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**A CROSS-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE PRAGMATICS OF
REQUESTS BY STUDENTS OF THE BA ENGLISH
TEACHING PROGRAM AT BUAP**

**TESIS QUE PARA OBTENER EL TITULO DE:
MAESTRO EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

P R E S E N T A:

LIC. JACOB MALDONADO MORALES

**DIRECTORA DE TESIS
DRA. ELIZABETH FLORES SALGADO**

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To my parents, Benito and Judith.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the problem

At present, we are living in a globalized world where communication between people from different countries using a *lingua franca* or a second language is becoming a common phenomenon. Crystal (2003) indicates that English is now the first global *lingua franca* and that it is probably affecting various areas, from daily news to education. We have to remark that individuals speak and use different languages depending on the society they belong to in spite of the influence of a *lingua franca* (Mahmoud, 2014). This makes people acquire a language and its system features, both linguistic and pragmatic, based on their daily communicative encounters (Diaz Perez, 2001). For this reason, the process of learning a second language is definitely seen as an interesting area of study, since it becomes relevant not only for understanding linguistic components like grammar rules or syntax, but also to figure out how well language learners perform in real communicative contexts by conveying messages successfully while using a foreign language as well as the relationship between the language use and the communicative encounters.

Therefore, the concepts competent speaker, communicative competence as well as pragmatic competence gain importance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in academic contexts. Then, it is imperative to define who a competent speaker is given the idea that a person may understand that in his L1 subjects can be omitted in sentences or that in his culture it is a normal practice to take another person's turn while a second person might see this as an unacceptable behavior (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1997). In the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field, there are different approaches on what a competent speaker is. On the one hand, Chomsky's (1965) theory claims that a speaker can be considered competent if his knowledge of grammar, syntax, phonology and lexis of the language are well founded. Nevertheless, being competent not only implies understanding grammatical structures, having a broad

vocabulary repertoire nor having a good pronunciation or understanding how to write well-formed sentences. Opposite to this notion, Hymes (1972) proposes that a competent speaker must also know the appropriate use of the linguistic system in a particular context. He states that:

“a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (Hymes, 1972, pp. 277).

In this sense, we have to consider that the pragmatic competence defines the interaction between two speakers. Kasper (1992) defines pragmatic competence as the knowledge that a speaker (for this study we will consider a second language learner) must have about the linguistic components, their functions, and the social norms that need to be followed in order to interpret and perform a message in a specific language. Then, the concepts of competent speaker and communicative competence hold a narrow relationship to explain to what extent English Language Learners (ELL) achieve the pragmatic competence in regards of the use of a certain speech event, like requests, which is of interest in this study. Moreover, it is crucial to observe how students of the English Teaching BA program in the Faculty of Languages develop this pragmatic competence.

A second language learner has to be competent using the linguistic forms of the target language as well as the suitable functions demanded by the context if he wants to avoid pragmatic failure (Flores Salgado, 2011). Pragmatic failure may appear if speakers are not completely aware of the appropriate language use (Diaz Perez, 2001; Nicholls, 2009; Mahmoud, 2014). The term is defined as “the inability to understand what is meant by what is said” (Thomas, 1983, p. 91), and this concept helps to support the theory of communicative competence which will be approached in this study considering Hymes’, Bachman’s and Canale and Swain’s models.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Understanding communicative competence plays an important role in order to explore pragmatic aspects of language. The pragmatic competence is an interdisciplinary matter that has drawn attention of many experts and that can be seen in the increment in the number of publications dealing with it. One example is the study conducted by Flores Salgado (1998) in which she found that Mexican are inclined to be more direct in their Spanish requests than American speakers in their English requests. Similarly, Mahmoud (2014) noticed in his study that speakers whose mother language is English tend to make more conventionally indirect requests compared to Jordanian speakers. Such an analysis permits us to comprehend that there can be cross-cultural differences when learning a second language, like English.

Academically speaking, it is important that learners of English understand that pragmatic transfer may lead to pragmatic failures even if the learner has an excellent grammatical and lexical command of the target language (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984). For that reason, we have decided to analyze the different patterns of realization of the speech act of requests. Requests are a type of speech act that is part of the social behavior found in the daily interaction between individuals. According to Ford (n.d.) they are “one of the most frequently occurring speech acts across cultures, and one of the most researched as well”. There are different classifications of speech acts (Allan, 1998; Searle, 1969) that consider various aspects in order to group all the acts into categories. However, Labov and Fanshel (1977) consider requests as a big group in their classification stating that some requests can be mitigated or not due that cross-cultural differences may influence the politeness attached to this speech act having as main variables social power, distance and the level of imposition embedded in the situation. Consequently, this study also focused on the process of using pragmatic transfer while second language learners perform requests in English. In this sense, the literature indicates that learners’ problems derived from intercultural communication are strongly related to the use of L1 norms and conventions while performing a speech act in a L2 (Wolfson, 1989; Kasper, 1992).

1.3 Purpose of the study

Bearing in mind all previously mentioned, the purpose of this study is to analyze the different realization patterns of the speech act of requests produced by English language learners with an intermediate level of the language enrolled in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language program. This will help to identify what specific strategies learners utilize in order to achieve requests successfully.

1.4 Research objectives

Furthermore, the objective of this study is to compare the realization patterns of requests produced by Spanish Mexican speakers, Mexican learners of English and American English speakers to analyze the observable differences.

1.5 Research questions

Two main research questions are addressed:

- i. What are the preferred requesting strategies in English used by the EFL student participants?
- ii. What are the external modifications used by the participants in English and the participants in Spanish in the process of making requests?

1.6 Context of the research

Literature indicates that the study of speech acts in second language learning is relevant because not only can researchers raise awareness about the learners' communicative competence, but also they can gain more understanding about the levels of their pragmatic competence. For the purpose of this study, the speech act of request was chosen given that there are apparent modifications or adjustments that a second language learner needs to comprehend in order to perform this act successfully. Flores Salgado (2011) points out that cultural norms and conventions (for this case we will talk about politeness) play an influential role on the performance of speech acts since they differ from culture to culture.

Therefore, the areas of research that are related to this study are, primarily the communicative competence models by Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990), the pragmatic competence as well as the pragmatic failure. On the other hand, the concepts of social distance, power and imposition had to be considered as they turned to be influential in the use of politeness. This is clearly seen in situations in which age, for example, needs to be reflected on in order to lessen or intensify the act. Finally, the study of the pragmatic transfer and the theories of speech acts were also approached for having a greater view.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of the study lies on two directions: first, this study is intended at contributing theoretically to the research field of pragmatics since studies which observe language as an object are becoming less common; instead, language analyses have switched to consider language use distinct depending on the context as the factor that determines the communication; second, this study looks for opening the discussion on how English language courses may conduct the manner language learners internalize pragmatic competence as well as the considerations decision makers, including teachers, would have to take on

1.8 Content organization

This study is divided into four chapters organized as follows. The theoretical concepts are reviewed in Chapter II. This chapter remarks the models of communicative competence as well as the speech act theory and the classification of speech acts. The methodology used for the purpose of the study is explained in Chapter III. This chapter includes a description of the context, the participants, instruments used and an explanation on how the data is analyzed. The analysis of the results is presented in Chapter IV. Here, the responses of subjects to the instruments are scrutinized and patterns of realization of requests are showed. Conclusions of the study are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

1.9 Key terms

The following terms are part of the central discussion of this study:

Speech act: A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. We perform speech acts when we offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal. They require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture (Searle, 1969).

Pragmatics: Morris defined pragmatics as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters” (1938, p. 6). In modern linguistics, pragmatics is broadly defined as the study of language use in context.

Pragmatic competence: Pragmatic competence can be defined as the ability to produce socially appropriate utterances in various contexts of language use. However, pragmatic ability does not refer only to the productive use of language through speaking and writing, but also to understanding and interpreting what is said or written by other speakers of the target language (Cohen, 2010)

Request: A request is a directive speech act whose illocutionary purpose is to get the hearer to do something in circumstances in which it is not obvious that he/she will perform the action in the normal course of events (Searle 1969). By initiating a request, the speaker believes that the hearer is able to perform an action.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter is intended at revising the theoretical concepts that lead this project. First, the models of communicative competence will be revised and discussed. Second, I will describe the pragmatic competence as well as the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic components in it. Third, I will describe the theory of speech acts and the classification of speech acts. Fourth, the concepts of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts will be explained followed the differentiation of direct and indirect speech acts. For the last part, I will focus on the speech acts of requests and the implications in the language use.

2.1 Communicative competence

A theoretical construct that has caused a great deal of debates in the field of linguistics, and that is closely associated to the disciplines of intercultural pragmatics and interlanguage is the communicative competence. As Cenoz (1996) points out, Chomsky's original concept of linguistic competence has been firmly criticized by linguists (Lyons 1970), psychologists (Campbell & Wales in Lyons, 1970), sociolinguists and anthropologists (Hymes 1972). The former concept of Chomsky (1965) implies an ideal speaker/listener, in a fully homogeneous community of speakers, who knows his language thoroughly and is not affected by factors correlated with the use or performance, but that are irrelevant from a grammatical perspective, such as errors, memory limitations, attention changes or distractions. Fundamentally, what has been criticized is the fact that the notion of competence firstly proposed by Chomsky does not attend to aspects related to the use of language. Critics of the concept of Chomskian linguistic competence consider that such implies an overly limited view that cannot account for the linguistic knowledge of a speaker in its entirety. Lyons expresses it as follows:

"It is frequently stated that there is a conflict between the sociolinguistic and the psycholinguistic approach to language; and furthermore, that generative grammar (which according to Chomsky

is a branch of cognitive psychology) must necessarily adopt the latter. I do not believe that this is so.

The two points of view, the sociolinguistic and the psycholinguistic can certainly be distinguished at the moment (and linguists tend to favor the one or the other according to their particular interests). But ultimately, they must be reconciled. The ability to use one's language correctly in a variety of socially determined situations is as much and as central a part of linguistic 'competence' as the ability to produce grammatically correct well-formed sentences." (Lyons 1970, p. 287)

Likewise, Campbell & Wales (in Lyons, 1970) consider that Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence ignores the ability to produce and understand sentences that are adequate for the context in which they are expressed:

"Although generative grammarians, in particular Chomsky, claim that their work is an attempt to characterize the nature of competence (...), their main effort has in fact been directed towards a more restricted sort of competence, (...) from which by far the most important linguistic ability has been omitted –the ability to produce or understand utterances which are not so much grammatical but, more important, appropriate to the context in which they are made." (Campbell & Wales in Lyons, 1970, p. 247)

In Taylor's opinion (1988), many of these criticisms are not valid, since they confuse linguistic knowledge with the ability to use such knowledge, which implies a more general confusion between cognitive state and cognitive process. For Chomsky, competence is a state, never a process, and has nothing to do with a capacity or ability (Taylor 1988, p. 151). In this sense, Cenoz (1996) points out that,

although on certain occasions it has been seen as an extension of Chomsky's concept of competence, communicative competence should not be considered a mere quantitative addition, since it also implies a qualitative change. In addition to incorporating new dimensions to the concept, the meaning of what Chomsky understood by linguistic competence changes.

While the notion of linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of certain rules, communicative competence also includes the ability to put that knowledge into practice. On the other hand, if Chomsky's linguistic competence is a static concept related to individuals and with an absolute character that does not imply comparison, communicative competence, on the contrary, is a dynamic, relative and socially based concept. Despite the inconsistencies that Taylor observes in many of the criticisms of the Chomskian concept of competence, this author acknowledges that in criticisms such as that of Hymes (1972), along with negative aspects, certain positive aspects can be highlighted; such as the point that certain aspects of what Chomsky considers acting are systematic and can therefore be described in the form of rules or norms, which indicates that they would constitute a type of competence. Chomsky (1980) himself acknowledges this fact when, together with grammatical competence, he proposes the existence of a pragmatic competence that underlies the ability to make use of knowledge characterized as grammatical competence:

“For purposes of enquiry and exposition, we may proceed to distinguish ‘grammatical competence’ from ‘pragmatic competence,’ restricting the first to the knowledge of form and meaning and the second to knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes. Thus, we may think of language as an instrument that can be put to use. The grammar of the language characterizes the instrument, determining intrinsic physical and semantic properties of every sentence. The grammar thus expresses grammatical competence. A

system of rules and principles constituting pragmatic competence determines how the tool can effectively be put to use.” (Chomsky 1980, p. 224)

2.1.1 Hymes' model

The concept of communicative competence was coined by Hymes in a manuscript published in 1972. As Duranti (1998, p. 147) claims, the introduction of the concept of communicative competence is consistent with Hymes' previous call (1964) in favor of a new area of interdisciplinary knowledge, the ethnography of communication. Hymes himself (1972) and Campbell & Wales (in Lyons, 1970) are among the first authors to call attention to the fact that Chomsky's most radical version of the competition-performance distinction did not take into account the sociocultural importance of the verbal and situational context in which a given statement is expressed and, consequently, cannot offer a systematic explanation of the fact that one of the components of a speaker's linguistic knowledge is how the language is used in appropriately. In this sense, Hymes states:

“There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as semantic rules perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole.” (Hymes, 1972, p. 278)

Contrary to Chomsky's more radical proposal, according to which competence relates only to the knowledge of grammar rules, Hymes proposes a broader notion of competence, that of communicative competence. This notion included not only knowledge of the rules of grammar or grammatical competence, but also knowledge of the rules of use of language or sociolinguistic competence. According to Hymes (1972) we can see communicative competence as what a speaker is required to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings. For Hymes (1972), dealing with

communication “requires a theory within which sociocultural factors have an explicit and constitutive role” (Hymes 1972, p. 271).

Unlike the transformational-generative grammar, which recognizes judgments of two types, grammaticality (related to competence) and acceptability (with respect to performance) Hymes (1972) considers that “if an adequate theory of language users and language use is to be developed, it seems that judgments must be recognized to be in fact not of two kinds but of four” (Hymes 1972, p. 281). Therefore, in his opinion, linguistic communication, as well as other forms of communication, involve knowledge and skills of four different types, namely:

“1 Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;

2 Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;

3 Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;

4 Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.” (Hymes, 1972, p. 281)

Hence, four different systems of competence interact in the Hymes concept of communicative competence: linguistic (what is formally possible), psycholinguistic (which is viable in relation to the human information process), sociolinguistic (what is the meaning or social value of a given statement), and strategic (what really takes place). As a consequence, a given statement can be, for example, ungrammatical in relation to a given grammar (e.g. the were walls blue), unacceptable from the point of view of discourse strategies (e.g. the wall the husband the wife my cousin heard call lost was red),

inappropriate in a given social context (e.g. saying good night to greet someone in the morning), or strange in a specific situation (e.g. saying “Hi, dude!” to the boss in the office).

2.1.2 Canale and Swain's model

Canale & Swain (1980) disagree with Hymes regarding the inclusion of psycholinguistic competence in a communicative competence model, but, on the other hand, they consider the inclusion of probability of appearance rules in the Hymes’ model an important aspect of the language use that is practically obvious in all other models of communicative competence:

“Knowledge of what a native speaker is likely to say in a given context is to us a crucial component of second language learners’ competence to understand second language communication and to express themselves in a native-like way.” (Canale & Swain 1980, p. 16)

For Canale & Swain (1980), the communicative competence includes three fundamental competences: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Nevertheless, it is compulsory to mention that Canale later revised that model and fragmented the sociolinguistic competence into two separate components: sociolinguistic competence on the one hand, and discourse competence on the other hand. In this sense, the four competences will be described below. First, grammar competence is concerned with mastery of the linguistic code and encompasses knowledge of lexical units as well as rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology. According to Canale and Swain (1980), no specific grammatical theory can be chosen to characterize grammatical competence. In their opinion, any communicative model that has among its objectives to provide students with the necessary knowledge to interpret and express the literal meaning of the sentences appropriately will necessarily have to take into account grammatical competence.

The second component of communicative competence, sociolinguistic competence, comprises two groups of norms: sociocultural norms of use and norms of discourse (This is derived from the Canale and Swain's former model as I mentioned above). It is essential that the student is aware of these norms in order to interpret the social meaning of the statements, especially when the relationship between the literal meaning and the intention of the speaker is unclear. The sociocultural norms of use are mainly focused on pointing out the extent to which certain propositions and communicative intentions are appropriate in a given context depending on contextual factors such as the topic of the conversation, the role of the interlocutors, the scenario and norms of interaction. These norms are also related in a secondary way to the way in which a specific grammatical form in a given sociocultural context represents an appropriate attitude and register. On the other hand, the rules of discourse focus on the combination of statements and communicative functions. While the grammatical connections between the statements are known as cohesion, the proper combination of communicative functions is called coherence.

Third, the strategic competence covers verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that interlocutors can use to counteract communication breakdowns caused by performance variables or insufficient competence. Two types of fundamental strategies can be distinguished: those that are primarily related to grammatical competence, such as paraphrasing grammatical forms that one has not mastered or cannot recall at any given time; and those that are primarily related to sociolinguistic competence, such as the manner to address a stranger when his social status is unknown. It is especially in the early stages of learning a foreign language when knowledge related to the use of these strategies can be particularly useful. Although this type of competence may acquire special relevance when it comes to an L2, we must underline it does not necessarily have to be restricted to the context of a foreign language. Any native speaker can be subjected to memory lapses or the uncertainty of the status of their

interlocutor, which would lead him to employ certain strategies to try to compensate for those deficiencies.

The fourth component in the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale & Swain was the result of a revision by Canale (1983) after three years. Even though the essence remains the same, two adjustments are made. In the first place, he derives the discourse competence from the sociolinguistic competence. Canale & Swain (1980) claimed that sociolinguistic competence comprised both sociocultural and discourse rules as explained above. Now, only the first are included in the sociolinguistic competence, “[which] addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction.” (Canale 1983, p. 7)

On the other hand, discourse competence deals with the way in which grammatical forms and meanings must be combined to produce a spoken or written text in different genres (Canale 1983, p. 9). The term "genres" refers to the type of text, for example, a letter of complaint, a public notice, a scientific report, etc. As previously mentioned, the unity of a text is achieved through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning.

The second remarkable change that Canale introduced with respect to the model proposed by Canale & Swain (1980) is the wider explanation of the strategic competence. The verbal and nonverbal strategies can be put into operation not only to compensate for certain communication failures but also to increase the effectiveness of communication. The type of intentionally slow and paused discourse used for a rhetorical effect would be a good example of a verbal communication strategy that responds to this second modification.

2.1.3 Bachman's model

Bachman (1990) also reorganized the model of communicative competence of Canale & Swain (1980) to remark strategic competence as a totally independent component of linguistic competence and integrated with it in what he calls communicative language ability (CLA). Thus, the CLA, which he describes as “consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use” (Bachman 1990, p. 84), consists of three components: linguistic competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms.

For Bachman linguistic competence includes a group of specific knowledge components that are used in linguistic communication. His description of this competence is based on the empirical results of a study carried out by Bachman & Palmer (1982) which, according to him, offers evidence for the grouping of morphology, syntax, vocabulary, cohesion and organization under a single component, the organizational competence, one of the two types of competences that make up the linguistic competence. The second is pragmatic competence, which includes, as mentioned above, sociolinguistic and illocutionary competence, that are capabilities related to the functions that are carried out through the use of language. Each of the types mentioned is subdivided into other categories. Figure 1 illustrates the components of language proficiency. Bachman (1990, p. 86) explains that this tree diagram reflects certain aspects to the detriment of others. Thus, the diagram represents the hierarchical relationships between the components of linguistic competence, at the cost of making them appear as if they were separate and independent of each other. However, he remarks that in the use of language, all these components interact with each other and with characteristics of the situation, and it is this interaction that characterizes the communicative use of the language.

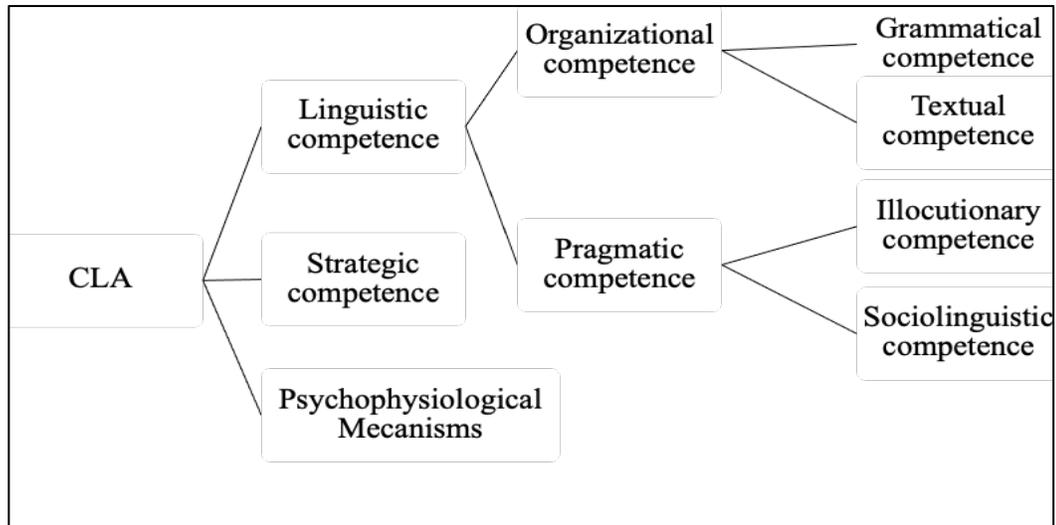


Figure 1. Bachman's Communicative Language Ability (Bachman, 1990)

In Bachman's model, the organizational competence corresponds to the grammatical and discursive competence of the Canale & Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) models, but the sociolinguistic competence has in Bachman's proposal broader connotations and constitutes, together with the illocutionary competence, a fundamental element of pragmatic competence. The organizational competence consists of "those abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional content, and ordering them to form texts" (Bachman 1990, p. 87). These capabilities can be classified into two different types: grammatical and textual. Grammar competence encompasses those competences involved in the use of language, as described by Widdowson (1978). They refer to the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology/graphology, and they control the choice of words to express specific meanings, their forms, their distribution in sentences to express propositions and their physical accomplishments, either as sounds or written symbols. Textual competence refers to the knowledge of conventions to join the statements that will form a text. One of its components is cohesion, that is related to those ways of explicitly illustrating semantic relationships such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion, as well as certain norms. For example, those that

regulate information already known and the new in speech. Rhetorical organization, the other component of textual competence, is related to the general conceptual structure of a text. Narration, description, comparison or classification are conventions of rhetorical organization.

Pragmatic competence is the second component of linguistic competence in Bachman's model. Contrary to the capabilities discussed above, pragmatic competence has to do with, on the one hand, the relationships between linguistic signs and their referents; on the other hand, with the users of the language and the context of communication. Bachman's notion of pragmatic competence includes illocutionary competence (knowledge of pragmatic conventions to perform linguistic functions) and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions to perform appropriately in a given context). Within the illocutionary competence, Bachman (1990, p. 90) mentions the ability to carry out and interpret speech acts and linguistic functions. Within the sociolinguistic competence, he comments on the following capacities: sensitivity to dialect differences (or varieties), to differences in register, to naturalness, and the ability to interpret cultural references and rhetorical figures.

According to Bachman (1990, p. 99), the definitions of the strategic competence of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) present a limitation: they do not describe the mechanisms through which strategic competition operates. Bachman considers strategic competence as an important part of all communicative linguistic use: not only that in which linguistic abilities are deficient and must be compensated by other means. Bachman distinguishes three components of the strategic competence: evaluation, planning and execution. The evaluation component allows, firstly, to identify the necessary information to carry out a certain communicative objective in a specific context; secondly, to define what linguistic competences will allow us to use such information more effectively to achieve our communicative objective; thirdly, to detect the capacities and knowledge shared by our interlocutor and assess to what extent the communicative objective has been achieved. The planning component recovers relevant aspects of linguistic competence and formulates a plan for the realization of the communicative

objective. In the case of a monolingual context, the relevant aspects will be drawn from the competence in the native language (L1) while in a bilingual context or using a second language or a foreign language, they will be extracted from the interlanguage system of the speaker, or second language or foreign language (L2). Finally, the execution component uses the relevant psycholinguistic mechanisms to carry out the plan in the proper modality and channel in relation to the communicative objective and the context.

2.2 Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence has been identified as a crucial aspect of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983). Although, communicative competence has a broader scope and involves the capacity to participate in communicative situations, it is the pragmatic competence that determines how those situations will be treated as it involves the appropriateness of what is said by the speaker according to the context. This competence is a much more specific concept. It involves linguistic as well as communicative competence and also a notion of how the context is built and what it demands from the participants: who the participants are, their status, age, situation, and other features which make part of the context of a communicative encounter. Thus, to define pragmatic competence, first we will refer to pragmatics as Crystal (2008) explains:

“Pragmatics is 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.” (p. 379).

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of meaning conveyed by the speaker rather than by the utterance. It interprets what is said according to the influence of the context and attempts to get what is inferred by the speaker which is, most of the times, much more than is said. Considering these

definitions, we can state that only by pragmatics can the user of the language be taken into the analysis of the intended meaning. Therefore, the assumption that there is no language without users becomes valid, and that the same utterance may mean different things if said by distinct people in different circumstances. Pragmatics studies the relation between language contexts and users and the resulting grammatical forms. That is, according to the context the speaker is in, he selects different structures to mean what he wants. In the case of a second, and especially, of a foreign language speaker, the selection has to be analyzed (mentally) and it must be something practiced as well (mainly in classes). However, in the case of a native speaker, this should be something more natural.

In this sense, we must mention first that pragmatics is related to sociolinguistics and other subdisciplines. This term is extensively employed in the field of second (and foreign language) acquisition and teaching, especially in reference to pragmatic competence as one of the abilities contained by the wide concept of communicative competence. The notion of pragmatic competence was early defined by Chomsky (1980) as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes". This concept was seen in opposition to grammatical competence that in Chomskyan terms is "the knowledge of form and meaning." In a more contextualized fashion, Canale & Swain (1980) included pragmatic competence as one important component of their model of communicative competence. In this model, pragmatic competence was identified as sociolinguistic competence and defined as the knowledge of contextually appropriate language use (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983). Later on, Canale (1988) expanded this definition, and explained that pragmatic competence includes "illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context" (p.80).

These components were retrieved again in Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, in which pragmatic competence is a central component incorporating the ability to use the language to express a vast range of functions and interpret their illocutionary force in discourse according to the sociocultural context in which they are uttered. More recently, Rose (1999) propose a more working definition of pragmatic competence saying that it is the ability to use available linguistic resources (pragmalinguistics) in a contextually appropriate fashion (sociopragmatics), that is, how to do things appropriately with words (Thomas, 1983; and Leech, 1983).

2.2.1 Sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics

The distinction established by Leech (1983) between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics is relevant for both the study of intercultural pragmatics and that of interlanguage pragmatics. While pragmalinguistics is defined as “the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics - where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech, 1983, p. 11), sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is described as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983, p. 10), that is, that subdiscipline that is interested in the different ways in which pragmatic performance is subject to specific social conditions

With regard to sociopragmatics, Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989) underline that, as with any variation in linguistic behavior, variations in the use of speech acts may be subjected to the effect of social parameters, such as the relative power of speaker and listener and the social distance between them. That is, speech communities differ in their assessment of speaker's and hearer's social distance and social power, their rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition involved in particular communicative acts (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Kasper, 1997). The effect of these and other situational factors may differ from culture to culture, from language to language and even from variety to variety within the same language. As an example of inappropriate attitude and register, which would indicate a disregard for socio-cultural norms of use, Canale & Swain (1980, p. 30) propose a situation in

which a waiter in an elegant restaurant, when taking note of an order, asks “OK , chump, what are you and this broad gonna eat? ”

The sociopragmatic conditions of a particular language will have to be taken into account by the foreign student of that language if he wants to avoid misunderstandings or give an erroneous and unwanted impression. Among these conditions, the question of the extent to which speakers express their requests directly or indirectly is especially relevant. For example, Blum-Kulka (1987), has investigated the relationship between the concepts of direct expression and politeness in English and Hebrew, concluding that while English speakers consider resorting to conventional indirect expressions (hints) as a polite strategy for making a request - although less polite than conventional indirect expressions - for the Hebrews, the use of hints is not a polite way to make a request.

Different researchers have concluded that social meanings transmitted by speakers of different languages when making a request may end in intercultural disputes, breakdowns or misunderstandings (Blum-Kulka, 1989; House, 1996; Hong, 1998). Thus, it is clear that there are notable sociopragmatic differences between different languages and cultures and that certain types or categories of speech acts that exist in a given language may not have an equivalent in another language or that may be expressed through a totally different way. For example, while a Frenchman would say "Bon appetit" or a Mexican would say “buen provecho”, an English speaker would generally say nothing.

The second dimension proposed by Leech is pragmalinguistics, which reflects the closest connection between language and pragmatics. It deals with the different ways in which speakers make use of different linguistic expressions - grammatical and lexical - to indicate a pragmatic meaning. Thus, for example, a conventional and indirect way of expressing a petition in English would be the use of questions like Would you do it ?, Won't you do it ?, Why don't you do it? o Do you want to do it? However, equivalent statements in other languages may not be construed as requests (as in Wierzbicka, 1991). In other words, pragmalinguistics refers to the resources for conveying communicative acts and

relational or interpersonal meanings. Such resources include pragmatic strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts (Kasper, 1997)

Wierzbicka (1996) clearly explains how relational or interpersonal meanings as well as the available resources vary in different languages:

“According to Anglo norms, it is important to give options to the addressee, not to pressure, and to try to find out what the addressee wants rather than to “impose” one’s own well-intentioned will upon the addressee. According to the Chinese norms, it is important to do the opposite. From a Chinese point of view, asking about the addressee’s wants implies that one doesn’t really care whether the addressee is going to do what we want them to do — for their good and at our expense (not in the sense that the event will be bad for me, the speaker, but that I will have to do something for the addressee).” (p. 332).

It can be clearly seen in this case, as in many others surely, that the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic dimensions are so closely related that it is often impossible to demarcate them. On the one hand, the prevailing norms in a specific culture that indicate what is the appropriate behavior in a given situation, taking into account extralinguistic factors of a social type, falls within the scope of sociopragmatics. On the other hand, as a result of compliance with these standards, a pragmalinguistic type election will be carried out. Similarly, the pragmalinguistic choice of a certain formula used as a polite strategy is determined by a previous sociopragmatic decision.

Due to vast sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic differences between different languages and cultures, the desirability of adopting a contrastive approach in the teaching of a foreign language results proper. Thus, Valero (1999) states in this regard the following:

“CS [Contrastive Studies] may also be useful in helping the student improve his/her communicative competence when comparing situations where the language is used in a different way in L1 and L2, i.e., politeness formula, requests structures, ways of asking for information etc. The use of this strategy makes the student more aware of the fact that language is inevitably linked to culture, and that different communities have developed different ways of categorizing.”
(p. 32)

2.3 Speech acts

In our daily communicative encounters, our utterances employ language in distinct ways. By using our verbal communication, we normally act/react or execute actions as a consequence of what it was said by our interlocutor. That is, one simple utterance detonates a specific reaction. This is basically the essence of a speech act theory and the connection between our utterance and its subsequent action is known as an illocutionary act. The theory of speech acts was initially proposed in the sixties by the British philosopher Austin (1962) and subsequently developed by his disciple the American philosopher Searle (1969). Alcaraz (1996) affirms that it constitutes one of the most original proposals to describe the language in action and that its appearance was for some the necessary sociolinguistic corrective to the formalized linguistics of the seventies and eighties, in which a formalist ideology dominated focused on the study of idealized sentences within an abstract linguistic system.

The following sections will deal with the explanation of the most relevant aspects of the theory of speech acts through the evolution that it has experienced with the various authors who, based on Austin's initial proposal, were making their own contributions. We will start with the different classifications of speech acts.

2.3.1 Classification of speech acts

A speech act is created when a speaker S directs a statement ST to a listener L in a context C. The moment a speaker issues a statement, therefore, he will be producing a speech act. As Alcaraz (1996) points out that the idea that any statement may be interpreted as an invitation, an apology, a threat, etc., it is essential to be able to really understand the whole meaning of communication (p. 73). Searle (1969) states that the reason for concentrating on the study of speech acts is that all linguistic communication includes linguistic acts. The communication unit would therefore not be the symbol, word or sentence, but the production of the symbol, word or sentence when performing the speech act. Hence, the speech act could be defined as the basic or minimum unit of linguistic communication. In this sense, speech acts are part of a social interaction behavior and must therefore be interpreted as an aspect of social interaction.

As Allan (1998) indicates, two approaches to the classification of speech acts can be distinguished. One of them, established by Austin (1962), is mainly a lexical classification of the so-called illocutionary verbs. The other, initiated by Searle (1969, 1976), is primarily a classification of acts. Austin and Vendler are framed in the lexical classification. Austin (1962), founder of the theory of speech acts, distinguished five classes of illocutionary verbs, which correspond to the five large groups of speech acts:

- *Verdictive* acts, as the name implies, are characterized by expressing a verdict, understood not only as the verdict in a trial, but any estimate of a given fact. The verdicts are connected with the notions of truth and falsehood, good sense and nonsense, and justice and injustice, Common performative verbs within this category are "calculate", "analyze", "understand", "estimate" or "characterize".

- *Exercitives* are related to the exercise of power, influence or rights. An exercitive act, therefore, consists in giving an opinion in favor or against a certain action. The consequences of an exercitive are that it obliges, allows or prohibits others from carrying out certain acts. Examples of performative verbs belonging to this group are "order", "send", "warn" or "advise."
- *Commissives* acts commit the speaker to execute a specific action, but also include announcements or statements of intent, which do not constitute promises. Among the performative verbs of the commissive type we can mention "promise", "propose", "dedicate to", and "pretend".
- *Behabitives* acts constitute a miscellaneous group and are related to attitudes and social behavior. "Thank", "apologize", "congratulate", "bless" or "challenge" are performative verbs that belong to this group.
- *Expositive* acts involve the presentation of opinions, the management of arguments and the clarification of uses and references. They express, therefore, how the speaker's contribution fits into the speech. Among the performative verbs that can be used to carry out this type of acts we could mention "insist", "deny", "affirm" or "illustrate".

Vendler (1972) completes the Austin's classification adding two new types of speech acts, namely *operational* and *interrogative* ones. As examples of operations can be cited "condemn", "designate" or "decree", and as interrogative examples "ask" or "interrogate."

Along lexical classifications, other authors have proposed classifications of acts. Within this second group we find the taxonomies of Searle (1969, 1976, 1979), Labov & Fanshel (1977), Bach & Harnish (1979), Habermas (1989), Allan (1986, 1998b). Starting with Searle (1976, 1979), he uses four

criteria to establish five types of speech acts. These four criteria are the illocutionary purpose, the direction of fit (from words to the world or from the world to words), the psychological state of the speaker and the propositional content, and the five types of speech acts are the representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives.

- The representative acts are intended to engage the speaker with the truth of the statement expressed. In this way, all representative acts can be evaluated according to the true-false-hypothetical dimension. The direction of fit in this type of acts is from the words to the world, that is, the words represent a certain reality, they adapt to the world. The expressed psychological state is "Belief (that something)". According to Searle (1976), most of the expositions and many of the verdicts of the Austin taxonomy (1962) would be included in this group because they all have the same illocutionary purpose and differ in other characteristics of the illocutionary force.
- In *directive acts* the illocutionary purpose consists in the speaker's intentions that the listener does something. The direction of fit is in this case from the world to words. The condition of sincerity is that of desire and the propositional content is always that the listener L carries out a future action A. Examples of verbs that denote members of this class are "ask", "beg", "send", "order", "invite", "allow" or "advise". A large part of the Austin's exercitives would also belong to this group.
- *Commissive acts* are those whose illocutionary purpose is to commit the speaker to a specific future action. The direction of fit is again from the world towards words and the condition of sincerity is the intention. The propositional content is always that the speaker S performs a future action A.

- *Expressive acts*, as the name says, this speech act expresses an inner state of the speaker. The expression is essentially subjective and tells us nothing about the world. For instance, when we say “I am sorry” for stepping on a person’s toe, it does not change anything here: done is done. Both stepper and stepped will have to live with the change that a stepped-on-a-toe represents. In the expressive there is no direction of fit, since when producing an expressive act, the speaker is neither about the world adapting to the words nor that the words fit the world. Examples of expressives are welcoming, refusing, thanking, apologizing, congratulating and praising.
- The defining characteristic of *declarative* acts is that if they occur successfully, they will bring with them the correspondence between the propositional content and reality. They will ensure that the propositional content corresponds to the world. The direction of fit in declarative acts is as much from the words towards the world as from the world towards the words, due to the peculiar character of this type of acts. There is no sincerity condition.

Although Searle is declared as a follower of Austin's postulates, he nevertheless does not prevent himself to point out the deficiencies that, in his opinion, the classification of speech acts proposed by his teacher presents. He, in the first place, stands out the fact that Austin's is not a classification of speech acts but of illocutionary verbs. According to Searle (1976, p. 8), Austin seems to assume that a classification of verbs automatically coincides with a classification of illocutionary acts. However, certain verbs, such as "notify" or “announce”, indicate not an illocutionary act, but the way in which it occurs. Apart from that, Searle criticizes other aspects. Searle also criticizes the absence of a clear and consistent principle or group of principles that serves as a basis for Austin’s taxonomy. As a consequence of this and the confusion between acts and illocutionary verbs, there is an overlap between some categories, and a considerable level of heterogeneity in some of the categories. Related to this last

objection, Searle points out the contradiction that not all verbs presented as members of a class conform to the definition offered for the category in question.

Nieto (1995) claims that in a first comparison between Austin's and Searle's typologies, it can be seen that latter is more linguistic than the former. Austin's model is more limited to the field of sociolinguistics, in the sense that it considers a series of variables such as the social role of the interlocutors, to the point that it is that social role that determines the verdictive acts. This favors that Searle's model is clearer and more easily demonstrable from an empirical point of view than Austin's, since it does not assume the possible assignment of more than one type of illocutionary act to the same proposition (Nieto, 1995, p. 34). Trosborg (1995) believes that the greatest advantage of Searle's speech act theory is that it clearly establishes a simple and finite taxonomy at the same time, which successfully associates illocutionary types with typical functions.

Habermas (1987, p. 415), on the other hand, considers that Searle's classification presents a problem as it characterizes the illocutionary force through the relations of an actor with the world of states of existing things. Such is not possible in the case of declarative acts, since when a speaker creates institutional events, he is not establishing a relationship with the objective world but acting in accordance with the legitimate orders of the social world while initiating new interpersonal relationships. Moreover, it is impossible to characterize the illocutionary force of expressive speech acts through the scheme of two directions of fit: from the world to things and from things to the world. In Habermas's opinion, the difficulties encountered by Searle's classification can be solved by assuming that the illocutionary purposes of speech acts are achieved by intersubjective recognition of claims of power or claims of validity and by introducing normativity and subjective veracity as claims of validity similar to that of truth, which will be interpreted with the help of actor-world relations. As a result, Habermas proposes the following classification:

- *Imperative* acts, by means of which the speaker refers to a state that he wishes to see realized in the objective world, in such a way that he tries to move the listener to produce that state. The imperatives can only be criticized from the point of view of the conditions of success, that is, if the required action can be carried out or not. The rejection of an imperative normally implies the rejection of a claim to power and is not based on criticism but it is in turn an expression of a will.
- *Constative* speech acts, with which the speaker refers to something in the objective world, so that they reflect a state of affairs. In denying such acts, the listener questions the truth claim that the speaker poses with the proposition he affirms.
- *Regulative* acts are those which the speaker uses to refer to something in a common social world, by establishing an interpersonal relationship that is recognized as legitimate. The rejection of such acts means that the listener questions the normative rectitude that the speaker intends for his action.
- *Expressive* speech acts used when speaker refers to something that belongs to his subjective world, by unveiling an experience to which he has privileged access. Rejecting expressive speech acts implies that the listener questions the claim of truthfulness with which the speaker makes the presentation he makes of himself.
- *Communicative* speech acts can be considered as a subclass of regulative speech acts that serve the organization of speech, although it is probably more appropriate, according to Habermas, to consider them as an independent class, which will be defined by its reflexive relationship with the communication process.

- *Operative* speech acts are those that designate the application of construction rules. Operational speech acts have a realizing, but not genuinely communicative sense. They serve at the same time to describe what is done when correct symbolic expressions are constructed.

According to Habermas himself (1987), the fundamental types that are distinguished in their classification need further differentiation, since both the commissive and declarative speech acts, those institutionally linked - such as “betting”, “marrying” , "swearing", etc. - or the satisfactory ones - which refer to the apologies for the violation of a rule and the reparations or reliefs - are subsumed under the same kind of regulative speech acts. On the other hand, the illocutionary forces undergo a different process of differentiation at the borders of each fundamental type according to the different languages.

2.3.2 Locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts

Searle (1969) stated that everything we say constitutes some sort of speech act. Moreover, each type of speech act is governed by a set of felicity conditions which must be met if the speech act is to be valid. Searle expanded then concept that every speech act consists of three separate acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

Locutionary act is the basic act of simply uttering a sentence from a language. It is a description of what the speaker says. The function of locutionary act is to transfer the meaning from speaker. For example, if someone says, “your car is dirty” the referring expression is “dirty” and nothing else.

Illocutionary act is what the speaker intends to do by uttering a sentence. The function is to transfer this meaning from speaker to listener. Illocutionary act would include stating, promising, threatening, predicting, ordering and requesting. For example, if a teacher says, “submit your homework”, the illocutionary act is one of ordering. Basically, illocutionary acts are linguistic acts performed in uttering certain words in a given context.

Perlocutionary act is the effect on the hearer of what the speaker says. Perlocutionary act would include such effects as persuading, embarrassing, intimidating, boring, irritating or inspiring the hearer. For example, if the parents say to their son “just take a risk, you get what you give”, the illocutionary act might be ordering, but the perlocutionary act is inspiring.

It should be also clear that speech acts and their component acts are extremely sensitive to the context of the utterance in particular to the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. In the theory of speech acts, attention has especially focused on the illocutionary act, much less on the locutionary and perlocutionary act, as the concept of an illocutionary act is central to the concept of a speech act. Although there are numerous opinions regarding how to define illocutionary acts, there are some kinds of acts which are widely accepted as illocutionary; for example, promising, ordering and congratulating.

2.3.3 Felicity conditions

The distinction made by Austin (1962) between constative statements and performative statements is based on the fact that while the former, which describe states of affairs, can be evaluated in terms of truth or falsehood; the latter, which are used to carry out actions, they cannot be qualified as true or false, that is, they have no truth values. Instead, the performative statements present felicity conditions, in such a way that, for an illocutionary act to be performed optimally, certain conditions would have to be met beforehand. Allan (1998), on the other hand, points out that the statement that performative acts have no truth values has been questioned since the beginning, and in his opinion, it is wrong. Although it is true that the truth value of a performative statement is less significant from the communicative point of view than its illocutionary force.

The felicity conditions that an illocutive act must fulfill can be divided, in the opinion of Austin (1962, pp. 14-15), into three main groups: first, there must be a conventional procedure that has associated conventional effects and that will consist of the enunciation of certain words by speakers and

in circumstances that will have to be adequate for the illocutionary act to be carried out successfully; second, the procedure must be executed by all participants fully and correctly; and third, the participants must think, feel and do what is previously established in the procedure. While in those cases in which the conditions of the first two groups are not met, speaker and listener will experience, what Austin calls misfires; failure to comply with the conditions of the third group results in cases of lack of felicity. While in one case the act does not take place, in the other, the act does take place, but in an infelicity way.

Levinson (1983) proposes some examples in which the felicity conditions that show their existence are not satisfied. For instance: if a catholic man tells his wife: "I hereby divorce you." By enunciating that statement, he will not get a divorce, as it is not stipulated as a conventional procedure for that purpose in the Catholicism. Therefore, the first condition will be breached.

Searle (1969), on the other hand, also paid attention to the conditions that will have to be met for the successful completion of an illocutionary act and classified them into four groups. The four types of felicity conditions established by Searle are:

- the conditions of propositional content, which make reference to the significant characteristics of the proposition used to carry out the illocutionary act. For example, while in the case of a speech act such as thanking, the propositional content must refer to a past event carried out by the listener, in the requests the propositional content must be based on a future act of the listener.
- the preparatory conditions, which concern the prerequisites that will have to be met in the real world for each illocutionary act. That is, they are those conditions that must be met for the realization of the illocutionary act to make sense. The simple act of carrying out the illocutionary act therefore presupposes compromise with the preparatory conditions. Thus, to thank, the preparatory condition will be that the act carried out by the listener benefits the speaker and this same speaker believes that the act benefits him; in the requests, however, two preparatory

conditions must be met: that the listener is able to perform the future act and that it is not obvious either to the speaker or to the listener that the listener will perform the act spontaneously in the moment.

- the conditions of sincerity, which establish what beliefs, intentions and feelings on the speaker are necessary and adequate for each illocutionary act. This type of condition therefore focuses on the psychological state of the speaker. For the illocutionary act of thanking to be sincere, the speaker must feel recognized or grateful for the act carried out by the listener. In the case of requests, on the other hand, the sincerity condition indicates that the speaker wants/feels the listener to perform act.

2.3.4 Direct and Indirect speech acts

In addition to the different classifications discussed in section 2.3.1, speech acts can also be divided into direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. The former are those that show a direct relationship between their structure or their linguistic form and their function. In Gleason and Ratner (1999) they are defined as speech acts which use the usual syntactic forms to encode the usual linguistic functions for which they are specifically designed. When a statement like *It's hot in here*, consisting of a declarative sentence, is used to make a statement, we are faced with a direct speech act. However, in the majority of cases, the so-called indirect speech acts are usually used, in which the relationship between the illocutionary act and the linguistic form is different from what we could predict or, in other words, in those that an illocutionary act is carried out in an indirect way by means of another illocutionary act. The indirect speech act has been defined as “one in which the speaker performs one illocutionary act (...), but intends the hearer to infer by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, another illocution” (Allan 1998). When the previous statement, *It's hot in here*, is used to ask the listener to turn on the air conditioning or to open the windows, it will be an

indirect speech act, since there is no direct relationship between the linguistic form - declarative sentence - and the function – to perform a request.

In the statement "Can you lend me your pen?" The linguistic form is that of a question; nevertheless, it is not intended to demand information about the ability of the listener to transfer his pen, but to carry out a request. This characterization of indirect speech acts implies the acceptance of the notion of literal force, according to which the illocutionary force is incorporated into the sentence form. Levinson (1983) has called this position a literal force hypothesis, which can be formulated in the following points:

- (i) The strength of explicit performatives is determined by the performative verb of the main clause.
- (ii) If not, the three main types of sentences in both English and Spanish - imperative, interrogative and declarative - have the forces that are traditionally associated with them: ordering, asking, and declaring respectively (with the exception of explicit performatives that have a declarative format).

As regards to those speech acts that are clearly manifested in the discourse through verbs that express the purpose of the speech act, the so-called performative verbs, some authors (Alcaraz 1996) consider them direct speech acts, while others (Allan 1986) on the contrary, consider them indirect. Those who argue that performative clauses are used to perform direct speech acts are based on the fact that the performative verb clearly indicates what the illocutionary purpose is. The illocutionary acts corresponding to the statements "I order you out of here" or "I advise you to change your attitude" would be to order in the first case and advise in the second. The position according to which the statements with performative verbs correspond to indirect acts is based on the argument that the illocutionary act that indicates the performative verb derives from another illocutionary act, since every statement that contains a performative verb will have a declarative as one of its illocutionary acts. Thus, in the statement "I

promise you that I will go with you to the theater”, an illocutionary act, the speaker's affirmation, serves as a vehicle to transmit another illocutionary act, in this case a promise

2.4 Requests

A request is an illocutionary act through which a speaker communicates to a listener that he wants him to carry out an act that will benefit the speaker. The requests may refer to non-verbal goods and services, objects, actions or a particular service - or to verbal goods or services, in this case, it would be a request for information. Thus, Tucker states that “requests serve to change a current state of affairs to the advantage of the speaker, whether by having another act to this effect or by seeking permission to act oneself” (1988). Labov & Fanshel (1977) consider that, although several subcategories can be considered within the group of requests - such as requests that a given action, information, attention, or approval to be taken - in short, all of them are basically requests that the listener performs a certain action. The act that the speaker wishes the listener to carry out will obviously take place after the statement corresponding to the request. Consequently, the speech act of the request can be characterized as a pre-event, unlike for example the complaints, which are post-events, since they refer to an offensive action that took place before the speech act. For this reason, requests, like all directive speech acts in general, by definition, concern a controllable event and never a process, that is, an uncontrollable event such as falling asleep or sneezing (Dik, 1989).

According to Searle's classification (1975), requests belong to the group of directive speech acts, which according to their definition

“are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. They may be very modest ‘attempts’ as when I invite you to do it or suggest that you do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it” (Searle, 1975, p.11).

Mulder (1998, 237) points out that the interest aroused by directive speech acts has his explanation that requests and other directive speech acts reveal two fundamental functions of language, desiderative and instrumental. That is, not only does directives express the speaker's attitude toward prospective action by the listener, but also the speaker's intention or desire that the listener takes the locutionary statement or the attitude expressed in it as “a” motive or as “the” motive to carry out the action.

Apart from that, requests are usually considered a paradigmatic case of speech act that involves an intrusion into the territory of the listener and limits their freedom of action, that is, as an example of a face threatening act. More specifically, it is a speech act that threatens the negative image of the listener. As Trosborg states:

“The request is per definition a face-threatening act (FTA). The speaker who makes a request attempts to exercise power or direct control over the intentional behaviour of the hearer, and in doing so threatens the requestee’s negative face (his/her want to be unimpeded) by indicating that he/she does not intend to refrain from impeding the requestee’s freedom of action (Trosborg, 1995, p. 188).

However, it is not only the negative image of the listener that can be threatened by a request. In the opinion of Brown & Levinson (1987) and of Trosborg (1995), the requests may sometimes constitute threats to the image of both partners. The speaker is also at risk that his image will be damaged, since the listener can refuse access to his wishes. On the other hand, we can wonder to what extent the statement is true that the requests always threaten the negative image of the listener and therefore require the operation of the negative courtesy. In certain cases where there is a relationship of familiarity and closeness between the interlocutors, positive courtesy may also play a role in making requests. In

addition, certain types of requests, such as those addressed to a salesman, are not normally considered face threatening acts.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study as stated in previous chapters derived from a genuine interest to compare the realization patterns of requests produced by three different groups: first, a group of English language learners, and two control groups, one of Mexican Spanish speakers and the other of speakers whose mother language is English. Consequently, a quantitative research methodology was used to collect, compare and analyze the patterns of requests produced by the different selected groups in different moments and contexts. This chapter presents the description of the context, the participants chosen, the instruments and the data collection procedure adopted as well as all the aspects of the analysis.

3.1 Description of the context

The study was carried out mainly in a public university in central Mexico. This university is placed as one of the best-recognized institutions in the country because of the quality of its programs, and it is one of the first options to enroll in to study a BA program for students not only from central Mexico but from different states in the country, mainly from southern parts. The faculty of languages is one of the biggest faculties of this institution and which offers different options to learn a foreign language for enrolled students as well as for external public interested in so. However, the deferent program is the undergraduate English teaching program which aims at preparing professionals English teachers to cover the current necessities as required for all the educational levels. Flores Salgado (2011) points out that “the main objectives are to inculcate (...) the linguistic and cultural aspects of the language as well as to provide a comprehensive grounding in second language pedagogy” (p. 48).

As mentioned above, the study was developed not only in that public institution, but also in a private institution from where one of the controlled groups was taken. This institution is placed also in central Mexico and is an affordable option for students from the southeast part of the country and it offers different programs accredited by different certifiers. It offers the undergraduate foreign languages program with two terminals: Translation and English Teaching as a Foreign Language. Being the latter

the one with the biggest number of interested students. It is worth mentioning that there is significant number of students who have lived abroad and whose second language is English. Because of this reason, this group of students were not considered for the study given that their language might influence the results of the study.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were divided into three different groups: the experimental group and two control groups. For the experimental group, ten native speakers of Mexican Spanish were selected, who were learning English a foreign language and studying “English Teaching as a foreign language” at the public institution. All of them were enrolled in their last target language subject and were considered of intermediate level according to the institution’s language scales and courses organization. These subjects have taken four previous English language classes in the program they are in. For the first control group, ten native speakers of Mexican Spanish were chosen, who were studying at the private institution. All of them were also learning English a foreign language but who were enrolled in a different BA program from English Teaching. Finally, for the second control group, ten native speakers of American English were asked to participate in the study. Participants in this group were chosen after the first two in order to select speakers who were also studying a BA program.

All the Mexican participants had to complete a background survey (see Appendix 1). This background survey was adopted and modified from Flores Salgado (2011) and was administered to ensure that the groups shared a background as similar as possible to each other. This survey also was intended to avoid no other variables, from those being studied, interfered in the analysis. That is, to eliminate bias and to accomplish solid comparability among the non-native groups. The background survey was administered in Spanish and asked questions to gather information about how long participants have studied English, where and how they did learn the language. Additionally, the survey asked them whether they had applied a language proficiency test or not and the result or score of that.

Moreover, they were asked about the ability they considered the most difficult to develop for them. The following questions were about the ability that they think they devote more and less time in their Target Language class as well as how frequent they speak English in class and out of this.

3.3 Instruments

Campillo (2009) states that requests as speech acts have been paid great attention in linguistics and pragmatics studies. Such, represents the opportunity to look at what experts have been doing to analyze these speech acts. A vast number of research of pragmatics studies which are aimed at analyzing patterns of realization of different speech acts have gathered data in form of written responses to a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) (Ellis, 2001). The instrument in this study for data collection was a Discourse Completion Task modified from Flores Salgado (2011) as this showed a high reliability in her dissertation study.

As this is an experimental cross-linguistic study, it is important to underline what Blum-Kulka et al (1989) address as a limitation; that is, it was difficult to obtain natural data because of the different groups of participants and because of the nature and complexity of requests as speech acts which may occur different at natural environments and settings and are part of an interaction where turns are taken by language users interchangeably (and that may be adequated by cultural norms). However, Flores Salgado (2011) claims

“The use of experimental data allows an analysis of the utterance or sequence of utterances produced by learners at different proficiency levels when they respond to the same situation. In other words, this gives the researcher the opportunity to compare the structural patterns employed by learners at different levels in a specific scenario.” (p. 53)

The instrument consisted of ten tasks which required the participants to elaborate or state a request under setting conditions. That is, each task contained a description of what is happening and a resulting question on how they would state a request. As the instrument was adopted, we preserved the originality

of the instructions. An example of the tasks is presented as follows while the complete list of them is found in the appendix:

You lent a book to one of your professors one month ago and he has not returned it yet. You need it because the finals are approaching and you need to prepare a final paper for one of your classes. What would you say to get your professor to return the book?

All instructions and tasks descriptions were written in Spanish for the Mexican participants so there were no misunderstandings nor doubts. Therefore, the respondent could have a clear idea of the context and then he could create the corresponding response in English.

3.4 Data procedure

Each group of participants in this study were given the background survey and the DCT simultaneously, for time reasons. Each group was given first the background survey and with a set of photocopies which contained all the situations. In order to avoid ambiguities or misinterpretations, they were instructed on how to response to the DCT. The researcher did read all situations instructions and situations in Spanish. Then they were required to write what would be their exact words in response to the situation. Participants were given an hour to complete all the situations in the DCT.

Participants were also required to state if they did not know what to response. If that happened, they were asked to write any of the following reasons instead: a) I didn't know what to say; b) I didn't know how to construct the phrase; c) I didn't know what vocabulary to use in this situation; d) I didn't understand the situation; e) I didn't have time to state my answer; f) I have never been in a situation like this before; g) other. These options could brought an important meaning to the data analysis. Participants were given an hour to complete the DCT.

3.5 Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out taking the responses provided by the participants to the DCT. Every participant completed the DCT based on the tasks presented, and their responses were the unit of analysis of this study. The coding scheme was adapted from Flores Salgado (2011) that was proved to be a reliable and valid coding system containing observable elements which are features in the realization of this speech act: request.

3.5.1 Analysis of the requests

For this study, the speech acts of request were analyzed considering the request strategy as well as the request type, the external modification and the request length. For every response, three elements were identified: the head act being the core of the request (c), the alerts (a) and the supportive moves (b).

Examples:

Excuse me, would you mind turning your cigarette off? Because we are in a non-smoking area
(a) (c) (b)

Disculpe profe, podría regresarme mi libro? Lo necesito para repasar y hacer unos trabajos
(a) (c) (b)

Fellows, the phones are ringing. Get to work
(a) (b) (c)

As mentioned above, the head act was considered the main component of the participants' answers and were catalogued based on the three main request strategies: direct, conventionally indirect and indirect. Afterwards, for every strategy, a sub-categorization of each was presented: for the first strategy, imperatives, obligation, performatives, wishes, and desires and needs. For the second strategy, ability, willingness and suggestory formulae, and for the third strategy, hints only. The explanation for each of the sub-categories was taken from Flores Salgado (ibid) and was presented as follows:

1. Imperatives: a request that is performed with the imperative grammatical form to express and order. It is commonly used by a speaker with power over the hearer.
2. Obligation: shows authority in the speaker. This strategy is commonly performed with the use of *You have to*, *You must*.
3. Performatives: the request is explicitly named by the speaker by using a relevant performative verb.
4. Wishes statements: the speaker's intentions are expressed as a wish.
5. Need statements: the speaker's intentions are more demanding as a need.
6. Ability: this request gives the hearer the option of whether or not to carry out the request. Modals, such as *could* and *can*, are used to perform this strategy.
7. Willingness: this strategy can be formulated as a question, statement or embedded in expressions of appreciation or hope.
8. Suggestory Formulae: this type of strategy tests the hearer's cooperativeness by inquiring whether or not the hearer can carry out the action.
9. Hint: this strategy makes partial reference to the object or statement needed for the implementation of the act. The speaker does not state his/her desires explicitly.

Not only was the analysis of the responses focused on the head act, but also on the external modifiers. These elements were found either before or after the head act and were divided into alerts and supportive moves. The former were divided into five sub-groups: title/role (Mr., Professor), first name/nickname (Peter, Pepito), endearment term (sweet, dear), pronoun (you, she), and attention getter (hi, hey). The latter were divided into eight sub-groups: preparatory, getting a pre-commitment, supportive reason, disarmer, promise, cost minimizing, insult, and threat. (see appendix for examples). Finally, the length of each response was analyzed taking the number of words used per request. A total

of 300 illocutions were obtained: the three groups provided 100 responses each which will be analyzed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The three groups of respondents were the experimental group that was formed by 10 English language learners, the first control group which was composed by 10 native speakers of Mexican Spanish and the second control group which was made of 10 native speakers of American English. They completed the same instrument and a total of three hundred responses to the DCT were analyzed having the following results with regard to the three request strategies: direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect strategies.

Table 1. Percentages and frequencies of the three main strategies for the three groups.

Request strategies	Experimental group: Language learners	First control group: Mexican speakers	Second control group: American speakers
Direct	28% (28)	24% (24)	22% (22)
Conventionally indirect	69% (69)	68% (68)	74% (74)
Indirect	3% (3)	8% (8)	4% (4)
Opt out	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	100%	100%	100%

Within the three groups, conventionally indirect strategies were more used emphasizing a variation in the second control group where this is more elevated. Apart from this, it is worth noticing the consistency of the three requests strategies along the three groups, though the use of conventionally indirect forms is recurrent. Additionally, when comparing these results with the results presented by Flores Salgado (2011), we found similitude despite the fact that this study was developed five years later.

On the other hand, it is also important to see how those frequencies were distributed along the different tasks (see appendix 2 for tasks). Within the two control groups, it was found that the frequencies

were similar having insignificant variations whereas the experimental group differs in tasks 1, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10.

Table 2. Frequencies of each request strategy across all different scenarios for the three groups

Scenarios	Experimental Group:		First control group:		Second control group:	
	Language Learners		Mexican Speakers		American Speakers	
Scenario 1 Money	Direct	8	Direct	6	Direct	5
	Con. Ind.	1	Con. Ind.	4	Con. Ind.	5
	Indirect	1	Indirect	0	Indirect	0
Scenario 2 Cigarette	Direct	3	Direct	1	Direct	2
	Con. Ind.	7	Con. Ind.	7	Con. Ind.	7
	Indirect	0	Indirect	2	Indirect	1
Scenario 3 Book	Direct	2	Direct	5	Direct	5
	Con. Ind.	7	Con. Ind.	5	Con. Ind.	5
	Indirect	1	Indirect	0	Indirect	0
Scenario 4 Grade	Direct	3	Direct	1	Direct	0
	Con. Ind.	7	Con. Ind.	8	Con. Ind.	9
	Indirect	0	Indirect	1	Indirect	1
Scenario 5 Door	Direct	2	Direct	0	Direct	1
	Con. Ind.	8	Con. Ind.	10	Con. Ind.	9
	Indirect	0	Indirect	0	Indirect	0
Scenario 6 Bus fare	Direct	0	Direct	1	Direct	0
	Con. Ind.	10	Con. Ind.	8	Con. Ind.	9
	Indirect	0	Indirect	1	Indirect	1
Scenario 7 Car breakdown	Direct	0	Direct	1	Direct	0
	Con. Ind.	10	Con. Ind.	9	Con. Ind.	10
	Indirect	0	Indirect	0	Indirect	0
Scenario 8 Class	Direct	1	Direct	0	Direct	0
	Con. Ind.	9	Con. Ind.	9	Con. Ind.	10
	Indirect	0	Indirect	1	Indirect	0
Scenario 9 Job	Direct	9	Direct	6	Direct	7
	Con. Ind.	0	Con. Ind.	1	Con. Ind.	2
	Indirect	1	Indirect	3	Indirect	1
Scenario 10 Door	Direct	0	Direct	3	Direct	2
	Con. Ind.	10	Con. Ind.	7	Con. Ind.	8
	Indirect	0	Indirect	0	Indirect	0

With the aim of establishing relationships among the three groups and/or seeing how they differ from one another in regard to their behavior in using the three types of request strategies, the results will be explained in detail for each category.

4.1 Direct strategies

The direct request strategy contains the following sub-categories: imperatives, obligation, performatives, want and need statements. This type of direct strategies has the characteristic of presenting a high degree of explicitness in the illocutionary act. For instance:

- (1) Guys, stop doing what are you doing and go back to work. (D, D9¹; experimental group)
- (2) Por favor, cierra la puerta para que no se meta el agua. (D, H20; first control group)
- (3) This is a non-smoking area. Please put that out! (D, J3; second control group)

In Table 3, the percentages and frequencies of each sub-category of the direct strategy are presented and are distributed by groups. *Imperatives* were the second more-used sub-strategy by the three groups. Nonetheless, it is clearly seen that both first and second control groups used it more constantly than the experimental group. With this in mind, we can say L1 plays an important role when using this routine. On the other hand, the scenario where this routine was more repetitive was in scenario 9 where a high level of imposition prevails between acquaintances as seen in the following examples:

- (4) Hey, could you do me a favor? **Get back to work.** (D, E9; experimental group)
- (5) Oigan, por favor **atiendan las llamadas.** No pueden estar jugando cuando hay mucho trabajo (D, A19; first control group)
- (6) Hey guys, we're almost done with our work day. **Take those calls.** (D, D29; second control group)

¹ "D, D9" serves as reference to where the illocution can be found. All illocutions provided by the participants were stored in an excel document to ease their localization and later analysis. Isolated letters, like "D", indicate a column in the document where the types of strategies are divided. Alphanumerics, like "D9", refer to number of participant and number of task. In this case, D is participant number 4, and 9 is the ninth task.

Obligation routine was not utilized by any of the two control groups, though the experimental group used in a very low rate: 3 times used which represented the 10.7% of this routine for this group. The scenario where this frequency was detected was again scenario 9, and this time this finding may suggest learners were not influenced by L1 strategies. For instance:

(7) Hey man, **you have to return to work**, there are many calls waiting. (E, I9; experimental group)

The case of *performatives* seems irrelevant due to the low rate found in the experimental and second control groups. However, it is important to point that this routine was not found in similar scenarios and its random use did not allow to determine a pattern of its use as in Flores Salgado (2011) where this same routine presented low rates too. Examples of this sub-strategy are:

(8) Gentleman, I forget to register but do you think if it's possible **you permit me take the course** (F, A8; experimental group)

(9) Sir, please **I am asking kindly to open the door for me?** Please. (F, G25; second control group)

Table 3. Percentages and frequencies of each request using a sub-category of the direct strategy

Request strategies	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Imperatives	32.2% (9)	41.7% (10)	40.9% (9)
Obligation	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Performatives	7.1% (2)	0% (0)	13.6% (3)
Want	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Need	50% (14)	58.3% (14)	45.5% (10)
Total	100% (28)	100% (24)	100% (22)

Want statements were not found in any of the three groups opposite to Flores Salgado (ibid) where this routine was found where English learners were identified as recurrent user of it. Finally, the

experimental group and both first and second control groups use *need statements* more than any other direct strategy. In Table 3, we can see this sub-strategy covers the mainstream of direct strategy. Despite this fact, the percentages and frequencies were not constant among the three groups. The experimental and first control groups used it 14 times which represented the 50% and 58.3% respectively, whereas the second control group used this routine 10 times which signified 45.5%. It is meaningful to mention that the majority of these routines were found in scenarios 1 and 3 for the three groups as seen the examples:

(10) **I need the money** because I have a hard problem and to resolve it, I need the money (H, C1; experimental group)

(11) Hola profe, disculpe la molestia. Me apena decirle esto, pero **necesito mi libro**, el libro que le preste por favor. Necesito estudiar para mis examenes. (H, C13; first control group)

(12) Hi professor. That book I lent you, **I really need it back** as soon as possible to prepare a final paper please (H, E23; second control group)

In addition, it is remarkable the use of supportive moves to reduce the force of the request when using this sub-strategy, although within the first control group (Mexican speakers) it is a constant as seen in the following examples:

(13) Oye recuerdas que te preste dinero la otra vez? Lo que pasa que **necesito el dinero para comprar unas cosas** y no se si lo tengas (H, A11; first control group)

(14) Profe, tendra el libro que le preste la otra vez? Es que **lo necesito para estudiar** (H, A13; first control group)

4.2 Conventionally indirect strategies

The conventionally indirect strategy is divided into three sub-categories: ability, willingness and suggestory formulae statements. The feature of these strategies is that directness of the request is less in comparison to the direct strategies. Besides, the use of these routines gives the hearer the opportunity to decide whether or not to perform the request. Some examples are:

(15) Into the office isn't permit smoke. Could you go out to end of smoke? (I, C2; experimental group)

(16) Hola, perdonen que los moleste pero, me podrian ayudar a mover mi coche por favor? (I, J17; first control group)

(17) Sir, would you mind opening an extra spot for your class? I couldn't register (J, G28; second control group)

In Table 4, the percentages and frequencies of each sub-category of the conventionally indirect strategy are presented and are distributed by groups. Despite the fact that the three groups used a high rate of the conventionally indirect strategies, the second control group (Speakers whose first language is English) exploited considerably this strategy.

In Table 4, we can see that both experimental and first control groups used more *ability* than the second control group. The frequencies of these two groups are relatively close: the former used 49 times which represented the 71% and the latter used 51 times which represented 75%. This meant the majority of sub-strategies employed for both groups. The proportion of this sub-strategy for the second control group was distant in relation to the other two: 34 times which only represented the 45.9%. Examples of these requests are:

(18) **Miss**, maybe you don't realize but here, like a rule we don't have permit smoke. **Could you light off your cigarette** or smoke out the room? (I, A2; experimental group)

(19) **Profesor, podria devolverme el libro que le preste?** Es que lo necesito para la semana de examenes, debo estudiar. (I, F13; first control group)

(20) **Hi**, I have a huge favor, **could you please lend me some bus fare today?** I will get it back to you in our next class, please. (I, E26; second control group)

In the examples, we can also see that the use of the routine had attached alerts to initiate the illocutionary act that was common along scenarios 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10.

Table 4. Percentages and frequencies of each request using a sub-category of the conventionally indirect strategy

Request strategies	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Ability	71% (49)	75% (51)	45.9% (34)
Willingness	29% (20)	25% (17)	52.7% (39)
Suggestory formulae	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)
Total	100% (69)	100% (68)	100% (74)

Unlike *ability*, the use of *willingness statements* represented the majority only for the second control group with a frequency of 39 which meant 52.7% while it denoted 29% (n=20) for the experimental group and 25% (n=17) for the first control group. Examples of this routine are:

- (21) **Mrs, will you be kind to knock for me** please? I cannot do it for this hard boxes. (J, A5; experimental group)
- (22) **Perdon profe, me daria otra actividad para reponerme?** Por fa y ahora si no le fallo. (J, J14; first control group)
- (23) **Sir, would you mind opening an extra spot for your class?** I couldn't register. (J, G28; second control group)

It is worth mentioning, that it was found as a pattern, the constant use of alerts as seen in the examples. Likewise, some of the responses are made of two alerts as in (22) and most of them employed titles and attention getters.

Finally, the low rate (n=1) of *suggestory formulae* was used by the second control group that was demonstrated in the following example:

- (24) **Hey, I'll pay you \$5 each to help me push my car** (K, H27; second control group)

Flores Salgado points out that “the low frequency of suggestory formulas may reflect the fact that (...) learners still had not acquired adequate pragmalinguistic abilities to use this sub-strategy at their discretion” (p. 83). Even so, data can be determinant to draw conclusions about this routine since neither the second control group nor the others implemented this formula in a significant manner.

4.3 Indirect strategy

Indirect strategy is depicted by *hints* and it is the most indirect routine that can be used to make a request (Weizman, cited in Flores 2011). Likewise, this type of strategy is characterized by an increment in the degree of politeness as Leech mentions:

“indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be” (1983, p. 108).

Leech’s explanation can be found in the following examples:

(25) Please Mrs and Misses it's time to work and we have a lot of it. Please hurry up to go out at the exact hour. (L, B24; experimental group)

(26) Señor, buenas tardes. Disculpe, aqui adentro no se puede fumar. Ahi esta un letrero si no me cree. (L, B12; first control group)

(27) Hey, I really need to head home but I don't have any cash on me. I know this is weird but I swear I will pay you back. I could meet you at school to pay you back. (L, C26; second control group)

One important factor to underline about the use of these routines is that they do not rely on any specific structure or form. That is, unlike *willingness* or *ability*, it is difficult to find a set structure that is repetitive when using *hints*. On the other hand, in Table 5, the low rates of both experimental (n=3) and second control (n=4) groups might have meant either there were similarities between these groups or the

experimental group lacked of resources to perform the actual request. What comes to be relevant was the high rate (n=8) in the first control group that despite the fact they did not opt out at the moment of responding the instrument, the respondents claimed not to have answered clearly scenarios 2, 4 and 9.

Table 5. Percentages and frequencies of each request using a sub-category of the indirect strategy.

Request strategies	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Hint	100% (3)	100% (8)	100% (4)
Total	100% (3)	100% (8)	100% (4)

Examples of the *hint statements* employed by the first control group are showed below:

(28) Disculpe, no se puede fumar aqui y podrian llamarle la atención (L, A12; first control group)

(29) Profesor, siento que puedo dar mas en esta materia. Es dificil pero se que con empeño y dedicacion podria mejorar. (L, C14; first control group)

(30) Oye, te gusta tu trabajo? Cuidalo! (L, C19; first control group)

4.4 Request length

The analysis of the requests also covered the length of the responses and showed interesting differences and similarities among the three groups. In Table 6, the comparisons between the three groups is presented: first, when comparing the experimental and the first control groups, it was found that 65% of the requests made by the experimental group were longer than the first control group (25%). Having this in mind, the English learners tend to be more explanatory (or extended) in their request performance than the group of Mexican speakers. Similarly, the results exposed that the experimental group used more linguistic resources and because of that their responses were 65% longer than the ones made by the English native speakers (30%). This is in opposition to what was found in Flores Salgado', where the Americans' sequences were longer than those of the learners.

Table 6. Percentages of the comparisons of the request length among the three groups.

	Experimental group vs First control group	Experimental group vs Second control group	First control group vs Second control group
Percentages of comparisons	71% vs 25% 4% similar	65% vs 30% 5% similar	50% vs 47% 3% similar
Total	100% (100 comparisons)	100% (100 comparisons)	100% (100 comparisons)

However, what was quite interesting was the comparison made between the first control group and the second control group where the analysis indicated a balance in the request length. The responses made by the first control group were 50% longer than the second control group (47%) what may direct us to establish a correlation among native speakers of Spanish and English, though the sample is too short to determine this.

On the other hand, the longest requests made by the three groups was closed one to other: the longest request performed by a participant of the experimental group was of 63 words, while the longest for a member of the first control group was of 54 words and for the second control group was of 70 words. The requests were as follows:

- (31) Teacher, I accept this grade its not good but the subject its hard for me. I have made an effort to save the subject but now I see my grade and I am really worried about it because its possible that I lost my scholarship. Please I will make a big effort if you give me and opportunity of do an extra assignment. (J, A4; experimental group)
- (32) Profe, se que esta vez por alguna razon no obtuve una calificacion buena y sinceramente quisiera saber si existe la posibilidad de que pueda realizar un trabajo para ayudarme a mi promedio. Lo que pasa es que tengo beca y no puedo perderla. Prometo realizar un muy buen trabajo y ganarme esos puntos extras. (J, E14; first control group)

(33) Good afternoon, my name is Mairini. I wanted to take your class, but I was not able to register online. I work so your class is the only time that will work with me. This is one of my last classes which I need to finish my degree. Is there any way I could take your class? I will stand in the back of the class if I have to. (J, D8; second control group).

Similarly, the shortest requests made by the three groups were almost equal: the shortest requests performed by a participant of the experimental and first control groups were of 5 words, while the shortest for a member of the second control group was of 4 words. The requests were as follows:

(34) Please, could close the door? (I, 10; experimental group)

(35) Hey, a trabajar por favor. (L, F19; first control group)

(36) Close the door please. (D, B30; second control group)

Furthermore, the scenarios where a high rate of the most extended requests were found were similar for the three groups; for the experimental group, scenarios 1, 3 and 4, for the first control, scenarios 1 and 4, and for the second control group, scenario 4. Looking at these findings, we must remember that in scenarios 1 and 4 the distance between speaker and hearer is that of acquaintances and the degree of imposition is marked as high. Likewise, in both scenarios an item of high value for the speaker is at risk, for scenario 1 money, and for scenario 4 a final grade. This proposes that the higher the value of an item is, the more extended will be the request. That is, the speaker will try to persuade the hearer to perform the request by using all the resources to achieve his goal.

Comparatively, the scenarios where a high rate of the least extended requests were found were also similar for the three groups; for the experimental group, scenario 10, for the first control group, scenarios 9 and 10, and for the second control group, scenario 10. Scenario 10 here is a common factor where the degree of imposition was low but as the speaker has control over the situation, it is easy for him to persuade the hearer by using as less resources as possible.

4.5 External modifiers

The analysis of the results also focused on the additional elements that made up the requests obtained from the instruments. The elements that accompanied the responses, labeled external modifiers, were classified into alerts and supportive moves. In table 7, the frequencies of these modifiers within each group can be seen.

The responses displayed a considerable amount of these external modifiers for short and more extended requests. It is evidently that by some means these elements are vital components to mitigate or intensify the force of the request.

Table 7. Frequencies of external modifiers per request across all situations for each group.

External modifiers	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Alerts	86	117	81
Supportive moves	98	137	126

The numbers observed above differ from the total number of responses for each group because some of these elements were either present or not in the requests. The table shows that the first control group used more alerts than the experimental and second control groups, and the difference between these two was not significant. In regard to the use of supportive moves, again the first control group used more than the experimental and second control group. However, this time the difference between the experimental and the second control group was wider.

4.5.1 External modifiers: Alerts

After the request strategy was identified in the head acts, responses were analyzed to recognize which external modifiers were being used. These unforced components do not have a fixed position as they can arise before or after the head act (Flores, 2011, p. 92). The first external modifiers that was

looked for were alerts which are opening components that come before the head act in order to attract the hearer’s attention. In this category, five different alerts were established: title/role, first name/nickname, endearment term, pronouns and attention getters. Examples of these are below:

- (37) Endearment term: Hi **sweet** friend, I've something to tell you. Some time ago you borrow me some money and you did promise me to give it back to me and in this very exactly moment, I strongly need it, so please please give back my money. (D, J1; experimental group)
- (38) Attention getter - Title: **Disculpe profe**, podria regresarme mi libro? Lo necesito para reparar y hacer unos trabajos. (I, B13; first control group)
- (39) Nickname: Hey **Charlie**, would you please close the door so the rain does not get in? (J, F30; second control group)

Table 8. Percentages and frequencies of the alerts used across all situations.

Alert	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Title/role	50% (43)	32.5% (38)	39.5% (32)
First name/nickname	3.5% (3)	2.6% (3)	3.7% (3)
Endearment term	3.5% (3)	10.3% (12)	7.4% (6)
Pronoun	0% (0)	.8% (1)	3.7% (3)
Attention getter	43% (37)	53.8% (63)	45.7% (37)

In Table 8, statistics point out that the three groups used *alerts* similarly and that the most employed types of alert were title/role and attention getters. The high rates of *attention getters* prescribe that the speakers employ these alerts as a mean to initiate communication and were entirely found before stating a request. Scenarios 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In this sense, we must underline that these type of alerts were mainly found in conventionally indirect requests: 26 conventionally indirect requests used *attention*

getters in the experimental group, 43 conventionally indirect requests employed *attention getters* in the first control group, and 29 conventionally indirect requests utilized *attentions getters* in the second control group. Examples of those requests are below:

- (40) **Excuse me**, I'm sorry to bother you, but, could you please open the door for me? (I, D5; experimental group)
- (41) **Hola!** Disculpa, una molestia, es que me urge llegar a mi casa pero olvide mi dinero. No se si puedas prestarme \$6. Mañana sin falta te los pago. (I, D16; first control group)
- (42) **Hey** guys, would you mind helping me move car? I can't get it to start and need to get it off the road. I'd really appreciate your help. (J, I27; second control group)

Moreover, the results illustrated that conventionally indirect requests covers the majority of frequencies where a *title/role* was used by the experimental group with 32 repetitions. The first control group used 27 conventionally indirect requests with a *title/role* in it and the second control group make use of 25 conventionally indirect requests containing a *title/role*. Examples of these are:

- (43) **Mrs.**, will you be kind to knock for me please? I cannot do it for this hard boxes. (J, A5; experimental group)
- (44) **Profe**, me puede regresar el libro que le preste? Es que necesito estudiar para los finales. Luego se lo regreso. (I, D13; first control group)
- (45) **Sir**, is there a way I can take your course? (J, H28; second control group)

These results are proof of cultural conventions followed in general to direct to a person with respect. In other words, the use of *title/role* indicates power distance between the speaker and the hearer and it may be used to lessen the force of the request. However, for the case of this study, we must clarify that in scenario 10 not necessarily is the speaker marking power distance as in (46):

- (46) **Miss** Sophie, could you please close the door? (I, E30; second control group)

4.5.2 External modifiers: supportive moves

Finally, as supportive moves are observable elements that alter the sense of the head act by lessening or increasing the force of the request, these elements were identified in all responses. These variable components, as in the case of *alerts*, do not have a stationary position since they can appear before or after the head act. In this category, eight different supportive moves were identified: preparators, getting a pre-commitment, supportive reasons, disarmers, promise, cost minimizing, insults and threats. Examples of some of these are below:

(47) Supportive reason: Excuse me, Could you help me to move my car? **just to get my car don't cause traffic.**

(I, B7; experimental group)

(48) Getting a pre-commitment: Señor **un favor**, podria abrir la puerta de la direccion por mi? por favor. (I,

I15; first control group)

(49) Promise: Could you spit me the bus fee? I don't have money on me right now and I need to get home. **I'll**

pay you back. (I, A26; second control group)

Table 9. Percentages and frequencies of the supportive moves used across all situations.

Supportive move	Experimental Group:	First control group:	Second control group:
	Language Learners	Mexican Speakers	American Speakers
Preparator	12.2% (12)	13.9% (19)	10.4% (13)
Getting a pre-commitment	5.1% (5)	5.8% (8)	6.3% (8)
Supportive reasons	50% (49)	46% (63)	46.8% (59)
Disarmer	15.3% (15)	16.1% (22)	21.4% (27)
Promise	10.2 (10)	10.2% (14)	10.3% (13)
Cost minimizing	4.1% (4)	5.1% (7)	4.8% (6)
Insult	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Threat	3.1% (3)	2.9% (4)	0% (0)
Total	100% (98)	100% (137)	100% (126)

We could see in Table 9 that the first control group was which used more *supportive moves* than the other two. In Table 9, the percentages of the use of *supportive moves* indicate a similar rate in the three groups though the frequencies were different for each of them. Numbers illustrate that the most employed type of supportive moves were *supportive reasons*, though the frequencies for each group were different: n=49 for the experimental group, n=63 for the first control group and n=59 for the second control group. Taking the first and second control groups as reference can direct us to see the experimental group as prevented of using a vaster linguistic repertoire either because it is not using its mother tongue or because its second language level has not reached the level a native might have. Both notions can be observed in the following examples of the same situation

(50) Hello professor. **I had a situation**, so I couldn't register this course at this time. Is it OK if I take the course with you? (J, J8; experimental group) (n=25)

(51) Buenos dias profe, quisiera tomar su curso en la mañana, pero veo que ya esta lleno y **yo trabajo en la tarde y salgo ya muy noche asi que no se si seria posible que me permitiera tomar su curso por la mañana**. (J, J18; first control group) (n=43)

(52) Professor, I missed the registration for your class and I really want to take it. **I work full-time, so I can't take it any other hour**. Can I please join your class? (J, J28; second control group) (n=32)

With regard to the examples, we could clearly see not that do they differ in the length of the request, but also in the length of the *supportive reason*. This supports what was explained above and we can note the justifications of the moves for the first and second control groups are more verbose, while the experimental group response is limited.

On the other hand, the second more popular move in each group was disarmers where it is important to observe that percentages and frequencies are different from one another. Percentages of this move for the experimental and first control group are close to each other whereas frequencies of the same move for the first and second control group are more similar. Leaving this out, disarmers were used as a potential resource to diminish the force of the request as much as to manage the objective of the request. Peculiarly, the use of *disarmers*, for the experimental group, arose where the requests were highly longer unlike the first and second control groups where this occurred in lightly high request as in the examples:

(53) Dear teacher, like you know, the finals are approaching and I really have to prepare me to the exams but you have not return me yet my book that some time ago I let it. Please I need it, it's relevant for me use this book. (H, A3; experimental group) (request length: 43 words)

(54) Profe, la verdad es que me cuesta mucho esta materia y no me fue muy bien. No se si podria dejarme algun trabajo extra para subir un poco mi calificacion? (I, A14; first control group) (request length: 30 words)

(55) I know we don't know each other very well, but I don't have the money to pay to get home. Could I please borrow some and I promise to pay you back? (J, J26; second control group) (request length: 32 words).

Finally, the third most chosen move was *preparators* that have the characteristic of opening the request (except in those cases where *alerts* were used) as in (56).

(56) **Hello teacher**, how are you? **I need to ask you a favor**. I have to do a big important paper for next week and I need the book I lent you last month. Could I have it back? And if you need it later, I can return the book in two weeks. (J, D3; experimental group)

The particular case of *preparators* indicate different patterns though it is curious to observe how these moves occurred in the experimental group. That is, *preparators* were mainly accompanied by a *title/role (alerts)* and a *supportive reason* in the first and second control groups whereas in the experimental group, *preparators* were partly complemented by a *title/role* only and sometimes an unclear *supportive reason*. We can see this in (57), (58) and (59)

(57) **Hey, I really hate to ask you this**, but remember the money I lent you, **I have this really big problem**, and I really need you to pay me back please! (H, D1; experimental group)

(58) **Profe, quisiera hablar con usted**. Yo se que sali bajo en su materia, **pero si repruebo me quitan la beca y en verdad la necesito**. Podria dejarme un trabajo? Y le prometo recuperarme en el proximo parcial. (I, F14; first control group)

(59) **Professor, I was wondering if I could talk to you about my grade?** I have been trying really hard this semester to keep my grade up. **If I lose my scholarship, I won't be able to continue in school**. I was wondering if there are any extra assignments I could do to bring my grade up? (J, I24; second control group).

An important note in the examples above is to mention the register not only used in the *alerts* that accompanied the request but also in the *preparator* itself. In other words, the formality or informality of the register depended on the power distanced established between speaker and hearer which could have

been the reason to use a clearer *supportive reason* as in (58) and (59) than the one used in (57). Similarly, the use of this moves contributed first to open the conversation and to lead the hearer infer what the conversation will be about, and second to provide the hearer the opportunity to think about the possible resolution for the request stated.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapter, we offered an analysis that brings us closer to the conclusions of the study. The purpose of this chapter is not to repeat strictly what has been presented in chapter 4, but to answer the research questions stated in chapter 1 by observing the results and findings from the responses provided by the three group of participants. Furthermore, we will attempt to draw up what inferences can be made as well as the pedagogical implications of the findings. Afterwards, we will mention what the limitations of the study were and also suggestions for further research.

Regarding the research questions stated in chapter 1, the answers are as follow:

- i. *What are the preferred requesting strategies in English used by the EFL student participants?*

The statistical results show consistency as which is the most used type of request strategy along the three groups of participants: conventionally indirect strategies. Nonetheless, only the experimental group and the first control group inclined to use the sub-strategy of *ability* to pose their request. These two groups mostly based their request using the structure *Could + Agent + VP*. Our first inference here is that pragmatic transfer occurred in the experimental group. We must remember that this group is made of Mexican speakers learning English as a second language placed on an intermediate level. On the other hand, the second control group preferred the *willingness* sub-strategy formulating their request in a clause condition like *If + Agent + Modal + VP* or posing a question as their request mainly following the structure *Would + Agent + VP?*. This comparison of the strategies preferred by the experimental group not only suggests patterns of pragmatic transfer, but it also indicates these participants are in the process of developing pragmalinguistic patterns as those used by the American speakers.

It is important to remember that participants of the experimental group are secluded, due to the context, to being exposed mainly to speakers of English as a second language: their classmates, their

teachers and/or colleagues. In spite of the difference in preference of sub-strategy to make a request between the experimental and the second control group, we can observe an important rate in the use of *willingness* by the experimental group too. Our second inference here is that this group of learners could reach those patterns followed by the American speakers having more formal instruction or more exposition to the language. This is due to the fact that they were taking their last course of learning the language.

ii. *What are the external modifications used by the participants in English and the participants in Spanish in the process of making requests?*

For the purpose of this study, we analyzed the responses to find external modifiers that mitigate or intensify the force of the illocution. The classification of these modifiers, adopted from Flores Salgado (2011), include *alerts* and *supportive moves*. On the one hand, what the findings show is that a great number of alerts were used by the three groups. The highest rate of them were *titles/roles* and *attention getters*. Our third inference is that the use of *titles/roles* diminish the force of the illocution and it is used intentionally for communicative success. We observed that this type of alerts were constantly placed before the head of the act which supports our inference. Moreover, there is a correlation in their use and the types of strategies where they were highly found: conventionally indirect strategy. On the other hand, *attention getters* were found as devices to intensify the force of the illocution and were observed recurrently as the beginning of them. The main linguistic forms used in the three groups were: *Oye*, *Disculpa*, *Hey*, *Excuse me*. Our next inference is that, although these devices were used to intensify the force of the illocution, they are usually mitigated by the head of the act which mostly followed the use of a conventionally indirect strategy.

Other external modifiers that deserve attention are *supportive reasons* which have the highest rate of occurrence along the three group of participants. It is noticeable that the first control group utilized

them more than the other two groups. These *supportive reasons* provided by the Mexican speakers could indicate that they are used to downgrade the force of the request. We could not conclude what position held these elements as they were found in both: before and after the head of the act. The inference we can draw here is that *supportive reasons* are the preferable resources to diminish the force of the speech act no matter what level of proficiency of the language the speakers has since the speakers that use more indirect strategies are also those that use more modifiers that soften the illocutionary force of the request.

Regarding the pedagogical implications that this type of study reveals, we can point out that learning a foreign language implies something more than learning its grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. The occurrence of pragmatic transfer, in some cases negative, is often a reflection of errors induced by teaching strategies or the artificial environment under which students learn a second language. Pragmatic aspects such as those analyzed in this study are very important in verbal communication and can affect the image of the speaker, in the sense that the use of an inappropriate form in a given context can culminate in a communication breakdown.

Now, it is relevant that what has been said so far has clear pedagogical implications. If the productions of certain speech acts by non-native English speakers differ in certain aspects from those by native speakers, and if this divergence may affect the image of the foreign speaker, more attention should be paid to aspects related to pragmatics in English as a foreign language classes. Ultimately, the goal of language is communication. Requests, as those analyzed in this study, are actual linguistic functions that we carry out through the language, they constitute what we use the language for, and yet hardly they receive attention in English as a Foreign Language classes. The objective of teaching a foreign language should be for the non-native speaker not only to be able to use its grammatical and lexical knowledge but also his understanding of the sociopragmatic features inherently distinct for each speech event to reach the communicative success. In this way, the acquisition of communicative competence has been considered one of the most important objectives in learning a foreign language. By giving attention to

the development of the communicative competence of the student, and in particular on pragmatic aspects, it is difficult to select the linguistic material offered to students and the communication activities that they will have to carry out. Their instructions should be clear and concise and should cover areas that are normally neglected, such as the relationship between the interlocutors and its effect on the choice of the type of language or a scale of the different degrees of courtesy. Attention will necessarily have to be paid to the specific sociopragmatic norms of the target culture, as well as to the pragmalinguistic rules.

Finally, teachers, in their role of decision-takers in the classroom, must be aware of the vast type of activities available, the variety of assessment instruments as well as the teaching approaches to help their students learn not only the grammatical or lexical components of the target language, but also competences they need to develop to be proficient speakers of the target language. Apart from that, teachers have the opportunity to take the curriculum provided by schools from the structural view of the language to the communicative perspective where sociopragmatic features may also help the student modify their perception of correctness to the adequation of the language which can raise the linguistic security of the student in any communicative event.

Concerning the limitations of this study, we must mention that although we found consistencies along the preferable strategy to make a request, it is important to remember that the sample of participants was short. Likewise, we must underline that the participants of the experimental group were students learning English formally which does not allow us to make any generalization as inconsistencies might be observed in participants with different characteristics learning the language under distinct conditions. To draw up stronger conclusions, further research could take larger samples of participants learning languages under different settings.

Secondly, we might have analyzed illocutions that have been influenced somehow by the methodology implemented. This is a crucial limitation due to the fact that natural illocutions may be impossible to record as they happen randomly under non controlled settings. Hence, future research could

implement various methodologies in a single study in order to diminish their influence and try to replicate natural conditions to ultimately optimize the collection of data. Nevertheless, it would be difficult for a single researcher to carry out a work of these characteristics. The collaboration of various researchers in a shared project would be necessary.

Finally, this study concentrated on a group of speakers (experimental group) whose level of the target language was intermediate. It is valid here to ask if the same illocutions would have been obtained when they were in basic or advanced levels. For further research, longitudinal studies could provide us with a more critical analysis as we would have the opportunity to observe with more detail aspects of the development of their pragmatic competence. Thus, research putting their effort on studying the various aspects of the development of the pragmatic competence of speakers of different languages have larger and interesting aspects to redefine the conclusions made in the field so far not only on the particularities of the requests but also of other language functions like invitations, complains, rejections, etcetera.

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APPENDIX 1

Nombre: _____

Lengua Meta: _____

Edad: _____

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo has estudiado inglés?

2. ¿Dónde aprendiste inglés?

3. ¿Cómo has aprendido inglés?

4. ¿Has aplicado algún examen de proficiencia?
 - a. Si b. No

¿Cuál? a. CAE b. First Certificate c. TOEFL

Otro: _____
5. Si lo has tomado, ¿Cuál ha sido tu puntaje o calificación?

6. ¿Cuál fue tu calificación final de tu Lengua Meta anterior?

7. ¿Cuál es la habilidad que se te ha dificultado más adquirir?
 - a. Reading b. Listening c. Writing d. Speaking
8. Describe brevemente la mayor dificultad que has tenido con esa habilidad.

9. ¿Cuál o cuáles habilidades has practicado más en tus clases de Lengua Meta?
 - a. Reading b. Listening c. Writing d. Speaking
10. ¿Cuál o cuáles has practicado menos?
 - a. Reading b. Listening c. Writing d. Speaking
11. ¿Con que frecuencia dirías que hablas inglés en tu clase de lengua meta?
 - a. 0% b. Menos del 50% c. El 50% d. Más del 50% e. El 100%
12. ¿Con que frecuencia dirías que hablas inglés fuera de la escuela?
 - a. Nunca b. Rara vez c. Regularmente d. Casi siempre e. Siempre
13. ¿Cuál es la habilidad que se te dificulta más cuando hablas inglés?
 - a. Listening b. Speaking

14. Describe brevemente la mayor dificultad que tienes cuando hablas inglés.

15. ¿Reconocerías que la interacción entre hablantes nativos de un idioma es diferente a la que tendrían un hablante nativo y un aprendiz del mismo idioma?

a. Si b. No

¿Por qué?

16. ¿Reconocerías que la interacción entre hablantes nativos de un idioma (por ejemplo inglés) es diferente a la que tendrían dos aprendices de un idioma extranjero (por ejemplo inglés)?

b. Si b. No

¿Por qué?

APPENDIX 2

Requests

Instructions: Read each situation and answer the question at the end of each situation.

Situation 1

A very good friend of yours owes you \$500, you gave him the money two months ago and he promised to return it as soon as possible, but he has not given the money back. You need your money and you decide to ask your friend to return it. What would you say to get your friend to return the money without losing his friendship?

Your answer:

Situation 2

You are waiting to complete some paperwork. You are in a non-smoking office which is very small. There is not much ventilation. Some minutes later after you have arrived, another person enters the office and he lights a cigarette. What would you say to get this person to put his cigarette out?

Your answer:

Situation 3

You lent a book to one of your professors one month ago and he has not returned it yet. You need it because the finals are approaching and you need to prepare a final paper for one of your classes. What would you say to get your professor to return the book?

Your answer:

Situation 4

You have obtained a very low grade in one of your classes, you are very worried because it is going to affect your GPA and you can lose your scholarship. You decide to ask your professor to give you the opportunity to do an extra assignment to improve your grade. What would you say to get your professor to give you another opportunity?

Your answer:

Situation 5

You are about to enter the principal’s office but the door is closed. You are carrying some boxes with your both hands and you need someone to open the door for you. There is only an elderly near the door and no other people near you. So, you decide to ask this person to open the door for you. What would you say to get this person to do this favor for you?

Your answer:

Situation 6

You need to go home urgently, but you do not have money to pay the bus. You do not see any of your friends nearby. A classmate, who you barely talk to, is near the bus stop waiting for it. So, you decide to ask this classmate to lend you some money for the bus. What would say to get this person to lend you some money?

Your answer:

Situation 7

You are driving and suddenly your car stops in the middle of the street. You try several times but it does not start. You are so frustrated because you need to move your car, but you cannot do it alone. You see that there are two people that are standing at the bus stop. So, you decide to ask them to help you. What would you say to get this guys to help to move your car?

Your answer:

Situation 8

You are very interested in taking a course in the morning, but you could not get into that class because you could not register at that hour. You cannot take the class in another hour because you work. Although you are not registered and you do not really know the instructor, you decide to try to ask the instructor to allow you to take this course. What would say to get this instructor to grant you permission to participate in this course?

Your answer:

Situation 9

You are the supervisor in a call center and you are in charge of ten guys (who are about the same age as you). It is four o'clock in the afternoon and there are many incoming calls waiting for your people to be answered. Two of the guys who have to answer the calls are just fooling around. What would you say to get these guys to go back to work?

Your answer:

Situation 10

You are doing your practicum in a school as an English teacher. It starts raining and you ask one of the children who is near the door of the classroom to close it. What would you say to get this child to close it?

Your answer:

APPENDIX 3

Nombre: _____

Lengua Meta: _____

Edad: _____

En caso de que no hayas respondido a alguna de las situaciones, menciona las razones por las que no lo hiciste

1. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
2. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
3. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
4. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
5. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
6. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
7. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
8. a. No sabía que decir
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
g. Otra _____
- b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
d. No entendí la situación
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así

9. a. No sabía que decir
b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
d. No entendí la situación
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
g. Otra _____
10. a. No sabía que decir
b. No sabía cómo estructurar la frase
c. Desconozco el vocabulario a utilizar
d. No entendí la situación
e. No me dio tiempo dar mi respuesta
f. Nunca he estado en una situación así
g. Otra _____

APPENDIX 4

Requests

Instrucciones: Lee cada una de las situaciones y responde la pregunta que aparece al final de cada situación.

Situación 1

Un buen amigo tuyo te debe \$500, tú se los prestaste hace dos meses él prometió regresártelos lo antes posible, pero aun no te los paga. Tú necesitas el dinero y decides pedirle a tu amigo que te lo regrese. ¿Qué le dirías a tu amigo para que te pagara lo que te debe sin que se ofenda y perdieras su amistad?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 2

Esperando a completar un trámite, estás en una oficina muy pequeña y sin mucha ventilación y en la cual se prohíbe fumar. Unos minutos después, otra persona entra a la oficina y enciende un cigarro. ¿Qué le dirías a esta persona para que apagara su cigarro?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 3

Le prestaste un libro a tu profesor hace un mes y él aún no te lo ha devuelto. Lo necesitas porque los exámenes finales están próximos y debes hacer el trabajo final de una de tus materias. ¿Qué le dirías a tu profesor para que te devolviera el libro?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 4

Obtuviste una calificación muy baja en una de tus materias. Estás muy preocupado porque va a afectar tu promedio final y puedes perder tu beca. Decides pedirle a tu profesor que te dé la oportunidad de hacer un trabajo extra para mejorar tu calificación. ¿Qué le dirías a tu maestro para que te diera otra oportunidad?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 5

Vas a entrar a la dirección de la escuela pero la puerta está cerrada. Vas cargando unas cajas con ambas manos y necesitas pedirle a alguien que te abra la puerta; solamente esta una persona mayor cerca de la puerta y nadie más. Decides pedirle a esta persona que te abra la puerta. ¿Qué le dirías a esta persona para que te abriera la puerta?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 6

Necesitas urgentemente ir a tu casa, pero no tienes dinero para pagar el autobús. No ves a ninguno de tus amigos cerca. Un compañero de clase, con el que nunca has hablado, está en la parada del autobús esperando. Decides pedirle a este compañero de clase que te preste dinero para el autobús. ¿Qué le dirías para que te prestara dinero para pagar el pasaje?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 7

Vas manejando y repentinamente se detiene tu coche a la mitad de la calle; tratas de encenderlo, pero no arranca. Te sientes muy frustrado porque necesitas mover tu coche, pero no lo puedes hacer sólo. Ves que hay dos muchachos esperando el autobús y decides pedirles ayuda ¿Qué les dirías a estos muchachos para que te ayudaran a mover el coche?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 8

Estás muy interesado en tomar un curso por la mañana, pero no pudiste inscribirte a esa clase en el horario matutino. No puedes tomar la clase a otra hora porque trabajas. Aunque sabes que no estas inscrito y no conoces al maestro, decides tratas de pedirle al maestro que te permita tomar esa clase. ¿Qué le dirías al maestro para que te diera permiso de participar oficialmente en esta clase?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 9

Eres el supervisor de un centro de atención telefónica y tienes a tu cargo diez muchachos (todos son más o menos de tu edad). Son las 4 de la tarde y hay demasiadas llamadas entrantes esperando ser atendidas. Dos de los muchachos que tienen que atender las llamadas están jugando. ¿Qué les dirías a estos muchachos para que se pusieran a trabajar?

Tu respuesta:

Situación 10

Estas haciendo tus prácticas en una escuela como profesor de inglés, comienza a llover y le pides a uno de los niños que está cerca de la puerta del salón que la cierre. ¿Qué le dirías a este niño para que la cerrara?

Tu respuesta:
