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Language transfer and pragmatic failure: a study
of German and Spanish learners of English as a
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Introduction

The pragmatic competence of second language learners has become an area of great interest to many researchers in the field of second language acquisition and interlanguage pragmatics over the last three decades.

Chomsky's idea of the ideal speaker and his concept of competence came under scrutiny by the end of the 1970s. Soon it was realized that grammatical correctness and appropriateness are not of exclusive importance. From that moment on grammatical competence was considered as only one of all the competences comprising the communicative competence of a speaker. In the following years linguists and language teachers realized that it was the low level of pragmatic ability which caused the language learners many difficulties.

The investigation of language transfer also belongs to the field of interlanguage pragmatics. The interest of this area lies in the examination of the extent to which and the circumstances under which second language learners transfer strategies from their mother tongue to the interlanguage. As positive language transfer is clearly an advantage for language learners, we will concentrate on instances of negative transfer. Furthermore, the concept of pragmatic failure will be explored, too. It has been established that a low pragmatic competence and negative language transfer may induce pragmatic failures which in turn may lead to a breakdown in conversation. Thus, the pragmatic competence of second language learners is crucial for a successful interaction in the target language and for being a competent member of the respective culture.

The present thesis is structured into three parts. The first chapter serves as an introduction to pragmatics and renders a survey of the various fields of this linguistic domain. The first part on language transfer and pragmatic failure is comprised of two chapters which treat the topic of the thesis in detail. The second part on politeness and the speech acts of request offers insights into Brown and Levinson's work on politeness phenomena,

Austin's and Searle's theories of speech acts and finally, into the various methods and strategies available for the realization of requests.

The third part of the thesis is the empirical chapter in which the results of a small-scale study on the realization of requests by Austrian German and Spanish speaking learners of English as a second language will be presented. The study examines to what extent the strategies employed by the second language learners for uttering a request converge and diverge, respectively, from the native speaker norm. Finally, possible instances of language transfer and pragmatic failure will be highlighted and discussed.

1. Pragmatics

'Pragmatics' is the field of linguistics which deals with languages and its users. In the long tradition of the study of languages, pragmatics is a relatively new research area. However, for quite a long time it was considered the waste-basket of linguistics, since the interest of pragmaticians lies in all the aspects that classical linguists could not explain with their models. The quintessential difference between the pragmatist and the traditional linguist can be found in their consideration of context. For the latter it is something static, whereas for the pragmaticians it is dynamic and proactive. (Mey 1993: 3-10) Classical linguists were mainly occupied with the truth value and the syntactic structure of sentences. However,

[u]sually, it is much more interesting to try and find out *why* people say something than whether *what* they say is true or false. (Mey 1993: 14)

The first steps moving from traditional linguistics to pragmatics were undertaken in the first half of the twentieth century. Asa Kasher considers the work carried out by Charles W. Morris, Rudolf Carnap, Yehoshua Bar-Hillel and R.M. Martin as the dawn of pragmatics. Kasher argues that those linguists introduced important ideas, but that "[a]t that time, Pragmatics was far below the required threshold of maturity." (Kasher 1998, 1: 46)

It was only in the 1960s and 70s that pragmatics gained major interest, because there had still been numerous observations left unexplained and several theoretical paradoxes unsolved. Many of these aroused the curiosity of philosophers rather than linguists. Their aim was to solve problems such as the relationship of language and logic in the areas of syntax and semantics and how language is actually understood by its users; they also acknowledged the fact that extralinguistic factors indeed played a prominent role. (Mey 1993: 18-20)

The 'pragmatic turn' in linguistics can thus be described as a paradigm shift [...]. Basically, the shift is from the paradigm of theoretical grammar (in particular, syntax) to the paradigm of the language user. (Mey 1993: 20)

Geoffrey Leech uses a well-chosen metaphor for the establishment of pragmatics by comparing it to colonization. He points out that in the early 1960s Katz, among others, began to incorporate meaning into structural linguistics and by the 1970s Lakoff et al claimed that one cannot separate the study of language use from structure. (Leech 1990: 1-2)

So pragmatics was henceforth on the linguistic map. Its colonization was only the last stage of a wave-by-wave expansion of linguistics from a narrow discipline dealing with the physical data of speech, to a broad discipline taking in form, meaning and context. (Leech 1990: 2)

George Lakoff and John Robert Ross were among the first ones to turn against Chomsky's principles. But finally, it was John Searle with his work "Speech Acts" (1969) who paved the way for pragmatics as a linguistic discipline. (Mey 1993: 20)

In the "Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics" Mey writes the entry on pragmatics in which he splits the development of this linguistic field into four stages. He refers to the reaction of Lakoff and Ross to Chomsky's generative grammar as the 'Anti-syntactic Tendency', which was not a real pragmatic orientation and limited itself to North America. The second stage, called the 'Social-Critical Tendency', originated in Europe and the effects language has on its users became of interest to linguists such as Bernstein and Wunderlich. Another phase is called the 'Philosophical Tradition' and refers to John Searle and his book on speech acts, as already mentioned above. Finally, Mey also enumerates the 'Ethnomethodological Tradition' which he calls a "Johnny-come-lately" school of thought (Mey 1998: 717). Linguists working in that field emphasized communication over grammar and were mainly interested in the way people convey their messages. Ethnomethodology had established itself in pragmatics in the early 1980s. (Mey 1998: 717-718)

By the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s a lot of publishing work had been done in the field of pragmatics. Mey comments on this as follows: “Pragmatics has come into its own, and it is here to stay.” (1998: 720)

1.1. Defining pragmatics

The word ‘to define’ comes “from Latin *definire*, [and means] to set boundaries to” (Allen 1994: 343). The following paragraphs will point out how various linguists established pragmatics as a field of linguistics. But first of all, it seems necessary to explain the word ‘pragmatics’ itself. It comes from the Greek word ‘*pragma*’ / ‘*pragmatíkos*’ and may signify activity, deed or affair. (Brown 1993, 2: 2311 ‘*pragmatic*’)

Among the earliest descriptions of pragmatics were those by Charles W. Morris and Rudolf Carnap. In his book “Foundations of the Theory of Signs” Morris considers pragmatics as one of the three areas of semiotics besides syntax and semantics. He renders the following definition: “By ‘pragmatics’ is designated the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters.” (30) Morris even suggests that the art of rhetoric might be considered as an early form of pragmatics. Jacob Mey updates the designation of pragmatics made by Morris stating that

[t]oday, in a less technical, more communication-oriented terminology, one would perhaps use words such as ‘message’ and ‘language user’, rather than ‘sign’ and ‘interpreter’. (Mey 1993: 35)

Rudolf Carnap also thinks of pragmatics as being a part of the trichotomy comprising the field of semiotics. He argues that one can analyze language without being actually interested in the speaker and the designatum. However,

[i]f in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language, then we assign it to the field of **pragmatics**. (Carnap 1948: 9)

A little bit further on in the first part of his book "Introduction to Semantics" Carnap pays homage to pragmatics stating that "[it] *is the basis for all of linguistics*" (13) and in fact considers semantics and syntax as being sub-fields of it.

After having outlined those first steps towards a modern notion of pragmatics, let us now turn to two of the major contributors in this linguistic field - Geoffrey Leech and Steven Levinson.

Leech argues that semantics and pragmatics have one thing in common, namely, they both deal with meaning. However, the way they do so is different. The main difference is that within the field of pragmatics meaning is described in relation to the user of the language, whereas semantics does not take the situation or the interlocutors into account. Leech "[...] redefine[s] pragmatics for the purposes of linguistics, as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations." (Leech 1990: 6) Overall, he differentiates between three possibilities of how to view the relation between pragmatics and semantics. Within pragmaticism semantics is assimilated to pragmatics and meaning is defined through the speech acts speakers perform with respect to their hearers. Amongst its representatives we find Austin and Searle. Those who take on a semanticist point-of-view believe that the semantic structure encloses the pragmatic force of an utterance. Finally, complementarism is the viewpoint Leech adopts. This position implies that whenever one wants to study the meaning of language, one has to look at it from a pragmatic as well as a semantic point-of-view. (Leech 1990: 5-7)

The criteria taken into consideration by Leech when doing a pragmatic analysis will be among others: the addressor and the addressee, the context (as the physical and social setting), the goal of the utterance and the utterance as an act (i.e. speech act) and as a product of a verbal act. Furthermore, Leech establishes eight postulates which should serve as a means of delineating pragmatics from semantics.

Semantics	Pragmatics
β Semantic representation	β vs. pragmatic interpretation
β Rule-governed (=grammatical)	β Principle-controlled (=rhetorical)
β Rules are fundamentally conventional	β Principles are fundamentally non-conventional
β No relation of sense to force	β relation of sense to force
β definition of correspondences through mappings	β definition of correspondences through problem and solution
β formal explanations	β functional explanations
β ideational	β interpersonal and textual
β description through determinate categories	β description through indeterminate values

(Leech 1990: 4-5)

Another linguist who favors a definition of pragmatics by delineating it from semantics is Levinson.

In Levinson's point of view pragmatics encompasses context-dependent aspects of the structure of a language as well as the usage and comprehension of a language. Hence, pragmatics is concerned with the interrelation of language structure and usage. Levinson suggests amongst other definitions of pragmatics the following:

Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are **grammaticalized**, or encoded in the structure of a language. (Levinson 1983: 9)

This means that pragmatics focuses on "those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing of grammars." (Levinson 1983: 9) This notion of pragmatics especially serves for studying deixis (a deictic word relates what is spoken of to the spatial or temporal context as does for example a demonstrative), presupposition and speech acts. Levinson himself is aware of the fact that he excludes principles of language usage like, for instance, conversational implicatures. But, he points out that those have

repercussions on linguistic structure anyway and hence are dealt with inexplicitly. Levinson sees the power of the definition in its restriction of pragmatics to exclusively linguistic matters and its concern with specific aspects of meaning. Consequently, he redefines pragmatics as “the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory”. (Levinson 1983: 12) If pragmatics can indeed be defined as “meaning minus semantics” (Levinson 1983: 32), then it strongly relies on the semantic theory taken into consideration. If semantics is delimited to the study of truth conditions, then there is more left to be studied in pragmatics than there would be if it were focusing on meaning components and features as well. Only in this way it is possible to *delimit* pragmatics from other linguistic areas, in particular semantics. (Levinson 1983: 9-13)

Jacob L. Mey criticizes Levinson’s approach to pragmatics and its constraint to purely linguistic matters. He argues that from a real pragmatic standpoint the context has to be considered as one of a language user’s and should not be limited to grammatical aspects of the context itself. Hence, Mey offers the following definition of pragmatics:

[...] pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society. (Mey 1993: 42)

He further distinguishes between two types of context. One is defined by society and its institutions (societal) and the other is composed in interaction (social). (Mey 1993: 42) In contrast to Mey, Stalnaker bases his work on Levinson’s approach to pragmatics.

Robert C. Stalnaker decided to follow Levinson’s and Leech’s attempts to define pragmatics by delineating it from semantics. Stalnaker considers pragmatics as the somewhat “neglected member” (Stalnaker in Kasher 1998: 55) of traditional linguistics and sees its problem in the fact that it borders on semantics. Stalnaker renders a rather straightforward definition:

Syntax studies sentences, semantics studies propositions. Pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed. (Stalnaker in Kasher 1998, 1: 58)

Wierzbicka suggests a further possibility of how to approach the pragmatics versus semantics question. She proposes two pragmatics and differentiates between linguistic pragmatics and simply 'another' pragmatics. The latter one belongs to the realm of sociologists, ethnomethodologists and psychologists. In Wierzbicka's opinion, the problem does not reside in how to differentiate linguistic pragmatics from linguistic semantics, because she regards the first as an integral part of the latter one. "[However,] there is a gulf between linguistic pragmatics and various other, heterogeneous, considerations of language use" (Wierzbicka 1991: 19). She argues that there is a considerable overlap between pragmatics and semantics, but that not everything "[...] that has ever been called 'pragmatics' could, or should, be swallowed by semantics" (Wierzbicka 1991:19)

As one can see there is no 'one and only' definition of pragmatics. The designation and interpretation of pragmatics is a rather complex matter.

So far, we have dealt with various definitions of pragmatics in general. However, pragmatics, as any other linguistic domain, is comprised of various sub-fields. In the following, we will briefly sketch sociopragmatics, touch on contrastive pragmatics; move on to cross-cultural pragmatics, and finally reach the topic of interlanguage pragmatics.

1.2. The field of pragmatics

Throughout this chapter we will be concerned with the scope of pragmatics. After briefly mentioning sociopragmatics and contrastive pragmatics, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics will be introduced. The latter one will be dealt with more explicitly and in more detail, since interlanguage pragmatics will be one of the main areas of interest in this paper.

1.2.1. Sociopragmatics

As we have come to know, pragmatics is concerned with universal conditions of language usage in communication. But, of course, depending on the culture, language community or the social classes and situations in which a certain language is spoken there might apply specific or local conditions, which vary to a certain extent. This is of interest to the field of sociopragmatics. (Leech 1990: 10)

Trosborg states that “[e]mphasis on the interactive aspect and the acknowledgement of the social context in which a speech act occurs have formed the basis for socio-pragmatic research.” (1995: 38). The main concerns of sociopragmatics are aspects of social variation such as the power relationship and the familiarity between the interlocutors or the setting and the aim of their conversation. (Trosborg 1995: 37-39)

1.2.2. Contrastive pragmatics

Throughout the first half of the last century linguists were still mainly occupied with analyzing communication between participants of the same cultural background who speak the same language. In times of globalization a shift to multilingual as well as multicultural interaction has been observed. Hence, in recent years one of the major interests of pragmatics has lain in the investigation of how people, stemming from different cultural backgrounds, observe specific pragmatic principles in various languages. (Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer 2008: ix-x)

“There is, then, a natural need to compare (the technical term is *to contrast*) the results of the investigations [...]” (Oleksy 1989: x). The a priori set-up generalizations need to be confronted with the cross-linguistic and –cultural data found, in order to be able to establish universal patterns which can be discovered in any language. “This alone constitutes a *raison d’être* for contrastive pragmatics” (Oleksy 1989: x).

[...] Contrastive Pragmatics investigates the pragmatic principles people abide by in one language or language community in contrast to how these principles may govern linguistic interaction in another language. (Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer 2008: x)

Nowadays, contrastive pragmatics is considered a field of cross-cultural pragmatics.

1.2.3. Cross-cultural pragmatics

We all know that in different countries people speak differently. What is important is that they do not only use distinct linguistic codes but that the difference lies in the way they do so. So far, pragmaticians have been trying to establish language universals, but their attempts have not been really successful. The major work in analyzing and comparing languages all over the world was carried out by mainly English and American researchers and hence an Anglocentric bias has been observed.

This problem, finally, led to the emergence of a new field of study: cross-cultural pragmatics. (Wierzbicka 1991: 67-69) The major assumptions of that area of research are the following:

- (1) In different societies, and different communities, people speak differently.
- (2) These differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic.
- (3) These differences reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values.
- (4) Different ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of, in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities.

(Wierzbicka 1991: 69)

Wierzbicka points out that if we really try to understand cultural values from an objective and culture-independent point-of-view, social and interpersonal conflicts could be avoided, alleviated and finally even resolved. Here, she also refers to the weakness of cross-cultural

pragmatics. One of the major problems lies in the language being used. Pragmaticians explain their findings with terms such as in-/directness, cordiality, intimacy et cetera, but do not consider that those words do not mean the same for everyone. Hence, one and the same expression might be considered direct by one author, whereas the other one regards it as being indirect, depending on one's own cultural background. (Wierzbicka 1991: 69-72)

This dilemma may not be resolved, but can be explained to some degree in the light of an *emic/etic viewpoint*. (Trosborg 1995: 49)

If one studies speech acts from an emic point-of-view, the way the speaker expresses the content is analyzed. From an etic viewpoint, the contents are considered from the standpoint of the observer. That means emic operations serve to derive how the informant conceptually categorizes and defines situations. The observer gets information through interaction. The goal of etic operations is to structure cultural phenomena into categories independently of the informant's categorization and definition. (Trosborg 1995: 49-50)

Wierzbicka claims that the crux of the matter, if we sincerely want to compare and be able to understand different cultures, lies in the terms being used. The terminology should be of relevance to other cultures as well and therefore, concepts which are at least "nearly" universal should be employed. (Wierzbicka 1991: 72)

1.2.4. Interlanguage pragmatics

Selinker, though he himself is regarded as having introduced the term 'interlanguage', sees its very beginnings in the work done by Fries and Lado. Early evidence of contrastive analysis and hence interlanguage can be found in Fries' statement:

The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. (Fries 1945: 9 quoted in Selinker 1992: 6)

It was Fries' colleague, Lado, who showed the relevance of this statement to contrastive analysis. Lado said that what is meant by the proposition above is the following:

[...] individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. (Lado 1957: 2)

After the bridge to contrastive analysis had been built, linguists were highly motivated to learn more about language transfer, especially negative transfer which was regarded as being linked to the making of errors. Consecutively, error analysis became one of the predecessors of interlanguage and second language acquisition research. Fries and Lado were occupied with a careful comparison of the native and the target language and through the results obtained they tried to predict transfer and errors. Nowadays one knows about the problems of contrastive analysis. One cannot really predict which errors will be made by language learners. Furthermore, researchers do not equate language transfer with making errors anymore. (Selinker 1992: 6-12)

Nemser and Corder were the first ones to move away from Fries and Lado towards Selinker's definition of interlanguage. They were also occupied with this conception, but called it 'approximative systems' and 'transitional competence', respectively. Corder talked of a 'built-in syllabus' which enables the language learner to build up a linguistic system independently of the native and target language. (Taron in Mey 1998: 390-391)

The term 'interlanguage' as it is used today was defined by Larry Selinker as...

[...] the linguistic system evidenced when an adult second-language learner attempts to express meanings in the language being learned. The interlanguage is viewed as a separate linguistic system, clearly different from both the learner's 'native language' (NL) and the 'target language' (TL) being learned, but

linked to both NL and TL by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner. (Taron in Mey 1998: 390)

Not only phonology, morphology and syntax but also the lexical and the pragmatic, and discourse levels of the interlanguage are comprised in this linguistic system. Characteristic of the notion of interlanguage is that it fossilizes at some stage and one principally differentiates between five processes which shape the interlanguage. Those operations are native language transfer, overgeneralization of the target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of communication and strategies of learning. Language transfer will be of special interest in this paper and will be dealt with in detail in the consecutive chapter. Overgeneralization means that a learner has mastered a certain rule of the target language but does not know all its exceptions yet. Transfer of training implies that a learner applies rules s/he has learned from a teacher or a textbook. This, however, might not always be done successfully. Strategies of communication refer to a learner's ability to paraphrase if s/he cannot think of the proper word. Finally, learning strategies are consciously employed by the learner in order to master the target language. This all can have an effect on the development of the interlanguage system.

The original interlanguage hypothesis as proposed by Selinker in the 1970s was subject to some amendments. First of all, it was shown that not only adults may have fossilized interlanguage system with native language transfer influences, but children, too. Here one draws on examples from French immersion programs in Canada. It was also argued about whether interlanguages should be considered natural languages and if they have to obey the language universals or not. Moreover, researchers were discussing the influence which social context has on the development of the interlanguage. It has been demonstrated that in some contexts learners can indeed speak a transfer-free interlanguage. Furthermore, the issue of fossilization and its inevitability was raised. On the whole, interlanguage research has experienced an expansion from phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis to sociolinguistic components as well as the

comparison of the performance of speech acts in the native, inter- and target language. (Taron in Mey 1998: 389-395)

This area where interlanguage studies are extended to include a learner's pragmatic and discourse knowledge is referred to as interlanguage pragmatics. The interest of interlanguage pragmatics lies in how non-native language users select and realize speech acts. This is done by studying bilinguals and by comparing native with non-native speakers of a language. As we have seen above, interlanguage studies were primarily concerned with the errors made by language learners.

[I]n interlanguage pragmatics attention has been focused on learners' inappropriate speech act realizations in order to uncover their pragmatic knowledge at a given time in their learning process. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 10)

It has been shown that learners even at an advanced level make pragmatic errors by failing to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force or politeness value. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 9-11)

In their book on interlanguage pragmatics Kasper and Blum-Kulka point out that ILP is a hybrid which belongs to two different disciplines.

As a branch of Second Language Acquisition Research, ILP is one of several specializations in interlanguage studies, contrasting with interlanguage phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. As a subset of pragmatics, ILP figures as a sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, or simply linguistic enterprise, depending on how one defines the scope of "pragmatics". (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3)

Interlanguage pragmatics is primarily concerned with the production and comprehension of linguistic action. Hence, one might believe that communication strategies, a field within pragmatics, is also of concern to ILP, but this is not the case. Communication strategies are linked to a learner's ability to solve referential problems, whereas interlanguage pragmatics analyzes the illocutionary force and politeness value of a speech act. (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3-4)

Most of the research done in interlanguage pragmatics focuses on communication rather than on the learning process. That means that the development of the pragmatic competence of a learner is not taken into consideration. This is, for example, highly criticized by Bardovi-Harlig who wants to draw attention to the fact that only a “handful” of longitudinal studies were carried out up to the turn of the century, as for example Kasper’s and Schmidt’s “Developmental Issues in Interlanguage Pragmatics”, two further essays by Schmidt and one by Billmyer on instructed learners of English. Hence, interlanguage pragmatics cannot be considered an acquisitional field. Bardovi-Harling comments on this as follows:

[...] not only was interlanguage pragmatics not fundamentally acquisitional, but it was, in fact, fundamentally not acquisitional.”
(1999, 49: 679)

She argues that the problem is that the research objects are seen as non-native speakers rather than language learners, and most studies are carried out regardless of the level of proficiency. This makes them non-acquisitional studies. Furthermore, the main focus lies on very advanced learners rather than on learners of various proficiency levels, since competent learners are still confronted with problems pertaining to basic pragmatics, too. In this way interlanguage pragmatics rather belongs to comparative and cross-cultural pragmatics than to second language acquisition. (Bardovi-Harling 49, 1999: 677-680)

2. Language transfer

In his work on language transfer Odlin (1989) suggests that the first studies on language transfer can be dated back to the nineteenth century. Moreover, he states that the polemic on transfer was not first considered in second language acquisition but rather in language classification and change.

Whenever throughout history various peoples came together, their languages came into contact as well. Consecutively, what happened is a phenomenon called language mixing, whereby native language influence is only one possible way of its manifestation. Other kinds of mixing are borrowing and code-switching. The importance of language contact and mixing caused debates among scholars already in the nineteenth century. At that time the concept of transfer became more and more important as one also began to study pidgins and creoles¹. The German linguist, Hugo Schuchardt, tried to explain many features of pidgin and creole languages through the concept of transfer. He pointed out that in language contact situations a clear tendency to simplification in order to make each other understood can be observed. There seems to be a universal tendency towards simplicity. However, the concepts of universality and transfer were considered a controversial issue in the study of pidgins and creoles. (Odlin 1989: 6-12)

By the 1950s, studies on language contact had increased and Weinreich and others rendered considerable contributions. Weinreich favored the term 'interference' over 'transfer' and was aware of the significance of the social context in language contact situations. The effects of instances of language contact are being distinguished by employing the terms 'borrowing transfer' and 'substratum transfer'. Borrowing transfer refers to the influence of a second on a previously acquired language. Substratum

¹ A pidgin is a variety of a language which developed out of purposes such as trading between groups of people who did not speak each other's language. A creole is a pidgin which is not used as a mere trade language anymore, but which has become the first language of a social community.

transfer is examined in the field of second language acquisition. It describes the influence of a source language (in most cases the mother tongue) on the acquisition of a target language. The target language is usually referred to as the “second” language irrespective of how many languages have already been learnt. Furthermore, borrowing transfer usually surfaces at the lexical level. However, a certain extent of cross-linguistic syntactic influence can also be observed, whereas phonetics and phonology of the native language are usually not affected. This is different from substratum transfer. Here the major influences are on pronunciation. (Odlin 1989: 12-15)

Despite the conflicting views on the significance of language contact in historical linguistics, the notion of language transfer remained uncontroversial among language teachers well into the twentieth century. (Odlin 1989: 15)

Linguists such as Jespersen, Palmer, Fries and Lado contributed to the idea that native languages affect second language acquisition. Those American scholars hypothesized that due to cross-linguistic differences second language acquisition varied in great extent from the acquisition of the first language. In behaviorist² terms of those times transfer was regarded as the transfer of habits. Native language influence was considered as the influence of old habits, some of which had positive effects others negative. A further claim was that difficulties which the learners face when acquiring a second language can be detected through contrastive analyses. (Odlin 1989: 15-17)

Contrastive analysis as advocated by Lado and Fries was already challenged in the 1970s. The difficulties and thus errors of second language learners predicted by linguists through contrasting the second to the learner’s first language did not always turn out to be true. It soon was shown that differences between languages do not necessarily lead to difficulties in learning. Moreover, in error analyses it could not always be

² Behaviorism is a field of psychology in which it is believed that every action carried out by any living-being is behavior. It is mainly concerned with the theories of classical conditioning and habit formation. Language acquisition is also thought of as a process of habit formation through successful imitation of exemplary behavior. Its major representatives are Skinner, Pavlov and Bloomfield.

clearly distinguished if an error occurred due to transfer from the first language, or if it was a case of transfer of training (influences through the teaching style), overgeneralization or simplification. (Odlin 1989: 17-19) Soon it became clear that some errors happen regardless of the native language of the learner. Those are called developmental errors and it has been demonstrated that first and second language acquisition proceed in developmental sequences. Hence, Krashen and others argue that second language acquisition does not really differ from the acquisition of the first language. This stands in clear contrast to the claims made by Fries and Lado in the 1950s. Transfer became a dubious concept, especially because it developed out of times of behaviorism and structuralism which were not positively assessed in the 1970s anymore. Nevertheless, the claims against transfer could not be supported by enough empirical evidence and it has been proven that transfer can occur in all linguistic subsystems. (Odlin 1989: 22-24)

2.1. Some terminological issues of transfer

Odlin clearly points out that the definition of the term 'transfer' is anything but straightforward. Some scholars even suggest not using the term or to do so in a very restricted way. To Odlin it seems easier to define what transfer is not, rather than what it is. So, he states that "*[t]ransfer is not simply a consequence of habit formation*" (Odlin 1989: 25). Within the field of behaviorism transfer is understood as being linked to the extinction of earlier habits. Contrary to that, in second language acquisition the learning of another language does not necessarily lead to the substitution of the first language. (Odlin 1989: 25)

Secondly, "*[t]ransfer is not simply interference*" (Odlin 1989: 26). Interference does usually have a negative connotation and hence, it is not always appropriate to speak of interference when referring to transfer. Native language influence can also be positive and helpful. (Odlin 1989: 26)

Moreover, “[t]ransfer is not simply a falling back on the native language” (Odlin 1989:26). This claim was made by Krashen when he said that learners fall back on old knowledge, that is, the first language, when they have not yet acquired new knowledge. However, native language influence is not the only source of influence on the learner language. (Odlin 1989: 26)

Finally, “[t]ransfer is not always native language influence” (Odlin 1989: 27). This is simply due to the fact that if a learner already knows more than one language, all the languages already acquired will have an influence on the acquisition of a new one. (Odlin 1989: 27)

After delineating clearly what transfer is not, Odlin establishes a “working” definition of transfer:

Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired. (1989:27)

However, he himself is not completely satisfied with his own definition and is aware of the fact that it still would need amplification. In this way he concludes: “A fully adequate definition of transfer seems unattainable [...] [because] a fully adequate definition of transfer presupposes a fully adequate definition of language” (Odlin 1989: 27)

Kellerman and Sharwood Smith, on the other hand, propose using the theory-neutral term ‘crosslinguistic influence’, which incorporates phenomena such as transfer, interference, avoidance and borrowing. This also helps restricting transfer to the incorporation of elements from one language into the other. (Kellerman and Sharwood Smith 1986: 1-2)

Kasper and Faerch have also tried to establish a definition of transfer. They differentiate between a behaviorist and a cognitivist approach to language transfer. As already mentioned above within behaviorism transfer denotes the influence of already existing habits on the formation of new ones. Hence, “[...] language transfer is conceptualized as the invariably automatic activation of habitualized linguistic behaviour” (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 49). Within cognitivism transfer is

described as a problem-solving strategy. This means that learners draw on the knowledge they have already acquired in their first language in order to overcome hurdles of the second language. Thus, transfer can be regarded as a decision-making procedure. Kasper and Faerch suggest a two-fold perspective on transfer.

[...] transfer can both be conceived as the creative activation of L1 knowledge at different levels of consciousness and the activation of highly automatized L1 knowledge in the absence of conscious control. (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 49)

Another linguist who has tried to designate transfer is Wode. He points out that transfer needs to be related to cross-linguistic influence in general in order to be able to completely understand this phenomenon. Wode claims that transfer has the following five characteristics: First of all, transfer does occur in learner languages and is developmental. By this he means that transfer is an indispensable part of the way languages are acquired. Furthermore, Wode attributes transfer the characteristic of being systematic rather than random and that it is constrained by the formal properties of the linguistic devices of all languages engaged. Finally, it is said that the use of transfer varies. The dimensions of variation are:

[...] individual variation among the transfer-based learner utterances; situational or task-specific variation in the sense that certain situations are more prone to trigger transfer-based utterances than others; and developmental variation as a function of the state of the development of the learner's L1 and/or L2. (Wode in Kellerman 1986: 174)

Also Kari Sajavaara regards it as quite difficult to conceptualize transfer. The problem lies in the fact that transfer has always been studied in reference to learner products, although it does, by definition, refer to a process. Traditionally transfer meant the transference of surface items from one language to the other. However, there are also a lot of other items which are transferred. Sajavaara points out that the question under which conditions transfer occurs has become more relevant than whether it does do so at all or not. Sajavaara also prefers the term 'crosslanguage influence' over language transfer and points out that transfer and the

transferability of items depend on far more factors than the similarity between languages. (Sajavaara in Kellerman 1986: 66-68)

2.2. Constraints on transfer

The promotion or inhibition of transfer depends on various factors. Rod Ellis amongst others calls those the constraints on transfer and lists six:

1. language level
2. social factors
3. markedness
4. prototypicality
5. language distance and psychotypology
6. developmental factors

(Ellis 1994: 315)

As regards the language level Ellis claims that transfer is most likely to happen at the phonological level. The 'foreign accent' of a learner is clearly influenced by the phonological system of the first language. Another language level where transfer is very probable to occur is lexis, which is fostered by the distance between the languages. Furthermore, transfer plays a major role at the discourse level. Very often errors classified as transfer-induced syntactic errors are discourse errors. Transfer at the syntactic level does not occur very frequently since learners have a greater metalinguistic awareness of grammatical than of phonological or pragmatic features. (Ellis 1994: 316-317)

Furthermore, sociolinguistic factors that influence transfer are the social context and the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. Negative language transfer is said to occur with lesser frequency in focused contexts, like classrooms, because there the learner's attention is drawn to probable interference instances. Natural settings, on the other hand, often render unfocused contexts and hence, transfer is more likely to occur. (Ellis 1994: 317-318)

A further constraint on language transfer is markedness. Markedness is a feature of linguistic items and is considered to influence the transferability of those. Some linguistic features are regarded as 'special', marked, and

others as 'basic' or unmarked. (Ellis 1994: 319-320) Gass also mentions markedness as one of the factors constraining transfer. Linguistic items usually referred to as marked are those which are irregular, semantically opaque or occur relatively infrequently. Those are highly marked and less likely to be transferred than frequent and regular forms. (Gass in Flynn 1988: 391)

Prototypicality may promote or inhibit transfer as well. Kellerman argues that learners of a language constantly make judgments about what can and what cannot be transferred from the first to the second language. Kellerman conducted a study about the semantic space of the word 'break'. He asked Dutch learners of English at various proficiency levels in which contexts one could use the word 'break' in English the same way they used the Dutch word 'breken'. Astonishingly, the learners' judgment of transferability was not influenced by their proficiency level. Everyone has a certain concept or image of what a word refers to in mind. This is the semantic prototype and we are able to judge the degree with which an object matches the prototype. (Ellis 1994: 324-327)

A further constraint on language transfer is the distance between the first and the target language. Gass following Kellerman mentions this as the second major factor determining transferable elements together with markedness. This distance between the first and the second language can be treated as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a psycholinguistic one. The latter denotes the learner's perception of the degree of difference between the native and the target language. Language distance can foster positive as well as negative transfer. Where languages are regarded as being rather similar, positive transfer can foster progress in learning. However, learners' psychotypology, which is the set of perception about language distance, is not fixed. So, the better learners get, the higher their proficiency level, the more they realize how many differences there are between the source and the target language. This perceived distance influences transfer. (Gass in Flynn 1988: 391-392)

Moreover, the language learner's proficiency level also constrains the likeliness of transfer. Since the starting point of the acquisition of a second

language is the first language, it can be assumed that transfer occurs more frequently at earlier stages of development. This is, however, not the case because the more linguistic structures are learnt, the higher the possibility of transfer. So, beginners do not make more transfer errors than learners at a higher proficiency level. (Ellis 1994: 329-332)

Examples of other factors constraining language transfer are learners' personality variables such as age and the task a learner is performing.

2.3. Various manifestations of transfer

As already mentioned above, Faerch and Kasper take on a cognitivist view of transfer in which language transfer is regarded as a means of solving the problems a language learner is facing when acquiring a second language. Overall, they differentiate between strategic, automatic, and subsidiary transfer.

When a learner does not know an interlanguage rule, or does not have access to it, s/he may overcome this hurdle by drawing on already existing knowledge from other areas. We basically distinguish between three communication strategies a language learner may employ. The first one is referred to as strategic transfer. Strategic transfer includes for example foreignizing (an L1 word is spoken with an L2 pronunciation) or literal translations, such as '*green-things*' for '*Grünzeug*' or '*green stuff*' for the Czech word '*zelenina*' meaning vegetables. (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 57-58)

Automatic transfer denotes

[...] the activation of highly automatized sub-routines from a secondary area of declarative knowledge, in situations in which attention is concentrated on something else. (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 59)

Thus, discourse gambits are very often expressed in the mother tongue, also by advanced learners. An interesting aspect about automatic transfer is that in contrast to strategic transfer, it is never combinatory. So, learners

would not use a native language discourse gambit and second language pronunciation. (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 59-60)

Thirdly, Faerch and Kasper mention another type of transfer, namely subsidiary transfer. Contrary to strategic transfer learners are not aware of the production problem or of the fact that knowledge has been transferred from the native language. It also differentiates from automatic transfer by being combinatory. Furthermore, subsidiary transfer may occur at various levels. So for example, it may surface exclusively at the articulatory level, with the other levels not affected. Moreover, subsidiary transfer may also have an impact on the morphological level which is rather rare. The syntactic and lexical level can be affected as well. Subsidiary transfer at the lexical level happens when learners start to carry out their syntactic plan, but do not go ahead with it. That means they start a sentence, and only then do they realize that they do not know how to formulate it. However, in order to be able to convey the intended message, learners make use of a communication strategy called restructuring.

On the whole, those different types of transfer refer to strategies used by learners when their interlanguage knowledge is not available or not that readily accessible as their L1 knowledge. (Faerch and Kasper in Kellerman 1986: 60-63)

Rod Ellis mentions four ways in which language transfer manifests itself. Those are: errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance, and over-use. Within second language acquisition errors can be either the result of transfer, i.e. interference, or they are simply products of language development processes similar to those occurring in first language acquisition. Positive transfer happens when the first language facilitates the acquisition of the second language. This does not mean that certain errors are completely absent, but that they occur in reduced numbers. Avoidance is a further strategy employed by learners. Here they simply avoid using certain structures which they consider difficult due to differences between the L1 and the L2. The first language clearly affects the learners not in what they do, but in what they do not do.

The crucial thing is that in order to state the case of avoidance, it has to be proven that the learners know the structure, but are avoiding it. (Ellis 1994: 301-305)

According to Ellis one distinguishes between three types of avoidance. Avoidance...

(1) occurs when learners know or anticipate that there is a problem and have at least some, sketchy idea of what the target form is like. [...]

(2) arises when learners know what the target is but find it too difficult to use in the particular circumstances [...]

(3) is evident when learners know what to say and how to say it but are unwilling to actually say it because it will result in them flouting their own norms of behavior. (Ellis 1994: 305)

Finally, overuse of certain linguistic structures may be the outcome of intralingual processes such as overgeneralization, for example of past tense inflections (cost-costed). Certain words may also be overused, because they seem appropriate in various contexts. Even at the discourse level overuse due to transfer is evident. Olshtain, for instance, showed that if native speakers of a particular language use more direct expressions of apology than native speakers of the target language, they tend to transfer this into the second language. (Ellis 1994: 301-306)

Terence Odlin claims that negative transfer can manifest itself in four different ways and names production errors, misinterpretation, underproduction (avoidance) and overproduction (over-use). Within the field of production errors Odlin further differentiates between three types: substitutions, calques and alterations of structures. Substitutions mean that a native language form is used in the target language. Calques refer to inappropriate language structures in the second language which are very similar to the first language. Those are, for example, literal translations as in: '*poner el fuego a fuera*' instead of '*extinguir el fuego*' for '*to put the fire out*' with English L2 learners of Spanish. Finally, alterations of structure may refer to hypercorrections. They are overreactions to native language influence. The example cited in this case is that of Arabic

learners of English who have difficulties in spelling words containing 'p' correctly. So, it is quite frequent that they write '*blaying*' instead of '*playing*'. However, as they want to avoid this mistake they are very often hypercorrect and this results in '*habit*' written with 'p' '*hapit*'. (Odlin 1989: 36-38)

A further manifestation of negative transfer is misinterpretation.

Native language structures can influence the interpretation of target language messages, and sometimes that influence leads to learners inferring something very different from what speakers of the target language would infer. (Odlin 1989: 38)

Misinterpretations may occur due to differing target language sounds, word patterns and divergent cultural assumptions. (Odlin 1989: 38)

Mary-Louise Kean argues that transfer potentially has two sources. Consequently, she differentiates between what she calls 'blind' and 'short-sighted' transfer. By blind transfer she means that learners very often fail to recognize that a target language item is different from the native language item and hence employ linguistic features of the L1 in their L2. Blind transfer, however, it is pointed out, is absolutely inevitable. It helps the learner to compensate missing L2 knowledge and to exceed L2 limitations. The second type of transfer is called short-sighted transfer. Here, the learner is not able to fully grasp the difference between the native language item and its use in the target language. (Kean in Kellerman 1986: 87)

A further distinction suggested is the one between transfer in L2 communication and transfer in L2 learning which is, however, not always made. Communication transfer means that the native language is used to receive input or to process output. Learning transfer happens when the learner uses the native language in order to establish hypotheses about the rules of the second language. Transfer in communication is quite common and according to Corder it is primarily a communication strategy, because whenever a learner borrows an item from the first language, s/he does so as a means to the ends. This means the primary aim is to get the message across. The borrowed item has not yet been incorporated into the interlanguage system, but this may be the case if the learner was able

to successfully convey the intended meaning. In this way communication transfer may finally lead to learning transfer, because it may induce changes in the learner's mental grammar. (Corder 1981: 104-105)

Concluding, the L1 system is used in both communication and production mechanisms as well as in hypotheses construction, and hence transfer takes place in communication and learning.

2.4. Areas of transfer

As we have already come to know language transfer may occur at various linguistic levels and it may manifest itself at the phonetic and phonological, semantic, syntactic and at the discourse level.

2.4.1. Phonetic and phonological transfer

It is a matter of fact that native language phonetics and phonology have a strong influence on second language pronunciation. The divergence between one phonological system and another can play an important role as regards perception and comprehension, since this may lead to production errors. Hence, Moulton differentiates between four different types of segmental errors³. When a learner makes a phonemic error⁴ s/he fails to differentiate between minimal pairs such as German '*Nacht*' and '*nackt*'. Phonetic errors⁵ refer to problems that the learner faces when the same phonemes sound acoustically different. This means, phonetic errors occur when there is equivalence on the phonemic but not on the phonetic level. This would be the use of the American dark /l/ in a German word like '*gelb*'. Americans learning German, for example, very often voice consonants between vowels as they do in their mother tongue. This is referred to as an allophonic error⁶. Distributional errors are made by

³ Speech sounds are also referred to as segments. Thus, segmental errors are errors involving the production of speech sounds.

⁴ A phoneme is a distinctive sound of a particular language. If a learner fails to distinguish two distinctive sounds, s/he makes a phonemic error.

⁵ Phonetics has to do with the pronunciation of sounds. Phonetic errors may lead to incomprehensibility or simply a foreign accent.

⁶ Allophones are the possible realizations of one phoneme. So, if a learner voices a vowel where native speakers pronounce it in an unvoiced way, s/he has made an allophonic error.

learners who do have problems articulating a particular sound at the beginning of a word, although they can do so without difficulties if the phoneme is located at the end of the word. (Odlin 1989: 113-117)

One of the major problems leading to phonological transfer is that learners perceive the sounds of the second language in terms of the first language's phonological system. This leads to negative transfer in most cases and the great majority of learners keep their foreign accent. (Ringbom 2007: 62)

Cross-linguistic influences on pronunciation also involve supra-segmental contrasts such as stress, tone and rhythm.

When non-native speakers do not use a stress pattern that is a norm in the target language, vowels and consonants may also vary from the target pattern, and this can result in a total misperception by listeners. (Odlin 1989: 117)

However, stress errors are not necessarily the result of native language influences. The frequency of phonemes in the various languages and the commonness of phonological rules affect how easily the sound patterns of a language are acquired. Furthermore, developmental factors may have an effect on a learner's pronunciation as well. (Odlin 1989: 120-121)

2.4.2. Syntactic transfer

Syntactic transfer is a rather controversial issue, but evidence has been found of it in comparisons of word order, relative clauses and negation. Word order rigidity has been proven to be transferable. So, speakers of a language with a flexible word order may keep this feature when using the second language, although that one has a rather rigid structure. Learners whose mother tongue has a rigid word order, however, also prefer to stick to that one, even though the second language would allow a rather loose ordering of the words. On the whole, it seems that a rigid word order is preferred because it makes language processing routines easier. (Odlin 1989: 85-87)

Very often the occurrence of word-order transfer is denied and thought of as a mere discourse strategy. However, “[e]vidence from the acquisition of English, Spanish, Dutch, and German thus strongly suggests that basic word order is one kind of syntactic pattern susceptible to native language influence.” (Odlin 1989: 95)

Non-native like adverbial placement is a typical example of word-order transfer. Spanish native-speakers learning English are very often likely to put the adverb at the wrong place, as in: (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 99)

(1) *‘I speak at home Spanish.’*

As regards the relative clause structure cross-linguistic variation may also lead to transfer. It has been shown by Gass that the native language definitely had an influence on the frequency of resumptive pronouns as in sentences like:

(2) *‘I know the woman that John gave the potato to her’.*

Moreover, syntactic transfer may occur where the first language allows null subjects as does Spanish. In Spanish it is common to have elliptical subjects and this may lead to the following transfer error: (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008:99)

(3) *‘He didn’t come to the party last night. _ was sick.’*

Finally, transfer can also be found in negation. However, it usually occurs in combination with other factors that influence second language acquisition. (Odlin 1989: 97-102)

Nevertheless, fact is that transfer plays an important role in the acquisition of syntactic structures, but it frequently occurs in conjunction with typological and universal influences.

2.4.3. Semantic transfer

One of the central questions within the field of semantic transfer is the relation between language and thought. The way native speakers perceive

the world is reflected in the way they structure the language semantically. Learners of a second language need to learn to “think in this language” in order to overcome the hurdles of cross-linguistic structural differences. (Odlin 1989: 71-72) The influence the native language has on the second language as regards the lexicon is very often positive. Learners especially at lower proficiency levels try to associate words with words they know in the first language. It already gives the learners a head start in the acquisition process, if they are able to recognize similarity between words. However, the more proficient they get the more often they realize that a word does not have one single meaning and that in many instances it does not correlate to the L1 meaning anymore. (Ringbom 2007: 71-72) So, learners have to be aware of “false friends” in order to avoid negative transfer. Quite frequently words look as if they have the same meaning but do not do so. Partial semantic identity of cognates also confronts the learner with problems, since those words may be used in certain contexts and in others not. (Odlin 1989: 77-81)

Transfer may also occur when there is no morphological similarity. An example would be:

(4) *‘He bit himself in the language’*

This is a sentence uttered by a Finnish learner of English, because in Finnish there is only one word for ‘language’ and ‘tongue’. On the whole, lexical similarities between languages can have a strong effect on the acquisition of a second language. In some cases these effects are positive; in other cases they can be negative and misleading. (Odlin 1989: 82-84)

2.4.4. Discourse transfer

Through cross-linguistic contrast studies of discourse it has been demonstrated that probable cases of transfer on the discourse level do exist. Studies on cross-linguistic influences are of great significance, because in the case of “[...] learners violat[ing] norms of conversation in the target language, the violations are potentially much more serious than

syntactic or pronunciation errors [...]” (Odlin 1989: 48) The problem with discourse is that the first language patterns are so firmly anchored in the learner’s mind that they are nearly resistant to modification. (Ringbom 2007: 64)

Politeness and coherence play a major role in the field of discourse. If a native language has negative influences on the target language, effects on comprehension and production are the consequences. Learners who transfer native language norms at the discourse level to the target language run the risk of being perceived as impolite, rude or incoherent. (Odlin 1989: 48-49)

The following chapter on pragmatic failure will deal in detail with transfer at the discourse level. Terminological issues such as whether to speak of discourse or pragmatic transfer will be discussed and negative transfer at the discourse level which may manifest itself in pragmatic failures will be treated.

3. Pragmatic failure

At the beginning of this chapter a definition of linguistic, communicative and pragmatic competence will be provided. Then it will be discussed if there is a difference between the two terms pragmatic and discourse transfer or if they can be used interchangeably. Finally, the focus will lie on negative pragmatic transfer which has been denoted as pragmatic failure by Jenny Thomas.

3.1. Communicative vs. pragmatic competence

The notion of communicative competence developed alongside with a shift in focus from formal aspects of language outside its context of use on aspects of language in use. Chomsky differentiated between competence and performance. To him, competence referred to the ideal speaker or listener, who has perfect knowledge of the rules of a language; whereas performance equated actual language use. In the mid 1960s a shift from a Chomskian, structural to a functional definition of language could be observed. Searle and Hymes were among the first ones to react against Chomsky and his formal linguistics. What they criticized about Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance was his complete ignorance of context and sociocultural factors. Furthermore, it is argued that Chomsky's notion of competence is too narrow and that it does not suffice if a speaker knows the finite set of rules of a language. This does not make him/her a competent user of the language yet. Chomsky's idea of competence makes up for only a part of the later on developed concept of communicative competence. It is described as linguistic competence – one of the four competences comprising communicative competence. (Trosborg 1986: 7-9)

Hymes criticizes Chomsky's idea that the only important thing is grammatical correctness and that he does not take appropriateness into consideration. Hymes argues that "[s]ome occasions call for being appropriately ungrammatical." (Hymes in Pride and Holmes 1984: 277) He points out that a child does not only acquire which sentences are grammatically correct but also when and in which contexts to use them. To

Hymes “[t]here are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless” (Hymes in Pride and Holmes 1984: 278). Hence, grammatical competence is only regarded as one of the several competences comprising communicative competence. (Hymes in Pride and Holmes 1984: 281). In the following we will have a look at Canale and Swain’s definition of communicative competence.

Canale and Swain suggested that communicative competence is comprised of at least three competencies: grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Moreover, knowledge and skill are the two dimensions of communicative competence. Knowledge refers to what one knows about the language and skill is concerned with how well one can use this knowledge.

Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge and skill of a speaker or hearer to accurately express or understand the literal meaning of an utterance. This can roughly be compared to Chomsky’s idea of competence.

Sociolinguistic competence is comprised of two sets of rules. On the one hand, there are sociocultural rules and on the other hand, there are discourse rules. The first ones refer to the appropriateness of an utterance in a specific social context. The second set of rules is concerned with the appropriateness of utterances to their linguistic contexts. It is the knowledge about how to combine sentences into a unity of text. This is achieved through cohesion and coherence.

Finally, strategic competence is a compensatory element which the speaker or hearer makes use of in order to compensate a lack in knowledge. This competence is especially useful to second language learners. (Canale and Swain 1980: 29-30)

Additionally to the components of communicative competence established above, systems of knowledge and skill such as world knowledge and personality factors play an important role for being communicatively successful. Furthermore, communicative competence is not simply an alternative to linguistic competence but an expansion and enrichment to

what has formerly been understood as proficiency in language. (Trosborg 1986: 12)

Bratt Paulston also points out that “[c]ommunicative competence is not simply a term; it is a concept basic to understanding social interaction” (in Scarcella et al 1990: 289). This implies that in order to be able to interact successfully in society one has to be communicatively competent. It means that one has to be competent enough not only to produce grammatically correct utterances but also appropriate ones.

One of the quintessential components of communicative competence is pragmatic competence. It was Bachman who suggested that language knowledge can be spilt up into organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence is concerned with a speaker’s control of the formal structure of a language. Bachman further divides it into grammatical and textual competence. The first one refers to knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology, whereas the latter describes the awareness of the conventions for combining sentences to form a text. Pragmatic competence describes the relationships between signs and referents and the relationships between language users and the context of communication. Bachman adheres to Van Dijk’s definition of pragmatics and states that on the one hand, it has to do with the relationship between utterances and the functions or acts speakers want to perform (i.e. the illocutionary force of utterances); and on the other hand, it is concerned with the context of the utterances which determines their appropriateness. Hence, pragmatic competence is comprised of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. (Bachman 1990: 87-90)

While illocutionary competence enables us to use language to express a wide range of functions, and to interpret the illocutionary force of utterances or discourse, the appropriateness of these functions and how they are performed varies from one language use context to the next [...]. Sociolinguistic competence is the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context; it enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to that context. (Bachman 1990: 94)

Bachman's idea of illocutionary competence is clearly linked to Searle's theory of speech acts and the various functions a single utterance can perform depending on the context. Sociolinguistic competence is used to refer to a speaker's and hearer's sensitivity to differences in dialect, register or cultural conventions.

Bachman's division of pragmatic competence into illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence is often compared to Leech's division of pragmatics into sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. (Martínez Flor, Usó Juan and Fernández Guerra 2003: 11) Leech refers to sociopragmatics as the "sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech 1990: 10) and points out that it deals in the same way as sociolinguistic competence with the appropriateness of utterances in specific social contexts. Pragmalinguistics is concerned with the "linguistic end of pragmatics" (1990: 11) as Leech terms it. Similar to illocutionary competence it is concerned with the various functions an utterance can perform. (Martínez Flor, Usó Juan and Fernández Guerra 2003: 11)

Furthermore, Bialystock also claims that pragmatic competence is comprised of a variety of abilities. On the one hand, there is the speaker who needs to be able to use the language for different purposes, i.e. to request or to command. On the other hand, there is the listener who needs the capacity to understand the real intentions of the speaker. Pragmatic competence is said to be the ability to use and interpret non-literal forms, i.e. forms where the intended meaning is conveyed indirectly and needs to be inferred appropriately. If any of the conversational partners does not have this competence it will result in a conversation break-down. (Bialystok in Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 43)

To sum up, being pragmatically competent means to be able to decode and encode utterances appropriately in a given social context. This makes it one of the main components of communicative competence. But what if a speaker or hearer fails to perform or understand an utterance appropriately? This question leads us to the next part of the chapter

dealing with pragmatic transfer and Jenny Thomas's idea of pragmatic failure.

3.2. Pragmatic transfer

To many linguists transfer is not only a psychological but also a sociolinguistic process. In this instance they speak of sociolinguistic transfer and propose a classification of it into three types.

- (1) transfer of a native language sociolinguistic variable rule
- (2) transfer of native, discourse-level, sociocultural competence
- (3) socially motivated transfer where the transferred pattern [...] fulfill[s] a social psychological function. (Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz in Scarcella et al 1990: 55)

The second type of sociolinguistic transfer is further referred to as pragmatic transfer. (Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz in Scarcella et al 1990:55-56)

Kasper defines pragmatic transfer as:

[t]he influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information. (Kasper 1992, 8: 207)

Tran closely follows Kasper's definition of pragmatic transfer and denotes it as the influence of the learners' knowledge of sociocultural and linguistic norms in their first language on the acquisition of L2 pragmatics as well as on the production and comprehension of utterances in the second language. Pragmatic transfer especially takes place when learners do not have sufficient knowledge of the rules of use in the second language. (Tran 2006: 46)

Tran differentiates between pragmatic and discourse transfer. Discourse transfer is described as the influence of formations or norms of the first language in a second language context. Discourse transfer frequently

occurs with adjacency pairs such as compliment responses, where the second pair part is very often taken over from the native culture but seems inappropriate in the target culture. Vietnamese learners of English, for example, are prone to respond '*No, no*' to a compliment like '*You look great today.*' (Tran 2006: 47-48)

However, a differentiation between pragmatic and discourse transfer does not occur along a clear-cut line. Odlin and Kasper, for example, pointed out the overlap of pragmatic and discourse transfer and use the terms interchangeably. In the area of interlanguage pragmatics pragmatic and discourse transfer are two interwoven concepts and referred to by Tran as 'pragmatic and discourse transfer'. In this paper, the term 'pragmatic transfer' will be used including also transfer occurring at the discourse level, because whenever pragmatic transfer is analyzed it automatically includes discourse transfer. The interest within the field of research on pragmatic transfer lies in which strategies are transferred from the first to the second language when a speech act is realized. But, in order for a communicative act to be realized the speaker needs to be involved in conversations and encounters which are, however, the focus of discourse analysis. (Tran 2006: 48-50)

Transfer does exist at the pragmatic level and one of the reasons for miscommunication to take place, is the falling back on sociocultural conventions of the first language while communicating in the second language. Furthermore, the first language can also have an influence on learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in the second language. (Takahashi 1996, 18: 189-190)

In his work on pragmatic and discourse transfer Tran points out which conditions shape and influence pragmatic transfer. The term 'transferability' is used to describe the likelihood of the occurrence of pragmatic transfer. It is the probability with which a strategy of the first language is transferred to the second language. (Tran 2006: 88-90) Conditions which shape this probability are for example the level of proficiency and the length of exposure to the target language and culture. In her article "Pragmatic transferability" Takahashi names further reasons

for the likelihood of transfer. So, she argues that learners may not transfer pragmatic features of the first language to the second language, if they believe those are language specific. On the other hand, they may transfer specific pragmatic features, if they think of those as being universal. (Takahashi 1996, 18: 190)

However, linguists have not found a consensus yet on which conditions influence pragmatic transfer. Some claim that there is a positive correlation between language transfer and proficiency. That means the more competent a language learner is the more likely s/he transfers strategies from the first language. Others maintain that this is not the case and that there is a negative correlation if there is one at all. (Tran 2006: 91-93)

3.3. Negative pragmatic transfer – pragmatic failure

When linguists speak of pragmatic transfer very often they refer to negative pragmatic transfer unless otherwise specified. Negative pragmatic transfer generally occurs when the norms and the conventions of language use in the first and second language are different and learners are not aware of it. We distinguish between two levels at which negative pragmatic transfer might occur. On the one hand, negative pragmatic transfer can take place at the pragmalinguistic level. Typical of pragmalinguistic transfer are literal translations that do not exist in the target language or the learner applies too direct or too indirect strategies which are common in the first language but perceived as being inappropriate in the second language. On the other hand, there is the sociopragmatic level at which the learner's style of politeness and the decision about the appropriateness of a speech act are affected. It also has to do with the perception of the social distance between the interlocutors or the status of the conversation partner. (Tran 2006: 56-60)

Those types of negative pragmatic transfer, i.e. sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer, are the causes of pragmatic failures. (Tran 2006: 51) It was Jenny Thomas who coined the term 'pragmatic failure' and defined it as "the inability to understand 'what is meant by what is said'"

(Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 22). Comparably to the division of negative pragmatic transfer, she differentiates between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure. Thomas argues that the latter can easily be overcome in teaching, whereas the first one involves the learner's system of beliefs and his/ her knowledge of the world and is hence more difficult to be dealt with. Thomas points out that what learners need to acquire in order to reduce pragmatic failures is pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is not used synonymously to communicative competence, but it is regarded as an important component of all which comprises the linguistic competence of a speaker. For a learner to understand what is meant by what is said pragmatic principles are needed so that s/he can "assign [a] sense and reference [and b] force or value to the speaker's words" (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 24). Although pragmatic failure can be applied at both levels (a and b), Thomas exclusively uses it to describe the inability to recognize the force of the speaker's utterance. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 22-26)

We can say that a pragmatic failure occurs if:

- a H perceives the force of S's utterance as stronger or weaker than S intended s/he should perceive it;
- b H perceives as an order an utterance which S intended s/he should perceive as a request;
- c H perceives S's utterance as ambivalent where S intended no ambivalence;
- d S expects H to be able to infer the force of his/her utterance, but is relying on a system of knowledge or beliefs which S and H do not, in fact, share.

(Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 26)

Thomas prefers the term 'pragmatic failure' over 'pragmatic error' since she feels that the force of an utterance cannot really be wrong, but that it rather fails to achieve the speaker's goal and to be interpreted in the intended way. It is crucial that learners overcome pragmatic failures because they reflect badly on a person and are very often the source of national stereotyping. Germans are not rude and Spanish not too direct,

but they are perceived as being so due to pragmatic failures. Learners need to acquire pragmatic competence in order to be able to express themselves the way they want to in this very particular situation and in order to avoid being unintentionally rude or impolite. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 27-29)

3.3.1. Pragmalinguistic failure

Thomas classifies pragmatic failure into two types, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure is considered as to be a linguistic problem, whereas different cultural perceptions of language appropriateness become evident at the sociopragmatic level. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 32-33)

Pragmalinguistic failure [...] occurs when the pragmatic force mapped on to a linguistic token or structure is systematically different from that normally assigned to it by native speakers. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 35)

An example of this would be the question *Can you X?*, which is perceived as a polite request by native speakers of English, whereas speakers of French are more likely to interpret it as a question about one's ability. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 36)

Thomas mentions two possible sources for pragmalinguistic failures. On the one hand, they may be teaching-induced and on the other hand, they may be due to pragmalinguistic transfer. In the latter instance, the learner transfers a speech act strategy from the first to the second language which is then perceived as inappropriate by native speakers of the second language. In Russian, for example, the equivalent term (*'konesno'*) to the English 'of course' is very often used for enthusiastic affirmation instead of a simple 'yes'. However, in English 'of course' means that the speaker has asked about something obvious. The following example shows an instance of inappropriate pragmatic transfer which leads to pragmalinguistic failure.

(5) *English: Is it a good restaurant?*
Russian: Of course!

The Russian speaker merely meant to express 'Yes, *it is indeed.*' However, for the English conversational partner it sounded more like '*What a stupid question!*'.

Learners may also use a direct speech act where a native speaker would apply an indirect one. The Russian language allows more imperatives than English even in polite usage. When the directness level is transferred to English, the speaker seems brusque and impolite.

Very often the classroom use of the language causes many pragmalinguistic failures, too. So-called teaching-induced errors are due to the frequent use of for example imperatives in school books which are scarcely used for requests in formal spoken English. Another example, of teaching induced pragmalinguistic failures are complete sentence responses which violate the pragmatic principle of economy.

(6) A: *Have you brought your cap?*
B: *Yes, I have brought my cap.*

This answer sounds as if the speaker were peevish and in a bad mood.

What leads to further pragmalinguistic failures is the overemphasis of metalinguistic knowledge. This often leads learners to assume that there exists "[...] an isomorphism between the grammatical category 'the imperative' and the speech act 'ordering'" (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 37). In formal conversation imperatives are hardly ever used as requests or commands. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 36-37)

3.3.2. Sociopragmatic failure

Studies of sociopragmatic failure are concerned with the differing assessment of size of imposition or social-distance by the language learner as opposed to the native speaker. "Sociopragmatic decisions are social before they are linguistic" (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 38) and hence correcting sociopragmatic failure is a delicate matter since it implies questioning the learners' knowledge of the world and their social competence. Typical sociopragmatic failures are the misjudgment of the

size of imposition, taboos, and differing assessments of relative power and/ or social distance. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 38-39)

Thomas names the distinction between free and non-free goods suggested by Goffman as an example for the misjudgment of the size of imposition. Free goods are those which can be used freely by anyone without asking for permission, such as salt and pepper in a restaurant or matches in Great Britain. So, the speaker would not need to use a very polite strategy to request a match even from a stranger. In Russia cigarettes were considered free goods and it would suffice to say '*Give me a cigarette*', whereas in other countries this would be regarded as rather impolite. But again, cultures vary a lot in what are considered free goods and what not. In Great Britain you would not ask someone you hardly know about his/her income or political beliefs, whereas in other countries this is perceived as normal. Furthermore, taboos are also culture-specific and a language learner would make a sociopragmatic failure if s/he addresses a topic which is considered a taboo in this culture. Finally, a further typical sociopragmatic failure is the misjudgment of the relative power or the social distance of the addressee. Europeans, for example, are not really used to be on first name terms with their boss as is the case in the United States. They may feel inhibited to switch from 'vous' to 'tu-terms' and continue addressing their employer as 'Mr./Ms. X'. They may also behave more differentially than expected, which leads to sociopragmatic failure. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 39-40) A further example of a differing assessment of the relative power and the social distance is the status assigned to teachers in Great Britain and in Austria. In Austria teachers do not only prepare the pupils for a test, but they also set the tests, examine and evaluate them. In Great Britain, the task of teachers is to coach the pupils while the examinations are taken by some external authorities. This brings about that teachers in Austria are thought of as examiners, whereas in England they are more the supporters of the students. Thus, the first ones are assigned more relative power than the latter ones. (Hawlik 1998/99: 14)

Thomas points out that a pragmatic failure may also occur, if pragmatic principles such as politeness conflict with values such as truthfulness. Those conflicts arise, if learners are not aware that:

- 1 In different cultures, different pragmatic 'ground rules' may be invoked.

- 2 Relative values such as 'politeness', 'perspicuousness', may be ranked in a different order by different cultures.

(Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 41)

On the whole, the language learner needs to become aware of the fact that the pragmatic ground rules do not operate in the same way in every culture or country. It can be compared to children who need to learn that not everything uttered can be taken literally and at face value, but has to be interpreted differently, according to different ground rules. So, for example, someone getting to know people from the United States needs to be aware that utterances such as '*We really must get together sometime.*' are meaningless, polite words. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 41-43)

Concluding, Jenny Thomas points out that a clear-cut division between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure can hardly be obtained, because they form a continuum along the line of the pragmatic decision-making process. Finally, she emphasizes once more that learners need to be sensitized to cross-cultural differences as regards the perception of social distance, size of imposition, value judgments, pragmatic ground rules, etc. in order to reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failures. (Thomas in Bolton and Kachru 2006: 44-45)

4. Politeness

Politeness is held to be a social value present in every civilized culture. But, again, just as every social group varies, so does the consideration of what is polite or impolite. Some cultures favor directness, whereas others appreciate more indirect utterances. (House and Kasper in Coulmas 1981: 157) This has led to a division into positive politeness cultures and negative politeness cultures. In positive politeness cultures the weight or seriousness of a face-threatening act (cf. the definition in 4.1.1.) tends to remain low, social distance is no obstacle for easy-going, relaxed conversation and the power of one interlocutor over the other is never very great. Examples of such cultures are the western USA, Spain or New Guinea. On the other hand, negative politeness cultures are those generally considered as stand-offish and reserved like the British, the Germans or the Japanese. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 245)

House and Kasper regard politeness as an aspect of urbane societies. They define it as an “urbane form of emotional control serving as a means of preserving face” (House and Kasper in Coulmas 1981: 157). House further suggests that politeness is a basic socio-psychological guideline for human behavior and an integral part of all human interaction. To her, politeness also means to respect Grice’s cooperative principle and the conversational maxims working together with it. (House in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 13)

At this point it seems important to recall the Gricean maxims which are the ‘Maxim of Quantity’ (be as informative as necessary), the ‘Maxim of Quality’ (be truthful), the ‘Maxim of Relevance’ (be relevant), and the ‘Maxim of Manner’ (be clear and unambiguous). Those four maxims work together within a general principle called the ‘Cooperative Principle’.

[...] make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice in Kasher 1998, 4: 148-149)

Further definitions of politeness are Leech's, who describes politeness as a strategy to avoid conflict and Lakoff's, who sees it as a means of reducing disagreements in personal interaction. (House and Kasper in Coulmas 1981: 157)

It can be said that politeness, i.e. the word itself, has two concepts. On the one hand, it is an everyday word which stands for courtesy, good manners and etiquette. On the other hand, politeness has developed into a technical term through the work carried out by Brown and Levinson. In this way, the idea of politeness as a folk term is also referred to as first-order politeness, whereas the latter one is denoted as second-order politeness. (Hickey and Stewart 2005: 3)

H.P. Grice and John Searle were the first to suggest that politeness needs to be studied in linguistics, because they found it insufficient to study conversation as a mere information exchanging process and henceforth included social factors such as politeness in their research work. (Terkourafi in Bousfield and Locher 2008: 45) Brown and Levinson, however, extended and deepened the work of Grice and Searle and hence developed their famous theory of politeness phenomena.

4.1. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness phenomena

One of the major contributions in the field of politeness research was made by Brown and Levinson. Through the study of three unrelated languages and cultures (i.e. English, Tamil and Tzeltal) they developed a model of politeness which consists of three basic notions: 'face', 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs) and 'politeness strategies'. All three components will be explained in the next part of the paper.

4.1.1. Face

Brown and Levinson claim that every competent member of any cultural group has 'face'. Face is described as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61).

This notion of face is based on the idea developed by Goffman and on its general meaning - to be embarrassed or humiliated, as in 'to lose face'.

Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61)

It is in the best interest of all participants to maintain each other's face. If one threatens someone else's face, it is in the nature of things that this person wants to defend his/her face. And, this in turn leads to the other's face being threatened. The notion of face is regarded as something universal, since one assumes that it is a prerequisite to orient oneself to it in interaction. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61-62)

Furthermore, face consists of two aspects which are termed 'negative' and 'positive face', respectively.

negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition

positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 61)

In short, someone's negative face is his/her desire to be independent and to have freedom from imposition, whereas a person's positive face is his/her wish to belong, to be a group member and to be appreciated as such by the other members.

In this sense, face is a basic want and members of a society usually try to satisfy each others wants. However, these wants do not necessarily need to be completely satisfied and can even be ignored in certain instances. Brown and Levinson restate their definition of face regarding to wants in the following way:

Negative face: the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.

Positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 62)

However, from time to time the actions of an individual are impeded by others and one's own wants are not desirable to someone else. If this is the case, our face is in danger and face-threatening acts may be the consequence.

4.1.2. Face-threatening acts – FTAs

Acts against the face wants of one of the interlocutors usually threaten that person's face, and are referred to as 'face-threatening acts'. Basically one differentiates between acts threatening the negative and the positive face, respectively. If the addressee's (H's) negative face is threatened, then the speaker (S) does not avoid impeding the addressee's freedom of action. Those acts:

- (i) predicate some future act A of H, and in doing so put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act A.
- (ii) predicate some future act of S toward H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to accept or reject them, and possibly to incur a debt.
- (iii) predicate some desire of S toward H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire, or give it to S.

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 65-66)

Negative-face-threatening acts belonging to type (i) are, for example, orders and requests, suggestions, advice, reminders or threats, warnings or dares. Offers and promises are mentioned under category (ii) and acts that predicate some desire of S toward H (iii) are, for instance, compliments and expressions of envy or admiration and expressions of strong (negative) emotions toward H. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66)

Acts that threaten the addressee's positive face usually indicate that the speaker is indifferent to the wants and needs of his/her counterpart. We differentiate between two types of acts that threaten the positive face of H. Those are acts that show

- (i) [...] that S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H's positive face.
- (ii) [...] that S doesn't care about (or is indifferent to) H's positive face. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66)

Acts that belong to type (i) are for example expressions of disapproval, criticism or complaints and contradictions or disagreements. Acts that indicate that S is indifferent to H's positive face (ii) are expressions of violent (out-of-control) emotions, the raising of taboo topics, the announcement of bad news about H and good news about S, respectively. Further face-threatening acts of that sort are those dealing with politics, race or religion. Inattention to H or abrupt interruption of H by S belong to this category as well. Finally, the inappropriate use of address terms and status markers are additional face-threatening acts toward H's positive face. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 66-67)

On the other hand, there are acts that offend the speaker's negative face. Examples are the expression of thanks, the acceptance of H's thanks or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers and responses to H's faux pas (such as saying something embarrassing to H). A further threat to the speaker's negative face is if S commits himself unwillingly to promises and offers. Acts that damage the speaker's positive face are apologies and the acceptance of a compliment. Furthermore, if S loses control over his body, stumbles or falls down, or if s/he laughs or weeps uncontrollably, this results in a face-threatening act as well. Finally, confessions, admissions of guilt and self-contradiction are instances of offence against S's positive face, too. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 68)

After having identified the various types of face-threatening acts, it has become clear that those are sometimes inevitable. The perception of the seriousness of the face-threatening act depends on the assessment of three variables as suggested by Brown and Levinson: the social distance variable (D) between S and H, the relative power variable (P) of S respective to H and the absolute ranking variable (R) of the imposition. Social distance denotes the degree of familiarity and solidarity between

the interlocutors. Relative power describes the degree of imposition on the addressee and the absolute ranking refers to the culture-specific weighting of the right of S to perform the act, the expenditure of goods/ services by the addressee and the degree to which H welcomes the imposition. (Bowe and Martin 2007: 28-29) In order to make this more transparent, examples involving different assessments of D, P and R will be provided consecutively.

An example of a varying social distance variable D would be “S requesting the time from H” with P and R held constant.

(7) a. *Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?*

b. *Got the time, mate?*

With reference to example 7a. it can be assumed that S and H are strangers and D is perceived as distant. Example 7b. shows that D is rather close and S and H were known to each other or “similar” in social terms.

Instances of a differing perception as regards the relative power variable P would be if S and H have seen each other before and S is requesting a free good.

(8) a. *Excuse me sir, would it be alright if I smoke?*

b. *Mind if I smoke?*

The utterance in 8a. might be said by an employee to his/her boss implying that the degree of imposition is held low. The example in b. however, is likely to be said by a boss to his/her employee.

Finally, example sentences clarifying the differing assessment of R are:

(9) a. *Look, I'm terribly sorry to bother you but would there be any chance of your lending me just enough money to get a railway ticket to get home? I must have dropped my purse and I just don't know what to do.*

b. *Hey, got change for a quarter?*

In example 8a. S considers the utterance to be a far more serious face-threatening act than does S in b. Since in the latter example, R is perceived weaker by the speaker, a language usually employed for realizing not too serious face-threats is also used. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 80-81)

The realization of face-threatening acts does not only differ in the assessment of D, P and R, but also in the way they can be carried out. A face-threatening act can either be done 'on record' or 'off record'.

The 'on record' strategy for realizing a face-threatening act implies that the utterance is unambiguous and can be taken literally by the addressee. In this way '*I promise to do the shopping*' signifies that the speaker commits him/herself to that future act. In contrast to that, a speaker goes off record, if his/her utterance is ambiguous and hence S cannot be held to have committed him/herself to a particular intent. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 68-69)

So, for instance, if I say 'Damn, I'm out of cash, I forgot to go to the bank today', I may be intending to get you to lend me some cash, but I cannot be held to have committed myself to that intent (as you would discover were you to challenge me with 'This is the seventeenth time you've asked me to lend you money'). (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

However, if the face-threatening act is realized by means of the on record strategy, it is still possible for the interlocutors to control the weight, the seriousness, of the FTA. Usually, one tries to reduce the weight of the FTA through redressive actions. Those are then called 'face-saving acts'. However, if the interlocutor does not really care about the face of her/his counterpart, s/he can realize the face-threatening act baldly and without redress.

If a speaker does the act baldly, without redress, it means that s/he does so in the most direct, unambiguous and clearest way possible. This implies that a request would be realized as an imperative, like in '*Close the window!*'. Usually face-threatening acts are only carried out in this way, if it is most efficient to do so (e.g. '*Watch out!*'), if it is in H's interest (e.g.

'Come in!') or if S is a lot superior in power to H (e.g. a military sergeant speaking to one of the recruits). (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

4.1.3. Face-saving acts

Face-saving acts refer to the attempts of the speaker to lessen the weight of the face-threatening act.

By redressive action we mean action that 'gives face' to the addressee [...]. [The FTAs are carried out] with such modifications or additions that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired, and that S in general recognizes H's face wants and himself wants them to be achieved.

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 69-70)

One can differentiate between two types of redressive action, namely 'positive politeness' and 'negative politeness'.

Positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the addressee. By applying this strategy the speaker aims at indicating that s/he wants H's wants to be satisfied. This implies that S treats H as an in-group member, as a friend, as a person who's liked, and that S gives H the feeling that they hold the same views, at least to a certain extent. S can also clarify that s/he just wants the best for H.

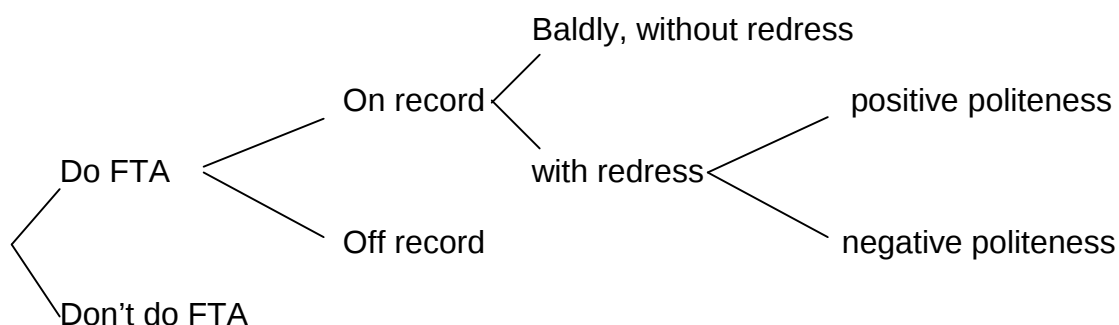
Negative politeness, on the contrary, is targeted at the addressee's negative face. Negative politeness strategies are, for example, the assurance that S respects H's face wants, apologies for interfering, linguistic deference, the hedging of the illocutionary force (cf. the definition in 5.1.2.) of the act, or the use of passives that distance both the speaker and the addressee from the act. Typical aspects of negative politeness are modesty, restraint and formality. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson point out that...

[t]here is a natural tension in negative politeness, however, between (a) the desire to go on record as a prerequisite to being seen to pay face, and (b) the desire to go off record to avoid imposing. A compromise is reached in conventionalized indirectness [...]. (1987: 70)

Hence many indirect requests in English have become conventionalized so that they are on record. Thus, '*Can you pass the salt?*' is understood as S wanting H to do X, and not as a question about H's ability to do X.

(Brown and Levinson 1987: 70)

The following chart visualizes and summarizes the various strategies one can employ when carrying out a face-threatening act.



(Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

4.2. Criticism of Brown and Levinson's model

Many scholars consider Brown and Levinson's model as a milestone in the research on politeness phenomena. Some, however, point out various problems of their theory of politeness. For instance, Bowe and Martin argue that the key problem of Brown and Levinson's model lies in the fact that they mainly observe politeness strategies in the context of face-threatening acts. But, interaction does not exclusively exist in acts which damage one's public self-image. The building of positive rapport is just as important, but is only dealt with in passing. A further problem is said to be their characterization of positive politeness strategies which are defined through expressions of (in)formality, deference and solidarity. In the English-speaking world those strategies are sometimes applied overtly if the addressee is older, has higher social status or is more powerful. In Asian cultures, for example, expressions of deference and respect are mandatory in such instances. Bowe and Martin feel that deference comes rather short in Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. (Bowe and Martin 2007: 35)

A further critical point of Brown and Levinson is that they are mainly concerned with the individual rather than with a whole social group. This individualistic interpretation of 'face' does not meet approval, especially by researchers in non-Anglo-Saxon countries. They find it difficult to apply the model to their own cultures. Hence, they also argue against the claim that Brown and Levinson's definition of polite behavior can be held universal. The two types of 'face' and the concept of imposition are regarded as being particularly culture-specific. (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003: 1460) Bowe and Martin also point out that it is rather problematic to identify cultures in terms of positive and negative politeness as well as the level of directness. Particularly, the extent to which a culture is described as being direct and indirect, respectively, is relative. One cannot claim that the culture, in which people are most indirect, is automatically the most polite one. In Polish, for example, it is quite common to use performatives and imperatives for advice or directives. The Poles themselves will not have the feeling that they are impolite, they may just be perceived as such by people from a different culture who may not be used to this way of speaking. Thus, describing cultures due to their level of directness as done by Brown and Levinson is a delicate matter and one may foster national stereotyping. (Bowe and Martin 2007: 37-38)

In conclusion, Brown and Levinson's work on politeness phenomena remains one of the most important ones, despite some weaknesses pointed out by other researchers.

4.3. Different perspectives on politeness

Apart from Brown and Levinson there have been many other linguists who have done significant research work in the field of politeness theory. In this chapter diverse perspectives of politeness will be briefly touched on, including the work of Robin Lakoff, Geoffrey Leech, and Bruce Fraser and William Nolen.

As stated in Gino Eelen's work (2001) Robin Lakoff is held to be the mother of modern politeness theory. Lakoff, as many others, bases her concept of politeness on Grice's Cooperative Principle. She argues that if

a speaker does not completely adhere to the Cooperative Principle – which is quite common in normal informal conversation - the addressee tries to find an explanation for that behavior in one of the politeness rules. This means that if speakers talk ambiguously, and not completely clearly, they may be trying to avoid offence. Hence, politeness is a strategy employed to reduce disagreement in conversation. Lakoff identifies three politeness rules which are:

1. Don't impose
2. Give options
3. Make the conversational partner feel good and be friendly

Furthermore, Lakoff stresses that different cultures may give different weight to the rules. Cultures emphasizing rule 1 adhere to a 'Strategy of Distance', which means that they prefer impersonality. If more weight is given to rule 2 the culture is said to be a 'Culture of Deference'. Finally, the 'Strategy of Camaraderie' is chosen by societies which prefer rule 3 and hence a higher level of informality can be found in conversations. (Eelen 2001: 2-3)

Geoffrey Leech also adopts the Gricean framework for his own development of a theory of politeness. Leech argues that a speaker principally has illocutionary goals (the speech act s/he intends to be conveying) and social goals (his/her position on truthfulness, politeness, irony et cetera) when participating in a conversation. Hence, Leech defines two sets of conversational, i.e. rhetorical, principles – 'Interpersonal Rhetoric' and 'Textual Rhetoric'. (Leech 1990: 13-15) In his point-of-view politeness belongs to Interpersonal Rhetoric and consists of the following maxims: the Maxim of Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy. (Leech 1990: 132)

Furthermore, Leech argues that the level of politeness required depends on the situation. Hence, he also proposes a classification of various situation types which can be competitive (as in ordering, asking), convivial (as in offering, thanking), collaborative (as in announcing, asserting) or

conflictive (as in threatening or accusing). In competitive situations the illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; in convivial contexts they coincide; in collaborative situations the illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social one and in conflictive settings the first one conflicts with the latter one. Politeness is, of course, most relevant in competitive and convivial situations since in the other two types of situations it is either irrelevant or out of the question. (Leech 1990: 104-105) Moreover, Leech developed a number of scales which determine the amount and kind of politeness. In addition to Brown and Levinson's R, P and D variables optionality (the degree of choice the speaker leaves the hearer) and indirectness (the amount of inference-work the addressee needs to do) are mentioned. (Leech 1990: 108-109)

Leech's model of politeness is relatively

[...] difficult to evaluate, since there is no way of knowing which maxims are to be applied, what scales are available, how they are to be formulated, what their dimensions are, when and to what degree they are relevant, and so forth. (Fraser 1990: 227)

The view of politeness Fraser and Nolen take on is referred to as the 'conversational-contract view'. They also adopt Grice's Cooperative Principle and Goffman's notion of face, but apply it distinctly to Brown and Levinson. When entering in a conversation everyone has an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations which establish what the participants can anticipate from each other. This is the conversational contract they agree on which due to changes in the conversational context may have to be renegotiated. Some terms are held to be general, such as turn-taking, and seldom negotiable. Participants are aware of others perceiving them as impolite or rude if they do not behave as negotiated and agreed on in the conversational contract. "Being polite is taken to be a hallmark of abiding by the CP [cooperative principle] – being cooperative involves abiding by the CC [conversational contract]" (Fraser 1990: 233). Politeness in Fraser and Nolen's sense implies that neither sentences nor languages are polite, but that speakers choose to be polite by obeying the conversational contract they have "endorsed". Finally, it is pointed out that politeness lies in the hands of the hearer. No

matter how polite or impolite a speaker tries to be, whether or not s/he will be perceived as such depends on the hearer's assessment. (Fraser 1990: 232-233)

4.4. English, German and Spanish politeness

Although England, German-speaking countries (like Germany and Austria), and Spain are Western European cultures, differences regarding politeness and its various strategies can be identified.

British society is usually described as an avoidance-based and negatively-oriented culture. For example, typical of the British is the preference of conventionally indirect and off-record strategies in requesting, for example. Furthermore, they hardly ever use the bald-on record strategy, even though the face-threat would not be very serious at all. Another characteristic of British society is that they avoid mentioning the addressee as actor and they make frequent use of external modifiers as in '*I am extremely sorry*'. They also tend to give lengthy explanations before they come to the point and are always keen to redress the hearer's negative face. On the whole, English politeness can be described as negative rather than positive. Strategies used that show this are hedging, deictic anchorage or personal reference. (Stewart 2005: 116-118)

Hedging serves to protect face. Hedges are usually modal verbs or adjectives with positive connotations; personal pronouns such as 'we' or 'they' are used to defocus the criticism aimed at the addressee. Deictic anchorage refers to the use of past tense as in '*I was wondering whether...*' or '*I didn't think you'd mind if...*'. Moreover, there is a clear preference of off-record politeness. Frequently, the speech acts uttered are non-conventional indirect and require the addressee to infer appropriately. An example of this would be '*The sound quality wasn't too good.*' indicating that it actually was bad or even very bad. (Stewart 2005: 122-126)

German politeness is characterized by its directness and explicitness as compared to other languages like English. Typical of German interaction is self-reference and content-orientation. Thus, German speakers are more

likely to say '*May I...*' rather than '*Would you like me to...*'. Furthermore, they also rely less on verbal routines such as '*Nice talking to you*' which is commonly used in Anglophone cultures. German speakers are thought of to be rather direct, because they prefer to be clear and to avoid uncertainty. So, the use of the imperative in sentences like '*No, this is not true.*' rather than '*I'm sorry, but I don't think this is true.*' is considered perfectly normal. However, this does not, of course, mean that German speakers are less polite, but they may be perceived as such by people who are not aware of the cultural norms within this society. (House in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 21-22)

[...] while an utterance like 'Go down to the basement and get it for me' may appear like an impolite order to a non-member of the German linguaculture, it may be perceived as perfectly polite by an 'ordinary German'.

(House in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 22)

Finally, Spaniards may even be perceived less polite than Germans by outsiders not acquainted with their linguaculture. The Spanish do not give much weight to words such as 'please', 'thanks', 'sorry' or 'excuse me'. Spanish culture is more oriented towards positive politeness. In Spain no one will ever be offended if interrupted in conversation because for them it shows engagement and attentiveness on the part of the conversational partner. Spanish face is said to have two features. On the one hand, Spaniards desire to be perceived as original and sociable due to their need for autonomy. On the other hand, they want to speak and act freely and openly with each other showing their desire for affiliation. The Spanish can be considered as very tolerant and not hyper-sensitive to intrusions into their private lives. (Hickey in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 317-318)

Pushing past others in public places or accidental invasions of others' territory would not necessarily be followed by anything like 'sorry'. Likewise, requests for small favours [...] addressed to friends or strangers in the street would seldom include anything corresponding to 'please' or 'thanks'. (Hickey in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 320)

Spaniards show a clear preference of direct structures be it in requests and orders (*'Close the door, (woman)!'*) , or in offers and invitations (*'Take it!'* or *'Come to dinner!'*) as these translations show. They also judge others' statement without any redress especially in interaction where conflicting opinions arise. So, phrases like *'Don't talk rubbish'*, *'You're stupid/mad'* are quite normal before expressing one's disagreement. (Hickey in Hickey and Stewart 2005: 321-322)

This brief outline has already shown that there are considerable differences in what is considered polite in various countries and cultures.

After the ensuing chapter on speech acts, which will clarify further significant theoretical terms, the focus will lie on requests and its varying realizations in English, German and Spanish. In the third part of the paper all theoretical topics discussed so far will be taken on and backed-up by a small-scale study investigating the verbalization of requests by native speakers of English in comparison to German and Spanish non-native speakers of English.

5. Speech Acts

John L. Austin was the first to study speech acts. He said that the study of utterances was the study of locutions defined as full units of speech. Austin taught at Harvard University and his work on speech acts was published only posthumously. “How to Do Things with Words” is a collection of the lectures he held exploring the idea that statements are not only constative but also performative. It was then Austin’s alumnus John Searle who took on his ideas and developed them further. Searle found some points of criticism and undertook a re-classification of illocutionary acts. Austin and Searle are the founding fathers of the speech act theory and many linguists working in that field took on their assumptions as the basis for their research.

The consecutive sub-chapters will exemplify what things Austin did with words, his distinction between constatives and performatives and his classification of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The part on Searle will point out the weaknesses of Austin’s work and discuss Searle’s proposition of felicity conditions and illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). After the classification of speech acts into direct and indirect ones, the final sub-chapter will briefly focus on recent studies in speech act theory.

5.1. How Austin does things with words

John Austin was the first one to develop the theory of speech acts. In his work (1962) he renders useful insights into the study of speech acts. As other language philosophers (like Wittgenstein, and later Strawson, Grice and Searle) Austin was interested in how and for what purposes words are used in conversation. Soon he was to find out that not every utterance is a statement and that some are only disguised as statements, but are not meant to be such. Not all utterances can be said to be either true or false and not each one is a description. Those sentences which cannot be ascribed a truth value and do not serve as a description are called performative sentences. Austin’s distinction between constatives and performatives led him to the formulation of illocutionary acts.

5.1.1. Constatives versus performatives

As already mentioned above, many statements are not intended to be mere declarations, but they have to be understood as requests or warnings etc. Austin also pointed out that not all true or false statements are descriptions. He refers to those true or false statements as 'constatives'. Furthermore, he maintains that not all utterances describe or constate something, they cannot be classified as true or false and the uttering of the sentence is already part of doing the action. He calls those 'performative' utterances and provides the following example:

(10) '*I do.*' (uttered during the wedding ceremony)

In this utterance one does not describe what one is doing, nor does it say anything about its truth value; but to utter that sentence means to do it, i.e. marrying. A performative "[...]" indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" (Austin in Cobley 1996: 258). The uttering of the words is what makes up the performance of the act, but it is not the only thing necessary that the act can be said to have been performed. The circumstances should be appropriate and other persons should perform other actions as well. (Austin in Cobley 1996: 255-261)

If all those conditions are met, Austin speaks of happy performatives. If this is not the case, and the act is to some extent a failure, the performatives are said to be unhappy. For an act to be happy Austin developed a set of rules. First, there must exist a conventional procedure accepted by and known to the participants. Secondly, persons and circumstances have to be appropriate. Thirdly and fourthly, the procedure must be carried out correctly and completely. Finally, if the procedure is designed for persons who have specific feelings and thoughts, the really must have those feelings and thoughts; furthermore, the participants must conduct themselves appropriately to those.

Now if we sin against any one (or more) of these six rules, our performative utterance will be (in one way or another) unhappy. (Austin 1962 [1980]: 15)

If any of the rules in 1-4 cannot be met, then the act will not be performed at all. This might be the case if we do not utter the act correctly or if we are not in the position to do the act. Austin provides the example of a person who is already married, and thus cannot say '*I do*'. If rules 5-6 are not obeyed the act is nevertheless achieved, but the procedure has been abused. So, one may promise something, but not have the intention to keep the promise. (Austin 1962 [1980]: 12-16)

As he continued his work on speech acts Austin became dissatisfied with the distinction of utterances into constatives and performatives. He suggested a new classification into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. All three acts are performed at the same time within an utterance.

5.1.2. Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary acts

Austin says that the simple act of saying something is the performance of a locutionary act. Hence the study of utterances is the study of locutions which are the full units of speech. It is the uttering of a sentence which has a certain sense and reference. A locutionary act has a meaning; it conveys the literal meaning of the words and the grammatical structure of the utterance. According to Austin, the locutionary act can be further divided into the phonetic, the phatic and the rhetic act.

The phonetic act refers to the uttering of certain noises and sounds. The phatic act relates to the utterance of certain vocabularies and words. The performance of a rhetic act is the usage of those words with a particular sense and reference. In performing a phatic act one is always performing a phonetic act as well, but not necessarily a rhetic one. We are, for example, able to read a sentence in Latin without understanding a single word. Whenever one is performing a locutionary act one is also performing an illocutionary act, too.

When we carry out a locutionary act, we use speech, but the way we do so may alter its meaning and its sense. The function a particular utterance has is referred to as its illocutionary force. It is the question about whether an utterance can be understood as an advice or as a warning. The

performance of an illocutionary act is the “[...] performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to [the] performance of an act *of* saying something” (Austin in Kasher 1998, 2: 10).

A perlocutionary act, on the other hand, is the act that has consequences and effects on the feelings and actions of the hearer, or even the speaker or any other person in a given moment. A perlocutionary act may be done with the intention of producing those effects.

Summing up, the locutionary act has a meaning, the illocutionary act has a force in saying something and the perlocutionary act is the achieving of certain effects by saying something. Let us now exemplify this by drawing on the following utterance: ‘*It’s cold in here.*’ The locutionary meaning of this sentence simply refers to the room temperature. The illocutionary act has the force of a request to turn on the heater. The perlocutionary act is the turning on of the heater as a result of the effects of the utterance. (Austin in Kasher 1998, 2: 7-12)

Austin established a fixed schema for classifying the components performed in an utterance as locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. By the end of his work, however, he had to admit that his division of utterances into constatives and performatives was not really felicitous. He had to revise it and consequently proposed a classification of utterances according to their illocutionary force.

5.1.3. Austin’s classes of performative utterances

Austin mentions the following five classes of utterances classified according to their illocutionary force:

1. Verdictives
2. Exercitives
3. Commissives
4. Behabitives
5. Expositives

Verdictives refer to the giving of a verdict. They have an effect on us and on others. Verdictives denote evaluations and judgments, but they do not need to be final. Examples are: *to estimate, assess, value and describe*.

Exercitives imply the exercising of power and rights. It means to make a decision in favor or against a certain action. The effects of exercitives are the permission or the inhibition to do acts. Examples are: *appointing, voting, ordering, advising or warning*.

Typical commissives are promises. A characteristic of commissives is that they commit you to doing something. Commissives also include declarations and announcements. Examples are: *I give my word, to plan, intend, declare, propose and promise*.

Behabitatives refer to attitudes and social behavior.

Behabitatives include the notion of reaction to other people's behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct. (Austin 1962 [1980]: 160)

Examples are: *to apologize, thank, compliment*, but also *criticize and complain*.

Expositives show how an utterance fits into the course of the conversation, and refer to the conducting of arguments and to clarifications of usages. Austin is not sure if expositives should indeed be mentioned as a separate category, since they would fit into any of the other classes as well. Examples are: *to insist, affirm, deny, ask and remark*. (Austin 1962 [1980]: 53-62)

Austin's work on speech act finishes with this classification of utterances. His alumnus John Searle developed his ideas further and in this way he became the second most important contributor to the theory of speech acts.

5.2. Searle's work on speech acts

Searle's view on speech act theory was different from Austin's. When revising Austin's work, Searle identified six weaknesses of his theory.

Searle criticizes Austin's permanent confusion of verbs and acts. He also argues that not all verbs suggested by Austin can be considered illocutionary verbs. Furthermore, the individual categories overlap and within those there is hardly any homogeneity to be found. The verbs listed in one category very often do not satisfy the given definition of this specific class and there does not seem to be a consistent principle of classification. (Searle 1979: 11-12)

Cohen also points out that a weakness of Austin's theory. What Austin classifies as five separate acts are actually different aspects of one single event. Searle suggests that a speaker performs four acts at the same time within a normal utterance. Those are the performance of an utterance, a propositional act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act. (Cohen in Sebeok 1974: 176)

Cohen, like Searle, also thinks that Austin's terminology on the whole is rather unfortunate. Another disadvantage of Austin's theory is that illocutionary acts need to be conventionalized in order to be classified as such. Searle, however, does not focus on conventionality. To him, all illocutionary acts which are felicitous by the use of language are conventional and he proposes a new categorization of illocutionary acts. (Cohen in Sebeok 1974: 176-177)

5.2.1. A new taxonomy of illocutionary acts

As Searle is not content with the classification proposed by Austin, he suggests a new categorization of illocutionary acts:

1. Assertives
2. Directives
3. Commissives
4. Expressives
5. Declarations

Assertives commit the speaker to the truth of the expression. Typical of assertives is that they can be classified as either true or false. They include doubts, assertions, claims, statements and complaints, among others. Directives serve as a means for the speaker to get the hearer to perform a particular act. Questions, orders, commands, requests, pleads, advice and permissions belong to this category. As to commissives, they commit the speaker and not the hearer to some future act. Examples of those are promises and threats. The function of expressives is to express the psychological state of the speaker. This class includes expressions of thank and welcome, as well as congratulations and apologies. The successful performance of declarations leads to changes in the status or condition of the referred to object. If the act of appointing someone head of the department is successfully performed, then this person is head of department from that moment on. Other examples of declarations are oaths and christenings. (Searle 1979: 12-18)

In the course of his work on speech acts, Searle also raised the question which conditions are necessary and sufficient to carry out an illocutionary act. If any of the conditions are not met, the acts turn out to be defective, or infelicitous. This will now be dealt with in the following sub-chapter.

5.2.2. Felicity Conditions and IFIDs

A speaker can never be sure that the hearer will understand his/her utterance as has been intended, i.e. he/she can never be sure that the hearer will recognize the utterance's illocutionary force. What a speaker, however, can do in order to convey his/her message appropriately and to make him/herself understood to the audience is to obey the felicity conditions and to make use of illocutionary force indicating devices.

In Searle's opinion, elementary illocutionary acts consist of a force and a proposition. If we take the example sentences '*Please, help me!*' and '*You will help me*', we see that both have the same propositional content, namely that you help me, but that they vary in force. (Vanderveken and Kubo 2002: 5) In order to convey the intended force and hence the illocutionary act appropriately, Searle has established conditions which

need to be met. Furthermore, he points out that there are also devices which indicate the illocutionary force.

Searle provides a list of conditions for the successful performance of an illocutionary act. First of all, there are 'general conditions' which have to be fulfilled. The speaker and the hearer should know how to speak the language and there should be no handicaps to communication, such as deafness. Then, there are also 'propositional content conditions'. These imply that promises and threats, for instance, can only be predicated by the speaker and can never refer to past acts. (Searle in Kasher 2, 1998: 50-51) The 'preparatory condition' refers to what the speaker implies in the performance of an act. The preparatory condition of a statement is that the speaker can back it up. Or, by making a promise the speaker implies that the thing promised is in the interest of the hearer. Searle and Vanderveken also list the 'sincerity condition' as essential for the performance of a felicitous illocutionary act. The sincerity condition refers to the various mental states the speaker would have, if s/he really were to perform the act. This condition determines whether the act is sincere or insincere, i.e. whether the speaker has that specific psychological state or not. This means when I promise something, I usually do have the intention of doing it. (Vanderveken in Tsohatzidis 1994: 106) Finally, there is the 'essential condition'. The essential condition influences all the other conditions and it also determines the propositional content. If we take a request, the essential condition is that the speaker attempts to get the hearer to carry out an act. This implies that the propositional content has to be about a future act of the hearer and not a past one. (Searle in Kasher, 2 1998: 62)

Let us now illustrate all the necessary conditions for the felicitous performance of an illocutionary act, like a request. (Searle in Kasher, 2 1998: 58)

- β Propositional content condition: Future act A of H.
- β Preparatory condition:
 1. H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A.
 2. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord.
- β Sincerity condition: S wants H to do A.
- β Essential condition: Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.

Devices which indicate the illocutionary force of an utterance are important for the performance of a felicitous illocutionary act and are called 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices', or IFIDs. Usually those devices are verbs which explicitly name the illocutionary act being performed. Those are also referred to as performative verbs (Vp). Utterances which include an IFID normally have the following structure: '*I (Vp) you that...*'.

(11) *I advise you that you have to study hard for the test.*

(12) *I promise you that I will do it.*

However, speakers do not always perform their speech acts so explicitly and the illocutionary force indicating devices may be omitted as in:

(13) *You have to study hard for the test.*

(14) *I will do it.*

Those are called implicit performatives. Performative verbs are not the only devices which indicate the illocutionary force. Word order, stress and intonation can also contribute to the felicitous performance of an illocutionary act. (Yule 1996b: 49-50) Compare the following two examples.

(15) *You are going home now!*

(16) *Are you going home now?*

The force of the first one is a command, whereas the force of the second one is a question.

5.3. Direct and indirect speech acts

An additional way of characterizing speech acts is their classification into direct and indirect ones. Here, one focuses on the structure of the speech act and how it relates to its function. In English the three basic sentence types show a clear relation between their structure and their communicative function. Declaratives usually serve to make a statement; interrogatives are used to utter a question and imperatives may be employed to command or request. In cases where there is a direct relationship between structure and function, we speak of 'direct' speech acts. If the opposite is true, we label those speech acts 'indirect'. This means, if we use a declarative in order to make a statement, we have performed a direct speech act. If we, however, use a declarative sentence to make a request, we call this an indirect speech act. (Yule 1996: 54-55) Let us consider the following example:

(17) a. *It is cold in here.*

b. *I hereby tell you about the room temperature.* (direct speech act)

c. *I hereby request of you that you turn on the heater.* (indirect speech act)

In indirect speech acts, one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by the performance of another. In this way, '*Can you reach the salt?*' is a question and a request at the same time. In order for the hearer to understand this utterance as a request, s/he needs to share the same background knowledge with the speaker and has to be able to make inferences. (Searle 1979: 31-32)

The most common types of indirect speech acts are interrogatives which are not used for asking a question. Hence, a sentence as in (18) is not understood as a question about one's ability, but rather as a request of the hearer that s/he carries out the act.

(18) *Can you pass the salt?*

The use of indirect speech acts where interrogatives function as requests is a matter of politeness. In English, indirect speech acts are considered more polite than direct ones. (Yule 1996: 55-56)

5.4. Speech actions and events

More recent studies in the field of speech act theory do not focus on single speech acts, but put them into context. Hornsby, for example, suggests that “[t]he true significance of illocution is shown when a speech act is located in a broader, social context” (Hornsby in Tsohatzidis 1994: 187) Austin had difficulties in drawing a clear-cut line between speech acts and actions. Whenever someone performs an utterance, s/he performs an action. But in order to perform an action, the speaker will have to carry out many individual acts. (Hornsby in Tsohatzidis 1994: 188) In performing a speech action, someone is doing (at least) three acts as in the following example:

(19) *It's raining.*

1. act: uttering the sentence
2. act: saying that it is raining
3. act: reminding Jane to take her umbrella

Speech actions are also commonly referred to as ‘speech events’ as in Yule. Speech events are the circumstances which help the speaker to convey his/her communicative intention and which make it easier for the hearer to draw the correct inferences.

A speech event is an activity in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. (Yule 1996: 57)

A speech event is usually made up of a central speech act and other utterances leading to the central speech act and its consecutive reaction to this one. So, when I want to ask someone to do me a favor, I may start the conversation by ‘*Do you have a minute?*’ before carrying out the

central speech act which may be a request for someone's help. (Yule 1996: 57-58)

It is the speech event that helps us to interpret a particular speech act as it has been intended. In this way, depending on the circumstances the following speech act can be understood as a complaint or as praise.

(20) *This tea is really cold!*

On a winter's day this utterance is likely to be intended as a complaint, whereas on a hot summer's day it can be interpreted as praise, because the speaker was already longing for some refreshment. Therefore, one and the same utterance can be interpreted as two different speech acts. (Yule 1996: 47-48)

6. Requests

This chapter focuses on speech acts pertaining to requests. The theoretical input on politeness and the theory of speech acts will be of importance in this section as well. The realization of requests is the object of study in the empirical part of the paper. Accordingly, it seems plausible to introduce a standard definition and a classification of requests. For this reason, the classification scheme of requests, as proposed by Anne Trosborg, will be taken on and presented in the consecutive sub-chapters. I have decided to opt for Trosborg, since her work on request realization strategies is very clearly structured and renders explicit examples which are of great value for my own classification of requests carried out in the third part of the paper.

A request is an illocutionary act in which the speaker (i.e. requester) wants the hearer (i.e. requestee) to perform an act which is beneficial to the speaker. A request can be one for verbal goods and services, such as a request for information; or, it can be one for non-verbal goods and services, i.e. the performance of an action. The act is to be carried out by the hearer either immediately after the uttered request, or at some later stage. Furthermore, a request has the characteristic of being impositive. The requester, in some way, imposes on the requestee; s/he wants the hearer to perform an act for her/his benefit. At the same time, this characteristic makes the request a face-threatening act. Whenever a request is uttered, the requestee's negative face (i.e. the wish to be unimpeded) is threatened, as the requester to some extent tries to exercise power and control. But, the speaker also risks losing his/her face, if the hearer refuses to perform the required act. What distinguishes a request from other acts such as suggestions, pieces of advice, or warnings is the fact that the act exclusively lies in the interest of the speaker and is at the cost of the hearer. (Trosborg 1994: 187-189)

As stated above, a request is an illocutionary act and can be assigned various degrees of illocutionary force, ranging from ordering to begging. Basically there are three ways in which a locution can be assigned the illocutionary force of a request. On the one hand, there is mood, since it is

assumed that each utterance consists of a proposition and a modality. The imperative mood has the force of a directive and can be used to perform a request. However, requests are quite frequently realized as declaratives or interrogatives. Or, a speaker may simply introduce a performative verb which clearly indicates the illocutionary force (e.g. request, order, demand). On the other hand, the force of the utterance is derived from the set of felicity conditions. For a request to be felicitous, the relative status of the speaker and of the hearer are of importance. The speaker must be in a position to demand something from the hearer, and the requestee has to be able and willing to carry out the required act. Finally, there are requests with no explicit illocutionary force. The desired act is not mentioned and it is the task of the hearer to infer the speaker's intentions correctly. The strategy employed here is referred to as 'hinting'. (Trosborg 1994: 189-192)

6.1. Request strategies

Trosborg divides the various request strategies into four major categories classifying them from the least to the most direct. The first group is comprised of indirect requests, such as hints. Then there is the category of conventionally indirect requests which are hearer-oriented. Requesting strategies belonging to this group are the questioning of the hearer's ability and willingness to perform the act and the suggestory formulae strategy. The third category is comprised of conventionally indirect requests which are speaker-oriented. Those are statements of the speaker's desires or wishes and his/her needs or demands. Direct requests belong to the last group. Strategies employed are statements of obligation and necessity as well as the use of performatives and imperatives. Another classification of requests has been suggested by Blum-Kulka. Her division of the various strategies and modifications is more refined, but Trosborg's seems to be handier, because it is structured more clearly and it is well-arranged. That is why I have decided to take Trosborg's classification as the basis and to complement it with Blum-Kulka's suggestions when necessary. Let us now have a closer look at the individual categories.

6.1.1. Indirect requests

Indirect requests belonging to category one (cf. the table on p. 81) are also referred to as 'hints'. Here the impositive intent is not stated explicitly by the speaker, and s/he also refrains from mentioning the hearer as the actor. We differentiate between a mild and a strong hint, if the desired action is not mentioned at all by the requester, we call it a 'mild hint'. If the speaker partially mentions or alludes to his wishes and desires, the utterance is considered a 'strong hint'. Examples of hints are the following:

(21) *It's hot in here.*

(22) *The dishes need to be done.*

(23) *Has the car been cleaned?*

In these instances, it is up to the hearer to infer the intent of the speaker. The lack of transparency is intentional, since it may also serve to preserve the speaker's face. However, those indirect requests are part of conversational routine and there is a certain predictability of the intended meaning due to conditions of reasonableness, availability and obviousness. (Trosborg 1994: 192-194)

Reasonableness

The speaker may indicate his/her reasons for having a request and he/she must be able to justify his/her wish. Reasons take on the form of causal clauses and support the request.

(24) *Close the window, please. It's cold in here.*

(25) *Could you get me a coke, please? I'm so thirsty.*

It may also be the case that the reason is stated before the actual request. This strategy is used if the speaker wants to find out if it actually is okay to utter the request.

Availability

The availability condition refers to the questioning of some condition which would be a hindrance to compliance of the performance. Further ways of hinting are instances like:

(26) *Are you ready?*

(27) *Is there any cake left?*

Obviousness

A request is felicitous only if it is not obvious that the hearer is going to perform the desired act anyway, or if the desired state of affairs does not already exist. (Trosborg 1994: 194-197) That is why pre-conditions need to be questioned as in:

(28) *Have the dishes been done?*

(29) *Have the dustbins been emptied?*

6.1.2. Conventionally indirect requests – hearer-oriented conditions

Whenever one is formulating a request, its performance depends on the requestee's willingness and availability. It is the requestee who has the option to refuse to carry out the requested act. Fact is that hearer-oriented requests are more polite than speaker-oriented ones, because the requester does not take for granted that the requestee will indeed perform the act.

If a requester wants to perform a conventionally indirect request which is hearer-oriented, s/he has two strategies available to do so: the speaker may question the hearer's ability and willingness, or s/he may employ suggestory formulae. (Trosborg 1994: 197)

6.1.2.1. Questioning hearer's ability/ willingness

The hearer has to be able to infer correctly that a question about his/her ability or willingness to carry out a certain act is intended as an attempt to cause him/her to actually do so.

Ability

The hearer's capacity to carry out a desired act is referred to as 'ability'. There are two conditions for the felicitous performance of a request: on the one hand, the requestee needs to be physically as well as mentally be

able to perform the act. On the other hand, external factors such as time and place should be no impediment to the execution of the desired act.

(30) *Could you reach the salt for me?*

(31) *Could you lend me some money, please?*

These requests would be infelicitous if the requestee (a) was physically not able to reach the salt or (b) had no or not enough money to lend.

Willingness

If the requester questions the requestee's willingness to do an act, then s/he wants to show that s/he does not take the compliance of the act for granted.

(32) *Will you bring the car to the repair?*

(33) *Would you lend me your pen?*

The question about the hearer's willingness can also be intensified by the use of lexical markers such as in '*Would you like to/ be so kind/ mind/ object...?*'. Another way of questioning the willingness of the requestee is to ask for permission and in this way the focus does not lie on the requestee as the one who is carrying out the act anymore. Furthermore, the hearer has got the feeling that the speaker depends on him/her. (Trosborg 1994: 197-200)

(34) *Can I have the milk, please?*

(35) *May I have a lighter, please?*

(36) *If you'd let me borrow some of your DVDs, that would be great.*

Blum-Kulka calls this strategy the 'preparatory strategy' and adds the question of possibility as another means to realize a request. Possibility questions are often formulated in an impersonal way like '*Is it/ Would it be possible to...*'. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 280)

6.1.2.2. Suggestory formulae

When a requester employs this strategy s/he tests the requestee's cooperativeness. The speaker pretends that his/her interest in the felicitous performance of the request is rather low and presents the request more as an allusion to the hearer's interest. (Trosborg 1994: 201)

(37) *How about lending me some of your DVDs?*

(38) *Why don't you come to the party tonight?*

6.1.3. Conventionally indirect requests – speaker-based conditions

The speaker sincerely has to wish that the act is going to be performed by the hearer. In this way he can express the request as a wish which is quite polite or as a demand which is rather blunt. (Trosborg 1994: 201)

6.1.3.1. Statements of speaker's wishes and desires

Here the speaker expresses his/her request as a wish or desire. This is a rather polite way of requesting.

(39) *I would like to have some more wine please.*

(40) *I think it would be better if you stopped that now.*

(41) *I would rather you gave up playing soccer.*

6.1.3.2. Statements of speaker's needs and demands

When a speaker utters a request as a need or a demand this may be perceived as rather brusque by the hearer.

(42) *I need something to write with.*

(43) *I want you to carry out the task as was agreed.*

Want-statements are regarded as rather impolite. In order to reduce the face-threatening act, it would be good to introduce mitigating devices such as *please*. (Trosborg 1994: 202)

Blum-Kulka subsumes the strategies (speaker's wishes/ needs) as suggested by Trosborg under the term 'want-statements' which represent

the fourth most direct way of realizing a request. In this paper the category 'want-statements' will represent strategies four (cf. the table on p. 81).

By uttering a want-statement the speaker expresses her/his intention, desire or feeling towards the fact that the hearer carries out the desired act. (House and Kasper in Lörscher and Schulze 1987: 1257) Additional examples to those already suggested by Trosborg are:

(44) *I'd be happy if you could give your paper a week earlier.*

(45) *I'd appreciate it if you could spare the time and trouble to clean up this mess.*

6.1.4. Direct requests

Within direct requests the illocutionary force is made explicit through the use of performative verbs or the use of the imperative. Requesters may also employ modal verbs expressing obligation or necessity. (Trosborg 1994: 202)

6.1.4.1. Statements of obligation and necessity

When using this strategy, the speaker exerts authority over the hearer or refers to some external authority. Requests containing verbs such as *should* or *ought to* are related to some moral obligation. *Have to* is used when the speaker refers to some obligation not imposed by the speaker, whereas *must* does. (Trosborg 1994: 202)

(46) *You should/ ought to be there at 10 o'clock.*

(47) *You have to be there at 10 o'clock* (otherwise you'll miss the bus)

(48) *You must be there at 10 o'clock* (because I want you to)

(49) *You must be there at 10 o'clock, or else...*

Blum-Kulka calls this strategy the locution derivable, since the illocutionary intent can be directly inferred from the semantic meaning of the utterance. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 279) To this category do not only belong statements of obligation and necessity but also questions like:

(50) *Are you going to clean the kitchen?*

(51) *Are you going to lend me some money?*

In this paper the locution derivable will be treated as an additional strategy for request realization (cf. the table p. 81). This means that we will split up Blum-Kulka's locution derivable strategy into statements of obligation and necessity including *should*, *have/ ought to* and *must* and into statements or questions in which the illocutionary intent becomes clear from the semantic meaning.

6.1.4.2. Performatives

If the utterance contains a performative verb, then its illocutionary force is made explicit and the speech act is marked as an order. This way of requesting is very authoritative and direct and considered impolite outside a particular context.

(52) *I ask you to be there at ten.*

(53) *I order you to leave.*

In order to reduce the illocutionary force one has the possibility to hedge it. In the following instance we speak of a 'hedged performative': (Trosborg 1994: 203)

(54) *I would like to ask you to be there at ten.*

(55) *I must ask you to leave.*

6.1.4.3. Imperative

Imperatives are very authoritative and have to be obeyed if they are uttered by some authority figures. Those are usually orders from parent to child, from teacher to pupil or from employer to employee. However, they can be softened by the use of *please*.

(56) *Go to bed right now.*

(57) *Come to the front, please.*

Elliptical phrases also belong to this strategy. Here only the desired object is mentioned, but usually '*please*' is added. (Trosborg 1994: 204)

(58) *Two cups of tea, please.*

The consecutive table (cf. p. 81) summarizes and illustrates the various request strategies as they will be applied in this paper. Let us assume that the requester wants to borrow a pen from the requestee.

REQUEST STRATEGIES

	Category		Strategy	Request
#1	Indirect requests	#1	Hints a) mild hints b) strong hints	I have to write this down. Oh, my pen does not write anymore. Do you need yours at the moment?
#2	Conventionally indirect requests – hearer-oriented	#2	Preparatory conditions	Could you lend me your pen? / Would you lend me your pen? / May I borrow your pen? / Is it possible to borrow your pen?
		#3	suggestory formulae	How about lending me your pen?
#3	Conventionally indirect requests - speaker-oriented	#4	Want-statements	I would like to borrow your pen. / I want (need) to borrow your pen. / I'd appreciate it if you could lend me your pen.
#4	Direct requests	#5	Statements of obligation and necessity	You must/ have to lend me your pen.
		#6	Locution derivable	Are you going to lend me your pen?
		#7	Performatives a) explicit b) hedged	I ask you to lend me your pen. I would like to ask you to lend me your pen.
		#8	imperatives and elliptical phrases	Lend me your pen. Your pen (please).

6.2. Internal modification of requests

A speaker may not only vary the degree of politeness of a request according to the strategy chosen, but the impact of the strategy may also be softened or increased by the use of modality markers. If the devices serve to lessen the impact a request may have on the requestee, they are referred to as downgraders. One speaks of upgraders, if they increase the impact. In general, this is referred to as the internal modification of requests. (Trosborg 1994: 209)

6.2.1. Syntactic downgraders

Syntactic downgraders serve to distance the request from reality. If the requester's expectations are rather low from the outset, s/he will not lose his/her face that easily, should the requestee refuse to perform the desired act. Of course, it is also easier for the hearer to refuse the request if the utterance contains downgraders.

One way to lessen the impact of the request on the hearer is to formulate a question, and not a statement. Questions are usually considered to be more polite, because the requestee can negotiate the future act. Compare the following two requests:

(59) *Are you going to clean the kitchen?*

(60) *You are going to clean the kitchen.*

Here, I would also like to draw on Blum-Kulka for supplementary explanation. Whenever, the preparatory strategy is used, the question cannot be coded as a downgrading device, because the interrogative is unmarked. With imperatives as in the example above, it clearly has a mitigating function. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 281)

Further ways to downtone the impact of a request are the usage of the past tense, the negation of a preparatory condition or of tag questions.

(61) *Could you hand me the hammer, please?*

(62) *Couldn't you hand me the hammer, please?*

(63) *Hand me the hammer, will you?*

Another way to distance the request from reality is to employ conditional clauses, as in:

(64) *I would like to borrow some of your DVDs, if you don't mind lending me them.*

If one uses the conditional in order to replace an indicative form, this is also a way of downgrading. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 283)

(65) *I would suggest you leave now*

Embedding is a further strategy used to downtone the impact of the utterance on the hearer. This means that the request is embedded in some clause in which the speaker expresses his/her attitude to the request. Here we differentiate between three ways of embedding a request:

a) tentative: (66) *I wonder if you would lend me your DVDs*

b) appreciative: (67) a. *I hope you will be able to help me with the dishes tonight.*

b. *I'd really appreciate if you could help me with the dishes tonight.*

c) subjective: (68) a. *I thought that you could help me with the dishes tonight.*

b. *I'm afraid you'll have to go now.*

The embedding clause can also be presented in the continuous aspect as in the following example:

(69) *I was wondering if you would borrow me your DVDs.*

Finally, modal verbs also belong to the category of syntactic downgraders and may be used to convey tentativeness: (Trosborg 1994: 209-212)

(70) *I thought that you might let me borrow your DVDs.*

(71) *Mightn't I come with you?*

6.2.2. Lexical/ phrasal downgraders

Lexical/ phrasal downgraders signify that the requester has low expectations that the desired act will be fulfilled.

Politeness markers such as *please* show deference to the requestee.

(72) *Could you hand me the hammer, please.*

(73) *Would you be so kind as to hand me the hammer?*

The consultative device is used to ask for the requestee's consent. Typical phrases are '*Would you mind...*', '*Do you think...*', '*Do you object...*'.

Modal sentence adverbials and modal particles are referred to as downtoners and are used to reduce the imposition the request may have on the hearer. Modality markers such as *just*, *simply*, *perhaps*, *rather* belong to this category.

(74) *Just hand me the hammer, will you?*

(75) *Perhaps you could hand me the hammer.*

A further way to lessen the impact of the utterance is to understate aspects of the desired act.

(76) *Would you just wait a second?*

(77) *Do you have a minute?*

Furthermore, one can also hedge the propositional content which makes the utterance rather vague. Typical hedges are *kind of*, *sort of*, *somehow* or *more or less*. Finally, one can use hesitation markers (*er*, *em*) or interpersonal markers. The latter ones serve to maintain a good relationship with the requestee. The speaker can draw the hearer's attention to him/her by using so-called cajolers, as *you know*, *you see*, *I mean*. Or, the speaker can appeal to the hearer's consent by using appealers, like *right?* or *okay?*.

(78) *You wouldn't mind helping me with the dishes tonight, I mean, would you?*

(79) *You might come with me to the party, right?*

Very often in actual speech there might not only occur one or the other downgrader, but rather a combination of those. (Trosborg 1994: 212-214)

6.2.3. Upgraders

Upgraders can be used by the speaker to increase the impact the request may have on the hearer. Typical upgraders are adverbial intensifiers, *do*-constructions, commitment upgraders and lexical intensification.

Adverbial intensifiers are adverbs such as *such, so, very, quite, really, terribly, awfully*, et cetera.

(80) *You really must come to the party.*

(81) *I'd be terribly grateful, if you helped me with the dishes tonight.*

Do-constructions as in sentence like '*Really, do come to the party*' also serve to intensify and increase the impositive force. Commitment upgraders like '*I'm sure/certain/positive...*', *surely, certainly* or *unfortunately* increase the commitment to the proposition. By lexical intensification the speaker makes his/her attitude clear which can either be positive or negative. This also implies the use of swear words.

(82) *You'd be such a darling if you helped me with the dishes tonight.*

(83) *Get the hell out of here!*

(84) *You'll do the fucking dishes!*

(85) *Come over here right now!*

(86) *Clean up that mess!*

Aggravating supportive moves are insults, threats and moralizing statements. (Blum-Kulka 1989: 288)

(87) *You're such a pig! Clean up!*

(88) *Go and study for the test, if you don't want to fail.*

(89) *You know, it is really uncooperatively towards your flat mates. So, could you please clean the kitchen for once.*

Upgraders do not make a request automatically more polite. It depends on the elements which are upgraded. If the positive attitude of the requester is supported by an upgrader, it makes the request more polite. If, however, the impositive force is upgraded, the politeness level of the request is lowered. (Trosborg 1994: 214-215)

6.3. External modification

External modification refers to supporting statements which help to “persuade” the requestee to perform the desired action. A request must be well prepared and needs to seem plausible.

The devices used for preparing a request are referred to as preparators and there are various ways of doing so. The requester can prepare the content for the request. S/he may structure and guide the conversation so that the request fits into the context. The requester can also prepare the actual speech act by letting the requestee know that s/he will be asked to perform a desired action, as in ‘*There’s something I’d like you to do for me*’. Checking on availability is another preparatory strategy, the hearer may find out if it is the right time to utter the request through questions like:

(90) *May I disturb you for a moment?*

(91) *Are you busy right now?*

Moreover, the requester may secure a pre-commitment and hence avoid that the requestee will refuse the request.

(92) *May I ask you a favor?*

(93) *Would you help me out?*

Other external modification devices are disarmers and sweeteners. Disarmers are used to conciliate the requestee as in:

(94) *I hate bothering you but...*

(95) *I really don’t want to trouble you but...*

Sweeteners are usually employed to flatter the requestee. So, you can praise someone's craftsmanship if you want help when mounting a cupboard.

(96) *I don't know anyone that handy with tools.*

Moreover, it may be an advantage for the carrying out of the desired action if the requester states his/her reasons for making the request. If the requester explains and justifies the request and points out positive consequences, the requestee will be more likely to perform the action.

(97) *Would you mind doing the dishes? I've got to be at work at 3.*

(98) *Could you take in the laundry, please? It looks as if it's about to rain.*

As a request is usually at the cost of the hearer, the speaker can refer to factors that will minimize the cost. Another way to get the requestee to carry out the action is to promise him/her rewards. (Trosborg 1994: 215-219)

(99) *Would you mind picking up the kids from the cinema? You can take my car.*

(100) *If you do the dishes, I'll give you five bucks.*

As can be seen, there are numerous ways in which a requester can get the requestee to carry out the desired action. In the following sub-chapter the main requesting strategies of English, German and Spanish speakers will be presented.

6.4. Requests in English, German and Spanish

The English are said to use more indirect strategies than the Germans or the Spanish. They prefer to employ more downgraders than upgraders and, thus, seem to be more concerned with the negative face of the hearer. Moreover, they use conventionally indirect request strategies in a wide range of request situations. The most frequently used strategy is the query preparatory strategy. According to the terminology employed in this paper, this means that they use conventionally indirect requests which are hearer-oriented and in which the requester questions the requestee's ability and willingness to perform the desired action. (Barron in Schneider and Barron 2008: 41-46) Furthermore, the imperative is hardly ever employed by English native speakers and the most frequently used modification device is the politeness maker 'please'. (Barron in Schneider and Barron 2008: 56)

German speakers are said to be more direct than the English and less so than the Spanish. However, their mostly preferred requesting strategies are the conventional indirect query preparatory and performatives. The latter one is a rather direct strategy and is employed more often by German speakers than by British English speakers. When they use the query preparatory, Germans seem to prefer the ability rather than the willingness question. Moreover, Germans use more upgraders and fewer downgraders than the English. (Warga in Schneider and Barron 2008: 247-253)

So far, Austrian speakers have automatically been included whenever the term 'German speakers' has been employed. However, Warga points out that there are differences between Germans and Austrians if one investigates the micro structure of their use of requests. Although both German speaking groups use the query preparatory most frequently, Austrians in comparison to Germans use the possibility question more often than the question about the hearer's ability or willingness. A characteristic of possibility questions is that they have an impersonal construction as in '*Wäre es möglich, dass... /Would it be possible to...?*' and hence have a more polite effect on the hearer. Furthermore, Austrians

use subjectivisers and the conditional as downtoners more often than Germans. This again has a less direct effect on the requestee. On the whole, those minimal differences in the micro structure of request realization let Austrians appear to be more polite than Germans, although, overall, they use the same strategies. (Warga in Schneider and Barron 2008: 253-256)

Of all the three groups, the most direct speakers are the Spanish. Rob le Pair compared native speakers to non-native speakers of Spanish and found out that those whose mother tongue is Spanish do not appear to use non-conventional strategies, i.e. hints, at all. But, again, the most frequently used strategy of peninsular Spanish speakers is the conventional indirect one. Nevertheless, Spanish native speakers use direct strategies twice as often as do other cultural groups such as the English or Germans. The imperative seems to have a different pragmatic force and native speakers are hardly ever threatening the hearer's face when employing it in request situations. On the whole, Spanish speakers seem to be more direct in their requesting, because they use imperatives, obligation and want statements more often than other cultural groups. (Rob le Pair 1996, 16: 652-661)

7. The study

Part three comprises the empirical part of the thesis. The study investigates the realization of requests by Austrian German and Spanish learners of English as a second language. .

7.1. Aims of the study

In recent years there has been a clear shift from the focus on grammatical competence to communicative and pragmatic competence in teaching as well as in research. It has been found out that fairly advanced learners who are highly competent as regards grammar still face problems when it comes to their pragmatic knowledge. Very often even proficient language learners transfer strategies from their first language to the interlanguage and this may result in pragmatic failures.

This study aims at evaluating to what extent advanced learners still transfer requesting strategies from the first to the second language and hence risk pragmatic failure. This means it will be investigated if learners are able to choose the appropriate directness level as required in the target language / culture depending on the situation provided. The internal and external modification of requests will also be analyzed and it will be examined to what extent learners transfer the use and the extent of modification devices from the first to the second language.

7.2. Methodology

Research on the pragmatic competence of language learners can be carried out either in a longitudinal or a cross-sectional design. Sometimes a combination of both may be used. A longitudinal study is conducted over an extended period of time and may examine the acquisition of pragmatic or discourse ability or the acquisition of politeness. With cross-sectional research designs data from two or more cross-sections is collected. This

might imply learners with different levels of proficiency or the studies on the realization of requests as have been carried out by Blum-Kulka (1989), and Trosborg (1994), for instance. What is problematic is that researchers very often employ a cross-sectional research design to match native with non-native speakers instead of comparing learners of different proficiency levels. Cook calls these studies single-moment studies, because cross-sectional research design would look at different learners at various moments in time. (Kasper and Rose 2002: 75-79)

In this thesis the research design selected is a small-scale single-moment study because we will have a look at request realizations of native speakers compared to second language learners.

7.3. Choice of instrumentation

There are various options a researcher can choose from in order to conduct a study on learners' pragmatic competence. On the one hand, it is possible to observe spoken interaction in authentic discourse, elicited conversations or role-plays. Questionnaires are a further means of data collection. These might take on the form of discourse completion tasks, multiple-choice or scaled response questionnaires. On the other hand, data can be collected through oral and written self-report. Interviews, diaries and verbal protocols belong to this category.

In this thesis the discourse completion tasks (DCTs) have been chosen as a means of data collection. With those questionnaires data can be collected relatively quickly and cheaply, and contextual variables can be controlled more easily. Furthermore, learners might not feel inhibited as they probably would in oral performance.

7.3.1. Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs)

Typical of a DCT is a situational description followed by a dialogue. Out of this dialogue there is at least one turn which has to be completed by the participant. The researcher can decide freely which one of the turns has to be filled in, if the participant has to provide two turns or can opt for not

carrying out the act desired. The specified context serves as a constraint so that a particular communicative act is elicited.

As the discourse completion tasks are very popular among researchers, they very often have come under scrutiny and the data obtained has been compared to data from other research designs. It has been found out that responses tend to be longer in speech than in written forms. Furthermore, participants have been held to be more direct on the DCT than in role-plays. However, on the whole, DCTs are a valuable means of data collection and the language elicited does not vary to a great extent from an oral performance. (Kasper and Rose 2002: 90-92)

7.4. Informant population

The native speakers participating in my study come from various backgrounds and belong to different age groups. The data was collected randomly in parks, on the plane and from friends and relatives. I did not want the native speakers to be a homogenous group, since this would only reflect the use of request strategies from one particular social class or age group and not from native speakers in general. The number of questionnaires which could finally be collected for evaluation are 22 filled in by Austrian native speakers of German, 19 by English native speakers, and 15 completed by Spanish native speakers. German speaking participants mainly live in the east of Austria including the provinces of Burgenland, Lower Austria and Vienna. The data of English native speakers was collected on the plane to London and in London, which, however, does not necessarily mean that the place of origin of the participants actually is London. The Spanish native speakers were to a great extent from the North of Spain.

The participants of the questionnaires designed for non-native speakers form a rather homogenous group. The German native speakers are all studying English at the University of Vienna and are still undergraduates. Most of them are in their second or third year and are between 18 and 24 years old. The majority has been learning English for 9-12 years including school. Furthermore, only 5 out of 19 have stayed in an English speaking

country for an extended period of time (at least for a month). Eight have rated their own competence level as being upper-intermediate, ten consider themselves to be at an advanced level and one learner thinks to have a native-like competence.

The Spanish informants form a rather homogeneous group, too. Most of them are students of the University of Santiago de Compostela and they have been studying English for about four years as part of a diploma or masters degree. About seventy-five percent of them have been learning English as a second language for about twelve years or even longer. Moreover, five of the informants said that their mother language is Galician, which is a co-official language in Spain. But as the language used in education is Castilian, they can be considered as bilingual. In contrast to the Austrian English learners fifteen out of twenty Spanish second language learners have already stayed in an English speaking country for an extended period of time. Seven out of these fifteen stayed for three months or even longer. Two students consider their competence level as being intermediate, three think it is upper-intermediate, twelve have rated their competence to be at an advanced level and one learner believes s/he has already reached native-like competence.

7.5. Design of the questionnaires

The questionnaire for the native speakers consists of only one part, namely the discourse completion tasks. The questionnaire for the non-native speakers is comprised of two parts: the first one is the same as for the native speakers, namely the discourse completion tasks; the second part serves to receive personal and background information.

The DCT consists of ten situations and dialogues designed for the elicitation of requests. Each task contains a contextualization in which the situation and the persons engaged in conversation are described. Five situations are taken out of everyday life and another five are related to school and university. Like in a role-play, the participants take on the role of one of the persons described in the contextualization. The social distance and the relative power of the speakers vary, too. This means that,

according to the situation provided, the persons involved in interaction know each other or are strangers; they may be of equal or of higher and lower status, respectively. The discourse completion tasks consist of a headline providing the situation in keywords. What follows is a contextualization and an explanation of who the persons participating in conversation are. Then there is a slot in which the participants have to fill in the missing turn. Consecutively an answer is provided to ensure the elicitation of a request.

(101) **At the library**

Christine is working on her seminar paper in the library. Some girls sitting at the same table have already been chatting for a while. Christine cannot concentrate.

Christine: _____

One of the girls: Sorry, we'll be quiet.

The situations chosen are partly based on the ones selected for the CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) (Blum-Kulka et al: 1989) and have partly been invented by myself. However, also the ones based on the CCSARP have been subject to slight amendments.

The situations, which elicit requests, chosen for the CCSARP are the following:

- S1 A student asks his roommate to clean up the kitchen the latter had left in a mess the night before. [...]
- S3 A young woman wants to get rid of a man pestering her on the street. [...]
- S5 A student asks another student to lend her some lecture notes. [...]
- S7 A student asks people living on the same street for a ride home. [...]
- S9 An applicant calls for information on a job advertised in a paper. [...]
- S11 A policeman asks a driver to move her car. [...]
- S13 A student asks a teacher for an extension on a seminar paper. [...]
- S15 A university professor asks a student to give his lecture a week earlier than scheduled. [...]

(Blum-Kulka et al 1989: 14-15)

The following situations are included in the questionnaires of the present study:

Sit. 1 In the lecture hall

Susan missed last week's lecture and would like to borrow Ann's notes.

Sit. 2 In a non-smoking compartment

Michael is going from York to Manchester. One of the other travellers boarding the train takes a seat in the same compartment as he does. Michael is really happy that a free seat was available in the non-smoking area of the train. After a while the other passenger lights a cigarette.

Sit. 3 At the library

Christine is working on her seminar paper in the library. Some girls sitting at the same table have already been chatting for a while. Christine cannot concentrate.

Sit. 4 At a shared flat

Susan and Tom share a flat. The kitchen is really in a mess. This time it is Tom's turn to do the cleaning up. It is not the first time that Susan reminds him of doing so.

Sit. 5 At a police check

Mrs. Peters is on her way home from work as she has to stop at a police check. The police officer wants to check her driver's licence.

Sit. 6 After a class at university

Steven is going to work as a counsellor in a camp in the United States during the summer. Since he has to start work already before the end of term, he has to ask his professor if he is allowed to take the exam one week earlier.

Sit. 7 At the beginning of a university course

Mr Smith is teaching one of the literature courses. Due to the fact that he has to attend a conference in Manchester at rather short notice in a two weeks time, he has to ask one of his students to hold the presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

Sit. 8 At Monica's parents' home

Monica has promised her mother that she will come up for all her expenses on her own. Her best friends have planned to go on a weekend trip to London which she does not want to miss. Unfortunately, she cannot afford it and asks her mother for some money.

Sit. 9 A telephone call

Paul is planning to tour England by car. Since he does not own one, he decides to contact a car rental agency and asks for a price quote.

Sit. 10 At school

Mrs Baker is an English teacher. She wants Robert to hand-in every piece of homework he has not given to her so far by the end of this week.

The second part of the questionnaire for non-native speakers comprises questions about the participants' personal data and background as a language learner.

The following questions had to be answered:

- Are you male or female?
- How old are you?
- Is English your mother tongue?
- If no, what is your mother tongue?
- Are you studying English as part of a diploma/ masters degree?
- For how long have you been studying English at university (in years)?

- For how long, i.e. how many years, have you been learning English (including school)?
- Have you ever been to an English speaking country for an extended period of time (a month or longer) ?
- If so, where have you been (country) and for how long did you stay (in weeks)?
- What do you think is your general level of competence in English?

The evaluation of those questions has already been presented in the section on informant population (p. 92-93). In the following sub-chapter on results and findings of the study we will try to find out, if the request strategies chosen correspond to those of the native speakers of the target language or not. We will further examine if there are instances of language transfer and if there are any cases of pragmatic failures.

7.6. Results and findings

7.6.1. Native speakers' request realization

First of all, we will compare the categories and strategies of request realization chosen by native speakers. The charts below show which category and strategy, respectively, were preferably chosen by each native speaker group in the given situations. Let us briefly recall that category 1 stands for the most indirect directness level, whereas category 4 represents the most direct one.

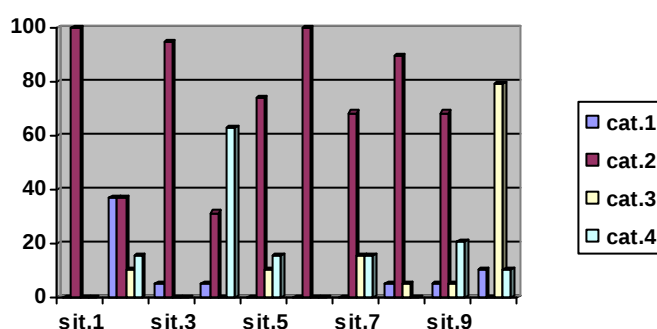
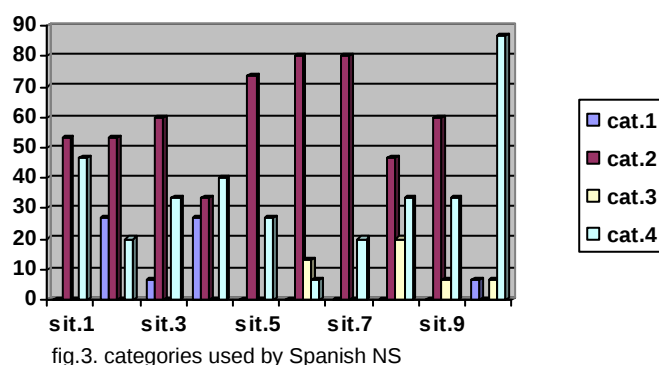
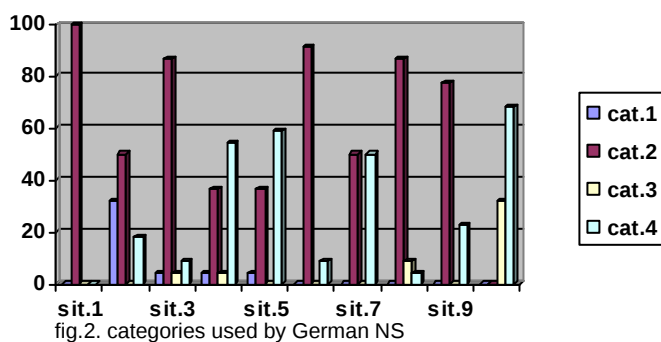


fig.1. categories used by English NS



As can be seen from the charts above the most frequently chosen directness level within all native speaker groups is category 2. Those are the hearer-oriented conventionalized indirect requests. Let us have a look at situations 4 (kitchen a mess) and 10 (missing homework), because here a clear preference of the more direct request realization levels can be noted within all native speaker groups. In situation 4 category 4 of the request realization strategies exceeds with about sixty percent category 2 within the English and German native speaker groups. It seems interesting that Spanish speakers use the hinting strategy quite frequently in this situation, although some researchers maintain that the Spanish hardly ever use hints (see p. 89).

Examples of strong hints realized by Spanish speakers in situation 4 are:

(102) *La cocina no se limpia sola, ¿eh?*
(The kitchen does not clean itself.)

(103) *Muchas veces no limpias cuando te toca.*
(Very often you don't do the cleaning when it's your turn.)

In situation 10 (missing homework) German and Spanish speakers chose the most direct requesting level, whereas English native speakers still opted for conventionally indirect requests which are speaker-oriented.

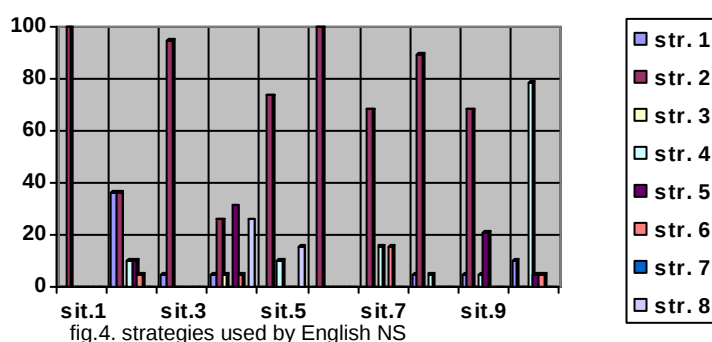
A further situation which renders unexpected results is situation 5 (police officer). At a first glance it seems as if Austrian police officers are rude and impolite in comparison to their colleagues from Great Britain and Spain. Nearly two thirds of the requests in this situation were realized at the most direct level employing the most direct strategy, namely elliptical imperatives as in:

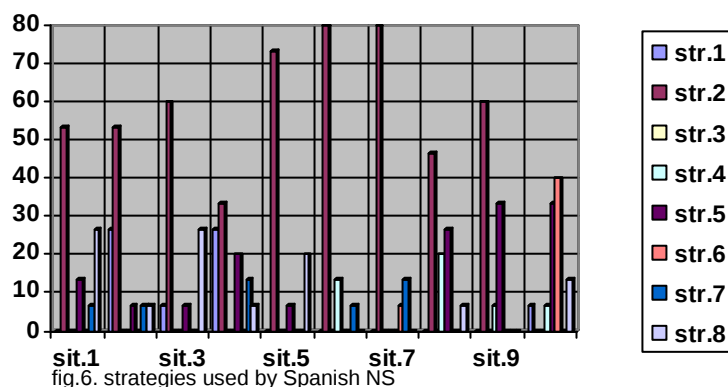
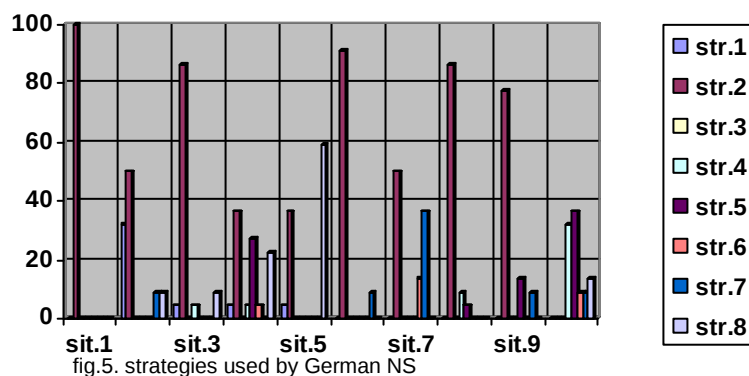
(104) *Ihren Führerschein, bitte.*
(Your driver's licence, please.)

This phrase, however, is perfectly acceptable by Austrian native speakers of German and no one would ever have the feeling that a police officer uttering this speech act is impolite or rude. It is simply a highly routinized form for requesting a driver's licence.

On the whole, it can be seen that conventionally indirect requests which are hearer-oriented are most frequently used. This has already been stated in the theoretical parts above and hence supports the findings of other studies.

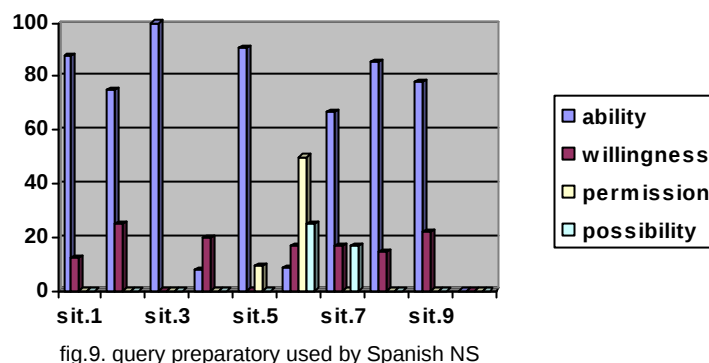
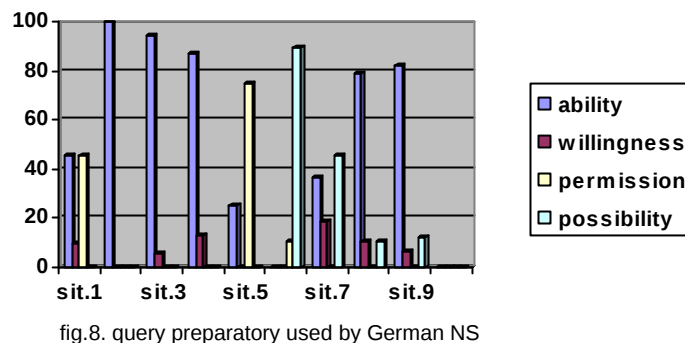
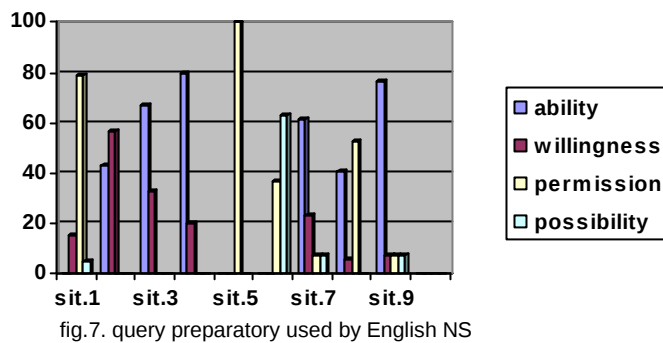
Let us now turn to the individual requesting strategies as identified above (see p. 81). Hints belong to strategy 1 and represent the most indirect way of request realization, at the other end of the scale we find the most direct strategy which are imperatives.





As has already been stated in the theoretical part, the most preferred strategy by all native speaker groups is strategy 2, the preparatory condition. Especially English native speakers show the strongest preference for this strategy and hardly ever employ direct request realization methods. Performatives were not used even once by English native speakers, whereas Austrian speakers of German employ that strategy in fifty percent of the situations given. The Spaniards clearly make use of the greatest variety of direct requesting strategies. The locution derivable is used in 8 out of 10 situations, followed by the imperative and by the performative which is used in half of the situations. Statements of obligation are only used in two out of ten situations.

As the query preparatory is the most frequently used strategy, we will have a closer look at which types of questions are, respectively, the most and least preferred ones by the individual native speaker groups. A query preparatory can be realized by means of an ability question, a willingness question, a question about permission or a possibility question.



The charts clearly show that Spaniards use the ability question with the highest frequency, namely in 7 out of 10 situations. German speakers also prefer the ability question in 60 percent of all occasions. The English, however, only employ it in 3 out of 10 situations.

In situation 6 (student asking professor) the possibility question is clearly favoured by German and by English speakers, whereas Spaniards tend to use the question about permission.

(105) a. *Herr Professor, wäre es vielleicht möglich, meine Prüfung eine Woche früher zu machen?*

b. *Herr Professor, wäre es möglich, dass Sie die Prüfung eine Woche vorverlegen?*

(106) a. *Would it be possible if I sat the exam a week earlier?*

b. *Would it be possible to do the exam early?*

(107) a. *Perdone professor, ¿podría hacer el examen una semana antes?*

(Excuse me professor. Could I sit the exam one week earlier?)

b. *Oiga, profesor ¿podría hacer el examen una semana antes de que acabe el semestre?*

(Listen, professor. Could I take the exam one week before the end of semester?)

Situation 5 (police officer) renders different results as regards the Spanish native speaker group. English speakers exclusively use the question about permission, whereas Spaniards mainly question the ability of the hearer. German speakers also employ the question about permission three times more often than the ability question.

(108) a. *Could I see your licence, please?*

b. *Please can I see your driving licence?*

(109) a. *Darf ich bitte Ihren Führerschein sehen?*

b. *Könnten Sie mir bitte Ihren Führerschein zeigen?*

(110) a. *¿Podría darme su carnet de conducir, por favor?*

(Could you please give me your driver's licence?)

b. *Perdone señora, ¿me podría enseñar su carnet de conducir?*

(Excuse me, madam. Could you show me our driver's licence?)

7.2.1.1. Native speakers' internal request modification

In this section we will have a look at the way in which native speakers internally modify their request realizations. As stated in chapter 6 there are two sets of internal modification devices. On the one hand, we have downgraders (syntactic and lexical) which lessen the illocutionary force. On the other hand, one may use upgraders which support and strengthen the illocutionary force. In the consecutive part we will examine the use of downgraders, since upgraders were hardly ever employed by any of the native speaker groups and their usage seems to be more of an exception. The figures obtained by upgrading devices cannot be considered of relevance, since no or in most cases not more than one upgrader was used on the average per situation.

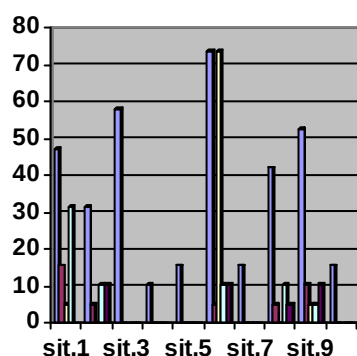


fig.10. syntactic downgraders used by English NS

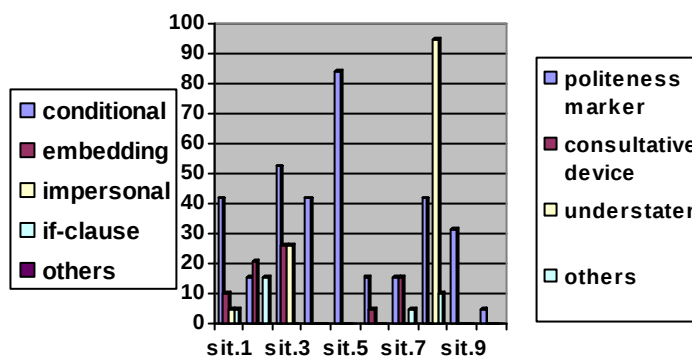


fig.11. lexical/ phrasal downgraders used by English NS

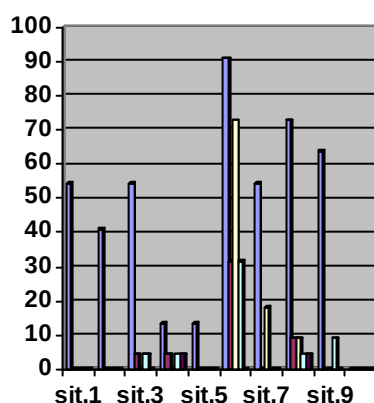


fig.12. syntactic downgraders used by German NS

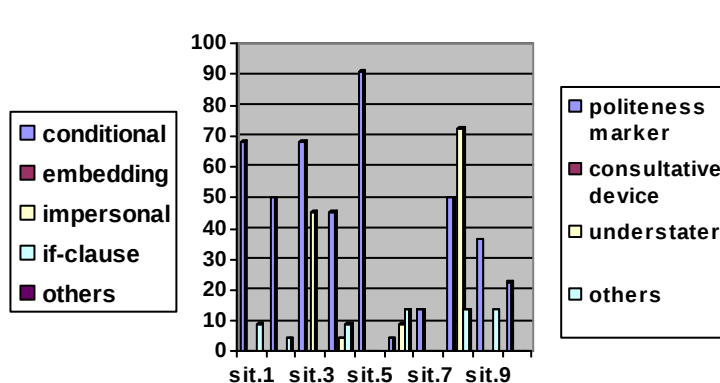
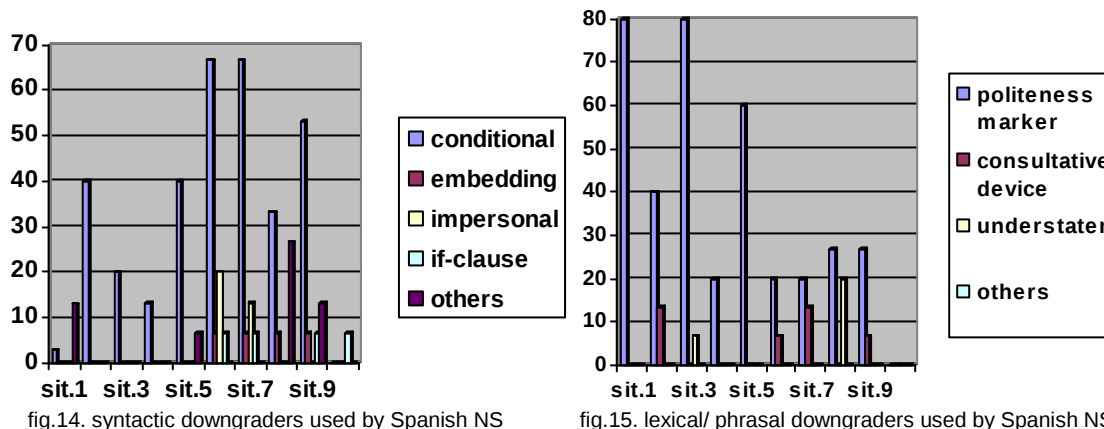


fig.13. lexical/ phrasal downgraders used by German NS



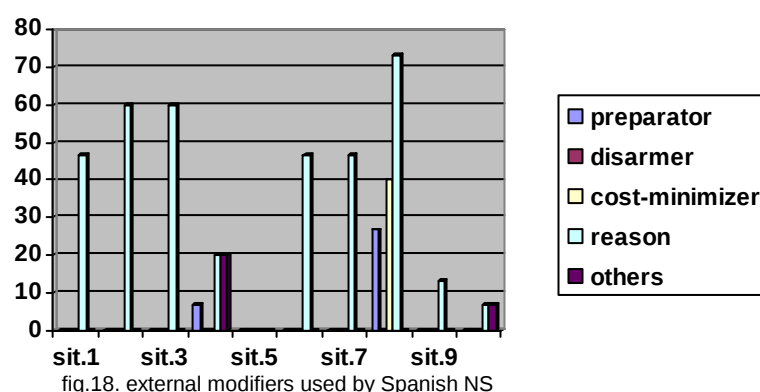
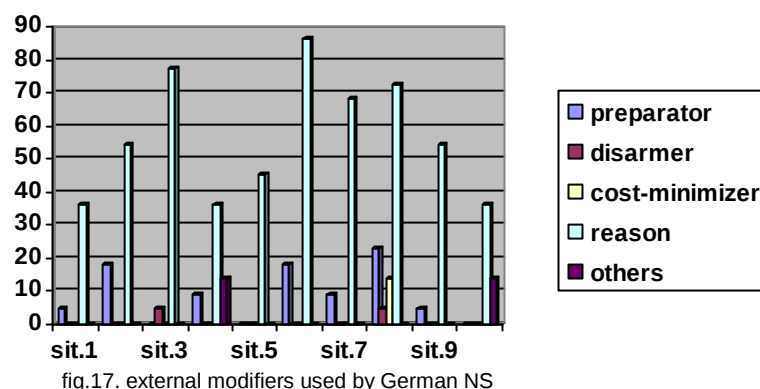
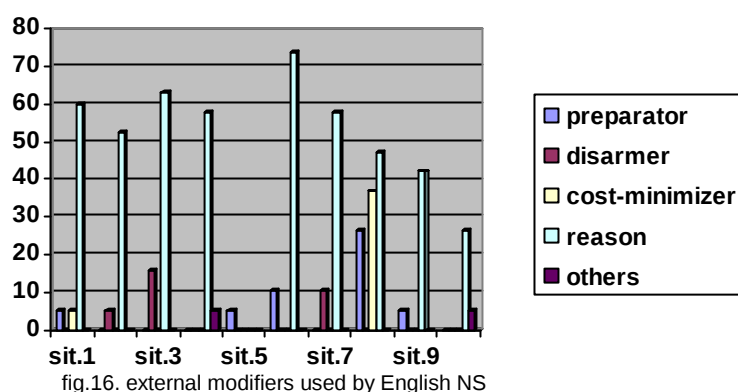
First of all, we will examine the results of the syntactic downgraders. The figures show that the most frequently used downgrading device is the conditional which is employed with the greatest frequency by all native speaker groups. The English native speakers also use downgrading devices to a higher extent than do the German or the Spanish natives. Situation 6 (exam earlier) demands the most syntactic downgrading devices, because the requester knows that the requestee does not have to carry out the desired act.

As regards lexical downgraders, the politeness marker 'please' is the most commonly used device. German and Spanish native speakers employ it more often than English native speakers. This can be inferred from their use of more direct strategies than the English. On the one hand, German speakers use nearly twice as often understaters (like '*ein bisschen*', '*ein wenig*'); and on the other hand, they do not use consultative devices at all, whereas English and Spanish speakers do so in 4.5 out of 10 situations.

On the whole, Spaniards use fewer downgraders than do the German or English speakers, although they employ the most direct strategies. Hence, the Spanish indeed seem to be more direct than the German and the British. In the following we will examine external request modification.

7.2.1.2. Native speakers' external request modification

There are various modification devices a speaker can use preceding or following the head-act. Most frequently, speakers prepare the request or justify it through providing reasons.



As can be seen from the charts above, providing a reason and hence explaining the grounds for realizing the request, is the most commonly used external modification device by all three native speaker groups. However, apart from stating the reason, the Spanish speakers do not

really seem to feel the need for further modification of their requests and hence are the group with the least frequent external modification devices.

Austrian German speakers also show a preference for the use of preparators and do so more often than the other native speaker groups. Especially in situation 8 (asking for money) they tend to prepare the request carefully, as in:

- (111) a. *Ich weiß, ich habe dir versprochen, dass ich mir in Zukunft alles selbst finanziere.*
b. *Mama, meine besten Freundinnen fahren am Wochenende nach London.*

English and Spanish speakers show a tendency towards the use of cost-minimizing devices. The most frequently uttered phrases in this case are:

- (112) *I'll pay you back.*
(113) *Te lo devuelvo cuando trabaje. / Prometo devolvértelo.*
(I'll give it back to you as soon as I've found work. / I promise to give it back to you.)

The English native speakers use disarmers twice as often as do the German native speakers. Spaniards do not do it at all. Examples of disarmers are:

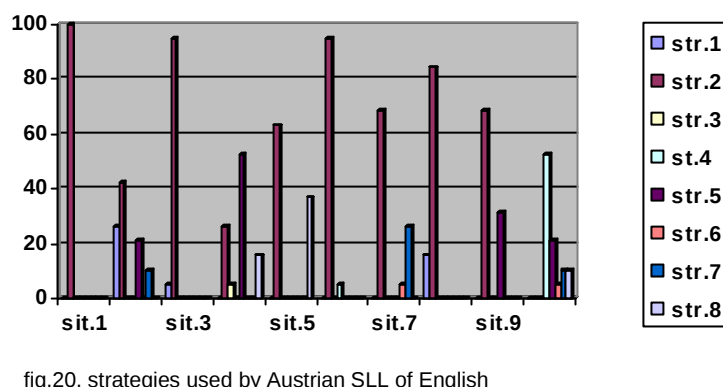
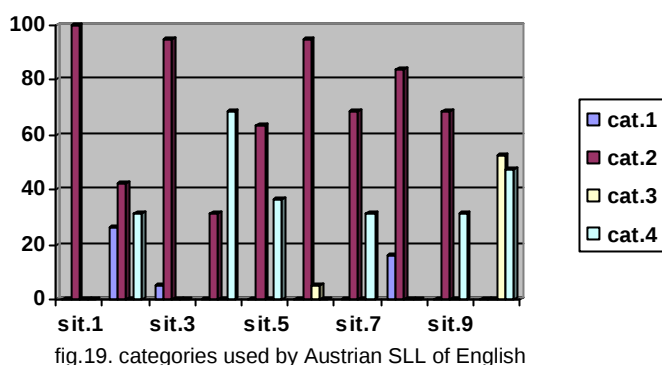
- (114) a. *I'm sorry to be a pain, but...*
b. *Sorry to bother you, but...*
(115) *Entschuldigung, ich will euch nicht stören, aber...*

On the whole, the English and the German natives use nearly twice as many external modification devices as do Spaniards.

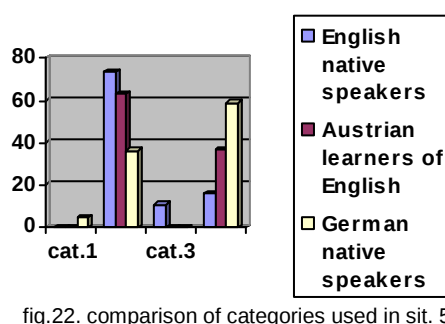
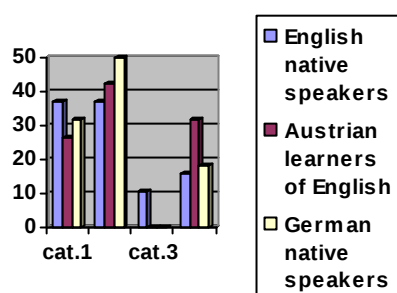
7.2.2. Request realization of Austrian learners of English

In this section we will investigate to what extent Austrian learners of English converge with the native speaker norm of the target language. In instances where a divergence can be noticed, we will compare the results

to the request strategies employed by German native speakers and analyze if there are possible instances of language transfer which may consecutively also lead to pragmatic failure.



Overall, the Austrian learners of English do not diverge from native speakers as regards the most frequently used category and strategy. In all situations except 4 and 10 the most common level of directness is the hearer-oriented conventional indirect request. However, as far as the most direct level of request realization is concerned, Austrian second language learners still use twice as many direct requests as do English native speakers in situations 2 (non-smoking compartment) and 5 (police officer).



In situation 2 language learners use the most direct category even more often than do Austrian German native speakers. Here one cannot speak of language transfer and the problem seems to be related to the learning process and the interlanguage system of the learners. Situation 5, however, may be an instance of transfer. Very often the request is realized in the same way as by native speakers of German. Compare:

(116) a. *Your driver's licence, please!*

b. *Ihren Führerschein, bitte!*

Austrian second language learners use the same strategy, namely the elliptical imperative as do Austrian German native speakers. English native speakers, nearly exclusively use the preparatory condition by uttering a question for permission. Here, we may speak of a pragmatic failure on the side of the language learner. First of all, Austrian learners of English assigned a far stronger illocutionary force on the speech act than did native speakers and they may also have misjudged the relative power of the police officers. It seems that the relative power of the police officers in Austria is assessed higher than in Great Britain, which allows Austrian policemen to utter requests more directly because of their power position.

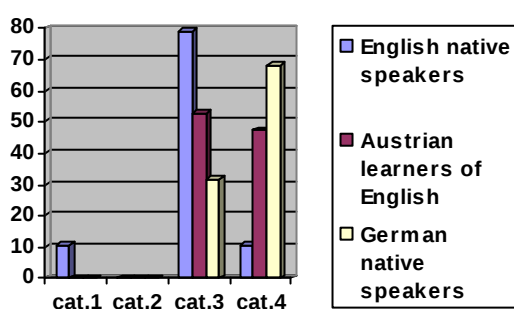


fig.23. comparison of categories used in sit.10

In situation 10 (missing homework) Austrian learners of English used category 4 even four-times as often as did the British. Eighty percent of the English native speakers preferred category 3 over category 4, which was only used by a tenth of the English informants; whereas, more than forty percent of the Austrian language learners employed request strategies belonging to category 4, the most direct level. Here the level of

directness seems to have been transferred from the mother tongue, too, because German natives used category 4 in nearly seventy percent of the cases. Compare the following examples:

English native speakers:

- (117) a. *Robert, you owe me a lot of pieces of homework now, I would like you to hand them in by the end of this week.*
 b. *At the end of the week I'd like every piece of homework that you haven't completed in.*

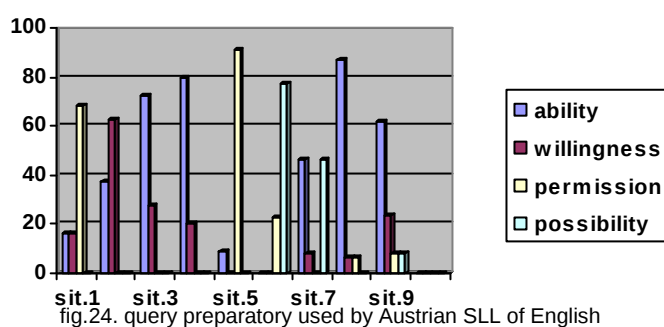
Austrian second language learners of English:

- (118) a. *Robert, please hand in all the homework you haven't handed in to me so far.*
 b. *Robert, I urge you to hand in all of your homework by the end of this week.*

German native speakers:

- (119) a. *Robert, gib mir bitte die fehlenden Hausübungen bis Ende der Woche ab.*
 b. *Robert, bis Ende der Woche sind alle Hausübungen da!*

As regards the realization of the query preparatory there also seem to be some instances of transfer. These, however, will not lead to pragmatic failures since the illocutionary force and the politeness level are the same as generally assigned by native speakers.



Especially in situation 8 (asking for money), the preference of Austrian German speakers for ability questions seems to have been transferred into the learners' interlanguage. Nearly ninety percent chose the ability question as a means of realizing the request and less than ten percent asked for permission. Comparable results can be found in the German native speakers request realizations, in which the ability question was

used in about eighty percent of the cases and the permission question was not uttered once. The English native speakers, however, asked for permission in more than half of the cases.

English native speakers:

- (120) a. *Mum, I know I said I wouldn't ask, but please can I borrow some money?*
 b. *I wondered if I could borrow some money, and I'll pay you back.*

Austrian second language learners of English:

- (121) a. *Do you think that you could give me some pocket money?*
 b. *Could you please lend me some money?*

German native speakers:

- (122) a. *Mama, könntest du mir bitte ein bisschen Geld leihen, damit ich nach London fahren kann?*
 b. *Mama, kannst du mir etwas Geld für London geben?*

7.2.2.1. Internal request modification of Austrian learners of English

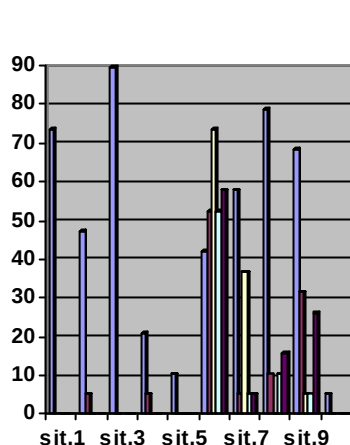


fig.25. syntactic downgraders used by Austrian SLL of English

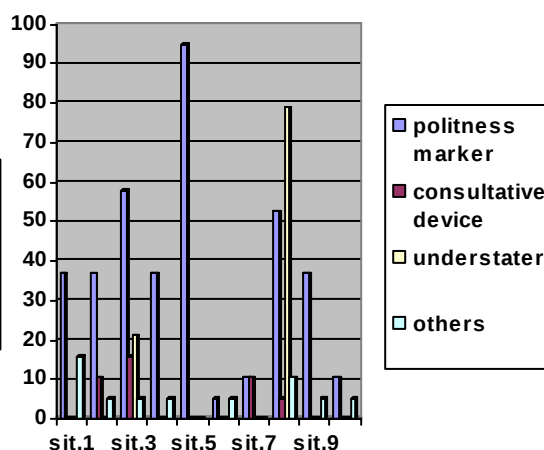


fig.26. lexical/ phrasal downgraders used by Austrian SLL of English

Austrian learners of English use fewer syntactic downgraders and about the same amount of lexical/ phrasal downgraders than do native speakers. Within the first five situations Austrian language learners did not use a lot of syntactic downgrading devices and most frequently the conditional was employed. In situation 6 (exam earlier) the highest number of syntactic

downgrading devices was used. In contrast to the English native speakers, the Austrian learners of English embedded their requests with a very high frequency. This is due to the fact that they very often used the phrase '*I would like to ask if...*' similar to '*Ich möchte gerne fragen, ob...*' of the mother tongue. English native speakers never used this phrase, but rather '*I wondered/ was wondering if...*'. Compare:

English native speakers:

(123) *Sir, I was wondering if I could take the exam a week earlier.*

Austrian second language learners of English:

(124) a. *I wanted to ask you if it's possible to take the exam one week earlier.*

b. *I wanted to ask if there's the possibility of taking the exam one week earlier.*

German natives:

(125) a. *Ich wollte fragen, ob es möglich wäre, meine Prüfung ein bisschen früher zu machen.*

b. *Herr Professor, ich wollte Sie fragen, ob es möglich ist, dass ich die Prüfung eine Woche vor dem eigentlichen Termin ablege.*

As regards lexical / phrasal downgraders, the Austrian learners of English use more politeness markers than do the English native speakers.

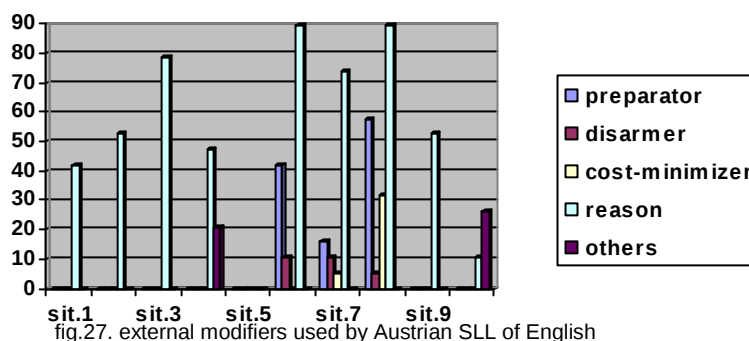
House and Kasper found the same results and drew the following conclusion:

The reason for this unanimous preference seems to be the double function of 'please/bitte' as an illocutionary force indicator, signalling the requestive force of the locution as well as marking the utterance for politeness. [...] This overrepresentation appears to be related to the learners' choice of higher directness levels and fewer syntactic downgraders [...]. (House and Kasper in Lörcher and Schulze 1987:1274)

Furthermore, the Austrian learners of English do not use many consultative devices. English native speakers employ those nearly twice as often. However, the Austrian-German native speakers did not use a

single consultative device in any of the situations. Hence, this under-representation of consultative devices in the learner's language seems to be transfer-induced, too.

7.2.2.2. External request modification of Austrian learners of English



As regards the external request modification devices the most frequently used one is providing the reason for and the justification of the request. Here there is no divergence from the English native speaker group. In situations 1 to 4 the learners used fewer modification devices than did the native speakers. However, in situations 6 (exam earlier, student asks professor) and 7 (presentation earlier, professor asks student) the learners used far more external modifiers than did the natives. Both situations require the performance of face-threatening acts. In order to mitigate the force and in order to overplay their insecurity as regards their linguistic, pragmatic and social competence, learners tend to use a high amount of modifiers, (internal modifiers were most frequently used in these two situations). House and Kasper also observed this phenomenon and referred to it as 'gushing'; also called the 'waffle phenomenon' by Edmondson and House. They define waffling as:

[...] excessive use of linguistic forms to fill a specific discourse 'slot' or 'move', i.e. achieve a specific pragmatic goal. [...] a direct consequence of learners' over-use of 'external modification' or supportive moves. (Edmondson and House in Phillipson et al 1991: 273-274)

Examples of typical instances of gushing / waffling by Austrian learners of English:

(126) a. *May I ask you a question? You see, I will be working as a counsellor in a camp in the United States this summer and I was told that I should have to start working already one week before the end of this term. So I wanted to ask, if there is a possibility that I take my final exam one week earlier, so that I could start working already.*

b. *As I must attend a conference in Manchester in two weeks of time, and I'm afraid I won't be here on the week of your presentation. I'm sorry, but it came rather unexpectedly. I would like to ask you however, to hold your presentation next week if possible.*

Compare the answers of English natives (the ones containing the most words of all results.):

(127) a. *Would it be possible for me to sit the exam a week or more earlier as I have to leave to work in the States a week before term ends?*

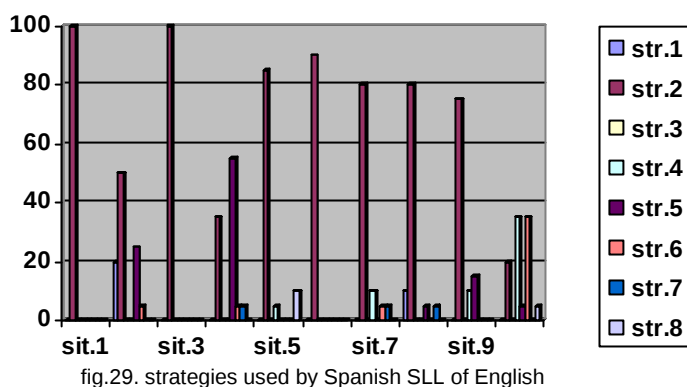
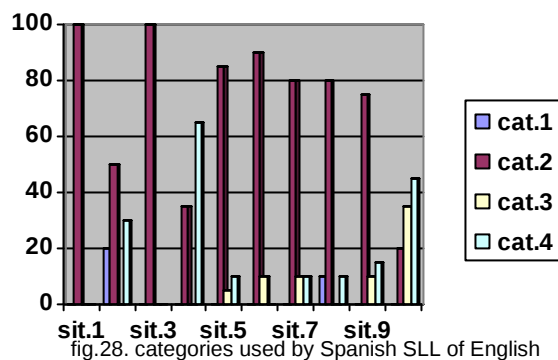
b. *I have to attend a conference in Manchester at very short notice – Would you mind holding your presentation a week earlier than planned? I would be very grateful.*

It seems that learners have the feeling that the more they say the better, because then at least something of what they have said will be effective and lead to the desired outcomes.

In the following we will investigate the strategies of request realization used by Spanish learners of English as a second language.

7.2.3. Request realization of Spanish learners of English

In this last section of the empirical part we will examine the use of requesting strategies of the Spanish learners of English. As with the Austrian informants we will investigate to what extent the Spanish second language learners converge with the native speaker norm of the target language. If there are any cases of divergence, the results will be compared to the request strategies used by the Spanish native speakers in order to identify possible instances of language transfer and pragmatic failure.



On the whole, Spanish learners of English do not diverge from the native speaker norm as regards the most commonly used directness levels and request realization strategies. In all situations, except situations 4 and 10, the most frequently used requests are the conventional indirect ones which are hearer-oriented. Divergences can be noted on the least direct and on the most direct levels. English native speakers use the hinting strategy three times more often than do Spanish second language learners. The Spanish native speakers do not employ hints very frequently. Hence, this under-representation may be due to transfer from the first language to the interlanguage. Similar to the Austrian learners of English, the Spanish use the most direct strategy with a higher frequency than the native speakers in situations 2 (non-smoking compartment) and 10 (missing homework). In contrast to the German speaking second language learners, no divergence can be noted in situation 5 (police officer).

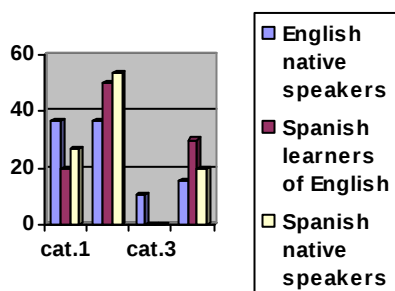


fig.30. comparison of categories used in sit.2

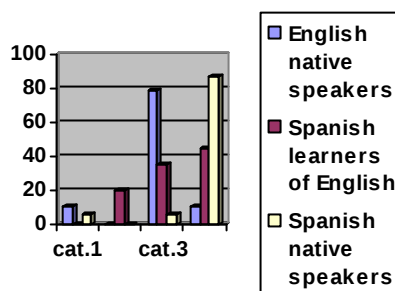


fig.31. comparison of categories used in sit.10

In situation 2 the same outcome as with the Austrian learners of English has been obtained. The Spanish language learners also use the most direct strategy more frequently than do both native speaker groups. In situation 10, the Spanish learners of English employ category 4, which is the most direct level of request realization, four times as often as did English native speakers. Spanish native speakers even use it eight times as much as the English. This frequent use of the most direct level of the Spanish learners may be a possible instance of transfer. Compare:

Spanish native speakers:

(128) a. *Roberto, haz los deberes que no has hecho hasta ahora.*

(Roberto, do every piece of homework you haven't yet done.)

b. *Roberto, tienes que entregarme los deberes este fin de semana.*

(Roberto, you have to hand me in every piece of homework this weekend.)

Spanish learners of English:

(129) a. *Robert, there's a lot of homework that you haven't given to me. Bring them to me by the end of the week.*

b. *You have to hand-in every piece of homework you have not given to me so far by the end of this week.*

The most direct strategy, the imperative, was not used even once by English native speakers. Furthermore, the obligation statement is employed six times more often by Spanish learners of English than by the English themselves. Hence, this may be a possible instance of a

pragmatic failure on the part of the language learners. The Spanish assigned a stronger illocutionary force to the speech act than did the English native speakers and the relative power of a teacher seems to be assessed higher by the Spanish than by the British. In this situation English native speakers tend to prefer the 'want-statement', which belongs to the category of speaker-oriented conventionally indirect requests.

English native speakers:

(130) a. *Robert, I need your homework in before Friday.*

b. *At the end of this week, I'd like every piece of homework that you haven't completed.*

As to the query preparatory, there are some differences in the choice of how to realize the request. Spanish learners of English show a preference for the ability question. In some instances this may be an indication of transfer.

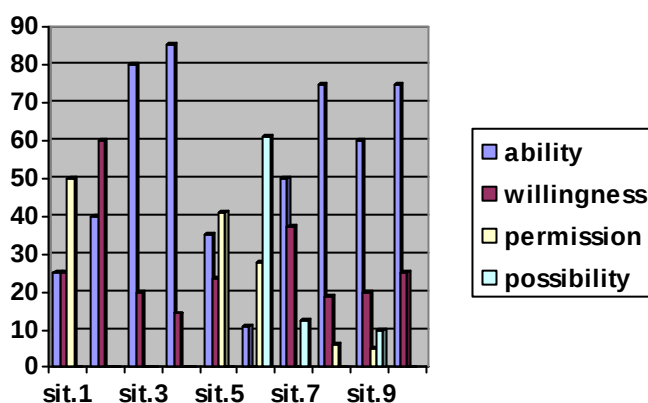


fig.32. query preparatory used by Spanish SLL of English

Differences can be noted especially in situations 5 (police check), 8 (asking for money) and 10 (missing homework). In situation 5 English native speakers exclusively use the question for permission, whereas about ninety percent of the Spanish natives employ the ability question. However, none of the native speaker groups uses the willingness question which is uttered by more than twenty percent of the Spanish learners of English.

Spanish learners of English:

- (131) a. *Excuse me madam, would you mind showing me your driver's licence, please?*
- b. *Good afternoon lady! Would you mind showing me your driver's licence in order to check it?*
- c. *Do you mind if I check your driver's licence?*

Furthermore, these request realizations seem to be inappropriately formal in the context provided. Especially, example (131)b. is contradictory in itself. The use of '*lady*' as a form of address is offensive in this instance and then the speaker continues with an utterance which is too formal within the given context. Spanish learners of English use the construction '*would you mind...*' quite extensively and in some situations, as in situation 5, its usage appears to be rather odd. Showing a police officer one's driver's licence is not a question of willingness, one simply has to do so if requested.

A further instance of transfer of the ability question occurs in situation 8. 90 percent of the Spanish native speakers and 70 percent of the Spanish second language learners use it on this occasion, whereas only about 40 percent of the English native speakers do so.

In situation 10 neither the English nor the Spanish native speaker group uses any of the possible request realization questions belonging to strategy 2. However, one fifth of the Spanish second language learners do so and again they employ the ability question most frequently followed by the willingness question.

Spanish learners of English:

- (132) a. *Would you hand-in every piece of homework by the end of this week?*
- b. *Robert, could you deliver your homework by the end of this week?*
- c. *Excuse me, Robert. Could you bring me your homework by the end of this week?*

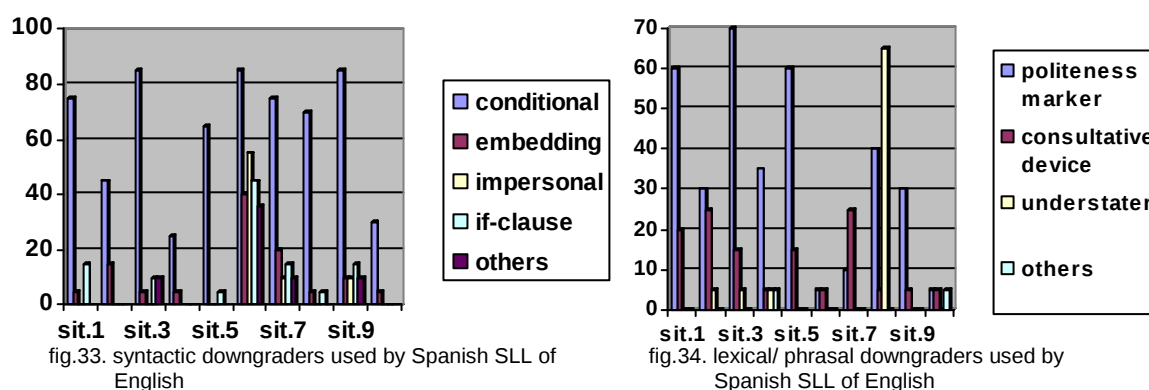
English native speakers:

(133) a. *I'm still waiting for your homework. You've got until the end of the week!*

b. *Robert, you have failed to give in every single piece of homework I have set you. I want them in by Friday and no excuses.*

Those examples may be indicators of pragmatic failure which, however, has not been transfer-induced. The illocutionary force assessed on the speech acts diverges clearly from the assessment by the native speakers. The English realized their requests in a more direct way and not even once did they employ the query preparatory. Maybe the Spanish language learners are aware that they are considered as rather direct by the English, and as they do not want to appear rude, they formulate their requests in an indirect way which increases the politeness level and without being aware that it may be inappropriate in the situation provided.

7.2.3.1. Internal request modification by Spanish learners of English

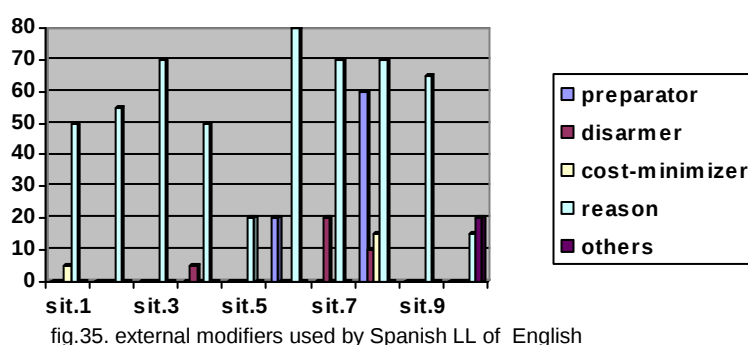


Overall, Spanish second language learners use about the same amount of syntactic and lexical/ phrasal downgraders as do English native speakers. In some situations, however, the Spanish use even more downgrading devices than the native speaker group. As already mentioned above, the Spanish language learners seem to try to avoid being rude and this leads to the result that they simply overuse certain strategies. Another possible explanation could be their limited pragmatic knowledge and so they have internalized one structure which is a polite way of requesting and they simply employ it without carefully considering the context and without being aware that it might be inappropriate in specific situations.

Consultative devices are used with a relative high frequency and twice as often as within the English native speaker group. Very frequently Spanish second language learners employ ‘*Would you mind...*’ for realizing a request.

- (134) a. *Ann, would you mind if I borrowed your notes from last week’s lecture?*
 b. *Excuse me, madam, would you mind showing me your driving licence please?*
 c. *I have been trying to concentrate for a while but with this persistent noise I can’t. Would you mind keeping quiet?*

7.3.2.1. External request modification of Spanish learners of English



As to the external request modification, there is no divergence from the native speaker norm as regards the overall usage. The most commonly used strategy is providing a reason. Just as all the other groups, the Spanish language learners feel the need for justification of their request. They, however, do not prepare the request as often as do native speakers. The Spanish language learners only do so in 2 out of 10 situations, whereas the English employ this external modification strategy in fifty percent of the situations provided. But, Spanish native speakers only use it in two situations as well. Hence, this under-representation may be transfer-induced.

In comparison to the Austrian learners of English, the Spanish do not use more external modifiers in situations 6 (exam earlier, student asks

professor) and 7 (presentation earlier, professor asks student) than the English native speakers, but they show a tendency to waffle in these instances, too. Request realizations become quite long and there is also an extensive use of internal modification devices in these specific situations.

Spanish learners of English:

(135)a. *I was wondering if you could hold your presentation a week earlier, because I have to go to a conference in Manchester in two weeks time. I know that may be difficult for you, but you'll be rewarded! What do you think? Will you try?*

b. *Excuse me, sir! I have a question for you. I'm going to work as a counsellor in a camp in the United States during the summer but I will have to work already before the end of term, so I wouldn't be able to take your exam. I was wondering if we couldn't do it a week earlier. Would that be a problem?*

c. *Professor, I would like to tell you about a problem that I have with the date of the exam. It clashes with a work that I have to do, so I was wondering whether I would be allowed to sit the exam one week earlier.*

Let us briefly recall that extensive use of modifiers and waffling are indications of probable insecurity as regards the linguistic and social competence of the learners. Spanish second language learners might indeed be unsettled regarding their pragmatic competence which would explain the results obtained above.

8. Conclusion

The query preparatory, which belongs to the hearer-oriented conventionally indirect requests, is the most frequently employed request realization strategy within any of the analyzed native speaker and learner groups. This is a typical characteristic of Western European cultures. However, it could be shown that Austrian and Spanish second language learners diverge from the English native speaker norm in some instances.

Once more it was demonstrated that German and Spanish speakers are more direct than their British counterparts and this led to instances of transfer as regards the directness level. Both second language learner groups transferred the more direct strategy commonly employed in their mother tongue from the first language to the interlanguage in two situations. Especially the transfer of the directness level in situation 5 by the Austrian second language learners and in situation 10 by the Spanish learners may be considered instances of pragmatic failure, because the illocutionary force of the speech act was assessed differently than by the English native speakers. Moreover, the social power of the respective person was misjudged, too. Transfer of language-specific structures occurred with Austrian language learners. They frequently transferred the phrase *'Ich wollte fragen, ob... / I wanted to ask if...'* and the routinized utterance of police officers *'Ihren Führerschein, bitte. / Your driver's licence, please.'*

Furthermore, Austrian second language learners use fewer syntactic downgraders than does the English native speaker group, whereas the Spanish learners employ even more of these structures in some situations. On the whole, there is no divergence as regards the overall number of lexical or phrasal downgraders between the native and the non-native speaker groups.

As to the external modification devices, all speakers, be it native or non-native, show a clear preference for providing a reason. Justifying one's request seems to be a valuable strategy for getting the requestee to carry out the desired act. Moreover, the waffling phenomenon occurred with both learner groups and especially in situations 6 and 7.

Finally, over-elaborateness and a too formal level became apparent characteristics of the Spanish second language learners, which led to the result that many request realizations seemed to be odd in the context of the situation provided.

On the whole, it could be shown that even learners at an advanced level still face problems linked to their pragmatic competence. In this way my study supports the theoretical postulates mentioned in parts one and two of the thesis and similar results to those of prominent researchers in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, like e.g. Blum-Kulka, Trosborg and Kasper among others, could be obtained.

As to the future of foreign language teaching, it would be desirable if the development of pragmatic and linguistic competencies of second language learners were fostered even better. This task should already begin in the very first year of the second language acquisition process. It would be desirable, if teachers repetitively pointed out the differences between the cultures and the languages and thus raised a higher awareness in the learners of how easily one makes a pragmatic failure without even noticing. Hence, it should be emphasized how significant pragmatic competence is for successful communication in the target language, so that being unintentionally rude or impolite can be avoided.

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Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich vorwiegend mit Sprachtransfer und pragmatischen Fehler.

Die Diplomarbeit gliedert sich nach einem einleitenden Kapitel über den Wissenschaftsbereich der Pragmatik und deren einzelnen Forschungsrichtungen in drei Teile. Der erste umfasst die Themenbereiche Sprachtransfer und pragmatische Fehler. Nach einem kurzen geschichtlichen Einblick in die Entwicklung dieses Forschungsbereiches, welcher dem der Interimssprache angehört, werden im nächsten Abschnitt Streitfragen über dessen Definition behandelt. Grundsätzlich versteht man unter Sprachtransfer die Beeinflussung der Interimssprache des Lernalers durch Konvergenzen beziehungsweise Divergenzen, die zwischen der Ziel- und der Ausgangssprache bestehen. Es gibt natürlich unterschiedliche Faktoren, die diesen Transfer beeinflussen, wie zum Beispiel das sprachliche Niveau des Lernalers, soziolinguistische Faktoren oder die subjektiv wahrgenommene Distanz zwischen Muttersprache und der zu erlernenden Sprache. Weiters kann sich Sprachtransfer auf unterschiedlichste Weise und auf den verschiedensten Ebenen (Phonetik, Phonologie, Semantik, Syntaktik oder auf der des Diskurses), manifestieren. Dem Transfer auf Diskursebene ist besondere Beachtung zu schenken, denn dieser kann, wenn negativ, zu pragmatischen Fehlern führen.

Das Kapitel, welches die pragmatischen Fehler behandelt, zeigt zunächst die Wichtigkeit von kommunikativer und pragmatischer Kompetenz auf, deren Niveau ausschlaggebend für das Auftreten von pragmatischen Fehlern ist. Letztere treten auf, wenn die illokutionäre Kraft eines Sprechaktes stärker oder schwächer ist als diejenige, die ein Muttersprachler dem linguistischen Zeichen zuordnen würde. In diesem Fall spricht man von einem pragmalinguistischen Fehler. Soziopragmatische Fehler passieren, wenn ein Lerner die soziale Distanz der Konversationspartner falsch einschätzt oder bestimmte Themen anspricht, die in der Kultur der Zielsprache als tabu gelten. Wichtig ist

jedoch, dass sich die Sprachenlerner oft nicht bewusst sind, so einen Fehler begangen zu haben.

Der zweite Teil der Arbeit zentriert die Themen Höflichkeit, Sprechakte und Aufforderungen. Das Hauptaugenmerk liegt im vierten Kapitel auf der Höflichkeitstheorie von Brown und Levinson. Vor allem Unterschiede der im empirischen Teil untersuchten Kulturen beziehungsweise Sprachgemeinschaften werden hier aufgezeigt. Im anschließenden Kapitel wird auf die Sprechakttheorien von Austin und Searle eingegangen und es zeigt deren Entwicklung auf. Austin begann zunächst mit einer Klassifizierung in konstative und performative Sprechakte, war aber jedoch bald nicht mehr zufrieden damit und nahm eine neue Einteilung in lokutäre, illokutäre und perlokutäre Sprechakte vor. Diese Kategorisierung wird dann von seinem Alumnus Searle weiterentwickelt. Das letzte Kapitel des theoretischen Abschnittes beschäftigt sich mit einer besonderen Form von Sprechakten – nämlich mit Aufforderungen und Bitten, im Englischen ‚requests‘ genannt. Im Hinblick auf den empirischen Teil der Arbeit werden die einzelnen Möglichkeiten und Techniken, die ein Sprecher anwendet um solch einen Sprechakt zu produzieren, aufgezeigt. Auch hier wird auf individuelle Tendenzen von English-, Deutsch-, und Spanischsprachigen aufmerksam gemacht. So gelten die Briten als „höflicher“ als die Deutschen und die Spanier, welche wiederum die direkteste Art um Bitten und Aufforderungen zu formulieren anwenden.

Der empirische Teil der Arbeit umfasst eine kleine Studie zur Verbalisierung von eben diesen Sprechakten von deutsch- und spanischsprachigen Englischstudenten. Die Daten wurden mit Hilfe eines spezifischen Fragebogens gesammelt. Die Aufgaben, die hier den Probanden gestellt werden, werden als ‚discourse completion tasks‘ bezeichnet. Das heißt, nach einer kurzen Kontextualisierung einer Situation müssen die Befragten eine Aufforderung formulieren, welche zur darauf folgenden, bereits vorgegebenen Antwort passt. Insgesamt wurden 21 Fragebögen von Österreichern, die Deutsch als Muttersprache haben, 19 von englischen und 15 von spanischen Muttersprachlern ausgewertet. Weiters wurden 19 österreichische und 20 spanische Englischstudenten dazu aufgefordert an der Studie teilzunehmen. Ziel der Untersuchung war

es, mögliche Fälle von Sprachtransfer und pragmatischen Fehlern aufzuzeigen. Diese konnten auch trotz eines sehr hohen Kompetenzniveaus beider Sprachstudentengruppen nachgewiesen werden. Sowohl spanische als auch österreichische Englischstudenten verbalisierten die Bitten bzw. Aufforderungen teilweise viel direkter als die englischen Muttersprachler und in mindestens zwei der gegebenen Situationen könnte dies zu pragmatischen Fehlern und somit auch zu einem möglichen Konversationszusammenbruch führen. Ein weiteres wichtiges Resultat ist der Nachweis des so genannten ‚waffling‘ Phänomens in zwei Situationen bei beiden Lernergruppen. ‚To waffle‘ bedeutet soviel wie schwafeln und bezeichnet die exzessive Verwendung von linguistischen Formen um ein bestimmtes pragmatisches Ziel zu erreichen. Oft deutet dies darauf hin, dass sich die Lerner in ihrer linguistischen und soziokulturellen Kompetenz verunsichert fühlen. Weiters waren die spanischen Englischstudenten, ganz wider Erwarten, in einigen Situationen zu formell. Dies kann aber oft von Muttersprachlern kontextspezifisch als unangemessen angesehen werden.

Die empirische Studie hat gezeigt, wie viele andere schon zuvor, dass Sprachenlerner auch auf fortgeschrittenem Niveau noch keine hohe pragmatische Kompetenz besitzen. Auch wenn das Hauptaugenmerk im Fremdsprachenunterricht bereits von grammatikalischer auf pragmatische Kompetenz gelenkt wurde, scheint die Wichtigkeit letzterer noch nicht ganz erfasst worden zu sein. Grammatikalische Fehler werden von jedem Muttersprachler verziehen, aber pragmatische Fehler hingegen werden oft als absichtliche Akte aufgefasst und rücken den Lerner somit in ein schlechtes Licht. Daher ist es unabdingbar, dass so gut wie möglich an der pragmatischen Kompetenz von Lernenden gearbeitet und somit verhindert wird, dass Sprachenlerner unabsichtlich unhöflich und schroff sind und ohne jegliches Bewusstsein auf diese Weise ihren Kommunikationspartner verärgern oder beleidigen.

Appendix

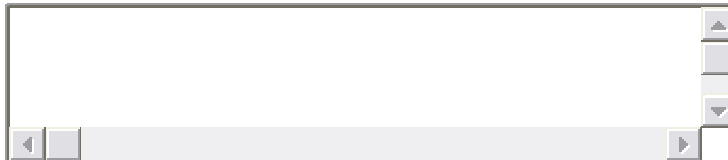
Questionnaire: request realization by German native speakers

Ich heie Bianca Schreiner und studiere Lehramt mit der Fcherkombination Englisch - Spanisch an der Universitt Wien. Im Rahmen meiner Diplomarbeit "Language transfer and pragmatic failure: a study of German and Spanish learners of English as a second language" fhre ich eine Studie zur Formulierung von Bitten, Forderungen und Wnschen in der Erst- und Zweitsprache durch. Ich bitte Sie, den Fragebogen vollstndig auszufllen. Die Daten werden anonym ausgewertet. Vielen Dank fr Ihre Mithilfe!

Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden zwlf Situationen. Nach jeder Situation sollen Sie eine Bitte, Forderung oder einen Wunsch formulieren. Tun Sie dies bitte so, als wrden Sie an einer realen Konversation teilnehmen.

1. Im Hrsaal

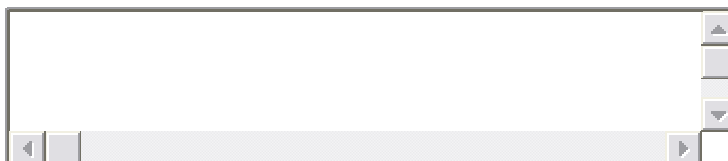
Susi hat die Vorlesung letzte Woche versumt und mchte sich Annes Notizen ausborgen. Susi:

A rectangular text input box with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically: a top button with an upward arrow, a middle button with a downward arrow, and a bottom button with a rightward arrow. On the left side, there are two small square buttons: a leftward arrow and a rightward arrow.

Anne: Du kannst sie gerne haben, aber gib sie mir bitte sptestens am Freitag wieder. Ich muss nmlich fr die Prfung lernen.

2. In einem Nichtraucherabteil

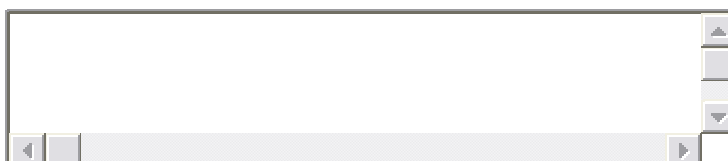
Michael fhrt von Wien nach Salzburg. Einer der Reisenden, der zugleich mit ihm einsteigt, setzt sich in das gleiche Abteil. Michael freut sich, dass dieses Mal ein Sitzplatz im Nichtraucherabteil frei gewesen ist. Nach einer Weile zndet sich der andere Mitreisende eine Zigarette an. Michael:

A rectangular text input box with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically: a top button with an upward arrow, a middle button with a downward arrow, and a bottom button with a rightward arrow. On the left side, there are two small square buttons: a leftward arrow and a rightward arrow.

Passagier: Entschuldige. Ich habe nicht mitbekommen, dass das ein Nichtraucherabteil ist. Ich mache sie schon aus.

3. In der Bibliothek

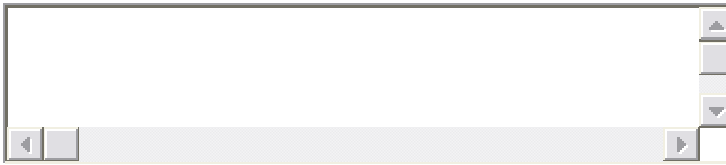
Christina arbeitet in der Bibliothek an ihrer Seminararbeit. Die Mdchen, die am gleichen Tisch sitzen, tratschen schon eine ganze Weile. Christina kann sich nicht konzentrieren. Christina:

A rectangular text input box with a light gray border. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically: a top button with an upward arrow, a middle button with a downward arrow, and a bottom button with a rightward arrow. On the left side, there are two small square buttons: a leftward arrow and a rightward arrow.

Eines der Mädchen: Entschuldigung. Wir sind schon leise.

4. In einer WG

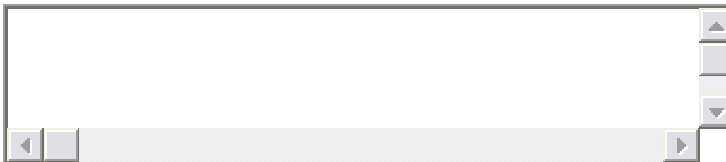
Susi und Tom wohnen in einer WG. Die Küche ist ein regelrechter Saustall. Dieses Mal ist Tom mit dem Putzen dran. Es ist nicht das erste Mal, dass Susi ihn daran erinnern muss, endlich aufzuräumen. Susi:



Tom: Ja, ich weiß eh. Ich putze sie, sobald ich Zeit habe.

5. Bei einer Polizeikontrolle

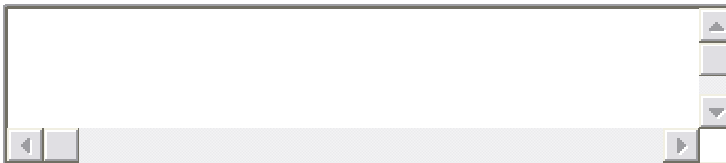
Frau Peters ist gerade auf dem Weg nachhause von der Arbeit, als sie von der Polizei angehalten wird. Der Polizist will ihren Führerschein kontrollieren. Polizist:



Frau Peters: Natürlich. Hier, bitteschön.

6. Nach einem Universitätskurs

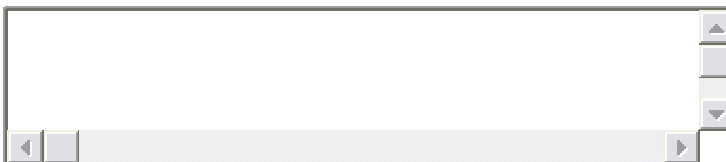
Stephan will in den Sommerferien als Betreuer in einem Ferienlager in den USA arbeiten. Da er bereits vor Semesterschluss zu arbeiten beginnen soll, muss er nun seinen Professor fragen, ob er die Prüfung bereits eine Woche früher machen darf. Stephan:



Professor: An und für sich sprich nichts dagegen, wenn wir ein passendes Datum finden. Lassen Sie mich mal in meinem Terminkalender nachschauen.

7. Zu Beginn eines Universitätskurses

Herr Schmidt unterrichtet einen Literaturkurs. Ziemlich kurzfristig hat er erfahren, dass er an einer Konferenz in Manchester teilnehmen muss, die in zwei Wochen stattfindet. Nun muss er einen seiner Studenten bitten, die Präsentation eine Woche früher als geplant zu halten. Hr. Schmidt:

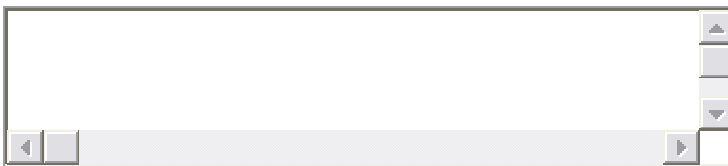


Student: Naja, ich habe gerade ziemlich viel zu tun, aber ich werde es schon schaffen.

SIE SIND FAST AM ENDE DES FRAGEBOGENS ANGELANGT. ICH MÖCHTE MICH SCHON JETZT FÜR IHRE GEDULD UND ZEIT BEDANKEN!

8. Bei Monikas Eltern

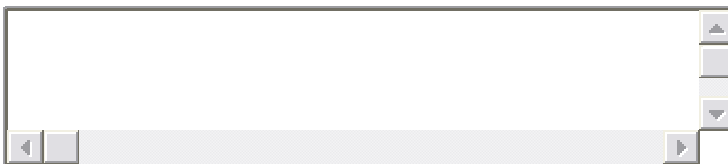
Monika hat ihrer Mutter versprochen, dass sie sich alles selbst finanziert. Ihre besten Freundinnen haben einen Wochenendtrip nach London geplant, den sie auf keinen Fall versäumen möchte. Leider kann sie sich das nicht leisten und bittet ihre Mutter um Geld. Monika:



Mutter: In Ordnung. Ich gebe dir ein bisschen Taschengeld für London, aber das ist jetzt wirklich das allerletzte Mal.

9. Ein Telefongespräch

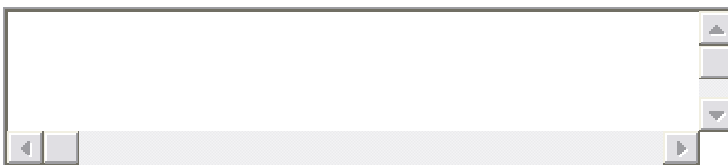
Paul plant mit dem Auto durch Deutschland zufahren. Da er kein eigenes Auto besitzt, beschließt er bei einer Autovermietung anzurufen und einen Kostenvoranschlag zu verlangen. Paul:



Frau Smart: Natürlich kann ich Ihnen eine Preisliste mit all unseren Sonderangeboten während der Sommerferien schicken.

10. In der Schule

Frau Becker ist Englischlehrerin. Sie will, dass Robert ihr alle Hausübungen, die er bis jetzt verabsäumt hat, bis Ende der Woche nachbringt. Fr. Becker:



Robert: Bis Ende dieser Woche? Das schaffe ich nie.

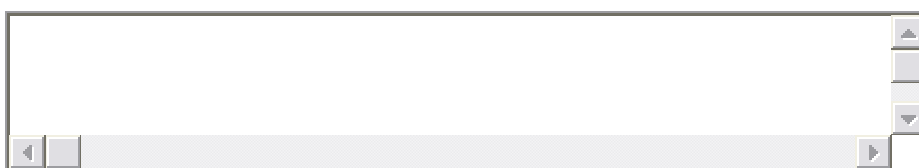
Questionnaire: request realization by Spanish native speakers

Me llama Bianca Schreiner y estudio filología inglesa y española en la universidad de Viena. Este cuestionario es parte de mi tesina sobre "Language transfer and pragmatic failure: a study of German and Spanish learners of English as a second language". Por favor, rellene completamente el formulario. Los datos van a ser evaluados anónimos. ¡Muchas gracias por su ayuda!

Por favor, lea las doce situaciones siguientes. Después de cada situación tiene que escribir un ruego, mando o deseo. Hágalo como si participara en una conversación real.

1. En el aula de la universidad

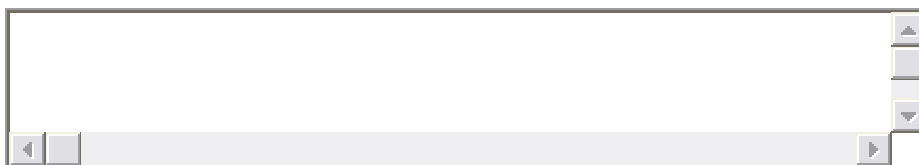
Pilar faltó a clase la semana pasada. Ahora quiere que Bea le preste los apuntes. Pilar:



Bea: Sí, claro, toma. Pero devuélvemelos antes del viernes que tengo que estudiar para el examen.

2. En el compartimento de no fumadores

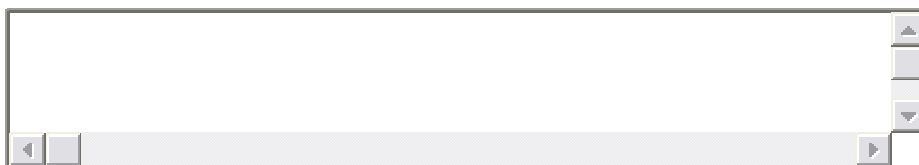
Miguel va en tren de Barcelona a Madrid. Uno de los viajeros que sube al tren en la misma estación se sienta en su mismo compartimento. Miguel está contento de que haya un asiento libre en la zona de no fumadores. Pero no tarda mucho hasta que el otro viajero se enciende un cigarillo. Miguel:



Viajero: Ay perdona. No me había dado cuenta de que era de no fumadores. Voy a apagarlo.

3. En la biblioteca

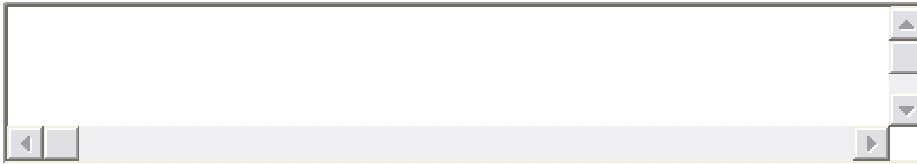
Cristina trabaja en la biblioteca por sus estudios. Algunas chicas sentadas a la misma mesa, ya están charlando desde hace un rato. Cristina no puede concentrarse.



Una de las chicas: Perdona, ya nos callamos.

4. En un piso compartido

Susana y Pablo viven juntos. La cocina está hecha un asco. Está vez le toca a Pablo limpiarla. Y no es la primera vez que Susana tiene que decirle que limpie. Susana:



Pablo: Sí, sí. Voy a limpiarla en cuanto tenga tiempo.

5. En un control policial

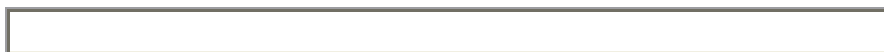
La Sra. Gómez está yendo a su casa después del trabajo cuando un policia la detiene. Quiere revisar su carnet de conducir. Policia:



Sra. Gómez: Por supuesto. Aquí lo tiene.

6. Después de una clase en la universidad

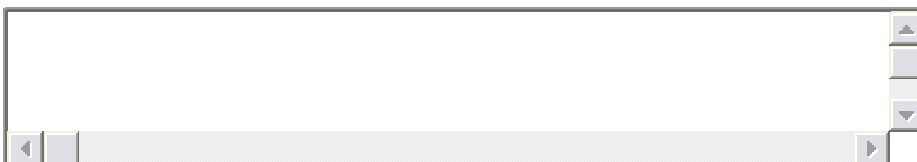
Estebán quiere trabajar como monitor en un campamento en los Estados Unidos durante las vacaciones del verano. Como tiene que empezar a trabajar antes de que acabe el semestre, tiene que preguntar a su profesor si puede hacer el examen una semana antes. Estebán:



Profesor: Bueno, por mi no hay problema. Sólo necesitamos fijar una fecha conveniente para ambos. Déjame consultar mi agenda.

7. Al empezar una clase en la universidad

El Sr. López es profesor de literatura. Hace poco que se ha enterado que tiene que participar en un congreso en Manchester dentro de dos semanas. Ahora tiene que pedir a un estudiante que haga su ponencia una semana antes de lo planificado. Sr López:



Estudiante: Es que tengo un montón de cosas que hacer. Pero, bueno, voy a intentarlo.

SÓLO FALTAN ALGUNAS SITUACIONES. ¡GRACIAS POR SU PACIENCIA!

8. En casa de los padres de Mónica

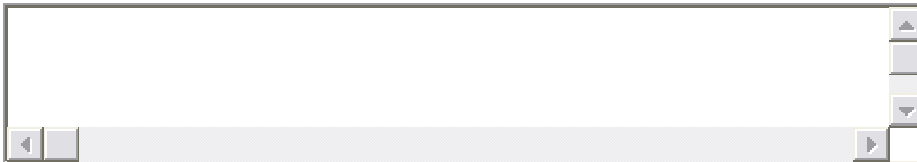
Mónica ha prometido a su madre que se va a pagar todos sus gastos. Sus mejores amigas han planificado un viaje a Londres para el fin de semana. Mónica también quiere ir, pero no puede permitírselo. Tiene que pedirle dinero a su madre. Mónica:



Madre: Bueno, de acuerdo, voy a darte un poco de dinero. Pero que sea la última vez.

9. Al teléfono

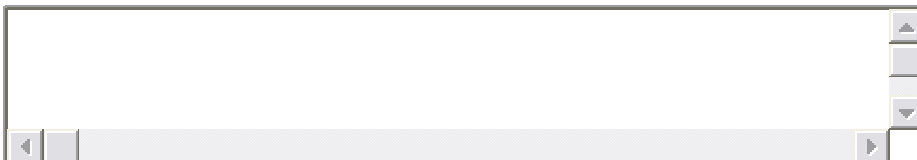
Pablo quiere explorar Portugal en coche. Como no tiene coche propio, llama a una empresa de alquiler de coches y pide presupuesto. Pablo:



Sra Seat: Por supuesto, puedo enviarle una lista con las ofertas que tenemos durante las vacaciones de verano.

10. En la escuela

La Sra. Martínez es profesora de inglés. Le manda a Roberto que haga hasta el fin de semana todos los deberes que no ha hecho durante el curso. Sra. Martínez:



Roberto: Pero Sra Martínez ¿hasta el fin de esta semana? Es imposible.

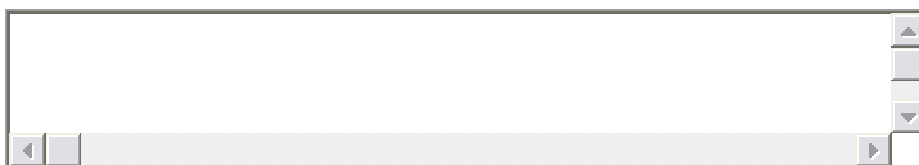
Questionnaire: request realization by English native speakers

My name is Bianca Schreiner and I am studying English and Spanish at the University of Vienna. Within the context of my diploma thesis on "Language transfer and pragmatic failure: a study of German and Spanish learners of English as a second language" I am carrying out a study on the verbalization of requests in the first and second language. Please fill out the form completely. Data will be treated anonymously. Thank you for your cooperation and help!

Please read the following twelve situations. After each situation you will be asked to formulate a request. Respond as you would in actual conversation.

1. In the lecture hall

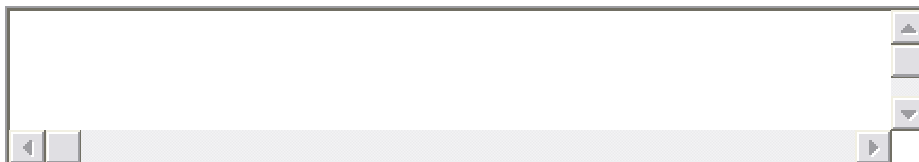
Susan missed last week's lecture and would like to borrow Ann's notes. Susan:



Ann: Sure, but let me have them back at the latest on Friday. I need to study for the exam.

2. In a non-smoking compartment

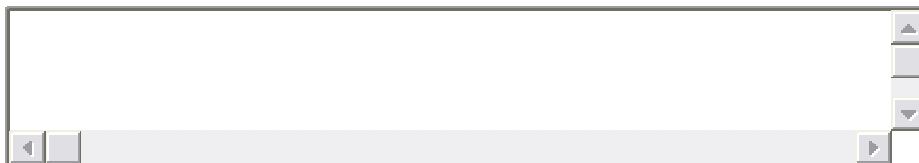
Michael is going from York to Manchester. One of the other travellers boarding the train takes a seat in the same compartment as he does. Michael is really happy that a free seat was available in the non-smoking area of the train. After a while the other passenger lights a cigarette. Michael:



Passenger: Oh, sorry, I didn't realize this is a non-smoking compartment. I'll put it out.

3. At the library

Christine is working on her seminar paper in the library. Some girls sitting at the same table have already been chatting for a while. Christine cannot concentrate. Christine:



One of the girls: Sorry, we'll be quiet.

4. At a shared flat

Susan and Tom share a flat. The kitchen is really in a mess. This time

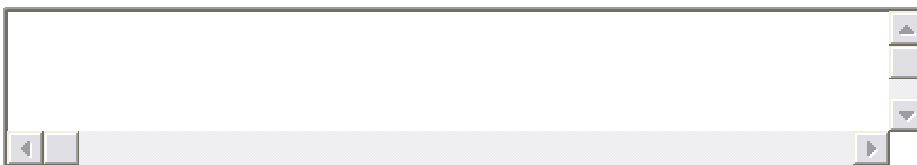
it is Tom's turn to do the cleaning up. It is not the first time that Susan reminds him of doing so. Susan:



Tom: Yeah, I know. I'll do it as soon as I've got time.

5. At a police check

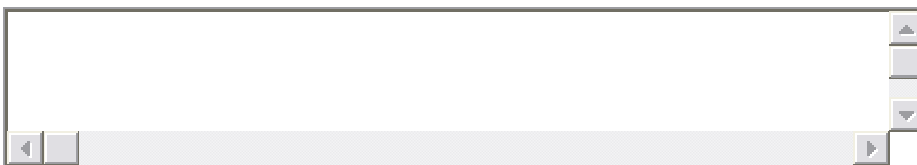
Mrs. Peters is on her way home from work as she has to stop at a police check. The police officer wants to check her driver's licence. Officer:



Mrs Peters: Yes, of course. Here it is.

6. After a class at university

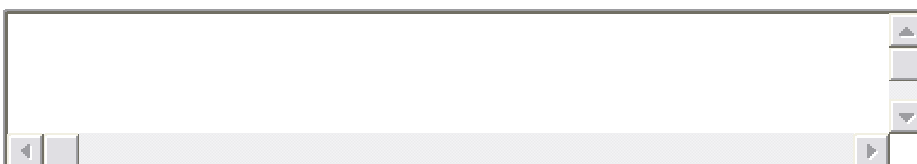
Steven is going to work as a counsellor in a camp in the United States during the summer. Since he has to start work already before the end of term, he has to ask his professor if he is allowed to take the exam one week earlier. Steven:



Professor: Well, I don't see any problem, but we will have to find a convenient date. Let me check my appointments book.

7. At the beginning of a university course

Mr Smith is teaching one of the literature courses. Due to the fact that he has to attend a conference in Manchester at rather short notice in a two weeks time, he has to ask one of his students to hold the presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Mr Smith:

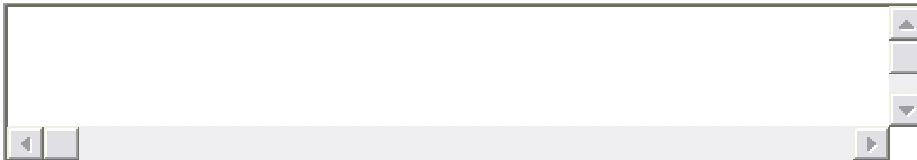


Student: Uff, I've got a lot of work at the moment, but I'll try my best.

YOU HAVE NEARLY REACHED THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
I ALREADY WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND HELP!

8. At Monica's parents' home

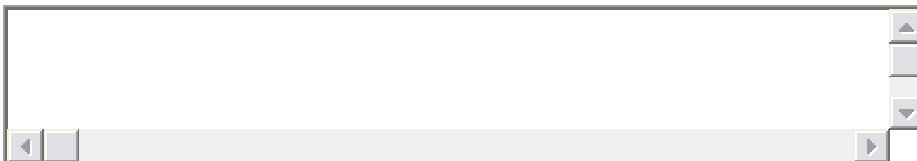
Monica has promised her mother that she will come up for all her expenses on her own. Her best friends have planned to go on a weekend trip to London which she does not want to miss. Unfortunately, she cannot afford it and asks her mother to for some money. Monica:



Mother: Ok, I'll give you some pocket money for your trip, but this is really the last time.

9. A telephone call

Paul is planning to tour England by car. Since he does not own one, he decides to contact a car rental agency and asks for a price quote. Paul:

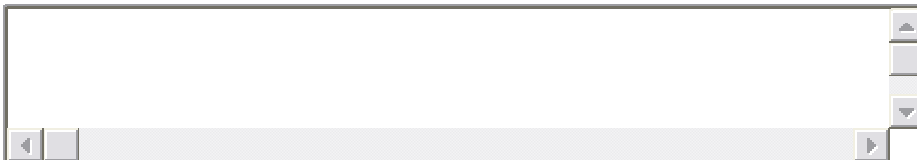


Ms. Smart: Of course, I can send you a quote of some of our special offers during the summer holidays.

10. At school

Mrs Baker is an English teacher. She wants Robert to hand-in every piece of homework he has not given to her so far by the end of this week. Mrs Baker:

Robert: But Mrs Baker, by the end of this week? This is impossible.



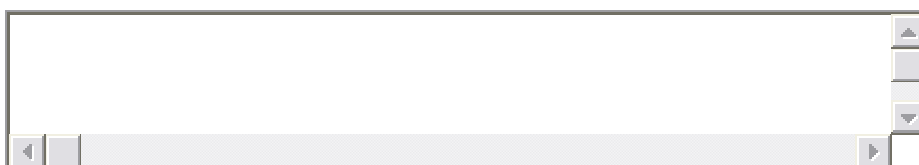
Questionnaire: request realization by second language learners

My name is Bianca Schreiner and I am studying English and Spanish at the University of Vienna. Within the context of my diploma thesis on "Language transfer and pragmatic failure: a study of German and Spanish learners of English as a second language" I am carrying out a study on the verbalization of requests in the first and second language. Please fill out the form completely. Data will be treated anonymously. Thank you for your cooperation and help!

Please read the following ten situations. After each situation you will be asked to formulate a request. Respond as you would in actual conversation.

1. In the lecture hall

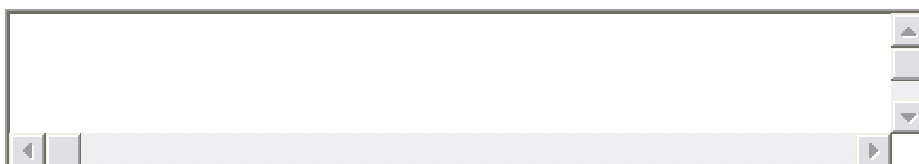
Susan missed last week's lecture and would like to borrow Ann's notes. Susan:



Ann: Sure, but let me have them back at the latest on Friday. I need to study for the exam.

2. In a non-smoking compartment

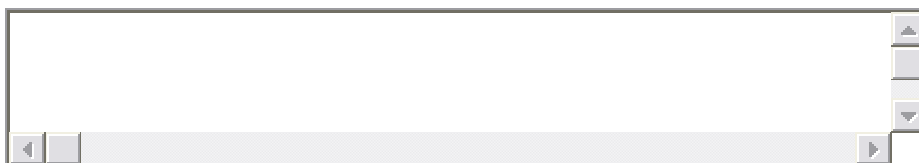
Michael is going from York to Manchester. One of the other travellers boarding the train takes a seat in the same compartment as he does. Michael is really happy that a free seat was available in the non-smoking area of the train. After a while the other passenger lights a cigarette. Michael:



Passenger: Oh, sorry, I didn't realize this is a non-smoking compartment. I'll put it out.

3. At the library

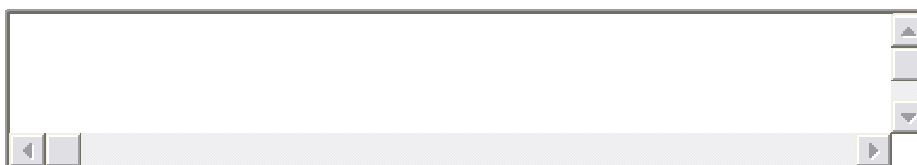
Christine is working on her seminar paper in the library. Some girls sitting at the same table have already been chatting for a while. Christine cannot concentrate. Christine:



One of the girls: Sorry, we'll be quiet.

4. At a shared flat

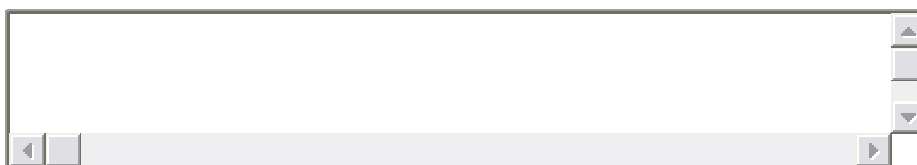
Susan and Tom share a flat. The kitchen is really in a mess. This time it is Tom's turn to do the cleaning up. It is not the first time that Susan reminds him of doing so. Susan:



Tom: Yeah, I know. I'll do it as soon as I've got time.

5. At a police check

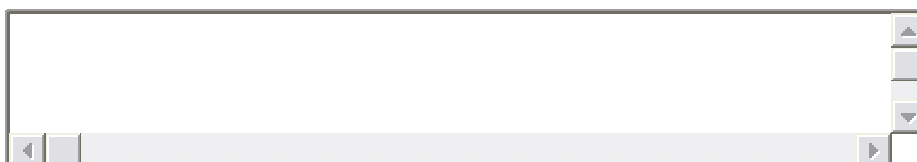
Mrs. Peters is on her way home from work as she has to stop at a police check. The police officer wants to check her driver's licence. Officer:



Mrs Peters: Yes, of course. Here it is.

6. After a class at university

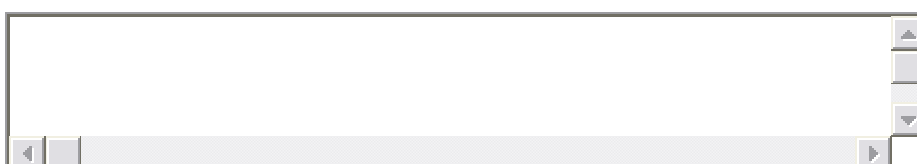
Steven is going to work as a counsellor in a camp in the United States during the summer. Since he has to start work already before the end of term, he has to ask his professor if he is allowed to take the exam one week earlier. Steven:



Professor: Well, I don't see any problem, but we will have to find a convenient date. Let me check my appointments book.

7. At the beginning of a university course

Mr Smith is teaching one of the literature courses. Due to the fact that he has to attend a conference in Manchester at rather short notice in a two weeks time, he has to ask one of his students to hold the presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Mr Smith:

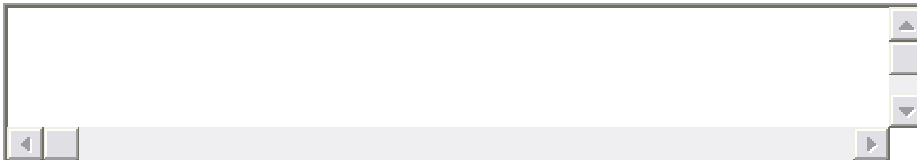


Student: Uff, I've got a lot of work at the moment, but I'll try my best.

YOU HAVE NEARLY REACHED THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
I ALREADY WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND HELP!

8. At Monica's parents' home

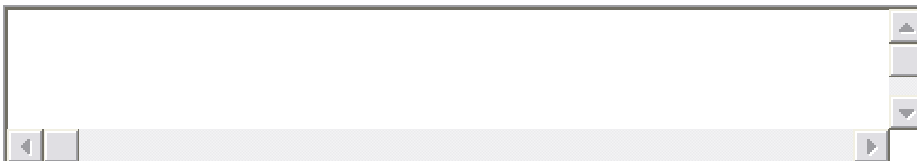
Monica has promised her mother that she will come up for all her expenses on her own. Her best friends have planned to go on a weekend trip to London which she does not want to miss. Unfortunately, she cannot afford it and asks her mother for some money. Monica:



Mother: Ok, I'll give you some pocket money for your trip, but this is really the last time.

9. A telephone call

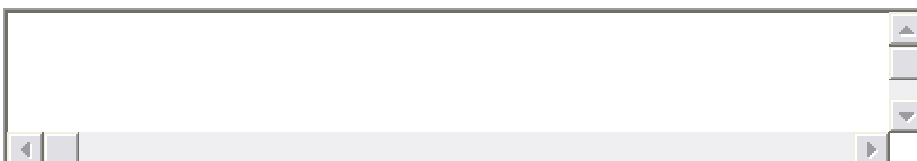
Paul is planning to tour England by car. Since he does not own one, he decides to contact a car rental agency and asks for a price quote. Paul:



Ms. Smart: Of course, I can send you a quote of some of our special offers during the summer holidays.

10. At school

Mrs Baker is an English teacher. She wants Robert to hand-in every piece of homework he has not given to her so far by the end of this week. Mrs Baker:



Robert: But Mrs Baker, by the end of this week? This is impossible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME PERSONAL
QUESTIONS.

Personal information:

11. Are you male or female?

☐ male ☐ female

12. How old are you?

☐ 18-24 ☐ 31-40
☐ 25-30 ☐ older

13. Is English your mother tongue?

☐ yes ☐ no

14. If no, what is your mother tongue?

15. Are you studying English as part of a diploma/ masters degree?

☐ yes ☐ no

16. For how long have you been studying English at university (in years)?

☐ 1 ☐ 4
☐ 2 ☐ more
☐ 3

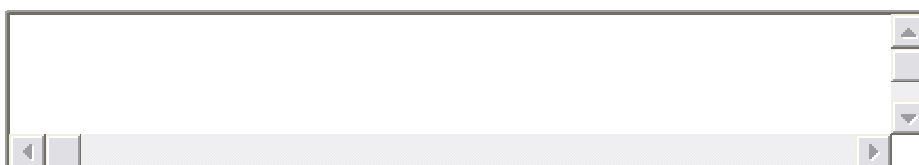
17. For how many years have you been learning English (incl school)?

☐ 1-2 ☐ 9-10
☐ 3-5 ☐ 11-12
☐ 6-8 ☐ longer

18. Have you ever been to an English speaking country for an extended period of time?

☐ yes ☐ no

19. If so, where have you been (country) and for how long did you stay (in weeks)?



20. What do you think is your general level of competence in English?

☐ elementary	☐ advanced
☐ intermediate	☐ native-like
☐ upper-intermediate	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Lebenslauf

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