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Defining Levels of Pragmatic Competence in English in Chilean Pre-service English Language Teachers.

Tesis para optar al Grado de Magíster en Lingüística, Mención Lengua Inglesa

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Abstract

The study reported in this thesis investigated how the pragmatic abilities of three groups of English Language Teaching student in a Chilean University could be classified. The speech act of request (Saeed, 2009) was considered as the speech act of choice to evaluate the pragmatic performance of the participants. Bachman's (1990) Model of Communicative Language Ability along with The Common European Framework of Language Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) were used to stablish the language domain that was to be assessed. Transcriptions of the participants were analyzed using a rubric designed specifically for this purpose. The analysis showed that the ELT students' performance could be classified in three different levels. Furthermore, only two of these groups had a marked pragmatic performance, whereas the other could be considered a transition of two different levels of performance. These findings are expected to raise awareness of the importance of this ability in the instruction of English as a second language.

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This work is yours

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1.   Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Pragmatics is part of what to know a language is and so its importance in the instruction of English as a second or foreign language is apparent (Bachman, 1990; Liu, 2006). LoCastro (2012) also acknowledges the importance of students of English to be competent not only in the use of the language itself but also in the accepted norms of behavior of the target culture.

To conduct the study reported in this thesis, Bachman's (1990) Model of Communicative Language Ability was used as the theoretical background to guide the assessment of the aforementioned abilities in Chilean students of the English Language Teaching program at Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile. The Common European Framework of Language Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) was used to specify the construct of the assessment tool used to assess the participant's pragmatic performance.

The test used in this study was the Oral Completion Discourse Task (Liu, 2006). To categorize the performance of the participants, a rubric was designed to make an objective judgment of the behavior. This rubric has been adapted from the one used by Cohen and Olshtain (1994) in their communicative ability scales. However, some elements Pinyo, Aksornjarung, and Laohawiriyanon (2010), Brown and Levinson (1978), and Yamashita (2008) were added to make this rubric a holistic assessment tool.

The corpus of this study was composed of forty-five transcripts obtained from several interviews with students from the English Language Teaching Program at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile. The levels of English of these students range from A2 to B2, according to the Common European Language Reference Framework (Council of Europe, 2001).

1.2 Motivation for the study

Pragmatics has not been as explored as other areas of English teaching and assessment (Roever, 2011)and it has not been addressed with attention by scholars (Pinyo at al, 2010), in spite of being an essential component of the knowledge and performance of a language (Bachman, 1990).Much literature has been written dealing with the assessment of grammar, vocabulary, speaking, reading, but pragmatic abilities seem to have been left behind by the main authors in the area.

The present study intents to be a qualitative and quantitative work aimed at determining different levels of pragmatic performance of Chilean students of English language teaching. This categorization is expected to be a contribution to the seemingly poorly explored area of assessment in pragmatics. This research also attempts at bridging the investigation gap in the pragmatic abilities in the instruction of English as a foreign language.

1.3 Research questions

The questionguiding the study was how can pragmatic abilities be classified in different levels of performance in Chilean university students of English language teaching?

The specific research questions of this study were the following:
- How many levels of pragmatic abilities performance can be identified?
- To what extent can this classification be used to assess different groups in different contexts?
- Will this classification be reliable?
- Will this classification be valid?

The specific objectives of this researchwere

- To design an evaluation tool for pragmatic abilities.
- To compare/ contrast participants' pragmatic performance to make a request in English
- To identify different levels of pragmatic performance among the participants.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows: in Chapter 1, the most important concepts of pragmatics, politeness, and assessment are defined as well as other definitions which bring coherence and theoretical background to study reported here.

In Chapter 2, the methodology of the study is introduced and discussed. The chapter includes details as to who the participants of this study were, why the Oral Discourse Completion test was chosen, how the new rubric was designed and validated, how the process of assessing the participants was carried out and in how many stages, and finally how the data obtained from this process was analyzed.

In Chapter 4, the results of thestudy are explained. These results came from the responses of all participants which were firstlyanalyzed qualitativelybased on the criteria in the rubric. Secondly, the scores obtained from these responses were also compared as to draw further results for this research paper.

Chapter 5 of this study offers a discussion of the findings. In this chapter,all responses from the participants will be compared and based, once again, on the criteria in the rubric. Secondly, all those phenomena that arose from the previous analysis are discussed as well as its implications for the results of this research.The most important conclusion drawn from the analysis of the results is

discussed.

2.   Theoretical framework

2.1   Introduction

To understand the issue related to the assessment of pragmatic ability in English as a foreign language, we need to understand what pragmatic ability is and how it can be observed. First of all, the concept of pragmatics and its components areexplained as it is the focus of this study:several authors were taken into consideration so as to have a clear definition of what it means to be pragmatically competent in a second language. Secondly, assessment and all those elements of it that were used to assess pragmatic abilities are explained to make sense of what pragmatic ability is and the possibility of its assessment

2.2   Pragmatics

Pragmatics is defined by Saeed (2009) as the study of how a speaker and/or hearer interpret the use of language. That is, pragmatics refers tothe use of language in real life situations in order to achieve a given action based on the interpretation of utterances.Leech (1983) provides two similar definitions: the aim of pragmatic is to study the relation between meaning and speech situations, and the main objective of pragmatics is to explain how the sense (the literal meaning of an utterance) and the (illocutionary) force are coupled. He also includes in his definition several aspects of a speech situation such as addressers and addressees, the context of an utterance, and the goal of an utterance, the utterance as a form of act or activity: a speech act, and the utterance as a product of a verb act. Leech (1983) also claims that the utterance is in fact an illocutionary act which has a clear, precise intention. This in Saeed's (2009) words is the intention that the speaker has in mind as he or sheuttersa *speech act*.

Every speech act has an illocutionary force which is a product of human communication which allows us to perform an action (Leech, 1983). Saeed (2009) explains this force, brought by a speech act, which has an effect on a hearer. Simply put, illocutionary force is whatever action a speaker performs when uttering a speech act (Riemer, 2010). Finally, Austin (1962) in his own theory understood this force as what a speaker actually does in communication.LoCastro (2012) adds to these definitions that it is not only the intention that matters but also the hearer's understanding of it. Indeed, every time speakers have an intention in mind, they will not just utter a speech act, but perform an action with that utterance that is to have an effect on the interlocutor in the conversation.

In order to understand how pragmatic abilities are displayed in either oral or written form, speech acts need to be adequately defined. These acts are explained by Roever (2011) as acts of "request, apology, and refusal." Cummings's (2009) views them as acts which have a force, an illocutionary force, as long as both speaker and listener are able to acknowledge the intention of an utterance. The prosperity of this acts depend largely on the *felicity conditions*.

Ellis (1969) and LoCastro (2012) explain that the success of a speech act depends not only on the acknowledgment of the intention by the hearer but also on the acknowledgement of the position of authority of the speaker (Preparatory Condition), on the willingness of the listener to comply with the speaker's intentions (Sincerity Condition), and on the actual intention given by the author to the utterance for the listener to do something (Essential Condition). This is what Austin called Felicity Conditions (1962). Bara (2009) views these acts as a direct consequence of considering language in terms of the results a speaker can achieve through the intention given to a speech act. These speech acts are both part of and tool of what a speaker wants to achieve through language in the world: these acts have a function, meaning and purpose. Among these speech acts, request stands out for its importance in the instruction of English as a second language.

2.3 Request

The interest on requests is rooted in the fact that they are considered to be occurred most frequently in everyday situations andthe one that presents more failure in its performance for learners of English (Achiba, 2003;Pinyo et.al., 2010).

This particular illocutionary act is defined by Becker (1982) as utterances that are intended to have the hearer do something the speaker desires. Searle (1976) categorizes them as a directive speech act for the same reason explained by Becker (1982): a request aims at having a hearer do something a speaker wants or needs. Finally Bach and Harnish (1979) point outsa request dependsgreatly on the speaker's desire. This speech act is to be uttered successfully following certain requirements, such as *form for request*.

Coulmas (1981) sees forms for requests as routines which are appropriate for a given situation and intention; in a communicative situation, these routines regulate the interlocutors' participation and utterances. For Lee (2005), the linguistic forms for a request refer to combinations of language elements, as well as social factor, to form a speech act—a request for the purposes of this study. Examples of these linguistic forms vary according to different levels of politeness. However, the most common ones would be *I would like to…? I wonder if…? Can I…?*. There are also those expressions which look closer to a command or mild command, such as *do this*. These linguistic forms become much more polite by the use of politeness strategies such as indirectness, considered to be the most polite. These requests are partof the Bachman's Model of Communicative Ability (1990) —illocutionary competence.   Not following these form results in on-record statements (Yule, 1996) such as imperatives: these kinds of constructions are considered by Yule (1996) as "misleading" as they can be easily confused. Both Yule (1996) and Saeed (2009) indicate that negative politeness strategy is the preferred strategy used by native speakers of English when performing a directive speech act.

During the performance of speech acts in a real conversation, it is also necessary to consider *Grice's Cooperative Principles* (1975). Riemer (2010) defines the Cooperative Principles as "a general condition" for a conversation to be held.The same principles are defined by Saeed (2009, 213) as any beliefs that a hearer may have regarding a speaker's behavior. Grice proposes three maxims which a speaker needs to consider in conversation. These maxims are paraphrased by Grice injunctions (Saeed, 2009).

1. Maxim of Quality

   Try to make your contribution one that is true

   a. Do not say what you believe is false.

   b. Do not say that you which you lack adequate evidence.

2. Maxim of Quantity.

   a. Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of exchange).

   b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

3. Maxim of Relevance

   Makeyourcontributionrelevant.

4. Maxim of Manner

   Be perspicuous, and specifically:

   a. avoidambiguity

   b. avoidobscurity

   c. be brief

   d. be orderly

The amount and quality of the information is of paramount importance as a hearercan understanda request and the reason behind it and carry out a speaker's whishes or not; hence, these principles are needed to stablish successful

communication.

2.4 Pragmatic competence

For Bachman and Palmer (1996) the idea of pragmatic competencerefers to the way a speech act is uttered with a clear communicative goaland using all the language resources available to do so. Thomas (1983), who asserts that pragmatic competence has two components, confirms this idea: pragma-linguistic competence and socio-pragmatic competence. The former is the ability to form grammatically correct sentences and the latter to abide to the social conventions of a language. Kasper and Blum-Kulka define (1993) this competence as the ability to produce and interpret a speech act in a certain context.

One means to achieve a successful pragmatic competence is *acknowledgement of social distance* between the participants in a conversation. Yule (1996) explains that people have a face want or expectation about their image to others. Social distance is the awareness of the closeness or difference in status (such as age, power, relationship, and acquaintanceship) between the speaker and the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Depending on this distance, the speaker will make decisions such as the use of politeness strategies (e.g. negative directness). Not recognizing social distance may lead to face-threatening acts.

An important concept to consider in social distance is "face wants" or the self-image that any given person has about themselves and the expectations about it and the desire to be respected(to be respected or treated as an equal). This face want will depend on, firstly, the social distance between the participants in a communicative act, secondly, the power distance and, finally, the level of imposition of the speech act (LoCastro 2012). If a given face want is not respected, by either not acknowledging the power distance or uttering an order in a situation which calls for a polite request, then a face-threatening act takes place (Yule, 1996; Saeed, 2009).On the other hand, if a person's expectations for respect

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towards their face wants are fulfilled, then there is a face-saving act—acknowledging the social distanceand power in any given (Brown and Levinson, 1978). This is also known as *politeness* (Saeed, 2009)

Ellis (1994) considers that politeness is important to successfully perform an illocutionary act. Politeness is defined by Brown and Levinson (1978) as acknowledging and respecting a person's "face." Face, for the same authors, is the emotional and public image that a person expects others to recognize. The same authors explain that politeness can be achieved and it is dependent on the closeness existing between both speaker and listener in an interaction (Leech, 1983). The social distance is known as face wants. Each person has a face want that depends on the social situation in which they are partaking (Leech, 1983). If during an interaction, a speaker's utterance is considered as a threat to the listener, then that is described as a face threatening act; on the other hand, if the speaker tries to be less threatening as possible during the interaction, then that action is called a face saving act. The latter is achieved through politeness, which heavily depends on pragmatic knowledge.

If during an interaction, a speaker's utterance is considered as a threat to the listener, then that is described as a face threatening act. On the other hand, if the speaker tries to be less threatening as possible during the interaction, then that action is called a face saving act (Yule, 1996), which can be achieved by the used of *mitigating devices.*

These devices are expressions which soften an imposition such as a request (Brown and Levinson, 1987;Yule, 1996). Words and expressions such as *please*and the use of modal verbs in some formulaic expressions as *would you?* Or other constructions such as *I was wondering if …?*are considered to be mitigating devices (Lee, 2005; Yule, 1996). The use of mitigating devices is considering a face-saving act (Yule, 1996). Therefore, these types of expressions are frequently found in situations with a high level of formality in those in which there is a wide gap of power between interlocutors. Mitigating devices are used along with what is known as *politeness strategies.*

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Yule (1994) points out that there are two types of politeness strategies: positive politeness strategy and negative politeness strategy, or negative directness. The latteris the use of an indirect speech act to weaken a face-threatening act when performing a request or order (Saeed, 2009) by the use of different modal verbs. Additionally, Saeed (2009) explains that this kind of strategy is used by explaining the reason for the request or order before the request or order itself. Besides, this strategy includes the use of Searle's (1975) preparatory conditions, which are necessary introductions to the speech act in order for it to be successful.An important feature of negative politeness is what Both Yule (1994) and Saeed agree upon: the use of negative politeness strategies is part of what is considered to be polite in English-speaking countries.

Not complying with any of these requirements—felicity conditions, request forms, Cooperative Principles, acknowledging social distance and power, politeness strategies—leads to pragmatic failure, or failing at either understanding or producing a speech act according to language cultural norms (Thomas, 1993; Yamashita, 2008). Pinyoet. al. (2010) also refer to pragmatic failure and define it as the inability to produce, to understand and to interpret an utterance in a specific context.

Another reason why a learner of English could fail at uttering a successful speech act is because of his or her own mother tongue: this is known as pragmatic transfer.This concept refers to the positive or negative influence that the first language of an individual could have on the production, either written or oral, of the second language (Kasper , 1992). Tajeddin and Zand (2012) point out that the transfer of the first language to a second has negative consequences on the performance of the second one.

2.5 Assessment

Assessing is, for Mousavi (2009),judging a person's characteristics or behavior and assigning it a certain level of appraisal. For Brown and Abeywickrama(2010) assessment is part of the continuous process of teaching and overlaps with testing, measurement and evaluation—although they also affirm that assessment is not necessarily part of a formal educational process. All these authors agree that assessment could happen and at any time under any circumstance. Bachman and Palmer (1996) put forward the idea that assessment can be used to judge an individual knowledge of a specific topic or performance. In the case of English language teaching, assessment is used to judge a person's performance of a task in a given language setting.

To assess language proficiency it is necessary to rely on a *model of a language* and *a framework* of it. Fulcher and Davidson (2007) and McNamara (1996), defines a model a document with a theoretical description of what to know a language is.One model to describe what it means to know the English Language is Bachman's Model of CommunicativeLanguage Ability (CLA) (1990). In his model, Bachman (1990) consider that to know English is to have language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. The pragmatic abilities that are part of what to know a language is also are part of what Bachman (1990) calls pragmatic competence, which derives from the language knowledge component of its model. This pragmatic competence is composed of the ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative function of the language (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007).

If a model is a highly theoretical description of what to know a language is, then a more concrete description of this knowledge is provided in framework. A framework is a selection of the skills and abilities that are displayed when communicating in a language (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Another difference with a model, according to the same authors, is that a framework represents mediation between the model and specifications, in this case, for English teaching

and testing.

One of the most widely used frameworks nowadays to describe what students of English should be able to do and know (Figueras, 2012) is the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR). This framework aims at providing specifications for the design of ELT material—such as course books, syllabus and examination material (Council of Europe, 2001).

Whereas a model and a framework provide,to different extents, an abstract definition of the knowledge of language and how it can be assessed, the concept of *construct* arises as the most specific definition of language performance (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007).

A construct is derived from the specification provided by this framework, and it specifies the components of a language that are intended to be measured in a given test(Douglas, 2000). Bachman and Palmer (1996) add that the level of specific ability or component of a language can be inferred just by observing a test-taker perform a task.

Within the area of language assessment, two concepts deserve special attention: *validity and reliability*. They are used to define what an effective test is (Bronw and Abeywickrama, 2010); that is, these concepts are helpful to determine if a test measures what it is supposed to, and if its design and application have been appropriate and error-free (Bronw and Abeywickrama, 2010). Validity and reliability are the two main properties of any language assessment scheme.

Messick (1995) explains the concept ofvalidityas the characteristic of any assessment tool to be an authentic sample of performance which ensures a valid generalization of the construct domain. Douglas and Abeywickrama (2010) consider that validity should also include a direct relationship between the objective of an assessment tool and its construct and be firmly based on a theoretical background.

One of the most relevant types of validity is *construct validity* which is defined by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as the extent to which any assessment tool can actually be used to make a judgement of a domain of the language and

how the scores obtained from a test can be used to make a valid generalization about a certain behavior.

The concept of reliability is viewed by Rudner &Scafer (2001) as an error-free test and test administration.Another definition for the same concept is given by Berkowitz, Wolkowitz, Fitch, and Kopriva (2000) which is theconsistency of scores after the administration of an assessment over a period of time to the same individual test-takers. Similarly, Bachman and Palmer (1996) view reliability as the consistency of a test results under different situations.

Interrater reliability is one of the most important types of reliability. This refers to the consistency in score among raters regarding the assessment of a language component using a specific assessment tool(Gamaroff, 2000). Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) also refer to this as a scoring process among different raters that is free of error and subjective judgement of individuals' performance, that is, different raters closely follow the specification and scoring of a behavior that needs to be assessed (Gamaroff, 2000; Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).

These two concepts of validity and reliability are of paramount importance at the moment of selecting assessmenttools as problems related to the validity and reliability should be avoided as much as possible to ensure not only that an assessment tool is consistent among different kinds of raters and situation in which it is applied but also that the interpretation made from the scores obtained are meaningful and correct (Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

If there is a problem with validity, then a test will not measure what it is designed to measure (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). If, on the other hand, there is a problem with reliability, then the interpretation if the results will not be consistent among raters and no valid decisions can be made based on these interpretations (Fulcher and Davidson ,2007)

In the next section both pragmatics and assessment are useful to refer to the concept of *pragmatic testing*. Here all the components of pragmatics and assessment come together for a specific purpose which is to assess how well or poorly a test-takers performs a pragmatic task.

2.6 Pragmatic testing

Pragmatic testing is defined by Yamashita (2008) as a tool or process designed and used to elicit and evidence the behavior of an individual regarding the use of language in context. Similarly, Roever (2005) adds that this kind of testing has to do with an assessment tool whose construct is pragmatics, or the use language properly given a specific context.One of the most widespread methods to test pragmatic ability is the *Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs).*

Discourse Completion Test is a method which Collects data regarding the pragmatic performance of an individual in different ways (Khamayord&Aksornjarung, 2011) —Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT), Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT), Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT), etc. One of the most important characteristics of a DCT is that the test-taker's response is based on a prompt describing a specific situation (Roever, 2011) so as to get an everyday-like response to it (Pinyo at. al., 2010). Parvaresh and Tavakoli(2009) explain that the sole purpose of the ODCT is to expose the subject to a situation to which they need to react orally. Pinyoet. al. (2010) consider that the design of this test aims at properly assessing pragmatic abilities and that the responses from subjects taking an ODCT are much more natural than in any other type of CDT.

This test presents both advantages and disadvantages as noted by Yamashita (2008). On one hand, for the same author, the most important advantage is the fact that DCTs can be used to assess the production or comprehension of a subject's speech act, and it provides the researcher with considerable amounts of data. Yamashita (2008) also supports the view that DCTs are indeed useful when assessing interlanguage pragmatics in learners of English. The same author claims that DCTs are also reliable and valid in the sense that they assess what they are supposed to assess (pragmatic abilities) and that they provide consistent results in different contexts of administration. (Yamashita, 2008)

On the other hand, OCDTs do place some disadvantages. Roever (2008) points out that one drawback of using ODCT is the need to rely on raters to assess the performance of the test-takers, which could lead to an inter-rater's reliability problem. Similarly, Brown (2008) found that OCDTs could be a source of error for inter-rater's reliability as well. Just by responding to the situations described in the ODCT is not enough to assess pragmatic performance since a more quantitative result is needed such as numbers from a score. An effective method to score a test which elicits oral responses is the use of a *rubric* (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).

A rubric is a scoring procedure which takes elements from a modeland a framework to hierarchically describe different levels of performance of a certain behavior (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Bachman and Palmer (1994) as well as Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) add that in a rubric there should be explicit description of behavior criteria so that inferences can be made based on those descriptions. The criteria in a rubric should be described as explicitly and accurately as possible so as to objectively determine to what extent a test-taker fulfills the descriptionin all of the different levels (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).However, Bachman (1990) provides the simplest definition of a rubric as a detailed description of how test-takers are supposed to behave in a test.

A rubric can be used to assign a score holistically, that is, the score is given based on the test-taker's general performance on a task (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). On the other hand, ananalytic scoring method assigns score to specific features of the behavior being assessed (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).

The importance of this last section lies in the fact that pragmatics and pragmatic testing are areas which have not been explored thoroughly yet (Roever, 2005).

The concepts defined here are intended to provide a much wider understanding of what the assessment of this ability is. Similarly, for the reason just mentioned, there is an evident lack of assessment tools for pragmatic abilities. This poses a serious problem as the few tests available to assess pragmatic abilities need to carry the burden of being both valid and reliable (see 2.5) with very limited

methodological resources available; furthermore, many scholar in the area of assessment and language teaching have severely criticized existing tests for pragmatic abilities for their lack of construct validity—therefore, unreliable.(Roever, 2005).

2.7Conclusions

This theoretical framework chapter has been devoted to discuss the main issues related to the assessment of pragmatic abilities. From this literature, it seems clear that there is a need to understand what pragmatics is, what the elements that comprise it are and how they are displayed in communication, what assessment is and how the two of them come together to have a clear definition of pragmatic testing, as well as the current state of the literature in these areas. To say that the area of pragmatic testing needs further development is to acknowledge that there is a gap which needs to be bridged.

In the next chapter, the methodology used to conduct this research is reported andhow all the concepts previously defined were applied to the process of carrying out this research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The following study is a cross-sectional study aimed at determining different levels of pragmatic performance in three different groups of English Language Teaching students. The data used were the response given by these students to an ODCT (see 2.6) which were later scored in a rubric designed for the purposes of this study. This data was later analyzedbased on each one of the descriptors present in the aforementioned rubric. The scores obtained by the participants were later compared using statistic methods to classify the participants' pragmatic performance

This chapter is organized as follows: first, the data collection procedure is explained step by step. Then, the participants and their contribution to this study are described. Finally, the analysis collection tool section in which the process of selecting a proper tool for assessing pragmatic abilities, designing a rubric for this tool, and the validation of this rubric is explained thoroughly.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The data analyzed in this study consistedof the transcription of forty-five interviews from forty-five students, each of whom was to orally react to twelve situations form a test designed by Liu (2006), known as Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT)(Appendix 1).The construct of the test was to assess pragmatic performance of uttering request by nonnative speakers of English.

In these interviews, each one of the subjects had to answer orally to twelve different everyday like situations using a specific speech act: request, in both formal and informal situations. There were three sessionsof interviews for each group lasting no more than ten to twelve minutes per subject. At those moments,

there was one participant and one assessor who explained the instructions to the test-taker and recorded the interview. Each subject was selected randomly by the teacher in charge any of the three different courses.

The interviews were recorded in a Sony 4GB digital Voice recorder, model ICDPX333D.

Later on, each one of one of the digital recordingswas transcribedusing the software *Dragon Naturally Speaking V12.* This tool is useful to convert digital sound files into written ones. This software was used in this study in order to save time when transcribing the interviews. This part of the process took less than a week. Later, the transcripts obtained from this software were compared by listening to the audio files and reading the word files at the same time to correct of the errors in the transcription, complete the responses which were not fully processed by the software, and ensure maximum fidelity of the written files(Appendix 6)

3.3 Participants

At the beginning, the subjects of this research were two groups of ten sophomore and ten senior students of the English Language Teaching Program at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV). However, in order to have a much wider approach and appreciation of the different level of pragmatic abilities performance, three groups of fifteen pre-service language teaching students became the subject of this study.

At the moment of research, the participants were at Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Courses of English Language in the English Language Teaching curriculum at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.These courses are divided as such based on the performance levels described by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Learning, Teaching, assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001)(Appendix 2). This framework (see 2.5) describes the performance that a subject should have at

a certain stage during the time they acquire a second language (Figueras, 2012). The framework has also been used to establish course objectives and clear guidelines for the teaching and testing of English (Figueras, 2012). The language abilities described in the CEFR range from A1 as the beginner level to C2 as the advanced one. In each one of these categories, a list of "can do" statements (Council of Europe, 2001) describes the level of performance a person should reach to be at any of the levels set by CEFR (Appendix3). The Common European Framework and its descriptors have had a significant impact in the instruction of foreign language in Europe (Papageorgiou, 2010)

The first group of subjects in this research is in the Elementary Course which corresponds to the A2 level. The following group is the pre-intermediate students who are in the borderline between A2 and B1 level in the aforementioned framework. Finally, the last group is the advanced students who have reached the B2 level.

In order to be enrolled in any of the courses mentioned, all the subjects had to take a placement test at the beginning of the each academic term 2014. For this purpose, the English Department at PUCV used the different sample tests designed by Cambridge English Language Assessment from the University of Cambridge. Consequently, the subjects who are in the elementary level should be able to pass the KET test (Key English Test); the subjects in the pre-intermediate level,the KET test(Key of English Test) and PET (Preliminary English Test) test; and the students at the advanced class, the FCE test(First Certificate in English). The students in the last group have been in this program a year longer than the ones in the two first groups.

The number of students in these courses is around twenty to twenty-five; however, for the purposes of this research only fifteen from each group became the universe of this study. The participants were chosen randomly by the teachers running the different courses—Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced English— in order to ensure that there were varied, different and representative samples of pragmatic performance.

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Every participant was explained the objectives of this research and was given a consent letter to sign if they agreed with the conditions of their participation (Appendix 4).

3.4 Collection tool

The first stage consisted of selecting an already validated test to assess the pragmatic abilities of the participants. This test needed to be validated so as to avoid problems of, of course, validity and reliability during its application and, more importantly, analysis. The test of choice wasthe Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) (Lui, 2006) (Appendix 1). This test is a role-play which elicits an oral response to a series of situations in which the subjects need to identify different features of the situation such as the social distance and closeness (Brown and Levinson, 1978) with their interlocutors and a speech act necessary to achieve a task successfully. To test the subjects' pragmatic ability, the Oral Discourse Completion Test was chosen because it, as stated before, presented the participants in this study with the opportunity to respond orally to a situation using a speech act (Yamashita, 1996).The validation (see 2.5) of this test came from its previous uses such as Liu (2006) who also tested pragmatic abilities but in Chinese EFL students who had high and low proficiency levels of English according to the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Liu (2006) concludedthat, based on his data, there was no correlation between the level of grammar proficiency and the level of pragmatic proficiency. Yamashita (2008) also used DCT's in one of his studies and found that these tests were highly efficient to assess English interlanguage pragmatics.

The second stage was the redesign and validation of a rubric (see 2.6)which was based on the rubric proposed by Cohen and Olshtain Communicative Ability Scale (1990). This rubric was modified based on the work developed by Pinyo, Aksornjarung, and Laohawiriyanon (2010),Brown and Levinson (1978), and Yamashita (2008). This new rubric was designed with the purpose ofhaving a

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scoring method which considers all the most relevant characteristics of proper pragmatic performance so as to obtain a global rating of the participants' pragmatics abilities (Brown &Abeywickrama, 2010).

The following is the rubric designed by Cohen and Olshtain(1994) to assess pragmatic abilities:

0 = No answer
- Wrong answers
- Answers irrelevant to the given situation
- Answers which do not convey a speaker's intention at all or change a speaker's intention

1 = Acceptable answers which contain one or more of the following characteristics, but can still convey the speaker's correct meaning and intention

- Too much or too little information
- Grammatical or lexical errors impairing but not preventing the interlocutor understanding the meaning or intention of the utterance
- Too polite or rude linguistic expression

2 = Appropriate answers which fully convey a speaker's correct meaning and intention and contain the following characteristics

- Proper amount of information
- Grammatical and lexical correctness or minor errors which do not affect the Interlocutor's ability to understand the meaning or intention of the utterance
- Polite linguistic expression

Below is the rubric by which the subjects' performance was scored (Appendix 5). It is important to remember that this rubric took the Cohen and Olshtain communicative ability scales in Cohen (1994) as a starting point and that later different element fromPinyo, Aksornjarung, and Laohawiriyanon (2010), Brown and Levinson (1978), and Yamshita (2008) were added. Several other new elements were added to this rubric following Yamashita's (2008) view that the testing of pragmatics, and pragmatic ability, should include elements such as cultural norms (expressed through different negative and positive politeness), language setting (level of formality or closeness among speakers), Grice's Cooperative Principles (see 2.3) , and pragmatic routines (forms for requests [see 2.3]). These elements of pragmatic ability allows speaker to make use of English in adequately and avoid misleading interpretations (see 2.3) of a speech act (Mey, 1993).

DESCRIPTOR	0	1.0	1. 5	2.0	2.5	3.0
Linguistic Forms for Request	No response	No use of linguistic forms for request	Some features of 1.0 and of 2.0in equal measure	There is some use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing requests	Some features of 2.0 and of 3.0in equal measure	The use of linguistic forms is fully appropriate for expressing requests
Mitigating Devices		Limited use of mitigating devices		Moderate use of Mitigating device		Extensive use of Mitigating devices
Acknowledgment of Social Distance		No acknowledgement of social distance.		Social distance is not fully acknowledged Politeness		Acknowledgement of Social distance
Politeness Strategies		No politeness strategies (use of modal verbs)		Few politeness strategies (negative politeness)		Politeness strategies are widely used
Cooperative principles		Not enough information for request		Insufficient amount of information for a request		Information provided is completely relevant to the given situations and the interlocutor's expected responses.

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The validation of this rubric, or its consistency in score among different raters and under different conditions (Brown&Abeywickrama, 2012; Rudner &Scafer, 2001; Wolkowitz, Fitch, Kopriva, 2000) was confirmed by asking four experienced ELT instructors to score a sample of three participants' responses, one per group. This rubric was given to one tenure-track professor and three teachers, all of them currently teaching at Pontifícia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. Additionally, two of those teachers have a vast experience as oral assessors for Cambridge English Language Assessment.Furthermore, all of them hold master's degree closely related to English language teaching.

The four raters were given three samples of the participants' response, one participant per group, to score. Later those scores were compared to the scores used for the analysis in this study. In most of the scores given by the raters, there was a divergence of 0 or 0, 5 between scores. In only one case, there was a divergence of 1, 0. Table 1 shows the Pearson Correlation (r) value of the scores.

Table 1: Person correlation of raters' scores

Subject	researcher	rater 1	rater 2	rater 3	rater 4
Subject 2/Group 1	1,5	1,5	1	2	1
Subject 3/ group 2	2,5	2,5	2	2,5	2,5
Subject 4/ group 3	3	3	3	2	2,5
		r= 1	r=0,98198051	r=0,188998224	r=0,94491118

Table 1 shows that there is a 75 percent of correlation between the scores from the research and the ones provided by the participant raters. On the other hand, there is a 25 percent in which there is no correlation between the scores. This leads to conclude that the proposed rubric is indeed valid to assess pragmatic competences. Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the scattered spread of the variables (scores) for raters 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Table 2: scattered spread of rater 1's scores
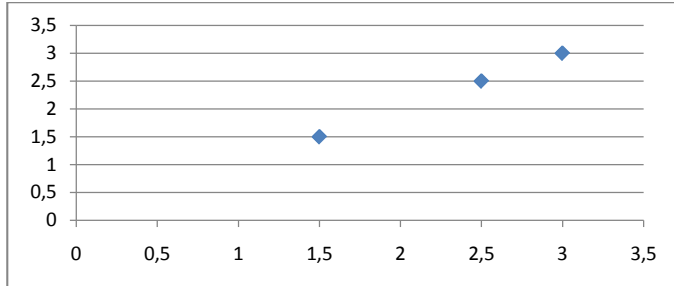
Table 3: scattered spread of rater 2's scores
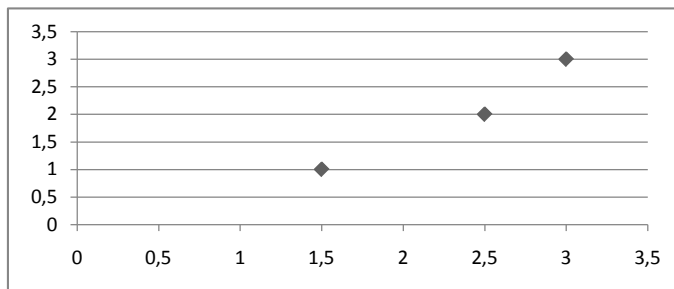
Table 4: scattered spread of rater 3's scores
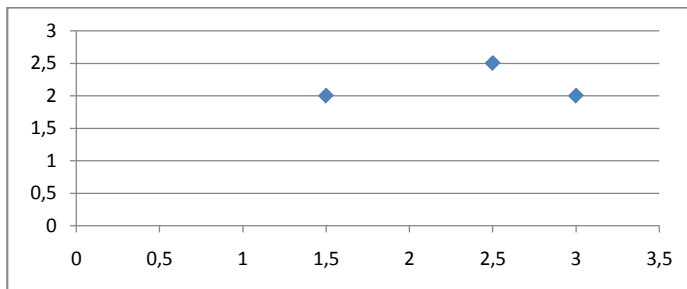
Table 5: scattered spread of rater 4's scores
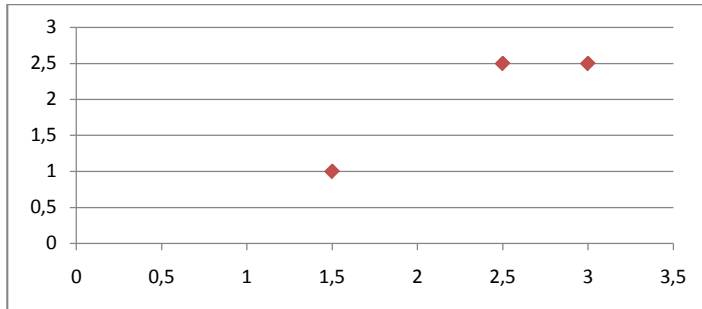
5.5 Conclusion

All these methodological steps were carefully followed so as to ensure that the data collected was as reliable as possible so that the analysis of it could shed light, error free, on the pragmatic performance of the participants. In the following chapter, all the data collected though the procedure described above. This analysis was carried out based on the criteria present in the rubric whose validation was described in 3.2.

4. RESULTS

Chapter 4is the detailed result analysis of the pragmatic performance in all the group of participants. This analysis was performed based on the proposed rubric adapted from the Cohen and Olshtain communicative ability scales in Cohen (1994), Pinyo, Aksornjarung, and Laohawiriyanon (2010), and Brown and Levinson (1978). This was a holistic analysis of the participants' performance in the ODCT tasks based oneach indicator present in the aforementioned rubric.Finally, those phenomena that arouse from this study, but which were notassessed bythe rubric, will be commented at the end of the section.

Finally, all the score obtained for the test were compared using a graph chart on Excel as well as the standard deviation per each group so as to have a quantitative comparison of the results and a more objective view of the pragmatic performance of the participants.

4.1 Beginners group's analysis result.

The analysis of the data provided by group 1 was carried out based on each one of the descriptor in the proposed rubric: linguistic forms for request, mitigating devices, acknowledgement of social distance, politeness strategies, and cooperative principles. These criteria describe what a proper pragmatic competence is considered to be (section 2.4). There is also a general assessment of the pragmatic performance and a brief discussion of those phenomena which arose during this analysis which deserve special attention due to their singularity.

4.1.1 Criterion 1: Linguistic forms for request

As explained in section 2.3, In order to perform a request, it is necessary to make use of different forms that to utter it and to soften the force of the request and make the request polite (Yule, 1996; LoCastro 2012).

Many of the requests made by the participants in this group simply are on record (Yule, 1996). The first subject in this group uttered the following request in the first situation:

Participant 1
Situation 1
Mister, please, I can't study. Please, put your music down or…

Another example is the use of another on record request by participant 15 in situation number 5

Turn off your cellphone.

After the analysis of the criterion, it became clear that there was an overlapping of the different features assessed in the prosed rubric, and another of those features is the use of mitigating devices (section 2.4). All the subjects in this group, except for one, used only the modal verb *can*, the adverb *please,* and the expression *excuse me* as their only linguistic forms to utter a request. This can be explained by their lack of knowledge of grammatical structures vocabulary to utter their requests example. Even though their control of grammatical structures and knowledge of lexical items are not considered as part of rubric, it seems that they do impose a constraint on the beginner's performance when uttering a request. Evidence of this is that many of them did not finish their utterances,probably, in the hope that the hearer would fill the blanks in information and come to the conclusion that they are being asked to do something. The following are some examples of

the seemingly low proficiency that most of the subjects in this group displayed when it the use of forms for request:

Participant 9

Situation 5

In this class the mobiles are no… accepted.

Situation 6

I'm sorry I can't see the basketball game. Please…

Situation 9

Can you help me, please? I'm not good at math so… please?

Situation 12

Hey, you have a…you have a piece of paper?

4.1.2 Criterion 2: Mitigating devices

In the analysis of the pragmatic abilities in this group of subjects, it became clear that the two more frequently used mitigating devices(section 2.4) used are please and *sorry* to express some degree in politeness, regardless of the closeness with the interlocutor. The majority of the subject heavily relied on the adverb*please*that it is even repeated twicein one utterance:

Participant 1

Situation 3

Miss, <u>please</u>, I can't understand. Can you say again<u>, please</u>?

Sometime the mitigating device *please* is used at the beginning of an utterance as if it was part of a much complex structure; however, in some cases the subject was not able to complete the requests.

Participant 9
Situation 6
I'm sorry I can't see the basketball game. Please…

In one of the cases, there was the expression *I beg you pardon* which seemed to have been used to work as a mitigating devices (see 2.4). That can lead to the idea that the participants learnt mitigating devices but out of contexts; therefore, they did not know how to use them. This was, however, only an isolated case in this data set.

Participant 8
Situation 3
Beg you a pardon. Can you repeat what you were saying, please?

4.1.3 Criterion 3: Acknowledgement of social distance.

As explained is section 2.4, To acknowledge social distance refers to recognize the closeness or difference in status age, power, relative, acquaintance between the speaker and the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

All participants sounded threatening to the hearer in at least one of their responses because their requests sound more like orders or imperatives, in spite of the social context:

Participant 14
Situation 5
Turn off your mobile, please.

Participant 13
Situation 6
Can you move, please? I can't see.

Participant 12
Situation 12
Give me a paper, please?

In the examples above, there is no evidence that the participants did acknowledge social distance as there is no direct address to any person in particular, which might suggest that participants did not have the face want of the hearers in mind at the moment of making their request. For instance, in situation 12, the subjects needed to interact with the president of a university; however, none of them actually addressed the hearer as *sir* or *president* to respect the face want (section 2.4)) of the interlocutor.

The analysis applies for several of the subjects' utterances. The reason could be the lack of knowledge of modal verbs, formulaic expressions, and mitigating devices used to make the request sound more polite and to acknowledge the power difference between interlocutors.

4.1.5 Criterion 1: Politeness strategies

As explained in section 2.4, this indicator refers to the use of an indirect speech act to weaken a face-threatening act when performing a request or order (Saeed, 2009).

After analyzing these groups of subjects from the point of view of this strategy, it became clear that the *can* and *could* are the modal verbs used by all participants, but only in simple request and not as part of a much complex formulaic expression.

Participant 13
Situation 1
Please, can you turn the music down?

Participant 7
Situation 6
Could you move, please? I want to watch the game.

As for the use of Searle(1975)'s preparatory conditions(see 2.2), most of the subjects seemed to rely heavily on the situational context assuming that their interlocutor would understand the reason of their request. This, according to the same author, made the request unsuccessful as the hearer might not understand the request or feel threaten by subjects' the utterances.

Participant 4
Situation 5
Please, I'm doing my class. Can you turn off your mobile phone, please?

Situation 6
Excuse me, I can't see. Can you… can you move, please?

Situation 7
Sorry, I can't come on Wednesday because I have an exam. Can I came on Thursday, please?

Situation 8
Well, you know we have more work today. Can you stay more hours, please?

Situation 9

Sorry, I don't know a lot of… about mathematics. Can you help me? Can I study with you?

Participant 5
Situation 4
Can I ask you for a favor, please?

4.1.5 Criteria 5:Cooperational principles

Explained insection 2.3, these correspond to the principles ofGrice's (1975) Maxim of Manner (avoid obscurity) and Quantity (make your contribution as informative as required for the current purposes of exchange).

The participants frequently brokethe maximsof manner and Quantity as they sometimes were obscure in the way they uttered their requests, but did not provide enough information; basically, they did not explain what was being asked nor why. Representative examples of these situations are the following:

Participant 9
Situation 7
Can I come another day, please?

Situation 8
I'm sorry, can you stay some hours, please? I need to… work extended hours.

Situation 9
Can you help me, please? I'm not good at math so… please?

Situation 10
My computer is not working. Can I use yours, please?

Situation 11

Excuse me, you have time for an interview?

Situation 12

Hey, you have a…you have a piece of paper?

During the analysis, It becameclear that if it was not for the written description of the situation the participants were to respond to in the tests, there would not be a clear reason for making such requests as the ones above, which leads to believe that the subjects relied heavily on contextual situation and forgot about the hearer and their expectations for information. This also made their requests look more like simple yes/no questions than a speech act of request (see 2.3), using complex structures and mitigating devices.

The example taken from Participant 13 clearly illustrates this point:

Situation 10

Sorry, I need to ask you a favor. I have my computer… my computer is broke or something and I need to ask you a favor. I have my deadline tomorrow and I need you, please, borrow your computer to… for the… for one hour.

In this case, the subject said,"my deadline is tomorrow," but he failed to mentionthat he had a paper due the next day, and that was the reason he needed to use the hearer's computer.This could sound as obvious information, but it did breakPrinciple of Manner and Quantity (see 2.3).

4.1.6 Further comments on beginnersgroup'sperformance

Based on the beginner group participants' performance, it can be stated that this group took longer than the other groups to utter a request. The reason might be that they needed more time to both understand what was expected from them to do in the oral test and finally perform the speech act that was required.

Secondly, in some cases all the indicators in the rubric can be found in at least one of the answers given by the Participants. The responses given by participant 5 in situation 7 and 8 exemplify this situation.

Situation 7
Do you have another time for our interview?
Situation 8
Can you stay a little time more?

Thirdly, some attempted to utter a request by using of mitigating devices and avoiding the violation of the Politeness Principles; however, they failed at uttering the request because of the lack of vocabulary in some cases and grammatical structures in other.

Participant 7
Situation 9
Hi, can you help me study, please?

Situation 10
Can I use your computer, please?

Situation 11
Can I make you some questions?

Therewas, however, one subject whose performance was better than the rest of the Participants'. This was one of the few attempts in which a request actually fit into the next level of performance (intermediate). This is evidence that there was a degree of progress in their pragmaticperformance as they were more exposed to the English language.Nevertheless, this could also be a coincidence and the Participant might not have been fully aware that he was actually performing the task properly.

Participant 10
Situation 9
I know we haven't talk a lot because we're just meeting but can you please help me with math? Because I'm not really good at that but I can see you are very good… at this.

Participant 13
Situation 10
Sorry, I need to ask you a favor. I have my computer… my computer is broke or something and I need to ask you a favor. I have my deadline tomorrow and I need you, please, borrow your computer to… for the… for one hour.

Finally, even though they are not part of the rubric, it is worth mentioning that in some cases some grammatical and lexical errors disrupt the performance of the request making it very difficult to understand. Therefore, one conclusion might be that pragmatics does depend on grammatical and lexical knowledge. This is clearly exemplified in the examples below:

Participant 12
Situation 7
I need that you move my meet because I can go on Thursday, please.

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Participant 14
Situation 1
Can you hmmm ….off the music?

Situation 12
Can you borrow me a sheet of paper?

Participant 15
Situation 1
Can you please down the music?

Situation 4
You can fix my computer?

4.2   Intermediate Group's analysis results.

Similarly to the first group's analysis results, this group of participants' pragmatic performance was explored based on each one of the descriptor in the proposed rubric: linguistic forms for request, mitigating devices, acknowledgement of social distance, politeness strategies, and cooperative principles—all of which should be consider as part of a proper pragmatic competence(section 2.4). Finally, there is a general assessment of the pragmatic performance and a brief discussion of those cases which either didnot correlate with the level of English they were placed in or deserve special attention due to the singularity of the responses.

In the Intermediate level,the fifteen students were in the Intermediate English course or in the borderline between the PET (Preliminary English Test) and KET (Key of English Test) tests, according to the CEFR (see 3.3).

4.2.1 Criterion 1: Linguistic forms for request

As discussed in section 2.4, these linguistic forms for request are seen by Lee (2005) as combinations of language elements to utter a speech act—a request, in this case. Examples of these forms are *would like to…? I wonder if…? Can I…?*(Lee, 2005).

In several of the responses in this group, considerable differences arose from the use of linguistic forms in comparison to the Elementary group. Whereas in the first group there was predominance of the modal verb *can* for the utterance of a request, such as in can *you show me that suit? (*participant 1, situation 2) , the current group displayed a slightly wider range of this forms: *would it be possible…? I'd like to…? Could you..?* etc.This could evidence the fact that there actually is a transition between the performances from one level to the next. Consider the following cases:

Participant 1

Situation 12

I'd like to know if you could help me with an interview for my thesis and I know you're busy, but I wanted to know if you could help me.

Participant 8

Situation 7

I would like to apply for the new job, but I can only come on Thursday. Would it be an option for you?

Participant 14

Situation 4

Teacher, do you have a moment? I'm having problems with my computer and I wonder if you have time for me to help me erase a virus, please?

However, there were still several cases in which the participants either relied entirely on the modal verb *can* as their only available resource to utter a request or did not use a form for request at all. Furthermore, their overall performance in this test can be deemed as an elementary one. Some of these cases were as follows:

Participant 5

Situation 5

Can you please turn off your mobile phone?

Situation 6

Can you please move? I'm watching the game.

Participant 4

Situation 6

Hey, hey, hey, get out! Sorry, sorry but I want to see that!

Subject 9

Situation 11

Although I know you're very busy, I know…I need this interview from you.

Participant 12

Situation 6

Is it possible that you can move away, please? I'm trying to see the TV.

Situation 7

Is it possible that we can change the day for the interview? Because I have problems on Wednesday.

The reason for these responses could be the lack of knowledge of those forms that are used in a request and the transfer of the first language into the second, among other. These, however, were only four cases out of fifteen. This could lead to the ideas that they are only isolated situations and that these participants are not closely correlated with the level they are supposed to.

4.2.2 Criterion 2: Mitigating devices

These devices are explained in Chapter 2.4, as words or expressions intended to soften the impact of a request; therefore, the utterance becomes a face-saving actLee (2005) and Yule (1996).

In the case of the Intermediate group, the use of *please*seemed to have a predominant role in the utterance of a request as it was present on most of the responses. Unlike the previous group, this word was used only once in the participants' utterances, and not twice as in the Elementary group. This might mean that these participants understood that using the word more than once did not make the utterance more polite. Moreover, the Intermediate group participants made use of other devices—such as several modal verbs—to ensure politeness in their speech acts. This does not mean that this group achieved the high level of

pragmatic competence according to the rubric, only that they have moved from a limited use of mitigating devices to a moderate one.

In these examples, it can be seen the use of the word *please* and different structures containing modal verbs in the responses:

Participant 1
Situation 2
Could you please show me that suit that I can't reach?

Participant 2
Situation 7
Could we please reschedule the interview for Thursday? Because I have exams on…this Wednesday.

Participant 7
Situation 11
I was wondering if I could interview you for my theses, if it's not (a problem).
Participant 8
Situation 4
Could you do me a favor? My computer is broken. I would like to know if you can fix it.

In all the examples above, there mitigating devices were used moderately, that is, therewas a fair use throughout most of the responses, but this use was not still extensive.

4.2.3 Criterion 3: Acknowledgement of social distance

Social distance refers to the power distance between two speakers and thelevel of imposition that the request carries (LoCastro, 2012) as explained in section 2.4.

The participants in this group tended to occasionally acknowledge social power, either as power holder or not. For instance, in those situations in which there was a person with more power that the participants, in just few cases the participants addressed their interlocutors as it is supposed to given the power relationship. For instance,in situation 4, the test-takers were to ask a teacher for help to repair a broken computer; in this case only a few participants actually acknowledged the social distance by addressing the teacher by their degree. Then, in situation number 7, the participants had to talk to their new boss and ask to reschedule a job interview; none of the take-takers addressed the person by a title (*sir* or *mister*). Furthermore, some of the responses contain words which were considered inappropriate for a formal situation—*quite*, for instance.

Participant 1

Situation 4

I know you've been quite busy, but I wanted to know if you could help me with my computer because it has a virus.

Situation 7

I know you're quite busy, but I have no options, and I wanted to know if you…I could come to the interview in Thursday, because I can't come on Wednesday because I have a final exam.

Participant 5

Situation 4

Hi, I know you're good with computers and I know you're very busy, but I want to know if you can fix my computer, please?

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Situation 7

I know you schedule interviews on Wednesday but I need to do it on Thursday because I have an exam on Wednesday. Can you please… can we please hmm…make the appointment that day?

4.2.4 Criterion 4: Politeness strategies

As defined in section 2.4, these are thestrategies used when uttering any speech act in order to achieve politeness (LoCastro, 141; Yule, 64-65).

In this group of participants, similar to the description provided in the rubric, negative politeness strategy is not often used. That is, in few occasions the participants explained the reason of their requests so as to soften it and prevent a face-threatening act. These examples provide evidence to support the point above and also to the claim that some of the test-takers relied largely on contextual information to make themselves understood, which may lead to unsuccessful speech acts. (Allan, 1994).

In the following example, it is clear that without a context it would be particularly difficult to understand the request and to not take it as a face-threatening act (see 2.4).

Participant 1
Situation 6
Please move, I can't see.

Participant 13
Situation 10
Excuse me, I have a homework for tomorrow. Can I borrow your computer, please?

Participant 14
Situation 12
Excuse me, can you give me a piece of paper?

4.2.5 Criterion 5: Cooperational Principles

As explained in section 2.3, these maxims are of paramount importance in conversation, and if they are broken, then the success of a request could be at stake (Locastro, 2012).

In terms of this criterion, this second group seemed to be divided into those whose responses follow Grice's Maxims and those whose responses did not. In the case of those participants who did not fit into the descriptor of performance for this criterion, there were those whose responses simply fit into the description given for the lower level performance. This point is illustrated by Participant 15's responses to situation number 6 and 10.

Participant 15
Situation 6
Sorry, I can't watch the game.

Situation 10
Can you do me a favor and lend me your computer?

On the other hand, there were participants whose responses were well correlated with the rest of criterion. That is, these test-takers actually achieved a level of pragmatic performance that is consistent with their overall level of English. Examples to this are found in the responses provided by subject 1 in situation8.

I know you might be tired, but I wanted to know if you could stay a couple of hours

more hmmm…to work.

According to the description of this situation, the test-taker was short-handed in their bookstore and needed extra help. This was the information that was not provided by subject 1 to the interlocutor; therefore, the hearer might not have adequately understood the reason of the request.

Additionally, several of the test-takers seemed to, just as the participants in group 1 did, rely heavily on contextual information to utter their request rather than just explaining the reasons of it—thus follow Grice's maxims. In these cases, if there was not a description of the situation, then the utterance could be not understood.

Participant 6
Situation 6
You're blocking y view, can you please go away?

Participant 7
Situation 4
I was wondering if there's a chance you can fix my computer.

Participant 9
Situation 2
Can you show me that please?

One conclusion from this criterion is that, after analyzing the data, to some extent, there seems to be a smooth transition in the pragmatic performance between the elementary group and the intermediate one. This is evidenced in the responses provided by the test-takers which did not radically differ from one group to the other, but they seemed to overlap in their pragmatic ability.

4.2.6 Further comments on intermediate group's

performance

In general, the performance of this group was acceptable according to the criterion in the rubric, which might mean that their level of pragmatic ability correlates to their level of English. However, it is also important to mention that the transition between the Elementary group and the intermediate group seems to be smooth and gradual as some of the participants had a satisfactory pragmatic performance in correlation with the rubrics, but other had a much poorer performance which placed them in the elementary level. This point will be much more evident in the score analysis section.

One of the first aspects that outstands from the general performance of this group is the fact that there were not as any constrains in the language because of grammar and vocabulary as there were in the Elementary level. This could be explained by the fact that their level of English according to the CEFR is a level higher than the Elementary students. Therefore, the Intermediate students are able to use and understand much complex grammatical structures and use and understand a much wider range of lexical items. The following is a comparison between two participants from both groups in situation 7, in which the participants had to request the manager of a company to reschedule a job interview due to a test they had the same day. The responses given by the Elementary group test-taker did contain grammar mistakes which made understanding the request difficult, whereas the participant from the second group displayed a much grammatically correct construction.

Situation 7

Participant 12/ group 1
I need that you move my meet because I can go on Thursday, please.

Participant 4/ group 2

So well, I would be glad to take the interview on Wednesday, but in this time I have to take my final term exam. So, I was wondering if we can do that… this interview on Thursday, preferentially in the morning, if it's not a problem for you.

Situation 1

Participant 14/ group 1
Can you hmmm ….off the music?

Participant 13/ group 2
Could you please turn the music down?

Situation 12

Participant 14/ group 1
Can you borrow me a sheet of paper?
Participant 6/ group 2
Do you have some paper, please? Because I don't have any.

A second point which is interesting in this group is the use of a much wider range of modal verbs to utter a request. This a feature addressed in the "forms for request" section of the rubric (see 3.4). The Elementary group tended to use the modal *can*as a resource for their request, but in this second group, a significant number of student used the verb *can*, *could*, *would* and *might* in different constructions to make a request.

Participant 1
Situation 10
Could you please show that suit that I can't reach?

Participant 2
Situation 4
I know you are really busy, but I would like to ask you for help hmm…to fix my computer.

      Another phenomenon which arose from the analysis of this group is the way in which the participants acknowledged social distance (section 2.4)—or did not. Situation number 4 in which the participants had to request help from a teacher to fix a computer. A significant number of the participants did not address the teacher using their degree, in spite of the imposition of power that this person holds.

Participant 5
Situation 4
Hi, I know you're good with computers and I know you're very busy but I want to know if you can fix my computer, please?

      On the other hand, the rest the participants did acknowledge the power distance by using an academic degree to address their interlocutor. This might indicate that these participants do have a higher level of overall pragmatic performance and, therefore, adapt their speech to situations with different levels of formality.

Participant 10
Situation 4
Mister, can you please, if you are available with time, fix my computer?

Participant 12
Situation 4
Miss, exists the possibility that you can help me with my computer? Because I have problem.

Two more phenomena which rose from the analysis of this criteria was the use of the interjection *hey*and word *dude*the by subject 4 in situations 6 and 12. In the first, the prompt described a situation which was informal but the interaction was held with a person the participant was not familiar with. It seems as if the speaker considered that given the informality of the situation of watching a football game did not call for the use of any forms for request or maxims of conversation as there was not an imposition of power between the interlocutors. The second case describes a situation in which there is a certain level of formality, but this time the hearer is well known by the test-taker. Probably this is what prompted the use of the word *dude* to signal closeness between them and that any of them held more power than the other. Consequently, in spite of having been considered as an unusual at first, this response actually met the criteria of acknowledging social distance.

Participant 4
Situation 4
Hey, hey, hey, get out! Sorry, sorry but I want to see that!

Situation 12
Psst…hey, hey , dude, hmm…lend me a paper, please! I have to write down some notes. Yes, I know! I didn't bring mine, so quick!

Finally, participant 12 in situation 6 and 7 provided responses which do not fit into the category of forms for request in English (see 2.3), but they might be consider correct in Spanish. I the former situation test-takers had to ask an unknown person to move aside so they could watch a game on TV, the latter situation the participants needs to reschedule job interview because thy has a test the very same day.

This transfer of language (see 2.4) is the only example in this group. To make the request, this test-taker resourced to the Spanish structure *es posible*? This structure did comply with the requirement of forming a request structure and using negative directness as there wasno useof modal verbs in a complex structure, and, therefore, might become a face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Searle, 1975; Yule 1996).

Participant 12

Situation 6

Is it possible that you can move away, please? Because I'm trying to see the TV.

Situation 7

Is it possible that we can change the day for the interview? Because I have a problem on Wednesday.

4.3   Advanced group's analysis results.

Similarly to the first group's analysis, this group of participants' pragmatic performance was explored based on each one of the descriptors in the proposed rubric: linguistic forms for request, mitigating devices, acknowledgement of social distance, politeness strategies and cooperative principles. Finally, there is a section with those phenomena which were not considered in the rubric but were noticed during the analysis.

4.3.1 Criterion 1: Linguistic forms for request

In the rubric, this criterion(section 2.3) describes that test-takers should be able to use appropriate forms of request. During the analysis, itbecame evident that most of the participants met this criterion. Their structure contained most or all the elements; thatis, modal verbs were appropriately used, negative politeness

strategies, and mitigating devices—combined in just one request. This criterion is where the clearest difference with the previous two groups is found: Elementary and intermediate groups used the elements separately in several responses, whereas the Advanced Group combined of the aforementioned features effectively. This is not to say that the participants in the other two groups did not do this combination; Group 3 participants did it more effectively in 6 of the situations. The following is an example of the same situation prompt, but from subject form the three groups.

Situation 9

Participant4/ group 1
Sorry, I don't know a lot of…about mathematics. Can you help me? Can I study with you?

Participant 4/ group 2
Hmm…hi, hi…Sebastian, I don't know anything about math and I'm trying to comprehend this lecture but I can't…I know that you know a lot of these hmm…calculating things and for. So, could you help me? Because the test is on the next week, please?

Participant 4/ group 3
Sorry, I don't know…I know that we don't know each other but I was wondering if you could help me with my studies on math because I'm struggling to understand and we have the test on next week, I so I would appreciate if you could help me.

TheseComplex structures were also used in situations in which there was a high level of formality. For instance, situation 7 in which the participants had to utter a request to a prospective employee. In this case, a significant number of the participants used highly complex structures containing most, if not all, the features

that Lee (2005) asserts make a proper request (see 2.3).

Situation 11
Participant v 1
Ok,…I'm really interested in the job, so I would really like to have an interview. Can we schedule it for Thursday, please?

Participant 14
I was wondering if there was any change that I…that you could move the date for the following day.

The same happens particularly with Participant number 4 in situation 4. In this case there is an evident use of request forms in combination with the rest of the criteria in the rubric.

Teacher, I was wondering if you could help me with my computer. I know that you are kind of busy right now, but it would be very helpful if you help me.

4.3.2 Criterion 2: Mitigating devices

Theseexpressions areused to soften a request and avoid a face-threatening act (see section 2.4). These expressions were found in most of the responses given by the students; furthermore, these participants were able to make use of these expressions in combination with other components of a proper request. The most commonly found mitigating devices are *please*,*sorry*, and modal verb such *would you…?*This presents one similarity with the Elementary Group as they also extensively used the words *please* and *sorry*. The following are examples of the use of these mitigating devices by the participants in this group:

Participant 1

Situation 1

Sorry, can you please turn me down the volume? I'm trying to study in the next room.

Participant 3

Situation 11

Teacher, I know that you have been busy, but I would like to ask you some questions, please.

Participant 6

Situation 10

Could you please lend me your computer just for a few hours? Because I need to do my homework for tomorrow and you have to do it the day after tomorrow, so, please, you could help me with that?

In these cases, the combination of all or most of the descriptor in the rubric make these responses appropriate for highly formal situations. That is, these participants were able to combine the use of different forms for requests along with a range of mitigating devices to utter request that were considered effective and appropriate based on the rubric.

4.3.3:Criterion 3: Acknowledgment of social distance

Similar to some cases in the Intermediate group, the participants in this group make use of specific words to address their interlocutors in situations of different formality. For instance, in situation 7 in which the test-takers were to address a prospective employee, one of themused the word *sir* to acknowledge the power distancebetween them and respect the face want (see 2.4) of their interlocutors (Yule, 1996).This situation was observed in group number two, but not

in number one.

Participant 6

Situation 7

Sir, I know that you're very busy but I really can't come on Wednesday. Could you please do it on Thursday?

The second case of a clear acknowledgement of social distance was found in situations number three and four. Here the participants had to request one teacher to speak slowly and another one to help them repair a broken computer. The test-takers, in this case, used the words *sir*, *teacher*, and *professor* to address this hearer who expected their face want to be respected given their academic degree. Consequently, the participants who used these words made much more evident their desires to respect the distance power between them and their hearer.

Participant 3

Situation 3

Teacher, can you repeat that sentence again?

Situation 4

Teacher, I know that you've been busy but could you please help me with this computer?

Participant 8

Situation 3

Sorry, sir, could you speak more slowly?

Situation 4

Sorry, sir, would it be possible if you can see my computer? Because it has a lot of problems

4.3.4: Criterion 4: Politeness strategies

The most frequently used politeness strategy by this group was negative politeness (see section 2.4). In this case 9, out of 15 participants, were able to use this strategy in at least one of their responses. Similarly as in the previous criteria, this strategy was used in combination with other features of request utterances. The expressions most commonly used in this group to make use of the negative politeness *was I was wondering if…* and *I want to know if….*as well as similar expressions using the modal verbs *might*and *may.*
The following participants' responses exemplify the point above.

Participant 1
Situation 7
Ok…I'm really interested in the job, so I would like to have an interview. Cab we schedule it for Thursday, please?

Participant 3
Situation 7
I have a finale exam on Wednesday. I know that you're being busy, but could you please take into consideration my appointment? If possible.

Participant 4
Situation 4
Teacher, I was wondering if you could help me with my computer. I know that you

are kind of busy right now, but I would be very helpful if you help me.

Participant 5
Situation 2
May I ask you to show… the suit, please?

All these requests were asked using indirect speech acts (see 2.4) which is the type of strategy preferred by native speakers of English to perform their directive speech acts (Yule, 1996; Saeed, 2009).

There, however, were other circumstances in which the level of formality was very low, and these participants actually avoided the use of the strategy and resourced to positive politeness which is a direct directive speech act (Yule, 1996).

Participant 1
Situation 1
Mister, please, I can't study, please, put your music down or…

4.3.5 Criterion 5: Cooperational Principles

The maxims proposed by Grice's (1975) Manner (avoid obscurity) and Quantity (make your contribution as informative as possible) were followed by the majority of the participants in at least half the situation: they not only uttered a request but also explain the reason for it and provide some details.

Those participants who broke these maxims provided responses that are much shorter than the rest of the participants. Furthermore, these poor responses could lead to misunderstanding if uttered out of context.

The following are examples of those responses which applied Grice's Maxims:

Participant 4
Situation 1
Can you please turn the music down? I'm studying and I can't concentrate in my studies, so, please, turn the music down.

Participant 6
Situation 4
Teacher, could you please speak slower? Because I don't understand.

Participant 7
Situation 11
You know I'm writing my thesis to graduate, so, please, can you spear one or two hours of your time for an interview?

On the other hand, there are those responses which decontextualized could be meaningless and misleading. For example, the hearer might not fully understand the request and the reason for it which could lead to a failure in the speaker's intention to have the hearer do something. This is exemplify by the following response given by participants 2 to situation 8, in which they were to ask an employee to stay a few extra hours after work because they were short-handed and needed extra help.

Participant 2
Situation 8
Will you be so kind to stay for a few hours?

4.3.6 Further comments on advanced group's performance

In the group there are two points that are worth mentioning: participants not having enough vocabulary and participants making assumptions about power-holding hearers.

Firstly, there was a situation in which aparticipantdid utterappropriate forms for request following most of the indications for a successful directive speech act; however, one problem they faced was the lack of vocabulary to express their ideas properly. These situations led one participant to use lexical items which make their request look as a face-threatening act (see 2.4). Consider the following example:

Participant 4
Situation 6
Sorry I was watching the basketball game and you are blocking my view. Please, could you hmmm…get away?

In this case the hesitation of the participant makes evident that there is lack of lexical resources to express the request correctly. This could have made the request sound rude and inconsiderate to the hearer face want.

There was a similar situation ingroup 1 which also displayed a lack lexical knowledge to express requests; however, in that specific case it was not only the lack of vocabulary which posed a disadvantage for the participants but also the lack of proper grammatical structure.

The second point which deserved special attention is the fact that in some cases the participants made the assumption that those hearers who hold a certain amount of power were particularly busy during their routines. So the teacher and the employee in situations four and seven were deemed extremely busy by the test-takers.

Participant 4

Subject 5

I know that you're very busy but could you please help me with my computer?

Participant 7

I know that you have been very busy this time but can you please help me to fix my computer?

Situation 11

Participant 1

So…I know you're really busy, but I would like to include you in my thesis. So, can I make you an interview, please? Give me …time.

Subject 4

I was wondering if we could meet hmm… one or two hours because I'm doing my thesis and I need your help. I need to interview. I know that you are very busy but as we know each other for a long time I… it would be very helpful for me if we can get each other to interview you.

4.4 Quantitative results analysis

In the following section, the scores for each one of the subjects in the three groups were compared so as to draw conclusions about the participants' pragmatic performance based on hard data. The results were obtained by assigning a score to each participants based on their overall performance on the ODCT test (see 2.6). These scores were compared in terms of their standard deviation with the intention of providing a clear view of the meaning of the results.

First, table 6 shows the different scores that each subject achieved. It is important to bear in mind that the rubric used to score the participants' pragmatic performancesaims at a holistic assessment of pragmatic ability, not per response.

Table 6: Pragmatic ability scores per group

Participants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	1,5	2	3
2	1,5	2,5	2
3	1,5	2,5	2,5
4	1,5	2,5	3
5	1	1,5	2
6	1	2	3
7	1	1,5	3
8	1,5	1,5	3
9	1	2	3
10	1	2	2,5
11	1	2,5	3
12	1	2	3
13	1,5	2	2,5
14	1	3	3
15	1	2	3

This table shows, firstly, the similarities in score among participants in group number 1 and 3and,secondly, how these two groups are also significantly different among each other and, most importantly, form group number 2. From this chart, it can be concluded that group number 2 presents pragmatic abilities which are present in both group 1 and 3.

Table 7 shows a bar graph with a clear picture of the differences in scores in each one of the groups.

Table 7: Pragmatic ability scores comparison
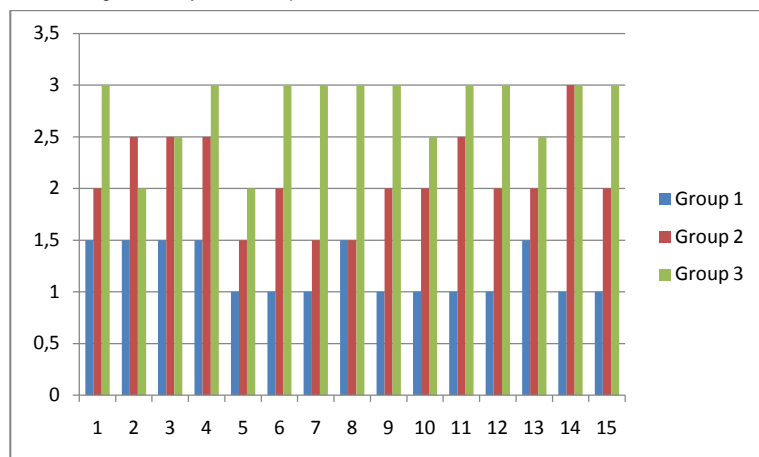
From the bar graphs above, it is evident that the variation among scores in group 1 one and 2 is not as dramatic as it is between group 1 and 3 in group number two. This suggests that in groups 1 and 3 there is the most marked performance difference and that here we have the closest correlation betweenthe CERF level of English of each group and the rubric used in this study.

Now in table 8, the standard deviation for each group is presented. Standard deviation is understood as the dispersion in a set of values—scores in the case of this study.

Table 8: Standard deviation per group's scores

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Standard deviation	0,24	0,41	0,36

In table 9, the bar graph shows the difference between the standard deviation in the three groups.

Table 9: Standard deviation comparison per group's score
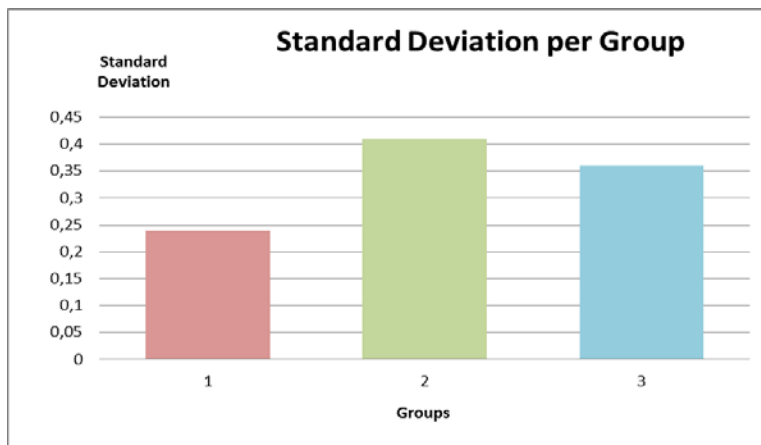
From table 9, thetwo groups that present little variation among its scores are number 1 and 3; therefore, here we have the strongest correlation between the lowest and highest levels of English and the lowest and highest scores in this study. In other words, the pattern of behavior in both groups is homogeneous. The result in group number 2 shows the biggest differences among scores; this large variation in the standard deviationsuggests that in this group is heterogeneous in terms of the performance of pragmatic; individuals in the group do not really behave in the same way. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that group number 2 represents a transition between the low and the high level of performance.

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5.   Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this section, the resultsobtained from all of forty-five participants' response analysis from the three groups are discussed. This analysis of all the samples in this research's data is based on all the criteria present in the rubric---linguistic forms for request, mitigating devices, acknowledgement of social distance, politeness strategies, and cooperational principles—with which the participants' responses were scored.Secondly, there is the discussion of all those phenomena which arose from the analysis of the data presented in the further comments section (4.1.6, 4.2.6 and 4.3.6) in the Analysis chapter. Finally, the discussion of those issues related to the assessment of pragmatic abilities is presented.

5.2 Discussion per criterion

5.2.1 Linguistic forms for request

During the analysis of the data (section 4) it was found that most of the requests uttered by those participants in the Elementary group had similar structure to imperative forms (Yule, 1996); furthermore, the most predominant device to form request was the use of the modal verb *can* and rather simple lexical items. This allowed these participants only a limited range of possibilities to utter their request. On the other hand, those participants in group 1 made use of a more extensive range of forms for politeness. The responses given by these participants range from very simple structures such as *can you…?*To more complex ones such as *would it be possible…? I'd like to…? Could you..?* etc., as well as a wider range of lexica items. This data also showed that there is an improvement in the pragmatic performance between these two levels; a reflection of their different CEFR level of English.

In the case of the test-takers in the Advanced Group, a vast majority of them

were able to utter their request using highly complex structures and extensive vocabulary, which contain containing most of the features that Lee (2005) asserts are ideally used in an adequate request as well as those features assessed in the rubric.

One interpretation of these resultsmight be that, besides all the elements that make a request effective, grammar and vocabulary play a crucial role in the performance of pragmatic abilities.In other words, the higher the level of English, the higher the pragmatic performance is. This idea coincides with Khamyod and Aksornjarung's (2011) finding that learners of English as a second language who were highly proficient in the second language also performed very well in their pragmatic abilities. In their study form 2011, Khamyod and Aksornjarung conducted a comparative study of pragmatic abilities whose subjects were learners of English with high and low proficiency. One of their findings is that those participants with the highest levels of English were likely to have a high proficiency level pf pragmatic ability as well. Consequently, as the ELTstudents in this study reach higher level of English, they seem to also improve their pragmatic performance.

A second finding in the request form issue is the language transfer (see 2.4) in some of the responses given by Elementary and Intermediate participant; some of these responses' structures have very similar to those used in Spanish to make a request. Kasper (1992) refers to this phenomenon as pragmatic transfer as any influence from a learner of a second language's first language on the learning, production and understanding of a pragmatic event. The implication of this particular finding is that different rubrics might need to be designed which address the issue of transfer, depending on the level of English of the test-takers.

5.2.2   Mitigating devices

These devices are used in a directive speech act to soften the impact and avoid a face-threatening act (Lee, 2005; Yule, 1996). In all three groups there was an extensive use of the words *please*, *sorry*, and, in the highest levels, modals verbs such as *could* and *would*.

During the analysis for the Elementary Group, the most common words used to mitigate a request were *please* and *sorry* (section 4.1.2). They were used as the exclusive device to avoid a face-threatening act, whereas the highest groups used them in combination with modal verbs in much more complex grammatical structures for request. This may suggest that those participants at the lower level are not still able to make such combinations to prevent themselves from uttering a face-threatening act.

On the other hand, participants from the Intermediate and Advanced Groups were able to make such combination, probably understanding that *please* and *sorry* are not the only carriers of politeness in English. This could be considered as evidence that as every other ability in the second language improves so does the pragmatic ability.

Once again, this rubric and the scoring based on it seem to indicate that there is a progression that these ELT students go through as they reach higher levels of English since there was an evident correlation among the three different levels of English in each group and the three different levels of performance in the rubric.

5.2.3   Acknowledgement of social distance

To be able to recognize the social distance between the speaker and the hearer (section 2.4)is another component of pragmatic ability (Brown and Levinson, 1978). This criterion showed a stark contrast between group 1 and 3. In the first group, most of the participants did not recognize the power distance in those situations in which it was required; for instance, in situation 12 (requesting an interview to the president of a university), the participants in group 1 did not use the vocative case of tittle or degree to address hearer. This, however, was used by

several participants in group 3, preventing themselves from uttering a face-threatening request. In the first case, the test-takers did not respect their interlocutor's face want, unlike those in group number 3 (see sections 4.1.3 and 4.3.3).

In this respect, group 2 keptreinforcing its tendencyto being the point of transition between the high and the low level performance. On one hand, the responses in this group show that in many cases there no awareness of other's face wants by not addressing the hearer properly and even by using highly colloquial expression in their request. On the other, few responses seemed to have been uttered with some awareness towards the power difference between speakers.

Another reason for failure in this criterion is the lack of knowledge of modal verbs, formulaic expressions, and mitigating devices to make the request more polite and acknowledge the power difference in the prompt situations. This might have led the ELT students to falling short of words at the moment of uttering their directive speech acts.

5.2.4 Politeness Strategies

As discussed in section 2.4, using an indirect speech act to weaken a face-threatening act when performing a request or order (Saeed, 2009) is part Searle's (1975) preparatory conditions for a successful directive speech act. This negative politeness strategy requires that speakers know and use modal verbs more frequently to, indirectly, utter a request.

Once more, a progressive tendency was found in this criterion as the participants in group number 1 used direct request to have the hearers do what they wanted them to do, in just a few cases there is the use of indirect speech acts. That is, their speech act was uttered as *do this*, instead of indirectly as *could you do that?*

This performance, as has always been the case so far, improved steadily in

the higher proficiency levels. The Intermediate Group displayed a disparity in their responses as the majority of the participants used a direct speech act for their request, and, evidently, only a small number of them used indirect politeness in their responses. This radically changes in group number 3, in which many participants used the aforementioned strategy in at least one of their responses. Furthermore, the test-takers in this group combined this strategy with other features of successful request.

Another felicity condition for a request is Information to explain a requestso as to prepare the hearer for what is coming (Allan, 1994). In these cases, both Elementary and Intermediate participants showed a similar tendency to omit the explanation of the reason for their requests, relying on the context of the situation leaving their hearer with the task of inferring what the speaker needs and why.

On the other hand, group number 3 was the one which more often provided an explanation for their request to mitigate face-threatening acts and be polite. Once again, these participants were able to combine many of the pragmatic abilities feature so as to utter a successful request, which is the type of feature combination Yule (1996) and Saeed (2009) are preferred by native speakers of English to perform their directive speech acts(section 2.4).

5.2.5   Cooperational Principles

Grice's (1975) Maxim of Manner (avoid obscurity) and Quantity (informativecontribution) indeed overlap with the previous criteria; however, the way in which the information is provided during a directive speech act is what makes these two criteria different.

Similar to what was concluded in previous criteria, there is a stark difference between the performance of the participants between the Elementary Group and the Advanced Group in addition to the transitional stage that the Intermediate Group became.

First of all, the responses in the first group lacked the information necessary to abide to Grice's Maxims (1975). If not for the situational context provided in the

written prompts, the reason for the request would be unclear and lead to either misunderstanding or failure of the speech act. Similarly, a portion of the participants from the Elementary Group also responded breaking the Gricean Maxims.

On the contrary, the remaining members from group 2 and a significant number of participants from the advanced level followed Grice's Maxims in their responses; that is, not only did they utter a request explaining their reasons, but they also provided the right amount of information to do so.

Again, both Elementary students and advanced students correlate their pragmatic performance with their CEFR English level of proficiency and the Intermediate students represent a transition between these two opposing groups.

5.3 Discussion of further issues

5.3.1   Classification of pragmatic levels of performance

First of all, the General research question that this study was aimed at answering was how pragmatic abilities can be classified in different levels of performance in Chilean university students of English language teaching. From the analysis in chapter 4, it can be stated that after all forty-five participants responded orally to twelve situations from the ODCT (Liu, 2006) and those responses were later scored using a rubric, which was primarily based on Cohen and Olshtain Communicative Ability Scale (1994), the pragmatic ability of participants can be classified in correlation with their CEFR level of English; that is, there is a beginner's level, a intermediate's level, and an advanced level.

The difference in the qualitative and quantitative analysis shows that there are differences between the performances in the participants that belong to each one of the groups assessed. This classification, once again, is correlated with the levels

of English that the participants were previously assigned at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile, levels which were based on the Common European Framework of Language Reference (Council of Europe, 2001).

This result can also be based on the qualitative analysis of the responses (sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). In this chapter, all the criteria present in the rubric used for this study were addressed in terms of the participants' behavior. That is to say, in each of the criteria in the considered in the proposed rubric, the participants presented various differences that led to the classification of their performance as beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

Similarly, the quantitative analysis (section 4.4) provides enough evidence to define the aforementioned categories of pragmatic performance. This evidence canbe different scored obtained by the participants in each one of the groups.

5.3.2 Different levels of performance

Secondly, one of the specific questions for this research was how many levels of pragmatic abilities can be identified based on the results and analysis in this study. The easiest answer to this questions is three different levels; however, after the analysis in sections 4.1 and 4.3, it can be stated that there are actually two well-defined groups whose scores and performance show a stark difference between them: those are groups 1 and 3. These two groups presented the most consistent behavior and scores, reason why they are easily identifiable.

On the other hand, there is group 2, whose performance and score is not as marked as in the other groups. Based on the analysis in sections 4.2, it can be seen that participants in this group had performances which were similar to those of group 1 and 3 equally. This result shows that the intermediate group, more than a level on its own, is actually a transition between beginners to advanced level of performance. Not only the similarities in the behavior of participants in groups 1 and 3,   but also the dispersion in their scores show that group 2 did not perform as homogeneously as the other two groups did.

5.3.3 Reliance on context

Heavy reliance on context is another finding in this study, as all participants in group 1, half the participants in group 3, a few of them in group 2 relied heavily on the context of the situation to utter their request without resourcing to Grice's (1975) cooperational principles nor to politeness strategies. In some cases, In spite of being able to fulfill all the other criteria, the aforementioned participants seemed to have assumed that their hearer would understand their request without an explanation about it: these participants only relied on the situational context. By doing so, they broke Grice's (1975) Maxims and did not used negative politeness strategies. If these two criteria are not used, the utterance could be misunderstood or misleading (as explained in section 2.3 and 2.4). Instead, these participants assumed that their hearer would understand the reason of a request (and the request itself) based solely on the situation in which this speech act was uttered. Consider the following examples:

Participant 4 / Group 1
Situation 6
Excuse me, I can't see. Can you… can you move, please?

Participant 7/ group 2
Situation 7
Is there any chance I could have the interview on Thursday?

5.3.4 Lack of grammar mastery and lexical knowledge

This results refer to the constrains that not mastering complex grammatical

structures as well as not having a wide range of lexical item knowledge did affect the pragmatic performance of participants from all groups. During the interviews, those participants who did not have sufficient control of grammatical structures and Lexical items hesitated during the utterance of their speech acts and their responses were not effective enough so as to fulfil the requirements of forms for request (section 2.3) mitigating devices (section 2.4) and politeness strategies (section 2.4). Therefore, they did not have a proper performance of pragmatic abilities. Consider the examples taken form the analysis in section 3.5:

Participant 7/ Group 1
Situation 11
Can I make you some questions?

Participant 4/ Group 3
Situation 6
Sorry I was watching the basketball game and you are blocking my view. Please, could you hmmm…get away?

From the examples above, it can be seen that sometimes the lack of grammatical structures and lexical items overlap (participant 7/ group 1), whereas only one of these two is present in the participants' responses (participant 4 / group 3).

5.3.5 Language Transfer.

This finding could be seen mostly in the responses given by participants in group 2. In these cases, their mother tongue, Spanish, negatively influences responses in all groups (Kasper, 1992). This transfer (see section 2.4)could be appreciated in the use of grammatical structures for request which are used by the participants in their everyday interactions with their friends and family. These expressionsare *hayalgunaposibilidad …?*And*es possible …?*Which was used in ODCT by participants from all groups as is there

Participants 12/ Group 2
Situation 6
Is it possible that you can move away, please? Because I'm trying to see the TV.

5.4   Discussion on issues in the assessment of pragmatic abilities

First of all, in spite of their low level of proficiency, all of the participants responded or attempted to respond to the situations given, regardless of their achievement in this task. This evidences that the subjects understood not only the instructions for this test but also the situations to which they were supposed to react.

An interpretation of this fact can be drawn from the students' level accordance with the CEFR Can Do Statements, corresponding to the listening and speaking abilities for this level describing the subjects' linguistics performance. The Elementary Group Students, whose CEFR is A2, performed accordingly to the Can Do Statement of this level: "Can express simple or requirement in a familiar situation." Hence, the conclusion that can be drawn is that KET level students can actually understand and react to an oral task and perform pragmatic tasks at a fairly simple level of achievement.

Similar conclusions can be drawn for the other two groups of participants.

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The Intermediate Group participants performed accordingly to their CEFR Can Do Statement (Appendix 3): "Can Express Opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements." Likewise, those students whose level is B2, FCE test, have performance which is described as "Can follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics." The progression in the language abilities displayed in these statements was reflected in the pragmatic performance they participants had in the test applied for this research.

Secondly, the scoring of the abilities indicates that the score for the Elementary Level and the Advanced Level (see 4.4) show the most significant difference. That is, these two groups present the widest gap in performance. Statistically speaking, the scores for each one of these groups also present an important dispersion in scores (see 4.4), meaning that the individuals in group 2 did have considerable differences in their scores, and therefore, performance. The opposite happened with the sores obtained by the group 1 participants: their scores showed to be much more scattered than those in the other two groups. The conclusion is that in this group there is not a uniform performance, but one in which there is a much wider range of pragmatic performance samples from groups 1 and 3. As a general conclusion for this point, all the abovereflects the progression of the participants' pragmatic abilities.

Thirdly, it is important to take notice that those participants with the lowest scores were the ones with the less mastery of grammatical structures and vocabulary, or what Thomas (1983) refers to as pragma-linguistic competence. Similarly, those with the highest scores seem to have a much greater knowledge and understanding of complex grammatical structures and lexis. These participants had a vast knowledge of modal verbs, formulaic expressions, and mitigating devices which they used to make the request sound more polite and to acknowledge the power difference between interlocutors.

This could mean that in future attempts to assess pragmatic abilities, the control of grammatical structures, at different level, and knowledge of vocabulary

might need to be included in a rubric as new criteria of performance.

6.Conclusion
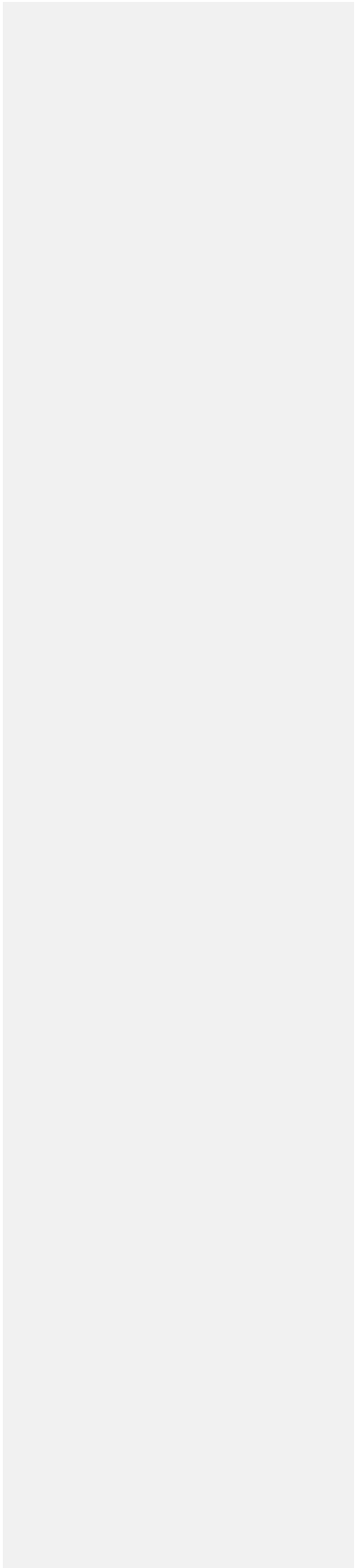
6.1 Introduction

The general research questions that guided the conduction of this research was how pragmatic abilities can be classified in different levels of performance in Chilean university students of English language teaching; consequently, this exploratory research aimed at defining the pragmatic performance of English language teaching students.

6.2 Methodology synthesis

To define the levels of pragmatic ability of this research's participants, Bachman's (1990) Model of Communicative Language Ability (see 2.5) was used as the theoretical background to describe what it means to know a language. From this model, the competence that was used for such description was the illocutionary competence and its components—ideational function, manipulative functions, heuristic function and imaginative function.

Following the selection of a model, the Common European Framework of Language Reference (CEFR) was used as the framework of language to define the specific aspects of the language that were to be assessed in this research. The Can do Statements proposed by the Council of Europe (2001) to describe different stages of language performance were considered as the language specifications. From these specifications and for the objective of the research the construct, or specific ability intended to be measured (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010), of the tests was defined: to assess pragmatic performance of uttering request by nonnative speakers of English.

The next step was the selection of a test, which had been used in previous similar studies so as to avoid reliability issues (see 3.2). The test of choice was the Oral Discourse Completion Task (Liu, 2006). To make an objective judgment of the participants' responses, a rubric was designed based on the one proposed by Cohen and Olshtain (1994) and using elements from later elements fromPinyo, Aksornjarung, and Laohawiriyanon (2010), Brown and Levinson (1978),and Yamashita's (2008) consideration of pragmatic performance.

6.3 Synthesis of Findings

The main findings in this research (section 4) were,first of all, that pragmatic abilities in Chilean university students of English language teaching can be classified in three different levels: basic, intermediate and advanced. All of them based solely on the rubric proposed for this research.

Secondly, all participants in the three different groups performed accordingly to their CEFR level of English language: those participants who had the A2 level had the lowest scores and those who had the B2 level had the highest scores in the OCDT used to assess their pragmatic abilities. In other words, thescores and different levels of performance obtained in this study do reflect the European Framework of Language References level of English performance.

Thirdly, there seems to be a well-defined progression of the development of pragmatic performance in the ELT students. The participants at the lowest level of the CEFR had the lowest scores and the OCDT in this research. Then, the participants in the Intermediate Level obtained better scores than the Elementary participants, but not as high as the participants with the B2 CEFR level, who achieved the highest scores, again, based on the rubric designed for this level. This shows a linear progression in both the development and performance of the participants in this research.

The fourth finding is that the starkest difference in performance is appreciated in the Elementary and Advanced groups: the former obtained the lowest scores and the latter the highest. This leaves the Intermediate Group as a

transition stage between low and high pragmatic performance. The standard deviation in the scores in these three groups showed a low dispersion in the scores in the first and second group a high dispersion of scores in the Intermediate Level, meaning that this group had both low and high pragmatic performance—a transition of performance.

Finally, the results from this study showed that the mastery of complex grammatical structures as well as a wide range of lexical items does have a direct impact on pragmatic performance. As,the participants   get more and more proficient in English and , as a result, their grammar gets better and use a wider range of vocabulary, their pragmatic performance improves; in other words, they are able to use language considered to beadequate according to a certain context.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The most important limitation of this study comes from the same problems this research intended to tackle: the lack of extensive literature and studied regarding pragmatic competences (Roever, 2005). This poses the problem of designing an assessment tool which lacks a thorough definition of the language aspects this tool is aimed at assessing—therefore, a problem of validity. In section 2.5, the concept of model was defined as what to know a language is; however, if a model and, subsequently, a framework (see section 2.4) fail at providing such explanation, then the clear definition of an assessment tool's construct negatively affected. This, once again affects the construct validity of a test and, by extension, its reliability. Had this been the case in this research, all data and the results of it would be deemed invalid and unreliable. Fortunately, the existing literature does suffice, for the time being, to design a valid, reliable pragmatic abilities assessment tool.

The other limitation has to do with the number of participants in this research. Even though the forty-five participants in this research make a representative sample inside the ELT program at PUCV, there is still the need to extrapolate the findings in this research to other ELT student at different other institutions and, most importantly, to other learner of English either as a second or foreign language.

6.5 Further Research

Further research in pragmatic abilities can assess the issues of improvement of not only assessment of pragmatic in learners of English but also teaching practices regarding the same ability. There is extensive literature on methods to teach and assess grammar, vocabulary, and abilities other than pragmatics. This poses a problem since, according to Bachman's (1990) Model of Communicative Ability; the pragmatic component of a language is part of what it is to know a language. The reality is, however, that pragmatic abilities have been left aside by not being included as part of the objectives in a language class not being considered as a measurable construct in the many assessment tools exiting. Any further studies to come on the assessment of pragmatic abilities will need to provide strong grounds for the description of what is means to be pragmatically competent and to clearly define the construct of pragmatic assessment tools for different levels of proficiency and contexts—college, school, English for specific purposes courses.

6.6 Final comments

This study is important in the sense that it intended to raise awareness among future teacher of English that learning English is more than just being good at grammar, reading, or speaking: it is also being able to use language in context and achieving a goal with this language considering the accepted pragmatic norms of English-speaking countries to achieve successful communication; therefore, It is

absolutely essential that the importance of pragmatics in the instruction of English be recognized (Liu, 2006).

Finally, the finding of this research might have implications on the assessment and teaching of English as a foreign or foreign in Chilean classrooms in the sense that this research study might be the starting point to, firstly, further development of this topic by fellow Chilean teachers of English and, secondly, to raise interest and awareness on the importance of the ability in our students. Additionally, this study could be a contribution to the design of class material, text books and assessment tools which cater for the student's' needs regarding the development of pragmatic abilities, alongside those needs and objectives set the Common European Framework.This last point is important as it could help the CEFR to answer the question posed by Bachman's(1990) model: what is to know a language?

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8. Appendixes

Appendix 1

Situation scenarios for ODCT (Liu, 2006)

1.   You are trying to study in your room and you hear loud music coming from another student's room down the hall. You don't know the student, but you decide to ask him to turn the music down.

2.   You are now shopping in a department store. You see a beautiful suit and want to see it. You ask the salesperson to show you the suit.

3.   You are now discussing your assignment with your teacher. Your teacher speaks very fast. You do not follow what he is saying, so you want to ask your teacher to say it again.

4.   Your computer is down because of a virus. One of your teachers is very skillful in fixing computers. You know he has been very busy recently, but you still want to ask him to fix your computer.

5.   You are a teacher. In class, the mobile phone of one of your students rings. You ask your student to turn off his mobile phone.

6.   You are watching a basketball game. A student you don't know comes and stands just in front of you blocking your view. You want to ask the student not to block your view.

7.   You are applying for a new job in a small company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon from one to four o'clock on Wednesday. However, you have to take the final-term exam this Wednesday. You want to schedule an interview on Thursday.

8.   You are the owner of a bookstore. Your shop clerk has worked for a year, and you have gotten to know him/her quite well. It is the beginning of the semester, and you are very busy selling and refunding textbooks all day. Today you have a plan to extend business hours by an hour, though you know the clerk has worked long hours in the past few days. You ask the clerk to stay after store hours.

9.   For the first time this semester, you are taking a mathematics course. You

have had a hard time following lectures and understanding the textbook. A test is scheduled to be held next week. You notice that one student sitting next to you seems to have a good background knowledge of math, and is doing well. Since it is the beginning of the semester, you do not know him/ her yet. You want to ask him/her to study together for the upcoming test.

10.   Something is wrong with your computer, but you have to finish some homework which is due tomorrow. Your roommate has a computer, but he is also writing a course paper on his computer. His homework is due the day tomorrow. You want to ask him to stop his work and let you use his computer to finish your homework first.

11.   You are writing your graduate thesis and need to interview the president of your university. The president was your teacher and you know him quite well. You know the president is very busy and has a very tight schedule. You still want to ask the president to spare one or two hours for your interview.

12.   You are the manager of a company. You are in a meeting with the other members of your company. You need to write some notes, but realize you do not have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you. You know the person very well.

Appendix 2

Cambridge English

A range of exams to meet different needs

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

IELTS: 9 | 8 | 7.5 | 7 | 6.5 | 6 | 5.5 | 5 | 4.5 | 4

BULATS: 90 | 75 | 60 | 40 | 20

Financial (ICFE)

Legal (ILEC)

Business Higher (BEC)
Business Vantage (BEC)
Business Preliminary (BEC)

Proficiency (CPE)
Advanced (CAE)
First (FCE)
Preliminary (PET)
Key (KET)

First (FCE) for Schools
Preliminary (PET) for Schools
Key (KET) for Schools

Flyers (YLE Flyers)
Movers (YLE Movers)
Starters (YLE Starters)

C2
C1 } Proficient user
B2
B1 } Independent user
A2
A1 } Basic user

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

Appendix 3

CEFR LEVELS	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
C2	CAN advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	CAN understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts.	CAN write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.
C1	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, to read the media for information or to understand non-standard correspondence.	CAN prepare/draft professional correspondence, take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write an essay which shows an ability to communicate.
B2	CAN follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	CAN scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.	CAN make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests.
B1	CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.	CAN understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within a familiar area.	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.
A2	CAN express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.	CAN understand straightforward information within a known area, such as on products and signs and simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters.	CAN complete forms and write short simple letters or postcards related to personal information.
A1	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices, instructions or information.	CAN complete basic forms, and write notes including times, dates and places.

Appendix 4

Universidad de Chile
Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades
Escuela de Postgrado
Magíster en Lingüística, mención Lengua Inglesa

Consent Form

I,_____, hereby declare that all the information and requirements concerning my volunteer participation in Mr. Ronald Dotte's thesis dissertation "Defining Levels of Pragmatic Competence in English in Chilean Pre-service English Language Teachers" have been explained to me.

The objective of this project has been thoroughly specified to me and all questions about my participation have been answered to my complete satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described by the author of this project in so far as they relate to my participation.

I have been assured absolute confidentiality of my personal information with regard to my participation in this research; however, any portions of the transcripts of the recorded interviews may be used for linguistic analysis, played for academic purposes or published in the future as along as these materials are available only to the aforementioned researcher.

I understand that my participation is purely voluntary, that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, and that I am not subject to any direct benefit from this research.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form.

--   ----------------
Signature of participant   Date

Appendix 5

Proposed Rubric
Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria used in marking the participants " responses eli
the multiple-rejoinder DCT are adapted from the Cohen and Olshtain
communicative ability scales in Cohen (1994), Pinyo, Aksornjarung, and
Laohawiriyanon (2010), Brown and Levinson (1978) as well as Yamshita's (2008)
considerations of pragmatic performance in English-second language students.
.This rubric is aimed at assessing the global pragmatic performance of students.
The scoring criteria employed in the present study are as follow:

DESCRIPTOR	0	1.0	1. 5	2.0	2.5	3.0
Linguistic Forms for Request		No use of linguistic forms for request		There is some use of inappropriate linguistic forms for expressing requests		The use of linguistic forms is fully appropriate for expressing requests
Mitigating Devices		Limited use of mitigating devices		Moderate use of Mitigating device		Extensive use of Mitigating devices
Acknowledgment of Social Distance	No response	No acknowledgement of social distance.	Some features of 1.0 and of 2.0in equal measure	Social distance is not fully acknowledged Politeness	Some features of 2.0 and of 3.0in equal measure	Acknowledgement of Social distance
Politeness Strategies		No politeness strategies (use of modal verbs)		Few politeness strategies (negative politeness)		Politeness strategies are widely used
Cooperative principles		Not enough information for request		Insufficient amount of information for a request		Information provided is completely relevant to the given situations and the interlocutor's expected responses.

Descriptors

Requestform : a request is a directive speech act whose aim is to have a hearer do something a speaker's needs or wants (Saeed, 2009). Bach and Harnish(1979) adds that these acts depend heavily on the speaker's desire.Examples of these linguistic forms are *I would like to…? I wonder if…? Can I…?*which are widely used to soften the force of the request and make the request polite (Yule, 1996; LoCastro 2012).

Example: would you mind opening the window, please?

Mitigating devices: These devices are expressions used to soften an imposition (Yule, 1996), such as a demand or requests (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Examples of these devices include *please* and modals verbs such as *would you?*

Examples: *Please* lend me some cash.

> I don't suppose that you would by any chance be able to lend me some cash, would *you*? (Levinson, 274)

Acknowledgement of Social distance: Social distance is the awareness of the closeness or difference in status (such as age, power, relative, acquaintance) between the speaker and the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Depending on this distance, the speaker will make decisions such as the use of politeness strategies (e.g. negative directness). Not recognizing social distance may lead to face-threatening acts.

An important concept to consider in social distance is "face wants" or the self-image that any given person has about themselves and the expectations about it

(to be respected or treated as an equal).

Brown and Levinson (1978) provide an illustration of a situation in which a couple who tries to sleep is disturbed by loud music coming from a neighbor's house. The man intends to talk to the neighbor but with neither acknowledgement of the social distance nor respect for the neighbor's faces wants—a face-threatening act. On the other hand, the woman suggests a face saving act—acknowledging the social distance in the situation and the neighbor's face wants.

Him: I'm going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now.

Her: Perhaps you could just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it's getting A bit late and people need to get to sleep (Brown and Levinson, 1978)

A key issue in social distance is face-threating acts;these are action which threatens a person's public image. It represents a threat to a person's individual expectations regarding self-image (Brown and Levinson, 1978). An example of a face-threatening act is an order, as in an order there no politeness strategies at work.

Example: Open the window. (order)
            Could you please open the window? (polite request)

Contrary to a face-threatening act, there is the face-saving act.

Politeness Strategy:these strategiesare used when uttering any speech act in order to achieve politeness (LoCastro, 2012; Yule, 1994). Yule (1994) acknowledges that there are two types of strategies: positive politeness strategy and negative politeness strategy, or negative directness.
Negative directness consists of using an indirect speech act to weaken a face-

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threatening act when performing a request or order (Saeed, 2009). According to the same author, this strategy is applied, first of all, by explaining the reason of a request or order before the request or order itself.

Example: it's very hot in here; could you please open the window?

Similarly, these indirect speech acts make use of Searle's preparatory conditions necessary for a successful speech act performance (Allan, 1994) at the moment o requesting or ordering.

Example: Could you open the window?

This strategy is also addressed and explained by Searle (1975); he states that in a normal conversation, request and order are preferred to be performed indirectly as a mean to express politeness, diminishing face-threatening acts.
The use of these strategies is what is referred to as tact or politeness (Saeed, 2009). Both Yule (1994) and Saeed agree that the use of negative politeness strategies is part of what is considered to be polite in English-speaking countries.

Conversational Cooperation: when uttering a speech act of request, it is enormously important to consider Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles. These principles are intended to be a set of regulations for an interaction between speaker and hearer so as to regulate cooperation and , hence, communication (LoCastro, 2012; Saeed 2009; Yule, 1996). For this, Grice (1975) proposed four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.
Two of these maxims seem to stand out in the utterance of a request: manner and quantity. The former asks form a speaker to avoid obscurity and ambiguity and to be brief and orderly; the latter requires that in conversation be contributions that are adequate and informative for the intention of the conversation. (Grice, 1975; LoCastro, 2012).

If during an exchange the speaker does respect all four maxims, then the hearer will successfully infer the speaker's intention (Locastro, 2012; Saeed, 2009) If the utterance is understood, there will be a positive result which in the case of a request will be that the hearer will follow the speaker's desires (Saeed, 2009). If, however, the maxim is broke, then the exchange might not be successful; Similarly, Locastro (2012) who points out that failing at following the Gricean Maxims leads to "misunderstanding".

For example:

A: I'm going to be late for work…could you take care of washing up the breakfast dishes for me?

B: Sure. I'll take care of them.

In this example, LoCastro (2012) illustrates how following the Gricean Maxims helps the hearer to clearly understand the message and speaker's intention. If not information had not been provided, the response of the hearer might have been different form the one that was intended by the utterance.

Appendix 6

Interview transcriptions

Group 1

<u>**Subject 1**</u>

Situation 1

Mister, please, I can't study. Please, put your music down or…

Situation 2

Mister, please, can you show me that suit?

Situation 3

Miss, please, I can't understand. Can you say again, please?

Situation 4

I'm sorry, can you help me with that…?

Situation 5

Please, turn off your mobile. I'm busy now.

Situation 6

Please sit down because I can't see the play… the game.

Situation 7

I know that you are busy but I need to take the exam this Wednesday. Can you give me an interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

Mister, can I stay late today? Because I have a lot of work.

Situation 9

Excuse me, I… study with you. I know that you're good in math; can you help me, please?

Situation 10

I'm sorry, please, I… help me because I need to finish the work right now. Can you lend me use your computer to finish my homework? Then I help you with yours.

Situation 11

Mister Sullivan, you know me, please. Can you… can you give me one or two hours for the interview, please?

Situation 12

Can you give me some piece of paper, please? I don't have anyone.

Subject 2

Situation 1

Please, can you turn the music down?

Situation 2

Can you show me that suit?

Situation 3

Can you repeat what you just say?

Situation 4

Have you time… have you have time… no. Do you have time to fix my computer?

Situation 5

Turn off your cellphone, please?

Situation 6

Hey, you don't let me see.

Situation 7

Can you change the time for the interview?

Situation 8

Can you stay here to help me?

Situation 9

Can we study together?

Situation 10

Can you let me use your computer for a minute?

Situation 11

Would you let me interview you?

Situation 12

Can you give me some papers to take notes?

Subject 3

Situation 1

Excuse me, can you turn the music down, please?

Situation 2

Can you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

I'm so sorry but I didn't listen what you say so, can you repeat again, please?

Situation 4

Hmm… I'm so sorry but my computer is broke so I need to fix him… can you help me?

Situation 5

Turn off the mobile, please.

Situation 6

May you move you, please?

Situation 7

I'm so sorry but I have my final term exam in Wednesday so… but I need the work. Can I have the interview on Thursday, please?

Situation 8

Can you stay here after store hours, please?

Situation 9

I know that I didn't speak you in all the semester but I need help so, can you help me in the test, please? …Or to study for the test?

Situation 10

May I borrow your computer for a little time? Because I need to do my homework for tomorrow.

Situation 11

Mr. President, may I make you an interview, please, for my thesis? It would be one or two hours.

Situation 12

Can I borrow you a piece of paper, please? Because I have not.

Subject 4

Situation 1

Oh, excuse me, can you… can you turn down the music, please? I can't study.

Situation 2

Oh, sorry mister, can you show me the suitcase, please?

Situation 3

Sorry mister, I didn't understand. Can you repeat it again, please?

Situation 4

Sorry mister, I know that you are very busy now but I need help. Can you help me with my computer, please?

Situation 5

Please, I'm doing my class. Can you turn off your mobile phone, please?

Situation 6

Excuse me, I can't see. Can you… can you move, please?

Situation 7

Sorry, I can't come on Wednesday because I have an exam. Can I came on Thursday, please?

Situation 8

Well, you know we have more work today. Can you stay more hours, please?

Situation 9

Sorry, I don't know a lot of… about mathematics. Can you help me? Can I study with you?

Situation 10

I need to use your computer urgently because mine is down. Can you bring me please… borrow me?

Situation 11

Mister, you know you are busy but can you help me with my graduate thesis, please?

Situation 12

Hey, can you give me some paper? Because I have nothing to write down.

Subject 5

Situation 1

Can you please turn the music down, please?

Situation 2

Can you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

Can you repeat it slowly, please?

Situation 4

Can I ask you for a favor, please?

Situation 5

Please, turn off your mobile phone.

Situation 6

Can you move, please?

Situation 7

Do you have another time for our interview?

Situation 8

Can you stay a little time more?

Situation 9

Hello, I like you teaching me Mathematics?

Situation 10

Sorry, I have a problem with my computer. Can you lend me yours?

Situation 11

Sorry, teacher, can you give me one or two hours for a little interview, please?

Situation 12

Can I have a piece of paper, please?

Subject 6

Situation 1

Hi, can you turn down the volume, please?

Situation 2

Excuse me, can you please show me that?

Situation 3

Excuse me, can you say that again, please?

Situation 4

Sorry, I know you're busy but can you please fix my computer?

Situation 5

Turn off your mobiles, please.

Situation 6

Can you move in front of the television?

Situation 7

Can I have the interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

Can you please stay more hours today?

Situation 9

Hi, I know you don't know me but can you please teach me Mathematics?

Situation 10

Can I borrow your computer before you… after you finish your work?

Situation 11

Can I ask you some questions?

Situation 12

Do you have a sheet of paper?

Subject 7

Situation 1

Hi, can you turn your music down, please?

Situation 2

Hi, can you show me this suit, please?

Situation 3

Can you say that again, please?

Situation 4

Do you have tome to fix my computer, please?

Situation 5

Turn off your mobile, please.

Situation 6

Could you move, please? I want to watch the game.

Situation 7

Can you make me an interview this Thursday?

Situation 8

Can you stay a little more, please?

Situation 9

Hi, can you help me study, please?

Situation 10

Can I use your computer, please?

Situation 11

Can I make you some questions?

Situation 12

Can you give me a piece of paper, please?

Subject 8

Situation 1

Can you turn off the music, please?

Situation 2

Can I see that suit, please?

Situation 3

Beg you a pardon. Can you repeat what you were saying, please?

Situation 4

Can you have the time… if you have free time can you please check my computer?

Situation 5

Can you please turn off that?

Situation 6

Can you move, please? I can't see.

Situation 7

I know this might be hard but can I have a interview by a day that I will be available?

I know it's very hard and you only schedules interviews on Wednesday but can you… you (like?) an exception and interview me on Tuesday?

Situation 8

Can you please stay for a little bit longer today?

Situation 9

I know we haven't talk a lot because we're just meeting but can you please help me with math? Because I'm not really good at that but I can see you are very good… at this.

Situation 10

I have to finish a homework for tomorrow. I know you are doing also stuff in your computer but can you please borrow me your computer just for tonight?

Situation 11

Sir, I don't want to bother you but I would like to ask you some questions for my thesis and I want to know if you are available for… this.

Situation 12

Hey, can you please borrow me one of your papers… one of your sheets?

Subject 9

Situation 1

I'm sorry, can you stop the music, please? I have to study.

Situation 2

I'm sorry, can you show me that suit, please?

Situation 3

Excuse me, can you repeat?

Situation 4

Excuse me, you have time? I need to fix my computer…have a problem.

Situation 5

In this class the mobiles are no… accepted.

Situation 6

I'm sorry I can't see the basketball game. Please…

Situation 7

Can I come another day, please?

Situation 8

I'm sorry, can you stay some hours, please? I need to… work extended hours.

Situation 9

Can you help me, please? I'm not good at maths so… please?

Situation 10

My computer is not working. Can I use yours, please?

Situation 11

Excuse me, you have time for an interview?

Situation 12

Hey, you have a…you have a piece of paper?

Subject 10

Situation 1

Can you turn the music down, please?

Situation 2

Can you show me the suit, please… to buy it?

Situation 3

Could you repeat, please?

Situation 4

May you help me with my computer… Can you help me with my computer?

Situation 5

Could you put your cellphones off, please?

Situation 6

Could you move, please?

Situation 7

May you change my interview's day, please?

Situation 8

Could you stay here some hours after your turn, please?

Situation 9

I know I don't know you but it's possible to study with you?

Situation 10

Could you stop working and let me use your computer?

Situation 11

May you give me… can you give me one hour to make you an interview?

Situation 12

Hey man, can you give me some piece of paper?

Subject 11

Situation 1

Can you please turn the music down? I'm studying.

Situation 2

Can you please show me the suit?

Situation 3

Can you please repeat… repeat what you are saying?

Situation 4

If you have time can you please fix my computer?

Situation 5

Turn your cellphone off… turn off your cellphone.

Situation 6

Move away.

Situation 7

Can we do the interview in another day? Thursday maybe?

Situation 8

Can you please stay for another hour… more hour?

Situation 9

Can you please teach me a little bit of math? I'm not very good.

Situation 10

I need to finish some work. Can you please let me use your computer?

Situation 11

I really need to do this interview. Can you please hmm… can you please answer me some questions?

Situation 12

I don't have any paper. Can you… can I use yours?

Subject 12

Situation 1

Can you stop your music? Because I need to study.

Situation 2

Can you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

Madam, can you repeat the instruction, please?

Situation 4

Can you fix or repair my computer, please?

Situation 5

You need to turn off your cellphone because we are in classes.

Situation 6

Can you move? Because I can't see, please.

Situation 7

I need that you move my meet because I can go on Thursday, please.

Situation 8

Can you stay here one hour? Because we need to work.

Situation 9

Can you study with me? Because I can't understand very well Mathematics.

Situation 10

Can you do your homework tomorrow? Because I need to use your computer.

Situation 11

I need to do you an interview. Can you be with me one or two hours?

Situation 12

Give me a paper, please?

Subject 13

Situation 1

Please, can you turn the music down?

Situation 2

Can you show me that suit?

Situation 3

Can you repeat, please?

Situation 4

I know you're busy right now but can you help me to fix my computer?

Situation 5

Please, turn off your phone.

Situation 6

Can you move, please? I can't see.

Situation 7

Good morning, I know you are busy and you do the interviews on Wednesday but anyways I want to please begging you to give me an interview on Thursday.

Situation 8

I know we're busy right now and… but I need to ask you if you can stay one hour… because it's the end of semester.

Situation 9

Hi, I know we don't know each other but I know your good at math and I need to ask you if you can study with me because I don't know anything.

Situation 10

Sorry, I need to ask you a favor. I have my computer… my computer is broke or something and I need to ask you a favor. I have my deadline tomorrow and I need you, please, borrow your computer to… for the… for one hour.

Situation 11

I know you're quite busy, but I need… I really need you for my thesis to do an interview and, please, can you give me an hour?

Situation 12

Can I use your notebook to write something?

<u>Subject_14</u>

Situation 1

Can you please hmm… off the music?

Situation 2

Can you show me that pants?

Situation 3

Can you repeat it, please?

Situation 4

Can you see what happened with my computer?

Situation 5

Turn off your mobile, please.

Situation 6

Can you sit, please?

Situation 7

Can you make me the interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

Can you please stay in the store a few hours?

Situation 9

Can we study together?

Situation 10

Can I use the computer, please?

Situation 11

I am writing my graduate thesis and I want to know if you can… if I can make you an interview for one or two hours, please.

Situation 12

Can you borrow me a sheet of paper?

Subject 15

Situation 1

Can you please down the music?

Situation 2

You can show that suit?

Situation 3

Can you repeat that?

Situation 4

You can fix my computer?

Situation 5

Turn off your cellphone.

Situation 6

Can you move?

Situation 7

You can change the date?

Situation 8

You can stay after hours?

Situation 9

Please help me with Mathematic.

Situation 10

Please, lend me your computer for a homework?

Situation 11

I need you only for one or two hours.

Situation 12

Please, give me any paper?

Group 2—Pre-intermediate subject

Subject 1

Situation 1

Could you please turn the music off or turn it a little bit hmm… not so loud? Because I'm studying.

Situation 2

Could you please show me that suit that I can't reach?

Situation 3

May you tell me that again? You have spoken too fast and I didn't understand.

Situation 4

I know you've been quite busy, but I wanted to know if you could help me with my computer because it has a virus.

Situation 5

Please turn your mobile phone off.

Situation 6

Please move, I can't see.

Situation 7

I know you're quite busy, but I have no options, and I wanted to know if you… I could come to the interview on Thursday? Because I can't come on Wednesday because I have a final exam.

Situation 8

I know you may be tired, but I wanted to know if you could stay a couple hours more hmm… to work.

Situation 10

I know we're not friends, but I wanted to know if you could help me to study for the test because I can see you have hmm… more skills than I for math.

Situation 11

Please, please, please lend me your computer, I know you're busy but I can wait and I'll stay up at… up until… hmm… very late in… at night, but I need your computer.

Situation 12

I'd like to know if you could help me with an interview for my thesis and I know you're busy, but I wanted to know if you could help me.

Situation 13

Have you got any paper you could lend me?

Subject 2

Situation 1

I'd knock on his door… Oh, and I'd say please, would you turn the music down because I'm trying to study? And if you ever needed me to do the same I'd do it.

Situation 2

Please could you show me that suit? Because hmm… It's beautiful and I'm thinking of purchasing it.

Situation 3

Please could you repeat what you're saying because hmm… I didn't get the idea.

Situation 4

I know you're really busy but I would like to ask you for help hmm… to fix my computer.

Situation 5

Could you please turn your mobile phone off? Because it bothers the rest of the class.

Situation 6

Please could you sit down? Because you don't allow me to see.

Situation 7

Could we please reschedule the interview for Thursday? Because I have exams on… this Wednesday.

Situation 8

Could you please stay a few hours more? Because I need you to.

Situation 9

Could you please stay after hours with me?

Situation 10

Hi, I don't know you very well but you seem to have a good background in math and I'd like to ask you for help to study together.

Situation 11

I'm sorry, I know you're busy but I'd like to borrow your computer for today.

Situation 12

I know you're really busy, a really busy person but I'd like to ask you for a few hours to the interview.

Situation 13

Hey, could I please borrow paper and pen to write… to take notes of this meeting?

Subject 3

Situation 1

Ok… I'm sorry, I'm trying to study. Can you please turn the music down?

Situation 2

Excuse me, I really want that… I think that suit is very beautiful and I really want to buy it. So, can you please show it to me?

Situation 3

Excuse me, teacher, I didn't get the idea very well. So, can you please repeat it?

Situation 4

Excuse me, teacher, I know you're very busy right now but I have this computer that is very slow and I know you're very skillful in fixing computers so, I just want to ask you if you can fix it and I will pay you, or something.

Situation 5

The ring… the phone that just rings, can you pass… no, I don't know. Can you turn that off, please?

Situation 6

Excuse me, I'm watching that game in the TV, so can you please move? Because you're blocking the TV.

Situation 7

Ok. Hmm… I really want to take this interview, but I'm taking my final exam on Wednesday. So, I know you're very busy but can you please schedule an interview for me on Thursday?

Situation 8

Hey, I know you have been working very hard, but I really need you to stay for an hour more today.

Situation 9

Hey, I have noticed that you have… you are really good at maths and I'm not quite good. So, as the test is coming to… is going to be held next week, can you please help me to be better in maths?

Situation 10

I have this problem with my computer and I really need to use one to finish my homework, and I know you have… you are also writing a course paper but can you please ( ) your computer to me so I can finish my homework?

Situation 11

President, I know you know me very well, so I have to ask you if you can schedule hmm… an hour or two for my interview. I know you're very busy but I really need to finish this off so can you please do it for me?

Situation 12

I need to write some notes so, I know you have some paper right there so can you please give it… one or two pages… no, one or two sheets for me so I can write my notes down?

Subject 4

Situation 1

(knocks) Please could you turn the music down? I'm trying to study.

Situation 2

Excuse me, yeah the suit, yes, that one. How much it cost? I'm very interested in that.

Situation 3

Ok, please, I don't want to be disrespectful but could you please talk a little bit slow I cannot follow you.

Situation 4

Miss can I ( ) a little bit, I have a problem with my PC hmm… it seems that it has a virus and I know that you… you know a lot about the computer system and so for. Can you check it, please?

Situation 5

So, now this is present perfect… come on, what I told you? Please, cellphones off, right now.

Situation 6

Hey, hey, hey, get out! Sorry, sorry but I want to see that!

Situation 7

So well, I would be glad to take the interview on Wednesday, but in this time I have to take my final term exam. So, I was wondering if we can do that… this interview on Thursday, preferently in the morning, if it's not a problem for you.

Situation 8

Ok Mark, hmm… it seems that we'll have to work a lot today so, could you stay with us after hours?

Situation 9

Hmm… hi, hi… Sebastián, I don't know anything about maths and I'm trying to comprehend this lecture but I can't… I know that you know a lot of these hmm… calculating things and so for. So, could you help me? Because the test is on the next week, please?

Situation 10

(knocks) Yes… hey I have a big problem. My PC has broken and I need to do a homework for tomorrow… for tomorrow at 8:00. Yeah, I know that you're doing a very hard work with it. Could you lend me your computer for just twenty minutes? I really need to finish this.

Situation 11

Good morning, President. (Laughs) Hi, yeah, yeah you know me. Yes, we… well, I took your… some of your classes in the (). Well, I know that you're kind of busy

these days but I need to… I need your help for my thesis. Yes, I need an interview for one hour, two hours maybe. So, could you help me in this ()?

Situation 12

Psst… Hey, hey, dude, hmm… lend me a paper please? I have to write down some notes. Yes, I know! I didn't bring mine so, quick!

Subject 5

Situation 1

Excuse me, can you please turn the music down? I'm trying to study.

Situation 2

Hmm… Hi, do you work here? I need… I want to see that suit. Can you please show me?

Situation 3

I'm sorry, can you please repeat? I got lost.

Situation 4

Hi, I know you're good with computers and I know you're very busy but I want to know if you can fix my computer, please?

Situation 5

Can you please turn off your mobile phone?

Situation 6

Can you please move? I'm watching the game.

Situation 7

I know you only schedule interviews on Wednesday but I need to do it on Thursday because I have an exam on Wednesday. Can you please… can we please hmm… make the appointment that day?

Situation 8

I know you're working a lot but I need you to stay after store hours today.

Situation 9

I see you're good in math, I need help. Can you please help me?

Situation 10

I know your homework is for tomorrow too… my homework… it's for tomorrow and I know you're busy but I need to use the computer. Can you please pass me your computer and I can finish my homework first and then you can do your own?

Situation 11

Hi, I know you are very busy and I know we met before. I really want to make an interview with you… make you an interview. I have plenty of time so any time you can give me a minute to do the interview will be good.

Situation 12

Hi! Can I ask you something? Can you please hmm… give me a piece of paper and a pencil? I need to write… a little… stuff.

Subject 6

Situation 1

Excuse me, I'm trying to learn my (), can you please stop your music?

Situation 2

May I see that suit hmm… that it's on the… on that room?

Situation 3

Can you explain me again what you're saying?

Situation 4

Can I ask you a favor? Can you help me with my computer?

Situation 5

Please, turn off your cellphone. We're trying to make a (nice?) class.

Situation 6

You're blocking my view. Can you please go away?

Situation 7

I'm sorry but I have a problem. Can you… can I have the interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

I () a problem. Can you stay for more hours in your work?

Situation 9

Can you help me, please, with this maths problem? Because I can't understand.

Situation 10

Can I use your computer, please? Because I need to make a homework for tomorrow.

Situation 11

Can I have an interview with you? Because I need to make a homework.

Situation 12

Do you have some paper, please? Because I don't have any.

Subject 7

Situation 1

Excuse me, could you turn the music down, please?

Situation 2

Could you show me this suit, please?

Situation 3

I'm sorry, could you… could you say that again, please?

Situation 4

I was wondering if there's a chance you can fix my computer.

Situation 5

Turn off your mobile phone, please.

Situation 6

Can you sit down, so I can watch the game, please?

Situation 7

Is there any chance I could have an interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

I'm sorry to bother you, but I'd really like (for?) you to stay a few hours more.

Situation 9

Could you please hmm… teach me some stuff that I don't understand for the test?

Situation 10

Could you please let me use your computer for a short time? You can continue on paper and then put it in the computer.

Situation 11

I was wondering if I could interview you for my thesis, if it's not ().

Situation 12

Can I borrow some paper, please? So I can write some notes.

Subject 8

Situation 1

Can you please lower the volume so I can study?

Situation 2

Can you please show me that suit? I'd want to see it.

Situation 3

Can you please repeat what you said? I couldn't understand.

Situation 4

Can you do me a favor? My computer is broken. I would like to know if you can fix it.

Situation 5

Can you please turn your mobile phone off?

Situation 6

Can you please move? I can't see the TV… or the game.

Situation 7

I would like to apply for the new job, but I can only come on Thursday. Would that be an option for you?

Situation 8

Could you please stay for extra hours?

Situation 9

Hey, I'm a bit behind in math… can you please teach me some more?

Situation 10

Can I please use your computer to finish my homework, please?

Situation 11

Mr. President, I know you're busy but can you please spend (spare?) one or two hours so I can interview you, please?

Situation 12

Can you please lend me a… some extra paper? I forgot mine.

Subject 9

Situation 1

I'd like to know if you can turn down the volume of the music, please.

Situation 2

Could you show me that please?

Situation 3

Could you repeat it again, please?

Situation 4

I know you are very busy but I think that you are the only person that can help me.

Situation 5

Could you turn off the mobile phone, please?

Situation 6

Sorry but I can't see because you're in front of me.

Situation 7

I want to know if it is possible to find another day.

Situation 8

I know that you may be tired but I really need you to help me this time.

Situation 9

Considering that you are good at math, could you help me with this subject?

Situation 10

I have a problem with my computer and you are the only person that I can… that I know that have another one. So, could you lend me… can I borrow yours?

Situation 11

Although I know you're very busy, I know… I need this interview from you.

Situation 12

Can I borrow two pieces of paper, please?

Subject 10

Situation 1

Well, I would probably say to him… please may you turn down the volume, please?

Situation 2

Can you please show me the suit… this suit?

Situation 3

Teacher, I don't understand the… what you are saying. Can you please repeat it?

Situation 4

Mister, can you please, if you are available with time, fix my computer?

Situation 5

Turn off your cellphone now, please.

Situation 6

Can you please move out because I'm watching the basketball game, please?

Situation 7

Would you please put off… no… put up the meeting for tomorrow? Because I have a final exam term today… I mean on Wednesday, please?

Situation 8

Is there any chance that you can stay here, working for more hours? Because… only if you can.

Situation 9

I haven't been doing as well as you in Mathematics. Can you please… could you please hmm… study with me?

Situation 10

Can I ask you something? I have to finish my homework… finish up my homework for tomorrow. Can you please borrow me your computer?

Situation 11

I know you have a tight schedule but would you please, if you are free… if you have free time, maybe two or more hours, can I interview you?

Situation 12

Can you give me some paper, please?

Subject 11

Situation 1

Can you turn off the music, please? ... I would say that

Situation 2

I would say: can I… can you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

Can you repeat it, please?

Situation 4

I know you have been very busy but can you help me with the computer, please?

Situation 5

Please turn up your mobiles phone.

Situation 6

Can you move, please?

Situation 7

I need to take exams on Wednesday. So, I would be very thankful if you can schedule an interview for Thursday.

Situation 8

I know you have been working all day, but please can you stay one hour more? I will give you a reward.

Situation 9

I'm very bad at Mathematics. Could you help me with this, please?

Situation 10

Sorry for bothering you but could you lend me your computer, please? I will be quick.

Situation 11

Hi, I'm doing my thesis and I need you to give me an interview, please.

Situation 12

Could you give me some paper, please?

Subject 12

Situation 1

Sorry, can you turn off the music, please? Because I'm trying to study.

Situation 2

Can you show me that clothe please? Because I'm interested in that… in that clothe.

Situation 3

Miss, can you repeat this again? 'Cause I don't understand.

Situation 4

Miss, exists the possibility that you can help me with my computer? Because I have a problem.

Situation 5

Ok… you know the rules so you have to turn off your cellphone, please.

Situation 6

Is it possible that you can move away, please? Because I'm trying to see the TV.

Situation 7

Is it possible that we can change the day for the interview? Because I have a problem on Wednesday.

Situation 8

Can you stay for some hours? Because I have to do some business.

Situation 9

I noticed that you're good at maths so can you help me to study? Because I don't understand too much.

Situation 10

When you finish can you borrow your computer? Because I have to send a work for tomorrow.

Situation 11

Exists the possibility that you can collaborate with me for my thesis? It's about one or two hours. Please.

Situation 12

Can you give me a sheet of paper? Because I don't have one.

Subject 13

Situation 1

Could you please turn the music down?

Situation 2

Excuse me, could you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

Excuse me, could you please say it again?

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Situation 4

I have been busy and I need to fix my computer. Can you do it for me, please?

Situation 5

Please turn off your mobile.

Situation 6

Excuse me, I can't see the match.

Situation 7

I'm going to be busy on Wednesday… the interview can be on Tuesday… Thursday?

Situation 8

Could you please stay after the store hours, please?

Situation 9

Excuse me, I have problems in math, could you please help me with the exercise and understand the situation, please?

Situation 10

Excuse me, I have a homework for tomorrow. Can I borrow your computer, please?

Situation 11

Excuse me, can I make you some questions? It's for my thesis and I need help.

Situation 12

Excuse me, could you give me a sheet of paper, please?

Subject 14

Situation 1

I'm sorry but I'm trying to study. Can you please lower the music… please?

Situation 2

Excuse me, can you show me that suit, please?

Situation 3

I'm sorry, can you repeat that, please? You're going too fast.

Situation 4

Teacher, do you have a moment? I'm having problems with my computer and I wonder if you have time for me to help me erase a virus, please.

Situation 5

Who's that cellphone ring? Please, turn it off.

Situation 6

I'm sorry, can you move? I'm watching the TV.

Situation 7

Sorry, I know you only take appointments on Wednesday but I have an exam, a final term exam and I need to make an appointment for the job interview on Thursday. Is it possible?

Situation 8

Annie, are you busy? I know you have been working long hour terms but I really need your help to stay a few hours more. Can you do it?

Situation 9

Hi, my name is Angela and I know that you're doing quite well in this course and I'm not. So, I was wondering if you could help me because we have a test… a text… a test next week and I'm really lost.

Situation 10

Hey, I know you have this homework due the day after tomorrow but I have to do something for tomorrow and my computer is having some problems. Can I please use your computer?

Situation 11

Mr. President, I really need some time to talk with you. I know you have a very busy schedule but I want some time for an interview. Can you please make some time?

Situation 12

Hey, can you hand me some paper, please?

Subject 15

Situation 1

Excuse me, can you please turn off the music?

Situation 2

Can you show me that suit?

Situation 3

Sorry, can you repeat it?

Situation 4

I know that you're busy but can you please check my computer?

Situation 5

Can you please turn off you mobile?

Situation 6

Sorry, but I can't watch the game.

Situation 7

I'm sorry but I'm very busy on Wednesday. Can I take an appointment on Thursday?

Situation 8

Can you do me a favor and stay more hours?

Situation 9

I know that we don't know each others but can we study together?

Situation 10

Can you do me a favor and lend me your computer?

Situation 11

I know you're busy but if you check your schedule, can you make me an hour for a meeting?

Situation 12

Excuse me, can you give me a piece of paper?

Group 3—advanced subjects

<u>Subject 1</u>

Situation 1

I'd say sorry, can you please turn down the volume? I'm trying to study in the next room.

Situation 2

I would say I'm sorry, I'm really interested in that suit. Can you please show it to me?

Situation 3

Sorry, I got lost. Can you repeat again?

Situation 4

I know you have been very busy but can you help me? I have this virus in my computer and I don't know what to do.

Situation 5

Please, your mobile off. We're in classes,

Situation 6

Can you please move aside? Because I cannot see the game.

Situation 7

Ok… I'm really interested in the job, so I would really like to have an interview. Can we schedule it for Thursday, please?

Situation 8

Ok… You know we're really busy, can you please stay more hours working, to make things faster?

Situation 9

Hello (laughs), I've noticed that you're very good at math. Can we please make a… form a study group so you can help me, please?

Situation 10

So… are you too busy with your work? It's just that I need to work on mine and it's due for tomorrow so can we just give me a little minutes to finish mine, please? My computer has stopped working.

Situation 11

So… I know you're really busy but I would like to include you in my thesis. So, can I make you an interview, please? Give me… time.

Situation 12

Please can you hand me a paper? I don't have one to make notes.

Subject 2

Situation 1

Can you turn the volume down?

Situation 2

Are you able to show me that suit?

Situation 3

I didn't get it. Can you repeat it, please?

Situation 4

I know you have been busy but I would like you to help me with a problem with my computer.

Situation 5

Turn off your device, please.

Situation 6

Can you move, please?

Situation 7

Is there any possibility to reschedule the interview?

Situation 8

Will you be so kind to stay for a few hours?

Situation 9

Is there any possibility that you help me with maths?

Situation 10

I know you're doing homework but would you lend me your computer for a few hours to finish my homework?

Situation 11

If we set a time, would you help me with my thesis interview? …One of my thesis interviews.

Situation 12

Can you give me a piece of paper?

Subject 3

Situation 1

Ok… I would ask the person in the other room to…

Sorry, could you please turn off the radio?

Situation 2

Please could you show me that dress?

Situation 3

Teacher, can you repeat that sentence again?

Situation 4

Teacher, I know that you've been busy but could you please help me with this computer?

Situation 5

Students, please turn off your mobile phones, please.

Situation 6

I can't see the game. Please, can you move?

Situation 7

I have a final term exam on Wednesday. I know that you're being busy but could you please take into consideration my appointment? If possible.

Situation 8

I have a lot of work so can you stay for… more hours please?

Situation 9

I've heard that you're very good at maths so, please, could you help me?

Situation 10

Can you lend me your computer for a few minutes, please?

Situation 11

Teacher, I know that you have been busy, but I would like to ask you some questions, please.

Situation 12

Could you please give me a piece of paper, please?

Subject 4

Situation 1

Can you please turn the music down? I'm studying and I can't concentrate in my studies so ,please, turn the music down.

Situation 2

Sorry, can you help me? I need to… I want to try on this suit and… please?

Situation 3

Sorry, miss, can you repeat it again? I can… I couldn't be able to understand you.

Situation 4

Teacher, I was wondering if you could help me with my computer. I know that you are kind of busy right now but it would be very helpful if you help me.

Situation 5

Student, please, could you turn off your mobile phone? It is very disrespectful to have it on.

Situation 6

Sorry, I was watching the basketball game and you are blocking my view. Please, could you hmm… get away?

Situation 7

I was wondering if we could… if we can schedule the interview for Thursday? Because on Wednesday I have my final term, and I know that you're very busy hmm… so, is there any chance that we can have the interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

Hmm… so, I was wondering if you could stay hmm… in the book store for a few hours after…

Situation 9

Sorry, I don't know…I know that we don't know each other but I was wondering if you could help me with my studies on math because I'm struggling to understand and we wave the test on next week so I would appreciate if you could help me.

Situation 10

Roommate, I was wondering if you could lend me your computer. I know that you're doing a homework that is hmm… that is… not tomorrow and I have this homework for tomorrow so, I was wondering if you could lend me your computer just for an hour.

Situation 11

I was wondering if we could meet hmm… one or two hours because I'm doing my thesis and I need your help. I need to interview. I know that you are very busy but as we know each other for a long time I… it would be very helpful for me if we can get each other to interview you.

Situation 12

Sorry, could you lend me some paper? I need to write some notes… I need to write down some notes but I don't have any paper. Would you be so kind to lend me paper, please?

<u>Subject 5</u>

Situation 1

Could you please turn down the music?

Situation 2

May I ask you to show… the suit, please?

Situation 3

Miss, could you repeat again? I couldn't understand.

Situation 4

I know that you're very busy but could you please help me with my computer?

Situation 5

Could you please turn off your mobile phone, as it's not allowed here in the class?

Situation 6

Could you please move a bit? 'Cause I cannot see.

Situation 7

Hmm… I have a problem and I need an interview on Thursday, so can I schedule the interview for that day at 2 o'clock?

Situation 8

We're being really busy so I would like to ask you to stay some hours after work, please.

Situation 9

I was wondering that we could study together?

Situation 10

You know, I was thinking and you have the… your homework for two days more so, could you please let me use your computer for my homework that is due tomorrow?

Situation 11

Hmm… I know that you have been very busy but I was wondering if you could take one or two hours for my interview. Please?

Situation 12

Do you have any paper for me, please?

Subject 6

Situation 1

Ok… Sorry, could you please turn down the music, please?

Situation 2

Could you please pass me that dress? I want to try it on.

Situation 3

Teacher, could you please speak slower? Because I don't understand.

Situation 4

Teacher, I know that you're very busy but could you please help me with my computer? I need to fix it.

Situation 5

Could you please turn off that… cellphone, please?

Situation 6

Sorry, I need to see the match. Could you please… I don't know.

Situation 7

Sir, I know that you're very busy but I really can't come on Wednesday. Could you please do it on Thursday?

Situation 8

As I know you for too long, I need you to please stay here for extra hours?

Situation 9

Hmm… well, I know we don't know each other but I need you to please help me with my Mathematics test because I don't know how to study. So, could you please help me with that?

Situation 10

Could you please lend me your computer just for a few hours? Because I need to do my homework for tomorrow and you have to do it the day after tomorrow so, please? You could help me with that.

Situation 11

Well, as I know you for quite a lot of time, please you could… could you please hmm… schedule a meeting with me because I need you for my thesis.

Situation 12

Hmm… I need a paper, do you have any?

Subject 7

Situation 1

I'm trying to study. Can you please turn down the volume of the music, please?

Situation 2

Can you please show me the suit?

Situation 3

Can you repeat it again? I couldn't hear the instructions.

Situation 4

I know that you have been very busy this time but can you please help me to fix my computer?

Situation 5

Please turn off your mobile phone.

Situation 6

Can you please move? You're blocking my view.

Situation 7

I know that you're very busy but I can't take the interview on Wednesday. Can you please hmm… set a meeting for my on Thursday?

Situation 8

We have so much work to do… can you please stay an hour after, please?

Situation 9

I have noticed that you are very good at maths, and I don't understand anything. Can you please teach me something for the test?

Situation 10

I know that you're using your computer but I have a homework for tomorrow and I don't have anything to write it on. Can you please borrow your computer… no, lend me your computer, please?

Situation 11

You know I'm writing my thesis to graduate so, please, can you spare one or two hour for your time for an interview?

Situation 12

Can you please give me some paper?

Subject 8

Situation 1

Hey, sorry but could you hmm… decrease the volume of your… the music please?

Situation 2

Sorry, can I see the suit, please?

Situation 3

Sorry, sir, could you speak more slowly?

Situation 4

Sorry, sir, would it be possible if you can see my computer? Because it has a lot of problems.

Situation 5

Sorry but could you turn off your mobile phone, please?

Situation 6

Sorry but could you move out? Because I cannot see.

Situation 7

Even though you have a busy time I would like to ask you for an interview on Thursday, please.

Situation 8

Ok, could you stay after more hours, please?

Situation 9

Sorry but I know that… I don't know you very well but can I ask you if you can teach me some math class?

Situation 10

Hey, dude, could you stop doing what you are… could you stop doing that and let me finish my homework for tomorrow, please?

Situation 11

Hey, sis, hmm… you know, I'm doing my graduate thesis and I have to hmm… interview so… I know that you're busy so… can I have a little conversation with you?

Situation 12

Hey, can I borrow a piece of paper, please?

Subject 9

Situation 1

Sorry but could you please turn down the music?

Situation 2

Hello, can you please show me that suit?

Situation 3

Could you please speak slowler and explain it better to me?

Situation 4

I don't want to bother you, as I know you're kind of busy, but I really need you help. Could you please help me with my computer?

Situation 5

Please, turn off the mobile phones. And that means for all of you.

Situation 6

I'm watching that basketball game, could you please move, as you're blocking my view?

Situation 7

I'm sorry but I'm going to be quite busy on Wednesday. Could we reschedule the interview on Thursday?

Situation 8

I know you've been quite busy the last days but I really need you to stay a couple of hours after work. Could you?

Situation 9

Hi, I noticed that you're quite good for Mathematics and I'm really bad at it. Could you please help me for studying for the next week's test?

Situation 10

Sorry, I know you have your homework for the day after tomorrow and mine is for tomorrow so, would you mind to hmm… if I use your computer for finishing my homework and then you can finish yours?

Situation 11

I know you're a quite busy man but I really need to schedule an interview with you. Would you mind to help me for a couple of hours?

Situation 12

Hi, could you give me just a piece of paper so I can hmm… finish this… to taking notes about this, please?

Subject 10

Situation 1

Could you turn down the music down, please?

Situation 2

Could you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

Can you repeat what you have just said, please?

Situation 4

I was wondering if you can take a look at my computer.

Situation 5

Please turn off your mobile phone, please.

Situation 6

Could you move a little bit, please? I can't see.

Situation 7

I know that you're very busy but I was wondering if we can set an appointment for my interview.

Situation 8

Can you work extra hours today, please? I know that… I don't know.

Situation 9

You look like you master Mathematics; could you explain me… could you explain to me what this is about?

Situation 10

Can you lend me your computer? Because your paper is for the day after tomorrow and I have to finish mine.

Situation 11

I know that you're very busy but I would like to ask you if we can set an interview.

Situation 12

Can you lend me a piece of paper, please?

Subject 11

Situation 1

You know what? I'm trying to study really hard and I would appreciate if you could turn off the radio.

Situation 2

I really want to fit in that suit. Could you please bring it to me?

Situation 3

Could you repeat the instructions, please?

Situation 4

You know what? I'm having a virus on my computer, so I was wondering if you could actually help me to delete it.

Situation 5

Guys, can you just turn off your mobile phones, please?

Situation 6

I can't see a thing, can you just move a little bit, please?

Situation 7

I really want to sit for an interview but I cannot make it on Wednesday, so could you just reschedule the interview?

Situation 8

I know that you've been working very hard lately but I really need you to work hmm… for a longer period of time.

Situation 9

I know this is the very first time that I have ever talked to you but I really need your help to pass this course. Could you just teach me maths a little bit?

Situation 10

I'm aware that you're working on your own report but I really need to polish up mine. Could you just lend me your computer just to finish off mine?

Situation 11

I know that you're very busy all time but I would appreciate if you… we could have an interview… for my thesis.

Situation 12

Can I borrow a sheet of paper from you, please?

Subject 12

Situation 1

I would say to him: could you please turn down your music? I cannot concentrate… to read… I need to study.

Situation 2

May I… can I see or prove this beautiful suit?

Situation 3

I'm sorry, I didn't really understand what you just… can you repeat it?

Situation 4

Professor, I'm sorry; I know that you are actually quite busy nowadays but can you check my computer?

Situation 5

What we said about the cellphones? You have to turn them down… off.

Situation 6

I'm sorry I'm not able…can you move? I cannot see the game.

Situation 7

I'm actually not able to come on Wednesday. Can we move the appointment to another day… preferably on Thursday?

Situation 8

I'm sorry, I know that you have been working for a lot of hours the past few days but we really need you today. Can you stay a little bit long?

Situation 9

I'm sorry, I… Hi, I'm Victor, can we, by any chance, look this subject together? I'm really having… I'm really struggling with it.

Situation 10

I know that you have this important paper to do but I'm really in a hurry right now, it's an emergency. Can you lend me your computer? It won't take long.

Situation 11

Hi, professor, I need… I really need to interview you but I know that you have a tight schedule. Can we make… can you make some room for me to make you the interview?

Situation 12

I'm sorry, I don't have any paper and I need one. Can you lend me some?

Subject_13

Situation 1

Could you please turn down the music?

Situation 2

Could you help me, please? Could you show me the suit, please?

Situation 3

I'm sorry to interrupt you. Could you please speak slowler? Could you say it again?

Situation 4

I would say… I know you are very busy but I was 0wondering if you could help me with my computer.

Situation 5

Please turn off your mobile phone.

Situation 6

Can you move a little bit? Because you are blocking my view.

Situation 7

I was wondering if you could hmm… take the possibility to give my exam on Wednesday? Or… to schedule my exam… please schedule my exam?

Situation 8

I know you have worked a lot and I hmm… but today could you… could you stay after store hours?

Situation 9

This subject is difficult to me, could we study together?

Situation 10

I wanted to ask you a favor… could you give me favor?

Situation 11

Ok… I was wondering if you could help me with an interview.

Situation 12

Can you borrow me a piece of paper?

Subject 14

Situation 1

Please can you turn down the music?

Situation 2

Could I have… could I try on that suit?

Situation 3

I'm sorry, I don't understand. Can you repeat?

Situation 4

I wonder if you have some time so you could help me with my computer… shut down?

Situation 5

Who is this phone and… can someone turn it off?

Situation 6

Can you move away?

Situation 7

I was wondering if there was any chance that I… that you could move the date for the following day?

Situation 8

I know that we have been working really hard for a few days but could you make an extra effort and stay two hours more?

Situation 9

Hello… can… are you good at math? So, I was wondering that… if we could study together? Maybe some time, during the week?

Situation 10

I was wondering if you could hmm… well until what time would you be writing your essay? And if after that could you lend me your notebook so I can write my work for tomorrow because my computer die.

Situation 11

I Know that you're a very busy man but I want to see if there's any option that could you open a space in your schedule for one or two hours for my interview for my final project?

Situation 12

I see that you have some sheet of papers. Can I borrow some of them? I forgot mines in my house.

Subject 15

Situation 1

Excuse me, can you please turn off your music?

Situation 2

I'm sorry, I was wondering if you can show me the suit that you have there?

Situation 3

Sorry, can you say that again, please?

Situation 4

I know that you have been very busy but I need your help with my computer. Can you help me, please?

Situation 5

Students, cellphones are not allowed in this classroom. Please turn it off.

Situation 6

Excuse me, I cannot see… I cannot watch the match. Can you please move one step…by?

Situation 7

I was wondering if there is any possibility to change… to have the meeting on Wednesday because I have a final exam that day.

Situation 8

Is there any possibility to… for you to stay here one more hour, please?

Situation 9

Hi, I've noticed that you're good at math. I was wondering if you could help me with tat subject.

Situation 10

I know that you have a homework to do but I really need to use a computer and mine doesn't work so, do you think that it would be any problem if I can use your…?

Situation 11

I know that you have been very busy with your work, but I really need your… your opinions about my thesis.

Situation 12

Can you give me a sheet of paper?