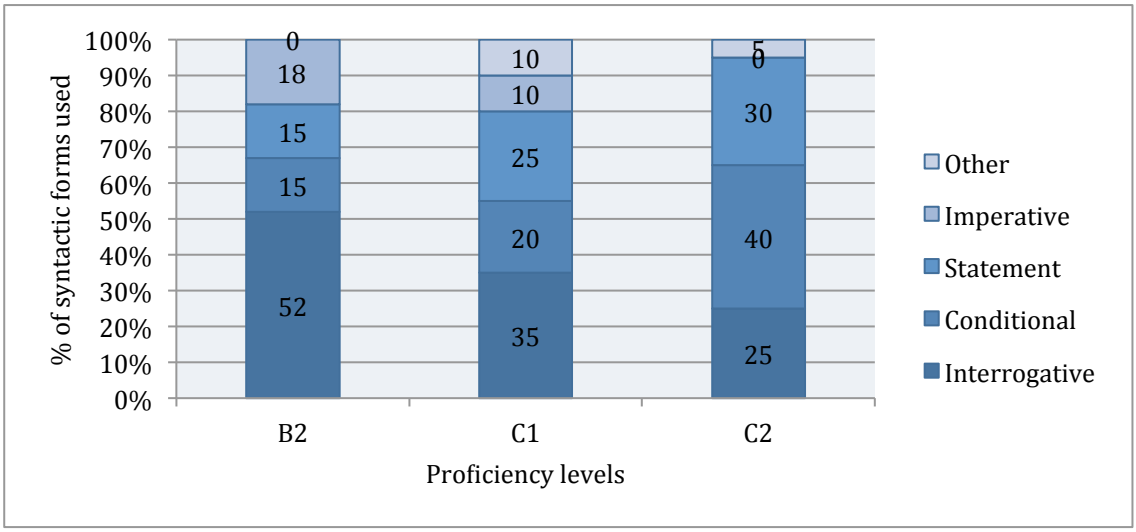

Figure 4.27: distribution of uses of syntactic forms in MRs in dialogic tasks

Besides the differing degrees in the quantity of syntactic forms employed, there were variations in terms of their grammatical complexity. Table 4.35 provides examples of variations in the same types of syntactic forms at each level. As can be seen, somewhat more grammatically complex forms, in terms of tense and aspect, were noticed in C2 speech (e.g. S30: *I was wondering whether*...), and slightly less complex ones in C1 as well as in B2 speech (e.g. S10: *If you don't mind I will ask you to…*?) with noticeable grammatical inaccuracies at times. This is very much in line with other research (e.g. Youn, 2013 and 2015; Ikeda, 2017; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2015). Al-Gahtani and Roever (2015) hypothesize that the appearance of expressions, such as 'would you mind' and 'I was wondering', only at very high proficiency levels could be explained by the complex skill involved in combining the actual request with these fixed chunks. Besides the grammatical complexity and accuracy of syntactic forms an increasing usage of lexical/phrasal modification (highlighted in blue) embedded within syntax was noted at C1 but especially at C2. In fact, while on average only 52% of MRs had been lexically/phrasally modified at B2, this rate was 70% at C1 and 85% at C2 levels. Barron's (2003) data showed similar trends in this respect, namely that grammatical complexity in pragmalinguistic features increases with proficiency. Despite research that indicates otherwise (e.g. Bouton, 1999; Roever, 2012), such findings would support Hassal (2003, p.1906) who argues that 'the development of pragmatic competence may be closely tied to the development of grammatical competence'.

Table 4.35: Sample of syntactic variation in MR formulation across levels

	B2	**C1**	**C2**
Interrogative	*Can you…? (S1)*	*Can you please…? (S14)*	*Can you please…? (S26)*
Conditional	***If** you don't mind I will ask you to… (S10)*	***If** you don't mind I'd like just to… (S20)*	*I was wondering **whether** you could (S30)*
Statement	*I would like more… (S2)*	*I'd like to ask you sincerely to please… (S13)*	*I would just like to… (S22)*

As already touched upon in previous paragraphs, the extent to which lexical/phrasal modifiers had been employed to modify SAs varied across the proficiency levels (Figure 4.28 and Table 4.36). For instance, cajolers (e.g. you know) were noticeably absent in B2 speech and only appeared in C1 and C2 speech production. The explanation for such phenomenon might be either that the noticing/acquisition of cajolers only take place at higher proficiency levels or that it is only at these levels that speakers possess enough

cognitive capacity to produce them in face-to-face interaction. Some other modifiers showed a consistent increase with proficiency. For instance, the quantity of hedgers jumped from mean of 0.15 (per person per task) at B2 to 2.4 at C2 (Table 4.36). A similar trend was noted in the quantity of downtoners, undertaters and upgraders, although SD figures indicate that there were greater individual differences in the two higher proficiency groups. Such findings are consistent with Trosborg (1995, p.430), who claims that with increasing language control more modification is evident in L2 speech. One could argue that this is purely a sign of proficiency, their syntactically embedded position may simply prevent less proficient learners from using them in speech. Nevertheless, it is argued here that their use could still be random at advanced level ignoring the given context but the analysis of the relationship between the identified imposition and the quantity of modification employed in the present dialogic tasks points otherwise, as will be elaborated on later in this section.

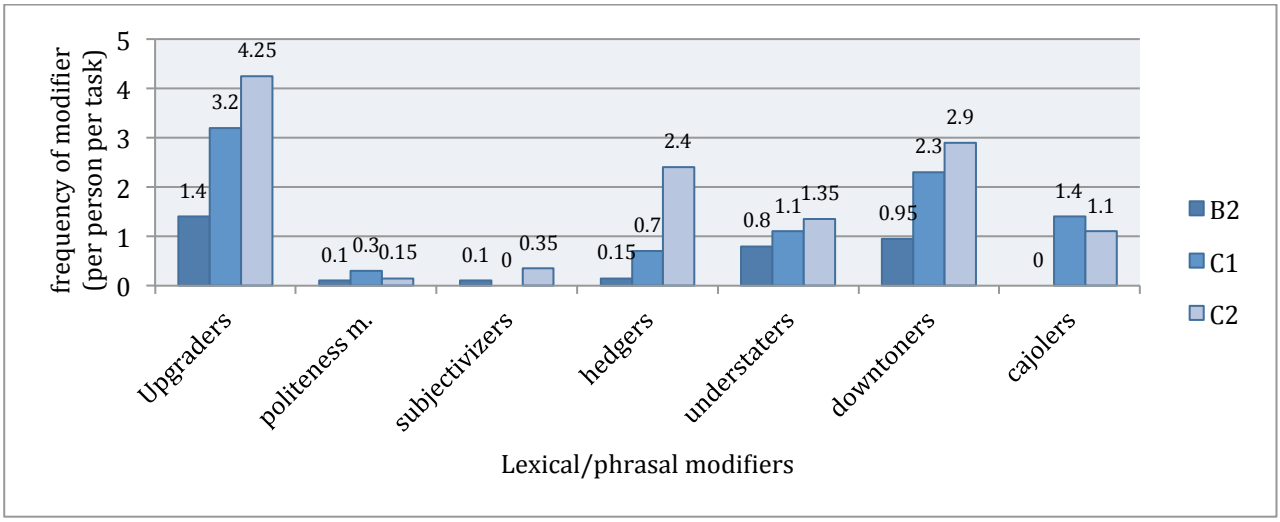

Figure 4.28: Descriptive statistics of all lexical/phrasal modifiers in dialogic tasks

Table 4.36: Descriptive statistics of lexical/phrasal modifier use in all SAs in dialogic tasks (frequency per person per task)

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL MODIFIER USE IN DIALOGIC TASKS													
	upgraders		*politeness markers*		*subjectivizers*		*hedgers*		*understaters*		*downtoners*		*cajolers*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	1.4 / 1	1.26	.1 / 0	.21	.1 / 0	.21	.15 / 0	.33	.8 / .75	.48	.95 / .5	1.01	-	-
C1	3.2 / 3	1.73	.3 / .25	.34	-	-	.7 / .5	1.2	1.1 / 1	.96	2.35 / 1.5	2.72	1.4 / 1.25	1.3
C2	4.25 / 4	1.49	.15 / 0	.24	.35 / 0	.66	2.4 / 1.75	1.92	1.35 / 1	1.15	2.9 / 2.75	2.18	1.1 / .75	1.41

The range of each type of lexical/phrasal modifier at the different proficiency levels showed some similarities and also some differences (Table 4.37). Amongst upgraders '*so /really/very'* were employed at all three levels and in generally great numbers, whilst some other upgraders only appeared at C1 and C2. On

the whole, C2 participants used the widest range, including for instance '*extremely'* and '*completely',* although admittedly not very frequently and not everyone in the group. As highlighted above, the present findings confirm other research findings that point to the rise in quantifier use as proficiency develops (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Dalmau and Gotor, 2007; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). In addition, the present data also revealed that such increase in the number of upgraders was also accompanied by an increase in their range. According to the data in Table 4.38, it appears that range of upgraders employed was twice as many at C1 (16) than at B2 (8), and widened further at C2 (19).

Table 4.37: Descriptive statistics of upgrader division in dialogic tasks

	LEXICAL/PHRASAL UPGRADER USE IN DIALOGIC TASKS													
	so	very	really	quite	at least	please	completely	absolutely	exactly	particularly	pretty	definitely	such	other
B2 token= 28	14%	21%	18%	21%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%	12%
C1 token= 69	16%	25%	16%	1.5%	9%	9%	4%	4%	-	-	1.5%	1.5%	-	12.5%
C2 token= 87	5%	22%	31%	9%	5%	-	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	-	15%

Table 4.38: Type/token ratio of upgraders in dialogic tasks

	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	8	28	0.28
C1	16	69	0.23
C2	19	87	0.22

Likewise, the range of downgraders revealed significant differences amongst the three proficiency levels. Generally, C2 participants tended to use the widest range in the use of most individual downgraders.

Hedgers occurred in every C2 participant's speech, while only 60% of C1 and 20% of B2 participants employed them. The data reveals an increased use of hedgers at C1 and C2, and shows that even these two proficiency levels displayed significant variation with C2 speech containing more than 3 times as many hedgers as C1 and 16 times as many as B2 speech (Table 4.39). The type/token ratio is the lowest at C2, but it does not seem to reflect the true level of proficiency in this case. In terms of the range of hedgers, it is worth noting that despite the same token numbers C1 and C2 (i.e. type: 6) there were significant differences

in their frequency, as the most commonly type of hedger '*maybe'* at C1 changed to the frequent use of '*kind of*', '*sort of*' and '*I guess*' at C2 (Table 4.40).

Table 4.39: Type/token ratio of hedgers in dialogic tasks

	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	1	3	0.33
C1	6	14	0.43
C2	6	48	0.24

Table 4.40: Descriptive statistics of hedger division in dialogic tasks

	HEDGERS IN DIALOGIC TASKS				
	maybe	I guess	kind of	sort of	seem
B2 token=20	-	-	100%	-	-
C1 token=46	50%	7%	7%	-	-
C2 token=58	-	15%	33%	21%	4%

A similar trend was observable in the use of understaters; with increasing proficiency the quantity, although not the range, of understaters (i.e. *'just', 'a bit'/'a little bit'* and *'some')* also increased (Table 4.41). However, the difference across levels was not as significant, neither in quantity nor in range, as in the case of hedgers.

Table 4.41: Type/token ratio of understaters in dialogic tasks

	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	6	16	0.38
C1	6	22	0.27
C2	6	21	0.29

On the other hand, the use of downtoners showed significant variation across the proficiency levels (Tables 4.42 and 4.43). Their quantity (token: 20) and range (type: 2) was the smallest at B2, however, their number increased considerably at C1 (token: 46) and especially at C2 (token: 58) although their range remained almost the same, 'just' and 'maybe' being the most common at all three levels. Such increase in their usage is consistent with other research findings (e.g. Trosborg, 1995) and may perhaps be an indication of not only increased linguistic ability but also of freed up cognitive capacity to pre-plan utterances, as was the case of

C1 and C2 learners in the present study, who were able to frequently modify the force of requests by downtoners, despite their grammatically more complex intra-sentential position.

Table 4.42: Descriptive statistics of downtoner division in dialogic tasks

	DOWNTONER USE IN DIALOGIC TASKS				
	just	maybe	perhaps	might	others
B2	45%	55%	-	-	-
C1	61%	20%	4%	11%	4%
C2	52%	40%	5%	-	3%

Table 4.43: Type/token ratio of downtoners in dialogic tasks

	Type	**Token**	**Type/token ratio**
B2	2	20	0.1
C1	6	46	0.13
C2	5	58	0.09

Finally, cajolers were only apparent at the two higher levels. This is interesting as they were almost completely absent from C1 and C2 participants' speech produced for the monologic tasks. One possible explanation is the face-to-face nature of this task, where establishing harmony between interlocutors (i.e. the role of cajolers) is desirable and in most cases essential.

Participants' evaluation of the two different task contexts, within which these lexical/phrasal modifiers appeared, showed similarities as well as differences. B2 and C2 participants' evaluation was generally the same as they identified D6 (S=H) as involving slightly higher imposition than D5 (S<H) (Figure 4.29 and Table 4.44). In the subsequent semi-structured interview C2 participants justified the higher imposition in D6 with the potentially confrontational context (i.e. their request could imply accusation: flatmate was unclean), while B2 participants' comments were somewhat less explicit about the reason for their judgement. Conversely, at C1 higher imposition was assigned to D5 than to D6, justified by the fact that the request in the former could be interpreted as a complaint. Thus, all participants made their own, seemingly slightly different, interpretation of the two contexts.

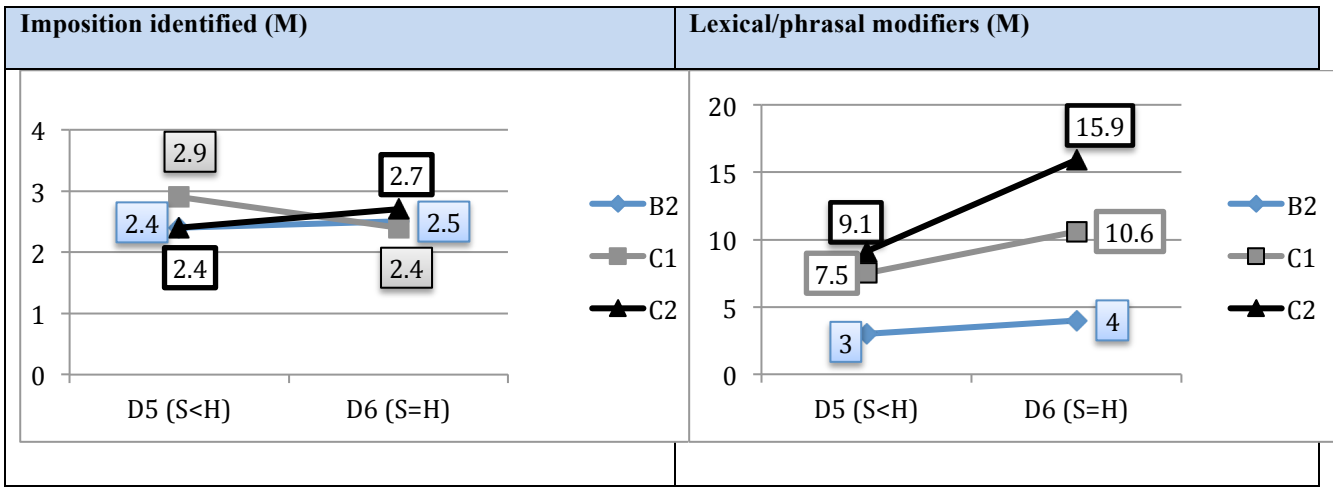

Figure 4.29: Relationship between imposition identified and lexical/phrasal modifier use in dialogic tasks **(M per person)**

Table 4.44: descriptive statistics of participants' evaluation of imposition and modifier use in SA

	IMPOSITION				*MODIFIER USE*			
	D5 (S<H)		*D6 (S=H)*		*D5 (S<H)*		*D6 (S=H)*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	2.4 /2	1.07	2.5 /3	1.18	3 /3	1.76	4 /4	2.21
C1	2.9 /3	.87	2.4 /2	1.07	7.5 /5	6.45	10.6 /10	6.81
C2	2.4 /2.5	1.35	2.7 /2.5	1.06	9.1 /7	5.21	15.9 /15.5	4.3

The comparison between participants' evaluation of the context and language use led to a number of observations. The data showed (Table 4.44) that there was a slight discrepancy at C1 as participants used more extensive lexical/phrasal modification in D6 (mean: 10.6), where they identified lower imposition (mean: 2.4 as opposed to mean 2.9 in D5). In contrast, B2 and C2 participants' language use in terms of modifier quantity generally seemed to reflect their evaluation of the imposition, as in their speech more modification was employed in D6 where higher imposition was identified. However, it was noted that while C2 participants mostly justified their markedly greater modification in D6 in the semi-structured interview; as their comments seemed to imply that in their view much more caution was needed in D6 than in D5; B2 participants' comments seemed to be somewhat contradictory to their own intention. This might suggest heightened awareness of the relationship between language use and context (e.g. imposition) at C2, consequently resulting in better ability to match language use to communicative goal at this level. Indeed, comments such as '*I wanted to give the message without hurting anyone*' (ID: S29) or '*It's very confrontational and there's less structure to the message*' (ID: S27) may support this claim.

Such suggestion could perhaps be also further supported by the examination of the extent to which certain modifiers were employed in dialogic tasks. Table 4.45 presents the use of hedgers and downtoners (mean, median, SD per person) in the two tasks. The data shows that B2 participants' used slightly more hedgers (mean: 0.3) and downtoners (mean: 1.2) in D6 than in D5. Thus, seemingly in accordance with their evaluation of the imposition level they softened the impact of their request by these modifiers. Likewise, more downtoners were employed at C1 in D6 (mean: 3), despite the fact that their identified imposition was actually lower in this task. However, C2 participants displayed a seemingly strategic use of these modifiers employing noticeably more in D6 (mean of hedgers: 9.1, downtoners: 3) than in D5 (mean of hedgers: 1.8, downtoners: 1.5) in accordance with their identified level of imposition.

Table 4.45: Descriptive statistics of selected lexical/phrasal downgraders' use in dialogic tasks

	D5				*D6*			
	hedgers		*downtoners*		*hedgers*		*downtoners*	
	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD	M/med.	SD
B2	-	-	.7 /0	1.25	.3 /0	.67	1.2 /1	1.54
C1	.7 /0	1.88	1.7 /1	2.16	.7 /.5	.82	3 /2	3.82
C2	1.8 /1	2.2	1.5 /1	1.26	9.1 /7	5.21	3 /2.5	2.44

Overall, the following features have been highlighted regarding the use of pragmalinguistic devices in dialogic tasks.

- The most frequently employed syntactic forms were conditional structures at C2 and interrogatives at B2 and C1.
- Regarding lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders, their quantity and range generally increased with proficiency. In fact, it grew significantly in the case of hedgers, downtoners and cajolers.
- In their evaluation of the two different dialogic contexts B2 and C2 participants were generally close, while C1 speakers differed in this respect. In addition, it was highlighted that comments made to justify evaluation of the context during the semi-structured interviews tended to deepen with proficiency, with frequent references to the future consequences of the request as well as to the relationship between language use, social context and speaker's intention.

- Finally, it was suggested that the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers in speech tended to be generally more in accordance with participants' evaluation of imposition at C2 than either at B2 or C1 levels.

4.2.3 Comparison of pragmalinguistic devices in speech at B2-C2 levels in the two task formats

Data obtained from the two task formats exhibited similar features in terms of pragmalinguistic devices employed at the three proficiency levels. Table 4.46 is a summary of the general findings related to four pragmatic features, (1) syntactic forms (2) lexical/phrasal modification (3) participants' evaluation of contexts (4) adjustment of language, in both task formats. Overall, it was concluded that, despite differences in the amount of speech produced not only across levels but also across individuals, consistent with much research into the development of L2 requests (e.g. Rose, 2000; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Felix-Brasdefer, 2017), there was gradually more fine-tuning of requests through the use of modification and more complex syntax with increasing proficiency. It was also suggested the adjustment of language seemed to relate noticeably more to participants' own evaluation of the given context at C2.

Table 4.46: summary of pragmalinguistic devices in the two task formats

	Monologic	***Dialogic***
Syntactic forms: MRs	▪ the use of conditional structures increased with proficiency ▪ the quantity of interrogatives and statements declined	▪ conditional structures were most frequently employed at C2 ▪ B2 and C1 speech contained more interrogatives
Lexical/phrasal upgraders and downgraders	quantity and range increased with proficiency	quantity and range generally increased with proficiency, especially in the case of hedgers, downtoners and cajolers.
Evaluation of task contexts	depth of analysis of the different contexts seemed to increase with proficiency	depth of analysis tended to deepen with proficiency, with frequent references to the future consequences of the request as well as to the relationship between language use, social context and speaker's intention
Adjusting language	the usage of lexical/phrasal modifiers tended to reflect the identified imposition more closely with increasing proficiency.	the quantity of lexical/phrasal modifiers seemed to be generally more in accordance with participants' evaluation of imposition at C2 than at B2 or C1

Table 4.47 is a summary of findings in relation to syntactic forms in MRs, showing the mean (M), median (m) and standard deviation (SD) figures per person per task. The data reveals that in terms of syntactic

structures there was a gradual decrease in the use of interrogatives and an increasing preference for conditional structures with increasing proficiency in both task formats (Table 4.47). This finding is consistent with Al-Gahtani and Roever (2015) who found the same trend in their role-play data conducted with upper-intermediate and advanced learners. However, in my data conditional structures were the most common syntactic forms in monologic MR formulation at all three levels, whilst in dialogic tasks this trend was only the case in C2 speech, as B2 and C1 participants seemed to rely more on the syntactically less complex interrogative structures. It was argued that as the production of grammatically more complex conditional structures requires more cognitive capacity during online processing, this may prevent less proficient L2 speakers, such as C1 but especially B2 speakers, from employing them as often as they perhaps intend to in face to face interactions.

Table 4.47: descriptive statistics of syntactic forms in MRs (per person per task)

	MONOLOGIC TASKS								*DIALOGIC TASKS*							
	interrogatives		*conditionals*		*statements*		*imperatives*		*interrogatives*		*conditionals*		*statements*		*imperatives*	
	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD	M/m	SD
B2	.3/.25	.3	.5/.5	.33	.37/.25	.24	.12/0	.17	.55/.5	.49	.15/0	.33	.15/0	.24	.2/0	.34
C1	.27/.12	.32	.52/5	.18	.2/.25	.78	.22/.25	.18	.35/0	.47	.2/0	.25	.25/0	.35	.1/0	.21
C2	.12/0	.17	.72/.75	.29	.15/0	.21	.07/0	.16	.25/0	.35	.4/.5	.39	.3/.25	.34	-	-

Regarding lexical/phrasal modification, speech produced for both task formats showed not only a gradual increase in modifier numbers but also a wider range apparent in more proficient participants' speech. In addition, it was also noted that the amount of lexically/phrasally modified MRs increased (Figure 4.30). For instance, in monologic tasks there was a gradual increase from 55% of modified MRs at B2 to 83% at C2. It is acknowledged that, as Al-Gahtani (2010) warns, learners tend to produce speech that is 'unnaturally rich' in language features if they know that their speech-production is examined. However, in the present study learners were not aware of the kind of language that was in focus, which, it is hoped, may have resulted in them producing language similar to that of real life, at least in terms pragmalinguistic features.

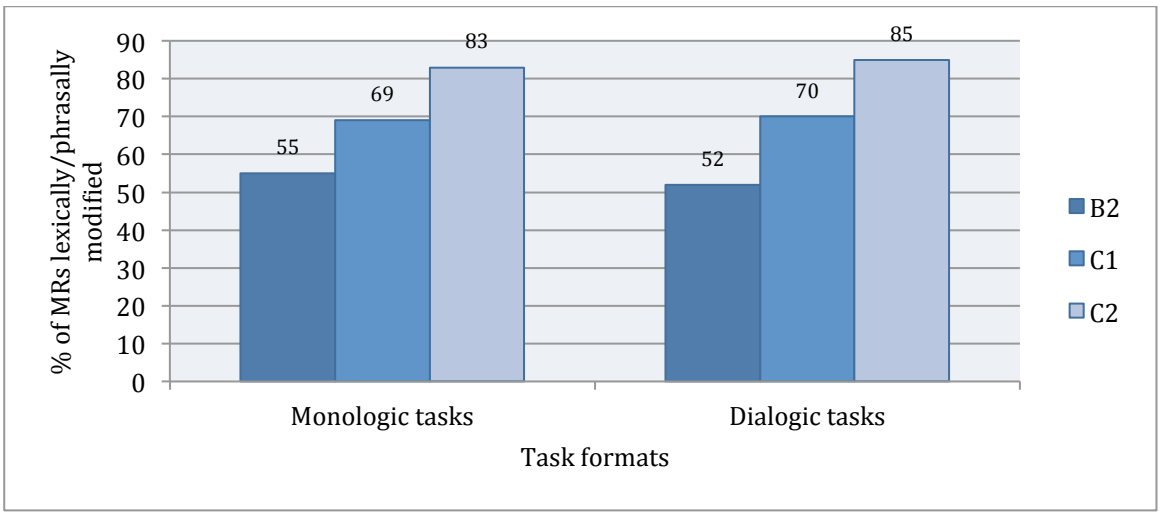

Figure 4.30: overall percentage of MRs lexically/phrasally modified

A further observation was that lexical/phrasal modification (per person per task) increased in dialogic tasks at all three proficiency levels (Table 4.47). However, the extent of such increase varied considerably, and whilst it was less remarkable at B2 (mean per person: 2.8 ➔ 3.6), it doubled at C1 (mean: 4.5 ➔ 9.5) and C2 levels (mean: 6.07 ➔ 12.5). A closer analysis of the median numbers and SD also indicate that this growth in quantity was most consistent at C2. One could perhaps argue that the increase in speech production in dialogic tasks (Table 4.47) might, naturally, result in growth in lexical/phrasal modification, however, such development was not parallel at each level. For example, although C1 speech showed the biggest increase (approximately 231% compared to that of 193% at C2 and 183% at B2), the increase in modification was not the highest at this level. It is also worth noting that even those C2 participants who employed only few modifiers in monologic tasks employed noticeably more in dialogic tasks. Ellis (2004) argues that tasks closely imitating spontaneous conversation (i.e. dialogic tasks in this study) are more likely to elicit implicit knowledge, as there is limited opportunity for pre-planning speech. If the present findings do indeed reveal participants' implicit knowledge of the importance of employing modification, it would mean that awareness of the increasing need for lexical/phrasal modification in face-to-face interaction as well as the ability to act upon this awareness already exist at B2 and gradually increases with proficiency. In addition, it could perhaps be also argued that dialogic tasks may be just as effective at revealing explicit knowledge of L2 pragmatic features as monologic tasks, at least at B2-C2 levels. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) calls for the development of a measure that capture the change in L2 pragmatic knowledge and I believe that the examination of the same/similar range of modifiers to this study in L2 speech through the use of monologic

or dialogic tasks would be very likely to allow practitioners, for example, in language testing to assess such change across B2-C2 proficiency levels.

Table 4.47: overall descriptive statistics of speech production in the two task formats (per person per task)

	MONOLOGIC TASKS				*DIALOGIC TASKS*			
	Lexical/phrasal modifier		*No. of words*		*Lexical/phrasal modifiers*		*No. of words by Ss*	
	M/med	SD	M/med	SD	M/med	SD	M/med	SD
B2	2.8 /2.12	1.51	96.82 /81.25	38.33	3.6 /3	1.46	176.05/180.75	50.46
C1	4.5 /5	2.17	94.07 /94.37	28.41	9.5 /6.75	6.28	218.45 /196.5	79.91
C2	6.07 /4.37	3.54	137.82/130.5	53.51	12.5 /11.25	3.69	265.25/264.25	55.77

With regard to the usage of these modifiers, it was argued that although all three levels attempted to use them in accordance with their evaluation of the context (i.e. identified imposition), it was mostly C2 participants who seemed to use them strategically and generally in accordance with their own evaluation.

4.3 Summary of features indicating language adjustment (RQ4)

Identifying how speech is adjusted to different contexts is a complex matter and relying purely on the quantity of linguistic features employed would be inadequate to draw conclusions regarding L2 pragmatic competence without taking into consideration speakers' own evaluation of the given context as well as their intention in the communicative act. Of course, a natural concern could lie in the nature of self-assessment as it relies on participants' subjective evaluation and judgement. However, it is believed to be a valuable source of evidence in the present study as two factors, (1) participants' awareness that this was not a high-stake test and (2) attempts were made to provide a relaxing interview environment (see Section 3.3.3), may have allowed at least some insight into their real intentions. As observations in relation to the overlap between participants' intention and language use have been scattered in the previous two sections (i.e 4.1 and 4.2), this section aims to summarise these findings.

Preliminary interactional work

The data presented in 4.1 suggested that with increasing proficiency there tended to be more preliminary interactional work leading up to the actual request and there was more linguistic transition between the different preliminary interactional components. It was also highlighted that in dialogic tasks participants at each level took on a leading role in D6 (S=H), while in D5 (S<H) this role was mostly relinquished to H apart from C2 participants, who still tended to drive the conversation, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree than in D6, by initiating future action more frequently. Another observation in dialogic tasks was in relation to showing sensitivity to H. Data revealed that participants at each level appeared to, on the one hand, (1) adhere to Grice's (1975) co-operative principle of manner, according to which speakers need to be brief when necessary and, on the other, (2) produce preliminary interactional work if it is anticipated that a request might receive a dispreferred response (Schegloff, 2007). Indeed, in D5 (S<H) all participants tended to produce longer turns, but still including a number of necessary preliminary interactional features, thus seemingly showed their awareness of H's availability and time. On the other hand, in D6 (S=H) participants at each level produced a number of short turns seemingly to assess H's willingness to perform the request. It was also noted that this tendency to assess/respond to H's comments/attitude and show active listening seemed to increase with proficiency as set phrases such as '*Okay that makes sense*.' appeared with increasing frequency in C1 but especially in C2 speech.

Syntactic formulation of requests

Regarding the directness of requests in monologic tasks, it was noted that for example in M2, where participants had to ask a hearer (H) to perform their wish (i.e. finish presentation slides) 70% of B2 participants opted for implying the request, whereas, only 40% of C1 and only 10% of C2 participants chose this option. I believe that opting for an explicit expression to formulate the request by C1 and C2 participants was possibly done consciously, based on their assessment of the context (i.e. power constellation: S=H; low imposition).

The choice of directness was also noted in dialogic tasks, especially in D6 (S=H) where the task was to ask a flatmate to do some cleaning. Figure 4.31 shows the percentage of B2-C2 participants' making direct or

implied requests, as well as 'face' related statements, in the two dialogic tasks. As can be seen, 70% of C2 participants opted for implying the request, whereas, only 50% of C1 and 30% of B2 participants chose this option in D6. A plausible explanation for this might be C2 participants' evaluation of the context as potentially 'face-threatening', resulting in such linguistic choice. Indeed, many referred to the sensitive nature of the context in D6 in the subsequent interview, for example, by making comments such as '*You're telling someone that they're messy and dirty*' (ID: S25) and '*I felt egoistic for wanting to oppose her*' (ID: S27). This might also explain why 80% of C2 participants used 'face' related statements in their speech (e.g. S26: *'I'm] not criticizing you.'*; S22: *'I guess we're raised differently'*), whereas, only 10% of C1 and none of the B2 participants did the same. Such statements also seem to indicate C2 speakers' heightened awareness of the potentially more 'face-threatening' nature of face-to-face conversations.

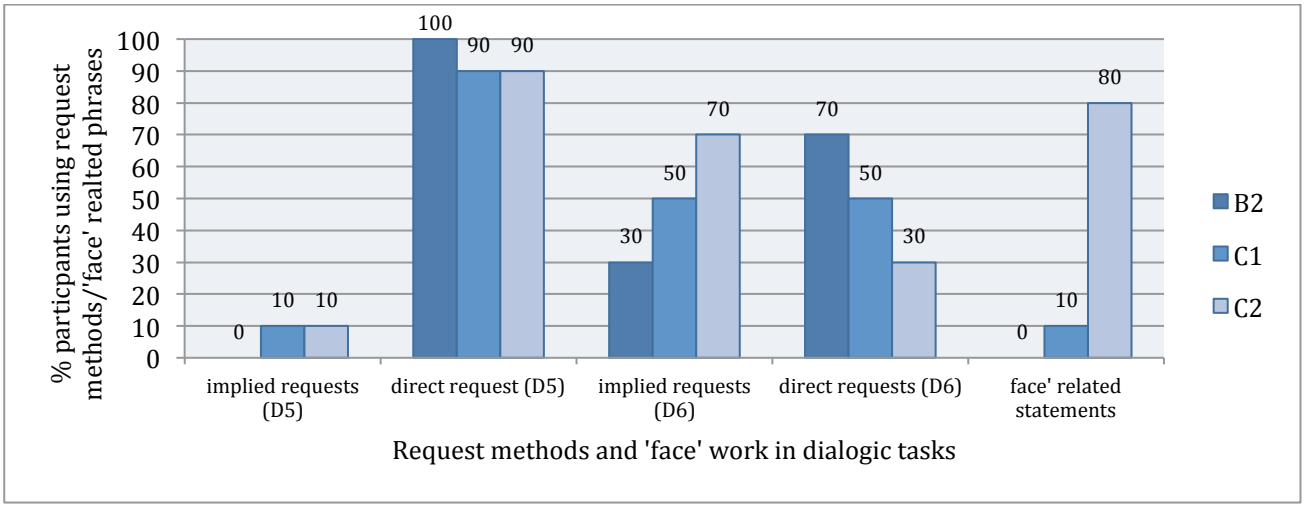

Figure 4.31: Distribution of request methods and 'face' work in dialogic tasks (% of participants)

Another observation related to increased syntactic variation and less repetition in request formulation as proficiency progressed. While 70% of B2 participants reverted to the same syntactic form in monologic tasks, only 30% of C1 participants and 20% of C2 participants used the same form in no more than three tasks. Even if the same syntactic form was employed at these two levels it was not infrequently lexically/phrasally modified. However, such claim needs to be made with some caution as this may simply imply increased linguistic ability to consciously select and produce more complex syntactic forms to formulate requests. Table 4.48 presents typical examples of request formulation in the different monologic tasks at B2, C1 and C2. As the examples show, the same syntactic form involving 'can' (in bold), with very

little lexical/phrasal modification (in blue), was employed in all four tasks at B2. Conversely, the syntactic form tended to vary at the two higher proficiency levels, frequently including lexical/phrasal modification as well as CRs expressing appreciation (in blue).

Table 4.48: Sample of request formulation in monologic tasks across levels

	B2 participant (ID: S5)	C1 participant (ID: S14)	C2 participant (ID: S25)
M1	***can I*** *got a:n (0.2) extension (0.1) on (0.1) >my essay deadline< today?*	***I was wondering if< (.) if it's possible*** *for me to get an exte::nsion (.) for the deadline*	***I would really like to ask you for*** *(.) e::rm for an extension (.) to (.) an extension of the deadline basically. If I could have a few more days to complete the assignment (.) that would be much much appreciated*
M2	***We can*** *go to:: the coffee shop to do it together.*	***if you can plea::se*** *finish it today*	*this is quite crucial that you do it ...* ***if you could just make sure that you*** *finish finish it today,*
M3	*I want your help.* ***Can you*** *give me some opinion on my (.) draft?*	***I'm just calling to::: ask for*** *so:me (.) feedback on my:: (.) actual draft. If it's possible, that would be great*	***I've been wondering if (.) whether you could*** *have a look at (.) the draft that I've prepared so far. ... That would be great.*
M4	***Can you*** *please give me one more day?*	***if it's possible*** *for you to (0.1) just I keep it for another day*	***I: I was wondering whether (.) I could*** *have a look at the book for one more day. ...it would be great if I could keep it for one more day.*

Table 4.49 provides examples of the same feature in dialogic tasks. As can be seen, the syntactic difference (in bold) is not as noticeable as in speech produced for monologic tasks, which may be due to the online nature of these tasks requiring instantaneous speech production without any planning time. Al-Gahtani and Roever (2015) also found similar trends in terms of syntactic forms thus concluded that their participants did not adjust their language. However, I would like to highlight the increasing use of lexical/phrasal modification (in blue), especially at C2, which might indicate adjustment but through lexical rather than syntactic choices.

Table 4.49: Sample of adjusting language to context in dialogic tasks

	D5 (S<H)	D6 (S=H)
B2 *S4*	***can I ask you***< *for reason? Why you give such a low mark?*	>***Can you help me*** *to< like (.) clean (.) a little bit?*
S10	*::,* ***if you don't mind (0.2) I will (.) I will ask you to*** *(0.1) explain it to me more.*	***if you don't mind, I'll ask you to*** *be a little bit more tidy and clean.*
C1 S11	*So::* ***would it be possible to*** *(.) to check my mark again?*	***I think you should*** *be a bit a bit teamworker.*

S15	*So **can you** please clarify it for me?*	*Janet, I I have this idea (.) about the:: ( ) cleaning in our house. Erm (.) **can we** organise a rota? So we clean things in turn*
C2 S25	*for a:::nd we::ll **if you could** just explain why my mark is so low?*	*maybe **if we could** all (.) work a bit better o::n keeping the house tidy that'll be that'd be great*
S23	*A::nd I was going through it (.) a::nd **I** just **wanted** your feedback (.) erm on it (.) because*	***we** just **wanted to** (.) make sure it's clean and everyone does their bit.*

Lexical/phrasal modification of requests

As highlighted previously (see Figure 4.30 in 4.2.3), the number of lexically/phrasally modified MRs tended to increase with proficiency. Table 4.50 reports on how the quantity of such modification changed in the different contexts at the three proficiency levels. While MRs in tasks involving unequal power constellation were consistently modified (e.g. 100% of MRs modified in M3 and D5) at C2, C1 and B2 participants seemed to be somewhat less consistent in this regard, as at times more lexical/phrasal modification was employed in tasks involving equal power constellation (e.g. M2). Similarly, Trosborg (1995, p.428) also found that only more proficient learners were able to adjust their language to the given context to some extent by varying internal modification. Therefore, she argues that "only when learners have acquired a wider range of communicative strategies and modificational devices can they begin to deliberately select strategies and markers according to the demands of the social situation". Rose's (2000) findings also correlate with Trosborg's, indicating that the acquisition of adjusting pragmalinguistic devices to social context only happens at a later stage of proficiency. The question is at what stage this adjustment takes place, and what 'norm' their language is adjusted to. It is argued here that in an L2 context, the L1 'norm' should also be complemented to some extent by L2 'norms', in other words, speakers' own evaluation of a given context and subsequently their own intention in that context. It is believed that with increasing proficiency and cognitive capacity L2 speakers are able to evaluate the social context in greater depth more swiftly and act upon their own evaluation by selecting appropriate (i.e. according to own intention) pragmalinguistic devices. The data in the present study seems to indicate that B2 speakers already attempted to employ lexical/phrasal modification in accordance with their own intention and that this competence increased with proficiency.

Table 4.50: Descriptive statistics of MRs modified by lexical and phrasal upgraders/downgraders in each task (%)

	PERCENTAGE OF LEXICALLY/PHRASALLY MODIFIED MRs IN EACH TASK					
	M1 (S<H)	***M2 (S=H)***	***M3 (S<H)***	***M4 (S=H)***	***D5 (S<H)***	***D6 (S=H)***
B2	55%	77%	53%	33%	50%	60%
C1	46%	82%	85%	67%	60%	80%
C2	83%	73%	100%	75%	100%	70%

Another type of lexical/phrasal modification feature worth mentioning is the appearance of CRs showing appreciation in C1 and C2 speakers' speech. B2 participants' speech lacked these completely, while their use was noticeable in C1 speech (mean per person per task: 0.33, median: 0.08), although mainly in monologic tasks with few instances in dialogic tasks. Their frequency of use increased even more noticeably in C2 speech (mean per person per task: 0.58, median: 0.16), especially in tasks where higher imposition was identified. Although some argue that the development of CR knowledge and use does not develop in parallel with proficiency (e.g. Barron, 2003; Roever, 2006, 2012), there is other research (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos, 2011) indicating an increased ability to use CRs as proficiency develops and noting some grammatical development in their acquisition, which is very much in line with the present findings. One could argue that this might simply imply the increase of lexical repertoire, however, the present findings also seemed to indicate that advanced L2 speakers were able to use them according to context. Indeed, C1 and C2 participants employed hardly any CRs to express appreciation in M2, which was identified as having the lowest imposition and involved requesting the performance of a wish.

Evaluation of the given context

As discussed previously, assessing L2 pragmatic language use without taking speakers' intentions into consideration is not complete. The semi-structured interviews conducted in the present study indicated that, in order to achieve their communicative goal, all participants had considered the context to some degree before language production. As expected, their evaluations in terms of the degree of imposition differed slightly but were, on the whole, fairly similar (Table 4.51).

Table 4.51: overall descriptive statistics of participants' evaluation of imposition in the six tasks

	MONOLOGIC TASKS								*DIALOGIC TASKS*			
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*D5 (S<H)*		*D6 (S=H)*	
	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD
B2	2.8 (3)	.4	2.7(2.5)	1.25	2 (2)	1.05	3 (3)	.47	2.4 (2)	1.075	2.5 (3)	1.18
C1	2.9 (3)	1.2	2 (2)	.94	2.2 (2)	.79	3 (3)	.94	2.9 (3)	.876	2.4 (2)	1.075
C2	2.5 (3)	1.18	1.6 (1)	.84	2.2 (2)	.92	3.3 (4)	1.05	2.4 (2.5)	1.35	2.7 (2.5)	1.6

Table 4.52: Lexical/phrasal modification in each task

	MONOLOGIC TASKS								*DIALOGIC TASKS*			
	M1 (S<H)		*M2 (S=H)*		*M3 (S<H)*		*M4 (S=H)*		*D5 (S<H)*		*D6 (S=H)*	
	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD	M(median)	SD
B2	2.5 (2)	2.12	2.5(2)	1.43	2.9(2)	2.02	3.3(2.5)	2.26	3 (3)	1.76	4 (4)	2.21
C1	4.3 (4.5)	2.94	3.7(4)	2.05	4.6(5)	2.71	5.4 (5)	2.22	7.5 (5)	6.45	10.6 (10)	6.81
C2	7.7 (7)	4.73	4.2(3)	3.29	5.9(5)	3.03	6.5 (4)	4.42	9.1 (7)	5.21	15.9 (15.5)	4.30

The comparison of participants' evaluation of imposition, their comments regarding the social context and their speech production resulted in a number of observations. First of all, as discussed in section 4.2.3 (see Table 4.47) participants at each level, but especially at C1 and C2, employed noticeably more lexical/phrasal modification in dialogic tasks to soften the force of their request, which might indicate their increased awareness of committing potential FTAs in face-to-face conversations. Another noted feature was that the amount of modification in C2 speech appeared to vary in accordance with participants' subjective assessment of the imposition level in each task (Table 4.52). In other words, generally more modification was used in tasks evaluated as having higher imposition (highlighted in blue), with the exception of M4, where somewhat less modification appeared than would have been expected based on their rating of imposition level. However, this was justified by participants' comments made in relation to the assumed relationship in this task (i.e. friends). Likewise, C1 and B2 participants also attempted to vary lexical/phrasal modification in accordance with their own evaluation of imposition, although seemingly to a lesser degree than C2 participants and at times somewhat contradictorily to their identified level of imposition (e.g. highlighted in green). Some argue that EFL learners' development in sociopragmatic skills is slower than ESL learners' (e.g. Matsumura, 2001, 2003) and, consequently, adjusting their speech to the social/power constellation in any given context is much less effective (Rose, 2000). I would also argue that similar trends can be observed amongst ESL (to which group the present participants belonged having lived in an L1 environment for some time) learners but the slow progression in their case could perhaps be also attributed to differing proficiency levels rather than sociopragmatic skills.

Regarding the participants' evaluation of the different contexts, it has been discussed (in section 4.2.1.4) that while participants at each level considered their own as well as H's general responsibility, it was only at C1 and especially at C2 where increasingly more comments related to the nature of the relationship between interlocutors and H's potential reaction to the request. In particular, C2 participants frequently hypothesized about H's feelings (e.g. S27: '*I tried to imagine why she hasn't done it.' S30: 'Potentially upsetting someone, maybe a friend.')*, thus showing sensitivity, and the consequences and of their utterances (e.g. S25: '*It causes confrontation.').* Language issues have also been touched upon in C2 evaluation (e.g. S28: *'I thought about the language to make the professor to feel sorry.').* Overall, the depth of analysis appeared to increase with proficiency, which, I would argue, could not be explained solely by differences in personality or culture, as all present participants had various individual/cultural backgrounds, and increased freed up cognitive capacity could have also contributed to enabling more proficient L2 speakers to be more aware of contextual variables and less occupied by forming grammatically correct sentences. As Field (2011, p.86) argues, with increasing proficiency L2 speakers tend to pay more attention to "the effectiveness with which the message has been conveyed". In order to achieve such effectiveness, a greater degree of context evaluation is inevitable before making appropriate language choices. The increasing depth of analysis at the three proficiency levels, and their subsequent linguistic choices, I believe, may be a proof of this development in the present study.

Overall, as highlighted in the literature review chapter (see 2.4.2) previous research findings regarding L2 speakers' ability to adjust language to social context are inconclusive, some indicating that pragmatic expressions remain the same, regardless of H's power or social status, even in advanced learners' speech (e.g. Rose, 2000; Roever and Al-Gahtani, 2015) while others (e.g. Woodfield, 2012) pointing otherwise. The present findings provide some support for the latter and suggest that language adjustment consists of several layers and includes most importantly speakers' own evaluation, based on which linguistic choices (e.g. syntactic forms; lexical/phrasal modification) will be made. Data showed an increasing depth of analysis of the different contexts as proficiency developed, based on which individual aims were identified and language choices selected. For instance, if the consequences of the request were considered long lasting or

endangering the relationship with H, more mitigation was employed, especially at C2 level, despite the power constellation (e.g. S=H). At times the range of syntactic forms showed little variation in a learner's speech, but the extent of modification within syntax seemed to differentiate them from other proficiency levels and implied their attempt at adjusting language to context. Trosborg (1995, p.428) argues that learners need to acquire a range of pragmalinguistic devices and communicative strategies before they are able to make conscious choices regarding their use in context. The present data suggests that such mapping of linguistic choices to the social situation is already under way at B2 and this skill seems to gradually increase with proficiency. What is more, with increasing proficiency the mapping process appears to be taking place on a more conscious level in speakers' minds.

4.4 Summary of key findings

Overall, the present data revealed a number of pragmatic features apparent in B2-C2 participants' speech (Table 4.53). The analysis of the preliminary interactional work in speech indicated that the amount of preliminary interactional work before requests seemed to increase with proficiency and the coherence between the individual elements of preliminary interactional work (i.e. appropriate use of conjunctions) also tended to become gradually more logical and effective. In addition, more advanced participants appeared to drive the conversations more in dialogic tasks whilst also being more effective in co-constructing the interaction, for example by: (1) showing sensitivity to H's feelings (e.g. *I'm not criticizing you…),* (2) signalling their understanding (e.g. *That makes sense*) and (3) initiating further action. In terms of syntactic forms, conditional structures seemed to be the preferred syntactic choice for request formulation at all three levels, followed by interrogatives. However, only C2 speakers were able to make this choice in both task formats, in other words, not only in tasks including planning time (i.e. monologic tasks) but also in tasks involving online processing (i.e. dialogic tasks), whereas B2 and C1 learners relied mostly on interrogatives in the latter task format. Regarding lexical/phrasal modification, a gradual increase was observed not only in the quantity but also in the range of lexical/phrasal modifiers. Finally, with increasing proficiency the depth of contextual analysis also seemed to increase and the degree of modification tended to reflect speakers' identified intentions and evaluation of context.

Table 4.53: Pragmatic features observed in speech according to level

	B2	C1	C2
PRELIMINARY INTERACTIONAL WORK	• Address form can at times be inappropriate. • Often include preliminary interactional work, however, it is not always very logically structured. • When necessary at times include apology. • Transition between the different parts is at times not indicated or at times inappropriate (i.e. use of conjunctions) • At times parallel pattern of interaction.	• Address form is appropriate. • Frequently include preliminary interactional work. • When necessary mostly include apology. • Mostly logically structured speech and smooth transition between different parts (e.g. by using appropriate conjunctions) • More collaborative pattern of interaction.	• Address form is appropriate. • Almost always include preliminary interactional work (e.g. projecting upcoming request, problem statement, account). • When necessary almost always include apology. • Logically structured speech and smooth transition between different parts (e.g. by using appropriate conjunctions) • Shows active listening. • Contributes to and ensures collaborative pattern in conversations.
SYNTACTIC VARIATION	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
	1. Use many interrogatives in their simplest form *(e.g. Can/could you…?)* especially in dialogic tasks. 2. Use conditional structures to a much lesser degree in the dialogic tasks requiring online processing. Conditional structures include the present tense and often *'if you don't mind'*.	1. Use a number of interrogatives but often with modifiers *(e.g. just)*. They are the preferred syntactic form in tasks involving online processing. 2. Conditional structures are used preferably but only in monologic tasks (mostly including the present tense) and to a much lesser degree in the dialogic tasks involving online processing. 3. *'would like'* and *'if you don't mind'* are often replaced by *'if* ***it's*** *possible'*. 4. *'possible'* is also used with *'whether'* not only *'if'*	1. Use some interrogatives but almost always with modifiers *(e.g. possibly, just)* 2. Conditional structures are the preferred syntactic structures to formulate R in both task formats, often involving past tense. 3. *'would like'* is rare and is almost always used with modifiers *(e.g. really, just)* 4. *'if* ***that*** **would** ***be*** *possible'* is frequent NB: Often imply R in face-to-face tasks involving potential FTA (e.g. D6).
LEXICAL/ PHRASAL MODIFIERS	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
Upgraders	A reasonable number and range is used. The most common ones: *really, very, so*, *quite*.	A fairly good number and wide range is used. The most common ones: *really, very, so*. Also appear: *completely, quite, absolutely, please*.	A very high number and wide range is used. The most common ones: *really, very, so*. Also appear: *quite, completely, pretty, obviously, particularly, exactly, definitely.*
Downgraders Hedgers	Very few used. Mostly used: *kind of, just*	Some but not many used. Most common: *maybe, just*. Also appear: *I guess, something like, might*.	A great number used especially in dialogic (face-to-face) tasks. Most common: *just, sort of, kind of*. Also: *I guess, something like, it seems like, things like these, basically.*
Understaters	A reasonable number used. Most common: *just, a little (bit), some.*	A reasonable number used: Most common: *just, a little (bit), some.*	A reasonable number used. Most common: *just, a bit, a little bit, some.* But also *'tiny bit'* appears.
Downtoners	Some used but a fairly narrow range, mainly: *just, maybe.*	A generally high number and good range used. Common ones: *just, maybe* + less common: *might, perhaps.*	The highest number and a good range used. Common ones: *just, maybe* + less common: *possibly, perhaps*.

Cajolers	Not observed.	A reasonable number used in dialogic tasks. Common: *you know, actually.*	A reasonable number used in dialogic tasks. Common: *you know, actually*.
Politeness markers	A reasonable number used (i.e *please)*	A reasonable number used. (i.e *please)*	A reasonable number used. (i.e *please)*
Subjectivizers	Some used *(e.g. I'm just wondering)*	Some used *(e.g. I was wondering if…)*	A reasonably good number used, often in grammatically complex form regarding tense/aspect *(e.g. I've been wondering whether…)*
LANGUAGE ADJUSTMENT	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
Linguistic features in verbalising R	Syntactic formulation of R is often the same in situations including equal and non-equal social constellation.	Syntactic formulation of R is often varied depending on social constellation. If the same grammatical form is used, a modifier is often added.	Syntactic formulation of R is frequently varied depending on the social constellation. If the same grammatical form is used, a modifier is almost always added.
CR to express 'appreciation' & 'face' concerns	No observed features.	CRs expressing 'appreciation' is reasonably frequently added and showing consideration for others' 'face' appears *(e.g. I appreciate that you… / I fully understand that….)*	Both CRs expressing 'appreciation' and 'face' related statements appear generally frequently in speech. There is a wide range of expressions that show consideration for others' 'face' *(e.g. I do understand / I'm not criticizing you / maybe you do not realize / this is no offence)*
explicit / implied R	There seem to be some conscious decision regarding whether to express the request explicitly or imply it.	There seem to be some conscious decision regarding whether to express the request explicitly or imply it.	Explicitly expressed or implied requests tended to be chosen based on considering context and power constellation. There is a tendency to opt for implied request in face-to-face situations involving potential FTA.
link between imposition and modifiers	Some lexical/phrasal modifiers are used but to very similar extent in each task. The quantity and use of modifiers does not always match the imposition identified in the given context.	An increased number of lexical/phrasal modifiers are used and although there is some variation in their quantity depending on the context they do not always match participants' intentions.	An increased number of lexical/phrasal modifiers are used and their quantity seems to vary depending on speakers' evaluation of the imposition in the given context.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the differences in pragmatic features displayed in two task formats at B2, C1 and C2 proficiency levels. It is believed that the differences observed in preliminary interactional work and pragmalinguistic features indicate a positive proficiency effect on the development of pragmatic competence. The study suggests that such features are useful indicators of L2 students' pragmatic competence in the target domain and can contribute towards the development of level descriptors in language assessment but also towards educational aims in language classrooms. Besides drawing conclusions, the findings also allowed the study to provide implications, identify limitations and make some suggestions for future research, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This empirical study aimed to contribute towards the assessment of L2 speakers' pragmatic competence at B2-C2 levels in an academic context. The research questions focused on identifying features of pragmatic competence, specifically in terms of preliminary interactional work (based on Schegloff, 2007) (see Section 4.1) and pragmalinguistic devices (based on Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Barron, 2003) (see Section 4.2), through the use of monologic and dialogic tasks, as well as on the extent to which these features were utilized and linguistic choices adjusted to context at the three proficiency levels (see Section 4.3). The study involved two main stages; the first pilot stage focused on the design of meaningful and relevant tasks for the target participants and identification of key pragmatic features as elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks. The second stage involved the administration of these tasks to a group of 30 participants, 10 at each level and with various L1 backgrounds, using a mixed-method design (Creswell, 2014, p.570) in order to collect quantitative and qualitative data via (1) speech produced for six different tasks in the two task formats and (2) participants' perceptions of the pragmatic demands of the task contexts as elicited by interviews. Participants were instructed to interact naturally and there were no pre-determined interactional outcomes, in other words participants had the liberty to decide what was a reasonable outcome (e.g. accept the professor's explanation of their mark or persuade him/her to change the mark). Standardization was ensured through role-play cards and using the same interlocutor (i.e. the researcher), who followed the interlocutor guidelines for her interventions (see Section 3.3.3). The resulting quantitative and qualitative data were analysed to address the study's research questions. Task performances were analysed qualitatively using a CA perspective and quantitatively using descriptive statistics on various linguistic features. Likewise, descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the interview data quantitatively. In addition participants' interview comments informed the evaluation/interpretation of their language use.

This concluding chapter will first summarise and synthesise the main findings of this study under each research question (5.1). It will then discuss implications of the findings and contributions of the study (5.2). Finally, it will describe the limitations of the present study (5.3) and suggest directions for future research.

5.1 Summary and synthesis of the findings

This section will revisit each of the research questions of this study, and synthesise the findings and discussion provided in Chapter 4.

Overall, the analysis of speech produced for the two task formats (4 monologic tasks + 2 dialogic tasks) revealed some typical patterns in terms of (1) preliminary interactional work (2) syntactic choices and (3) lexical/phrasal modification representative of pragmatic competence at the different proficiency levels. The comparison of this data with the analysis of the interview data provided some insight into whether/how participants' evaluation of the different contexts reflected language adjustment.

RQ1.1: What *features of pragmatic competence* in terms of sequential organisation are elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks?

The two task formats elicited a number of preliminary interactional features, such as projecting the upcoming request, providing problem statements and accounts, also highlighted by other research (e.g. Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012) (see section 4.1). It was also noted that monologic tasks allowed the analysis of how these features were linked linguistically (see section 4.1.1), while dialogic tasks allowed the analysis of more interactional features of speech, such as turn taking (see section 4.1.2).

RQ1.2: What *features of pragmatic competence* in terms of pragmalinguistic devices are elicited by monologic/dialogic tasks?

The two task formats elicited similar pragmalinguistic features (see section 4.2). In terms of syntactic forms, interrogatives, statements, conditionals and imperatives were all observed in participants' speech, although they were employed to differing degrees. Regarding lexical/phrasal modifiers, both task formats allowed participants to employ a variety of these. The most commonly employed modifiers, with numerous examples in speech, were: intensifiers, politeness markers, subjectivizers, hedgers, understaters, downtoners and cajolers. Such findings are consistent with much previous research as described in Sections 2.4 and 2.5.

Generally, both task formats separated the varying degrees of pragmatic feature usage at the three proficiency levels but dialogic tasks tended to elicit the use of lexical/phrasal modification slightly more effectively; this was observed even for those participants' whose speech did not contain a great deal of such linguistic devices in monologic tasks. In addition, dialogic tasks allowed participants to exhibit their ability to show sensitivity to H and to drive the conversation.

RQ2: To what extent and in what ways these *pragmatic features are utilised differently by B2-C2 level learners?*

With increasing proficiency a general increase in preliminary interactional work was observed in both task formats, which is very much in line with other research (e.g. Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017) (see section 4.1). It was also noted that C1 but especially C2 participants employed more pre-pres (Schegloff, 2007) to project an upcoming request. More proficient participants used more effective linguistic linking between features of expansion and this was especially noticeable in monologic tasks (see section 4.1.1). It was argued that although conjunctions are not strictly part of pragmatic competence, their use influences H's understanding of the communicative situation, thus contributing towards the speaker's achievement of their communicative goal, which is one of the key concepts in pragmatics. Speech produced for dialogic tasks also gave an insight into another area of pragmatic competency, namely being able to listen and respond to H (see section 4.1.2). While a number of conversations at B2 showed a parallel pattern of interaction (Galaczi, 2008), where speakers at times seemed to follow their own plan and ignored H's input/response, conversations at C1 and C2 revealed a much more collaborative design.

Regarding syntactic choice, it was found that with increasing proficiency participants chose conditional structures more frequently to formulate their requests in both task formats and simpler forms were more common especially in B2 speech (see section 4.2). This is again consistent with much research (e.g. Youn, 2013; Ikeda, 2017; Barron, 2003). It was also observed that the quantity and range of lexical/phrasal modifiers increased with proficiency (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).

RQ3: To what extent do B2-C2 level learners *adjust linguistic choices to the given context*?

The analysis of preliminary interactional work in speech indicated that all participants were able to adjust their role in driving the conversation in dialogic tasks as they all took on a more leading role in the task involving equal power constellation, while they tended to be slightly more 'passive' in the task involving unequal power constellation (see section 4.3). However, C2 participants were able control the conversation even in the latter task by more often initiating future action and searching for a solution.

Adjustment was also noted in the way pragmalinguistic devices were employed. Syntactic variation seemed to indicate that with increasing proficiency there was more awareness of the need to modify the syntactic form by lexical/phrasal upgraders/downgraders especially in contexts involving unequal power constellation (see section 4.3). It was noted at C1 and C2 that the difference in lexical/phrasal modifier quantity seemed to reflect the identified level of imposition increasingly more closely.

In addition, it was observed (see Sections 4.2 and 4.3) that with increasing proficiency there was a greater depth of analysis of the different contexts and participants at higher proficiency levels seemed to be more aware of the connection between their language use and social context as they frequently referred to the future consequences of the request as well as to the relationship between language use, social context and speaker's intention. This seems to support Cook (2001), who believes that competent L2 speakers are aware of social rules and are able to adjust their speech according to contextual variables. Such awareness, one could argue, might gradually increase with linguistic competence as this competence frees up cognitive capacity allowing speakers to pay more attention to contextual factors, which in due course determines their language use. In fact, the comparison of participants' evaluation of the contexts and their actual language use in the present data, in terms of pragmatic features, indicated that this was mostly true at the highest proficiency level, and only C2 level participants seemed to be able to match their language use to their own pragmatic intentions. In other words, the ability of setting and achieving individual goals based on the assessment of social context, whilst also adapting their own contribution (e.g. language, turn-taking) flexibly

to H's input so as to achieve a mutually acceptable conversational outcome, appeared to show progress across proficiency levels. This was possibly due to increased linguistic ability, which freed up cognitive capacity and allowed more proficient participants to consider social variables before making language choices. Therefore, it is suggested here that with increasing proficiency there is increasing pragmatic competence not only with regard to sequential organization and pragmalinguistic features but also to achieving personal communicative goals.

With increasing language competence participants not only used a greater degree and a wider range of pragmalinguistic devices but they also prepared the ground for the request better by using more extensive preliminary interactional work. This could in turn mean that, as much research suggests (e.g. Yamashita, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012), proficiency level may indeed influence the development of pragmatic competence. Other studies, for example Youn (2015) and Ikeda (2017), have already investigated the increasing development of pre-actions and pragmatic language use in L2 speech, but the present study has additionally provided quantitative data with regard to specific pragmalinguistic and interactive features employed in participants' speech. Nonetheless, it is worth cautioning that assessing pragmatic competence is far more complex than simply looking at the frequency distribution of specific language features, as high frequencies do not necessarily reflect higher pragmatic competence and the quality of their usage is also of importance. A notable feature of this study is the use made of semi-structured interviews, which highlight another aspect of pragmatic competence, namely pragmatic decision-making and being aware of the consequences of language choice in achieving the set communicative goal.

5.2 Implications of the findings and contributions of the study

The limited empirical information available about the differences in pragmatic competence amongst L2 speakers at the higher levels of language proficiency provided the rationale for the current study to develop tasks that allow an insight into their ways of displaying such competence. The findings are considered to be useful for (1) making inferences about B2-C2 speakers' pragmatic skills for university activities and for (2)

informing the content of pre-sessional/in-sessional courses in UK universities regarding how successful students' communication with tutors and peers might be enhanced.

The present study's findings provide a number of implications for both language assessment and language teaching. Present data revealed the occasional mismatch between participants' speech produced (i.e. task completion) and their pragmatic intentions (i.e. interview data), mostly at B2 but also at C1, which indicates that although there was conscious evaluation of context and decision making regarding the pragmatic goal on their part, these participants failed to act accordingly at times and were seemingly unaware of their shortcomings. This stresses the significance of providing educational input to make L2 speakers aware of how and which particular linguistic choices aid them in achieving their pragmatic goal, and also of assessing pragmatic competence, particularly in an L2 academic context, as has previously been advocated by Ikeda (2017) and Youn (2013).

5.2.1 Construct of pragmatic competence

The present research used a CA framework and investigated sequential organization of speech alongside pragmalinguistic devices provided by SA research. Thus, it combined the (1) more recent view of pragmatic competence - focusing primarily on interactional features and viewing pragmatic competence as co-constructed and the mutual achievement of S and H - with (2) a more traditional view of pragmatic competence, with the main focus being on the individual's language use and cognition, looking at pragmatic competence as the speaker's individual achievement. Indeed, this study showed that pragmatic competence was very much co-constructed in dialogic tasks. In these tasks, although participants initially set a communicative goal and selected corresponding language, their goal/language was influenced by each turn taken by H, prompting speakers to constantly re-evaluate/adjust their aim/language, eventually leading to a mutually constructed outcome. Monologic tasks did not involve the same skill, nevertheless, there were some common features in the two tasks: (1) speakers conducted the conversation with individual aims in mind and (2) used linguistic devices as their tools in the ongoing and fluid communication (including preliminary interactional work and other moves) to achieve their goal. Therefore, it is believed that the two

views on L2 pragmatic competence (i.e. individual cognition versus co-constructed) are closely intertwined and this study has shown that it is important to focus on both interactional and linguistic features when describing the construct pragmatic competence.

In addition, the present study also highlighted the importance of another aspect of L2 pragmatic competence, namely the awareness of contextual parameters (e.g. power constellation), within which individual intentions are to be achieved, as well as the ability to verbalize and act upon such awareness. The analysis of the interview data clearly indicated more proficient participants' heightened awareness of contextual factors, although the time restrictions the swift nature of online communication may have posed upon the consideration of such factors, and participants' ability to verbalize how this awareness may have influenced their verbal behavior. It is argued here that this aspect (i.e. ability to verbalize pragmatic awareness) should be an added component in the construct of L2 pragmatic competence as, not only does it provide a valuable insight into speakers' language choices and interactional moves, which in turn enables us to understand how and why speakers' intended communicative goal might or might not have been achieved, but it also highlights speakers' consciousness of their verbal actions in social context. This finding is also particularly vital in light of the conceptualization of pragmatic competence discussed in Section 2.8.1. further confirming that pragmatic competence does not exist only as S's and H's inner trait, but it is formulated in each context-specific situation and in the course of interaction.

5.2.2 Methodology to research L2 pragmatics

The study used a mixed-method approach for analysing both task performance and interview data. I believe that this greatly contributed to appropriate backing when addressing inferences and neither quantitative nor qualitative research method in itself would have provided such an insight into the complex nature of L2 pragmatic competence (see Section 4.3). The use of interview data was also an invaluable source and would be advocated for further research. As discussed in 5.2.1, highly proficient learners were able to articulate reasons for their language choices based on their evaluation of contextual variables, which enabled me to gain a better understanding of their cognitive processes and, consequently their pragmatic competence. However, a word of caution is needed here. As discussed in 3.2.2, interviews have their own methodological

limitations, such as people not always being aware of their own cognitive processes/verbal actions or they only say what they 'think' they did (e.g. Dornyei, 2007), which can make the reliability of interview data doubtful. Despite such drawback, interview data in the present research indicated that participants were able to recall some of their inner thoughts (Ericsson, 2002) and, in line with Kormos (1998), it was possible to gain some valuable insight into their cognitive processes in order to understand at least some of their pragmatic decisions and corresponding language choices. Therefore, it is advocated here that making an enquiry into participants' evaluation of specific social contexts through interviews could better enable future researchers to comprehend language use in social contexts, thus minimizing the possibility of making false assumptions in this regard. Moreover, I believe that similar mixed-method research involving retrospective interview data could also be effectively employed when investigating institutional language within higher education.

5.2.3 Assessing pragmatic competence

This study also provided empirical insight into the use of pragmalinguistic devices, both syntactic and lexical/phrasal elements, employed in L2 speech. Youn (2013) highlighted the importance of grammar as her study indicated that delivering pragmatic meaning in an L2 through this was found the most difficult by speakers. The present findings have identified specific devices, which could be further utilized in predicting L2 pragmatic competence and could aid the ongoing process of developing descriptors for L2 proficiency. Refining and widening their range would merit further research into L2 pragmatic competence.

Additionally, this study has implications for the design and development of instruments for the assessment of pragmatic competence. The fact that the current study analyzed the display of pragmatic features across two task formats helped to investigate the degree to which these features were elicited by the two formats. It confirmed previous research into the effectiveness of both monologic (Ikeda, 2017) and dialogic (Youn, 2013, 2015; Ikeda, 2017; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012) task formats in eliciting pragmatic features. In addition, it revealed that both task formats elicited similar pragmalinguistic devices, although dialogic tasks elicited more interactional features (e.g. showing sensitivity to H, following up on H's response) and

prompted all speakers to employ pragmalinguistic devices to a greater degree. This would indicate that although *dialogic tasks better cover the underlying construct, monologic tasks also allow generally similar inferences with regard to the construct*. Therefore, as suggested by Ikeda (2017), it is argued here that monologic tasks could also be used effectively for assessment purposes and would aid practicality by being less resource intensive and allowing online implementation in assessment.

In terms of task formats, the present study has also shown that, although many of the pragmatic features investigated in monologic/dialogic tasks could also be elicited by DCTs (despite their methodological disadvantages as discussed in 2.6.4: table 2.4), the way and the extent to which such features are elicited during online processing would be different. As the results of Pilot study 1 indicated (see 3.2.1), monologic tasks allowed more proficient learners to employ a wider range of pragmalinguistic devices and provided a noticeably better opportunity for participants to lay down more elaborate preliminary interactional work before verbalizing their requests. Moreover, in terms of dialogic tasks, the construct elicited would be somewhat different, as DCTs do not easily lend themselves to elicit extended discourse/interaction, hence preventing the observation of the interactional pattern (e.g. parallel, collaborative) as indicated in Section 4.4: Table 4.53.

Finally, as pointed out in section 2.7, the CEFR (2001, p.31; also see the CEFR Companion Volume, 2018) descriptors draw attention to both social and linguistic features of pragmatic competence by referring to L2 speakers' ability to "convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using … a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing degree)" and "give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.". Likewise, the Trinity ISE III descriptors list and provide examples of some pragmalinguistic devices (e.g. lexical/phrasal modifiers such as intensifiers: 'vague and imprecise language' such as 'a bit more') under lexical repertoire. The findings of the present study suggest a wider range of empirically-based descriptors of L2 pragmatic competence, which can be useful in complementing the more generic CEFR. I suggest this to be done in two ways. On the one hand, adjust the description of some aspects of pragmatic competence, and on the other, add pragmalinguistic devices to exemplify how this could be done rather than simply referring to 'grammatical' and 'vocabulary range' (see Table 4.54). In fact, such range does not specifically imply higher pragmatic competence as argued by much research.

Table 4.54: Pragmatic features observed in speech according to level

CEFR descriptor for 'Propositional precision' (CEFR Companion Volume, 2018)	**Suggested descriptor for 'Propositional precision'**
C2: Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations). Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.	**C2:** Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g. adverbs expressing degree *such as 'really'/'a little' to intesify/soften meaning*, clauses expressing limitations). Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. *Can purposefully adjust language (e.g. soften meaning by using a wide range of lexical/phrasal modifiers) in accordance with own intention while taking social variables (e.g. degree of imposition) into consideration.*
C1 Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/ uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position.	**C1** Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/ uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position. *Can generally, but not always successfully, adjust language (e.g. soften meaning by using a range of lexical/phrasal modifiers) in accordance with own intention while considering social variables (e.g. degree of imposition).*
B2 Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though his/her language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity.	**B2** Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though his/her language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity. *Can adjust language (e.g. soften meaning by some lexical/phrasal modifiers) to some degree, in accordance with own intention while taking social variables (e.g. degree of imposition) into consideration.*

I believe that the findings of the present study (See Table 4.53) can contribute to future pragmatic scales. Moreover, the specific examples regarding pragmatic language features, provided in this study, can also be used for the purposes of examiner training sessions to aid language testers' awareness of linguistic signs indicating L2 pragmatic competence. Based on Table 4.53, some possible phrasings for pragmatic competence rating scale descriptors could include the following with varying degrees of ability/success:

- Able to use appropriate address terms.
- Able to include appropriate amount of preliminary interactional work.
- Able to create smooth and logical linguistic transition between components of preliminary

interactional work.

- Able to lexically/phrasal modify the syntactic form (e.g. by using hedgers, understaters, downtoners) in order to soften/strengthen the force of request.
- Able to act upon own evaluation of the degree of imposition in a given context by using lexical/phrasal modifiers when considered necessary.
- Able to utilize a number of expressions in order to show consideration for the co-participant's 'face' (e.g. I'm not criticizing you… This is no offence…)

It is emphasized here that these descriptors should be used/understood as sliding scales of pragmatic competence (e.g. 1-4) rather than descriptors of individual CEFR levels. This is because the ability to use 'appropriate address terms' may not necessarily mean that the speaker is C2 level in terms of pragmatic competence. For instance, as the present data indicated, many B2 level participants were able to use address terms appropriately in all task contexts.

5.2.4 Teaching pragmatic competence

House (2007, p.19) argues that an intercultural speaker "… is a person who has managed to develop his or her own third way, in between the other cultures he or she is familiar with", and I would argue that this is indeed what most international university students strive for. Therefore, the assessment of their speech production should be based on their own intentions and context evaluation, rather than on target language norms (Ishihara, 2009) and even the educational input should focus on awareness raising and allowing L2 speakers to make conscious choices regarding language use. As Thomas (1983, p.98) puts it, "Making learners aware of the underlying behaviour behind language will help them to develop their own 'personality' in an L2…". Undoubtedly, this is much easier to do/achieve in language teaching than in language assessment, as the latter requires some kind of benchmark. It is suggested here that, similar to the present study, this benchmark could be speakers' own assessment of the given contexts with regard to imposition and power constellation. Such subjective judgement would, of course, be beyond the control of either teachers or assessors, but at least it would provide an insight into speakers' own thought processes regarding the context, which in turn influence their language choices. It is advocated here that classroom

input should include raising awareness of the impact different language choices may have on H, thus allowing L2 speakers to consciously select appropriate wording/pragmalinguistic devices that reflect their communicative intention. Language use based on individuals' context evaluation is one of the basic principles of pragmatics, as highlighted in chapter 2 and should, therefore, be included when assessing pragmatic competence. It is argued here that self-assessment should provide valuable evidence not only for assessors and teachers but also for L2 speakers, as it would potentially enhance their awareness of the relationship between social context and language use.

5.2 Limitations of the study

While this study offered various contributions and implications as described above, there are several limitations to be acknowledged. The first one concerns interlocutor behaviour. In order to provide some kind of standardization, and to control for interlocutor variability, the researcher (who was also a lecturer of some of the present participants) acted as the interlocutor in both tasks, despite the fact that the role involved being a professor in one and classmate in the other. The question is whether participants would have acted differently with a different person who was an equal socially (e.g. a classmate in D6, which task involved having a conversation with a flatmate). Equally, the potential impact of acquaintanceship and age factors cannot be excluded, although O'Sullivan's findings (2002; 2008) suggested that there was no evidence of interlocutor age having an impact on the interaction and that it is practically impossible to control for the effect of the acquaintanceship variable as it interacts with other test-taker characteristics (e.g. personality, gender) in a highly complex way.

Another concern might lie in the nature of interviews, which, in the case of the present study, relied on participants' subjective judgements and their memory to recall their own thoughts before and during speech production. Every effort had been made to refresh their memory (e.g. simple prompts were provided to recall the different task contexts); however, it is impossible to estimate what relevant thoughts may have been lost in the time that elapsed between speech production and the interview. Nonetheless, I believe that since interviews directly followed task completion participants' memory was still fresh, thus, enabling them to

recall most of their conscious thought processes. Additionally, another potential methodological shortcoming of the interview data collection was the lack of audio recordings of the interview data. Although the decision was made after carefully considering participants' preference for not being recorded (see Section 3.2.2) and it is believed that the researcher's extensive notes during each interview captured all details provided by learners (see example notes in Appendix 11), it is acknowledged that audio recordings and word-by-word transcripts might have enhanced the validity of the interview data analysis.

Thirdly, this study involved 30 participants, the majority of whom had stayed in the host environment for differing periods (See Section 3.3.1). Unfortunately, it was not possible to recruit participants with the same length of experience in the host country (i.e. [B2] Mean=9 months, [C1] Mean 12.2 months, [C2] Mean=50.4 months); therefore, it was not possible to know whether/the extent to which observed pragmatic features in participants' language was the consequence of length of stay in the host society, though you might also note that length of sojourn is not necessarily a guide to degree of exposure to linguistic/ pragmatic data, or proficiency per se, which might potentially have confounded the findings in terms of the proficiency effect. Nevertheless, it is believed that a number of comparisons made between participants at different levels of proficiency are still valid indicators of the selected pragmatic features observable at each proficiency level, and that the results are still useful to inform the development of descriptors at each proficiency level. What we can capture in a language test is the snapshot of their language profile at the moment of the examination regardless of how, where and for how long a period this acquisition process took place.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

This study has generated a number of important avenues for future research. Firstly, the current study did not investigate the impact of pronunciation features on the speakers involved and I believe further research is needed in this regard. There has been little attempt (e.g. Taguchi, 2005, 2007; Ikeda, 2017) at investigating this side of pragmatics possibly for a number of reasons. Firstly, L2 pronunciation features are far from universal, although there have been attempts at identifying common features (Jenkins, 2007), and the role

they play in the realm of pragmatics is even more complex. Secondly, specific features of an L2 speaker may have different impact on different, whether L1 or L2 speaking, conversational partners. Nonetheless, they have a significant impact on the conversation outcome, hence cannot be ignored. Moreover, they might also be proficiency related, therefore, could be included in L2 proficiency descriptors.

More investigation into non-verbal signs (e.g. gestures, gaze) would also be useful in order to understand how these might also influence the interpretation of pragmatic meaning in interaction. Although Roever (2011) mentions their importance in L2 pragmatic assessment, there has been little research of these to date. Their use may not be proficiency related but could still be used for educational purposes to raise L2 speakers' awareness of such features in interaction.

Another line of investigation could involve analysing how or whether the linguistic features identified as characteristic of each proficiency level in this study would aid language testers' evaluation of L2 pragmatic competence. Language testers could be trained to judge L2 pragmatic competence based on the pragmalinguistic and interactional features highlighted by this study in order to see which features are perceptible enough in live operational conditions to be reliably assessed by raters. In addition, it could be analysed how such training would aid raters in better evaluating pragmatic competence.

Further research could also look at the extent to which L2 speakers' awareness of what is being investigated may influence their language use with regards to pragmatic features. Al-Gahtani (2010) argues that learners' language may be much richer in the investigated language features, had they been informed of the focus of investigation. However, participants in the current study were not informed of the focus of investigation prior to their task performance in order to behave naturally and produce language that would allow the investigation of their implicit knowledge regarding pragmatic competence. If the present findings were to be used for assessment purposes, this would be important to investigate.

Lastly, one of the stated aims of the mixed-methods design in the present study was to qualitatively investigate the relationship between speakers' thought processes and their speech production (Section 3.1).

However, general findings were drawn to describe specific proficiency levels without analyzing individual participants and their speech production. Future research may find value in triangulating the analysis of individual participants' discourse in task responses with the interview comments from the same participants (e.g. two/three at each level). This could offer useful insights into 1) the contextual appropriateness of individuals' pragmalinguistic feature use, and 2) the ways in which such use (mis-)aligns with the participants' pragmatic intention. This could be particularly fruitful for gaining further insights into L2 speakers' attempts at adjusting their language to the given context.

5.4 Final remarks

This study has contributed to the existing literature and research field in various ways. Most importantly, it provides empirical evidence for pragmalinguistic devices across B2-C2 levels, as well as common sequential organization features, displayed in B2-C2 learners' speech in social contexts. In addition, it illustrates the degree to which these learners attempt to adjust language to their own evaluation of the context, suggesting that there is indeed increased competence with increased proficiency in this regard. In other words, the main contribution this project makes to the field is to identify the specific pragmalinguistic features of speech that can aid the evaluation of L2 pragmatic competence, and therefore to identify the most suitable features for teaching and assessment purposes.

Introducing and incorporating such pragmalinguistic features in assessment and teaching material is also important for L2 speakers who come to study and live in an L2 environment. As a former student, as well as a lecturer, myself living and working in an L2 environment I am aware of the serious consequences that lack of pragmatic awareness can cause (e.g. unintentionally using language for requests that might insult a professor or a classmate). The results of this study bring more precision to defining some specific linguistic elements of pragmatic competence that L2 learners in the same context could find useful (i.e. interacting with tutors/peers). As such, it could provide an important step towards developing intercultural awareness and communication.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Pilot 1 tasks and Questionnaire

Task 1. INSTRUCTIONS:
In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are speaking to the person in the situation. Write down what you would say.

1. You borrowed a laptop from your friend Eva but you accidentally spilled coffee over it. You are returning the laptop to Eva. *You say:*
2. You were supposed to hand in your project report today but you are not ready. Your teacher is collecting them now and comes up to you to get it. *You say:*
3. You need to borrow a book from your friend Ben but you know that she needs it too to prepare for a difficult exam tomorrow. *You say:*
4. You have just finished your university studies and are in the process of applying for a job. You would like one of your university professors Mr Jones to give you a reference. You know that he is always very busy. *You say:*
5. You have recently bought a new mobile phone. You have only used it for a week when it stopped working. You go back to the shop and talk to a shop assistant. *You say:*
6. You had a birthday party in your home yesterday. The apartment is untidy and you are just cleaning up. Your friend, Maria, comes by. You invite her in. *You say:*
7. You stop by your teacher's office to ask a question about the assignment. She takes time to answer your question. You know she is very busy, so before you say good-bye, *you say*:
8. You and your friend are about to cross the street when you see the bus coming. Your friend does not see the bus and is about to step in front of it. *You say:*
INSTRUCTIONS: *In this part of the task, you are talking to someone, and this person speaks first. When he/she finishes, you answer.*
9. You go to a clothing store and you need to buy a new pair of trousers. A salesperson approaches you. You don't want her assistance. *The assistant says*: 'Can I help you?' *You say:*
10. You need to talk to your teacher. You go to his office during office hours to see if he has time to talk. His office door is open, you knock. *Your teacher says*: 'Come in.' *You say:*

Task 2. INSTRUCTIONS:
In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are in the situation. Write down what you would say.

11. You have a university essay deadline approaching. You are not ready because you have been ill for weeks. You need to get an extension on the deadline urgently. You decide to call the professor in his office. Unfortunately, he is not there so you leave a message. *You say:*
12. You were absent from an important lecture yesterday. You decide to call one of your classmates and borrow her notes. When you get through the answer phone switches on asking you to leave a message. *You say:*
13. You had a meeting with your professor to discuss your dissertation. You completely forgot about it. You call the professor in his office but he is not there so you need to leave a message on his answer phone. *You say:*
14. You had a meeting with your classmate to discuss a project you are both working on. You completely forgot about it. You call your classmate on his mobile but you only get the answer phone. *You say:*

PILOT-STUDY 1. QUESTIONNAIRE

3. What is your IELTS level? _____
4. Which type of task was more difficult 1 or 2? Why?
5. Are these situations realistic? Do they happen to you in real life?
6. If some of them are not, which ones?
7. Which ones do you think are not important? (You don't really care whether you sound appropriate or not.)
8. Can you think of other situations when you find it difficult to know what to say in English?
9. Any other comments?

Appendix 2: Pilot 2 tasks

TASKS
PC – power constellation (S<H or S>H or S=H)
I – imposition

MONOLOGIC TASKS

	REQUEST	**APOLOGY**
S<H - HIGH I	You have a university essay deadline approaching. You are not ready because of illness. You need to get an extension on the deadline urgently. You decide to call the professor (Prof. Taylor) in his office. Unfortunately, he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.	You have promised to send a revised version of your essay to your professor by Monday. You completely forgot about it and it is Thursday. You call the professor (Prof. Wilson) in her office but she is not there so you leave a message on her answer phone.
S=H – HIGH I	You are working on a project with another student (Jane). She is very slow and does not really want to contribute. The presentation is tomorrow and you know that she still hasn't done the 'Introduction' slides. You decide to call her. When you get through the answer phone switches on asking you to leave a message.	You borrowed a book from a classmate (Jim) and promised to give it back in a week. It has been 4 weeks and you still have the book. Jim has sent you a message saying that he really needs it now. You call him back on his mobile but you only get the answer phone.

DIALOGIC TASKS

1. **S<H / high imposition**

You have just got one of your essays back with a very low mark. You are very surprised because you expected a much higher mark and decide to ask the professor (Prof. Ficzere) to explain the reason.

2. **S=H / high imposition**

You are sharing a flat with another student (Edit). She is very untidy and often leaves the kitchen without doing the washing up and she never cleans any of the areas you both use. Ask her to do more cleaning around the flat.

Task 1. INSTRUCTIONS:
In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are in that situation and start a conversation with the other participant.

You have just got one of your essays back with a very low mark. You are very surprised because you expected a much higher mark and decide to ask the professor (Prof. Ficzere) to explain the reason.

You are sharing a flat with another student (Edit). She is very untidy and often leaves the kitchen without doing the washing up and she never cleans any of the areas you both use. Ask her to do more cleaning around the flat.

Task 2. INSTRUCTIONS:
In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are in the situation. Say the first thing you think of.

1. You have a university essay deadline approaching. You are not ready because of illness. You need to get an extension on the deadline urgently. You decide to call the professor (Prof. Taylor) in his office. Unfortunately, he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.
2. You are working on a project with another student (Jane). She is very slow and does not really want to work hard. The presentation is tomorrow and you know that she still hasn't done the 'Introduction' slides. You decide to call her. When you get through the answer phone switches on asking you to leave a message.
3. You have promised to send a revised version of your essay to your professor by Monday. You completely forgot about it and it is Thursday. You call the professor (Prof. Wilson) in her office but she is not there so you leave a message on her answer phone.
4. You borrowed a book from a classmate (Jim) and promised to give it back in a week. It has been 4 weeks and you still have the book. Jim has sent you a message saying that he really needs it now. You call him back on his mobile but you only get the answer phone.

Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Outline – Pilot study 2

Name:

Nationality:

Age:

Sex:

IELTS:

	POWER **S<H** **S=H** **S>H**	**IMPOSITION** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very low – very high**	**FAMILIARITY** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **not familiar – very familiar**	**DIFFICULTY** **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very easy – very difficult**
Monologue 1 *(extension)*				
Monologue 2 *(project work)*				
Monologue 3 *(revised essay)*				
Monologue 4 *(borrowed book)*				
Role-play 1 *(low marks)*				
Role-play 2 *(flatmate)*				

NOTES:

- difference between home and UK (e.g. power / imposition?)

Appendix 4: Participants' biodata

Student ID	L1	Age	Gender	Proficiency level
S1	Japanese	22	M	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S2	Thai	20	F	IELTS 6.5 (CEFR B2)
S3	Slovakian	21	M	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S4	Chinese	19	M	IELTS 5.5 (CEFR B2)
S5	Chinese	20	F	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S6	Turkish	33	M	IELTS 5.5 (CEFR B2)
S7	Turkish	30	F	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S8	Italian	20	M	IELTS 6.5 (CEFR B2)
S9	Arabic	28	F	IELTS 5.5 (CEFR B2)
S10	Spanish	22	F	IELTS 6.0 (CEFR B2)
S11	Arabic	24	M	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S12	Swahili	25	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S13	Spanish	24	F	IELTS 8.0 (CEFR C1)
S14	Arabic	26	M	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S15	Russian	24	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S16	Arabic	23	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S17	Nepali	25	F	IELTS 7.0 (CEFR C1)
S18	Polish	23	M	IELTS 7.5 (CEFR C1)
S19	German/Italian	20	F	IELTS 7.5 (CEFR C1)
S20	Spanish	39	M	IELTS 8.0 (CEFR C1)
S21	Arabic	21	F	IELTS 8.0 - changed to CEFR C2
S22	German	22	M	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S23	Urdu	23	F	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S24	German	21	F	TOEFL speaking 30 = IELTS 9 (CEFR C2)
S25	Polish	28	M	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S26	Temne	54	M	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S27	Hindi	25	M	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S28	Arabic	21	F	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S29	French	24	M	IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)
S30	Chinese	31	M	TOEFL 118 = IELTS 9.0 (CEFR C2)

Appendix 5: Main study task design

Monologic tasks

	Task 1	***Task 2***	***Task 3***	***Task 4***
Speech act	Apology + REQUEST	REQUEST	REQUEST	Apology + REQUEST
Power constellation	S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H
Imposition	high	high	high	high
Cultural considerations?	Relationship between lecturer and student? UK and L1 culture?		Relationship between lecturer and student? UK and L1 culture?	
Real life?	Relevant context.	Relevant context.	Relevant context.	Relevant context.

Instructions in monologic tasks:

In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are in the situation and speak when you are ready.

Tasks:

GENERAL SITUATION	**PROBLEM + reason**	**SOLUTION**	**Action**	***parameters***
You have a university essay deadline tomorrow.	You are still not ready because you have been ill.	You need to get an extension on the deadline today.	You decide to call Professor Taylor in his office but he is not there so you leave a message on his answer phone.	*S<H* *Apology + REQUEST:* *H to grant wish (allow extension)* *Legitimate excuse provided*
You are working on a presentation (to be given tomorrow) with another student, Jane.	She still has not done the 'Introduction' slides because she is very slow.	You need to make sure that she finishes them today.	You decide to call her but she is not answering so you leave a message on her answer phone.	*S=H* *REQUEST:* *H to perform wish (create slides)*
You last assignment is due in one week.	You are worried because you are not sure whether you have understood the task correctly.	You really want your professor's opinion on your draft.	You decide to call Professor Willson in her office but she is not there so you leave a message on her answer phone.	*S<H* *REQUEST:* *H to perform wish (give feedback)* *Semi-legitimate excuse provided*
You borrowed a book from a classmate (Jim) and promised to give it back in a week.	It has been 3 weeks and you still have the book because you have been moving house. Jim has sent you a message saying that he needs it.	You need the book very much for another day.	You decide to call him but he is not answering so you leave a message on his answer phone.	*S=H* *Apology + REQUEST:* *H to grant wish (allow S to have book)* *Semi-legitimate excuse provided*

Dialogic tasks

	Task 5	***Task 6***
Speech act	Request	Request
Power constellation	S<H	S=H
Imposition	high	high
considerations	The interlocutor's personality and method of questioning are likely to have an impact on the candidates' output.	The interlocutor's personality and method of questioning are likely to have an impact on the candidates' output.
Real life?	Relevant context.	Relevant context.

Instructions in dialogic tasks:

In this part of the task, you will see a description of a situation. Imagine that you are in that situation and start a conversation with the other participant.

Tasks:

GENERAL SITUATION	**PROBLEM + reason**	**ACTION / SOLUTION**	***parameters***
You have just got of your essays back from Professor Willson.	You are surprised at the very low mark given because you believe you followed the instructions carefully.	Ask the professor to explain the reason.	*S<H* *Request:* *H to perform wish (explain mark)* *Semi-legitimate reason provided.*
You are sharing a flat with another student, Janet.	She is very untidy and never cleans any of the communal areas. This has been bothering you for months.	Ask her to do more cleaning.	*S=H* *Request:* *H to perform wish (clean more)* *Semi-legitimate reason provided.*

Appendix 6: Semi-structured interview outline – main study

Name	**Nationality**	**Age**	**Sex**	**IELTS score**

	POWER CONSTELLATION *(What is the power position?)* **S<H** **S=H** **S>H**	**IMPOSITION** *(How demanding is your request?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very low – very high**	**FAMILIARITY** *(How familiar are you with this situation?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **not familiar – very familiar**	**DIFFICULTY** *(How difficult was this situation?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** **very easy – very difficult**
Monologue 1 *(extension)*				
Monologue 2 *(project work)*				
Monologue 3 *(essay draft)*				
Monologue 4 *(book)*				
Role-play 1 *(low marks)*				
Role-play 2 *(flatmate)*				

NOTES:

- difference between home and UK (e.g. power / imposition?)

Appendix 7: Order of tasks in the test sessions

Schedule:

DAY 1	**Level**	**Time** (tasks + interview)	**TASK 1**	**TASK 2**
Participant 1	B2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
Participant 2	B2	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
Participant 3	B2	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
DAY 2				
Participant 4	B2	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
Participant 5	B2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
Participant 6	B2	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
DAY 3				
Participant 7	B2	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 8	B2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
Participant 9	B2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 10	B2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
DAY 4				
Participant 11	C1	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 12	C1	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
Participant 13	C1	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
DAY5				
Participant 14	C1	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
Participant 15	C1	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
Participant 16	C1	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
DAY 6				
Participant 17	C1	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
Participant 18	C1	1 hour	= / < *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
Participant 19	C1	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	< / = *(10 mins)*
Participant 20	C1	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
DAY 7				
Participant 21	C2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 22	C2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
Participant 23	C2	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
DAY 8				
Participant 24	C2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
Participant 25	C2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 26	C2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*
DAY 9				
Participant 27	C2	1 hour	3, 4, 1, 2 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 28	C2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	4, 1, 2, 3 *(20 mins)*
Participant 29	C2	1 hour	1, 2, 3, 4 *(20 mins)*	= / < *(10 mins)*
Participant 30	C2	1 hour	< / = *(10 mins)*	2, 3, 4, 1 *(20 mins)*

Appendix 8: Transcription symbols

(based on Atkinson & Heritage, 1984)

(0.5)	Number of a time gap in tenths of a second
(.)	A pause which is less than two-tenths of a second
=	A latch between utterances
[	An onset of overlapping talk
(( ))	A non-verbal activity
-	A sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound
:	Stretched sound or letter
( )	An unclear fragment on the tape
(guess)	The transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
.	A stopping fall in tone
,	A continuing intonation
?	A rising intonation
Underline	An emphasised word or sound
◦ ◦	The talk quieter than the surrounding
> <	The talk quicker than the surrounding
< >	The talk more slow than the surrounding
Hah, huh, heh	Laughing

Appendix 9: CCSARP categorisation

Request strategies	**Syntactic downgraders** Modify head act internally by mitigating impositive force of request (by syntactic choices)	**Lexical and phrasal downgraders:** Optional additions to soften the impositive force of request by modifying head act internally (lexical/phrasal choices)
Mood derivable: often imperative but also infinite forms, elliptical sentence structures: *Leave me alone.* **Explicit performative**: illocutionary intent is explicitly named using illocutionary verb *I am asking you to move your car.* **Hedged performative**: illocutionary verb modified by e.g. modal verbs *I must ask you to move your car.* **Locution derivable**: illocutionary intent is directly derivable from semantic meaning of locution *Madam you'll have to move your car.* **Want statement**: expresses speaker's desire that event should come about *I'd like to borrow your notes.* **Suggestory formula:** illocutionary intent is phrased as a suggestion by means of framing routine formula *How about cleaning up the kitchen?* **Preparatory:** contains reference to preparatory condition for feasibility of request (ability, willingness, possibility) *Can I borrow your notes?* **Strong hint:** illocutionary intent is not immediately derivable from locution *Will you be going home now?* **Mild hint:** locution contains no elements which are of immediate	***Interrogative*** *Can I* borrow your notes? ***Negotiation of a preparatory condition:*** addressee can comply or willing to carry out requested act: *You couldn't* give me a lift, could you*?* **Subjunctive:** Might be better if *you were to leave* now. **Conditional:** I would suggest you leave now. **Aspect:** *I'm wondering* if I could get a lift home with you. **Tense** (only if past tense forms are used with present time reference): *I was wondering* whether you could present your paper a week earlier. **Combinations of the above:** *I was wondering* if I could*n't* get a lift home with you.	**Politeness marker:** optional, bid for cooperative behavior: Clean the kitchen, *please*. Expressions seeking to involve hearer: *Do you think* you could…? **Understater:** to underrepresent stated affairs in propostion Could you tidy up *a bit*? **Hedge**: adverbials to avoid precise propositional specification to avoid potential provocation of such precision It would fit much better *somehow* if you did it next week. I'd *kind of* like to get a lift if that's ok. **Subjectivizer**: expressing subjective opinion re act in proposition, thus lowering assertive force of request I'm afraid you're going to have to move your car. I *wonder* if you would give me a lift. **Downtoner**: modifiers used to modulate impact on hearer Could you *possibly/perhaps* lend me your notes? **Cajoler:** interspersed to increase, establish or restore harmony between interlocutors, which may be endangered through request *You know*, I'd really like you to present your paper next week. **Appealer:** to appeal to hearer's understanding Clean up the kitchen, dear, *will you*? **Combinations of above**
		Upgraders Increase the impact of request **Intensifiers**: intensify certain elements of proposition The kitchen is in a *terrible* mess. **Commitment indicator**: indicate heightened degree of commitment

relevance to intended illocution *You've been busy here, haven't you?* (clean the kitchen!)		*I'm sure* you won't mind giving me a lift. **Expletive:** Why don't you clean that *bloody* mess up? **Time intensifier** You'd better move your car *right now*. **Lexical uptoner**: marked lexical choice, element of proposition is given negative connotations Clean up that *mess*! **Determination marker**: indicating heightened degree of determination I've explained myself and that's that! **Repetition of request** Get lost! Leave me alone!

Appendix 10: Lexical/phrasal coding categories identified in the present study

Lexical/phrasal pragmalinguistic categories identified in Pilot study 1, in Pilot study 2 and in Main studies

	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
LEXICAL/PHRASAL UPGRADERS: 4. intensifier 5. overstater 6. committer	4) adverbial modifier to intensify certain elements of the proposition 5) adverbial modifier overrepresenting the reality in the proposition to increase the force of the utterance 6) sentence modifier to indicate S's heightened degree of commitment to the proposition	4) The kitchen is in a terrible mess. (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka et al 1989) / Very, so, such, quite, really, just (House and Kasper, 1981) 5) Absolutely, terribly (House and Kasper, 1981) 6) certainly, obviously (House and Kasper, 1981)
LEXICAL/PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS: 1. hedge	Adverbial to avoid precise proposition in order to prevent potential provocation of such precision.	• I'd kind of like to go home now. (CCSARP) • Kind of, sort of, somehow, and so on, more of less, rather (House and Kasper, 1981)
2. understater	Adverbial to underrepresent the stated act in the proposition.	• Could you tidy up a bit? (CCSARP) • A little bit, a second, not very much (House and Kasper, 1981)
3. downtoner	Modifiers used to lessen the impact on the hearer.	• Could you possibly help me? (CCSARP) • Just, simply, possibly, perhaps, rather (House and Kasper, 1981)
4. cajoler	Type of gambits used to increase or restore harmony between the interlocutors.	• You know, you see, I mean, actually (House and Kasper, 1981)
5. politeness marker	Expression aiming to bid for cooperative behaviour	• Please (CCSARP)
6. subjectivizer	Expressing subjective opinion regarding the act in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of the request.	• I wonder (CCSARP)
CONVERSATIONAL ROUTINES		• [I'm (adverbial) sorry] • That'd be great: [That {'d/would} be +adj] Bardovi-Harlig (2009)

Appendix 11: Semi-structured interview: Sample comments (ID :24)

Name	Nationality	Age	Sex	IELTS score
	German	**21**	**Female**	**TOEFL Speaking: 30**

	POWER CONSTELLATION *(What is the power position?)* **S<H / S=H /S>H**	**IMPOSITION** *(How demanding is your request?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** very low – very high	**FAMILIARITY** *(How familiar are you with situation?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** not – very familiar	**DIFFICULTY** *(How difficult was this situation?)* **1 – 2 – 3 – 4** very easy – very difficult
Monologue 1 *(extension)*	**S<H**	**3**	**1**	**3**
Monologue 2 *(project work)*	**S>H**	**1**	**3**	**2**
Monologue 3 *(essay draft)*	**S<H**	**2**	**3**	**2**
Monologue 4 *(book)*	**S>H**	**4**	**2**	**4**
Role-play 1 *(low marks)*	**S<H**	**2**	**2**	**2**
Role-play 2 *(flatmate)*	**S=H**	**2**	**4**	**2**

NOTES:

Related to tasks:

M1: 'he might think it's only an excuse' / 'it's justified but extension is not always accepted'

M2: 'this is professional environment so it's very reasonable to ask' / 'I didn't want to get rude but wanted to sound urgent'

M3: 'I'm asking for the professor's time but he always welcomes it' / 'I have every right to ask for his help'

M4: 'it's the least justified request and shows bad character' / 'I'm making two requests at once'

D5: 'I expect him to do it as he should justify the grade so I can improve' / 'it's very reasonable to ask'

D6: 'it involves a very personal environment' / 'I felt a bit uncomfortable' / 'I pretended to be more familiar with my flatmate'

General notes:

- 'I've lived here since I was 14 but didn't know any English then'
- 'in Germany you have to use the 3rd person with professors as it's the formal way but in English it's 'you' with everybody'
- 'I know that the British overstate polite sentences and I've personally adapted to that way of speaking' / 'I think it was not a conscious decision, it's just happened but I realize it now'

- ‘I think about language a lot because I’m also an actor and interested in Psychology’ / ‘For example I’ve decided not to use ‘like’ as it’s meaningless and shows you don’t really care about language’ / ‘I often observe and listen to English people using language in different situations, it’s fascinating’
- ‘the role-play was easier as you can see the person and see their reaction’ / ‘you can also get quick feedback if the message is not understood’ / ‘messages can be misunderstood more often’
- ‘in the tasks I thought more about what to say but also about how to say it’