CRITICIZING AND RESPONDING TO CRITICISM IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF VIETNAMESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Interlanguage pragmatics research has contributed a great deal to our understanding of L2 pragmatic use but less to our understanding of L2 pragmatic development, although developmental issues are also its primary research goal. Additionally, previous studies have been confined to a rather small set of speech acts, under-researching such face-damaging acts as criticizing and responding to criticism even though these may be more challenging for L2 learners.

The present study examines pragmatic development in the use of criticizing and responding to criticism by a group of Vietnamese EFL learners with a view to shedding light on the pragmatic properties of these speech acts. IL data were collected from 12 high beginners, 12 intermediate learners, and 12 advanced learners, via a written questionnaire and role play, and analyzed with reference to L1 and L2 baseline data collected from 12 Vietnamese and 12 Australian NSs via the same methods. Metapragmatic data were collected via retrospective interview.

Four main findings are discussed. Firstly, the learners criticized and responded to criticism very differently from the NSs. This difference might have adversely affected how the learners negotiated their intentions expressed via speech act realizations. Secondly, there was little evidence of any proficiency effect on the learners' use of these two speech acts. This was probably because pragmatic development was limited by the EFL context, as the learners had had insufficient exposure to the target norms. Thirdly, there was evidence of pragmatic transfer in the learners' production. This transfer was affected by the learners' perception of L1-L2 proximity and assumption of L2 reasonableness. Finally, the retrospective interviews with learners suggested four main sources of influence on their pragmatic decision-making: insufficient L2

pragmatic knowledge, transfer of communication and learning, processing difficulty, and learning experience.

The present study lends support to a number of SLA theories, including Bialystoks' processing model and Meisel ***et al.***'s complexification hypothesis. It found that the major challenge for learners in L2 pragmatic acquisition is to gain control over processing. It also found an acquisitional order of modality markers which was dependent upon their structural complexity and the processing demands involved in producing them.

For my mother Nguyen Thi Thuy
And my former lecturer Dr. Linda Gerot
To whom I am deeply indebted
For having encouraged me
To start this doctoral study

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Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development	L1	First language
CA	Conversation Analysis	L2	Second language
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis	L	Learners
CCH	Creative Construction Hypothesis	MCQ	Multiple-choice questionnaire
CF	Criticism formula	NE	English native speakers
CRF	Criticism response formula	NL	Native language
CRS	Criticism response strategy	NNS	Non-native speaker
CS	Criticism strategy	NS	Native speaker
DCT	Discourse completion task	NV	Vietnamese native speakers
EAP	English for Academic Purposes	PDTP	Pre-Departure Training Program
EFL	English as a foreign language	Pre-EAP	Pre-English for Academic Purposes
ESL	English as a second language	QLD	Queensland State
FL	Foreign language	RP	Role-play
FTA	Face-threatening act	S	Speaker
GET	General English Training	SL	Second language
H	Hearer	SLA	Second language acquisition
IELTS	International English Language Testing System	TAP	Think-aloud protocol
IL	Interlanguage	TL	Target language
ILP	Interlanguage pragmatics	WQ	Written questionnaire

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT OF PROBLEM:

The last four decades have witnessed a major shift in linguistics research from focusing on forms to focusing on both forms and function. These fundamental changes reflect an emerging view in which language is treated as a communicative activity rather than an isolated set of grammatical rules. Following these developments, the field of language teaching has welcomed the arrival of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. With a view to developing learners' communicative competence, CLT specifies that teaching and learning a language are not merely teaching and learning its grammar. Rather, teaching and learning a language should be about how to use language appropriately for communicative purposes in real-life interactional contexts.

However, the appropriateness of language use, which varies from context to context within a language itself, also varies from one language to another and from one culture to another. Therefore, 'appropriateness' may be interpreted differently by people of different cultural backgrounds in different contexts. Culture shock or communication breakdown often happens in cross-cultural interaction when interactants are not aware of this variation. Thus, in language teaching, raising learners' awareness of the cultural values and expectations of the target community is crucial. Indeed, pragmatic competence constitutes one of the major components in a number of models of communicative competence (Canale and Swain 1980 [1], Canale 1983, Bachman 1990, and Bachman and Palmer 1996).

Since its introduction in the early 1980s, interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has received a great deal of attention thanks to its significance to language teaching. In a narrow sense,

ILP is the study of the use and acquisition of various speech acts in the target language (TL) by second language (L2) learners. To date, however, this line of research has been criticized for two reasons. First, it has predominantly concentrated on the investigation of L2 pragmatic performance rather than development (Ellis, 1994; Kasper 1996; Kasper and Rose, 1999, 2002; Rose, 2000). As a consequence, little is known about developmental issues, and thus about the questions of acquisition which are also a principal research goal of ILP. What is more, like contrastive and cross-cultural pragmatic research [(2)], much of earlier ILP research has been restricted to a rather small and "relatively well-defined" set of speech acts (e.g. requesting, complimenting, thanking, and inviting) (Ellis, 1994, p.166). Although current ILP research has begun to take greater interest in potentially more complex speech acts such as complaining and criticizing, the number of studies addressing these speech acts is still rather limited. Given that speech acts as such may cause even more problems for intercultural communication and are at least equally worth investigating, they should deserve due research attention.

1.2. A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED:

The study reported in this thesis has been conducted in an attempt to meet the obvious need for more ILP developmental research and to expand the scope of speech acts given consideration. It explores the interlanguage (IL) use of a special type of criticisms and criticism responses, which is giving and responding to peer-feedback on one's written work in a learning environment. This use is studied from a developmental perspective, with a view to providing a typology of realization strategies for the above two neglected speech acts.

It should be helpful to distinguish the type of criticisms and criticism responses given consideration in the present study from other types of the same speech acts. Giving negative feedback on someone's written work might be expected to be constructive and supportive in nature. Thus, the type of criticisms and criticism responses under inquiry in the present study may involve a lower level of 'infraction' than the more 'biting' types of criticisms and criticism responses such as criticizing or being criticized about one's appearance or behavior.

The rationale for choosing to investigate this specific type of criticisms and criticism responses lies in their importance for L2 learners in academic contexts. Specifically, criticisms and criticism responses of this type are observed to frequently occur in Western academic settings, whereby learning is an interactive process, characterized by plentiful student-student discussions and student-supervisor tutorials. Given that even native speakers (NSs) find these speech acts difficult, often needing to pre-plan their performance (Murphy and Neu, 1996), it is to be expected that L2 learners, who come from totally different educational systems and learning environments, will also experience considerable difficulty.

Therefore, the research questions that the present study seeks to answer are:

(1) In what ways do Vietnamese EFL learners differ from Australian NSs in performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism in English?

(2) To what extent is pragmatic development evident in the performance of these two speech acts by the learners of different proficiency levels?

(3) To what extent is pragmatic transfer evident in the learners' performance of these two speech acts?

(4) What factors may influence the learners' pragmatic choice when performing these two speech acts?

The following goals are expected to be accomplished in undertaking the current study. Theoretically, by seeking to address various important issues in ILP, including how learners generally develop L2 pragmatic competence over time and how L2 proficiency interacts with transfer, the present study seeks to add to the growing body of developmental ILP research. Also, by investigating criticisms and criticism responses within academic settings, it is hoped that it will provide useful information about the pragmatic properties of these important but under-researched speech acts, thus supplementing the existing body of speech act research.

Methodologically, it is hoped that this study will provide an innovative data collection method to contribute to the long-debated issue regarding data collection methods in ILP research. As Kasper and Dahl (1991) discuss, both observational (i.e. naturalistic) and elicitation (.e.g. discourse completion tasks, questionnaires, and role-plays) methods have problems. While naturalistic methods enable researchers to collect authentic data, they usually make it difficult to control social and contextual variables. Elicitation methods, on the other hand, can control those variables but they are artificial. In the present study, the data collection method is designed in a way that allows the researcher some control over relevant variables and at the same time endeavors to collect data that is authentic to a larger degree.

Practically, this study is expected to provide teachers with helpful information about the IL use of criticisms and criticism responses in a learning context. The results should help teachers anticipate where their learners may experience 'culture and language clashes' and work out ways to help their learners overcome or at least minimize the possibility of communication breakdown. Additionally, the findings may also provide textbook designers with a rich source of empirical data on Australian English NS criticism and criticism responses within academic settings. This is important because teaching materials have been criticized for being based largely on designers' language intuition about how speech acts are realized instead of being research-based (Boxer and Pickering, 1985).

1.3. DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The present thesis study focuses on Vietnamese EFL learners who are preparing to undertake university study in an English-speaking country. Hence, its findings may not be necessarily generalized to (a) Vietnamese EFL learners who do not have the same motivation, (b) Vietnamese learners of English as a second language (ESL), and (c) a larger population of L2 learners with different L1 backgrounds. Secondly, the chosen target norm for baseline TL data in this thesis is Australian English. Therefore, the language behavior of the NSs of Australian English in this study may not apply to NSs of other varieties of English. Furthermore, the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms in this study are those that occur within academic settings. Specifically, they are restricted to "peer-feedback" situations only. As a result, the definitions of these two speech acts are quite narrow for the purposes of this study. Finally, the present study only looks at the linguistic aspects of criticisms and responses to criticism and thus, paralinguistic and non-linguistic aspects will be outside the scope of inquiry.

1.4. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

1.4.1. Pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics, and pragmatic competence:

The present study adopts Yule's (1996) definition of pragmatics, Kasper's (1992) definition of interlanguage pragmatics, and Bachman's (1990) definition of pragmatic competence.

According to Yule (1996, p.3), "pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or a writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves." In this sense, pragmatics essentially focuses on language in use and users.

Kasper (1992, p.203) defines interlanguage pragmatics as "the branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge". To put it in another way, ILP is about the acquisition and performance of speech acts in the TL by L2 learners.

Based on Bachman (1990), pragmatic competence in the present study is defined as the knowledge that learners use to perform a speech act successfully when communicating with NSs of the TL. It consists of the knowledge of the linguistic resources needed to realize a speech act, of socio-cultural constraints on the use of these linguistic resources, and of sequential aspects of the given speech act. The term "competence" has been used in opposition to actual performance.

1.4.2. Pragmatic transfer:

The present study adopts Kasper's (1992) definition of transfer:

> "Pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics shall refer to the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (p. 207).

A distinction is made between pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer by Kasper. Pragmalinguistic transfer is defined as the process whereby learners' assignment of illocutionary force and politeness value to particular L1 linguistic material influences how they interpret and perform an equivalent L2 speech act, as perceived by them. Sociopragmatic transfer, on the other hand, refers to the process whereby learners' subjective judgment of the equivalence between L1-L2 contexts affects the social perceptions underlying their comprehension and production of an L2 speech act.

Another distinction made by Kasper is between "positive" and "negative" transfer. The kind of transfer that results in IL pragmatic behavior that is consistent with TL norms is regarded as "positive", while the kind of transfer that causes IL deviation form the target norm is considered "negative".

1.4.3. The speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism:

In the present study, criticizing refers to an illocutionary act whose illocutionary point is to give negative evaluation on the hearer's (H) actions, choice, words, and products for which he or she may be held responsible. This act is performed in hope of influencing H's future actions for the better for his or her own benefit as viewed by the speaker (S), or to communicate S's dissatisfaction / discontent with or dislike regarding what H has done but without implying that what H has done has undesirable consequences for S (adapted from Wierzbicka, 1987). Based on the above definition of the criticizing speech act, the speech

act of responding to criticism in this present study is defined as a verbalized reaction to a given criticism.

1.4.4. Criticism and criticism response realization strategies, semantic formulas, and modifiers:

In the present study, criticism and criticism response realization strategies are defined as the pragmalinguistic conventions of usage by which criticisms and criticism responses are realized respectively. This definition is adapted from Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) and Takahashi (1996)'s definitions of request strategies. Conventions of usage in the sense used by Clark (1979) are further made up of two other kinds of pragmalinguistic conventions, namely, conventions of means and conventions of forms. The former refers to the semantic devices (or semantic formulas) by which a speech act is performed. The latter involves the exact wordings used. For example, a criticism can be realized by means of different semantic formulas, from a direct statement of the problem or wrongdoing to a suggestion for change or repair. A suggestion for change in turn can be realized by means of different wordings such as "I suggest that you rewrite it", "Can you rewrite it?", "Do you think you can rewrite it?", or "Why don't you rewrite it?", and so on.

Criticism and criticism response semantic formulas in the above sense are semantic structures that have acquired an illocutionary force representing criticisms and criticism responses, respectively (adapted from Clark, 1979).

Modifiers are linguistic devices employed to help reduce the offence of a face-threatening act. An example of a modifier would be a compliment paid to the hearer either before or after a criticism is delivered to compensate for the offensive act (sweeteners), or hedges of

all kinds to reduce the degree of severity of a criticism such as “sort of”, “kind of”, and so on.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the topic of research, and by stating the research questions, limits the scope of the study. It also defines the operational terms and outlines the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the topic of research and summarizes what has been done and what has not yet been done about the topic so far, indicating the gap that the present thesis will bridge. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology in terms of sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 compares the results for the two data sets elicited via the two different data elicitation instruments (namely the peer-feedback task - hereafter referred to as the role play - and the questionnaire). It explains how each data set was used to address the different research questions. Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 report and discuss the main findings according to research questions. Specifically, Chapter 5 deals with Research Question 1, which is a comparison of the learners’ use of criticisms and criticism responses with the use of the NSs. Chapter 6 addresses Research Question 2, which is pragmatic development, and Chapter 7 addresses Research Question 3, which is pragmatic transfer. Chapter 8 reports and discusses the findings from the interview data with regard to Research Question 4, which deals with the influential factors in the learners’ pragmatic decision-making. The final chapter draws conclusions, presents theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications, and proposes further research.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the theories and literature relevant to the topic under investigation in the present study. The first two sections address two important linguistic notions: speech acts (2.1) and politeness (2.2). The final two sections deal with two important issues in acquisitional pragmatics: pragmatic transfer (2.3) and pragmatic development (2.4).

2.1. THEORY OF SPEECH ACTS

Speech act theory is one of the central issues in general pragmatic research (Levinson, 1983). In this section, the works by Austin and Searle, two pioneers in the field, are first briefly reviewed in order to provide theoretical frameworks. The speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism, which are the focus of the present study, are then discussed and existing research into these two speech acts is reviewed.

2.1.1. Concepts

The notion of speech acts dates back to the British language philosopher – J. Austin (1962). In his influential book entitled ***How to do things with words***, Austin made an interesting point that in saying something, one is actually doing something. This view is considered a breakthrough in linguistics since it points out that many everyday language declarative sentences are not intended to make true or false statements, as is firmly asserted by logical positivists. Rather, they are used to 'do things', that is, to perform certain linguistic actions such as requesting, complimenting, apologizing, and so on. Those utterances were then

termed ‘performatives’ by Austin [1]. Austin conceptualized performatives as involving three acts, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary - the three kinds of acts that, according to him, constitute what people “do with words”. Of these, a locutionary act is defined as the act of vocalizing a sentence and assigning a propositional meaning to it. An illocutionary act is the one of performing a particular language function and a perlocutionary act is the one of producing some kind of effect on the addressee. The core interest of Austin as well as of other pragmatists is the illocutionary act, which Austin later termed ‘speech act’ (Levinson, 1983).

Searle (1969, 1975), based on Austin’s work, put forward the important notion of indirect speech acts. According to Searle, direct speech acts enjoy a transparent relationship between form and function. Indirect speech acts, on the other hand, display no such relationship, and therefore, their illocutionary force does not derive from their surface structure. To put it differently, indirect speech acts consist of two acts, a primary illocutionary act and a secondary one where the primary act operates through and in force of the secondary one [2]. The phenomenon of “indirect speech acts” is considered universal across all languages and it is those indirect speech acts that make up the majority in everyday conversations.

Another important contribution by Searle is his attempt to use Austin’s felicity conditions to categorize speech acts. Austin noticed that although performatives cannot be verified as true or false, they can go wrong, i.e. they can be asserted as felicitous or infelicitous. Hence, there must be certain conditions for them to be successfully performed and their illocutionary force to be achieved [3]. Searle, however, emphasized that felicity conditions are not only dimensions in which utterances can go wrong as was suggested by Austin,

but they are also constitutive of the various illocutionary forces, and therefore, can differentiate illocutionary acts from one another. For example, in performing the act of promising, S must (1) say he or she will perform a future action, (2) intend to do it, (3) believe he or she can do it, (4) think he or she would not do it anyway, in the normal course of action, (5) think the addressee wants him or her to do it (rather than not to do it), and (6) intend to place himself or herself under obligation to perform it. These conditions are actually constitutive of promising and therefore can differentiate promising from other speech acts such as threatening, complaining, and so on. Searle classified those felicity conditions into four kinds which he termed 'propositional content', 'preparatory preconditions', 'conditions on sincerity', and 'the essential conditions'. Among them, 'preparatory preconditions' are concerned with the relationship between S and H, and H's will, benefit, or ability. The act of commanding, for example, is usually performed by a person of higher status but not the other way around. 'Sincerity conditions', on the other hand, refer to S's 'psychological state' in performing a specific linguistic action. For example, when one 'announces' something, one must believe in it. Doing otherwise would lead to a famous paradox that bears Moore's name: "The cat is on the mat but I don't believe it." The 'essential conditions' are about the obligations and responsibility assigned to S or H once the act is performed. Upon promising, for example, S is under the obligation to perform what is promised.

Austin and Searle had paved the way to research into linguistic functions instead of linguistic forms as is often observed in earlier linguistic studies. Yet regarding the classification of speech acts, both Austin's and Searle's taxonomies are criticized for

allowing too much overlap between different speech act categories and not being able to account for complex speech acts such as complaining and criticizing.

Austin (1962) classified speech acts into five major categories, namely verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behavitives, and expositives. However, this identification is solely based on the performative verb through which a speech act is expressed. As the argument goes, in reality the number of speech acts in every language much exceeds the number of their corresponding performative verbs. Thus, Austin's taxonomy may exclude many speech acts. The second concern is there seems to be no clear or consistent principle or set of principles on the basis of which Austin constructed his taxonomy. Therefore, according to his classification, many speech acts may belong to two different categories. For example, "describe" was classified by Austin as both verdictive and expositive.

Searle (1969), finding fault with Austin's taxonomy, attempted to construct a new classification. He ended up with five categories, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. The caveat, however, is despite his effort to construct twelve consistent classification criteria, Searle based his classifications on only three criteria when it came to his actual identification of speech acts. These three criteria included the illocutionary point or purpose of a speech act, the direction in which it fits words to the world, and the psychological state it expresses. As a result, the taxonomy that he put forward was more or less similar to that of Austin (Mey, 1993).

What is more, both Austin and Searle's taxonomies do not seem able to account for complex speech acts. Newell and Shutman (1989, cited in Hartley, 1996), for example, point out that the speech act of complaining may easily fall under four out of five

categories specified by Searle. It is expressive because it expresses a psychological state; it is representative because it expresses negative belief about a state of affairs; it is directive as it implies a demand for remedy; and finally, it is commissive as in complaining one commits himself / herself to a course of action. This is because, according to Hartley (ibid.), a single complaint may be made up of many different acts, each of which carries a different illocutionary force. For instance, it could be a compilation of an expression of annoyance (expressive), a statement of the offensive act (representative), a request for repair of the offence (directive), and so on. Thus, the effort to place it into any single category in Austin's or Searle's taxonomies will fail.

2.1.2. The speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism

As in the case of complaining, criticizing and responding to criticism may be composed of different acts, each of which carries a different illocutionary force and none of which is the head act. For example, a criticism can be a compilation of an expression of disapproval, an expression of negative evaluation, a statement of the act of wrongdoing, and a suggestion for change. A criticism response can be made up of an agreement with criticism and an offer of repair, or a disagreement with criticism and an expression of annoyance. Therefore, neither of the taxonomies given by Austin or Searle may apply to these two speech acts. Instead, criticizing and responding to criticism may be better described in terms of speech act sets which are made up by multiple components.

Unlike other speech acts such as requesting, thanking, greeting, and so on, criticizing and responding to criticism have been rather under-researched in literature (i.e. House and Kasper, 1981; Tracy, van Dusen, and Robinson, 1987; Tracy and Eisenberg, 1990; Wajnryb,

1993, 1995; and Toplak and Katz, 2000). Tracy, ***et al.*** (1987) investigated the characteristics of good and bad criticisms as perceived by people from different cultural backgrounds via an open-ended questionnaire. They found five stylistic characteristics that distinguish “good” from “bad” criticisms. Firstly, a good criticism needs to display a positive language and manner. Secondly, the changes suggested in it must be specific enough and the critic must offer to help make them possible. The reasons for criticizing must usually be justified and made explicit and the criticism compensated for by being placed in a larger positive message. A "good" criticism also does not violate the relationship between interlocutors and is accurate.

These findings correspond well to Wajnryb (1993), who reports that an effective criticism, in his teachers-participants’ view, must be kept simple, specific, well-grounded in the lesson, linked to strategies for improvement, and delivered as an attempt to share experience. It also needs to be softened by means of a number of strategies. These include 'measuring words' (to avoid being too negative), 'soft-pedaling' (i.e. using internal and external modifications to lessen the harshness of the criticism), 'using affirmative language' such as comforting messages, 'distancing and neutralizing' (to depersonalize the criticism) and 'using negotiating language' (to avoid imposing on the addressee). To save students’ face, one teacher even emphasized that a criticism should be “oblique and approached via the third person” (p. 60). Interestingly enough, this perception seems to clash with what the student in Wajnryb’s (1995) case study expected. She preferred to receive a direct and 'economical' criticism to rather than indirect, wordy, and 'time-wasting' one.

Toplak and Katz (2000) focused on the communicative effects of direct and indirect criticisms (i.e. sarcastic comments). They gave the participants a set of passages in which one of the interlocutors criticized the other in two ways, directly ("You are not really helping me out") or sarcastically ("You are really helping me out!"). Then they required the participants to complete a questionnaire for each passage about what the participants thought the critic's intent and the effect of the given criticism were from the perspectives of both the critic and the recipient. Similar to Wajnryb (1993, 1995), Toplak and Katz found a difference between the speaker and the addressee in their judgments of the criticisms given. The addressee tended to view sarcasm (as opposed to a direct criticism) as more severe than the speaker intended. However, they also found that sarcasm was not perceived by the recipient as having as negative an impact on the relationship between the interlocutors as direct criticisms.

Tracy and Eissenberg (1990) investigated the preferences for message clarity and politeness in giving criticisms in a workplace context among people from different races and gender. They found that superiors tended to give more weight to message clarity than did subordinates. However, this preference also varied according to gender and race. For example, in either role, females were found to be more face-attentive than men and whites were more concerned about others' positive face (i.e. the desire to be approved or accepted by others – Brown and Levinson, 1987) than nonwhites.

The literature on criticism responses seems scarcer than that on criticism. To date, Higara and Turner's (1996) is the only study that addresses the speech act of responding to criticism. Higara and Turner explore this speech act in relation to face attention. Comparing the student-tutor interactions in British and Japanese academic settings where

tutors initiate criticisms, they observed an interesting difference between the two cultures. In the British context the other's negative face is frequently attended to by both tutors and students. However, this is not the case in the Japanese context. Moreover, in responding to the tutor's criticisms, British students seem to attend more to their own face (both negative and positive), while Japanese students show more concern for the tutor's positive face. Higara and Turner also identify the five broad strategies which their participants employed in encountering a criticism. These include conciliation, negotiation, defending, resigning, and non-elaboration. Conciliation involves acknowledging the criticism and showing commitment to the suggestion. Negotiation refers to resisting the criticism plus the use of a token acknowledgement as a softener to mitigate the potential threat to the critic's face. Defending is resisting the criticism to protect the speaker's own face. Finally, resigning involves acknowledging the criticism but giving alternatives to the suggestion, and non-elaboration involves ignoring the criticism by responding to it only at its face value.

Overall, although the above studies have provided valuable insights into criticisms and criticism responses, many of them have not given an explicit definition of these two speech acts. The researchers tended to imply rather than explicitly define what constitutes a criticism and criticism response. This makes it difficult to compare and contrast the findings of the various studies.

One study in which the researchers try to discuss what constitutes a criticism as opposed to related speech acts such as a complaint is Tracy ***et al.*** (1987). Tracy ***et al***.(ibid., p.56) define both complaining and criticizing as the act of "finding fault" which involves giving "a negative evaluation of a person or an act for which he or she is deemed responsible".

However, they make two main points to distinguish them. The first one is whether an utterance can be taken as a complaint or a criticism seems to depend on its "content and form and the salient role identity" (p.56) of the giver and the recipient: criticisms are usually associated with higher social status and complaints with lower social status, although there may also be exceptions. For example, a subordinate may act "atypically" (p. 56) by criticizing his or her supervisor and signaling this linguistically.

There seem to be some reservations about this point. First, Tracy ***et al.*** are inconsistent in suggesting that a distinction can be made between criticisms and complaints based on content and linguistic form because, as they suggest earlier, both criticisms and complaints are concerned with the same content i.e. "finding fault". Thus, it can be argued that they may also be realized by similar linguistic structures. Second, it does not seem convincing to define a speech act based on the relative social status of S and H because social role identity does not seem to constitute an exclusive defining criterion. While it is the case that certain speech acts can only be performed by a particular person (e.g. those highly institutionized speech acts tied to laws, religions, or highly official ceremonies), this may not be true for many everyday speech acts, including criticisms and complaints. Indeed, Tracy ***et al.*** acknowledge that criticisms may also be given by subordinates. More importantly, the attempt to assign a particular social status and specific linguistic form to a speech act and to draw on these criteria to interpret it seems to overlook the fact that speech acts are context sensitive and dependent. In fact, contexts can sometimes be a more influential factor in determining the illocutionary point and force of a speech act, especially in the case of non-conventional indirectness (i.e. hints).

The second point that Tracy ***et al.*** (ibid.) make about the differences between a complaint and a criticism is the focus of the negative evaluation. They correctly argue that those utterances in which "the self-involvement is transparent" (p.56), i.e. if S perceives the act done by H as bringing negative or undesirable consequences to him or her, are more appropriately categorized as complaints.

Another definition of criticisms is found in House and Kasper (1981), who consider criticisms, accusations, and reproaches as different kinds of complaints. Their reasons for this are that all of these speech acts share the same two features, namely "post-event" (i.e. the "complainable" has already happened before the negative evaluation is expressed) and "anti-speaker" (i.e. the event is at cost to the speaker). However, one might argue against this definition at least on the following grounds. Firstly, a criticism does not necessarily have to be always targeted at an event which happens earlier in the sense used by House and Kasper. It can also be made about something static, permanent, and independent of chronological time such as a person's personality or appearance (see Wierzbicka, 1987). Secondly, the feature "anti-speaker" seems more applicable to complaints than to criticisms as pointed out by Tracy ***et al.*** (1987). Both the illocutionary force (i.e. the communication effect) and the illocutionary point that a critic and a complainer intend are inherently different. In criticizing, S may intend H to try to improve to his or her own benefits, or S just may wish to express his or her opinion known. In complaining, S implies that something bad has happened to himself or herself, or that H has done something bad to him or her and therefore expects a repair from the latter (Wierzbicka, 1987). Thus, criticisms are usually, though not necessarily, associated with

constructive attitudes or at least with non-self involvement, which is not the case with complaints.

In light of this discussion, it is apparent that compared to other speech acts, our understanding of the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism is rather limited due to the fact that these two speech acts are under-researched in literature. It is therefore necessary that more studies be conducted to shed lights on the pragmatic properties of criticizing and responding to criticism, thus supplementing the existing body of speech act research, which is presently confined to a rather small set of speech acts (Ellis, 1994).

2.2. THEORIES OF POLITENESS

Politeness is a dimension that usually enters into speech act performance (Ellis, 1994). This dimension is so crucial that the violation of it may deprive not-so-competent participants such as non-native speakers (NNS) of the chance to be engaged fully in the speech community as social equals with others (Kasper, 1990). To date, most research into politeness as a linguistic dimension has been centered on one of the following four perspectives: conversational-maxims (Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983), face-saving (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987), social norms (Jespersen, 1965), and conversational-contracts (Fraser, 1975; Fraser and Nolen, 1981; Fraser, 1990). These perspectives are presented as below:

2.2.1. Conversational-maxims

The conversational-maxim view of politeness is grounded principally on Gricean Cooperative Principles (1967, published 1975). The main point of Gricean principles is that in a conversation H expects whatever S says to be truthful, appropriately informative,

relevant, and clear. When one of these maxims is violated, e.g. S says something that seems irrelevant on the surface or uninformative enough, H assumes that S is expected to infer some other hidden meaning that S wishes to convey. Politeness in this view is the flouting of Gricean maxims. For example, in his earlier work, Lakoff (1973) proposed a 'politeness rule', which is complementary to the Gricean 'clarity rule'. As Lakoff puts it, if communication is the major aim, S will opt for message clarity in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. On the other hand, if the main purpose is to make H feel good, clarity can be sacrificed for the sake of politeness. Lakoff also posits the following three politeness sub-rules: (1) Don't impose; (2) Give options; and (3) Make A feel good (A being Alter). In a later work, Lakoff (1990) claims that those three sub-rules of politeness may not necessarily have an equal weight in different cultures. European cultures may prefer Distance (sub-rule 1), while Asian cultures can be Deferential (sub-rule 2) and modern American culture adheres to Camaraderie (sub-rule 3).

Leech (1983) also built his politeness model on Gricean Cooperative Principle but equates politeness with favorableness to H along the scale of cost vs. benefit, praise vs. dispraise, agreement vs. disagreement, and sympathy vs. antipathy. For example, in classifying imperatives according to the cost-benefit scale, Leech claims that an imperative is more polite when it brings benefits to H and less polite when it is uttered at cost to H. Thus, while "Peel these potatoes" sounds impolite (at cost to H), "Have another sandwich" does not necessarily (at benefit to H). Generally, Leech's model can be presented as follows:

(1) Tact Maxim: (a) Minimize cost to others; (b) Maximize benefit to others

(2) Generosity Maxim: (a) Minimize benefit to self; (b) Maximize cost to self

(3) Approbation Maxim: (a) Minimize dispraise of others; (b) Maximize praise of others

(4) Modesty Maxim: (a) Minimize praise of self; (b) Maximize dispraise of self

(5) Agreement Maxim: (a) Minimize disagreement between self and others; (b) Maximize agreement between self and others

(6) Sympathy Maxim: (a) Minimize antipathy between self and others; (b) Maximize sympathy between self and others

Like Lakoff, Leech also suggests these maxims have different weightings in different cultures, which accounts for cross-cultural variations in politeness norms. Various speech act studies have supported his claim. For example, Schneider cited in Barron (2002) found that the Modesty Maxim is more important in Chinese culture while the Agreement Maxim is more important in American culture.

2.2.2. Face-saving

The face-saving view of politeness was adopted by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Fundamental to this view are the concepts of positive and negative face, which come from Goffman's notion of face. Face is defined by Goffman (1967, p. 319) as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself", i.e. the public self-image. Based on this definition, Brown and Levinson define positive face as one's desire to be approved or accepted by others and negative face as one's desire to be free from imposition from others. These two types of face, in their view, operate pan-culturally: they can be lost, threatened, damaged, or maintained, and elevated. Therefore, they need to be continually

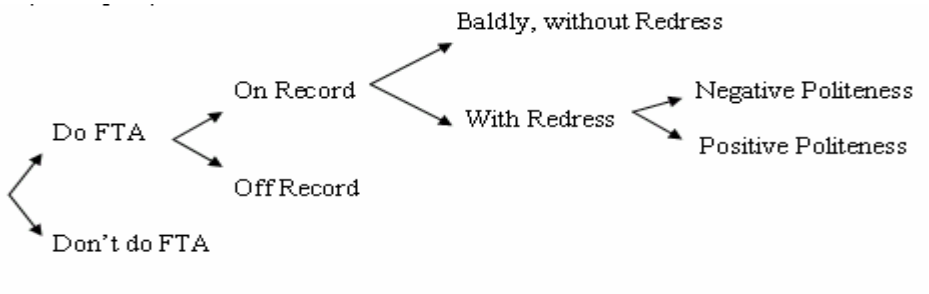
attended to in the process of communication so that politeness can be achieved. Brown and Levinson also claim that certain speech acts are inherently face-threatening, i.e. they may threaten either the positive or the negative face of the interlocutors involved.

On these grounds, they put forward the notions of positive politeness (which serves to save ego's positive face) and negative politeness (which serves to save alter's negative face), and a politeness model consisting of a number of steps that people usually take in performing a particular speech act. According to this model, there is a choice between positive and negative politeness strategies available to S in a situation that calls for a particular speech act. If S opts to perform a face-threatening act (FTA), he or she estimates the 'weightiness', Wx, (i.e. the seriousness in terms of face-loss) of this FTA as follows:

$$Wx = D(S,H) + P(S,H) + Rx$$

D stands for the social distance (the degree of familiarity and solidarity) between S and H. P stands for the relative power (the degree to which S can impose wants on H) between S and H. R is the absolute ranking of imposition (how 'threatening' the performed FTA is perceived to be within a particular culture) and x is the performed FTA. On the basis of the outcome of the calculation, S then can choose either to 'go on record', i.e. perform a direct speech act, or to 'go off record', i.e. opt for more indirect strategies such as metaphor, irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, and all kinds of hints. If S chooses a direct strategy, he or she can either 'go bald on record' without compensating for it or 'soften' it by various politeness strategies. In case S decides to modify the illocutionary force of the speech act he or she intends to perform, he or she will have to consider the

pay-off that the use of each type of politeness strategy brings and then make decisions accordingly. Brown and Levinson's model is schematized as below (1987, p.69):



Brown and Levinson's theory, though remaining the most influential theory to date, is not, however, without criticism. The most often cited criticism relates to their claim for the universality of their theory. First, it is doubtful whether 'face' or the notion of self operates similarly across cultures since cultures are not homogeneous (Kasper, 1994, Barron, 2002). Indeed, much of the recent non-Western politeness research has indicated the inadequacy of Brown and Levinson's ethnocentrically Anglo-Saxon negative politeness for explaining speech act performance in non-Western cultures (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Ide, 1989; Hill ***et al.***, 1986; Matsumoto, 1989; Clancy, 1989). For example, Ide and Matsumoto argue that given the lack of individualistic orientation in Japanese culture, negative face seems of little importance and cannot explain politeness behavior. Wierzbicka's (1985) also found Polish verbal interaction prefers involvement and sincerity over distance, thus disfavouring negative politeness. Another concern is whether the claim of the direct relationship between face and politeness is universally valid (Baron, 2002) since, for some cultures such as Japanese, saving face is not as important as social indexing (i.e. marking social standing) (Matsumoto, ibid.), as will be seen in the social-norm view below.

2.2.3. Social-norms

Unlike the view of universal politeness adopted by the face-saving approach, the social-norm approach assumes that each society has its own set of rules and standards and politeness is the awareness of one's social obligations to other members of the society. This means politeness is more concerned with conforming to norms of expected behavior than with attending to one's public self-image in Brown and Levinson's sense. Accordingly, the notion of face is also no longer seen in terms of psychological wants and face-threatening in terms of ignoring people's individual wants. On the contrary, face is related to social expectations and face-threatening is the failure to fulfill the society's wants.

The social-norm approach is empirically based on a number of studies of oriental politeness, for example, Nwoye (1992), Matsumoto (1989), Ide (1989), and Gu (1990), thus serving as an appropriate model for accounting politeness in these cultures. Nwoye indicates that in a society where public face (related to social norms and expected behavior) is placed over private face (related to individual desire), it is more important for individuals to discern what is appropriate and act accordingly than to act according to strategies designed to accomplish a particular inter-personal goal. Likewise, based on their studies of the honorific system in Japanese, Matsumoto and Ide argue that in a culture where the individual is more concerned with conforming to the social norm, it is discernment but not face that underlies the notion of politeness and governs the interactants' behavior. A similar argument is found in Gu (1990), who accounting for the function of politeness in Chinese culture, found the politeness principle is "a sanctioned

belief that an individual's social behavior ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement" (p.245).

On the basis of Leech's (1983) model, Gu proposed his own model, which indicates how one should go about behaving in conformity with norms and expectations in Chinese culture. The four maxims involved in this model are Self-denigration, Address, Tact and Generosity. The Self-denigration maxim dictates S to 'denigrate Self and elevate Other'. The address maxim admonishes him/her to address H with an appropriate address term based on H's social status, role and the S-H relationship. The Tact and Generosity maxims are close to Leech's. Politeness also involves a Balance Principle, which requires the reciprocation of politeness or the cost/benefit. An example is paying back a debt incurred as a result of a request, or performing a counter-offer, or counter-invitation.

2.2.4. Conversational-contracts

The conversational-contract approach was adopted by Fraser (1990). Fraser's politeness principle is an elaboration of the principle presented by Fraser himself (1975) and Nolen (1981). Fraser (1990) also adopts the Gricean Cooperative Principles in its general sense and recognizes the importance of Goffman's notion of face. Yet his principle differs from Leech's and Brown and Levinson's theories in the way that it is discourse-based rather than speech act based (Baron, 2002). The basic point in Fraser's conversational-contract view is that interlocutors bring into their conversation an understanding of certain initial contractual rights and obligations. These rights and obligations are renegotiable as the conversation goes on and the context changes. Politeness, hence, is an on-going process and involves conformity to the expected social norms rather than "making the hearer feel

good a la Lakoff or Leech" or "making the hearer not feel bad a la Brown and Levinson" (Fraser, 1990, p. 233).

Overall, this section has discussed the notion of politeness from different perspectives. In the conversational-maxim view, politeness is equated to avoidance of interpersonal conflict (Lakoff) and favorableness to H (Leech). In the face-saving view it is conceptualized as an instrument to defend S's self-image and satisfy H's face-wants. Both the social-norm and conversational-contract views relate politeness to conformity to norms of expected behavior. However, the latter treats it as an on-going process whereby interlocutors can continually negotiate their rights and obligations. This section also argues that politeness is a complex notion, which does not necessarily operate similarly in every society. Hence, as Kasper (1990) suggests, for the time being, a model of politeness should not attempt to generalize to every society but confine itself to a specific speech community.

2.3. PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

Pragmatic transfer is one of the most frequently addressed issues in interlanguage pragmatics which have an intermediate link to second language acquisition (SLA) research (Kasper and Rose, 1999). As its name betrays, the study of pragmatic transfer incorporates two disciplines. On the one hand, it relates to theories of general first language (L1) transfer within SLA research. On the other hand, it involves general pragmatic theory. Since the study of general L1 transfer has emerged long before the study of ILP, pragmatic transfer researchers often refer back to the "origins and evolutions of research on general language transfer" when discussing the role of L1 in ILP (Franch,

1998, p.2). This section thus begins with an overview of the historical development of the concept of L1 transfer in SLA research. Based on this theoretical framework, it then discusses pragmatic transfer and reviews current pragmatic transfer studies. It ends with a discussion of pragmatic transferability and a review of existing research on this issue.

2.3.1. Transfer in SLA

The study of language transfer dates back to Lado (1957) and his behavioristic Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). Basically, this hypothesis claims that learning a language is a process whereby learners form new language habits by overcoming the habits of the native language (NL). In this view, L1 transfer is assumed to play a major role in L2 acquisition. Specifically, learning will be more difficult where there is a difference between the NL and the TL and easier where there is a correspondence. In its strong form, the CAH even suggested that learners' errors could be predicted on the basis of the degree to which their NL and TL differ. However, empirically, this is not always the case as many errors made by learners are not transfer-induced (Dulay and Burt, 1974). Rather, they seem to be developmental (i.e. similar to L1 acquisition) or unique to a particular stage in learners' IL construction (Ellis, 1994). As a result, the CAH failed to predict many errors that actually occurred (Dulay and Burt, 1972; 1973; 1974; Whitman and Jackson, 1972; Hyltenstam, 1977). Later on, a weaker form of the hypothesis was put forward, claiming that not all errors were attributable to transfer and that CAH should explain rather than predict errors. Yet, even this version was found problematic: it does not seem to make sense to invest a lot of research effort only to confirm that predicted errors actually occur. Rather, the CAH must be predictive in nature if it is to be considered valid (Ellis, 1994). More importantly, Takahashi (1995, p.2) points out that the major flaw of the CAH in both

versions does not just lie in their lack of "validity and reliability of predictive / explanatory power for learning difficulty." It is defective because of its ***product-oriented*** nature. In other words, it solely aims at identifying the occurrence or non-occurrence of transfer based on the comparison of learners' NL and the TL and overlooks "languages in the process of creation (ILs) and their speakers, second language learners" (Long and Sato, 1984, p. 255).

For these reasons, in the early 1970s the CAH finally lost ground to the Creative Construction (CC) paradigm. The proponents of CC such as Dulay and Burt (1972, 1973, 1974, 1980, 1983) sought to challenge the CAH by demonstrating that L1 transfer did not play a major role in L2 acquisition since L2 acquisition is largely governed by universal innate principles (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Ellis, 1994; Takahashi, 1995). For example, in an investigation of the acquisition of English grammatical morphemes produced by Spanish and Chinese ESL child learners, Dulay and Burt (1974) found that most of the errors made by their participants were developmental rather than L1-transfer induced. They thereby argued for a universal order of acquisition irrespective of L1 background and a corresponding minor role for the L1. Their position was further supported by Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) with similar findings in a replication study on adult learners. The main problem of the CC hypothesis, however, is that it does not duly recognize the role of the L1, especially in the context of foreign language instruction or instructed L2 acquisition. As Faerch and Kasper (1987) noted, in those contexts, learners are often found to fall back on their NL. This observation challenged the CC position.

The Ignorance Hypothesis by Newmark and Reibel (1968) adopted the same minimalist position on the L1 as the CC. In it L1 transfer is regarded as only a communication strategy that learners rely on to fill in the gap in their TL competence (i.e. communication

transfer). Krashen (1983), supporting this approach, claims that transfer functions only as "padding" where there is a deficiency in the acquired system and has an inhibiting effect for acquiring the TL. Thus, it is his view that transfer is never incorporated into the acquired L2 system. The main criticism concerning this position is that it disregards transfer as a learning strategy for developing IL (i.e. learning transfer) and overlooks direct learning transfer although it actually occurs (Ellis, 1994).

In comparison with the CAH and the minimalist approach, the IL Hypothesis was considered more appropriate in accounting for the processes of second language acquisition (SLA) (Faerch and Kasper, 1987). Within the IL Hypothesis framework the role of the L1 is no longer overestimated as in the CAH, nor it is minimized as in the CC and Ignorance Hypotheses. Instead, it is reassessed as the process whereby the L1 makes its contribution to shaping the IL system (Selinker, 1972). In fact, Selinker argues that L1 transfer is one among five central processes (4) that explain the IL-specific features such as fossilization. In this way, Selinker successfully incorporated the concept of transfer into a theory of L2 acquisition by melding the psychological presuppositions of the CC hypothesis and the notion of transfer from the behaviorist tradition (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Takahashi, 1995). The reservation regarding Selinker's approach, nonetheless, is that despite his emphasis on L1 transfer as a process, his major concern with identifying the instances of different kinds of transfer seems to be rather a ***product-related*** assessment (Faerch and Kasper, 1987).

It was not until Kellerman (1977, 1978, 1983, 1986) introduced the psycholinguistic perspective on L1 transfer, which emphasizes learners' major role in deciding what is transferred and when it is transferred, that research took on a more ***process-oriented***

approach to transfer. Current research views transfer as a procedure whereby learners make use of their NL, or any foreign/ second languages acquired before the TL in developing and using their IL (Faerch and Kasper, 1987). It thus seeks to determine the underlying factors which condition what learners transfer, when, and how much. In this way, it shifts the focus from transfer onto transferability, the probability that a given L1 item may be transferred relative to other L1 items (Kellerman, 1983, 1986).

2.3.2. Transfer in ILP

In the field of ILP, Thomas (1983) discussed two kinds of "pragmatic failure": sociopragmatic failure and pragmalinguistic failure. Thomas' discussion was based on Leech's (1983) distinction between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. In Leech's definition, pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic resources used to perform a speech act whereas sociopragmatics is concerned with the social perceptions that govern one's comprehension and performance of speech acts. In Thomas's sense of the terms, therefore, sociopragmatic failure is defined as the failure to perform the required speech act in the right context and pragmalinguistic failure as the deviation from the target norm for a particular speech act. Later on, Thomas defined pragmalinguistic transfer as:

> "the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias', tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language" (p. 101).

This definition has been criticized by Kasper (1992), who argues that transfer is not necessarily limited to "inappropriateness" as it can be both 'positive' (which facilitates learning) and 'negative' (which inhibits learning). What is more, Kasper also points out

that the above definition of pragmalinguistic transfer needs to cover the transfer of the politeness value and illocutionary force given to a particular linguistic device as well. This is because in performing a particular speech act, one often has to choose from "a variety of strategies and forms which convey the same illocution but vary in their relational meaning or in politeness" (ibid., p.208).

Pragmalinguistic transfer is then defined by Kasper as the process whereby learners' assignment of illocutionary force and politeness value to particular L1 linguistic material influences how they interpret and perform an equivalent L2 speech act. Sociopragmatic transfer, on the other hand, refers to the process whereby learners' subjective judgment of the equivalence between L1-L2 contexts affects the social perceptions underlying their comprehension and production of an L2 speech act (5).

The distinction between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer is considered useful and pedagogically significant (Thomas, 1983). It is useful because it reveals that learners transfer not only their L1 linguistic features but also their cultural values, concepts of politeness, and their perceptions of social distance and power when performing an illocution in the TL. Furthermore, there is evidence that sociopragmatic transfer tends to affect learners' perception and production of L2 speech acts more than does pragmalinguistic transfer (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Fukushima and Iwata, 1988; Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1990; Fukushima, 1990; Kamimoto, 1993; Tanaka, 1997). This is because sociopragmatic judgment seems to often play a more important role than pragmalinguistic judgment in the success of intercultural communication:

> "It is precisely these sociopragmatic decisions (…) that govern what is and what is not mentionable in certain

> contexts in a given culture or speech community both in terms of taboo topics and in terms of speech acts, the mention of which may be considered inappropriate in certain circumstances" (Bonikowska 1988, p.171).

Bonikowska (1988) notes that sociopragmatic decisions also have 'explanatory power' in accounting for pragmalinguistic decisions. By looking at what kinds of sociocultural knowledge, contextual knowledge and knowledge of the world learners activate to arrive at a decision about whether to say anything in a particular situation, and if so what to say and how to say it, it is possible to explain the choices they make. This distinction, therefore, is really crucial for the teaching of pragmatics.

In order to identify instances of transfer, ILP studies often adopt the design developed by Selinker (1966, 1969). They compare three data sets collected from (1) the NS of the learners' NL; (2) the learners performing in the TL; and (3) the NS of the TL. As in the case of general L1 transfer, the kind of pragmatic transfer that results in IL behavior that is consistent with TL norms is regarded as 'positive'. On the other hand, the kind of pragmatic transfer that causes IL deviation from the target norm is considered 'negative'. Kasper (1992), based on Selinker's (1983) operational definition of language transfer, proposes to quantitatively identify instances of positive and negative pragmatic transfer based on the frequencies of a particular pragmatic feature in the NL, TL, and IL data. Specifically, as she puts it, the presence of positive transfer is determined by the lack of statistically significant differences in the frequency of occurrences of a pragmatic feature in all three sets of data (IL = TL, NL = TL, IL = NL). Instances of negative transfer are determined by the occurrences of statistically significant differences between IL and TL and between NL and TL in the frequency with which a pragmatic feature occurs, plus a lack of statistically significant differences in the frequency of occurrences of that feature

between IL and NL (IL ≠ TL, NL ≠ TL, IL = NL). Kasper also notes that of these two types of transfer, positive transfer is of less interest to ILP researchers because of the methodological difficulty of disentangling it from learners' over-generalizations or the operation of universal pragmatic principles and because of the unlikelihood of it leading to communication failure.

ILP research provides plenty of evidence of pragmatic transfer in learner language. Sociopragmatic transfer is reported in a number of studies by Carrell and Konneker (1981), Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Scarcella (1983), House (1988), Gracia (1989), Beebe ***et al.*** (1990), Robinson (1992), and Takahashi and Beebe (1993). In Takahashi and Beebe's (1993) study on the speech act of correction, for example, it was found that Japanese ESL learners' conceptualizations of politeness underlying their NL style-shifting patterns according to the relative social power and distance had affected their selection of L2 politeness strategies. House (1988) reported similar findings in a study on German learners of British English. She observed that these learners transferred their NL communicative style, i.e. the preference for self-oriented apologizing strategies (as opposed to the other-oriented strategies often chosen by the British). In a study of the speech act of refusal, Robinson (1992) showed that Japanese ESL learners tended to transfer the Japanese avoidance of saying "no" to a request in English. This influence of the native communicative style is also demonstrated in a study by Cohen and Olshtain (1989), who found that the Israeli learners of English seemed reluctant to take on responsibility for an offence when performing TL apologies, reflecting their NL apologies.

Regarding the preference for positive or negative politeness, Takahashi and Beebe (1993) discovered that in contrast to their American interlocutors, Japanese ESL learners seemed

to be reluctant to employ positive politeness strategies in correcting lower-status people due to the influence of their L1. In another study by Garcia (1989) on apologies, Venezuelan Spanish ESL learners often made use of positive politeness strategies as they did in NL contexts and underused the negative politeness strategies employed by NSs of English. The transfer of politeness preferences also manifests itself in the IL data of advanced Japanese learners in Baba's (1999) study on compliment responses. Those learners frequently opted for negative politeness strategies in responding to TL compliments as they usually did in their NL.

Regarding directness level, several studies by House and Kasper (1987), Takahashi and Dufon (1989), and De Capua (1989) have shown deviation from the NSs' behavior in learners' performance. For instance, House and Kasper (1987) point out that German and Danish ESL learners' frequent employment of direct imperatives in requesting (as opposed to NSs' more indirect preparatory questions) is influenced by their NL norms. Similarly, in De Capua (1989), German ESL learners are shown to transfer their NL preference for a high degree of directness when performing the speech act of complaint in English. Takahashi and Dufon (1989) also found that Japanese ESL learners often deviate from NSs in selecting the degree of directness as a result of their L1 norms. For example, when they wished to convey an explicit request, they opted for a more direct strategy than NSs and when they wished to be more implicit, they drew on a more suggestive and indirect requesting strategy. Another instance of transfer of NL directness level is found in Baba's (1999) study, which shows that advanced Japanese ESL learners tended to rely more on their NL indirect strategies when they responded to TL compliments.

There is also ample evidence for pragmalinguistic transfer in learner language. Both positive and negative transfer has been found, for example, in two studies by Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) on requests by English learners of Hebrew as an L2. While these learners were found to successfully transfer the NL semantic formulas which are similar to the TL (e.g. “imperatives, “ability questions, “why not questions, and “do you mind if …” form), they were also observed to exhibit inappropriate use of the TL ability question. As a result, they produced non-TL request forms. Blum-Kulka explains that a cross-linguistically, surface similarity in forms does not necessarily guarantee a similarity in function.

Transfer of L1 semantic formulas was also found by Olshtain (1983) and Bergman and Kapser (1989). Olshtain, for example, found that the preference for the semantic formulas “express apology” and “offer of repair” demonstrated by English learners of Hebrew when apologizing in the TL was an influence of their L1 norms. Bergman and Kasper also found that Thai learners of English negatively transferred the L1 semantic formula “verbal redress” and positively transferred the formula “offer of repair” when apologizing in the TL.

Faerch and Kasper (1989) found evidence of negative pragmalinguistic transfer relating to the use of internal and external modifications in request realization by Danish learners of German. They found that these learners transferred Danish modal verbs which are formally similar to the TL, resulting in “a distorting effect on the illocution or politeness” (p.228). These learners also employed Danish “consultative devices” when mitigating their requests in the TL.

In contrast to the studies referred to above, which provide clear evidence of pragmatic transfer, some studies also demonstrate that non-transfer occurs (i.e. cases where transfer could be expected but actually did not occur) (Walters, 1979; Rintell, 1979, 1981; Fraser, Rintell, and Walters, 1980; House and Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1987; House, 1988; Bergman and Kasper, 1993). In Yokota (cited in Baba, 1999), for instance, Japanese EFL learners were expected to accept a compliment paid to a family members due to the Japanese tendency to identify oneself with one's family members, but in fact did not exhibit this behavior. Takahashi (1995, 1996) points out that investigations based on performance data alone cannot shed light on the causal factors of non-transfer. Therefore, besides the current ***product-oriented*** studies of pragmatic transfer, there needs to be more ***process-oriented*** research on pragmatic transferability in order to illuminate the conditions under which L2 learners do or do not rely on their NL.

Another critical issue in early studies of pragmatic transfer is that except for Bergman and Kasper (1993), the great majority of them did not establish a sound method for identifying transfer (Olshtain, 1983; Beebe ***et al.***, 1990; and Takahashi and Beebe, 1993). As Kasper (1992) argues, since most claims about transfer made by IL pragmatists are based on a rough estimation of the similarity and difference of the frequency of pragmatic strategies or semantic formulas without any statistical testing, their findings should be treated with caution. Therefore, in order to ascertain instances of transfer, statistical analyses need to be carried out.

2.3.3. Pragmatic transferability

Pragmatic transferability or the conditions that favor or disfavor transfer was addressed in a number of studies (i.e. Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Olshtain, 1983; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; House and Kasper, 1987; Bodman and Eisenstein, 1988; Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Olshtain and Cohen, 1989; Takahashi and Dufon, 1989; Robinson, 1992; Takahashi, 1992, 1993, 1995; Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper and Ross, 1996; Hill, 1997; and Baba, 1999). Many of these, adopting the psycholinguistic approach to transferability, were grounded on the studies by Kellerman (1977, 1978, 1983, 1986). Kellerman indicated that learners have perceptions of what is potentially transferable and what is not in their own language. These perceptions then influence what learners actually transfer. The two important constructs in Kellerman's transferability framework are 'projection' and 'conversion'. The former is the process whereby learners make use of their beliefs about the relationship between their NL and TL to judge what is transferable and what is not. The latter refers to the learning decision (i.e. whether they should transfer a particular L1 structure or not) which is based on the learner's perceptions. Kellerman proposed three conditions on transferability, namely psychotopology, psycholinguistic markedness, and the reasonable entity condition. The first condition refers to learners' perception of L1-L2 distance. The second one is connected with 'coreness' or language specificity / neutrality and later relabeled as the term 'prototypicality' (learners' perception of L1 characteristics). The last one, on the other hand, is TL reasonableness assumption by learners in the absence of TL knowledge. Of these Kellerman found psychotypology more influential than prototypicality in determining the transferability of a specific L1 element. He argued that while prototypicality only affects what is judged as being transferable by learners, it

is their psychotypology, which changes as their proficiency develops, that governs what is actually transferred.

The influence of learners' perceptions of language-specificity on what they transfer is noted in Kasper (1981), Olshtain (1983), House and Kasper (1987), Bodman and Eisenstein (1988), and Robinson (1992). Kasper (1981) reports a case of consistent transfer avoidance where German ESL learners are found not to use the mitigating routine "***I mean***" when performing a variety of the TL linguistic acts although this cajoler is used the most frequently in NL equivalent contexts. Kasper conducted an informal interview with these learners, which showed these learners perceived this cajoler as unique to German and thus did not transfer it to the TL. A similar case is presented by House and Kasper (1987). In this study, high-intermediate Danish learners resisted transferring their L1 negative marker "***ikke***" when making requests in English and German. The reason was that they thought this mitigating device does not carry a presupposition of non-compliance as do its English and German counterparts in comparable contexts. Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) also illustrate the effect of learners' own judgments about the transferability of some pragmalinguistic features of gratitude expressions in their NL. The researchers found that in spontaneous role-play data, advanced Arabic, Farsi and Punjabi speaking learners of English avoided transferring ritualized expressions of gratitude which they considered "L1-specific". They hesitated and paused frequently, which these researchers saw as a signal of transfer resistance and which they attributed to learners' being aware of their L1 specificity.

At the sociopragmatic level, the results of Olshtain (1983) and Robinson (1992) revealed the same picture. After eliciting performance data, Olshtain conducted interviews with

learners about their overall perceptions of apologies as language-specific or language-universal. He found that the Russian learners of Hebrew tended to have a more language-universal perception of apology in that they thought that in all languages and cultures people need to apologize when they feel it to be necessary. In contrast, the English learners of Hebrew, holding a more language-specific view of this speech act, deduced that Hebrew speakers perform far fewer apologies. As a consequence, the Russian speakers produced more apologies than Hebrew NSs, demonstrating negative transfer and the English speakers produced fewer apologies than they would do in their NL but still apologized more often than Hebrew NSs. In the case of the English participants, Kasper (1992) explains that these learners' intuitions about what is transferable and what is not may have been overridden by highly-automatized NL pragmatic behavior. She suggests that when pragmatic knowledge is automatized, it overrides pragmatic transfer based on controlled processing. Alternatively, according to Kasper, the observed behavior may also be interpreted as learners' desire to "diverge" from the target community as a way of maintaining their own cultural identity.

Robinson's (1992) verbal protocol study of refusals indicates that Japanese ESL learners tend to be relatively direct in refusing their American interlocutors' offers and requests as they view directness as being more acceptable in American culture than in their native culture. Such perception can also account for some cases of the 'non-transfer' of the Japanese pragmalinguistic patterns in refusals. Further evidence is provided by Han (1992), who, during a follow-up interview with her Korean informants, worked out that these learners' tendency to accept the compliments given by their American interlocutors (contrary to their frequent rejection of compliments within their own language group) is

encouraged by their belief that American are always 'frank' and 'direct' and therefore prefer to accept compliments.

Unlike the studies that looked at learners' perceptions of language specificity vs. language universality, Faerch and Kasper (1989) illustrate the relationship between learners' perception of L1-L2 distance and the transferability of L1 requests. They found that while Danish modal verbs, consultative devices and negation rules are transferred into German by the Danish participants in their study, these features are not transferred into English. Faerch and Kasper thereby argue that these learners fall back on the L1 when requesting in German more often than in English probably as a result of their perception that Danish is closer to German than to English.

Interestingly enough, while the above reviewed studies were originally intended to address transferability merely from the psycholinguistic perspective and interpret their findings in view of learners' perception of language specificity or universality and language distance, other constraints are also addressed. One of these is proficiency factor. Similar to the research on general L1 transfer (see Takahashi, 1995 for a review), two conflicting views of the relationship between proficiency and transfer have been found in the pragmatic transfer literature. Some researchers hypothesize that pragmatic transfer correlates positively with language proficiency since they hold that transfer can take place only when L2 learners have gained sufficient TL resources to make it possible (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Olshtain and Cohen, 1989; and Hill, 1997). Takahashi and Beebe's hypothesis was grounded on their own findings that highly advanced Japanese participants often drew on their NL when performing English refusals. Takahashi and Beebe's hypothesis is further substantiated by Baba's (1999) study

on compliment responses, which found that the amount of pragmatic transfer increased with learners' language proficiency. Baba accounts for this observation by suggesting that as learners become more proficient, they are less likely to rely on simple and formulaic TL patterns. Instead, they are confident enough to attempt more complex TL material to express their own cultural identity. An interesting finding about adverted sociopragmatic transfer by Cohen (1997) also supports this hypothesis. Cohen kept a diary about his progress in acquiring different aspects of pragmatic competence in Japanese. Cohen reported intending to conform to his own cultural norms, which means being more interactive and specific than is appropriate in Japanese culture. Yet, he failed to do this due to a lack of L2 knowledge and control. As a consequence, he had to involuntarily observe Japanese conversational norms.

Other studies, on the other hand, assume the converse (Takahashi and Dufon, 1989; Robinson, 1992; Takahashi, 1992, 1993; and Maeshiba ***et al.,*** 1996). Maeshiba ***et al.***, for instance, discovered that the lower proficiency participants in their study tended to transfer NL apology strategies more often than their higher proficiency counterparts. Robinson (1992) found that although both low and high proficiency groups of Japanese ESL learners were aware of the differences in appropriate American and Japanese refusal behaviors, the former were more likely to be influenced by their NL whereas the latter approximated NS norms more closely. These findings obviously did not lend support to Takahashi and Beebe's assumption about the positive correlation between transfer and proficiency.

The resolution of this issue becomes even more uncertain when it comes to the findings of Takahashi's (1995) study which does not support either of the above two views.

Takahashi explored the transferability of five Japanese conventional indirect request strategies in four request situations in two proficiency groups of learners (low vs. high proficiency). This study was motivated by the researcher's attempt to overcome the methodological shortcomings of her earlier studies (1992, 1993). In these earlier studies, Takahashi did not take into account learners' perceptions of L1-L2 equivalence and psycholinguistic markedness when conceptualizing pragmatic transferability, a flaw inherent to the linguistic approach to transferability (see Eckman, 1977) [6]. Thus, in her 1995 study, Takahashi incorporated two important criteria within the concept of pragmatic transferability, namely learners' assessment of the contextual appropriateness of an NL pragmatic strategy and their judgment of the equivalence of the NL and TL strategies in terms of contextual appropriateness. She also proposed a pragmatic transferability scale, according to which those strategies which are rated highly for contextual appropriateness and contextual equivalence are more transferable and vice versa. The findings of this study reveal that the transferability of each NL request strategy seems to depend on a number of intertwining factors such as the politeness and conventionality manifested in each strategy and the degree of mitigation needed for each imposition situation. Neither a negative nor a positive correlation was found between proficiency (which was measured by learners' scores on Form One of the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test) and transferability as hypothesized. Takahashi, therefore, suggests that contextual familiarity may play a more influential role than proficiency.

The inconsistent and contradictory results regarding the effect of language proficiency may reflect the methodological limitations of the above studies. For example, most of these studies have been based on only quantitative data (exceptions being Takahashi and

Dufon, 1989 and Robinson, 1992) elicited from a single data collection instrument. Consequently, little has been discovered about how learners of different levels of language proficiency arrive at their choices regarding how to linguistically realize speech acts, and thus, how they differ in the process for activating their NL and prior IL pragmatic knowledge in performing a given speech act. In other words, little is known about the process of pragmatic transfer. Although it may happen that while high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups exhibit the same number of NL strategy patterns in TL realization, or show no statistically significant differences in their ratings of the transferability of a given strategy (as in Takahashi, 1995), the reasons behind these choices and ratings may not be similar. Therefore, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data would serve to provide a more insightful and comprehensive explanation. As Cohen (1996) has suggested, qualitative data on learners' thoughts can be elicited through retrospective verbal report interviews or thinking protocols.

2.3.4. Summary

This section addresses pragmatic transfer within the context of SLA research. It begins with a provision of a historical account of different approaches to general L1 transfer, such as the CAH, CCH, Ignorance Hypothesis, and IL Hypothesis (2.3.1). Overall, the recognition of the role of the L1 has been progressing from the CAH, CCH and Ignorance Hypothesis to the IL Hypothesis. Specifically, while the role of the L1 is overestimated by the CAH and underestimated by the minimalist position (the CCH and Ignorance Hypothesis), it is duly reassessed by the IL Hypothesis as one among five central processes that operate in L2 acquisition. The IL Hypothesis is, therefore, considered a more appropriate account. On this ground, the section then discusses the concept of

pragmatic transfer and distinguishes different types of pragmatic transfer (i.e. sociopragmatic vs. pragmalinguistic transfer and positive vs. negative transfer).

This section also reviews previous studies on pragmatic transfer (2.3.2) and pragmatic transferability (2.3.3). Overall, the review provides evidence of transfer at both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic levels. Yet, in a few studies, instances of non-transfer, (cases where transfer is expected but actually does not occur), are observed. It is required that further research be done to illuminate this issue. Concerning pragmatic transferability, this section addresses different accounts such as learners' perceptions of language-specificity and universality, perceptions of NL-TL distance, and proficiency levels. It is shown that the current research has produced conflicting findings regarding the relationship between proficiency and transfer. While some studies have found a positive correlation between proficiency and transfer, others report the converse. It is argued that the inconsistent and contradictory results may reflect methodological limitations of these studies. As the majority of them make use of quantitative data, it is suggested that a combination with qualitative data would provide more comprehensive insight.

2.4. L2 PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT

The study of L2 pragmatic development has been largely neglected in ILP even though developmental issues are also a principal research goal of ILP. This shortage of developmental research is probably due to the fact that ILP research originally derives its theoretical considerations, research questions, and methods from cross-cultural pragmatics rather than from SLA (Kasper, 1992; Barron, 2002). This section begins with a

review of current studies of non-native speakers' use of speech acts and their developmental patterns. It then discusses the role of input in L2 pragmatic development. The role of input is addressed in terms of learning contexts and instruction.

2.4.1. Non-native speakers' use of speech acts

Previous research on the pragmatic aspect of learner language generally supports the claim that TL speech act knowledge is incomplete for many L2 learners (see Ellis, 1994 for a review). Low proficiency learners, for example, tend to employ a rather narrow range of linguistic realization devices as well as illocutionary force mitigating devices (Scarcella, 1979) and exhibit problems in varying their strategies according to context (Tanaka and Kawade, 1982; Ervin-Tripp, 1987). There is also evidence that even advanced learners do not acquire the full native-like pragmatic competence in terms of their perception as well as production of speech acts (Walters, 1979; Carrel and Konneker, 1981; Olshtain and Weinbach, 1983; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986; House and Kasper, 1987). Their L2 speech acts are usually characterized by over-sensitivity to politeness and verbosity as a "play-it-safe" response to the absence of the TL socio-pragmatic knowledge. This evidence seems to suggest that L2 learners' pragmatic competence tend to lag behind their grammatical competence.

As is often noted, pragmatic errors may have more serious consequences than grammatical ones. This is because NSs tend to treat pragmatic errors as offensive rather than as simply demonstrating lack of knowledge, as they do NNSs' grammatical errors (Thomas, 1983; Rintell and Mitchell, 1989, Bardovi-Harlig ***et al***., 1991, Boxer and Pickering, 1995, Cenoz and Valencia, 1996; Kamimoto, 1993; Tanaka, 1997). Wolfson (1989) and

Boxer (1993) show that L2 learners' idiosyncratic pragmatic behavior may deprive them of the opportunity to interact with NSs. Without this opportunity, the learners may receive less input and produce less output, which affects their L2 learning.

To account for L2 learners' non-native pragmatic behavior, Kasper (1992) assumes that general pragmatic knowledge is universally available and that learners have full access to the same range of strategies to realize particular speech acts as do NSs. They are also aware of various contextual constraints on a particular strategy choice. However, a number of intertwining factors may affect their performance. These include their restricted L2 linguistic competence, lack of L2 pragmalinguistic sophistication in combination with negative transfer of sociopragmatic norms, and over-generalization. It may also happen that learners practice modality reduction under the pressure of spontaneous interaction (Kasper, 1982, 1984), i.e. they prioritize message clarity before face-work (Ellis, 1994).

Importantly, Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) also warn that non-target pragmatic behavior does not necessarily always reflect learners' lack of competence in the pragmatics of the target community. Contrary to what researchers often assume, learners may not always choose to target NS norms (see Kasper, 1992 and Cohen, 1997 in the previous section). Sometimes they deliberately resort to NL pragmatic norms because they may opt to become reasonably competent language users while maintaining their own cultural identity (Blum-Kulka cited in Ellis, 1994; Cohen, 1997; LoCastro, 1998; 2001; 2003). However, Ellis (1994) also points out that while this view may be relevant to learners' sociopragmatic choices, it does not seem to apply to their pragmalinguistic choices. This is because as Thomas (1983, p. 104) notes:

> "sociopragmatic decisions are ***social*** before they are linguistic, and while foreign learners are fairly amenable to corrections they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social …judgement called into question".

2.4.2. Developmental patterns in ILP

In contrast to the substantial amount of L2 pragmatic performance literature, research literature on L2 pragmatic development is rather scant (Rose, 2000). Thus, while a great deal has been discovered about how NNSs use TL speech acts, little is known about the acquisitional side of such use. Among the earliest developmental studies was Schmidt's (1983) famous Wes study. Schmidt spent three years examining how Wes, a Japanese adult acquired English as an L2. Data on Wes' early requests showed that he relied heavily on a limited range of unanalyzed request formulas and lexicalized requestive markers (e.g. ***please***). However, data on Wes' requests three years later showed that he used more analyzed request formulas, especially more imperatives, thus suggesting improvement over time.

Ellis (1992, 1997) studying the acquisition of English requests by two beginning learners, found a decreased use of direct requests and a corresponding increased use of conventionally indirect requests over time – a pattern also found in L1 pragmatic development. Based on these findings, he proposed three stages of development of IL requests. The first stage exhibits a total reliance on highly context-dependent, minimalist realizations without any relational or social goals (e.g. ***me no blue***) or direct formulaic requests (e.g. ***leave it, give me …***). The next stage is characterized by the use of unanalyzed request formulas (***can I have …***) and lexical cues to express illocutionary force (e.g. ***please, may be***). The final stage exhibits with more productive use of analyzed request formulas.

Ellis' findings are congruent with Schmidt's (1983) and add evidence about the important role of formulaic speech in beginners' IL (Ellis, 1994).

More recently, Achiba (2002, cited in Kasper and Rose, 2002) conducted a 17-month study of her own daughter Yao's acquisition of Australian English requests. She found four stages of development, which represented some overlap with Ellis' three developmental stages. Achiba's first stage was similar to Ellis' second stage and her second stage to Ellis' third stage. Achiba's third and fourth stages were characterized as pragmatic expansion. At these stages, requests contained many new pragmalinguistic forms such as a shift in modality (e.g. from ***"can"*** to ***"could"***), more frequent use of modification (in particular, more external modifiers), and greater use of syntactically complex and fully analyzed formulas. The difference between the third and the fourth stages is Yao's ability to "refine" the force of her requests at the fourth stage (e.g. her use of ***"could"*** as both an ability question and a suggestion). Similar to Ellis, Achiba also found that Yao's conventionally indirect requests had increased sharply in number between the first and the final developmental stages and had become the most frequently used strategy by the final stage.

Based on Schmidt, Ellis, and Achiba, Kasper and Rose (ibid.) proposed five developmental stages of L2 requests, i.e. pre-basic (highly context-dependent), formulaic (reliance on unanalyzed formulas and imperatives), unpacking (more productive use of formulas plus a shift to conventional indirectness), pragmatic expansion (occurrence of new forms plus increased use of modification and complex forms), and fine-tuning stages (varying requestive force according to contexts).

The development of other L2 speech acts such as suggestions and rejections was addressed by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) in their one-year study of 16 adult ESL learners. They found that over time the learners improved in terms of appropriate speech act choice but not appropriate form. They went on to suggest that these learners developed sociopramatic competence before pragmalinguistic competence.

The issue of acquisitional order in pragmatic development is addressed by Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2001). Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig conducted a one-year study on the expression of modality in oppositional talk such as disagreements, challenges, and denials by beginner learners of various L1 backgrounds. What they found was an acquisitional order in which lexicalized modality such as "***maybe"*** and ***"think***" emerged earlier than grammaticalized modality such as ***"could***" and "***would***". Their finding supported Schmidt (1983) and added evidence to Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann (1981)'s complexification hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, the order of acquisition of L2 forms is dependent on the structural complexity of these forms and the processing demands involved in producing them. That is syntactically complex structures, which are also more cognitively demanding, are usually acquired later than those that are simpler and require a minimum of processing capacity.

Besides the longitudinal studies above reviewed, a small but growing body of cross-sectional ILP research has also contributed to our knowledge of L2 pragmatic development. Scarcella (1979), for example, examining the politeness strategies used by 10 beginners and 10 advanced ESL learners, found that these learners tended to acquire politeness forms (pragmalinguistics) before acquiring the rules of their appropriate use (sociopragmatics). This finding contradicted Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993).

Trosborg (1987) found that higher proficiency Danish ESL learners approximated more closely the NS use of modality markers in apologizing. Similarly, Trosborg's later study (1995) indicated higher frequencies of adjuncts to the main requesting strategies for higher proficiency learners. Rose (2000) reported a similar developmental pattern in request, apology, and compliment response realization for higher proficiency Cantonese EFL learners. As he found, this group displayed a greater use of conventionally indirect request strategies and a higher frequency of supportive moves and apology and compliment-response adjuncts. He also noted little evidence of sensitivity-to-situation variations for all three speech acts and thus suggested that pragmalinguistics takes precedence over sociopragmatics in the early stages of pragmatic development, supporting Scarcella (1979).

Overall, although L2 developmental pragmatic research is still scarce, the existing studies have made important contributions to answering the question of how L2 learners gradually develop their pragmatic competence. Both longitudinal and cross-sectional research has shown that as in the case of grammar, there are also developmental sequences in ILP. Specifically, as learners become more proficient in the TL, they tend to demonstrate lesser reliance on formulaic and unanalyzed semantic formulas and a corresponding more productive use of these semantic formulas. They also tend to be more sensitive to situation variations and mitigate their speech acts to a greater extent. What remains unclear, however, is whether learners' sociopragmatic competence develops before their pragmalinguistic competence or vice versa. Up to date only three studies have addressed this question (Scarcella, 1979; Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993; and Rose, 2000), yet they produced conflicting results. Obviously, there needs to be more research,

both longitudinal and cross-sectional, on L2 pragmatic learning to further our understanding of this crucial aspect in SLA research.

2.4.3. The role of input in L2 pragmatic development

According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001), input (i.e. "the communicative data available to the learner" – Kasper and Rose, 2002, p.191) is an important factor that influences L2 pragmatic development. Input can be received from the learning context and instruction (e.g. teachers and textbooks).

Research on the relationship between input and L2 pragmatic development is influenced by Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Schmidt, 1993, 1995, 2001) and Bialystock's Two-Dimensional Model of L2 proficiency development (1993, 1994). Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis states that in order for input to become intake and be processed further, it needs to be 'noticed' or attended to by learners (1995). As he added later (2001, cited in Kasper and Rose, 2002), such attention must be "particularly focused and not just global" (p.30). Thus, in order to acquire pragmatics, "one must attend to both the linguistic forms of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated" (p.30) [7]. In this way, Schmidt's hypothesis attempts to account for initial input selection (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Bialystock (1993) goes further by hypothesizing that pragmatic competence develops only when sufficient input is available to learners and is consciously 'detected' and analyzed by them in a way that allows them to develop control in processing it. Current research into the effects of learning contexts and instruction on L2 pragmatic development has provided support for these two hypotheses.

2.4.3.1. Learning contexts and L2 pragmatic development

Previous research on the effects of learning contexts has provided evidence of the superiority of second language settings to foreign language ones in terms of developing learners' pragmatic knowledge and competence. Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998), for example, found a higher rate of pragmatic awareness for Hungarian ESL learners than for EFL learners. Takahashi and Beebe (1987) found that Japanese learners in the ESL context made use of their NL when performing refusals far less frequently than their counterparts in the EFL context. Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) one-year longitudinal study of academic advising sessions showed an increased approximation of TL suggestions and rejections as the learners' lengths of stay in the TL environment increased. Barron (2002) also found that Irish learners of German FL produced more target-like offer-refusal exchanges after just a few months in Germany, thus adding evidence of the advantages of SL contexts.

To account for the advantages of the SL context, Bialystok's Two-Dimensional Model of L2 proficiency development (1993, 1994) may be relevant. Bialystok claims that in order to acquire L2 pragmatics, learners must develop control in processing input. This can be done only through sustained practice. It can be argued that the SL context may provide learners with more opportunities for both obtaining TL pragmatic input and practicing it. On the other hand, learning a language outside the TL environment, as Takahashi and Beebe (1987) argue, does not seem to facilitate both contextual familiarity and acquisition of the TL patterns required for learners to approximate TL behavior. Additionally, learning a language outside the TL environment does not seem to provide learners with

sufficient opportunities for engaging in interaction, and thus in practicing what they have learnt.

Interestingly, however, in contrast to the compelling evidence of the superiority of SL contexts found in the above studies, Niezgoda and Rover (2001) and Rover (2001) provided another perspective on the environmental effect. In an attempt to test the findings of Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) study, Niezgoda and Rover sought to investigate whether the environment effect is inevitable or factors such as learners' proficiency can override it. They compared the performance on a pragmatic error-rating task of a group of ESL learners from various NL backgrounds and a group of Czech EFL learners. The EFL group consisted of English teacher trainees, who had passed a highly competitive entrance exam into the university English program, and thus represented a highly select sample. Similarly to other studies, they found higher pragmatic awareness in the ESL group. What is notable, however, is the finding that their EFL group matched Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's ESL group more closely than Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's EFL group. According to Niezgoda and Rover, this result suggested little effect for the learning context. Niezgoda and Rover were also aware that their findings might have been influenced by a possible test effect. Despite this methodological problem, their study still implies that although FL settings may offer much more limited opportunities for L2 learning, high pragmatic awareness can be gained if learners are highly motivated and supported by appropriate instruction. A similar implication is found in Rover (2001, cited in Kasper and Rose, 2002). In a replication of his earlier study (1996), Rover found that, in respect of pragmatic development, learning environments did not seem to play as decisive a role as learners' L2 proficiency. Rover found that the most proficient learners

who had not stayed in the TL environment closely followed the NSs in their ability to comprehend TL pragmatic routines. As in Niezgoda and Rover, this finding seems to suggest that these learners' EFL instruction was effective in developing their competence in comprehending TL implicatures (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Both Niezgoda and Rover's and Rover's studies thus highlighted the issue of the role of instruction, which is discussed in the following section.

2.4.3.2. Instruction and L2 pragmatic development

2.4.3.2.1. Effects of instruction

Recent studies on instruction effects have shown that instruction benefits the development of TL pragmatic competence. Specifically, instructed learners have an advantage over uninstructed learners in terms of NS approximation in both pragmatic comprehension and production (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). In terms of pragmatic comprehension, for example, Kubota (1995) reported an advantage in understanding English implicatures for instructed Japanese EFL learners over their non-instructed counterparts. In terms of pragmatic production, Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) found that instruction assisted their learners to produce more target-like answers to the TL question about weekends in terms of both language features and content. Similarly, Rose and Ng (2001) found that their EFL learners made significantly more frequent use of those compliment formulas explicitly taught to them. Notably, studies by Wildner-Bassett (1994), Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, and Thananart (1997), and Tateyama (2001) revealed that FL beginners also benefit from pragmatic instruction. This finding is crucial as it

provides counter evidence to the assumption that pragmatic learning requires a solid foundation of TL grammar and lexis.

In addition to compelling evidence for the positive effects of instruction on L1 pragmatic learning, there is also contrary evidence. For example, Rose and Ng found no improvement in learners' confidence and metapragmatic awareness after five weeks of instruction. However, it may be argued that five weeks of instruction was not long enough for any substantial improvement to take effect. Yoshimi (2001) also reported almost no instruction effects on the comprehension and production of Japanese discourse markers by FL learners of Japanese from different NL backgrounds. Yet she acknowledged that the methodological inadequacies of the study might explain her findings. Kubota's (1995) study pointed out that while instruction significantly enhanced learners' comprehension of those English implicatures that were repeated from the teaching materials, it did not enable the learners to apply the acquired inferencing strategies to new implicatures. Looking at the delayed effect of instruction, Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) also found that learners retained improvement only in the content of their responses. This result suggests that the effects of instruction were not strong enough to override the effects of time. It also illustrates Bialystock's two-dimensional hypothesis, which holds that native-like pragmatic competence requires a high degree of processing control and can therefore be maintained only through sustained practice.

As far as teaching methods are concerned, recent studies have lent support to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1993, 1995) and are also congruent with the recent focus-on-form approach to teaching grammar. A growing body of classroom research shows that deductive or explicit metapragmatic instruction (i.e. instruction involving explicit

explanation of the rules of speaking) is effective in developing learners' pragmatic awareness and performance (e.g. Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001; and Rose and Ng, 2001). Inductive or implicit instruction (i.e. instruction in which learners are given input without metapragmatic explanation and led to gradually discover and formulate the rules of use through practice), on the other hand, failed to draw learners' attention to the target forms in the input. The only study that initially found superior effects for implicit instruction is Kubota's (1995). However, this initial difference vanished by the time a delayed post-test was conducted, probably due to the relatively short treatment time (20 minutes). This result brings up the important issue of appropriate length of treatment: how much time is sufficient, and what factors can compensate for short treatments or require longer treatments (Kasper, 2001). Obviously, future research needs to take this issue into consideration.

Overall, despite some counter-evidence, research generally supports the view that instruction can indeed facilitate L2 pragmatic development, even in the case of L2 beginners. It also indicates that learners tend to benefit more from explicit metapragmatic awareness-raising tasks and activities and through sustained occasions for communicative practice. On this basis, therefore, the responsibility of L2 teaching should lie in the provision of realistic pragmatic input and corresponding learning opportunities so as to optimize the benefits to learners (Kasper, 1997).

2.4.3.2.2. Critical issues in instruction

Two important issues are often raised in instructional ILP research, namely the quality of input presented to learners by classrooms (including the linguistic descriptions offered by both teachers and textbooks) and the optimal degree of instructional intervention.

Regarding the first issue, it is indicated that while sufficient input is crucial for L2 learning and classrooms are among the regular sources of input, especially in the case of FL contexts, many classrooms tend to provide either less input than needed or the input they produce is sometimes misleading. According to Kasper (1997), this is not because classrooms offer 'artificial discourse'. On the contrary, the discourse that they produce is as authentic as any other kind of discourse. The true reason lies in their unique characteristics. Classroom interaction usually involves a narrower ranger of speech acts (Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos, 1976) and discourse markers (Kasper, 1989) than learners need in communication outside the instructional setting. It is also unequal in terms of teacher-student roles and power. Teacher-talk usually displays a lack of politeness markings (Lorscher and Schulze, 1988) and monopolization of discourse organization and management by the teacher (Lorscher, 1986; Ellis, 1990), and thus does not serve as a pragmatically appropriate model for learners (Ellis, 1992).

Furthermore, teachers' instruction and textbooks may sometimes inadvertently bias learners towards a specific type of input and steer them away from others. For example, Mir (1992) found that as teachers explicitly emphasized the apology formula "I'm sorry" over others, the learners tended to overuse this formula. Widjaja (1997) also found that their learners did not hesitate to use the refusal formula "No, thank you" in all refusals

contexts as they were taught that this was a polite way to refuse an offer. These learners also opted for higher directness than the American NSs in refusing as a result of their instruction-induced belief that Americans preferred to be direct. Beebe and Takahashi (1989) and Takahashi and Beebe (1993) found the same effect of instruction on Japanese ESL learners' preference for explicit criticisms when disagreeing and correcting in English.

Textbooks as another source of pragmatic input also do not always provide authentic and representative language to learners. Either speech acts are not presented, or they are presented unrealistically. In addition, there is usually a lack of metapragmatic explanation in textbooks to facilitate L2 pragmatic learning (Vellenga, 2004). For example, Boxer and Pickering (1995) warn that textbooks generally do not contain indirect complaints as a social strategy. Bouton (1996), on the other hand, points out that most of the invitations provided in a textbook rarely occur in a published corpus of NS invitations. Similar findings are reported in Pearson (1985), Myers-Scotton and Bernstein (1988), Wolfson (1989), Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynold (1991), and Ohshtain and Cohen (1991). Moreover, textbooks sometimes stress one semantic formula over others or provide misleading information. Han (1992), for example, found that the Korean ESL learners in her study frequently resorted to the formulaic "thank you" as a compliment response because they learned from Korean ELT material that this is the only correct way to respond to a compliment. The reason is that most of the textbooks are built mainly on NS intuition of how they would perform a particular speech act (Boxer and Pickering, 1995). Since most NS pragmatic knowledge is tacit and cannot be reported, it is necessary that teaching materials be researched-based so that they can better represent NS language in use, thus offering learners more realistic input. In a recent study (2004),

Vellenga found that L2 textbooks rarely provide adequate metapragmatic explanation. She, therefore, suggested that textbooks should include not only authentic samples of speech acts but also extralinguistic contextual and cultural information to help learners with correct pragmatic choices.

The second important issue of how much instructional intervention is optimal has been raised recently by a number of researchers (see Kasper, 1997; and Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). This issue is raised for a number of reasons. Firstly, as discussed in the previous section, L2 learners do not always desire to totally converge with NS pragmatic behavior. In a study of NNS students in an American university, Hinkel (1996) found that the majority of Chinese, Indonesian and Arabic L1 students agreed with the statement: "I do not always try to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S". Siegal (1996, p.362) comments on this behavior as follows:

> "Second language learners do not merely model native speakers with a desire to emulate, but rather actively create both a new interlanguage and an accompanying identity in the learning process"

Therefore, the assumption that pragmatic competence should be based on a NS model needs to be reconsidered. So does the assumption that every deviation from NS norms displayed in learners' production needs to be 'fixed' by the L2 teacher. Furthermore, Kasper points out that NNS's total convergence may sometimes be perceived by NSs as "intrusive and inconsistent with the NNS's role as outsider to the L2 community" (1997, p.12). In this case, some divergence as a marker of non-membership could be more appreciated. Kasper (ibid.) also cited Giles, Coupland, and Coupland's (1991) claim that in many situations successful communication means optimal rather than total convergence.

On these grounds, it seems that while teaching L2 pragmatics needs to guarantee a provision of authentic and representative language, at the same time it also needs to allow for learners' subjectivity and social claims. As Thomas (1983, p. 110) suggests:

> "… to give the learner the knowledge to make an informed choice and allowing her/him the freedom to flout pragmatic conventions is to acknowledge her/his individuality and freedom of choice and to respect her/his system of values and beliefs".

2.4.4. Summary

In this section, pragmatic development and factors which influence it are discussed. Sub-section 2.4.1 reviews previous studies on pragmatic use and sub-section 2.4.2. reviews studies of pragmatic development. It is shown that L2 learners generally do not acquire a full native-like pragmatic competence and this often adversely affects how they communicate with NSs of the TL. It is also shown that similarly to L1 acquisition and L2 grammatical acquisition, there is a general pragmatic developmental pattern. In the few longitudinal and cross-sectional studies that exist, learners have been found to generally progress from formulaic and unanalyzed chunks of language to more analyzed and target-like language as their proficiency increases. Obviously, in order to move ILP research closer to the centre of SLA research, this line of research needs to be continued.

Sub-section 2.4.3 addresses the issue of input as an important influencing factor on pragmatic development. Informed by Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis and Bialystock's Two-Dimensional Model of L2 proficiency development, it is argued that pragmatic competence develops only when sufficient input is available to learners, and is noticed and analyzed by them in a way that allows them to develop control in processing it. Input

is received through the learning context and instruction (including teachers and textbooks). As regards the learning context, there is evidence to suggest that although SL learning contexts offer richer input and more opportunities for interaction, and thus more advantages in terms of learning opportunity than FL learning contexts, FL learners can still develop their pragmatic competence effectively if they are highly motivated and assisted by appropriate instruction. As regards instruction, it is argued on the one hand that instruction can facilitate the learning of pragmatics, if carried out effectively. On the one hand, it is also noted that when instruction and classroom discourse are the only regular sources of input, they may fail to provide learners with the amount of the authentic language needed for effective communication. In terms of teaching methods, it is noted that explicit (deductive) methods may be more effective than implicit (inductive) methods since more effects have been found within the literature for explicit instruction. This claim is congruous with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. Finally, it is argued that teachers should not attempt to 'fix' every pragmatic behavior that is different from the TL norms because learners do not always desire total convergence with the TL norms. Thus, besides offering authentic input, instruction should also allow learners to maintain their own cultural identity.

Table 3.1: Summary of the methodologies used in previous ILP studies on speech act production

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Scarcella, 1979	Cross-sectional	Invitations, Requests	RP	Arabic ESL – begin (10) / adv (10)	/	Eng NS (6)
Fraser, Rintell, & Walters, 1980	Single-moment	Requests, Apologies	Closed RP, - point scale	Spanish learners of Eng (8) - proficiency NG	Spanish NS (8)	Eng NS (8)
Cohen & Olshtain, 1981	Single-moment	Apology	RP	Hebr learners of Eng (20) – proficiency NG	Hebr NS (12)	American Eng NS (12)
Rintell, 1981	Single-moment	Requests, Suggestions	Closed RP, 5-point scale	Spanish learners of Eng (16 request / 10 suggestion) –proficiency NG	/	/
Blum-Kulka, 1982	Single-moment	Requests	DCT	American learners of Hebr SL– inter / adv (44)	Eng NS (10)	Hebr NS (32),
Schmidt, 1983	Longitudinal	Requests	Naturalistic	Japan ESL beginner (1)		
Olshtain, 1983	Single-moment	Apologies	Closed RP, questionnaire	Eng learners of Hebr SL (13) Russian learners of Hebr SL (14)	Eng NS (12) Russian Ns (12)	Hebr NS (12)
Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986	Cross-sectional	Requests	DCT	American learners of Hebr SL– low-inter / high-inter / adv (240)	American Eng NS (142)	Hebr NS (172)
Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986	Single-moment	Thanking	DCT, interview	ESL adv (67) L1 div	/	Eng NS (56)
Cohen, Olshtain, & Rosenstein, 1986	Single-moment	Apology	Questionnaire	Israel EFL advanced (84)	/	American Eng NS (96)
House & Kasper, 1987	Single-moment	Requests	DCT	Germ ESL inter / adv (200) Dan ESL inter / adv (200)	Germ NS (200) Dan NS (163)	Eng NS (100)
Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987	Single-moment	Complaints	DCT	Learners of Hebr SL – "rather high level" (35)	/	Hebr NS (35)
Takahashi & Beebe, 1987	Cross-sectional	Refusals	DCT	Japan ESL (20) Japan EFL (20) Grad / undergrad	Japan NS (20)	American Eng NS (20)
Trosborg, 1987	Cross-sectional	Apologies	RP	Danish EFL – inter (12) / low-adv (12) / high-adv (12)	Danish NS (12)	Eng NS (12)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Banerjee & Carrell, 1988	Single-moment	Suggestions	DCT	Chinese Malay EFL –adv (28)	/	Eng NS (12)
Takana, 1988	Single-moment	Requests	RP	Japan ESL (4 pairs) – proficiency NG	/	Eng NS (4 pairs)
House, 1988	Single-moment	Apologies	DCT, 3-point scale (NS only)	Germ ESL inter / adv (200)	/	Eng NS (200)
Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988	Single-moment	Thanking	RP, DCT, naturalistic	English learners (40pairs learners-learners, 24 pairs learners-NS) – proficiency NG	/	English NS (34 pairs)
Faerch & Kasper, 1989	Single-moment	Requests	DCT	Danish ESL between inter & adv (200) Danish learners of Germ SL (200)	Dan NS (163)	Eng NS (100)
Takahashi & Dufon, 1989	Cross-sectional	Requests	RP, RP check interview	Japan ESL – beg / inter / adv 3 pairs (learners-NS) each	/	American Eng NS (3 pairs)
Rintell & Mitchell, 1989	Single-moment	Requests, Apologies	DCT	ESL – low adv (29 request / 21 apology) – L1 NG	/	Eng NS (23 request / 14 apology)
Garcia, 1989	Single-moment	Apologies	RP, interview (NR)	Venezuelan ESL learners (10) – proficiency NG	/	American Eng NS (10)
Beebe & Takahashi, 1989a	Single-moment	Disagreement, Embarrassing info	DCT, naturalistic	Japan ESL –btw inter & adv (15)	/	Eng NS (15)
Beebe & Takahashi, 1989b	Cross-sectional	Disagreement, Chastisement	DCT, naturalistic	Japan ESL –high inter / adv (15)	/	Eng NS (15)
Wolfson, 1989	Single-moment	Compliments	Naturalistic	ESL: L1 div, proficiency div – n NG	/	Eng NS (n NG)
Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990	Single-moment	Status-congruent / incongruent acts	Naturalistic	ESL –adv (18) –L1 div	/	Eng NS (7)
Omar, 1991	Cross-sectional	Greetings	Questionnaire, RP, naturalistic	American learners of Kiswahili FL – begin (16) / inter (12), adv (4)	/	/

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990	Single-moment	Refusals	DCT	Japan ESL (20) – proficiency NG	Japan NS (20)	American Eng NS (20)
Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991	Single-moment	Rejections	Naturalistic	ESL adv (39) L1 div	/	Eng NS (7)
Robinson, 1992	Cross-sectional (1)	Refusals	DCT, self-report	Japan ESL – inter (6)/ adv (6)	/	/
Ellis, 1992, 1997	Longitudinal	Requests	Naturalistic	Portuguese, Punjabi ESL pre-teens begin (2)	/	/
Svanes, 1992	Cross-sectional	Requests	DCT	Learners of Norwegian SL, L1 div, length of stay: 8-12 months (44), 12-36 months (21), > 3 years (35)	/	/
Linnell, Porter, Stone, & Chen, 1992	Single-moment	Apologies	DCT	Learners of Eng (20) L1 & proficiency NG	/	Eng NS (20)
Han, 1992	Single-moment	Compliment responses	Field notes, interview	Korean ESL female (10) – proficiency NG	The same Korean ESL give baseline L1 data	American Eng female Ns (10)
Boxer, 1993	Single-moment	Complaints	Naturalistic, Field notes	Japan ESL learners – proficiency NG (2)	/	American Eng NS
Cohen & Olshtain, 1993	Single-moment	Apologies, complaints, requests	RP	EFL advanced (15), L1 NG	/	Hebr NS (11), 4 near-native
Weizman, 1993	Single-moment	Requests (hints)	DCT	Learners of Hebr SL, L1 div, (305), proficiency NG	/	Hebr NS (173)
Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993a, 1996	Longitudinal	Suggestions, rejections	Naturalistic	ESL adv (10) L1 div	/	Eng NS (6)
Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993b	Single-moment (1)	Rejections	Open questionnaire, DCT	ESL grad (13) L1 div	/	Eng NS (19)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Takahashi & Beebe, 1993	Single-moment	Corrections	DCT	Japan ESL–between inter & adv (15)	Japan NS (15)	American Eng NS (25)
Limmaneeprasert, 1993	Cross-sectional	Apologies, Responses to apologies	Questionnaire, meta-pragmatic assessment	American learners of Thai SL / FL – beg (16), adv (18)	/	Thai NS (18)
Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993	Single-moment	Complaints	DCT	Brit learners of Hebr (27), American learners of Hebr (23) – prof. NG	/	Hebrew NS (25)
Cenoz & Valencia, 1994	Single-moment	Requests, Apologies	DCT	Basque EFL (62) –proficiency NG	/	Eng NS (34)
Kim, 1995	Cross-sectional	Requests	Oral DCT	Korean ESL – inter / adv (15)	Korean NS (10)	American Eng NS (15)
Trenchs, 1995	Cross-sectional	Complaints	Questionnaire	Catalan EFL – low inter (13) / adv (14)	Catalan NS (20)	American Eng NS (20)
Trosborg, 1995	Cross-sectional	Apologies, Requests, Complaints	RP	Danish EFL learners – high begin / inter / adv (n NG)	Danish NS (n NG)	Eng NS (n NG)
Houck & Gass, 1996	Cross-sectional	Refusals	Video-recorded RP	Japan ESL low (2), high (2)	/	/
Maeshiba. Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1996	Cross-sectional	Apologies	DCT, rating scale	Japan ESL inter (30) / adv (30)	Japan NS (30)	Eng NS (30)
Yamashita, 1996	Cross-sectional	Refusals, Requests, Apologies	Self-assessment, language lab oral test, open DCT, RP, RP assessment, MCDCT	American learners of Japan SL (34), American learners of Japan FL (13) – begin (12), inter (20), adv (15)	/	/
Murphy & Neu, 1996	Single-moment	Complaints	Oral DCT	Korean ESL male grad (14) – proficiency NG	/	American Eng male NS (14)
Arent, 1996	Single-moment	Complaints	RP, interview, verbal report	Chinese ESL grad (22) – between inter & adv	/	American Eng NS (12)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Bodman & Carpenter, 1996	Single-moment	Greeting	Open-ended questionnaire	Bilingual grad students (20), ESL advanced (80)	/	American Eng NS (50)
Nakabachi, 1996	Single-moment	Complaints	DCT	Japan EFL -inter (39)	The same learners respond in L1	/
Hill, 1997	Cross-sectional	Requests	DCT, assessment questionnaire	Japan EFL male – low (20), inter (20), adv (20)	Japan NS male (10)	Eng NS (20)
Kondo, 1997	Longitudinal	Apologies	Pre-year abroad questionnaire, DCT, assessment questionnaire	Japanese EFL teenagers (45) – proficiency NG	Japan NS (48)	American Eng NS (40)
Tokano, 1997	Single-moment	Complaints	DCT (including assessment task)	Japan learners of Eng (34) – proficiency NG	The same learners responded in L1	American Eng NS (32)
Hassall, 1997, 2001	Single-moment	Requests	RP, rating scale	Australian learners of Bahasa Indones FL – low (3), middle (15), high (2)	/	Bahasa Indo NS (18)
Laohaburanakit, 1997	Single-moment	Refusals	Naturalistic (telephone)	Learners of Japan SL (11), L1 & proficiency NG	/	Japan NS (15)
Widjaja, 1997	Single-moment	Refusals	RP, interview	Taiwanese Chinese ESL female (10), proficiency NG	/	American Eng NS (10)
Francis, 1997	Cross-sectional	Requests	Naturalistic	ESL adults (n NG), 9 levels of proficiency	/	/
Sasaki, 1997	Single-moment (1)	Requests, refusals	RP, questionnaire	Japan EFL –low / low-inter / high-inter (12)	/	/
Hinkel, 1997	Single-moment (1)	Advice	MCQ, DCT	Taiwanese Chinese ESL (40 DCT, 40 MCQ) – "relatively high proficiency"	/	Eng NS (40 DCT, 40 MCQ)
Aktuna & Kamisli, 1997	Single-moment	Chastisements	Written RP	Turkish EFL advanced (68)	Turkish NS (80)	American Eng (14)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Kasanga, 1998	Single-moment	Requests	Naturalistic, DCT	ESL (100-naturalistic, 34 DCT) –L1 & proficiency NG	/	/
Kasanga, 1999	Longitudinal	Requests	Naturalistic (field notes)	ESL female adult learner (1) L1 NG	/	/
Nakashama, 1999	Single-moment	Requests	RP, retrospective verbal report	American learners of Japan SL (5) proficiency NG	The same learners respond in L1	Japan NS (5)
Dufon, 1999	Longitudinal	Experience questions & negative responses, greetings, terms of address	Naturalistic, learner journal, field notes, interview, questionnaire, site documents	Cau American learners of Indo (3), Japan-American learners of Indo (1), Japan learners of Indo (2) – true begin (3), inter (3)	/	/
Hoffman-Hicks, 1999	Longitudinal	Greetings, leave-takings, compliments	Open-ended questionnaire, pre-year abroad questionnaire, interview, case studies, naturalistic, RP	American learners of French FL adults (14)	/	French NS (25)
Suh, 1999	Cross-sectional	Requests	MCQ	Korean ESL –inter (10) / adv (10)	/	American Eng NS (10)
Baba, 1999	Cross-sectional	Compliments and Compliment responses	Modified RP	Japan ESL (14) – inter (4) / adv (10) American JSL (17) – inter (10) / adv (7)	Japan NS (17)	American Eng NS (17)
Barron, 2000	Longitudinal	Offers, Refusals of offers	DCT, RP, retro interview, questionnaire	Irish Germ FL –advanced (33)	Irish Eng NS (27)	Germ NS (34)
Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig,, 2000	Longitudinal	Expression of modality in oppositional talk	Conversational interview (RP)	ESL beginners (8) – L1 div	/	/
Rose, 2000	Cross-sectional	Requests, apologies, compliment responses	Audio-taped cartoon oral production task	HK Chinese EFL children, 7-year-old (20), 9-year-old (14), 11-year-old (19)	Cantonese NS (15 per age group)	/

Table 3.1 (continued)

Study	Type	Speech acts	Instruments	Learners (n)	L1 NS group	L2 NS group
Tatsuki, 2000	Single-moment	Complaints	DCT (cartoon prompts)	Japan EFL (41) – high level	The same learners responded in L1	/
Dufon, 2000	Longitudinal	Negative responses to experience questions	Naturalistic, learner journal	Cau American learners of Indo (3), Japan-American learners of Indo (1), Japan learners of Indo (2) – true begin (3), inter (3)	/	/
Churchill, 2001	Longitudinal	Requests	Naturalistic (notebook data)	Japan EFL –low level (47)	/	/
Matsumura, 2001	Longitudinal	Offering advice	MCQ	Japan EFL advanced (97), non-study abroad students (102)	/	/
Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2001	Longitudinal	Epistemic modality in disagreements	Conversational interview (RP)	ESL beginners (3) – L1 div		
Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2003	Single-moment [1]	Requests	RP, Naturalistic	Japan EFL – n & proficiency NG	Japan NS (n NG)	Eng NS (n NG)
Matsumura, 2003	Longitudinal	Advice	MCQ, self report on Eng exposure	Japan ESL (137) – proficiency div	/	Canadian NS (71)

Abbreviations: NG: Not given, NR: Not reported, Div: diverse

[1] These studies focus on comparisons of different data elicitation methods

[2] Boxer reported only on the total number of participants (295) but not the number of participants in each group

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed for data collection and analysis in the current thesis study. It begins with a brief overview of the methodologies used in previous ILP studies with a view to providing a background to the design of the present study (section 3.1). It then reports the pilot study, the main purpose of which was to establish the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments employed in the main study. Based on the results of the pilot study, it reports the methodological changes which were considered necessary prior to carrying out the main study (section 3.2). It ends with a detailed description of the sampling, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis of the main study (section 3.3).

3.1. INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. A critical review of the methodologies used in previous ILP studies

Table 3.1 summarizes 80 current ILP studies with regard to their design, speech acts under investigation, data collection instruments, and participants (1). In general, three main concerns were raised from this review. The first was the relative shortage of longitudinal and true cross-sectional designs in research of L2 pragmatic development, compared to single-moment designs (in the sense of Cook, 1993) in the study of L2 pragmatic use. The second was the question of optimal methods for collecting spoken data, as in previous research both observational and elicitation methods were found to be not unproblematic. Finally, there was a concern about the relative shortage of ILP studies employing self-report data to investigate L2 pragmatic decision-making.

3.1.1.1. Designs of previous ILP studies

A review of the existing ILP literature shows three types of studies: longitudinal, cross-sectional, and single-moment. Longitudinal studies observe a particular learner or group of learners over an extended period of time, usually ranging from a few months to a year or two. This is often considered an ideal design for investigation of the development of L2 pragmatic competence (Kasper, 1996; Rose, 2000). However, the main problem with this design of study is the difficulty in accessing and obtaining permission to observe learners over a long period of time. Thus, longitudinal studies are often rare, although they are very much needed. Table 3.1 shows that to date, there have been only 14 longitudinal studies, including Schmidt (1983), Ellis (1992), Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), Kondo (1997), Kasanga (1999), Hoffman-Hicks (1999), DuFon (1999, 2000), Barron (2000), Churchill (2001), Matsumura (2001, 2003), and Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2001). Of these, only Schmidt, Ellis, DuFon, Churchill, and Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig involved beginners [(2)].

Cross-sectional studies, which observe learners of different proficiency levels at a certain point in time, may also provide valuable information about L2 pragmatic development. Compared to longitudinal studies, these studies collect data more easily and quickly, and thus are more often employed by ILP researchers. However, 'true' cross-sectional studies are not plentiful. According to Rose (2000), many studies are called cross-sectional but are inadequately designed. For example, they collect data from learners of different proficiency levels but treat them as one single group against the L2 group. Thus, no comparison of the IL data is made, with the result that more is discovered about L2 pragmatic performance than about L2 pragmatic development. Rose (ibid.) considers such studies 'single-moment' rather than cross-sectional, citing Cook (1993, p.34):

> "(A) cross-sectional study … looks at different learners at different moments in time and establishes development by comparing these successive stages in different people … (Other studies) do not compare groups of learners at different cross-sectional levels to establish a series of developmental language states, but either lump all the learners together in one group, or separate them by first language or criteria other than chronological development … A further term, ***single-moment*** studies, needs to be coined to distinguish this approach from the true cross-sectional design."

"Single-moment" studies should also include those investigating "non-native speakers at a single level of proficiency" (in the sense of Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993, p.280 cited in Rose, ibid.).

Table 3.1 shows that only 21 out of 80 studies can be categorized as 'cross-sectional' according to the above criteria. Of these, however, according to Rose (ibid.), many provide almost no information about the developmental aspect, although they contribute helpful information about the performance aspect. For example, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) only briefly discussed differences in the use of external modifiers by different proficiency groups. More often, they compared NS and NNS requests, thus mainly addressing pragmatic failure rather than pragmatic development. Likewise, Takahashi and Beebe (1987), while finding proficiency effects on transfer, did not discuss pragmatic development ***per se***.

The limited number of longitudinal and true cross-sectional studies makes it more difficult to investigate the development of L2 pragmatic competence. Since there has been a relative shortage of developmental ILP studies to date (as opposed to abundant number of ILP performance studies), this problem requires attention from ILP researchers.

3.1.1.2. Methods of collecting spoken data in previous ILP studies

Data collection methods constitute another area of concern, as there is no easy way to collect the type of data that is both relatively 'naturalistic' while at the same time allowing for researcher control. Since data collection is a "powerful determinant of the final product" (Kasper and Dahl, 1991, p.216), this is a major consideration.

A review of the data collection instruments of 80 previous ILP studies shows that only 21 were based on naturally occurring data (collected via field notes, observation, or telephone conversations) (see Table 3.1). This is a small number, given that naturalistic data are desirable for the study of speech acts. The main reason for this may be that naturalistic data do not always allow for researcher control of relevant social and contextual variables, thus making the findings less comparable. Additionally, it is also not easy to gather a large enough corpus of data for comparison in this way.

Given these difficulties, many ILP researchers tend to draw on elicited data as an alternative. For example, Table 3.1 shows that 35 studies employed Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), both oral and written, 27 studies employed Role Play (RP) (3), both open and closed, and another 15 employed questionnaire (including Multiple Choice Questionnaire –MCQ). Of these, 14 studies combined different elicitation methods or combined one or more elicitation methods with naturalistic data. Ten combined one or more elicitation methods with meta-pragmatic assessment methods such as assessment questionnaires and rating scale.

Recent studies of various elicitation methods found that they, too, may be problematic (see Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Ellis, 1994; Kasper, 1999; and Yuan, 2001 for a review). The main difficulty associated with DCT and questionnaire is that although these instruments tend to be effective in gathering a large amount of data in a short time,

they are much criticized for their shortcomings in representing authentic speech in terms of response lengths, turn-taking, chance for opting out, and actual wordings (Beebe and Cummins, 1985; Rintell and Mitchell, 1989; Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones, 1989 cited in Ellis, 1994; Bodman and Eisenstein, 1988; Hartford and Bardovi-Harli, 1992; Turnbull, 1997 cited in Yuan, 2001. Also see Bownikowska, 1988 for a discussion of opting out as a pragmatic strategy). Even when such instruments are designed to allow for multiple-turn exchanges and opting out, they may still not be able to exactly capture what the participants would say in real life contexts. This is because, as highlighted by Wolfson (1989), what participants think they would say may be totally different from what they actually say under communicative pressure.

An RP, on the other hand, even though it allows for online L2 production in conversational sequences, and thus shares more similarities with natural speech production than a DCT or a questionnaire, is still of doubtful authenticity. One difficulty can be that if interlocutors are not good actors, or if the tasks are not realistic enough, they might find it hard to perform naturally (see Bownikowska, 1988; Kasper and Dahl, 1991). What is more, like any other type of elicitation method, a RP might also invite a certain degree of conscious decision-making, which is usually absent in natural communication (Ellis, personal consultation). This may affect the naturalness of the speech generated by the task.

The fact that elicitation methods such as DCTs, questionnaires, and RPs cannot replace ethnographic observations in studying spoken language has given rise to the need for a method that, while allowing the researcher to control relevant variables, also generates relatively natural speech. Baba's (1999) study is a good example. In her study on L2 English and Japanese compliment responses, NSs of both English and Japanese were recruited to act as conversation leaders and instructed to extend

compliments to their friends based on the photographs that these people brought along with them to the data collection session. The purpose of this procedure was to allow the conversation leaders to elicit spontaneous compliment responses from their friends. This method enabled the researcher to manipulate the relationship between the interlocutors (social power and social distance) as well as the topic of compliments, both of which factors were found to possibly exert a significant influence on the choice of compliment responses (Sim, 1989; Chen, 1993 cited in Baba, ibid.), while at the same time maintaining authenticity in the data.

Finally, it is ideally required that whatever instrument is used, it be used in combination with other instruments to reduce possible task bias, thus enhancing the level of objectivity of findings and the reliability of the study (Kasper, 1998 cited in Barron, 2002).

3.1.1.3. Self-report data in previous studies

To date, few ILP studies have made use of retrospection methods compared to other lines of SLA research (see Gass and Mackey, 2000 for a review). Earlier ILP studies are often restricted to the use of judgment rating-scales or assessment questionnaires for examining learners' social and contextual assessment, based on which they then made assumptions about learners' pragmatic decision-making (e.g. Fraser ***at al,*** 1980; Rintell, 1981; House, 1988, Maeshiba ***et al.,*** 1996; Hassal, 1997). Very few studies actually collected learners' verbal reports on how and why they made a particular pragmatic choice. Table 3.1 shows that only ten studies used self-report methods such as thinking-aloud protocols (TAP) or retrospective (verbal report) interviews to tap into learners' thought processes when performing speech acts in the TL. These include Eisenstein and Bodman, (1986), Han (1992), Robinson (1992), Cohen and Olshtain

(1993), Arent (1996), Widjaja (1997), DuFon (1999), Hoffman-Hicks (1999), Nakashama (1999), and Barron (2000). Of these, Cohen and Olshtain, and Robinson specifically focused on planning issues, such as the focus of learners' attention, their utterance planning, language of thinking, and their difficulties in decision-making. Other studies, on the other hand, focused more on influences on the learners' choice of linguistic realization material (e.g. Widjajia, Han, Arent, and so on).

This shortage of self-report data makes it difficult to investigate how learners generally arrive at their pragmatic choices when performing a particular speech act in the L2 and what factors may have affected this choice. Frequently in earlier studies (see above), assumptions about learners' pragmatic decision-making were made based on learners' own judgments of the severity of a given situation and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and/or the appropriateness of a given strategy, i.e. their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge. However, knowledge of L2 pragmatics may constitute only one of several sources of influence, as demonstrated by previous research and the present study (see Chapter 8). Judgment rating scales, therefore, while appropriate for understanding learners' pragmatic knowledge, may be inadequate for investigating other thought processes involved in learners' decision-making.

The shortage of self-report data also makes it difficult to investigate how learners at different stages of L2 development differ in their pragmatic decision-making. This insight is crucial, especially when learners of different proficiency levels are found not to differ in their performance (e.g. Takahashi, 1996 found no proficiency effects on the amount of transfer; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Omar, 1991 found no differences in speech act realization strategies by proficiency levels). Presumably, while high proficiency and low proficiency groups may exhibit the same number of L1 or IL

strategy patterns in TL speech act realization, or show no significant difference in their ratings of the transferability of a particular strategy (e.g. Takahashi, 1996), the reasons underlying these choices and judgments may not the same (e.g. as found in the current study – see Chapter 8). Thus, a combination of both quantitative data (on pragmatic performance) and qualitative data (on pragmatic decision-making) is preferable. Such qualitative data can be elicited via self-report methods such as retrospective interviews or TAPs (as suggested by Cohen, 1996).

3.1.1.4. Summary

This section has raised three concerns about the methodologies used in existing ILP studies. The first was related to the shortage of longitudinal or true cross-sectional methodological design for researching developmental issues. The second concerned optimal instruments for the collection of spoken data. The third was related to the shortage of retrospective data for investigating processing issues within ILP.

The present study attempted to overcome these limitations in the following ways. In terms of design, this is a cross-sectional study, focusing not only on L2 pragmatic performance but also on L2 pragmatic development. In terms of oral data collection, it employed an innovative method, namely a peer-feedback task (see 3.3.2.1), which allowed for both of the elicitation of relatively naturalistic data and researcher control of relevant variables. It also employed triangulation of data through the use of a written questionnaire as an additional source of performance data (see 3.3.2.2) and a retrospective interview, which provided information about learners' pragmatic-making decision (see 3.3.2.3).

3.1.2. The method used in the present study

Within the current thesis study, two studies were undertaken: the pilot study and the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to establish the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments which were to be used in the main study and to familiarize the researcher with the data collection and analysis procedures. To this end, the findings of the pilot study were analyzed carefully so that relevant adaptations could be made to the instrumentation and procedures prior to commencement of the main study.

As stated previously (see Chapter 1, Research Questions), the purpose of the main study was to investigate (1) how Vietnamese EFL learners criticize and respond to criticisms in English and how they differ from the NS in performing these two speech acts, (2) how their competence to perform these two acts develops in accordance with their level of language proficiency, (3) how they transfer L1 pragmatics when performing these two speech acts in the TL, and finally (4) what underlying factors may affect their performance.

The main study comprised three stages. Stage 1 aimed to gather baseline Vietnamese and English L1 data and IL data on the participants' performance of criticisms and criticism responses via a peer-feedback task. Stage 2 was designed to collect additional data on these two speech acts via a written questionnaire and Stage 3 was designed to elicit learners' thoughts and perceptions involved in their decision-making process via a retrospective playback interview session.

In the following sections, the pilot study is described in terms of its research questions, participants and sampling, data collection procedures, and findings. The main study is

presented in respect of the participants and sampling, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

3.2. PILOT STUDY

3.2.1. Research questions:

The pilot study sought to answer the following research questions:

(1) Is the peer-feedback task capable of eliciting the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms as intended?

(2) Is it capable of eliciting these two speech acts consistently?

(3) Is the questionnaire capable of eliciting the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms as intended?

(4) Are the interview questions effective in probing into learners' pragmatic decision-making processes?

3.2.2. Participants and sampling:

The pilot study was carried out at Hanoi National University, Vietnam in early 2002. Eight female Vietnamese third year college students who were majoring in English and six (five females and one male) NSs of American English who were learning Vietnamese as a second language were randomly selected to participate in the study. The mean age of the Vietnamese group was 21.0 (SD = .53) and that of the American group was 20.1 (SD = 1.7). The Vietnamese group reported their English language proficiency as being intermediate. Although no standardized proficiency tests were conducted to establish their levels of English, third year English major students at Hanoi National University, Vietnam, are generally considered to be of intermediate

level and their achievement tests are usually taken from Cambridge First Certificate to Progress which is intended for intermediate learners. None of the students had ever stayed in an English-speaking country. The American English NS group, on the other hand, included beginning learners of Vietnamese. Their lengths of stay in Vietnam ranged from three weeks to one and a half months.

3.2.3. Data collection procedures:

The pilot study was conducted in two phases, separated by 2 weeks. Phase 1 aimed to validate the peer-feedback task and to construct the questionnaire. Phase 2 aimed to establish the reliability of the peer-feedback task and pre-trial the questionnaire and the interview questions. In Phase 1, four dyads of Vietnamese learners and three dyads of American NSs were recruited. The peer-feedback task was carried out in their classes during class time. Firstly, the data collection procedures were explained and questions relating to the procedures were answered. Efforts were made to ensure that the participants fully understood what was required of them. They were then given the writing topic which was to be used in the main study and instructed to write a 250-word essay in 40 minutes (Appendix 3). After completion of the writing task, they were instructed to exchange essays with their peers and carry out oral peer-feedback based on the prompting assessment criteria specified in an instruction sheet (Appendix 4). In this way each dyad was expected to generate two conversations, with each member of the dyad giving feedback to the other. The students were encouraged to ask questions if any part of the instruction sheet was unclear and cassette tape recorders were turned on when they were ready to start their peer-feedback conversations. Due to time constraints, only 10 conversations instead of 14 were produced in this phase and these conversations were subsequently used to develop the written questionnaire for the main study.

Phase 2 was undertaken two weeks later. In this phase, in order to ensure the quality of the audio-recording, participants were invited to go to separate classrooms for data collection. In order to verify whether the peer-feedback task would succeed in eliciting criticisms and criticism responses consistently, three out of the four dyads of Vietnamese learners who had previously participated in Phase 1 were randomly selected and administered the same treatment. As one aim of this phase was also to pre-trial the written questionnaire (Appendix 5) and retrospective interview (Appendix 6) intended for the main study, these instruments were also tested on the learners as soon as they had completed their peer-feedback conversations. The learners were first given the questionnaire to complete and were then interviewed about the content of their peer-feedback conversations. A total of five peer-feedback conversations, five questionnaires (one learner could not do the RP and the questionnaire due to time constraints) and six interviews were collected as a result.

3.2.4. Results:

3.2.4.1. Research Question 1: Is the peer-feedback task capable of eliciting the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms?

In order to analyze the criticism and criticism response data, the pilot study made use of two coding schemes previously developed and validated by the researcher (see Nguyen, 2003). A detailed discussion of these two coding schemes can be found in section 3.4.2 of this chapter. Coding results indicated that only two out of ten conversations collected from Phase 1 did not contain data relating to the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms (see Table 3.2). These two participants reported that they had found their friends' essays satisfactory and had therefore made only positive comments, not criticisms as had been expected. In order to make the task as

natural as possible, the researcher accepted their explanations and made no attempt to encourage them to produce criticisms when they were not inclined to do so. On the other hand, the other eight conversations produced a total of 21 criticisms and 21 criticism responses, which were realized via a total of 50 and 38 formulas, respectively (Table 3.1). This finding seems to suggest that the peer-feedback task was generally capable of eliciting the two speech acts under consideration.

Table 3.2: The number of criticisms, criticism responses, and realization formulas produced in each conversation.

Dyad	Conversation	Criticisms		Criticism responses	
		No of Crit.	***No of CF***	***No of CR***	***No of CRF***
1	1	5	12	5	7
	2	***No conversation due to time constraints***			
2	3	4	8	4	8
	4	3	11	3	10
3	5	PRODUCING NO CRITICISM			
	6	2	2	2	2
4	7	2	6	2	2
	8	***No conversation due to time constraints***			
5	9	1	1	1	1
	10	***No conversation due to time constraints***			
6	11	***No conversation due to time constraints***			
	12	2	8	2	6
7	13	2	2	2	2
	14	PRODUCING NO CRITICISM			
Total		21	50	21	38

3.2.4.2. Research Question 2: Is the peer-feedback task capable of eliciting the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms consistently?

First, the peer-feedback task seemed to elicit an equal number of criticisms and criticism responses for the two phases. Table 3.3 shows a total of 14 criticisms for Phase 1 and a total of 15 criticisms for Phase 2. It also shows a total of 37 criticism formulas (CFs) for Phase 1 and a total of 35 CFs for Phase 2. The average number of

CFs per criticism for Phase 1 was 2.6, almost the same as the average number of 2.3 for Phase 2. In respect of criticism responses, Phase 1 elicited a total of 14 instances, more or less the same as Phase 2, which elicited a total of 15 criticism responses. The two phases also elicited a total of 28 and 36 criticism response formulas (CRFs), thus resulting in a respective average number of 2.0 and 2.4 CRFs per criticism response (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3: The total number of criticisms, CFs, and the average number of CFs per criticism produced by the same learners during the two phases

Dyad	Learner	Phase 1			Phase 2		
		Criticism	CF	Average	Criticism	CF	Average
1	1	5	12	2.4	3	8	2.6
	2	No conversation			2	6	3.0
2	3	4	8	2.0	5	7	1.4
	4	3	11	3.6	2	7	3.5
4	7	2	6	3.0	2	3	1.5
	8	No conversation			1	4	4.0
Total		14	37	2.6	15	35	2.3

Table 3.4: The total number of criticism responses, CRFs, and the average number of CRFs per criticism response produced by the same learners during the two phases

Dyad	Learner	Phase 1			Phase 2		
		CR	CRF	Average	CR	CRF	Average
1	1	No conversation			2	3	1.5
	2	5	7	1.4	3	7	2.3
2	3	3	10	3.3	2	7	3.5
	4	4	9	2.2	5	11	2.2
4	7	No conversation			1	5	5.0
	8	2	2	1.0	2	3	1.5
Total		14	28	2.0	15	36	2.4

Paired Samples ***T*** tests were conducted for the mean number of CFs per criticism and the mean number of CRFs per criticism response for those learners who participated in

both phases. They found no significant differences between the two phases (CFs: t =1.344, df = 3, ***p*** = .271; CRFs: t =2.043, df = 3, ***p*** = .134).

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 present examples of the criticisms and criticism responses produced by the same learners in Phase 1 and Phase 2. As can be seen, in many cases the learners employed the same semantic formulas and produced very similar wordings in the two phases. For instance, Learner 1 employed "identification of problem" and "advice" in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 to criticize her peer's phrase "pay for once per day" (Criticism 2). Her wordings were almost the same in the following two examples:

Phase 1: ***"Here you said "pay for once per day". You should say that "for each time of using". It's better".***

Phase 2: ***"Here you said "for once per day" so you should state it more clearly, more clearly than that. You should make it more clearly***".

Her peer, Learner 2, when responding to these criticisms, also produced the same formulas (an explanation and a seeking help utterance) and wordings in the two phases (Criticism response 2):

Phase 1: "***I mean "one time a day". So I write "use once per day" is OK?"***

Phase 2: ***"I mean "for one time", "for once" hmm. "Once per day" is right?"***

Thus, in view of the above findings, it could be concluded that the peer-feedback task was capable of fairly consistently eliciting the two speech acts under enquiry.

Table 3.5: Comparison of the criticisms made by the same learners in the two phases.

	Criticism	Phase 1	Phase 2
Learner 1	1 (Grammar)	*I mean the way to express is not ok. You should substitute by ah for example (…) I don't know/ The way to express you should change.*	*You should pay attention to some grammatical mistakes and some ah some way to express the idea. I think the phrase "for people to travel" should be replaced by others or should omit.*
	2 (Grammar)	*Here you said "pay for once per day". You should say that "for each time of using". It's better.*	*Here you said "for once per day" so you should state it more clearly, more clearly than that. You should make it more clearly.*
	3 (Grammar)	*What do you mean, "for it"? What does" it" substitute for?*	/
	4 (Grammar)	*What does "the others" substitute for? You should write more clearly.*	*I think the expression here is not ok. You should make it more clearly by writing like that, in that way, not like this. You should say "other means of transportation". You should pay attention more some ah to some mistakes, minor mistakes.*
	5 (Task fulfillment)	*You can't finish your essay. I mean there's a shortage of conclusion.*	/
Learner 3	1 (Grammar)	*Now you said "because of the following reasons". Is it wrong?*	*You have to use "for the following reasons"*
	2 (Grammar)	*What about the phrase "hundreds of people"?. It will be more exact when you use "hundreds of people". You should use "hundreds". I don't understand "a hundred" in this case.*	*I think that it is ah it will be more better if you use "hundreds of people". It will be more exact, more meaningful.*
	3 (Grammar)	*You should use "one of the major causes".*	*I think you should use "one of the major causes".*
	4 (Grammar)	*I don't understand the meaning of "the car stay at home". I'm not sure if ah because I haven't met this case.*	*I don't understand I haven't met the expression "the car stay at home".*
	5 (Grammar)	/	*You should you the plural "cities".*
Learner 4	1 (Grammar)	*I think that "vehicle" and "transportation" is the same meaning so if you write may be if you write ah. No in my opinion I think they are the same meaning*	/
	2 (Organization)	*I think your introduction and your body is not clear enough in ah in organization. You have the topic but you don't have the controlling idea. In the body you always give*	*I have to say that from the beginning you are illogical ah and maybe you misunderstand your essay I mean in the topic sentence you write (…) but in the controlling ideas you write (…)*

		the reason how to treat this problem. So may be it's a big problem. Your body and your introduction is illogical. You should pay much more attention when you write topic sentence in the whole essay.	***If you write like this I think you can't get high mark. I think you must write exactly what you want to explain.***
	3 (Grammar)	***"Equipment" is non-countable noun, not countable, so this is wrong.***	***"Equipment" is uncountable noun, not countable. You should pay attention to that.***
Learner 7	1 (Idea)	***Your statement is not clear enough. In your thesis statement you only mention ah you talk about traffic problem you don't mention the convenience that public transport gives the user. I think your thesis statement is too narrow. You need only one paragraph to develop your idea yes. So that's the problem.***	***I think you should mention some controlling ideas in your thesis statement. In fact your thesis statement doesn't mention controlling ideas.***
	2 (Grammar)	***I think you should use the word "great" instead of "high"***	/
	3 (Organization)	/	***In second paragraph you don't write topic sentence.***

Table 3.6: Comparison of the criticism responses made by the same learners in the two phases.

	Criticism response	Phase 1	Phase 2
Learner 2	1	***Okay.***	***Oh yes. So I can replace "safe for people to travel" instead of some other ah.***
	2	***I mean "one time a day". So I write "use once per day" is OK?***	***"I mean "for one time", "for once" hmm. "Once per day" is right?***
	3	***"For traveling by car or motorbike" I mean.***	/
	4	***I mean "the other means of transport". Yes.***	***I mean "the other transports". For example? Okay.***
	5	***Yes.***	/
Learner 3	1	***Oh no. I don't think so. "Public vehicle" means "bus" but ah it means in different ways. No I don't think so.***	***Yes.***
	2	***Yes. Yes. Yes. This is wrong. Thank you.***	***It's not related to the topic. I should write in the beginning? Yes I understand. You think I should write ah more shortly? I see.***
	3	***Yes.***	***Yes.***
Learn	1	***Yes***	***No, because "have" here goes along with "the people". In my opinion, it's suitable.***
	2	***No. This is untrue. I mean an exact***	***Yes. Yes.***

		number. No, "hundreds of people" means over a hundred, so "a hundred" is much more exact.	
	3	***Yes.***	***Yes I know***
	4	***I mean "you put your car at home". May be but I like this way to express my idea.***	***I mean "You leave your car at home". No I mean I consider the car like your close ah a close thing to you. I like this way to use that word.***
	5	***/***	***Yes.***
L8	1	***Opting out: What about grammar?***	***Yes. Yes.***
	2	***Opting out: and about organization?***	***Yes.***

3.2.4.3. Research Question 3: Is the questionnaire capable of eliciting the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms as intended?

The questionnaire included four criticism eliciting situations and four corresponding criticism response eliciting situations. As mentioned earlier, these situations were constructed based on the peer-feedback data collected in Phase 1. They were focused on four topics: organization, quality of arguments, task fulfillment and cohesion of the essay (see section 3. 3.2.2 for a more detailed description). These topics were chosen because they occurred in both the learners' and the NS data, unlike the topic of "grammar", which occurred more frequently but only in the learners' data.

Coding of the data revealed that all eight situations were capable of eliciting criticisms and criticism responses. Overall, a total of 40 CFs and 33 CRFs were produced for 20 criticisms and 20 criticism responses in the four criticizing and four responding to criticisms situations, respectively. This means that each situation produced an average number of 2.0 CFs and 1.6 CRFs (Table 3.7).

Following the pilot study, an amendment was made to the instructions accompanying the questionnaire. The original instruction read: "***Imagine that you are in a writing class. You have written a 250 word argumentative essay and now the teacher would like you and your friend to read and give feedback to each other's essay. What would you say in each of the***

following situations?" When reading this instruction and the accompanying situations, the participants were unsure whether they were supposed to refer back to the peer-feedback essay or to an imaginary essay. The researcher recognized that the instruction was too vaguely worded and amended it as follows for the main study: "***In reference to the essay that your friend has just written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations?"*** (for the four criticizing situations) and "***In reference to the essay that you have just written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations?"*** (for the four responding to criticisms situations).

Table 3.7: Number of criticisms, criticism responses, CFs and CRFs produced by the questionnaire.

Participant	Criticisms			Criticism Responses		
	No of Crit.	***No of CF***	***Average***	***No of CR***	***No of CRF***	***Average***
1	4	6	1.5	4	5	1.2
2	4	5	1.2	4	4	1.0
3	4	10	2.5	4	5	1.2
4	4	11	2.7	4	11	2.7
7	4	8	2.0	4	8	2.0
Total	20	40	2.0	20	33	1.6

3.2.4.4. Research Question 4: Are the interview questions effective in probing into learners' pragmatic decision-making?

Six interviews were transcribed and coded using the interview coding scheme developed by the researcher. To devise this coding scheme, the data transcript was read carefully and episodes where the learners commented on their pragmatic choices were identified. Recurrent themes across learners regarding how and why they made their choices were then identified (also see section 3.4.1.2 for more details). As a result, a number of influential factors operating behind the learners' pragmatic performance were found. These included perception of L1-L2 proximity, transfer and translation,

previously automatized IL pragmatic behavior, focus on message clarity, teaching material, instruction, and classroom discourse.

For example, it can be observed that the learners in this pilot study frequently employed the structure "***Should***" when criticizing their peers' essays and giving advice about how changes should be made (40% of the time). When asked, most of the interviewees (three out of four) reported finding this structure "polite and tactful". The interview showed that the major factors influencing the learners' perception of this structure included L1 influence (example 1) and the explicit instruction given by teachers or books and classroom discourse (example 2):

(1) "***Sometimes in Vietnamese I say "You should do this and that". I'm used to using the word "should" so when I speak English I transfer this habit."*** (English translation)

(2) "***When I was at high school, I was taught about the structure "You should do something". Teachers said "should" and "had better" are polite and tactful ways of giving advice".***

(English translation)

The interview also showed that automatization of a previously acquired pragmatic behavior is another decisive factor. Interestingly, this automatic process could exert such a strong influence on the learners' linguistic choice that they might unwittingly incline towards inappropriate structures. For example, one of the respondents commented that although she was aware that "***Should***" might not sound very polite ("like an order"), she had become used to using this structure since starting to learn English, and hence, the structure automatically came into her head when she wanted to give advice to people:

(3) "***I think between "Should" and "Had better", the latter structure is more polite. The former structure might not sound very polite, like an order. But I've been getting used to this structure since I started learning English, so it's like an automatic use."*** (English translation)

The interview data also suggested that this automatic processing could be related to the learner's L1:

(4) "***Later on I learn that there are a lot more structures in English to express your advice but still feel that "should" is closer to "nên" in Vietnamese."*** (English translation)

or could simply reflect overgeneralization induced by prior instruction:

(5) "***When I was at high school, I was taught about the structure "Should". Teachers said "should" and "had better" are polite and tactful ways of giving advice*** (…) (English translation).

Regarding processing issues, the interview data showed that the learners were sometimes so concerned about getting their message across that they forgot to take into consideration such social factors as the relationship between themselves and their interlocutors, even though they were aware of the importance of these factors. Quite often, the interviewees commented:

(6) "***I wasn't thinking of the hearer. Probably then I gave priority to ideas, what I was going to say."*** (English translation)

Although conducted with only a small number of participants, the retrospective interview provided valuable insights into the learners' pragmatic decision-making processes. This, in turn, suggested that the interview questions were quite effective and were therefore appropriate for inclusion in the main study.

3.2.5. Summary of the findings of the pilot study and suggestions for change in the main study

This pilot study was conducted with four dyads of Vietnamese EFL learners and three dyads of NSs of American English at a university in Hanoi, Vietnam one month prior to the main study. It was carried out in two phases, with the time lapse being two weeks. The first phase validated the peer-feedback task as a data collection instrument in the main study and developed the questionnaire as an additional data collection instrument. The second phase established the reliability of the peer-feedback task as well as validating the questionnaire and retrospective interview questions to be used in the main study. Of the seven dyads of participants in Phase 1, three dyads of learners were randomly selected to take part in Phase 2, whereby they went through the same data collection procedures as did they in Phase 1. Additionally, they were requested to complete the questionnaire and take part in the retrospective interview session immediately after completion of the peer-feedback task.

Data analysis suggested that all the three instruments were effective in eliciting the kind of data that the researcher sought to gather. The peer-feedback task also seemed to elicit 'natural' use of criticisms and criticism responses because the participants were allowed to give positive remarks if they were inclined to. It was, however, found that adaptations needed to be made to the data collection procedures and to the design of the questionnaire. Firstly, in the pilot study, data were collected in participants' classes during class time, which meant that the pairing of participants occurred naturally rather than being randomly arranged. This failed to ensure manipulation of the social distance factor as it might result that two participants in one pair were by chance close friends while those in another pair were not. Furthermore, conducting research while lessons continued did not produce good quality audio-recording. It was

therefore decided that data collection for the main study would be conducted outside the classroom with one pair of participants at a time. Secondly, the wording of the questionnaire was found to be too vague and to confuse the respondents. For example, as the instruction did not specify whether they were supposed to refer to the essay they had written or to an imaginary essay, the learners continually sought clarification on this point. The instruction was therefore reworded, specifically asking the learners to refer to the peer-feedback essays when responding to the questionnaire situations.

3.3. MAIN STUDY

3.3.1. Participants and sampling:

To serve the purpose of the present study, three groups of participants were recruited: Vietnamese NSs who provided NL baseline data (hereafter referred to as "Vietnamese L1 group" or "Vietnamese NSs"), Vietnamese EFL learners who provided IL data (hereafter referred to as "IL group" or "the learners"), and NSs of Australian English who provided TL baseline data (hereafter referred to as "Australian L1 group" or "Australian NSs"). In the present study, Australian English was chosen to be the target norm because in recent years the number of Vietnamese students who choose to study at Australian universities has increased dramatically. The current study aimed in part to facilitate appropriate performance of these two speech acts by this group of learners within an Australian academic setting (see Chapter 1). All the participants were college students and none had been involved in data collection for the preceding pilot study.

All the participants were randomly selected. However, before they were included in the selection round, they were required to satisfy a number of screening criteria. Firstly, they needed to fall within the same age group. Secondly, in the case of the

learner participants, it was necessary for them not to be studying a foreign language other than English. These screening criteria helped to ensure that these extraneous variables would not interfere with or cloud the effects of the variables under investigation. This screening would also help to make the participants more comparable in terms of the controlled variables.

For the purposes of screening, a background questionnaire was employed to gather necessary bio-data from prospective participants (Appendix 2). The questionnaire was written in the participants' mother tongues (i.e. Vietnamese for the Vietnamese L1 and IL groups and English for the Australian L1 group). For the IL group, the background questionnaire included more detailed enquiries into the learners' language learning experience such as duration of learning English, stays (if any) in English-speaking countries, target norms to which they had been mainly exposed, and so on.

As a result of the sampling processes, twelve NSs of Vietnamese (seven females and five males), twelve NSs of Australian English (nine females and three males), and thirty-six Vietnamese EFL learners (twenty four females and twelve males) from different universities in Vietnam and Australia were selected (Table 3.8). The Vietnamese L1 group included four postgraduates and eight undergraduates from various disciplines and various parts of Vietnam. The Australian group included five postgraduates and seven undergraduates, also from various disciplines but originating mainly from Queensland, Australia. The Vietnamese EFL learner group, on the other hand, comprised twenty-four postgraduates and twelve undergraduates, with various majors. They also originated from different parts of Vietnam (see Table 3.8). At the time of data collection, the learner participants were attending a Pre-Departure Training Program (PDTP) run by a collaborative team of Vietnamese and Australian teachers at Hanoi University for Foreign Studies, Vietnam. This program was intended

for AusAID-sponsored (Australian Agency for International Development) students, who were going to Australia for university study. It therefore specialized in training learners in general English skills, academic skills and some on-arrival and cross-cultural skills. Because learners were required to sit International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at the end of the course in order to present the scores to their universities in Australia, the program also offered some preparation for this test. All learning and teaching materials on this program were designed by the teachers based on available Australian-produced English textbooks and reference handbooks (Table 3.9). Given this learning context and the learners' future study plans in Australia, it is assumed that they were exposed mainly to Australian English and that they were motivated to learn Australian English as target norms.

Table 3.8: Background information on the participants

Groups and sub-groups		VNL1	IL			AuL1
		(N =12)	High Beg. ***(N =12)***	Inter. ***(N =12)***	Adv. ***(N =12)***	***(N =12)***
Total No of participants		12	12	12	12	12
Gender	***M***	5	4	6	2	3
	F	7	8	6	10	9
Courses of study	***Undergrad***	8	7	5	0	7
	Postgrad	4	5	7	12	5
	Major	Various	Various	Various	Various	Various
Mean Age		23.9	22.9	23.8	25.8	22.8
Location in home country		Various	Various	Various	Various	QLD

Based on classification by the Program Administrators, the learners were further stratified into three sub-groups of high beginner, intermediate, and advanced according to their level of English. The high beginner group consisted of twelve participants of the General English Training (GET) sub-program. This sub-program was intended for learners who had pre-entry IELTS scores of 5.0 and below. The intermediate group consisted of twelve participants of the Pre-English for Academic

Purposes (Pre-EAP) sub-program, which was intended for those who had pre-entry IELTS scores of between 5.5 and 6.0. Finally, the advanced group consisted of twelve participants of the English for Academic purposes (EAP) sub-program, which was intended for those who had pre-entry IELTS scores of 6.5 and above. The mean IELTS score for each learner group is presented in Table 3.10. This grouping was in agreement with the learners' self-assessment of the four English skills (Table 3.10).

Of the thirty-six learners, one had spent four years in Australia, one had spent four and a half months in Singapore, and two had spent periods ranging from one week to three months in Holland. The average number of years of English instruction was 7.5 for the high beginners (ranging from 4 to 15 years), 6.3 for the intermediate group (ranging from 4 to 10 years), and 9.0 for the advanced group (ranging from 5 to 17 years) (Table 3.10). The mean age of the Vietnamese NL group was 23.9 (SD = 4.9) and that of the Australian NL group was 22.8 (SD = 5.2). The mean ages of the IL beginning, intermediate, and advanced groups were 22.9 (SD = 5.1), 23.8 (SD = 5.3) and 25.8 (SD = 1.5) respectively (Table 3.9). The ANOVA test showed that there was no significant difference between these five groups in terms of age (F = .799, not significant at $\boldsymbol{p}$ = .531) (Table 3.8).

Table 3.9: Background information on the PDTP program

Teachers	Australian and Vietnamese dyads per class
Learning and teaching material	Australian-produced textbooks and reference handbooks
Focus of sub-programs:	
GET	General English skills, some academic skills, and cross-cultural skills (IELTS scores 5.0 and below)
Pre-EAP	Some general English skills, more academic and cross-cultural preparation (IELTS scores between 5.5 and 6.0)
EAP	Mainly academic skills and cross-cultural and on-arrival preparation (IELTS scores 6.5 and above)

Table 3.10: Summary of the learners' English learning experience and proficiency

Sub-groups	High begin. ***(N =12)***	Inter. ***(N =12)***	Advanced ***(N =12)***
Total number of participants	12	12	12
Actual range of IELTS scores	5.0	5.5	7.0 - 8.0
Average overall IELTS scores	5.0	5.5	7.3
Average number of years of English instruction	7.5	6.3	9.0
Average number of years of stay in an English-speaking country	0.02	0.00	0.38
Self-assessment of English proficiency level by skills	***No of learners referring to each category***		
Speaking:			
- Beginner's level	6	4	0
-Intermediate level	6	8	4
-Advanced level	0	0	8
Listening:			
- Beginner's level	9	4	0
-Intermediate level	3	8	6
-Advanced level	0	0	6
Reading:			
- Beginner's level	2	0	0
-Intermediate level	10	11	3
-Advanced level	0	1	9
Writing:			
- Beginner's level	4	0	0
-Intermediate level	8	11	2
-Advanced level	0	1	10

3.3.2. Data collection instruments

As mentioned in section 3.1.2, the current study made use of three data collection instruments. In order to elicit data on speech act performance, an RP (peer-feedback task) and questionnaire were employed. In order to collect data on learners' pragmatic decision-making, a retrospective interview was conducted. All instruments were validated in the preliminary study before being employed in the main study (see 3.2):

3.3.2.1. The peer-feedback task

A peer-feedback task was developed to elicit criticisms and criticism responses within an academic context (see Appendix 4). It can be argued that peer-feedback is a learning task that is quite often used in academic settings. Since all participants in the present study were university students, it was expected that they would be quite familiar with this type of task, thus making the data more natural. This task controlled the relative social power (equal) and distance (neutral) between participants (peer-to-peer), and also the topic of criticisms and criticism responses (an academic essay), thus making the data more comparable.

As a prerequisite to this task, all participants were instructed to write a 250-word argumentative essay in English on the pros and cons of public transportation as opposed to private transportation (see Appendix 3). This writing topic was taken from a commercially available IELTS practice book and was chosen as it did not require specialist knowledge and would not be too difficult for learners of high beginning level.

The peer-feedback task explicitly required that participants work together on their written essays, find at least one unsatisfactory point about their partners' essays, and discuss it with him or her. In this way, data on both criticisms and criticism responses were elicited within one conversation. The task also provided three main prompting assessment criteria, of which participants could take advantage when commenting on their partners' written work. These criteria comprised essay organization (demonstrated in prompt questions 1 to 6), essay content (questions 7 to 10) and language used (questions 11 to 13). To make the task more natural, however, it was

emphasized that besides commenting on points with which they were dissatisfied, participants were also free to make positive remarks about their partners' essays.

The instruction was written in the participants' mother tongues (i.e. Vietnamese for both Vietnamese L1 and IL groups and English for the Australian L1 group) to ensure their full understanding of the task. The language used in the instruction and the prompting questions was made as simple as possible so that it would be comprehensible to laypeople. Additionally, the instruction also explicitly encouraged participants to ask questions before they started if they found something confusing or unclear.

3.3.2.2. The written questionnaire

A written questionnaire was developed to collect additional IL, L1, and L2 data on criticisms and criticism responses (Appendix 5). On the one hand, the questionnaire was used to cross-check the RP peer-feedback data, since it was believed that a combination of different sources of data would help reduce task bias (Kasper, 1998 cited in Barron, 2002). On the other hand, the questionnaire was also expected to provide information about the learners' declarative knowledge of the L2 pragmatics, which may not have been fully obtained from the RP due to the processing load exerted on the learners.

The written questionnaire consisted of two parts: the introduction and the task, both given in the participants' mother tongues and in simple wording comprehensible to laypeople. The introduction explained the purpose of the questionnaire. It also explicitly asked the participants to ensure that they understood what was required of them before embarking on the task and encouraged them to ask questions if necessary.

The task itself was also composed of two parts. The first part elicited criticisms via four situations and the second part elicited criticism responses via another four corresponding situations (see below). These situations were made as comparable to the peer-feedback task as possible. First, they were based on the frequently occurring topics of criticisms and criticism responses found in the pilot peer feedback conversational data (e.g. essay organization, quality of argumentation, task fulfillment and cohesion). Second, they referred to the essays that the participants had written for the peer-feedback task (note that the questionnaire was carried out after the RP). This second feature was also believed to make the task more natural.

The four criticizing situations read: "***In reference to the essay your friend has just written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations":***

(1) "***What would you say to your friend if you think her/his essay was not very well-organized, so it was rather difficult to follow her/his ideas?***";

(2) "***What would you say to your friend if you think in some instances she or he didn't support her/his arguments with relevant examples and evidence, so these arguments were hard to convince readers?***"

(3) "***What would you say to your friend if you think she or he sometimes wandered off the topic?***"

(4) "***What would you say to your friend if you think she or he didn't often make use of linking words, so the essay seemed to lack cohesion***?"

The four responding to criticisms situations, on the other hand, read: "***In reference to the essay you have just written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations":***

(5) "***What would you say if your friend said your essay was not very well-organized, so it was rather difficult to follow***?"

(6) "***What would you say if your friend said in some instances you didn't support your arguments with relevant examples and evidence, so these arguments were hard to convince readers***?"

(7) "***What would you say if your friend said you sometimes wandered off the topic?***"

(8) "***What you say if your friend said you didn't often make use of linking words, so the essay seemed to lack cohesion***?"

Following the suggestion of Oppenheim (1996), sufficient space was provided under each hypothetical situation for the respondents to write lengthy answers.

3.3.2.3. The retrospective interview

Another data gathering instrument employed in this study was a retrospective verbal report interview (see Appendix 6). This instrument was used for the IL group only as this group was the main focus of the research. The retrospective interview was conducted in audio-playback sessions to tap the learners' reasons for their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices in performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism in the L2.

The advantage of this instrument was that it provided access to the process-oriented data which was unobtainable via other instruments (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993). It was also thought that it might help overcome such potential pitfalls as the researcher's incorrect inferences about the causes of the observed behaviors (Gerloff cited in Robinson, 1991). Furthermore, when collated with the data on participants' authentic speech, it was thought that the interview data might reveal more information about

the thought processes by which the learners finally arrived at their choices, information which could not be discovered from the RP data alone. The interview would also help the researcher clarify any unclear details in the peer-feedback conversation data.

It should be noted that despite the above advantages, retrospection is not free from limitations. Some researchers (Seliger, 1983; Schmidt cited in Robinson, 1991) caution that some processes, especially those acquired implicitly, may not be entirely available for conscious reporting. Or, some mental processes may be too complex to be accurately verbalized (Cohen, 1987, 1991). Importantly, interviewees may also not be able to recall all their thoughts at the moment of retrospection, and thus offer ***post hoc*** rationalization instead (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis, 2004).

Fortunately, these limitations can be minimized in a number of ways. To facilitate interviewees' recalls, the time lapse between task completion and retrospective sessions should be minimized and aids to task performance such as video or audio-recordings should be employed to remind participants of their thoughts. The interviewer should also probe interviewees' thoughts in connection with specific instances of their language use rather than as non-task related memory (Ericsson and Simon (1984, 1987, cited in Robinson, 1991). Furthermore, he or she should always avoid questions that may exert additional cognitive load on interviewees, thus interfering with their recalls (e.g. "Why-questions") (Gass and Mackey, 2000). The interview should be conducted in the interviewees' mother tongues since it is believed that the translation of their thoughts from one language to another may affect the interviewees' short-term memory (Faerch and Kasper, 1987, cited in Robinson, 1991). To avoid the possibility of ***post hoc*** rationalization, the interviewer should only ask

about the information that interviewees attend to and not "lead" them or try to elicit generalizations. Also, if probes are needed, they should be used in such a way as to clarify unclear answers but not to ask about information that interviewees do not give (Cohen, 1987, 1991, cited in Robinson, 1991). Finally, the researcher should stop probing further if the answer is "I don't know" or "I don't remember" (Gass and Mackey, 2000).

In the current study, the retrospective interview was constructed as below. It was semi-structured in nature in the sense that while being pre-constructed around the area of interest to the researcher, it also allowed the researcher to follow up on the learners' responses. The eight pre-constructed interview questions were asked in a logical order and in such a way as to cross-check information. Some of the questions were modified and adapted from Robinson (1992). Questions 1 and 2 both aimed to gather information on learners' pragmatic declarative and procedural knowledge, i.e. what they know about performing criticism and criticism responses and how they draw on this knowledge in their pragmatic decision making processes. Questions 3, 4, and 5, on the other hand, sought insight into learners' perceptions of L1-L2 distance, L1 nature and perceptions of their own culture, and the distance between their native culture and the target culture. Question 6 probed into the source of learners' knowledge regarding performance of these two speech acts. The reader may recall that one of the research assumptions in this study was that teachers' instruction and textbooks may affect what learners perceive as transferable and non-transferable. Hence, question 6 was designed to specifically investigate this issue. Question 7 sought information about the role of the L1 in learners' performance of the two TL speech acts under research and question 8 about processing issues. These two final

questions were designed to cast additional light on the answers elicited via the six other questions.

The interview was conducted individually with each learner in their mother tongue, i.e. in Vietnamese, as soon as they had completed the peer-feedback task and the written questionnaire.

3.3.3. Procedures

The current study was carried out one month after the pilot study. The data collection procedures involved the following steps (also see Figure 3.1):

1. Before the data collection session started, dyads of participants in each group were randomly arranged.

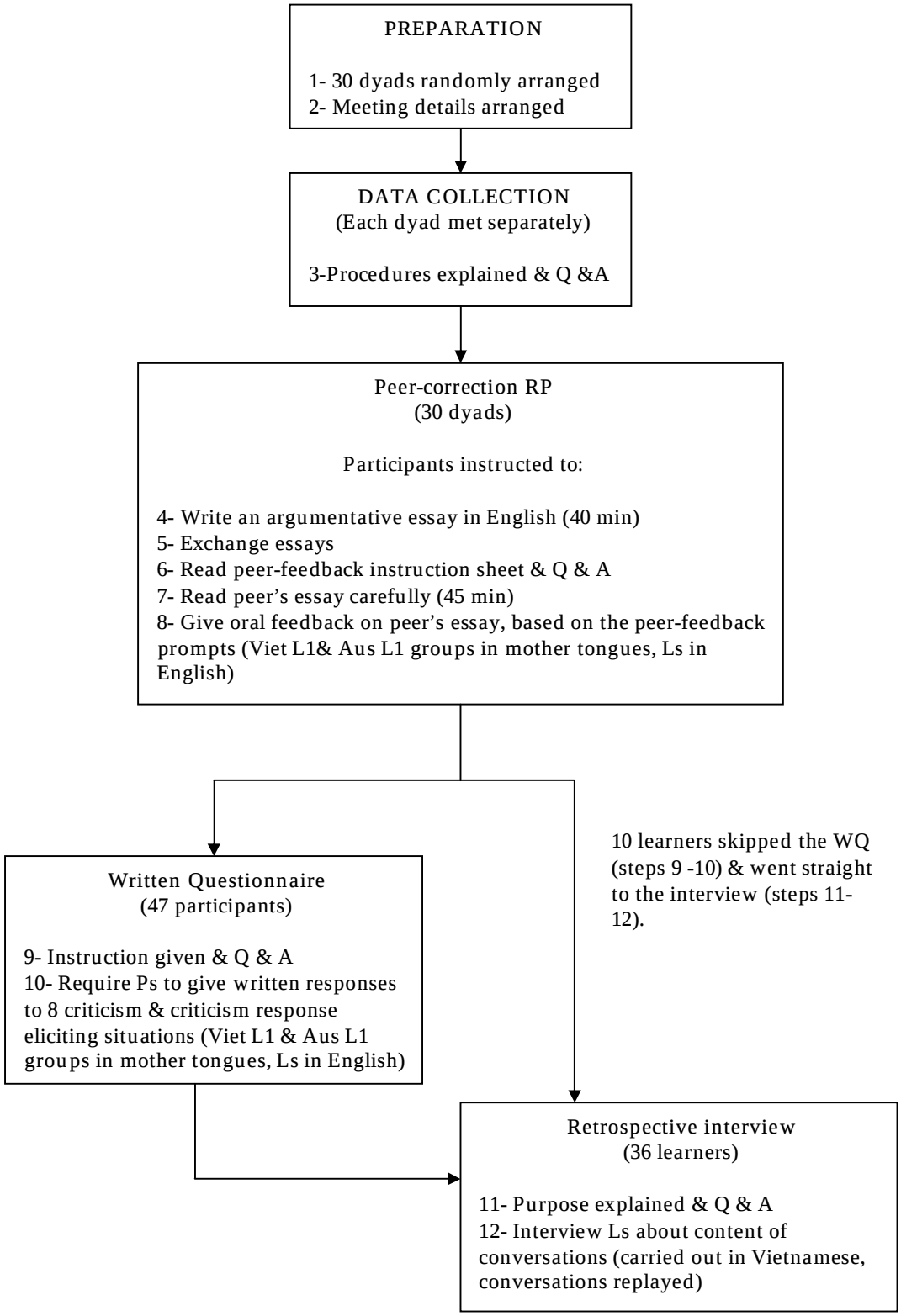
2. Meeting details were negotiated with each dyad. The data collection meetings with the Vietnamese L1 and IL groups were organized at two universities in Hanoi, Vietnam and the meeting for the Australian L1 group was at a university in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

3. Each dyad of participants was invited to the data collection meeting individually. They were first of all introduced to the procedures in general. They could ask any question about these procedures to make sure that they understood completely.

4. They were then introduced to the first task, which was to write a 250 word argumentative essay in English on public transportation. 40 minutes was allocated for completion of the task and all participants carried out the same task.

5. Upon completion of the writing task, dyads were instructed to exchange their written work with their peers.

Figure 3.1: Procedures of data collection in the main study



6. They were then given the peer-feedback instruction sheet to read. They were required to read the instructions carefully and to ask any questions related to the task requirements until they completely understood what was expected of them. It seemed that the participants had no difficulty in comprehending the task requirements, as peer-feedback was one of their very common classroom tasks.

7. They were then given around 45 minutes to read their peers' essays.

8. When they signaled that they were ready to discuss the essays based on the assessment criteria specified in the peer-feedback instruction sheet, the cassette player was switched on and the conversation began. The Vietnamese L1 and Australian L1 participants performed the task in their mother tongues, i.e. Vietnamese and English, respectively, for baseline data. The IL group, on the other hand, performed the task in English. The conversations produced by the participants were audio-taped with their consent for later analysis. The researcher's presence did not seem to affect the participants' performance. They had become quite familiar with her due to her visits to their classes to invite their participation and because of their individual contact when negotiating meeting details. Additionally, commenting on their peers' essays and having their own essays commented on by their peers in front of a third party was quite a familiar classroom task. Hence, they appeared to concentrate on the task rather than on the presence of the researcher and performed the task very naturally.

9. Upon completion of the peer-feedback task, each participant in the dyad was given a questionnaire to complete individually (all the questionnaires were the same). As for the peer-feedback RP, the participants were first required to read the instruction carefully and ask questions if they did not understand it.

10. After the researcher had checked that the participants completely understood the task requirements, they were given as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaire. As the language of the questionnaire had been kept as simple as possible, the participants did not have any difficulty in understanding it. The learners completed the questionnaire in English and the Vietnamese and Australian L1 groups completed it in their mother tongues. When responding to the situations in the questionnaire, the participants were asked to specifically relate their answers to the essays which they had written for the peer-feedback task. The reason for this was to make the task more natural. A total of 13 participants (including 10 learners, one Australian NS, and 2 Vietnamese NSs) wished not to be involved in the questionnaire due to time constraints. Thus, the learners who could not participate in the questionnaire were interviewed immediately (see below). The Vietnamese and Australian NSs, on the other hand, were free to leave the session.

11. Immediately after completion of the peer-feedback task (for those who skipped the questionnaire) or the questionnaire, the IL group proceeded to the interview session. First, they were reminded of the purpose of the interview. They were also encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything which they found unclear.

12. Each learner was then interviewed by the researcher about the content of the RP conversations. This interview was conducted in the learners' mother tongue, i.e. Vietnamese. In accordance with the suggestions of a number of researchers (Robinson, 1991; Oppenheim, 1996; Gass and Mackey, 2000), probing questions which may exert additional cognitive load on the learners and thus possibly interfere with recall, such as "Why did you say that?" were totally avoided. Instead, questions such as "Could you explain a bit further?" or "Could you tell me a bit more about that?" were asked to encourage them to provide more information on the topic. Also, back-channeling such

as “Um”, “Go on”, “I see”, or “OK” was used in response to the learners’ reports instead of concrete feedback as it was realized that the latter could affect the nature of the learners’ reports or even mislead them. When the learners answered: “I don’t know” or “I don’t remember” to a question, the researcher accepted their answer and moved on to other questions, not pursuing this question any further. During the interview, the learners’ conversations were replayed to refresh their memory. This interview was also audio-taped with their permission for later analysis.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Three data sets were obtained from the data collection. The first data set comprised 6 hours 39 minutes of recordings of 60 peer-feedback conversations from 30 dyads of participants, who produced a total of 326 criticisms and 323 criticism responses. These included 988 CFs and 857 CRFs. The second data set comprised 47 questionnaires with a total of 188 criticisms and 188 criticism responses. These included 308 CFs and 282 CRFs. The third data set comprised 8 hours of recordings of 36 retrospective interviews from 36 learners. The following sections report on the transcription, coding, and analysis of each data set.

3.4.1. Transcription of data

3.4.1.1. The peer-feedback conversations

First, the peer-feedback conversations were transcribed according to Conversation Analysis (CA) conventions. Specifically, they were transcribed based on Gail Jefferson (cited in Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, p. vii), with the following quoted symbols:

(0.5)	The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.
(.)	A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less

	than two-tenths of a second.
=	The 'equals' sign indicates 'latching' between utterances. For example: S1: yeah September [seventy six= S2: [September S1:=it would be S2: yeah that's right
[ ]	Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk
.hh	A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer the in-breath.
Hh	An 'h' indicates an out-breath. The more h's, the longer the breath.
(( ))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity. For example ((banging sound)). Alternatively, double brackets may enclose the transcriber's comments on contextual or other features.
-	A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
:	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
!	Exclamation marks are used to indicate an animated or emphatic tone.
( )	Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
(guess)	The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
,	A comma indicates a 'continuing' intonation.
?	A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
*	An asterisk indicates a 'croaky' pronunciation of the immediately following section.
↑↓	Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.
a:	Less marked falls in pitch can be indicated by using underlining immediately preceding a colon: S: we (.) really didn't have a lot'v cha:nge
a:	Less marked rises in pitch can be indicated using a colon which itself is underlined: J: I have a red shi:rt
Under	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
CAPITALS	Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.

° °	Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
Thaght	A 'gh' indicates that the word in which it is placed had a guttural pronunciation.
> <	'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
→	Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.
[H:21.3.89.2]	Extract headings refer to the transcript library source of the researcher who originally collected the data.

Below is a sample extract of an NS peer-feedback conversation:

S1: Start with organisation (.) ah essay DOES directly discuss the topic so far as what is written but it's not completed (.) so it's not really ABLE to fully discuss it (.4) um there's no introduction or conclusion (.2) ah I'm not sure

S2: oh I think that's sort of an introd:UCtion ((laugh)) (gh hh) the first sentence

S1: okay ((laugh)) (gh hhh)

S2: ah I guess I don't have a proper defined introduction =

S1: = yeah (.) I was going onto something else, ahh, ya, > at school we always liked (.) um with the essays< in the introduction what you had to do was (.) say what your MAIN thing was and then (.) say a sentence about EACH paragraph that you were going to write, (.) so that's when I was looking for an introduction that's what I was looking [for =

S2: [okay

S1: = but (.3) I don't know it's just like a different idea of what an introduction is. But ah (.) there's no conclusion but I think that's just 'cause it's not fiN:ISHed

The transcription was then checked by an English NS who was recruited to assist the researcher and carefully trained by her about CA transcription conventions.

3.4.1.2. The retrospective interview data

The interview data were transcribed broadly and translated into English for the purpose of report. The transcription was also checked by a Vietnamese NS who was recruited as another research assistant.

3.4.2. Coding of data

3.4.2.1. Criticisms and criticism responses

Criticisms and criticism responses were coded according to their: (1) realization strategies, (2) semantic formulas, and (3) modifiers (see Chapter 1 for definitions). The researcher and her research assistants coded the data independently. The English NS research assistant coded the Australian and IL criticisms and criticism responses. The Vietnamese research assistant coded the Vietnamese criticisms and criticism responses. Respective agreement rates of 87.0% and 90% were reached.

3.4.2.1.1. Criticisms

Firstly, a criticism is defined as an illocutionary act whose illocutionary point is to give negative evaluation on H's actions, choice, words, and products for which he or she may be held responsible. This act is performed in hope of influencing H's future actions for the better for his or her own benefit as viewed by S or to communicate S's dissatisfaction/ discontent with or dislike regarding what H has done but without the implicature that what H has done brings undesirable consequences to S (adapted from Wierzbicka, 1987). From S's point of view, the following preconditions need to be satisfied in order for the speech act of criticizing to take place:

1. The act performed or the choice made by H is considered inappropriate according to a set of evaluative criteria that S holds or a number of values and norms that S assumes to be shared between himself or herself and H.

2. S holds that this inappropriate action or choice might bring unfavorable consequences to H or to the general public rather than to S himself or herself.

3. S feels dissatisfied with H's inappropriate action or choice and feels an urge to make his or her opinion known verbally.

4. S thinks that his or her criticism will potentially lead to a change in H's future action or behavior and believes that H would not otherwise change or offer a remedy for the situation without his or her criticism.

(Adapted from Wierzbicka's discussion of criticisms, 1987 and Olshtain and Weinbach's discussion of complaints, 1993)

Precondition 2 will make criticisms inherently distinctive from their two neighbors, namely complaints and blames while the other three preconditions may be shared by all three speech acts. In complaints, the inappropriate action carried out by the complainee is seen as being at a cost to the complainer. On the other hand, blames are given mainly to assign responsibility for a unsatisfactory situation which can lead to further negative effects for the blamer or both the blamer and the blamee or for somebody else, or to shift responsibility away from the blamer (see Table 3.11).

A criticism can be realized by either direct or indirect strategies. Following Blum-Kulka (1987), the directness level of a criticism in the present study was determined by the degree of illocutionary transparency, and thus the amount of effort needed to

interpret the illocutionary point of this criticism. That is, "the more indirect the mode of realization, the higher will be the interpretive demands" (Blum-Kulka, ibid., p.133).

Table 3.11: Distinctions between a criticism, a complaint and a blame

Pre-conditions seen from S's perspective	Criticism	Complaint	Blame
1. Anti-speaker:	-	+	+/-
2. Request repair for:			
*S's benefit	-	+	+/-
*H's benefit	+	-	+/-
*General public's benefit	+/-	-	+/-

Symbols: +: Yes; -: No; +/-: Maybe Yes maybe No

Table 3.12 presents the coding categories of direct and indirect criticisms developed by the researcher based on her previous (2001) study of L2 New Zealand English criticisms and criticism responses (reported in Nguyen, 2003). These coding categories were mainly data-driven due to a lack of previously available coding categorizations of criticisms in literature. The coding categories were then modified to fit the fresh data of the current study. The following symbols are used: L = Learner, NE = English native speaker, NV = Vietnamese native speaker.

Table 3.12: Categorization of criticism strategies and formulas

Type	Characteristics	Examples
1. Direct criticisms:	Explicitly pointing out the problem with H's choice / actions / work / products, etc.	
a. Negative evaluation	Usually expressed via evaluative adjectives with negative meaning or evaluative adjective with positive meaning plus negation.	*"I think ah it's not a good way to support to one's idea* (L), *"Umm that's not really a good sentence"* (NE).
b. Disapproval	Describing S's attitude towards H's choice, etc.	*"I don't like the way you write that ah "I'm convinced about the idea" or "in my opinion"*

		(L)
c. Expression of disagreement	Usually realized by means of negation word "No" or performatives "I don't agree" or "I disagree" (with or without modal) or via arguments against H.	***"I don't quite agree with you with some points (.) about the conclusion"*** (L), ***"I don't really agree with you <as strongly as> you put it here"*** (NE).
d. Identification of problem	Stating errors or problems found with H's choice, etc.	***"And there are some incorrect words, for example "nowadays"*** (L), ***"You had a few spelling mistakes"*** (NE).
e. Statement of difficulties	Usually expressed by means of such structures as ***"I find it difficult to understand …", "It's difficult to understand …"***	***"I can't understand"*** (L), ***"I find it difficult to understand your idea"*** (L).
f. Consequences	Warning about negative consequences or negative effects of H's choice, etc for H himself or herself or for the public.	***"Someone who don't – doesn't agree with you (.) would straight away read that and turn off."***
2. Indirect criticisms:	Implying the problems with H's choice / actions / work / products, etc.	
a. Correction	Including all utterances which have the purpose of fixing errors by asserting specific alternatives to H's choice, etc.	***"safer" not "safe", comparison"*** (L), ***"And you put "their" I think t-h-e-r-e"*** (NE).
b. Indicating standard	Usually stated as a collective obligation rather than an obligation for H personally or as a rule which S thinks is commonly agreed upon and applied to all.	***"Theoretically, a conclusion needs to be some sort of a summary"*** (L).
c. Preaching	Usually stated as guidelines to H, with an implicature that H is incapable of making correct choices otherwise.	***"The following statement is meant to help you. You see, anyone can have an opinion, but the issue is whether they can back it up"*** (NE).
d. Demand for change	Usually expressed via such structures as "you have to", "you must", "it is obligatory that" or "you are required" or "you need", "it is necessary".	***"You must pay attention to grammar"*** (L), ***"You have to talk about your opinion in your summary"*** (L).
e. Request for change	Usually expressed via such structures as "will you ...?", "can you ...?", "would you ...?" or imperatives (with or without politeness markers), or want-statement.	***"I still want you to consider some points"*** (L), ***"What I would have liked to have seen is like a definite theme from the start like you're just TA:LKING about it"*** (NE)
f. Advice about change	Usually expressed via the performative "I advise you ...", or structures with "should" with or without modality	***I would advise that you jot down some bullet points about what you will write about before you do your essay"*** (NE), ***"I mean conclusion should have***

		some sort of improvement" (L)**.**
g. Suggestion for change	Usually expressed via the performative "I suggest that ..." or such structures as "you can", "you could", "it would be better if" or "why don't you" etc.	***"I think if you make a full stop in here the ah (.) this sentence is clear is clear"*** (L), ***"It could have been better to put a comma (.) so ah ((laugh))"*** (NE),
h. Expression of uncertainty	Utterances expressing S's uncertainty to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness of H's choice, etc.	***"Are there several paragraphs ah not sure about the paragraphs"*** (NE).
i. Asking / presupposing	Rhetorical questions to raise H's awareness of the inappropriateness of H's choice, etc.	***"Did you read your writing again after you finish it?"*** (L).
j. Other hints	Including other kinds of hints that did not belong to (h) and (i). May include sarcasm.	***"I prefer a writing style which are not too personal"*** (L)**.**

3.4.2.1.2. Criticism responses

In the present study, a criticism response is defined as a verbalized reaction to the criticism given. Table 3.13 presents the coding scheme to categorize criticism responses, adapted from Higara and Turner (1996). The following symbols are used: L = Learner, NE = English native speaker, NV = Vietnamese native speaker.

Table 3.13: Categorization of criticism response strategies and formulas

Type	Examples
1. Total acceptance:	
a. Agreement	"***Yeah, that's right***" (NE), "***yeah I haven't paragraphed it***" (L).
b. Offer of repair	"***I won't do that next time"*** (L), "***I'll pay attention to it***" (L), "***I'll make it more simple***" (L).
c. Seeking help	"***How would you change if you were me?***" (L), "***What is the best way to reorganize?***" (L), "***Can you give me some advice?"*** (L), "***What you would have done differently?***" (NE)
d. Admission of difficulty	"***I didn't know what to write then"*** (NE), "***I've never been good at that***" (NE).
e. Explanation	***"I was just trying to make it to the word limit. I had written all I had wanted to say, yet still hadn't reached the word limit. So I had to add in words to make up for it***" (NE).
f. Complimenting	***"You know when I talk about my ah my own writing I think we should be ah (.) I should have used some kind of opposing ideas, that is in the case because I can LEARN this from your ah your writing" (L).***

2. Partial acceptance:	
a. Agreement with one part & disagreement with another	***"I think sometimes my essay lacks linking words but as a whole my essay is coherent"*** (L)**.**
b. Offer of alternatives to the critic's suggestions	***"But I think I should use general examples, not specific examples"*** (L)**.**
3. Total resistance:	
a. Disagreement	"***Well, regarding this point, I don't think adding something about my own experience would really increase the value of my argument***" (NE), "***I think I used enough and relevant linking words***" (L).
b. Return of criticism	***"As we talk about structures I also want to say that you used only "That" structure. That, that, that, that all the time"*** (NV)**.**
c. Justification	***"I thought that putting in those points were relevant as they explained my argument further"*** (NE)**.**
d. Seeking evidence	"***Could you point out where?***" (L), "***In what way did I wander off track?***" (NE)
e. Opting out	***Anything else?***

3.4.2.1.3. Modifiers

When delivering criticisms and criticism responses, the participants employed the following modifiers to show respect to their interlocutors' face. These modifiers were categorized according to their relative locations within the criticisms and criticism responses. The coding categories presented in Table 3.14 were adapted from House and Kasper (1981).

Table 3.14: Categorization of modifiers

Type	Characteristics	Examples
1. External:	The supportive moves before or after the head acts.	
a. Steers	Utterances that S used to lead H onto the issue he or she was going to raise.	"***I read your essay and here are some my own ideas of this***" (L), "***Ah I have some comments about your writing"*** (L).
b. Sweeteners	Compliments or positive remarks paid to H either before or after a criticism to compensate for the offensive act. (It is acknowledged that an alternative term to "sweeteners" is "positive remarks".	***"There are quite good relevant ideas that you presented (.) ah but .."*** (NE).

	However, this term is not used in the present study because the present study does not focus on giving feedback on positive aspects).	
c. Disarmers	Utterances that S used to show his or her awareness of the potential offence that his or her speech might cause H.	***"You had a few spelling mistakes (.) but I think that's because you're writing too quickly, (.) nothing too major."*** (NE).
d. Grounders	The reasons given by S to justify his or her intent.	***"I think "is" is better than "are" there because traffic (.2) ah single?"*** (NE).
2. Internal:	Part of the criticism and criticism response.	
a. Syntactic:	Syntactic devices to tone down the effects of the offensive act	
- Past tense	With present time reference.	***I thought you missed out something.***
-Interrogative		***Should we change a little for its clearness?***
-Modal	All structures showing possibility.	***May, could, would***
b. Lexical / phrasal:		
-Hedges	Adverbials	***Sort of, kind of***
-Understaters	Adverbial modifiers	***Quite, a (little) bit***
-Downtoners	Sentence modifiers	***Maybe, possible, probably***
- Subjectivizers		***I think, I feel, in my opinion***
-Consultative	Usually ritualized	***Do you think? Do you agree?***
-Cajolers		***I mean, you see, you know***
-Appealers		***Okay? Right? Yeah?***

Table 3.15: Coding categories of the interview data

Sources of influence	Type of comments included	Key word / phrase search	Example
1. L2 pragmatic knowledge:	All comments related to L's understanding of the L2 culture and knowledge of how to perform speech acts in the L2.		
-Considerations of politeness	All references to 'politeness'.	'polite', 'soft', 'friendly', 'appropriate', 'acceptable', 'face-saving', 'avoid hurting', etc.	***"When criticizing or giving feedback to someone we need to choose 'soft' language to avoid hurting him or her".***
-Perceptions of the L2 culture	All references to the L2 culture.	'Westerners', 'the Australians', 'the NS', 'Western cultures', etc.	***"I think NSs usually express their ideas directly."***
-Need for explicitness	All comments on the pragmatic need to express opinions explicitly.	'defend my opinion', 'emphasize my opinion', 'make H see his/ her errors', 'truly argue', etc.	***"I need to make him see his errors and understand that this is the rules"***.
-Generalization	All mentions of the generalization of a particular language use from the previously acquired knowledge (L1 or universal knowledge).	'generalize'	***"I have learned the verb "agree" so when I want to express my disagreement I just say "I don't agree."***
2. L1 influence:	All comments related to the L1.		
- Translation and transfer	All reports on 'transferring' and 'translating' from the L1.	'translate', 'transfer', 'influenced byL1', 'the Vietnamese NS', etc.	***"I was influenced by the Vietnamese argumentative style."***
-Perception of L1-L2 similarity	All comments on the similarity between an L1 and L2 structure.	'equivalent', 'similar', 'corresponding', etc.	***"I think they*** (i.e. "should" and "***nên***") ***are similar. They are both sort of polite and friendly".***

Table 3.15 (continued)

Sources of influence	Type of comments included	Key word / phrase search	Example
3.Processing difficulties:	All comments related to processing issues such as processing difficulties, focus of attention, etc.		
-Automatization	All mentions of automatic use of a particular L2 form despite intentions.	'automatic use', 'not intended', 'slip of the tongue', 'not planned', etc.	***"I don't know why I just said it automatically. It's sort of "a slip of tongue".*** *"**When I speak English I'm not selective. I just use whatever word that comes along".***
-Focus on message content	All mentions of focus on message conveyance rather than modality.	'try to get my message across', 'try to convey my idea', 'precise', 'accurate', etc.	***"I did not think much about other people's feeling, (…) then I was only trying to get my message across".***
4. Learning experience:	All comments related to the source of the received L2 pragmatic input.		
-Textbooks	All mentions of textbooks as a source of information about a particular language use.	'textbooks', 'grammar books', etc.	*"**I read in the grammar book that "Must" expresses rules and obligation".***
-Instruction	All mentions of instruction as a source of information about a particular language use.	'teacher said', 'was taught', etc.	*"**My English teachers said that when giving advice we should use such a "soft" structure as "Should".***
-Teacher-talk	All comments on teachers' discourse as a model.	'teacher also used that word', etc.	***"When correcting my essay, my teacher also said "It should" or "There should be".***
-Peers	All mentions of learning a particular L2 use from classmates.	'classmates also used that word', etc.	***"The structures of this kind (I have heard many times. Like my classmates usually use them".***
-Media	All mentions of Western TV programs or movies as a source of information about L2 culture.	'Western movies', 'TV programs', etc.	*"**I knew it from Western movies, yes they*** (i.e. Westerners) ***are very direct".***

3.4.2.2. The retrospective interview

The interview data were coded by the researcher and one of her research assistants. The coding categories which they used were developed from the pilot study interview data and then fine-tuned and modified to fit the fresh data. In order to develop these categories, the transcription of the data was first read throughout to identify the episodes in which the learners commented on their choice of language for criticism and criticism response realizations. Recurrent themes of sources of influence on the learners' language use that emerged across different episodes were then identified and grouped together according to their commonality. The same procedures were repeated for the data of the present study (see Appendix 9). As a result, a total of four umbrella themes were identified: L2 pragmatic knowledge, L1 influence, processing ability and learning experience. These four themes included several sub-themes. In order to check the reliability of this coding, the agreement rate between the researcher and her assistant was calculated. An agreement rate of 92% was achieved.

The coding categories are presented in Table 3.15. The examples were originally in Vietnamese and the following examples are their English translations. Note that there was an overlap between different influences. Sometimes the learners reported on two or more influences for one instance of language use. In such cases, these influences were counted separately. For example, in the report "(1) ***I have never been taught how to express disagreement but I learned the verb "agree" and "disagree". So when I wanted to express my disagreement I just said "I don't agree".*** (2) ***And my friends also said the same way",*** two influences were counted: overgeneralization (1) and influence from peers (2).

3.4.3. Analytical procedures

The present study involved both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. The quantitative analysis was employed for the RP and WQ data (i.e. data on criticisms and criticism responses). The qualitative analysis was employed for the interview data. For the quantitative analysis, significant differences in means between different groups were tested by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 for Windows. For the qualitative analysis, only descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency counts were calculated.

3.4.3.1. Criticisms and criticism responses.

First, the raw frequency counts of each type of criticism and criticism response strategies, formulas, and modifiers were tallied for each group of participants. Then, in order to calculate the average number of strategies, formulas, and modifiers of each type produced by each group, the number of strategies, formulas, and modifies of each type was first calculated for each participant in the group. This was done by dividing the number of each participant's strategies, formulas, and modifiers of each type by the total number of strategies, formulas, and modifiers that he or she produced. Then, the outcomes for each participant were entered into an SPSS spreadsheet. After the outcomes for all participants in each group had been entered, calculations of means and standard deviations were made for the group. Comparisons between different groups of participants were made based on these two parameters.

Different statistical procedures were employed in this study depending on (1) how many groups were involved in each comparison and (2) whether the data to be compared for each group were normally distributed or not. To explore the second

condition, normality tests were conducted in SPSS. If the tests produced a ***p*** value higher than .05, the data were considered to be normally distributed.

For a comparison of the performance of the same group of participants on two different occasions (e.g. in the role play and the questionnaire), Paired Samples ***T*** tests and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests were employed. The former was used for normally distributed data and the latter was used in the other case. For a comparison of two different groups of participants, Independent Samples ***T*** tests were employed in cases where data were normally distributed and Mann Whitney U tests were employed when data were not normally distributed. To guard against Type A errors, where multiple ***t*** tests or Wilcoxon and U tests were run, a Bonferroni adjustment was also employed. For a comparison of three or more different groups, one-way ANOVAs and Kruskal-Wallis tests were employed. The former was used for normally distributed data and the latter was used in the other case. Where a significant difference was found, LSD ***post hoc*** and manual ***post hoc*** calculations were also made, respectively (see Table 3.16).

Table 3.16: Summary of the use of different statistical analyses

Type of tests	Type of comparisons	Example	Type of data
Paired Samples T	Same group, 2 occasions	RP (n =47) vs. WQ (n =47)	Normality
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank	Same group, 2 occasions	As above	Lack of normality
Independent Samples T	2 groups	Learners (n =36) vs. Aus L1 (n = 12)	Normality
Mann-Whitney U	2 groups	As above	Lack of normality
One-way ANOVA	3 or more groups	Learners (n =36) vs. Aus L1 (n=12) vs. Viet L1 (n =12) High begin vs. Inter vs. Adv (vs. Aus L1 vs. Viet L1) (n =12 for each group)	Normality
Kruskal-Wallis	3 or more groups	As above	Lack of normality

3.4.3.2. The retrospective interview

Two analyses were conducted for the interview data: analysis of the learners as a whole group and analysis of the learners by proficiency groups. For the first analysis, the total number of instances in which each sub-theme (influence) was mentioned by the whole group of learners was counted. The total number of learners who mentioned it was also calculated. For the second analysis, the total number of instances in which each sub-theme was mentioned by different proficiency groups was counted. It was also noted which learner mentioned which sub-theme in each proficiency group.

3.5. SUMMARY

This chapter reported the methodology employed in the current thesis study in terms of general methods, participants and sampling, data collection procedures and data analysis. Firstly, a critical review of the methodologies used in relevant studies was provided. The design of the current study was grounded in the findings of this review. The pilot study, which aimed at validating the instruments to be used in the main study, was then fully reported with respect to its methodology and findings. Based on its findings, relevant adaptations to the data collection procedures and instrumentation of the main study were proposed. As regards the main study, a detailed discussion of the operational notions of the two speech acts under consideration was provided in order to establish common understanding of the terms. Sampling and instrumentation were also described in great detail. Finally, the coding schemes employed for data analysis were described and illustrated with examples and statistical procedures were explained.

CHAPTER 4:

A COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS

FOR TWO DATA ELICITATION INSTRUMENTS

As reviewed in Chapter 3, previous studies have consistently shown that different types of speech act data elicitation instruments influence the language produced by research participants. The present study employed two data elicitation tasks, namely the open role play and the production written questionnaire. For the role play, participants were required to write a 250-word argumentative essay on the benefits of public as opposed to private transportation. They were then randomly arranged into dyads to conduct a peer-feedback task in which they took turns giving feedback to each other on the essays they wrote. This peer-feedback task provided the dyads with various prompt questions regarding three aspects of an academic essay: (a) organizational structure; (b) arguments, ideas, evidence; and (c) grammar, vocabulary, and presentation. The peer-feedback conversations were tape-recorded with the dyads' knowledge. For the production questionnaire, the participants were required to give written responses to four criticizing and four responding to criticism situations. These situations were made as comparable to the peer-feedback task as possible: they were designed based on the peer-feedback conversation data from the pilot study and also concentrated on the three above-mentioned aspects of academic writing (see Chapter 3 for more details).

The aim of the present chapter is to compare the data elicited by the role play and the written questionnaire with respect to: (1) the differences and similarities in the nature of the criticisms and criticism responses that each instrument generated and (2) their

potential to shed light on the learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge of these two speech acts. Based on this comparison, a decision was made as to how to use each type of data to address the research questions of the current study.

4.1. RESULTS

With regard to aim (1) (see above), this section compares criticisms and criticism responses elicited via the role play and the written questionnaire with respect to: (a) the amount of talk, (b) the range and (c) distribution of strategies and (d) formulas for realizing these two speech acts, (e) the frequencies with which they were modified, and finally (f) their actual wordings. With regard to aim (2), it specifically compares criticisms and criticism responses produced by the learners in the two tasks in terms of (a) the distribution of strategies and formulas for realizing these two speech acts, (b) the frequencies with which these two speech acts were modified, and (c) their actual wordings.

The comparisons were tested statistically by Paired Samples ***T*** Tests and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests. The latter test is similar to the former but is used when the data are not normally distributed. To guard against Type A errors, the Bonferroni corrected significant level was reset at .0015. Only significant differences are presented in the current section. Other comparisons which show no significant differences are included in Appendix 7. The number of participants in the comparison was 47 (13 withdrew after the role play), in which 26 were learners, 11 were Australian NSs, and 10 were Vietnamese L1 participants.

4.1.1. Amount of talk

The amount of talk was measured in terms of the number of words per criticism and criticism response produced by all the participants as a whole group. Figure 4.1 indicates that for both criticisms and criticism responses, the number of words elicited via the role play far exceeded that number produced by the same participants in the written questionnaire. Indeed, as can be seen from Table 4.1, on average, the role play generated 110.8 words per criticism and 51.9 words per criticism response, compared to 22.5 and 17.2 for the written questionnaire (***p*= .**001).

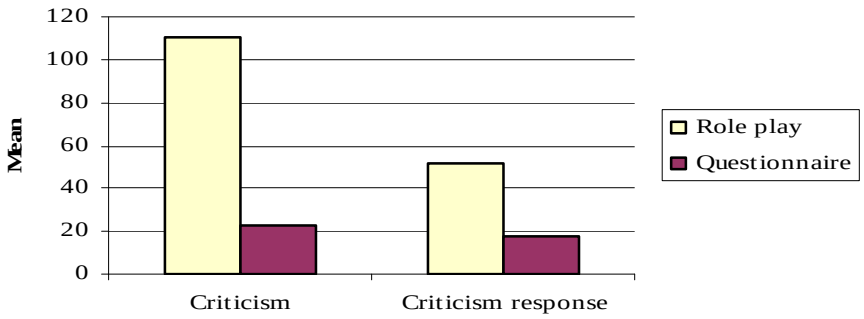


Figure 4.1: Mean number of words per criticism and criticism response elicited via the role play and the written questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the amount of talk between the role play and the written questionnaire

Task	Role play *(N =47)*			Questionnaire *(N =47)*			***Z***	***P***
Speech act	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Criticism	26,584 / 265	110.8	50.8	2,661 / 188	22.5	13.8	5.905	.001
Criticism response	11,855 / 262	51.9	49.2	3,221 / 188	17.2	10.0	3.993	.001

The greater number of words in the role play can be explained by the greater number of formulas per criticism and criticism response and other linguistic features specific to spoken discourse such as repetition and back-channeling (Figure 4.2). Indeed, the role play elicited twice as many criticism formulas (CFs) and criticism response formulas (CRFs) as the written questionnaire (CFs: M= 3.0 for the role play and M =1.6 for the questionnaire, Z = 4.951 at ***p*****=** .001; CRFs: M= 2.8 for the role play and M= 1.4 for the questionnaire, Z= 5.175 at ***p***= .001).

It also produced strikingly more repetitions and back-channeling for both criticisms and criticism responses than the questionnaire (repetition in criticisms: M= .89 for the role play as compared with M= .006 for the questionnaire, Z= 5.943 at ***p***= .001; repetition in criticism responses: M= .76 for the role play as compared with M= .01 for the questionnaire, Z= 5.511 at ***p***= .001; back-channeling in criticisms: M= 1.8 for the role play vs. M= .007 for the questionnaire, Z= 5.969 at ***p*****=**.001; back-channeling in criticism responses: M= 1.1 for the role play vs. M= .05 for the questionnaire, Z= 5.754 at ***p***= .001) (Table 4.2).

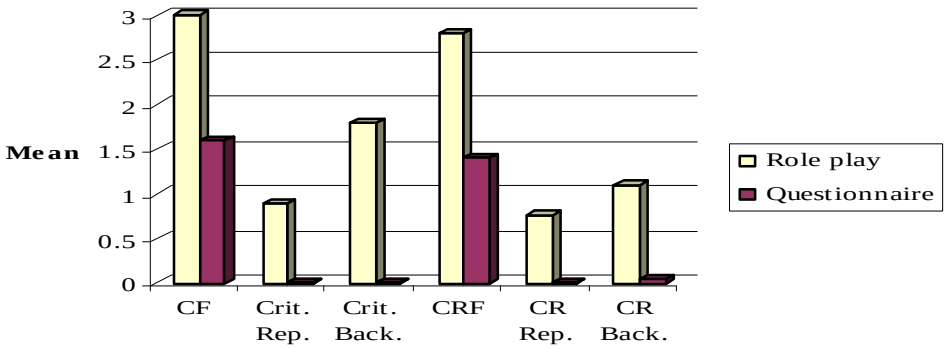


Figure 4.2: Mean number of formulas, repetitions, and back-channeling instances in criticisms and criticism responses elicited via the role play and the written questionnaire.

Table 4.2: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of formulas, repetitions, and back-channeling instances per criticism and criticism response between the role play and the questionnaire

	Task	Role play (*N =47)*			Questionnaire *(N =47)*			***Z***	***P***
Speech act		***F***	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
CRIT	CF	792 / 265	3.0	1.1	308 / 188	1.6	.68	4.951	.001
	Repetition	678 / 792	.89	.46	3 / 308	.006	.03	5.943	.001
	Back-channeling	1,144 / 792	1.8	1.2	2 / 308	.007	.04	5.969	.001
CR	CRF	700 / 262	2.8	1.4	282 / 188	1.4	.42	5.175	.001
	Repetition	478 / 700	.76	.80	3 / 282	.01	.03	5.511	.001
	Back-channeling	753 / 700	1.1	1.2	18 / 282	.05	.11	5.754	.001

Consider the following example of the criticisms produced by the same learner in the role play and written questionnaire about the conclusion of her peer's essay. In the role play she produced a total of ten CFs (underlined), 20 repetitions of vocabulary (boxed), 7 repetitions of ideas (CFs 2, 5, 6, and 7 expressed the same idea that the interlocutor did not mention her own opinion in the conclusion; CFs 8, 9, and 10 expressed the same idea that there should have been one more sentence to express the writer's own viewpoint), and 35 cases of back-channeling (in bold). Meanwhile, in the questionnaire she produced only one CF and no repetitions or back-channeling.

Role play:

"first I like to- I would like to talk to you about your organization - your essay organization (.) yes (.) I think that it is a clear organizational structure. ah it has 3 parts: introduction part, uh body and the con -conclusion, and the introduction is clear it's ah and brief (.) it also indicates indicates the main idea that (.) hmm (.) that our topic travel hmm people travel to the city to work each day should hmm should or shouldn't use only public transport. (1) ***and but hmm I don't think your conclusion is good***

(.) (2) *because in your conclusion you not mention hmm you didn't mention your opinion ((paper turning sound))* (3) *there are hmm (.) you expla- you mention ah some some new ideas that can develop as ah as a part of your body, for example the reduce greenhouse effects, air pollution level, traffic volume* (4) *but hmm I think you can link it in ah at the end of uh the first part of your body* (5) *but from your conclusion (.) I can't find out whether or not people should ah whether or not people should use ONLY public transport* (6) *because only (.) there are ONLY ideas not ah (.) you (.) ah you didn't conclude [A:NYthing* = (7) *because you ah you you wrote that they ah reduce the greenhouse effects and so on but (.) later on ah there's N:Othing* (8) *so I think you should add one more sentence that ah (.) people should ah (.) should use public transport and other and other kinds of ah (.) means of transportation ah* (9) *it should ah it should be have ah it should have another ah another sentence that ah that express your (.) that idea* (10) *yes and I think that in every kind of ah (.) every kind of an essay for example argument or ah dis- or (.) discussion essay ah (.) the writer should ah should express their own ideas (.2) es- I think especially in ah (.) in the conclusion"*

Written questionnaire:

"*Your essay is well-done, however, I think the conclusion is quite difficult for me to follow"*

Consider another example in which a learner criticized the lack of cohesive devices in his friend's essay. In the role play he produced a total of four CFs as opposed to one in the written questionnaire. He also produced 3 repetitions of vocabulary, one repetition of ideas (CFs 1 and 4 expressed the same suggestion), and 8 cases of back-channeling as opposed to none in the written questionnaire:

Role play:

"(1) ***(.) in the first part of the body (.) you ah say give ah lot of ideas and also give a lot of facts but (.) I wonder if it's better to use more (.) I mean transitional signals uh more cohesive devices*** (2) ***that will make your writing more COh:Esive and therefore coH:Erence will be better (.)*** (3) ***hmm here you don't use a lot of ah (.) the connectives between the sentences yeah?*** (4) ***but if I were you I would give more ah I would say use more connectives more transitional signals in the first part of the body yes"***

Written questionnaire:

"***I understand what you say in this essay and the ideas are convincing but I would make them more cohesive by using some more linking words, you agree?"***

4.1.2. Range of criticism and criticism strategies and formulas

4.1.2.1 Criticism strategies and formulas

The role play and the questionnaire data were found to contain the same range of criticism strategies (CSs) (direct and indirect) but not necessarily the same range of CFs. Generally, the role play tended to generate a wider range of CFs than the written questionnaire.

For instance, as shown in Table 4.3, there was a total of 15 CFs for the role play and only 12 for the written questionnaire. The CFs that the latter method did not elicit included "expression of disapproval", "expression of disagreement" (under the category of direct criticisms), "correction", and "expression of uncertainty" (under the category of indirect criticisms). The CF that occurred only in the written questionnaire data was "preaching". The 11 CFs shared by the two methods were "identification of

problem", "statement of difficulty in understanding", "statement of consequences" (belonging within the category of direct strategies), "indicating standard", "demand", "advice", "suggestion", "request", "asking/ presupposing", "expression of uncertainty", and "other kinds of hints" (under the category of indirect strategies).

Table 4.3: Range of CFs elicited in the two tasks

	CFs	Role play	Questionnaire
Direct criticisms	Negative evaluation	√	√
	Expression of disapproval	√	X
	Identification of problem	√	√
	Expression of disagreement	√	X
	Statement of difficulty	√	√
	Statement of consequences	√	√
	Correction	√	X
Indirect criticisms	Indicating standard	√	√
	Demand for change	√	√
	Advice for change	√	√
	Suggestion for change	√	√
	Request for change	√	√
	Preaching	X	√
	Asking/presupposing	√	√
	Expression of uncertainty	√	X
	Other hints	√	√

4.1.2.2. Criticism response strategies and formulas

The two different methods produced the same range of criticism response strategies (CRSs) ("total acceptance of criticism", "partial acceptance of criticism", and "total resistance to criticism") but not the same range of CRFs.

Table 4.4 also shows that while 13 CRFs were found in the role play data, only 10 were found in the questionnaire data. The three missing CRFs were "complimenting the critic" (under the category of "total acceptance of criticism), "return of criticism", and "opting out" (under the category of "total resistance to criticism"). The 10 CRFs shared by the two methods included "agreement with criticism", "admission of difficulty",

"explanation", "seeking help", "offer of repair" (under the category of "total acceptance of criticism"), "agreement with one part and disagreement with another part of the criticism", "giving alternatives to the critic's suggestion" (under the category of "partial acceptance of criticism"), "disagreement with criticism", "justification", and "seeking evidence" (under the category of "total resistance to criticism").

Table 4.4: Range of CRFs elicited via the role play and the written questionnaire

CRF	Role play	Questionnaire
Total acceptance with criticism:		
Agreement with criticism	√	√
Admission of difficulty	√	√
Explanation	√	√
Seeking help	√	√
Offer of repair	√	√
Complimenting	√	X
Partial acceptance with criticism:		
Partial agreement	√	√
Alternatives to suggestions	√	√
Total resistance to criticism:		
Disagreement with criticism	√	√
Justification	√	√
Return of criticisms	√	X
Seeking evidence	√	√
Opting out	√	X

4.1.3. Distribution of criticism and criticism response strategies

4.1.3.1. Criticism strategies

No significant difference was found in the distribution of CSs in the two sets of data ($p > .001$, see Table 4.5 in Appendix 7). The ratio between the respective means of direct and indirect criticisms found in the role play data was .63/.37. The corresponding ratio for the questionnaire data was .53/.46, fairly close to that of the role play data (see Figure 4.3).

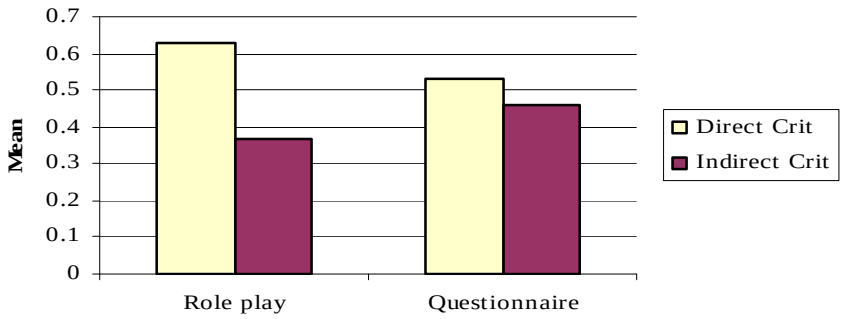


Figure 4.3: Ratio between direct and indirect criticisms in the two data sets

4.1.3.2. Criticism response strategies

Also, no significant difference was found in the distribution of the two main CRSs, namely "total acceptance of criticism" and "total resistance to criticism" in the role play and written questionnaire data (***p***> .0015, see Table 4.6 in Appendix 7). On average, the role play produced .63 for the strategy of "total acceptance of criticism" and .31 for strategy of "total resistance to criticisms" per criticism response. The questionnaire produced very similar means of .59 and .36 (see Figure 4.4):

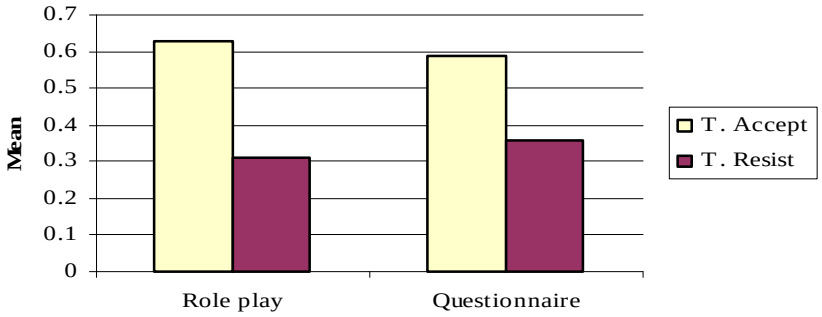


Figure 4.4: Ratio between strategies of "total acceptance of criticism" and "total resistance to criticism" in two data sets

4.1.4. Distribution of criticism and criticism response formulas

4.1.4.1. Criticism formulas

Five major CFs ("identification of problem", "expression of disagreement", "demand for change", "advice about change", and "suggestion for change") were compared in terms of their frequencies of use by the same participants in the two tasks. Significant differences were only found for "expression of disagreement", "identification of problem" and "advice". As can be seen from Figure 4.5, the role play elicited more "expressions of disagreement" and "identifications of problem", whereas the questionnaire elicited more cases of "advice".

The means of these three CFs for the role play and the questionnaire are shown in Table 4.7. The role play produced a mean of .08 for "expressions of disagreement" whereas the questionnaire produced a mean of zero (Z= 4.110 at ***p*** =.001). Likewise, the mean for "identifications of problem" found in the role play data was almost one and a half times greater than that in the written questionnaire (M =.43 for the former as compared with M= .29 for the latter, Z= 3.303 at ***p=*** .001). In contrast, the mean for "advice" found in the role play data was barely one third of that of the written questionnaire (M= .06 for the role play as compared with M= .16 for the questionnaire, Z= 3.177 at ***p***= .001).

Of the remaining CFs, "suggestion" was not found to be used with significantly different frequencies in the two tasks due to the alpha required by the Bonferroni correction (see Table 4.8 in Appendix 7). However, the mean for this CF in the questionnaire was in fact almost twice as great as that in the role play (M = .20, SD = .20 for the questionnaire compared to M = .11, SD =.12 for the role play, Z =2.405 at ***p*** =.016) (Figure 4.6).

Consider the following examples of the criticisms given by the same participants in similar role play and questionnaire situations, where they switched from "identification of problem" in the role play to "advice" (examples 1 and 2) or "suggestion" (example 3) in the questionnaire. In examples 1 and 3, the participants criticized the lack of connective devices in their peer's essays. In example 2, the participant criticized the lack of development of ideas in her peer's essay.

(1) Role play: "***(.3) yes another thing I ah another thing I think you are lack of linking words yes linking words. I didn't see ANY linking words in your essay didn't find any linking words."***

Written questionnaire: "***You should use linking words more."*** (L)

(2) Role play: "***hmm I felt you didn't really (.3) list a lot of positives (.) about public transport hmm (.2) but in the end y:OU (.4) stated (.) <WHY (.) you didn't (.) hmm agree with the (.) hmm statement given.>"***

Written questionnaire: "***I would advise that you jot down some bullet points about what you will write about before you do your essay. this way you know what you are going to write and that you won't go off the track."*** (NS)

(3) Role play: "***I don't think that you have some transitional sentences in your writing."***

Written questionnaire: "***The essay would have more cohesion if there were linking words."*** (L)

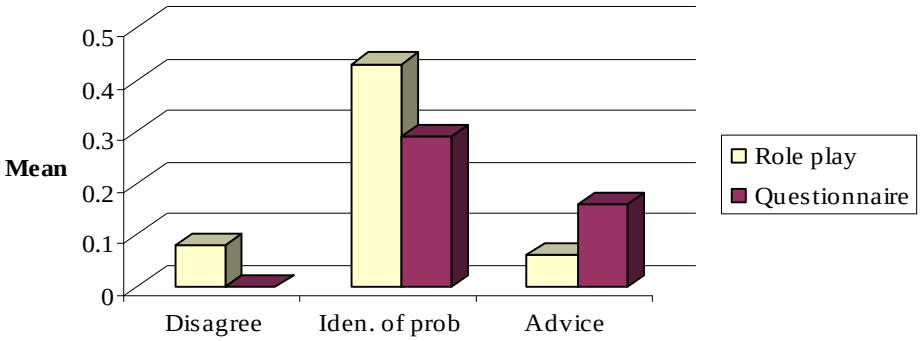


Figure 4.5: Mean number of "disagreements", "identifications of problem" and "advice" in the role play and the questionnaire

Table 4.7: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of "identifications of problem" and "advice" between the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CF	Role play *(N = 47)*			Questionnaire *(N = 47)*			Z	*P*
	f	*M*	*SD*	*f*	*M*	*SD*		
Disagreement	68 / 792	.08	.16	0 / 308	.00	.00	4.110	.001
Iden. of problem	537 / 792	.43	.23	96 / 308	.29	.23	3.303	.001
Advice	59 / 792	.06	.08	50 / 308	.16	.17	3.177	.001

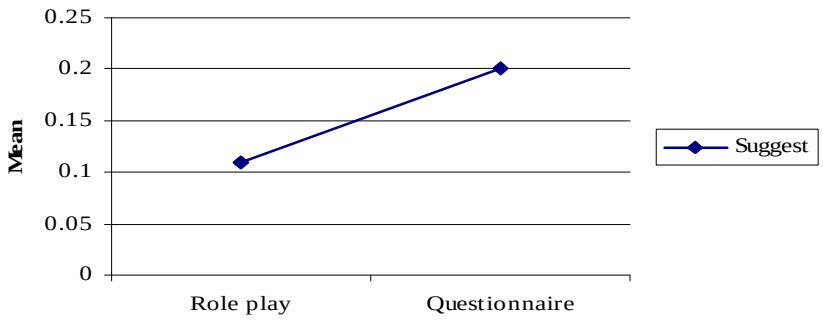


Figure 4.6: Mean number of "suggestions" in the role play and the questionnaire

4.1.4.2. Criticism response formulas:

Six major CRFs (including "agreement with criticism", "explanation", "seeking help", "offer of repair" "disagreement with criticism", and "justification") were compared with regard to how frequently they were used by the same participant in the role play and the questionnaire. Significant differences were only found for three of them, namely "agreement with criticism", "seeking help", and "offer of repair". Except in the case of "agreement with criticism", the CRFs were produced far more frequently in the questionnaire than the role play (see Figure 4.7).

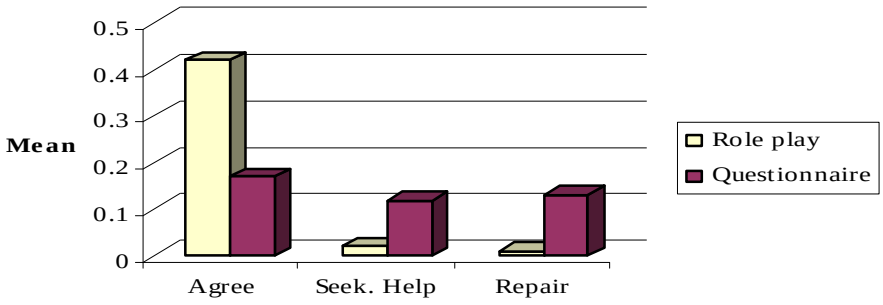


Figure 4.7: Mean number of CRFs "agreements with criticism", "seeking help", and "offers of repair" in the role play and the questionnaire data

Table 4.9 demonstrates the means of the above three CRFs and the results of the Wilcoxon tests. As can be seen, while the number of "agreements" produced in the questionnaire was markedly lower than in the role play (M= .49 for the role play vs. M= .17 for the questionnaire, Z= 4.346 at ***p***= .001), "seeking help" and "offer of repair" increased considerably ("seeking help": M= .02 for the role play and M= .12 for the questionnaire, Z= 3.303 at ***p***= .001; "offer of repair": M= .01 for the role play vs. M= .13 for the questionnaire. Z= 4.003 at ***p***= .001).

Table 4.9: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in mean number of the CRFs "agreements with criticism", "seeking help", and "offers of repair" between the role play and questionnaire data

CRF \ Task	Role play (*N = 47*)			Questionnaire (*N = 47*)			Z	***P***
	f	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
Agreement	260 / 700	.42	.31	58 / 282	.17	.18	4.386	.001
Seeking help	27 / 700	.02	.05	34 / 282	.12	.18	3.323	.001
Offer of repair	11 / 700	.01	.07	37 / 282	.13	.18	4.003	.001

For the remaining types of CRFs, "justification" was found not to be employed with significantly different frequencies in the two tasks due to the alpha required for Bonferroni correction (see Table 4.10 in Appendix 7). However, the mean found for this CRF in the questionnaire was in fact only half as high as that in the role play (M =.11, SD =.19 for the questionnaire as opposed to M =.24, SD = .23 for the role play, Z =2.562 at ***p*** =.010) (see Figure 4.8).

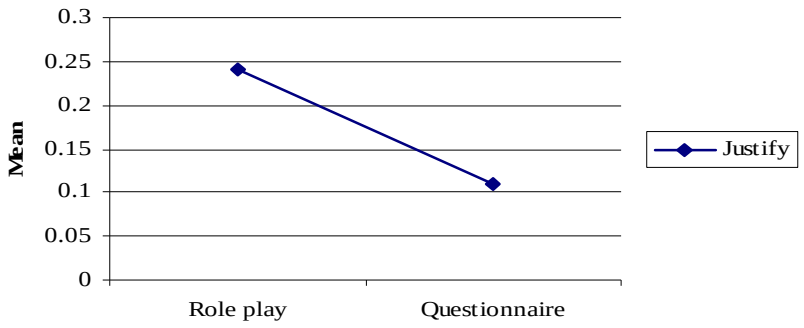


Figure 4.8: Mean number of "justifications" in the role play and the questionnaire

The following examples illustrate the switch from "agreement" or "justification" to "seeking help" or "offer of repair" by the participants when they moved from a role play situation to a similar written questionnaire situation. In examples 1 and 3, the

learners were criticized for the lack of organization of ideas in their essays. In example 2, the participant was criticized for not supporting his essays with relevant examples.

(1) Role play: "***Yeah"*** (agreement)

Written questionnaire: "***I will think of it to find a better structure for my essay"*** (offer of repair) (L)

(2) Role play: "***Ya well when I was reading yours I thought oh gees I didn't mention any of these"*** (agreement)

Written questionnaire: "***Yes I see what you are saying. What do you think would be some appropriate examples?"*** (seeking help) (NS)

(3) Role play: "***No, I don't repeat my ideas. Ah this is ah the ah this is the conclusion of the body paragraph (.) and this is the conclusion of the essay"*** (justification)

Written questionnaire: "***How can we make it better?"*** (seeking help) (L)

4.1.5. Frequencies of occurrence of modifiers

The frequencies with which various criticism and criticism response modifiers were used by the same participant in the two tasks were compared by means of Wilcoxon tests. A significant difference was found for criticism modifiers (Z= 4.741, ***p*= .**001, see Table 4.11) but not for criticism response modifiers (Z= .328, ***p*> .**001) (see Table 4.12 in Appendix 7). The mean number of modifiers per CF in the role play was 2.1, almost twice as high as the number in the written questionnaire (M= 1.1). Meanwhile, the mean number of modifiers per CRF in the role play was .51, more or less the same as in the written questionnaire (M = .48) (see Figure 4.9).

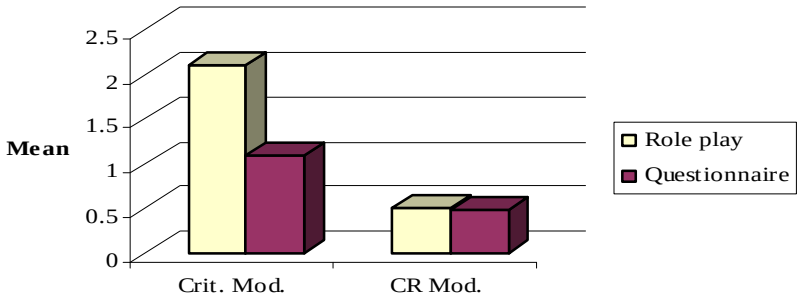


Figure 4.9: Mean number of modifiers per CF and CRF in the role play and written questionnaire

Table 4.11: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of criticism modifiers and criticism external modifiers between the role play and written questionnaire

CF / Task	Role play (N = 47)			Questionnaire (N = 47)			Z	P
	F	M	SD	f	M	SD		
Criticism Modifiers	1,344 / 792	2.1	1.4	365 / 308	1.1	.91	4.741	.001
Criticism External Modifiers	555 / 792	.94	.85	48 / 308	.15	.24	5.698	.001

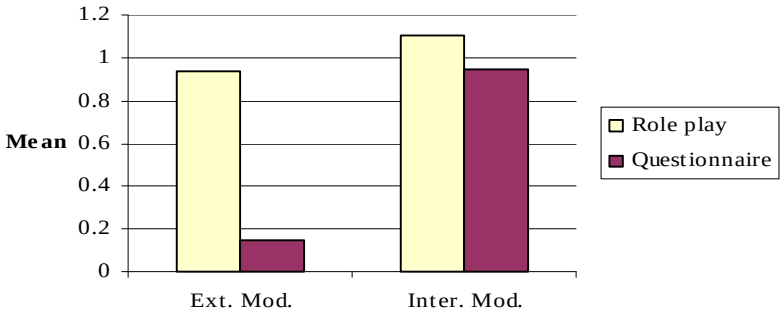


Figure 4.10: Mean number of external and internal modifiers per CF in the role play and written questionnaire

The higher mean for criticism modifiers in the role play was due almost entirely to the higher mean of external modifiers. Indeed, the role play produced a mean of .94 external modifier per CF, six times as high as the mean of .15 for the questionnaire (Z= 5.698, ***p***= .001). In contrast, it produced an average of 1.1 internal modifiers per CF, almost equal to the mean of .95 internal modifiers for the written questionnaire (Z= 1.794, ***p*** =.073) (see Figure 4.10 and Table 4.11).

4.1.6. Actual wording

4.1.6.1. Criticism realizations

Even when the participants used the same CSs or CFs in both elicitation tasks, the actual wording that they produced in each task was very different. An example is the use of “suggestions” by the high beginners. In the questionnaire they no longer predominantly drew on "***can***" to linguistically realize “suggestions” as in the role play. On the contrary, they made use of various linguistic structures such as "conditional clauses with or without modal" (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: “Suggestions” used by high beginners in the questionnaire and the role play

Suggestions by frequency counts	High beginners	
	Q	***RP***
Can	3	13
Why don’t you	1	0
Infinitive + modal	0	1
Conditional	4	4
Conditional + modal	2	0
Others	0	4
Total	10	22

Another example is the use of the CF "advice" by the Australian participants (Table 4.14). The role play data revealed only two instances where they gave “advice” which was mitigated by means of a modal structure and past tense ("***should have done***"). In contrast, out of 12 instances of "advice" in the questionnaire, none was linguistically realized by the structure "should have done". Alternatively, two were realized by bare "performatives" (e.g. "***I advise you***", "***It's advisable that***"), four by the structure "should", four by "imperatives", and another two by other linguistic means.

Table 4.14: “Advice” used by Australian NSs in the questionnaire and the role play (by frequency count)

Advice	Australian L1	
	Q	***RP***
Performatives	2	0
Should (not)	4	0
Should’ve (not)	0	2
Imperatives	4	0
Others	2	0
Total	12	2

4.1.6.2. Criticism response realizations

Again, the role play and the questionnaire produced different wording for the same CRFs. Compare the "offers of repair" by this participant in the role play and questionnaire when responding to the criticism that her essay was not well-organized: (1) "***Yes maybe I ah I think I can divide this paragraph into two paragraphs***" (role play); (2) "***Thank you. I will improve my knowledge"*** (questionnaire) (L). The first example contained more specific information (“divide this paragraph into two paragraphs” than the second (“improve my knowledge”). Consider another pair of examples of “offer of repair” that a participant gave in response to the criticism that his essay was lacking in connective devices. In these examples, the questionnaire response contained

more specific information (“put more linking words”) than the role play response (“make some change”): (3) "***I'll look at it AGAIN and make some changes if necessary"*** (role play); (4) "***I will put more linking words"*** (questionnaire) (L).

Below are other instances of wording variation by the same participants in the role play and the questionnaire. In both examples, the participants were criticized about the lack of organization of ideas in their essay:

(5) Role play: "***Yes that's what I liked about YOURS where you put it right in start = and I read it and I thought gee, I should have done that as well.***"

Questionnaire: "***I see what you mean. Now I look back, I would have done it differently. Yes, when I looked at your essay, I realized I should have structured mine better.***" (NS)

(6) Role play: "***Hmm I've never been very good at that ((laugh)) = I tend to start kind of scattered and [then = getting more scattered as I well more clear as I write I suppose.***"

Questionnaire: "***It is something I really struggle with - sometimes after having started writing, I think of a different point and before I know it I've written it in, whether it connects with what I've just said or not***".

4.1.7. Comparison of the learners’ criticisms and criticism responses in the two tasks

4.1.7.1. Distribution of criticism and criticism response strategies

No significant difference was found in the distribution of CSs and CRSs in the role play and the written questionnaire (df = 25, ***p***> .0015, see Tables 4.15 and 4.16 in Appendix 7 for more details). The two different methods elicited almost the same mean for direct criticisms (M = .56 for the role play; M =.50 for the questionnaire) and indirect criticisms (M = .43 for the role play; M = .49 for the questionnaire). They also

elicited very similar means for "total acceptance of criticism" (M = .51 for the role play; M =.57 for the questionnaire) and "total resistance to criticism" (M =.40 for each task). Figure 4.11 illustrates the distribution of direct and indirect CSs in the two tasks while Figure 4.12 illustrates the distribution of the two major CRSs "total acceptance of criticism" and "total resistance to criticism".

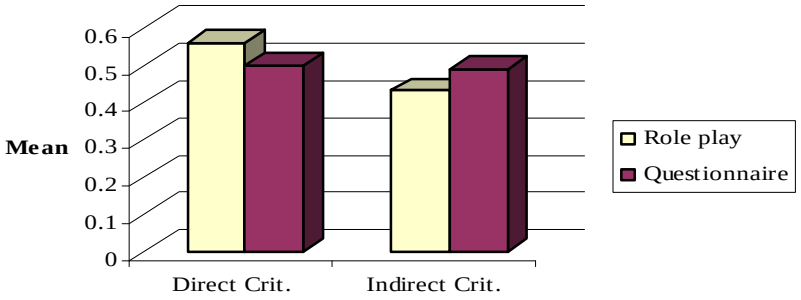


Figure 4.11: Mean number of direct and indirect criticisms produced by learners in the role play and the written questionnaire

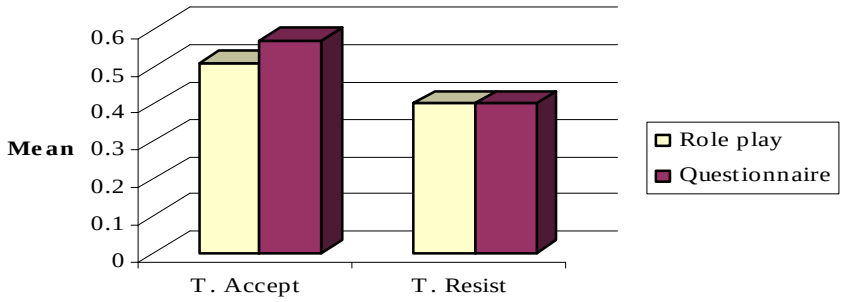


Figure 4.12: Mean number of CRSs "total acceptance" and "total resistance" produced by learners in the two data sets

4.1.7.2. Distribution of criticism and criticism response formulas

The distributions of all major CFs and CRFs produced by the learners in the two tasks were compared but significant differences were only found for one CF, namely

"expression of disagreement" and one CRF, namely "offer of repair". According to the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, the learners tended to express their disagreements more often but offer repair less often in the role play than in the questionnaire ("expression of disagreement": M=.08, SD=.09 for the role play, M=.00, SD =.00 for the questionnaire, Z=3.300 at ***p*** **=**.001; "offer of repair": M = .03, SD = .09 for the role play; M = .20, SD = .21 for the questionnaire, Z = 3.231 at ***p*** = .001).

Although the differences found for some of the remaining formulas across the two tasks were not statistically significant due to the alpha required by the Bonferroni correction (see Tables 4.17 and 4.18 in Appendix 7 for more details), these differences were in fact substantial. For example, in relation to criticism realization, the mean for "demands" found in the role play data was more than twice as high as that for the questionnaire data (role play: M =.05, SD = .06; questionnaire: M = .02, SD = .06, Z = 2.831, ***p*** = .005). On the other hand, the means of "advice" and "suggestions" found in the role play data were only half as high as the corresponding means found in the questionnaire data (advice: M = .09, SD = .09 for the role play vs. M = .21, SD = .19 for the questionnaire, Z = 2.571, ***p*** = .010; suggestion: M = .10, SD = .11 for the role play vs. M = .19, SD = .18 for the questionnaire, Z = 1.978, ***p*** = .048) (see Figure 4.13).

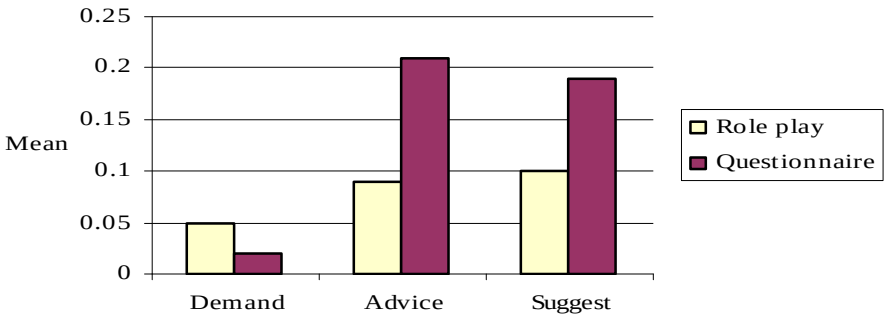


Figure 4.13: Use of "demands", "advice", and "suggestions" by learners in the two data sets

Regarding criticism response realization, the role play was found to produce a mean for "agreements" that was nearly twice as high as that for the questionnaire (role play: M = .27, SD =.23; questionnaire: M = .14, SD = .14, Z = 2.272, ***p*** **=** .023). In contrast, the mean of "seeking help" in the role play was only one sixth of the mean for the questionnaire (role play: M = .02, SD = .05; questionnaire: M = .12, SD = .15, Z = 2.813, ***p*** =.005). The mean for "justifications" was also much lower in the role play (M= .32, SD = .22) than in the questionnaire (M= .05, SD = .12) (Z = 2.632, ***p*** **=** .008) (see Figure 4.14).

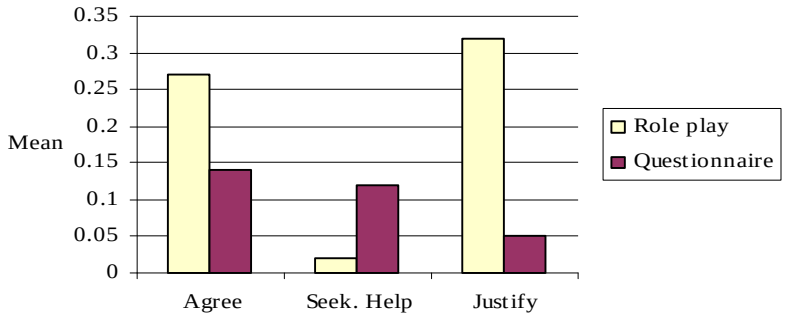


Figure 4.14: Use of "agreements", "seeking help", and "justifications" by learners in the role play and the written questionnaire.

4.1.7.3. Frequencies of using modifiers

No statistically significant difference was found between the frequencies with which the learners mitigated their criticisms and criticism responses in the role play and the questionnaire (***p*** >.0015) (see Table 4.19 in Appendix 7 for more details). However, the differences between the respective means for the two tasks were relatively great. Indeed, the mean for criticism modifiers found in the learners' role play data was 1.6 (SD = .98), more than one and a half times greater than the corresponding mean of 1.0 (SD = .55) for the questionnaire (Z = 2.872 at ***p*** **=** .004). The mean for criticism response

modifiers produced in the role play was .71 (SD = .51), also more than twice as high as the corresponding mean of .33 (SD = .29) for the questionnaire data (Z = 2.893 at ***p*** =.004). Figure 4.15 illustrates the differences in the mean frequencies with which these modifiers were used in the two tasks.

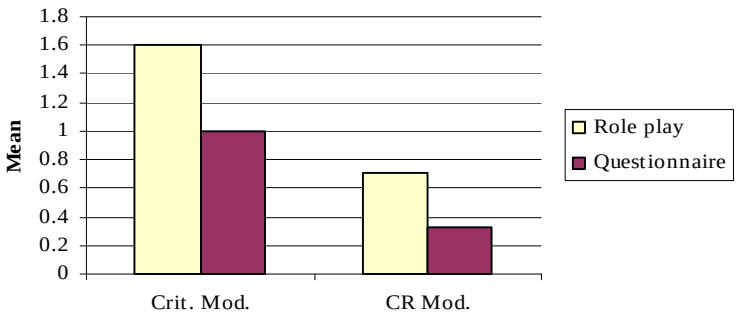


Figure 4.15: Mean number of criticism and criticism response modifiers produced by the learners in the role play and the written questionnaire

Further analysis indicated that the greater frequencies of criticism modifiers in the role play was due to a considerably higher mean for external modifiers (M = .69, SD = .70 for the role play compared to M = .07, SD = .15 for the questionnaire, Z = 4.178, significant at ***p*** =.001), whereas the means for internal modifiers for the role play and for the questionnaire did not differ greatly (M =.91, SD = .40 for the role play and M = .85, SD = .57 for the questionnaire, Z = .470, ***p*** =.638). For criticism response modifiers, however, the higher mean in the role play was probably due to the higher mean for internal modifiers (M =.62, SD =.45 in the role play as opposed to M = .27, SD =.26 for the questionnaire, Z =2.988, ***p*** =.003) rather than to external modifiers (M =.09, SD =.13 for the role play vs. M =. 05, SD = .09 for the questionnaire, Z =.937, ***p*** =.349).

4.1.7.4. Actual wording

A qualitative comparison of the two sets of data reveals a number of differences in the linguistic devices that learners employed to realize criticisms, criticism responses, and their modifiers. In general, more varied linguistic realization structures were found in the questionnaire data than in the role play data.

For example, regarding criticism realization, while no case of "conditional clause + modal" structure (e.g.: "***Your writing would be more logical if you used some linking words"***) was found in the "suggestions" produced by the high beginner and intermediate learners in the role play data, two cases of this structure were used by the high beginners and one case was used by the intermediate group in the questionnaire data. For advice realization, no case of the "***should*** in interrogative aspect" structure was found in the role play data of any of the three groups of learners. However, this structure was found in the high beginner's questionnaire data (e.g. "***Should we change a little for its clearness?"***). The "modal in past tense" structures such as "***should have done"*** and "***must have done",*** while absent in the learners' role play data, occurred in the advanced learners' questionnaire data.

For criticism response realizations, "seeking help" in the form of a "request" was expressed by only one structure in 5 out of 5 cases of the role play data (e.g.: "***Can you show me a better word?", "Can you correct this sentence for me?", "Can you suggest me a idea an idea?"***). In the questionnaire data, however, it was realized by a variety of structures. For instance, in 13 out of 22 cases, it was realized via "***could"*** (e.g. "***Could you suggest me some ways to reorganize it?", "Could you advice me what should I do I this case?"***). In another case, it was realized by "***may"*** (e.g. ***"May you explain more?***). In one case, it was realized by "***mind"*** (e.g. "***I very bad at linking words. So you mind giving some***

examples for this case?"). In 2 cases, it was expressed by means of "***can"***, in 4 cases by the "please + imperative structure" (e.g. "***Please give me some relevant example. I have not enough examples", "Please help me to find the irrelevant part to remove or to modify?"***), and in another case by the "want–statement" structure "(e.g. "***I want you to give me some suggestions of the linking words"***) (see Table 4.20 below).

Regarding modifiers, while the role play data contain no use of the "downtoner" "***perhaps"*** in any of the three groups, this "downtoner" did occur in the high beginners' data from the questionnaire. Likewise, the "understater" "***a little (bit)"*** while absent in the role play data for the intermediate learners, occurred in the questionnaire data from this group. Tag questions also occurred in the questionnaire data as a type of modifier (e.g. "***it seems that it's not very well-organized, isn't it?"***), whereas it was totally absent from the role play data.

Table 4.20: "Seeking help" requests in the role play and the questionnaire data (by frequency counts)

Seeking help	Learners	
	Q	***RP***
Want statement	1	0
Please + imperatives	4	0
Can you	2	5
Could you	13	0
May you	1	0
Do you mind	1	0
Total	22	5

4.1.8. Summary of findings

The main findings from both the quantitative and qualitative comparisons of the two data elicitation instruments are summarized below. Generally, more differences than

similarities were found for the two instruments when treating 47 participants as a whole group.

1. First, the role play produced a considerably greater amount of talk than the written questionnaire thanks to a greater number of formulas and features specific to spoken language such as repetitions and back-channeling.

2. Second, the two instruments generated the same range of broad strategies for the realization of criticisms (direct vs. indirect) and criticism responses (total acceptance, partial acceptance, and total resistance) but not the same range of semantic formulas for realizing these strategies. The role play generally produced a greater variety of semantic formulas than the questionnaire. For example, the role play elicited a few CFs ("negative evaluation", "expression of disagreement", "correction", and "expression of uncertainty") and CRFs ("complimenting the critic", "return of criticism", and "opting out") that the questionnaire did not.

3. Third, the two instruments did not result in different patterns of CS or CRS distribution. However, the two instruments did produce significant differences in the distribution of three out of five CFs and three out of six CRFs. Specifically, the role play data contained more "expressions of disagreement" and "identifications of problem" but less "advice" than the questionnaire data. They also contained more "agreement" but less "seeking help" and fewer "offers of repair". There were also a greater number of "suggestions" and a smaller number of "justifications" in the questionnaire than in the role play. However, these differences were not deemed statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction.

4. Next, the role play also generated more criticism modifiers than the questionnaire thanks to the greater number of external (but not internal) modifiers, i.e. supportive

moves. For criticism responses, no significant difference between the two methods was found.

5. Finally, the two instruments produced different wordings for the same semantic formulas.

The quantitative and qualitative comparisons of the learners' role play and questionnaire data yield the following general results:

6. The learners produced the same pattern of distribution of strategies when realizing criticisms and criticism responses in the two methods. However, they did employ one CF, namely "expression of disagreement" significantly less frequently and one CRF, namely "offer of repair" significantly more frequently in the questionnaire. There was also a reduction in the use of "demands", "agreements", and "justifications" and an increase in the use of "advice", "suggestions", and "seeking help" in the questionnaire. Nonetheless, these differences were not deemed statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction.

7. The learners produced more external criticism modifiers in the role play than in the questionnaire, but not a greater total number of criticism modifiers. For criticism response modifiers, no significant difference was found between the two tasks although the role play data contained three times as many internal modifiers as the questionnaire data.

8. Finally, the learners produced a more restricted range of linguistic realization devices in the role play than in the written questionnaire.

4.2. DISCUSSION

The following sections first discuss the type of data that each instrument generated. Then they attempt to address the potential of each instrument to shed light on the learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge, with a view to suggesting how to use each type of data to answer the research questions of the current study.

4.2.1. What types of data did the role play and the written questionnaire elicit?

Generally, the findings show that although the two instruments shared a few similarities, e.g. generating the same range and patterns of contribution of realization strategies for the two speech acts under inquiry, there were certain aspects in which the two data sets were found quite different. For example, the questionnaire data tended to exclude many features of online language production such as repetition, hesitation, back-channeling, and so on. They also appeared to contain a limited number of pragmatic features specific to spoken interaction such as "supportive moves" (e.g. "steers", "preparatory moves", and so on). What is more, the questionnaire tended to elicit shorter, less extended and elaborated discourse compared to the spoken discourse prompted by the role play. Also, it seemed to generate a fairly narrower range of CFs and CRFs and did not allow the interlocutors to opt out as they could do in real communication. It also tended to prompt a quite different pattern of use of some CFs and CRFs.

All these findings seem to be very much in line with the findings of previous research. For example, Beebe and Cummings (1985, 1996), Bodman and Eisenstein (1986, 1988), Eisenstein and Bodman (1993), Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992), and Turnbull (1997) have all found that written production questionnaires tend to generate responses that are shorter in length, non-representative in wording, less face-attentive,

less negotiatory, and which represent a more restricted range of semantic formulas compared to the role play.

What probably accounted for the above-mentioned limitations of the questionnaire was the fact it elicited written data. Thus, many aspects of speech production tended to be eliminated. Other causes were probably methodological. As can be seen, the questionnaire designed for this study elicited only single turns. One wonders if there would have been more negotiation (i.e. longer criticisms and criticism responses and more formulas involved in realizing them) had the questionnaire been designed in a way that allows for multiple-turns. Yet, it can be predicted that even then, 'negotiating' with an imaginary interlocutor would have been difficult and unnatural. Another limitation in the design of this questionnaire was that it did not specify that the respondents could opt out. It is highly likely that the data obtained would have been very different if it had.

The role play, in comparison, had the advantage of being an online oral interactive procedure and thus, tended to share many similarities with natural spoken communication. Like spontaneous, authentic speech of any type, it contained features of online speech production that may carry pragmatic force such as repetition, hesitation, back-channeling, and it tended to activate linguistic forms that required minimal attention in processing on the part of the interactants. Like natural oral interaction of any type, it tended to prompt a great number of supportive moves such as steers and preparators. It also seemed to enable extensive negotiation through turn exchange and allowed for opting out. Finally, similar to what other researchers have found (Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Kasper, 1999), the criticisms and criticism responses that it produced were generally more extended, more elaborated, and seemed to be realized by a wider range of semantic formulas. Its limitation, if any, lay only in the

fact that as a data collection method, it was designed for research purposes and thus was not truly authentic conversation. However, the fact that the participants in this study were not required to take on social roles different from their own could be considered to have reduced the unnaturalness of this task. Indeed, its capacity to elicit data that, to a certain extent, reflect online speech production, as indicated above, suggests that it was an adequate instrument for collecting spoken data. Its other strengths were that it allowed for researcher control and resulted in a large corpus of data in a relatively short time.

4.2.2. What did the written questionnaire tell us about learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge?

The written questionnaire was useful in a different way, as Kasper (1999) suggests. The data it elicited, though it did not contain many characteristics of spoken language, did provide some interesting insight into the learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge, especially when collated with the ***post hoc*** interview data.

Indeed, from the perspective of politeness, the learners tended to be more face-attentive in the questionnaire than in the role play. For example, they used fewer 'offensive' CFs such as "demands" and more CFs that they considered 'polite' such as "advice" and "suggestions" (but interestingly, not more modifiers, which occurred more often in the role play data). When interviewed about their performance in the role play, many learners commented that they could have been more polite, had they had more time to plan and monitor their speech. All these findings suggest that the learners were in fact aware of the necessity to attend to the interlocutor's face when performing quite 'face-threatening' speech acts such as criticisms and criticism responses. One reason for their lack of 'tact' in spontaneous speech was probably their

inability to activate relevant politeness and linguistic devices at the same time due to competing processing demands. Thus, the questionnaire data, to some extent, can provide additional information about what the learners ***can*** do under controlled conditions as opposed to what they ***actually*** do. In other words, it provides information about their declarative knowledge or 'knowledge ***that'*** which has not yet been automatized, as opposed to procedural knowledge or 'knowledge ***how'*** that is already available for automatic and unconscious use (see Anderson, 1976, 1980; Bialystok and Sharwood Smith, 1985; Sharwood Smith, 1986; Ellis, 1994 for more discussion of declarative and procedural knowledge; see Mitchell and Myles, 1998 for a discussion of controlled vs. automatic processing in fluency development).

In a similar way, the questionnaire data also shed light on the learners' L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge and what they ***can*** do with this knowledge when realizing criticisms and criticism responses under controlled conditions. For instance, while some grammatically complex structures such as "conditional + past tense" (e.g. ***If*** S ***had*** + V ***past participle***, S ***would have*** + V ***past participle***) or "modal + past tense" (***"should have done", "must have done"***) did not occur in the learners' role play data, their presence in the questionnaire data suggests that they were available to the learners but not always accessible, probably because they had not yet been proceduralized.

Additionally, a comparison of the performance of learners at different language levels in both the questionnaire and the role play can also provide valuable information on their interlanguage pragmatic development. For example, it can be assumed that the advice-giving structure "***you should***" is already an automatic process at the high beginning stage of language development as it was abundant in the high beginners' role play data. In contrast, the conditional structure "***If I were you, I would ...***" may still

be a controlled process as it was rare in these learners' questionnaire data. Such information was not available from the role play data.

4.2.3. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the questionnaire criticism and criticism response data have been compared with the corresponding role play data. It has been argued that despite a few similarities in the type of data that they generated, the two instruments differed in certain ways. For example, the role play tended to generate a type of data that were closer to natural speech than the questionnaire. The questionnaire, on the other hand, seemed to exclude many characteristics of spoken discourse due to its written nature. However, as it was less imposing on the learners' processing capacity, it allowed the learners to perform to the best of their competence. In this way, it revealed useful information about the learners' declarative knowledge of L2 pragmatics, or what they ***can*** do under pressure-free conditions, as opposed to what they ***actually*** do under communicative pressure.

By discussing the pros and cons of both elicitation methods, it has also been argued that the role play is the preferred option when the research focus is on spontaneous speech, while the written questionnaire is useful in gathering information on the learners' declarative knowledge as well as their pragmatic development, especially when it is employed in combination with the role play and the ***post hoc*** interview. Thus, in this study both data sets will be used. The role play data will serve to address how the participants in each group perform the speech acts of criticisms and criticism responses, while the questionnaire data, as an additional source, will be used to cross-check the role play and interview data.

CHAPTER 5:

A COMPARISON OF THE LEARNERS AND THE AUSTRALIAN NSs IN THEIR USE OF CRITICISMS AND CRITICISM RESPONSES

The present chapter seeks to address Research Question 1: "In what ways did the Vietnamese EFL learners differ from the Australian NSs in performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms?" It consists of two major sections. The results section compares the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of the learners' criticisms and criticism responses with those of the Australian NSs. The discussion section provides an interpretation of the results within the context of ILP research. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the results section of this chapter is based solely on the role play data. However, the discussion section will make use of relevant questionnaire and interview data to provide a more insightful account of the learners' pragmatic behavior.

5.1. RESULTS

Leech (1983) defined sociopragmatics as the social perceptions that underlie the use of a speech act and pragmalinguistics as the linguistic resources needed to perform that speech act (see Chapter 2 for more details). Based on this distinction, the choices of overall pragmatic strategies that the participants made in order to realize criticisms and criticism responses are examples of sociopragmatics in action. The choices of semantic formulas as conventions of means, the choices of actual wordings as conventions of forms (see Chapter 1), and the amount of talk that they produced in realizing these two speech acts fall under the pragmalinguistic aspect. Likewise, decisions made about whether to modify

criticisms and criticism responses are also related to sociopragmatics as they more or less reflect the speaker's social perceptions of politeness. However, the choice of external and internal modifiers is more concerned with pragmalinguistics since it involves choosing linguistic structures and assigning politeness values to these structures. It should also be noted that the distinction between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics is not always clear-cut, as Kasper (1992) has suggested, especially in the case of semantic formulas. In the present study, for example, the decision about whether to suggest a change by criticizing can involve both sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. This is because while giving a "suggestion" is one of the routinized semantic formulas characterizing the speech act of criticizing, it is at the same time also governed by the participant's assessment of relevant contextual factors and social perceptions. In the present chapter although the choices of semantic formulas as pragmatic routines are mainly addressed from the pragmalinguistic perspective, it is acknowledged that these choices are governed by sociopragmatic considerations.

Although statistical tests were run for the means of all strategies, formulas, and modifiers where a significant difference between the learners and the Australian NSs was anticipated, only those cases where a significant difference was actually found are reported in this chapter. Other cases are included in Appendix 7. The statistical procedures employed here include Independent Samples ***t*** tests, Mann Whitney U tests, and Chi-square tests for relatedness or independence. Mann Whitney U tests are similar to Independent Samples ***t*** tests but used when the data are not normally distributed. Where multiple ***t*** and U tests were run, a Bonferroni correction was also employed to reduce the chance of Type A errors. The level of significance was set at .0035.

5.1.1. Sociopragmatic aspects

5.1.1.1. Sociopragmatic aspects of criticisms

5.1.1.1.1. Criticism strategies

A ***t*** test run for the learners and the Australian NS group revealed a significant difference between them in the use of both direct and indirect CSs (***p*** <.0035). Figure 5.1 indicates that generally, the learners produced fewer direct criticisms but more indirect criticisms than the target group. Indeed, as shown in Table 5.1, on average, the learners produced a mean of .55 for direct criticisms, compared to .77 for the Australian NS group (***t*** =3.435, df = 46 at ***p*** =.001) and a mean of .44 for indirect criticisms, compared to .22 for the Australian NS group (***t*** = 3.538, df =46, at ***p*** =.001).

Nonetheless, an investigation of the means of direct criticisms produced by each individual participant revealed that not every learner was behind his or her Australian NS counterpart. In fact, there seemed to be an overlap between the two groups. For example, five out of 36 learners (13.8%) demonstrated a mean equal to or higher than the mean of .77, which was similar to 58.4% (seven cases) of the Australian NSs. 27 learners (75%) had a mean ranging from below .77 to .32, which was similar to the remaining 41.6% (five cases) of the Australian NSs. Only four of them (11.2%) actually had a mean below the lowest mean demonstrated by the Australian group, which was .32 (see Appendix 8).

Likewise, in the case of indirect criticisms, four out of 36 learners (11.1%) had a mean equal to or lower than the mean of .22 demonstrated by the Australian NS group (see Appendix 8). This indicates that not every learner produced a greater number of indirect criticisms than his or her Australian counterparts.

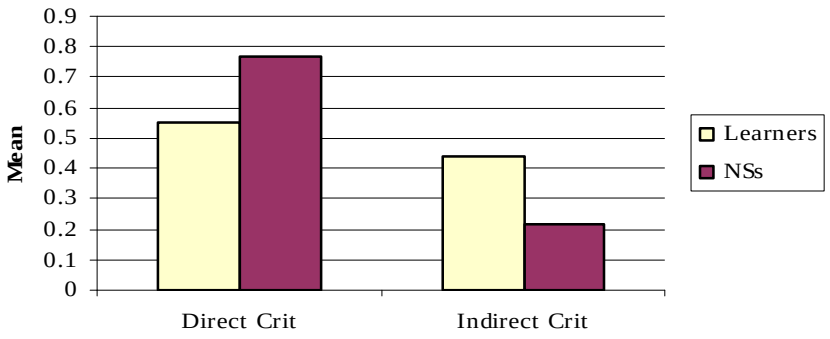


Figure 5.1: Mean number of CSs produced by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.1: Results of Independent Samples ***T*** tests for differences in the mean number of direct criticisms between learners and Australian NSs

Group: CSs:	Learners *(N =36)*				Australian L1 *(N =12)*				***T***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	%	***F***	***M***	***SD***	%		
Direct criticism	328 / 597	.55	.17	54.9	83 / 120	.77	.21	69.2	3.435	.001
Indirect Criticism	269 / 597	.44	.17	45.1	37 / 120	.22	.21	30.8	3.538	.001

5.1.1.1.2. Criticism modifiers

Overall, the learners tended to mitigate their criticisms significantly less frequently than the Australian NSs (Figure 5.2). Table 5.2 demonstrated that on average, learners made use of 1.6 modifiers per CF whereas Australians produced two and a half times as many (M =3.9) (Z= 4.777, ***p*** =.001). An examination of individual cases found only two learners (5.5%) to have a mean higher than the lowest mean demonstrated by the Australian NSs (2.6) (Appendix 9).

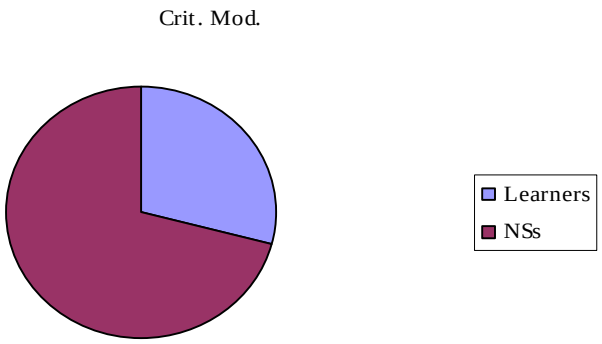


Figure 5.2: Mean number of criticism modifiers produced by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.2: Results of Mann Whitney U tests in differences in the mean number of criticism modifiers between learners and Australian NSs

Group:	Learners (*N =36*)			Australian L1 (*N =12*)			***Z***	***P***
Criticism modifiers	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Total modifiers	858 / 597	1.6	.94	447 / 120	3.9	1.1	4.777	.001

Table 5.3: Distribution of criticism modifiers around the mean by learners and Australian NSs

Descriptive Modifiers	Range of Mean		Distribution around Mean			
	Highest	***Lowest***	***Above Mean***		***Below Mean***	
			F	***%***	***F***	***%***
NS ***(N=12)***	6.0	2.6	6	50.0	6	50.0
Learners ***(N=36)***	5.3	.46	15	41.6	21	58.4

Table 5.3 indicates that as a group, the learners tended to vary more than the Australian NSs in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticisms. The difference between the highest and the lowest means of modifiers found for this group was just above ten

times (5.3 and .46) whereas that difference for the Australian NS group was only roughly three times (6.0 and 2.6).

5.1.1.2. Sociopragmatic aspects of criticism responses

5.1.1.2.1. Criticism response strategies

Looking at the two groups' use of the three main CRSs, the learners deviated from the Australian NS group in their choices regarding "total acceptance of criticisms" and "total resistance to criticisms" (***p*** <.0035) but not in their choice of "partial acceptance of criticisms" (***p*** >.0035) (Figure 5.3). As can be seen in Table 5.4, while the Australian NSs seemed to totally accept criticisms up to 95% of the time, the learners did so significantly less frequently (57.3% of the time). Accordingly, they totally resisted criticisms considerably more often than the Australian NSs (39.8% of the time as compared to 5.0% of the time for the latter group).

An investigation into the usage of "total acceptance of criticisms" and "total resistance to criticisms" produced by individual learners and Australian NSs showed that despite the general tendency described above, there was still some overlap between the two groups. In the case of "total acceptance", for instance, 50% of the learners (18 out of 36) fell into the range between 1.0 and .60, which was also the range between the highest and lowest means produced by the Australian NSs. Of this number, 22.2% (8 learners) had a mean of 1.0, equal to the highest mean demonstrated by 83.3% (10 out of 12) of the Australian NSs (see Appendix 8).

With regard to "total resistance to criticisms", 27.7% (10 out of 36 learners) had a mean of .00. This same mean was also a mean demonstrated by 83.3% (10 out of 12) of the

Australian NSs. Another 25.0% (9 out of 36) of learners had a mean equal to or lower than .40, which was the highest mean generated by the Australian NSs. Only 44.4% of learners (16 out of 36) had a mean higher than the highest means exhibited by the Australian NSs (Appendix 8).

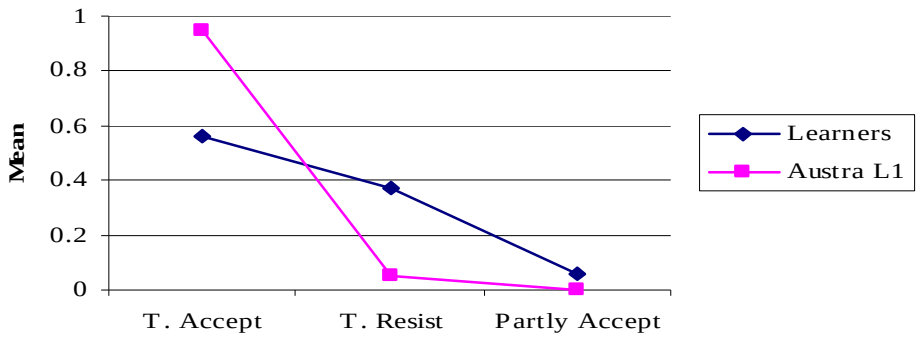


Figure 5.3: Mean number of the strategies of "total acceptance", "total resistance", and "partial acceptance" produced by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.4: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs "total acceptance" and "total resistance" between learners and Australian NSs

Group: CSs	Learners *(N =36)*				Australian L1 *(N =12)*				***Z***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	%	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***%***		
Total acceptance	95 / 168	.56	.31	57.3	54 / 57	.95	.12	95.0	3.739	.001
Total resistance	68 / 168	.37	.30	39.8	3 / 57	.05	.12	5.0	3.421	.001

Within the group, the Australian NSs appeared to be quite consistent in their choice between "total acceptance" and "total resistance". They seemed to be skewed towards only one side. For example, they were positively skewed in the case of "total acceptance" and negatively skewed in the case of "total resistance". In comparison, this was not the

case for the learners, who tended to vary largely among themselves. Indeed, their individual means for these two strategies ranged from 1.0 to .00 (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Distribution of "total acceptance" and "total resistance" by learners and Australian NSs.

CRSs	Descriptive	Range of Mean		Distribution around Mean					
		Highest	***Lowest***	***Above Mean***		***Below Mean***		***Mean =.00***	
				F	***%***	***F***	***%***	***F***	***%***
Total acceptance	NS ***(N=12)***	1.0	.60	10	83.3	2	16.7	0	0
	NNS ***(N=36)***	1.0	.00	18	50.0	14	38.2	4	11.1
Total resistance	NS ***(N=12)***	.40	.00	2	16.7	0	0	10	83.3
	NNS ***(N=36)***	1.0	.00	22	61.1	4	11.1	10	27.7

5.1.1.2.2. Criticism response modifiers

The learners did not vary from the Australian NSs in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticism responses. The results of a Mann Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups on the measure of the total number of modifiers that they produced (Z = 132.500, not significant at $p > .0035$, see Table 5.6 in Appendix 7).

5.1.2. Pragmalinguistic aspects

5.1.2.1. Pragmalinguistic aspects of criticisms

5.1.2.1.1. Criticism formulas

Two types of comparisons were made here: cross-group comparison, which was made between the learners and the Australian group and within-group comparison, which was made among different individuals within each group in their use of CFs.

Firstly, in a cross-group comparison of five major CFs (which occurred in at least 9.0% of the total number of CFs for one group), the learners were significantly different from the target group in the frequency of their use of "identifications of problem" (under the category of direct criticisms) and "demands" (under the category of indirect criticisms) (***p*** <.0035). No difference between the two groups was found for the other three CFs, namely "expression of disagreement" (under the category of direct criticisms), "advice", and "suggestion" (under the category of indirect criticisms) (see Table 5.8 in Appendix 7), although the difference for "advice" was quite substantial (M =.09, SD = .11 for the learners as opposed to M =.01, SD =.03 for the Australian NSs, Z = 5.712, ***p*** =.017) (Figure 5.4).

As shown in Table 5.7, the learners produced a considerably smaller number of "identifications of problem" (M =.32, SD =.18) than the Australian NSs (M =.57, SD =.27) (Z =2.930, ***p*** =.003). They also made use of a great number of "demands" (M = .07, SD =.10), which the latter totally avoided (M =.00, SD =.00) (Z =2.958, ***p*** =.003).

A further examination into the distribution of the two above CFs around the mean by individual learners and Australian NSs seemed to show that not every learner employed "identifications of problem" less often than the Australian NSs. On the contrary, six of them (16.6%) had a mean of .57 or above, which was similar to eight (66.6%) Australian NSs and which was a higher mean than the one produced by the remaining four (33.4%) NSs. Likewise, similarly to the NSs, who did not employ “demand” at all, 47.2% of the learners (17 out of 36) did not produce any instances of this CF (see Appendix 8).

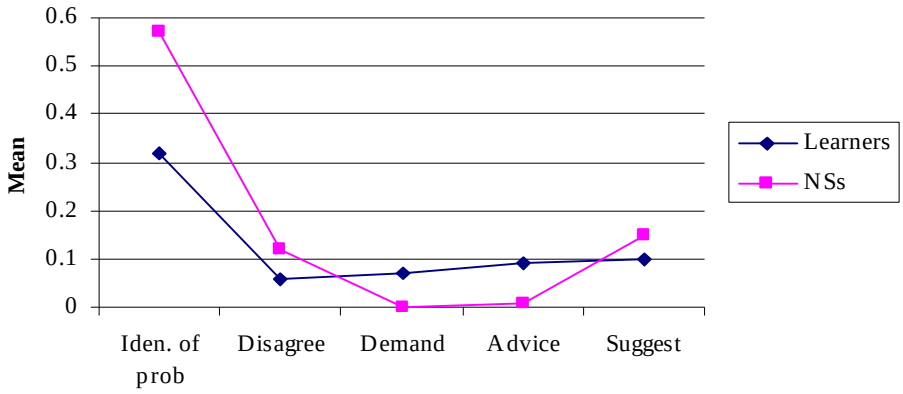


Figure 5.4: Five major CFs produced by learners and Australian NS

Table 5.7: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of “identifications of problem” and “demands” between learners and Australian NSs

Group: CFs:	Learners *(N =36)*				Australian L1 *(N =12)*				***Z***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	%	***F***	***M***	***SD***	%		
Iden. of problem	218/597	.32	.18	36.5	62/120	.57	.27	51.7	2.930	.003
Demand	56/597	.07	.10	9.4	0/120	.00	.00	.0	2.958	.003

When compared within the groups, the learners seemed to vary slightly among themselves. In the case of "identification of problem", for example, almost half of them (41.6%) were above the mean, while above half (55.6%) were below it. Meanwhile, the Australian NSs seemed to be skewed towards above the mean rather than evenly distributed around it (66.6% were above the mean and 25.0% were below it). In the case of "demand", the Australian group was still constant in their non-use (M =.00, SD =.00) whereas the learners continued to be scattered around the mean. 38.8% (14 cases) of them scored well above the mean, while 25.1% (9 cases) fell below it and 36.1% displayed a mean of .00 (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Distribution of "identification of problem" and "demand" by learners and Australian NSs.

CFs	Descriptive	Range of Mean		Distribution around Mean					
		Highest	***Lowest***	***Above Mean***		***Below Mean***		***Mean =.00***	
				F	***%***	***F***	***%***	***F***	***%***
Iden. of problem	NS ***(N=12)***	1.0	.00	8	66.6	3	25.0	1	8.4
	NNS ***(N=36)***	.88	.00	15	41.6	20	55.5	1	3.4
Demand	NS ***(N=12)***	.00	.00	0	0	0	0	12	100
	NNS ***(N=36)***	.33	.00	17	47.2	2	5.6	17	47.2

5.1.2.1.2. Amount of talk

A ***t*** test run for the learners and the Australian NSs showed no significant differences in the amount of talk that they produced when realizing criticisms (t = 1.205, df = 46, not significant at ***p*** > .0035, see Table 5.10 in Appendix 7).

5.1.2.1.3. Actual wording in criticism formula realizations

The learners often produced strikingly different wording even when they used the same CFs as the Australian NSs. A number of illustrative examples were found in the learners' and the Australians' use of "identifications of problem". It was observed that when "identifying the problems" in their interlocutors' essays, the Australian NSs would rather describe problems than announce them. In the meanwhile, the learners chose to do the opposite. For instance, when pointing out a spelling mistake to the interlocutor, a learner explicitly mentioned that this was a mistake: "***and ah (.) ah there are some incorrect ah (.) incorrect words, for example "nowadays".*** In contrast, an Australian explained where the problem was: "***You put "their" but I think "t-h-e-r-e***" but did not announce the existence of the problem.

In cases where participants were unsatisfied with their interlocutors' essay organization, the Australian participants frequently provided a description of the problem: "***I've just got through this ah and then it's once again in the end of the structure I thought you had two conclusions as well (.) so (.2)*** but they're both good***".*** In contrast, the learners tended to use a statement of the error without describing it: "I think your essay ah many ideas ah accurate (.) accuracy ah hmm (.) accurate ***but I think the organize the way you organize this essay is ah (.) is some ah (.) is incorrect ah in some part".***

Another example of the differences in actual wording that the learners and the Australian NSs produced occurs in their "expressions of disagreement". While an Australian "disagreement" was mitigated as much as this: "***I wouldn't necessarily agree with you on the point that ...***" or "***I wouldn't agree as strongly as you put it here",*** a learner's disagreement was

most of the time realized by bare performatives, for instance "***I don't agree/ disagree with you".***

Similarly, when it came to linguistic realization of the CF "suggestion", the learners did not use a lot of modality compared to the Australian participants, which made their "suggestions" a lot simpler in structure. For example, while the Australian NSs employed a wide variety of suggestion realization structures with modal verbs that express possibility, ranging from the lowest level of modality such as "***can***" (12%) and "***could***" (16%) to higher level of modality such as "***could have done***" (16%) and "***would have done***" (4%), the learners drew solely on structure "***can***" (31%) and made no use of the others. Likewise, when it came to structures with infinitive verbs (e.g. ***It's better + Verb infinitive***) and conditional structures (e.g. ***If + Clause, Main Clause)***, the Australian NSs used these structures only in combination with modal verbs. By contrast, a majority of the learners did not and only a small percentage of their suggestions contained modality (under 5%). C.f.: Infinitive structure: "***It's better to have noun and then Verb-ing like adjective"*** (learner) and "***It could have been better to put a comma (.) so ah ((laugh))***" (Australian NS). Conditional clause: "***I think if you make a full stop in here the ah (.) this sentence is clear is clear"*** (learners) and "***I think if they were together they would make more sense ((laugh))***" (Australian NS). Interestingly, 3% of the learners' suggestions were realized by the question "***Why don't you***", which the Australian NSs did not use at all (Table 5.11).

"Advice" was another CF that was verbalized differently by the learners and the Australian NSs. While 100% of the Australian "advice" (2 out of 2 instances) was mitigated by the structure "***should have done***" (with past tense expressing modality), none of the instances of this CF in the learners' data showed the same realization. On the

contrary, 85.2% (46 out of 54 instances) of the learners' advice was expressed by grammatically simpler and pragmatically less mitigated structure "***should".***

Furthermore, learners' "requests" were expressed by either bare imperatives (e.g. "***yes put "firstly", "secondly", "finally" if you have 3 arguments or 2 arguments"***) or "want-statement without modality" (e.g. "***but I still want you to consider some points that I think it's not suitable for an academic essay***"). A similar Australian "want-statement" request, in comparison, was substantially mitigated with double past tense markings: "***What I would have liked to have seen is like a definite theme from the start like you're just TA:LKing about it".***

Table 5.11: "Suggestions" used by learners and Australian NSs (by percentage)

Realization structures: Group:	Learners (*N =36*)		Australian L1 (*N =12*)	
	F	***%***	***F***	***%***
Can (e.g. ***You can +V***)	20/64	31.0	3/25	12.0
Could (e.g. ***You could +V***)	0/64	0.0	4/25	16.0
Could have (***e.g. You could have + V pp***)	0/64	0.0	4/25	16.0
Would have (***e.g. I would have + V pp)***	0/64	0.0	1/25	4.0
I suggest (***e.g. I suggest that you + V***)	1/64	1.6	0/25	0.0
Infinitive (***e.g. It's better + V inf***)	5/64	7.7	0/25	0.0
Infinitive + modal (***e.g. It can/could/would be better + V inf***)	3/64	4.7	4/25	16.0
Conditional (***e.g. If-clause***)	17/64	26.6	0/25	0.0
Conditional + modal (***e.g. If-clause with modal verb***)	3/64	4.8	3/25	12.0
Why don't you	2/64	3.1	0/25	0.0

5.1.2.1.4. Choice of modifiers

The learners did not differ much from the Australian NSs in their order of preference for a particular type of external modifiers. Indeed, they displayed the same distinct preference for "sweeteners" (50.5%) over all the remaining types as the Australian L1 speakers (70.4%). Their next choices included "disarmers" (19.4%) and "grounders" (21.2%), finally

followed by "steers" (9.4%). This is relatively similar to the Australian ranking of choices (Figure 5.5).

The learners differed from the Australian NSs, however, in that they seemed to provide a more even distribution of the various types of external modifiers. On the other hand, the Australian NSs tended to rely heavily on "sweeteners" (70.4%) and more or less ignored the rest, especially "steers" (3.8%) and "grounders" (6.1%). A Chi square test for relatedness or independence was run to determine whether this distribution was statistically significantly different. The result revealed that it was ($\chi 2$ = 35.640, df =3, ***p*** = .001) (Table 5.12).

Figure 5.6 and Table 5.13 illustrate the distribution of criticism internal modifiers by the two groups. As can be seen, except for "understaters", "downtoners", and "cajolers", all the remaining internal modifiers were distributed quite differently between the learners and the Australian NSs (χ^2 = 117.250, df =5, ***p*** = .001).

For instance, while the Australian NSs preferred “syntactic modifiers”, the learners seemed to favor “subjectivizers” the most. Indeed, “syntactic modifiers" constituted the largest percentage of the Australian criticisms (29.1%), but contributed only a modest quantity of 3.2% to the learners' total use of criticism internal modifiers. By contrast, "subjectivizers" were resorted to 41.4% of the time by the learners, but were employed only 18.8% of the time by the Australian NS group. "Hedges" were also much more favored by the Australian NSs than the learners (11.5% for the former as opposed to 5.7% for the latter).

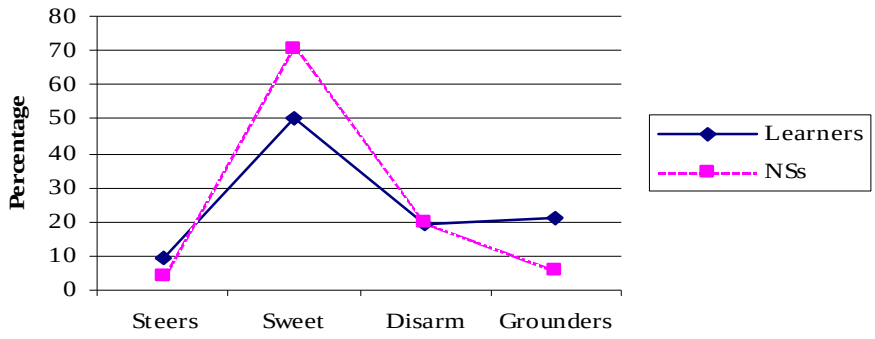


Figure 5.5: Distribution of different types of criticism external modifiers by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.12: Results of Chi-square tests for the distribution of criticism external modifiers by learners and Australian NSs

Group: External modifiers	Learners (*N =36*)		Australian L1 (*N =12*)		Chi-square	*P*
	F	%	*F*	%		
Steers	36 / 382	9.4	8 / 213	3.8	35.640	.001
Sweeteners	191 / 382	50.5	150 / 213	70.4		
Disarmers	74 / 382	19.4	42 / 213	19.7		
Grounders	81 / 382	21.2	13 / 213	6.1		

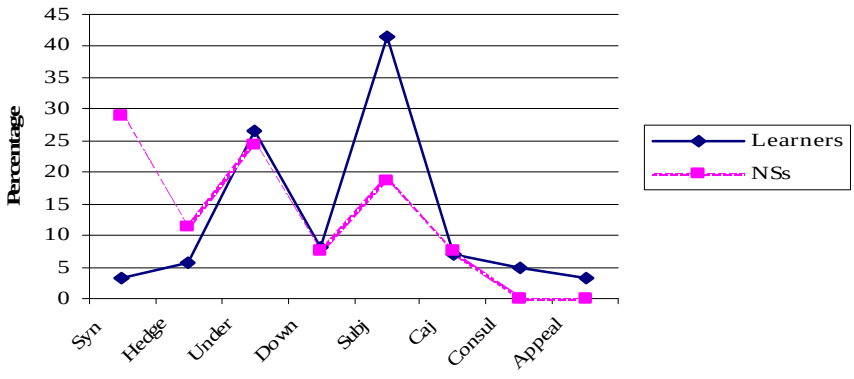


Figure 5.6: Distribution of different types of criticism internal modifiers by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.13: Results of Chi-square tests for the distribution of criticism internal modifiers by learners and Australian NSs (*)

Group: Internal modifiers	Learners (*N =36*)		Australian L1 (*N =12*)		Chi-square	*P*
	F	%	*F*	%		
Syntactic modifiers	15 / 476	3.2	68 / 234	29.1	117.250	.001
Hedges	27 / 476	5.7	27 / 234	11.5		
Understaters	126 / 476	26.5	57 / 234	24.4		
Downtoners	38 / 476	8.0	18 / 234	7.7		
Subjectivizers	197 / 476	41.4	44 / 234	18.8		
Cajolers	34 / 476	7.1	18 / 234	7.7		

(*) Chi-square was not computed for “consultative devices” and “appealers” as they constituted too small of a percentage of the internal modifiers used by the Australian NSs (under 1%).

5.1.2.1.5. Actual wording in criticism modifier realizations

5.1.2.1.5.1. External modifiers

A 'qualitative' examination of the wording of various types of external modifiers produced by the two groups suggests that learners' “sweeteners” might not sound as 'complimentary' as those given by the Australian NSs, probably because the language that they used was quite neutral and lukewarm. Let us take two examples of the sweeteners given by a learner and an Australian NS:

Australian NS:

"***I thought it was VERY CLEAR (.) and I really liked the way (.) you know it all flowed and each paragraph had a separate point yeah VERY easy to read what you are going to (.) you know what to - to determine what you were trying to say***"

Learner:

"***OK I read your essay and here are some my own ideas of this. firstly about the organization it's so clear you have ah introduction, body, and conclusion, and in the body you have 3 paragraphs with 3 reasons to support your ah support your ah (.) topic***".

In another case, a learner tried to use 'complimentary' words such as "good" and "carefully" when giving her friend a "sweetener". Yet, her phrase "***I'm glad to say***" made her sound superior although this might not necessarily be what she was intended at: "I have read your essay and ***I'm glad to say it's a G:OOD essay. you have written it very carefully and ah YO:U have made all the requirements***".

Similarly, when closing the conversation, an Australian interactant tried to compensate for her criticism by reaffirming the good points of her friend's essay as follows: "***but generally it was really good, really its taught me a lot/ looking at the rigor of writing/ yeah it's very nice***". In comparison, the same learner did it only by reaffirming her friend's efforts: "***so ah but in general you have tried your best/ <I see your effort ah you devote in to this ah essay>".***

When it came to "disarmers" (see Table 3.14 for a specification), the learners also tended to 'defuse' their interlocutors in a different way from the Australian group. For example, while 75.2% of the Australian disarmers (31 out of 42 instances) consisted of problem minimizing statements such as "***it's nothing too major***" or "***it's certainly not easy to do off the top of your head***", 68.2% of the learners' "disarmers" (52 out of 76 cases) were constituted by token agreements such as "***I understand your point of view*** but ..." or "***I see what you mean*** but ...". In 4% of the instances, the learners even forewarned and apologized before giving a criticism (e.g. "***hmm well, since ah ((laugh)) to err is human ((laugh)) so I'm very I mean very***

afraid of ah say (.) recognizing or correcting the mistakes with grammatic ah grammatical mistakes and vocabulary mistakes", "***I'm sorry*** but ...") and in 5.2% of the cases they drew on a self-effacing strategy such as "***I'm ah no good at this problem*** but ...", which the Australian NSs did not do at all.

5.1.2.1.5.2. Internal modifiers

An analysis of the range of internal modifier realization structures used by the learners and the Australian NSs revealed a much more restricted usage on the part of the learners. For example, the learners tended to employ only a few structures such as modal "***may",*** "hedges" "***something like that***", "***that sort of thing",*** "understaters" "***some",*** "***few***, "downtoners" "***maybe***", and rarely made use of or even excluded some other structures from their use (e.g. modal "***would", "could",*** "hedges" "***sort of", "kind of",*** "downtoners" "***perhaps", "probably"*** and so on). The Australian NSs, in comparison, made a wider and more regular use of various internal modification realization structures (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Range of internal modifier realization structures used by learners and Australian NSs

Range: / Group:	Learners (***N =36***)		Australian L1 (***N =12***)	
	F	***%***	***F***	***%***
1. Syntactic modifiers:				
Modal:				
May	11/476	2.3	4/234	1.7
Might	3/476	0.7	6/234	2.6
Would	0/476	0.0	12/234	5.1
Could	0/476	0.0	12/234	5.1
Past tense	1/476	0.2	34/234	14.5
2. Hedges				
Sort of (kind of)	2/476	0.4	21/234	8.9
Something (like that), that sort of thing	25/476	5.3	6/234	2.6

Table 5.14 (continued)

Group: / Range:	Learners (*N =36*)		Australian L1 (*N =12*)	
	F	***%***	***F***	***%***
3. Understaters				
A little (bit)	8 / 476	1.9	13 / 234	5.5
Some, few	77 / 476	15.1	7 / 234	2.6
Not very (really), not many (enough), almost, slightly	17 / 476	3.6	17 / 234	7.2
Just / only	14 / 476	2.9	16 / 234	6.8
Quite / rather	10 / 476	2.1	4 / 234	1.8
4. Downtoners				
Maybe	36 / 476	7.6	12 / 234	5.1
Perhaps, probably, possibly	2 / 476	0.4	6 / 234	2.6

5.1.2.2. Pragmalinguistic aspects of criticism responses

5.1.2.2.1. Criticism response formulas

As far as cross-group comparison is concerned, of the four major CRFs (which occurred in at least 9.0% of the total number of CRFs for at least one group), significant variations from the target group was found in the learners' use of three. These included "agreement with criticisms" (under the category of "total acceptance of criticisms"), "disagreement with criticisms", and "justification" (under the category of "total resistance to criticisms") (Table 5.15). No differences were found in their use of "explanation" (under the category of "total acceptance of criticisms") (see Table 5.16 in Appendix 7).

As shown in Figure 5.7, as a group, the learners made considerably fewer "agreements with criticisms" than the Australian NSs, while opting for a markedly greater number of "disagreements with criticisms" and "justifications". This finding appeared to consistently reflect their general tendency to accept criticisms less often and resist it more regularly than the Australian NS group as indicated in 5.1.1.2.1.

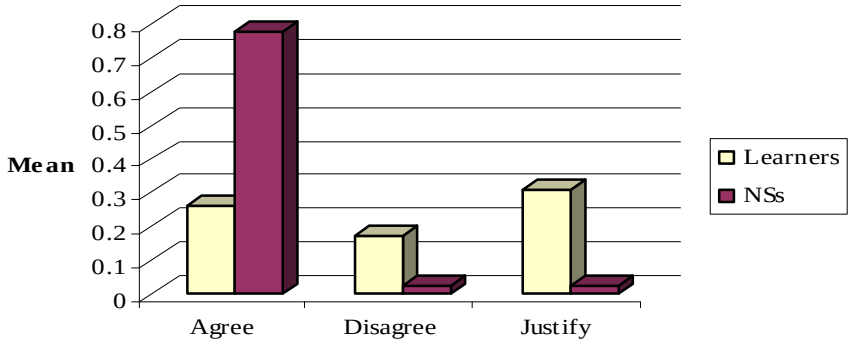


Figure 5.7: Mean number of "agreements", "disagreements", and "justifications" produced by learners and Australian NSs

The means of these CRFs are shown in Table 5.15. On average, the learners produced a mean of .27 for "agreements with criticisms", only one third of the mean for the Australian NS group (M =.79) (Z =4.553, ***p*** =.001). In contrast, they produced respective means of .17 and .31 for "disagreements" and "justifications", compared to .02 for each CRF for the Australian NS group (***p*** =.001).

Table 5.15: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number "agreements", "disagreements", and "justifications" between learners and Australian NSs

Group: CF	Learners *(N =36)*				Australian L1 *(N =12)*				***Z***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	%	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***%***		
Agreement	148/525	.27	.21	27.2	84/104	.79	.21	79.0	4.553	.001
Disagreement	95/525	.17	.13	17.6	2/104	.02	.04	2.0	3.659	.001
Justification	176/525	.31	.22	33.7	2/104	.02	.04	2.0	3.866	.001

Yet, despite the general tendency to deviate from the target group, there were learners who behaved similarly to the majority of the Australian NSs. For example, one learner

(2.7%) showed a mean of "agreement" higher than .79, which was a mean demonstrated by 66.6% (8 out of 12) of the Australian NSs. Eight of them (22.3%) did not use "disagreement" and "justification", similarly to 83.3% (10 out of 12) of the Australian NSs (see Appendix 8).

Within the groups, the Australian NSs tended to be more consistent in their choice of CRFs than the learners (Table 5.17). For example, they all employed "agreement" (mean from .33 above). Their individual means of "disagreement" and "justification" also ranged as narrowly as from .12 to .00. Meanwhile, the learners varied as much as from a mean of 1.0 to a mean of .00 in the case of "agreement", from .50 to .00 in the case of "disagreement", and from .78 to .00 in the case of "justification".

Table 5.17: Distribution of "agreement", "disagreement", and "justification" by learners and Australian NSs.

CRFs	Descriptive	Range of Mean		Distribution around Mean					
		Highest	***Lowest***	***Above Mean***		***Below Mean***		***Mean =.00***	
				F	***%***	***F***	***%***	***F***	***%***
Agreement	NS ***(N=12)***	1.0	.33	8	66.6	4	33.4	0	0
	NNS ***(N=36)***	1.0	.00	15	41.6	17	47.2	4	12.0
Disagreement	NS ***(N=12)***	.12	.00	2	16.7	0	0	10	83.3
	NNS ***(N=36)***	.50	.00	18	50.0	10	27.7	8	22.3
Justification	NS ***(N=12)***	.12	.00	2	16.7	0	0	10	83.3
	NNS ***(N=36)***	.78	.00	18	50.0	10	27.7	8	22.3

5.1.2.2.2. Amount of talk

The amount of talk was measured in terms of the total number of words that each group of participants produced when responding to criticisms. It was found that the learners talked significantly more than the Australian NSs (Figure 5.8). Indeed, they produced an average of 67.8 words per criticism response, almost five times as much as the NS group, who produced only an average of 16.5 ($z = 3.822$ at $\boldsymbol{p} = .001$) (Table 5.18).

An investigation into individual cases also showed that only two learners (5.5%) had a mean lower than the mean produced by the Australian NSs (16.5) and 20 of them (55.5%) had a mean lower than .75, which was the highest mean among the Australian NSs produced by only one person (Appendix 8).

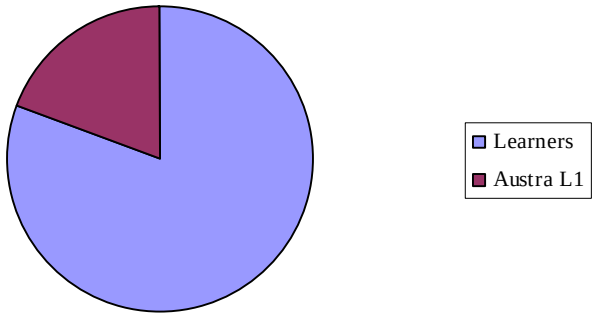


Figure 5.8: Number of words per criticism produced by learners and Australian NSs

Table 5.18 also shows that both groups varied largely among themselves. For example, individual means ranged from 75.0 to as low as 1.0 for the Australian NS group and from 198.6 to 6.9 for the learner group. Despite this, however, the learners still seemed to be more equally clustered around the mean (41.6% were above and 58.3 were below the mean) than the Australian NSs (only 25.0% were above the mean).

Table 5.18: Amount of talk produced by learners and Australian NSs

Descriptive Group:	Mean and SD		Range		Distribution around Mean			
	M	***SD***	***Highest***	***Lowest***	***Above***		***Below***	
					F	***%***	***F***	***%***
Australian NS (***N=12***)	16.5	22.5	75.0	1.0	3	25.0	9	75.0
Learners (***N=36***)	67.8	53.5	198.6	6.9	15	41.6	21	58.3

5.1.2.2.3. Actual wording in criticism response formula realizations

Learners' criticism responses also differed from Australian NS criticism responses in actual wording.

For example, when they "agreed with criticisms", the learners often used such words as "mistake", "wrong", "error" or "weakness' to describe what they did, whereas the Australian participants tended to simply acknowledge what they did without using those "trouble" words. Consider the following examples:

Learners:

(1) ***"yes, that's my weakness"***

(2) "***hmm yes that's my mistake, "in comparison with", or "compared with" yes yes my fault"***

(3) "***I know there's a problem with it***"

(4) "***yes I think it's wrong grammar***"

(5) "***I think that it is not a very good essay because we don't have good reference I think it is important***"

Australian NSs:

(6) "ya I haven't paragraphed it"

(7) "ya well when I was reading yours I thought oh gee I didn't mention any of these"

(8) "I know (.) I did realize"

(9) "yes I don't actually know what I think"

What is more, even when they were inclined to agree with criticisms, some learners attempted to save face by downgrading the seriousness of their wrongdoing, which the Australian NS group did not do. For instance, a learner responded to the criticism that she made a grammatical mistake by saying: ***"it's the common mistake among nonnative speakers, especially Vietnamese students***". Likewise, in response to the criticism that she made a spelling mistake, a learner said: "***it's just a slip of pen***". Another learner tried to de-emphasize her wrongdoing in the same way, saying: "***It doesn't matter, it's small.***"

Another difference was the learners' "disagreement with criticisms". Similar to the case of criticisms reported in 5.1.2.1, whereas the Australian NSs tended to offer mitigated "disagreement" (e.g. "***oh I think that's sort of an introd:UCtion ((laugh)) (gh hhh) the firs sentence"***), the learners did not. For example, they would sometimes directly refute the critic's opinions (often beginning their responses with "***no***"):

(10) "***No I think we shouldn't change the structure"***

(11) "***No I don't agree I I don't yeah ((laugh)) (gh hhh) I don't agree"***

(12) "***No I didn't use the question task question task/ no, it's not it's not the question task. I just write down exactly what ah"***

(13) "***If it's not necessary I will not use it"***

In other instances, they asserted their freedom of act and choice:

(14) "***okay that's your idea/ yeah that's your idea but I only support for my ah only one single side that's people go to work should use only public transport"***

(15) "***because it's opinion and your opinion is different to me"***

(16) "***but I think everyone have another way to arrange their body maybe you have 2 parts individually but I have 1 part but I ah I compare compare the public transport and private transport with together you see"***

(17) "***but I think this is also correct"***

(18) "***ah I like this way better I prefer to this way***"

At other times, they challenged the critic or expressed doubt of the validity of the criticism:

(19) ***"but what's the point of defining public transport here?"***

(20) ***"but can you find any argument AGAINST my ah point, against each point? ((laugh)) (gh hhh) Can you find any argument against each point?"***

(21) "***do you count it yet?"***

(22) "***do you think I will get ah higher score for that?"***

(23) "***I think <u>it's better to ask teacher</u>***"

5.1.3. Summary of findings

The present chapter sought to address Research Question 1: "In what ways did the Vietnamese EFL learners differ from the Australian NSs in performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms?" Generally, the learners were found to perform these speech acts quite differently from the NSs in a number of ways.

At the sociopragmatic level:

(1) They differed markedly in their choice of both CSs and CRSs. For example, they made significantly less use of direct criticisms but greater use of indirect criticisms than the Australian NSs. Also, they tended to accept criticisms considerably less often than the Australian NSs while resisting it far more frequently.

(2) They also tended to mitigate their criticisms significantly less often than the target group.

At the pragmalinguistic level:

(3) They were different in their choice of two CFs and three CRFs. For instance, in criticizing a friend, the learners did not employ as many "identifications of problem" as the target group but drew on a great number of "demands", which the latter completely avoided. The learners also employed more "advice" than the Australian NS group; however, the difference was not significant after the Bonferroni correction. In responding to criticisms, they produced far fewer "agreements with criticisms" while utilizing considerably more "disagreements with criticisms" and "justifications" than the NSs.

(4) Furthermore, the learners produced greatly different wordings from those used by the Australian NSs even for the same CFs and CRFs. For example, their “identifications of problem” often contain an announcement of errors rather than a description of problems as was the case with the NSs. Their “disagreement with criticisms” was also often abrupt.

(5) Their criticism responses were noticeably longer than the criticism responses given by the target group.

(6) Finally, they relied on a much narrower range of linguistic devices to realize the chosen modifiers.

As a group, the learners also appeared to vary among themselves more than the Australian NSs. For example, they varied in the choice of CFs, criticism modifiers, CRSs and CRFs, and the number of words that they produced in realizing criticism responses. The Australian NSs, on the other hand, seemed to be more consistent in this regard.

There were also areas where the learners were not different from the Australian NSs. In terms of criticisms, these included their frequency of use of the CFs “expression of disagreement” and “suggestion”, and the total amount of talk that they produced in criticism realization. Regarding criticism responses, they were similar to the target group in their use of “partial acceptance of criticisms” strategies, the CRF “explanation”, and in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticism responses.

An investigation of individual cases of learners and Australian NSs also revealed that although the difference between the two groups was significant, there was an overlap between them on all the above measures and that variability existed within each group. Therefore, not every learner was found to differ from the target group.

5.2. DISCUSSION

This study tends to support the claim made in the current ILP research that L2 pragmatic knowledge is incomplete for many learners, not excluding advanced ones (see Ellis, 1994 for a review). Indeed, the learners in this study seemed to exhibit very different sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic choices from the NS group in realizing both criticisms and criticism responses. A number of interplaying factors may have explained for these differences. They included learners' limited L2 linguistic competence and lack of fluency in the L2, which seemed to load their processing capability under communicative pressure, their lack of L2 pragmatic knowledge, and the influence of L1 pragmatics.

5.2.1. Learners' sociopragmatic competence

In terms of criticism realization the learners tended to be less direct than the Australian NSs. This was evident from their use of a smaller number of direct criticisms such as "identifications of problem". However, this lower level of directness did not necessarily mean that their criticisms were softer, according to the target norms. On the contrary, the learners tended to resort to quite 'offensive' indirect criticisms such as through a "demand" (e.g. "***you must pay attention to grammar", "you must give more fact more evidence***"), the use of which, according to Murphy and Neu (1996), may create an impression that they dictated the behavior of the hearer when they actually did not intend to do so. They also appeared to make fewer attempts to reduce the potential disruptive effects of their criticisms by employing noticeably fewer modifiers than the Australian L1 group. As Brown and Levinson (1987) pointed out (see Chapter 2 for more detail), face needs to be continually attended to in the process of communication and face-threatening

speech acts, therefore, need to be softened so that politeness can be achieved. The learners' under-use of modifiers seemed to fail them in this regard.

The learners' different sociopragmatic choices continued to be reflected in their reliance on a large percentage of "total resistance to criticisms" strategies, which the Australian NSs only very rarely used. It should be noted that this could not have been due to differences in the weights of the given criticism between the two groups, since they were found not to differ in the topic of criticisms, except in the case of grammar on which the learners made more comments (M =1.6, SD =7.0 for the learners, compared to M =.10, SD =.15 for the NS group, $\chi 2$ =13.757, df = 1, p =.001).

The tendency to resist criticisms was also evident from the learners' effort to struggle towards reaching an agreement with the critic during the interaction. For example, up to 33.7% of the time the learners attempted to justify themselves by arguing against the interlocutor or persuading the latter to withdraw his or her criticism. Up to 6.1% of the time they challenged the criticism by seeking further evidence of their wrongdoing or seeking a chance for further negotiation with the critic. Logically, this may help to explain the gap between the learners and the Australian NSs in terms of their produced amount of talk. Specifically, as the learners negotiated more, they also produced more words than their Australian counterparts, whose conversations were mainly made up of single-word agreements such as "Yes" or "Okay".

Generally, these findings seem to be very much in line with Pearson (1986), who, in a study on agreement and disagreement in spontaneous conversation, found that the NSs of American English tried to avoid disagreement as much as possible. They, thus, seem to

lend support to Pearson (ibid.) and Brown and Yule's claim (1983, p.12, cited in Pearson) that English NSs "do not typically challenge each other do not argue …" and therefore conversational participants are usually expected to agree but not disagree with one another. If we recall Leech's Agreement Maxim (1983, p.132) (see Chapter 2), which specifies politeness as an effort to "minimize disagreement between self and other" and "maximize agreement between self and other", we will see that the learners' behavior in this study did not seem to fit into the maxim. Obviously, with this idiosyncratic tendency to disagree, they would almost be likely to make themselves assertive critics, should they be involved in the peer feedback task with an Australian NS.

In terms of their use of criticism response modifiers, no differences were found between the learners and the Australian NS group because the latter reduced the number of modifiers that they employed compared to the case of criticisms. The lesser use of modifiers by Australian NSs in this case can be explained by their great use of agreements, which probably did not need much hedging. The learners, in contrast, employed a great number of disagreements. Yet, they did not employ considerably more modifiers than the NSs. Thus, the lack of differences between them and the NSs in this case still indicates an under-use of modifiers on their part.

Notably, the learners also tended to vary more in their choices of CSs and CRSs compared to the Australian NSs. This could suggest that they were uncertain of the appropriate norms of criticizing and responding to criticisms in the target language. Thus, there did not appear to be a common rule of choice within the group. For example, when it came to criticism responses, while the NSs were relatively constant in their tendency to agree with rather than challenge the interlocutor, the learners seemed to be more divided between

“acceptance” and “resistance”. All these findings were very much in line with Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), who also found a larger variability in learners’ behavior as compared with NSs.

5.2.2. Learners’ pragmalinguistic competence

There was overwhelming evidence of an incomplete L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge found for most of the learners in this study. For example, they tended to strikingly deviate from the NSs in the way they linguistically realized and mitigated their criticisms and criticism responses. This was the case even when they employed the same CFs or CRFs as the Australian NSs, a finding that would support what Cohen claimed (1996 cited in Rose and Kasper, 2001). For instance, when the learners opted for “identifications of problem” to criticize their peers, they were more likely to announce the problem rather than just describe it (e.g. "***You use some wrong words in spelling, yeah?", "You put the advantages and disadvantages in the wrong way", "Yeah wrong word use", "Ah you have incorrect using phrase***", etc). This could have made their criticisms sound quite untactful to the interlocutor. Also, their “suggestions” were at times more imposing ("***Why don't you ah break up the paragraph from "however" here?***") and “disagreements” more assertive: "***I don't agree with you about this word***".

Likewise, they also did not seem to use the same modifiers as their NS counterparts, for example, "past tense with present time reference", and made use of those that the NSs did not often use such as "appealers". Interestingly, even when they used the same modifiers, the linguistic features were also so noticeably different as to possibly produce a different effect. An illustrating example would be the case of "sweeteners", which seemed to

replicate Takahashi and Beebe's (1993, p. 141) finding that the 'positive remarks' that Japanese ESL learners gave to preface a criticism "were so lukewarm that a native speaker would hardly call them positive or feel comfortable with them". They also tended to rely on lexical forms ("understaters", "subjectivizers", "downtoners", and so on) rather than syntactic structures (modal verbs and "past tense") in realization of these modifiers.

When it came to criticism responses, the learners quite often showed themselves to be abrupt and over-explicit interlocutors. They tended to, for instance, express "disagreement" by directly refuting the critic's opinion, imposing their own ideas, claiming freedom of thought, challenging the critic, or even questioning the validity of the criticism, which would be quite unnatural for NSs of English. Especially, they often resorted to the explicit expression "***I disagree***", a finding consistent with what Pearson (1984) found with his Japanese EFL learners.

Notably, as in the case of CSs and CRSs, the learners also tended to vary more among themselves than the Australian NSs in their use of CFs and CRFs. For example, when criticizing, 100% of the NSs consistently avoided giving "demands for change", whereas only 47.2% of the learners did so. This variety among the learners became even more obvious when the learners were interviewed about their choice of "demand" (see Chapter 8). Of 19 learners who employed this CF, for instance, 12 respondents thought it was an appropriate choice in the case one wishes to emphasize his or her criticism or mention rules and obligations. Only seven respondents thought it was too strong a criticism. Obviously, they were very different in their L2 perception of "demand", thus suggesting a lack of L2 pragmatic knowledge.

5.2.3. Concluding remarks

Generally, there may have been a number of intertwining factors that contributed to the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic decisions that the learners made in performing criticisms and criticism responses. Firstly, it could be their limited L2 linguistic competence, as seen in the absence of grammaticalized modifiers. Secondly, it could be their lack of the necessary L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge to be able to perform more sophisticated and tactful criticisms and criticism responses. For example, when commenting on the use of such bald "disagreements" as "***I don't agree***" or "***I disagree***", many learners reported generalizing this use due to a lack of the knowledge of how to perform disagreements: "***From the beginning I learned the verbs "agree" and "disagree", so when I want to express my agreement and disagreement I just say "I agree" or "I disagree***". Furthermore, learners' L1 sociopragmatic knowledge might have influenced their choice of strategies and semantic formulas to realize criticisms and criticism responses. For example, the interview data (see Chapter 8) tended to confirm that the learners' substantial use of "advice" was perhaps influenced by their L1 transfer-induced misconception of this CF. In this post hoc interview, a majority of the learners (69%) reported considering "giving advice" as a polite indirect way of giving criticisms and were unaware that it was not always desirable according to NS norms.

Another factor of no less importance was what Kasper (1982) referred to as the practice of modality reduction due to a lack of control over language production under communicative pressure. Indeed, the abundant number of demands made by the learners would be a good example of this practice. In the ***post hoc*** interview, while many learners revealed a sociopragmatic misconception of "demand", a majority of them also mentioned

that they were unable to make other choices due to the competing demands on information processing under the pressure of spontaneous language production. When they could exert control over their speech, for instance, as in the written questionnaire (see Chapter 4), they obviously decreased the use of this 'offensive' CF. Interestingly, however, the learners' under-use of criticism modifiers might not have been entirely attributed to this factor. Although when asked, a number of learners reported deliberately reducing modality to give priority to message clarity when prompt speech was in need, they did not use a greater number of modifiers in the written questionnaire, the pressure-free condition of which might have enabled them to attend to 'politeness' in addition to conveying intended messages. Presumably, they were also influenced by the norms of their L1 which makes little use of modifiers (see Chapter 7).

Overall**,** like many other ILP studies (see Ellis, 1994; Rose, 2000 for a review), the present study also found a number of idiosyncratic pragmatic features which adversely affected how the learners expressed their intentions via speech act realizations. Although a few similarities were found between the learners and the target group, (e.g. their frequency of use of some CFs such as "expression of disagreement", "advice", "suggestion" and CRFs such as "explanation"), these similarities were outnumbered by the idiosyncrasies. This should not come as a surprise, though, as the complexity of speech acts like criticisms and criticism responses often creates considerable difficulty for speakers, including NSs. As Murphy and Neu (1996) put it, even NSs need to preplan how to perform challenging speech acts. Thus, it is to be expected that the learners at times failed to express themselves appropriately.

Nonetheless, it would be unreasonable to equate every pragmatic feature in the learners' criticisms and criticism responses that is different from the NS use with a pragmatic failure. In fact, the learners' "disarmers" may have been as effective as any "disarmers" used by the Australian NSs although they did not necessarily sound as 'native'. Also, their lack of a variety of linguistic structures for realizing some internal modifiers such as understaters, downtoners, their ignorance of the NS use of past tense structures to express modality, their avoidance of modal structures, and over-reliance on lexicalized modifiers simply reflects their incomplete L2 knowledge rather than a failure to be polite.

Regarding criticism responses, the learners' "seeking help" utterances (e.g. "***Can you correct this sentence for me?***"; "***So what transition do you think that better?***") and "offer of repair" (e.g***. "Yes so I think I will change"; "I'll make some correction later***") did not seem to fail to signal their "acceptance of the criticism". Likewise, their frequent references to their own acts as "mistakes", or "problems", or even "weaknesses" (e.g. "***yes that's my mistake", "yes, that's my weakness***") do not necessarily constitute less appropriate "agreements" than the Australian NSs'.

CHAPTER 6:

PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT

IN THE LEARNERS' CRITICISMS AND CRITICISM RESPONSES

The present chapter aims to answer Research Question 2: "To what extent was pragmatic development evident in the performance of criticisms and criticism responses by the learners of different proficiency levels?" To this end, it will compare three proficiency groups of learners (high beginners, intermediate learners, and advanced learners) in terms of their use of these two speech acts. Reference to how the Australian NSs used these two speech acts will also be made in order to examine the extent to which each proficiency group approximates the target norms.

This chapter is composed of two major sections: results and discussion. The results section presents sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of the learners' criticisms and criticism responses. It is based on the role play data only, as was mentioned in Chapter 4. The discussion section follows and makes use of all relevant data from three sources: the role-play, the questionnaire, and the ***post hoc*** interview, to shed light on the development of the learners' L2 pragmatic competence.

6.1. RESULTS

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the concepts of sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics in the current study are notionally defined based on Leech (1983). Accordingly, sociopragmatic aspects in this chapter include the participants' choices of broad strategies to realize criticisms and criticism responses and their overall judgments of whether or not to modify these criticisms and criticism responses. Pragmalinguistic aspects, on the other hand, involve the choices of semantic formulas as pragmatic

routines, the actual wording, and the amount of talk that the participants produced in realizing criticisms and criticism responses, and their choice of specific external and internal modification to these speech acts. Again, as was argued in Chapter 5, although the choices of semantic formulas as conventions of means are mainly addressed from the pragmalinguistic perspective, it is acknowledged that these choices in some cases can be a sociopragmatic factor.

The statistical procedures utilized in the present chapter include one-way ANOVA to test the differences in means among the three groups of participants, and the Kruskal-Wallis test, which is similar to ANOVA but employed in the absence of a normal distribution of data. Where significant differences were found, LSD ***post hoc*** ANOVA and manual calculations were also used to find where the differences lay. The level of significance was set at .05. Only significant differences in the participants' performance are reported here. Other results are presented in Appendix 7.

6.1.1. Sociopragmatic aspects

6.1.1.1. Sociopragmatic aspects of criticisms

6.1.1.1.1. Criticism strategies

The results of a one-way ANOVA test run for the mean difference of each broad criticism strategy revealed that the three proficiency groups of learners did not significantly vary from one another (direct criticisms: F = .354, df = 2, not significant at ***p*** >.05; indirect criticisms: F = .283, df = 2, not significant at ***p*** **>.**05, see Table 6.1 in Appendix 7). When compared with the Australian NS group, however, they all deviated considerably from this group in the use of direct criticisms (F = 4.034, df =3, significant at ***p*** =.013) and indirect criticisms (F = 4.206, df =3, significant at ***p*** =.011)

(Table 6.2). The ***post hoc*** manual calculations also revealed a ***p*** value lower than the .05 level for the differences between each group and the Australian NS group. Indeed, as seen in Figure 6.1, all three learner groups employed far fewer direct criticisms but noticeably more indirect criticisms than the Australian NS group.

Table 6.2: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for the differences in mean number of CSs produced by three groups of learners and Australian NS group

Group		High beginners N = 12	Inter. learners N = 12	Advanced learners N = 12	Australian NSs N = 12	***F***	***P***
Direct	***f***	137 / 242	66 / 133	125 / 222	83 / 120	4.034	.013
criticisms	***M***	.56	.52	.58	.77		
	SD	.21	.14	.18	.21		
	%	56.6	49.6	56.3	69.2		
Indirect	***f***	105 / 242	67 / 133	97 / 222	37 / 120	4.206	.011
criticisms	***M***	.43	.47	.42	.22		
	SD	.21	.14	.17	.21		
	%	43.4	50.4	43.7	30.8		

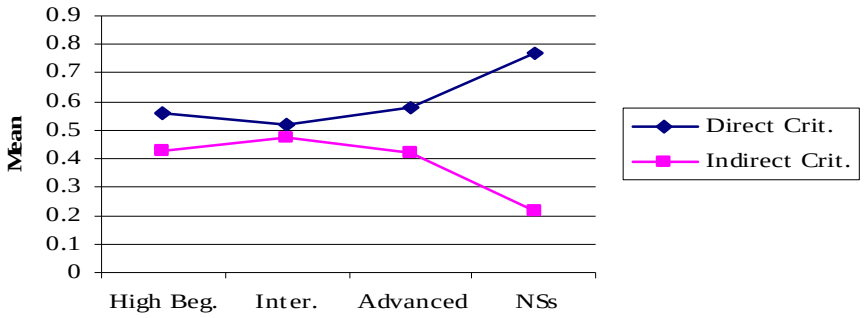


Figure 6.1: Mean number of direct and indirect criticisms produced by three proficiency groups of learners and Australian NSs

6.1.1.1.2. Criticism modifiers

Table 6.3 illustrates how often the learners of different proficiency groups modified the illocutionary force of their criticisms. Generally, it showed that the advanced and the intermediate learners tended to soften their criticisms more frequently than their high beginner fellow learners. Indeed, the total number of modifiers tended to increase significantly with proficiency from an average of only .98 per CF for the high beginners to 2.2 per CF for the intermediate and 1.7 per CF for the advanced learners (χ^2 = 13.491, df =2, ***p*** <.05). This was also the case when the learners were compared on the measures of the total number of external (χ^2 =12.538, df = 2, ***p*** <.05) and internal modifiers (χ^2 =6.371, df =2, ***p*** <.05).

Table 6.3: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of criticism modifiers among three groups of learners

Group:	High beginners (N =12)			Intermediate (N =12)			Advanced (N =12)			c^2	***P***
Modifiers	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
External modifiers	105/ 242	.38	.25	117/ 133	1.3	1.0	160/ 222	.74	.42	12.538	.002
Internal modifiers	153/ 242	.59	.18	108/ 133	.87	.50	215/ 222	.96	.38	6.371	.041
Total modifiers	258/ 242	.98	.30	225/ 133	2.2	1.2	375/ 222	1.7	.58	13.491	.001

Manual calculations made for each of the three learners groups revealed the existence of differences between the high beginners and both the intermediate learners (***p*** =.001) and the advanced learners (***p*** =.008). However, no differences were found between the two latter groups (***p*** =.265). Specifically, the high beginners lagged far behind both the intermediate learners and the advanced learners in the frequency with which they used external modifiers (***p*** =.001 and .028, respectively) and they lagged behind the advanced learners in the frequency with which they used internal modifiers (***p*** =.006).

These differences became even more obvious when individual cases within each group were examined. Appendix 8 shows that on the measure of total number of modifiers, all twelve high beginners fell below the mean of 1.6 (i.e. the mean calculated for all learners as a whole group – see Chapter 5), whereas only three out of 12 intermediate learners and six of out twelve advanced learners did so. On the measure of external modifiers, only one high beginner scored above the mean of .83 (ditto), as compared with seven intermediate and four advanced learners. Similarly, on the measure of internal modifiers, while none of the twelve high beginners scored above the mean of .81 (ditto), six intermediate and six advanced learners were well above it (Appendix 8).

Despite the remarkably higher means demonstrated by the higher proficiency learners, all three groups of learners considerably lagged behind the Australian NSs on the measure of the total number of modifiers ($\chi 2 = 31.501$, df =3, ***p*** = .001), the number of external modifiers ($\chi 2 = 25.888$, df =3, ***p*** = .001), and the number of internal modifiers ($\chi 2 = 22.618$, df =3, ***p*** = .001) (also see Figure 6.2). The ***post hoc*** manual calculations also found a ***p*** value lower than the .05 level for the difference between each group and the Australian NS group on these three measures.

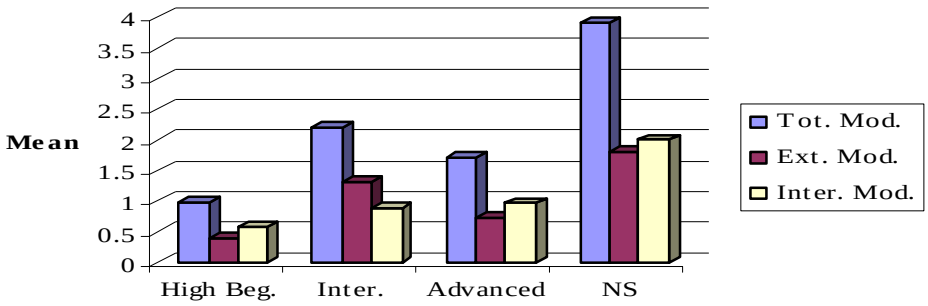


Figure 6.2: Total number of criticism modifiers, external modifiers, and internal modifiers produced by three groups of learners and Australian NSs

An examination of the individual cases of learners (see Appendix 8) showed that on the level of the total number of modifiers, only one intermediate learner had a mean higher than the mean of the Australian NS group (M = 3.9). In terms of external modifiers, again, only this learner and two others from her group possessed a mean higher than the mean displayed by the Australian NS group (M = 1.8). In terms of internal modifiers, none of the learners achieved the mean of the Australian NS group.

6.1.1.2. Sociopragmatic aspects of criticism responses

6.1.1.2.1. Criticism response strategies

According to the results of a Kruskal-Wallis test, the learners of different proficiency levels did not significantly differ in terms of the frequency with which they used three broad CRSs: "total acceptance of criticisms" (χ^2 = .977, df = 2, ***p*** >.05), "partial acceptance of criticisms" (χ^2 = 1.353, df = 2, ***p*** >.05) and "total resistance to criticisms" (χ^2 = .874, df = 2, ***p*** >.05) (see Table 6.4 in Appendix 7).

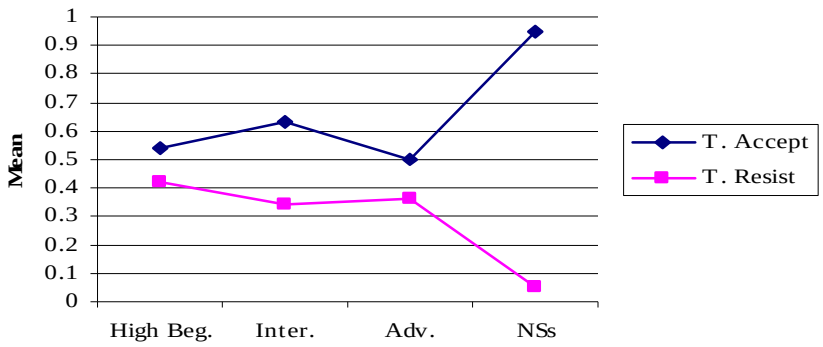


Figure 6.3: Mean number of CRSs "total acceptance" and "total resistance" produced by the three proficiency groups of learners and Australian NSs.

When compared with the Australian NS group, all of the three proficiency groups of learners notably varied from this group in the frequency of use of "total acceptance of

criticisms" (χ^2 = 15.312, df =3, significant at ***p*** =.002) and "total resistance to criticisms" (χ^2 = 12.970, df =3, significant at ***p*** =.005) with manually calculated ***post hoc p*** values lower than the .05 level for the respective differences between each group and the Australian NSs (Table 6.5). Specifically, the learners all tended to accept the criticism far less frequently and resist it far more than the Australian NS group (Figure 6.3). No significant differences were found in the frequencies with which four groups used "partial acceptance of criticisms" (χ^2 = 3.892, df =3, ***p*** > .05)

Table 6.5: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs "total acceptance of criticism" and "total resistance of criticism" produced by three groups of learners and Australian NS group

CR strategies	Group:	High beginners (N = 12)	Inter. learners (N = 12)	Advanced learners (N = 12)	Australian NS (N = 12)	χ^2	***P***
	F	39 / 75	30 / 44	26 / 49	54 / 57	15.312	.002
Total acceptance	***M***	.54	.63	.50	.95		
	SD	.19	.38	.33	.12		
	%	52.0	68.2	53.1	95.0		
Total resistance	***F***	33 / 75	14 / 44	21 / 49	3 / 57	12.970	.005
	M	.38	.33	.34	.05		
	SD	.22	.37	.32	.12		
	%	44.0	31.8	42.9	5.0		

6.1.1.2.2. Criticism response modifiers

According to the results of a Kruskal-Wallis test, no significant differences were found among the learners at three different proficiency levels regarding how frequently they modified their criticism responses (χ^2 = 2.557, df = 2, not significant at ***p*** >.05) (see Table 6.6 in Appendix 7). Also, no significant differences were found between these

three groups and the Australian NS group in this regard (χ^2 = 6.231, df = 3, not significant at ***p*** >.05) (see Table 6.7 in Appendix 7).

6.1.2. Pragmalinguistics aspects

6.1.2.1. Pragmalinguistic aspects of criticisms

6.1.2.1.1. Criticism formulas

A Kruskal-Wallis test run for the mean differences between all the major CFs (those which occurred in at least 9.0% of the total number of the CFs for one of the compared groups) indicated that learners at different proficiency levels did not necessarily differ in the frequency with which they used these CFs ("expression of disagreement": χ^2 = 2.761, df =2, ***p*** >.05; "identification of problem": χ^2 = 1.185, df = 2, ***p*** >.05; "demand": χ^2 = .461, df = 2, ***p*** > .05; "advice": χ^2 = .185, df = 2, ***p*** >.05; "suggestion": χ^2 = .012, df = 2, ***p*** >.05) (see Table 6.8 in Appendix 7).

Table 6.9: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of "identifications of problem" and "demands" by three groups of learners and Australian NS group

CFs	Group:	High beginners (N = 12)	Intermediate learners (N = 12)	Advanced learners (N = 12)	Australian NS (N = 12)	χ^2	***P***
Iden. of problem	***F***	85 / 242	45 / 133	88 / 222	62 / 120	9.708	.021
	M	.29	.28	.40	.57		
	SD	.14	.17	.22	.27		
Demand	***F***	24 / 242	15 / 133	17 / 222	0 / 120	9.478	.024
	M	.07	.10	.05	.00		
	SD	.07	.14	.08	.00		

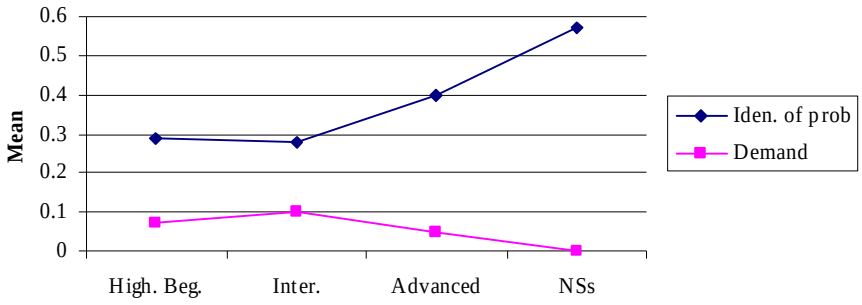


Figure 6.4: Mean number of "identifications of problem" and "demands" produced by three groups of learners and Australian NS group

When compared with the Australian NS group, the Kruskal-Wallis tests with manual ***post*** hoc calculations show that the learners all significantly varied from this group in the frequency with which they used "identifications of problem" (χ^2 = 9.708, df = 3, significant at ***p*** =.021) (except for the advanced learner group) and "demands" (χ^2 = 9.478, df =3, significant at ***p*** =.024), but not in the frequency with which they used "advice" (χ^2 = 6.103, df = 3, ***p*** >.05) and "suggestions" (χ^2 = .406, df = 3, ***p*** >.05) (Table 6.9). Figure 6.4 showed that the learners employed a far smaller number of "identifications of problem" (except for the advanced learner group) but a considerably greater number of "demands".

6.1.2.1.2. Amount of talk in criticism realizations

The amount of talk was measured by the total number of words produced by each group of learners in realizing criticisms. A one-way ANOVA test with LSD ***post hoc*** run for these three proficiency groups found a significant difference among them (F = 4.864, df = 2, significant at ***p*** = .014), specifically between the high beginners and the advanced learners (***p*** = .006) and between the intermediate learners and the advanced

learners (***p*** = .021). No such significant differences were found between the high beginners and the intermediate learners (***p*** = .624) (Figure 6.5).

Table 6.10 also shows that the advanced group produced an average number of 158.2 words per criticism, far exceeding the beginning and intermediate groups, who produced an average number of 89.7 and 101.3 per criticism respectively. Also, when these three groups of learners were compared with the Australian NS group, no significant difference was found (F = 1.997, df = 3, ***p*** >.05).

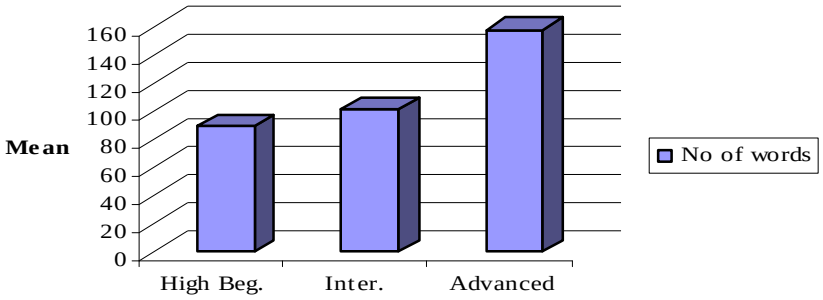


Figure 6.5: Mean number of words per criticism produced by three groups of learners

Table 6.10: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for differences in the mean number of words per criticism produced by three groups of learners

Group	High beginners (N = 12)	Intermediate (N = 12)	Advanced (N = 12)	***F***	***P***
Frequency	5,876 / 75	4,099 / 44	7,253 / 49	4.864	.014
Mean	89.7	101.3	158.2		
Std Deviation	65.7	38.3	64.5		

6.1.2.1.3. Actual wording of criticism formula realizations

Another area where learners from the different proficiency groups varied was their actual linguistic realizations of CFs. Take "suggestions" as an example. As can be seen from Table 6.11, while the high beginners and the intermediate learners tended to rely on a relatively narrow range of linguistic structures to realize their "suggestions" (four out of the eight structures listed), the advanced learners seemed to use a variety of linguistic structures, ranging from the simpler "***can***" and "***why don't you***" to the more complex "Infinitive" and "Conditional clauses" with and without modality. Between the two former groups, the intermediate learners no longer employed "***can***" as their main way of suggesting (only four out of 16 instances). On the contrary, they used more "conditional clauses" (six out of 16 cases) and other structures (five out of 16 cases). In comparison, out of 22 instances, the high beginners employed "***can***" up to 13 times, and made use of other structures far less often.

Consider the following examples of "suggestions" by high beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners:

High beginners:

(1) ***But (.) hmm I think you can link it in ah at the end of uh the first part of your body.***

(2) ***You can you can say that you think public transport help people prevent against some disease caused by air pollution or something like that I think it's better.***

Intermediate learners:

(3) ***But I think it's better if you can have ah [prediction ah = about the future so I think yeah in general it (.) that will be better if you write the conclusion paragraph, I think.***

(4) ***So I think that this paragraph <u>for me if I write this essay I will MOVE</u> this paragraph in the ah (.)***

Advanced learners:

(5) ***<u>I wonder if it's better to use</u> more (.) I mean transitional signals/ uh, more cohesive devices. that will ah make your writing more coH:Esive and therefore coH:Erence will be better.***

(6) ***So <u>why don't you ah break up</u> the paragraph from "however" here? yes, so I think that <u>if I were you I would divide</u> it into 2 paragraphs and ah (.)***

(7) ***<u>I suggest that you USE</u> you give MORE specific details (.) causing environmental pollution in WHAT WAY for example <the main reason in> ah you see?/yeah, more specific examples and ah (.)***

Table 6.11: "Suggestions" used by three groups of learners (by frequency count)

Realization structures: / Group:	Beginners ***(N =12)***	Inter. ***(N =12)***	Advanced (***N =12)***
Can (e.g. ***You can +V***)	13	4	3
Why don't you	0	0	2
I suggest (***e.g. I suggest that you + V***)	0	0	1
Infinitive (***e.g. It's better + V inf.***)	0	0	5
Infinitive + modal (***e.g. It can/could/would be better + V inf.***)	1	1	1
Conditional (***e.g. If-clause***)	4	6	7
Conditional + modal (***e.g. If-clause with modal verb***)	0	0	3
Others	4	5	4
Total	22	16	26

"Demand" was another case where the learners from different proficiency groups differed from one another. As indicated in Table 6.12, while the beginners' "demands" were largely realized by means of obligation-statements with "***must***", the intermediate and advanced learners seemed to prefer "***have to***". Indeed, the ratio between "***must"*** and "***have to***" in terms of their relative frequencies of occurrence in the beginners' data was

12 to 1, whereas the corresponding ratio was only 6 to 9 for the intermediate learners, and became even smaller for the advanced learners: 3 to 6. The advanced learners also made use of a wider variety of linguistic structures to realize "demand", which was evident from their use of other structures as well (e.g. "***It is required that***", "***It is necessary that***", etc) in addition to the common "***must***", "***have to***", and "***need to***".

Table 6.12: "Demand" used by the three groups of learners (by frequency count)

Group:	Beginners ***(N =12)***	Intermediate ***(N =12)***	Advanced (***N =12)***
Must	12	6	3
Have to	1	9	6
Need to	11	0	5
Others	0	0	3
Total	24	15	17

Compare the following "demands" given by different groups of learners:

High beginners:

(1) ***I think if you hmm (.) use this to be the conclusion of the body you must put it ahead and then you support your idea.***

(2) ***AND ah I think in the conclusion I think you ah you (.) MUST show your idea CLEARLY, you support for ah you agree with this statement or you disagree with this statement.***

(3) ***But ah but I think in this essay you need to find another way.***

Intermediate learners:

(4) ***You have to talk about your opinion in your summary.***

(5) ***You have to have in your introduction, firstly background information, secondly your opinion about the ah using public transport.***

(6) ***So you have to <LOOK THROUGH your essay AND check it AGAIN>***

(7) ***But I think that <every problem (.2) must be seen from TWO sides>/ hmm (.) there must be 2 sides here (.) there must be TWO-SIDE conclusion (.5) okay?***

Advanced learners:

(8) ***I mean you need to summarize the main points. And you need to refer back to what you have been disCU:SSing about and here hmmm (.)***

(9) ***Hmm when you say using public transport, it is necessary to give a definition, what the public transport is.***

(10) ***But here you are required to write about the general situation people should not ah people SHOULD use only public transport to commute ah to here each day/ yes it's my opinion.***

6.1.2.1.4. Choice of modifiers to criticisms

6.1.2.1.4.1. External modifiers

The learners of different proficiency levels did not exhibit differences in their preferences for particular types of external modifier. Generally, they all preferred "sweeteners" to the other three types, of which they favored "disarmers" and "grounders" over "steers". For example, Table 6.13 shows that "sweeteners" made up 40.0% of the total number of external modifiers in the high beginners' data, and 70.9% and 40.3% respectively for the intermediate and advanced groups. "Sweeteners" were followed immediately by "grounders" (24.8%, 14.5%, and 23.8% for the high beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners, respectively) and "disarmers" (high beginner: 23.8%, intermediate learners: 9.4%, advanced learners: 23.8%). "Steers"

ranked last with 11.4% for the high beginners, 5.3% for the intermediate learners, and 11.3% for the advanced learners.

Figure 6.6 also shows that the high beginners and the advanced learners had very similar percentages in their use of different types of external modifiers, whereas the intermediate learners were outstanding because of their greater use of "sweeteners" and less frequent use of the other three types.

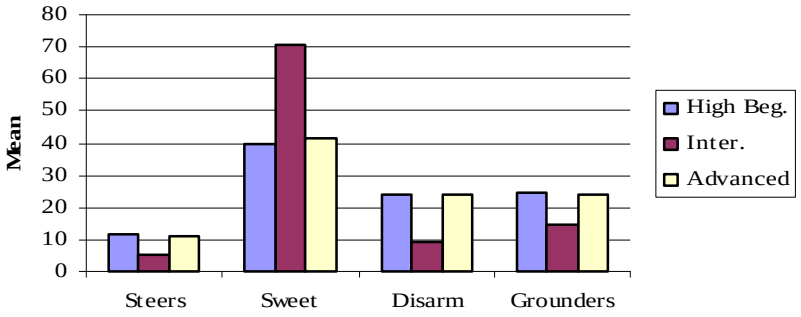


Figure 6.6: Different types of criticism external modifiers used by three learner groups

Table 6.13: Distribution of different types of criticism external modifiers by three groups of learners

Group: Types	High beginners (N =12)		Intermediate (N =12)		Advanced (N =12)	
	F	***%***	***F***	***%***	***F***	***%***
Steers	12 / 105	11.4	6 / 117	5.1	18 / 160	11.3
Sweeteners	42 / 105	40.0	83 / 117	70.9	66 / 160	41.3
Disarmers	25 / 105	23.8	11 / 117	9.4	38 / 160	23.8
Grounders	26 / 105	24.8	17 / 117	14.5	38 / 160	23.8

6.1.2.1.4.2. Internal modifiers

Of the five major types of internal modifiers (those which were used at least 9.0% of the time in one of the compared groups) – "hedges", "understaters", "downtoners", "subjectivizers", and "cajolers" - the learners significantly differed among themselves only in the use of "hedges" (χ^2 = 7.714, df = 2, significant at ***p*** = .021) and "cajolers" (χ^2 = 15.069, df = 2, significant at ***p*** = .001) (see Table 6.14 in Appendix 7 for the comparisons of "understaters", "downtowners", and "subjectivizers"). Table 6.15 shows that the more proficient the learners were, the more frequently they seemed to opt for these two types of modifiers. Indeed, while the high beginners' mean for "hedges" was only .005, it rose to .032 for the intermediate learners and to .087 for the advanced learners. In a similar way, the mean for "cajolers" was .00 for the high beginners, but increased to .03 for the intermediate group and .16 for the advanced group, marking them out as the most frequent users.

Table 6.15: "Hedges" and "cajolers" produced by three groups of learners

Group:	High beginners				Intermediate learners				Advanced learners			
	F	***M***	***SD***	***%***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***%***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***%***
Hedges	1/ 153	.005	.020	.7	5/ 108	.032	.080	4.5	21/ 215	.087	.130	9.8
Cajolers	0/ 153	.00	.00	.0	7/ 108	.03	.05	6.4	27/ 215	.16	.16	12.6

Manual ***post hoc*** calculations made for three groups in the use of "hedges" found a significant difference between the high beginners and the advanced learners (***p*** = .011), but not between the high beginners and the intermediate learners or between the intermediate learners and the advanced learners (***p*** >.05). Similar calculations made for the use of "cajolers" found a significant difference between the advanced learners and

both the high beginners (***p*** = .001) and intermediate learners (***p*** = .016), but not between the high beginners and the intermediate learners (***p*** >.05) (Figure 6.7).

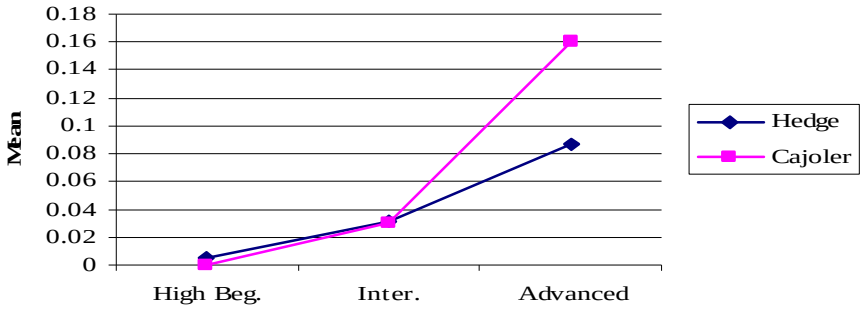


Figure 6.7: "Hedges" and "cajolers" produced by three proficiency groups of learners

When compared with the Australian group, all the three groups of learners significantly lagged behind the former in the frequency with which they used "syntactic modifiers" (χ^2 = 31.534, df = 3, significant at ***p*** = .001), "understaters" (χ^2 = 14.355, df = 3, significant at ***p*** = .002), and "hedges" (χ^2 = 13.727, df = 3, significant at ***p*** = .003) (Figure 6.8). The manual ***post hoc*** calculations also found a ***p*** value lower than the .05 level for each of these differences.

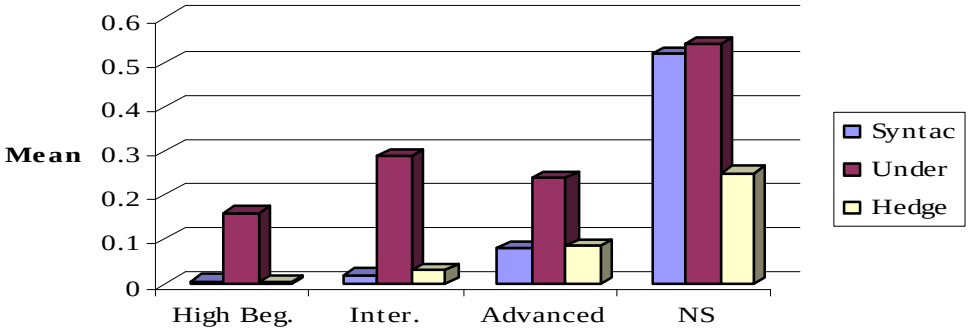


Figure 6.8: "Syntactic modifiers", "understaters", and "hedges" produced by three learners' groups and Australian NS group

An examination of individual cases (see Appendix 8) indicated that out of the 36 learners from the three groups, only one advanced learner produced a mean for "syntactic modifier" higher than the mean demonstrated by the Australian NS group (M = .57 for this learner, compared to M = .52 for the Australian NS group). Likewise, only one advanced learner and one intermediate learner had a mean for "understaters" higher than the mean displayed by the Australian NS group (M = .55 and 1.00 respectively for these two learners, compared to M = .54 for the Australian NS group). Also, only one advanced learner and one intermediate learner produced a mean for "hedges" higher than the mean produced by the target group (M = .45 and .28 for these two learners as opposed to M = .25 for the Australian NS group).

Table 6.16: Range of selected internal modifiers used by three groups of learners (by frequency counts)

Range: Group:	High Beginners (N =12)	Intermediate learners (N =12)	Advanced learners (N =12)
	F	***F***	***F***
1. Syntactic modifiers:			
May	3	2	6
Might	0	0	4
2. Hedges			
Sort of (kind of), tend to	0	0	2
Something (like that)	1	5	19
That sort of thing			
3. Understaters			
A little (bit)	1	0	7
Some, few	33	20	20
Not very (really), not many (enough), almost, slightly	5	4	8
Just / only	1	5	8
Quite / rather	0	0	10
4. Downtoners			
Maybe	10	12	14
Perhaps, probably, possibly	0	0	2

With regard to modifier realizations, Table 6.16 shows that the more proficient the learners became, the more varied their linguistic structures were. Indeed, while the high beginners and the intermediate learners used quite a few linguistic structures such as "***might***", "***sort (kind) of***", "***quite/ rather",*** "***probably/ perhaps/ possibly***", the advanced learners made use of all of the structures listed in the table.

6.1.2.2. Pragmalinguistic aspects of criticism responses

6.1.2.2.1. Criticism response formulas

The results of a Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant differences among the three groups of learners in their use of three major CRFs, namely "agreement with criticisms" (under the category of "total acceptance of criticisms") (χ^2 = .563, df = 2, ***p*** = .755), "disagreement with criticisms" (χ^2 = .217, df = 2, ***p*** = .897), and "justification" (χ^2 = 1.319, df = 2, ***p*** = .517) (under the category of "total resistance to criticisms") (see Table 6.17 in Appendix 7).

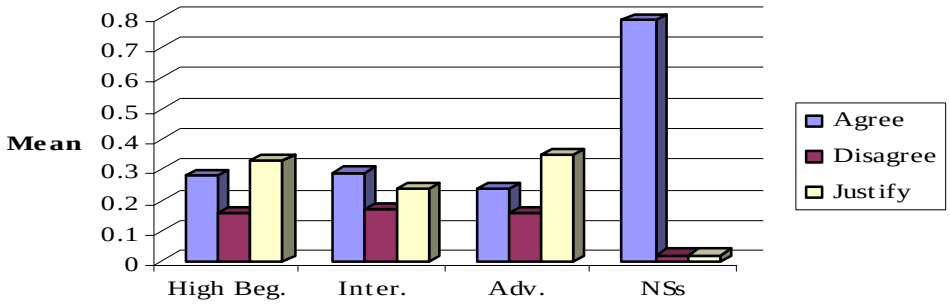


Figure 6.9: Mean number of "agreements", "disagreements", and "justifications" produced by three groups of learners and Australian NS group.

Yet, all the learners greatly deviated from the Australian NS group (agreement: χ^2 = 21.009, df = 3, ***p*** =.001; disagreement: χ^2 = 13.762, df =3, ***p*** =.003; justification: χ^2 =

16.746, df = 3, ***p*** =.001 with the manually calculated ***post hoc p*** values lower than .05 for each of these differences) (Figure 6.9). As indicated in Table 6.18, they all produced considerably fewer "agreements with criticisms" and far more "disagreements with criticisms" and "justifications".

Table 6.18: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of "agreements", "disagreements", and "justifications" produced by three groups of learners and the Australian NS group

CR formulas	Group:	High begin. (N = 12)	Inter. learners (N = 12)	Adv. learners (N = 12)	Aus. NSs (N = 12)	$\chi 2$	***P***
	F	56 / 203	36 / 104	56 / 217	84 / 104	21.009	.001
Agreement	***M***	.28	.29	.24	.79		
	SD	.13	.28	.21	.21		
	%	27.5	34.6	25.8	80.7		
Disagreement	***F***	37 / 203	18 / 104	40 / 217	2 / 104	13.762	.003
	M	.16	.17	.16	.02		
	SD	.11	.18	.11	.04		
	%	18.2	17.3	18.4	2.0		
Justification	***F***	71 / 203	31 / 104	74 / 217	2 / 104	16.746	.001
	M	.33	.24	.35	.02		
	SD	.18	.26	.23	.04		
	%	34.9	29.8	34.1	2.0		

6.1.2.2.2. Amount of talk in criticism response realizations

The results of a Kruskal-Wallis test indicated a significant difference among the three groups of learners regarding the total number of words per criticism response that they produced (χ^2 = 6.362, df = 2, ***p*** =.042). As in the case of criticisms, manual ***post hoc*** calculations showed that this difference lay between the advanced learners and both

the high beginners (p =.025) and intermediate learners (***p*** =.006), but not between the two latter groups (***p***> .05). Specifically, the advanced learners exceeded both of the lower proficiency groups, with an average of 92.5 words per criticism response for them, compared to the corresponding number of 61.7 for the high beginners and 49.2 for the intermediate group (Table 6.19).

Table 6.19: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of words produced by three groups of learners and Australian NSs

Group	High begin. (N = 12)	Inter. (N = 12)	Adv. (N = 12)	Aus. NS (N = 12)	$\chi 2$	***P***
Frequency	3,700 / 75	2,042 / 44	4,441 / 49	730 / 57	19.525	.001
Mean	61.7	49.2	92.5	16.5		
Std Deviation	58.9	44.4	50.8	22.5		

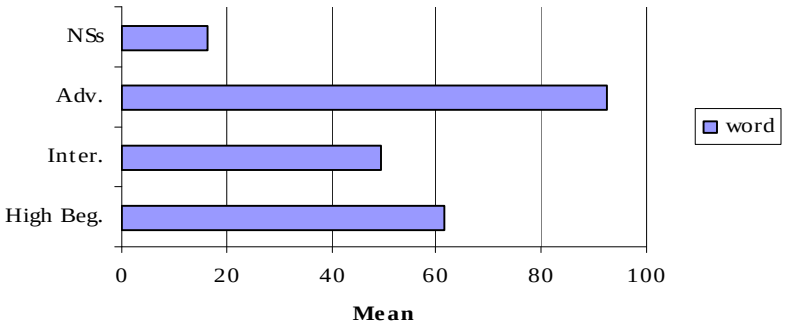


Figure 6.10: Number of words per criticism response produced by three learners' groups and Australian NSs

When compared with the Australian group, who produced only an average number of 16.9 words per criticism response, all three groups greatly exceeded this group (χ^2 =.2.192, df =3, significant at ***p*** = .001) (Figure 6.10). The manual ***post hoc*** calculations

also found ***p*** values lower than the .05 level for the differences between each learner group and the Australian NS group.

6.1.2.2.3. Actual wording in criticism response formula realizations

In terms of the content, the first feature that made low proficiency learners' criticism responses different from their higher proficiency peers' was that their criticism responses were often more repetitive – a characteristic typical of learners lacking in L2 fluency (Takahashi and Beebe, 1993). Consider the following criticism responses by high beginners, which were full of repetition:

(1) ***"I just said that I agree with the statement with the statement in the the topic the topic. And the body in the body of my writing I intended I intended to support my thought and in the first in the first paragraph of the body I did I did that but the problem is that I didn't have enough time to finish my writing/ yeah in the in the opening paragraph I I tell to the reader that I tell to the reader that I agree with the statement and in the body I would I would make them -I would try to persuade them to believe in my my thought yes and in the body you can you can see you can see that I support my thought so clearly"***

(2) "***yes because I I don't support or I don't resist public transport I just stand between/ yeah resist I don't support I don't resist it because I'm standing I stand between/ so I just indicate the advantage and disadvantage and it DEPENDS on it depends on one's hobby or condition it means I DEPEND ON ONE ONE'S HOBBY OR CONDITION. FOR ME I CHOOSE I CHOOSE PUBLIC TRANSPORT***"

The lower proficiency learners also seemed less effective in conveying their intended messages. At times, their criticism responses were unclear, non-elaborate, and thus difficult to comprehend:

(3) "***you mean the idea that people they can avoid disease and air pollution? <u>of course in this paragraph my main idea is the advantages of using public transport so this idea I think it defends how to I need I think that supporting sentences to support this idea are enough. I have mentioned M:Any ideas the supporting ideas BEFORE. of course if I put more than more than another supporting idea here it will make my essay L:ONGer and L:ONGer</u>***"

In example (3) the speaker disagreed with the criticism that he had not elaborated enough on the supporting ideas in his essay. He was thus trying to justify why he thought the criticism was unfair. However, he seemed to have difficulty expressing himself due to limited vocabulary.

(4) "***<u>I use "perhaps" because it is my opinion/ oh maybe but I think "perhaps" is is not means it not means no strong it only I want to express my opinion my OWN opinion</u>***"

In (4) the speaker was justifying why she used the word "perhaps" in her essay, in reply to the criticism that her idea would not sound strong enough. What she was trying to say was that she did not mean to be uncertain about the issue under discussion in the essay (***"it is not means it not means no strong"***). However, again, this learner seemed incapable of making her message comprehensible to the hearer.

Now consider how advanced learners responded in similar situations. In both of the following examples, the speakers provided a justification for what they did. In (5) the learner was criticized for presenting only one side of the argument and tried to argue that it was possible to do this. In (6) the learner was criticized for incorrect word usage (i.e. "***involve in***" instead of "***to be involved in***"). She did not agree with the criticism and gave reasons to justify herself. It seems that compared to the criticism responses illustrated in (3) and (4), both of these criticism responses were much more comprehensible and effective in terms of message clarity:

(5) ***yes there maybe some truth in what you say but yeah the thing is I think here we can have different ways of attacking a task/ this is one of the ways you know and your way is very is also very good you present both sides of the problem and then come to some sort of personal opinion. that's a very good one but I want to go directly to the point, I want to support directly to my point so I just say try to PRESENT some sort of arguments FOR the idea it doesn't mean I'm against it"***

(6) "***is there a difference between "involve in" and "to be involved in" "to be involved in public transport"? sometimes I'm not sure in this in this case but sometimes passive and I mean the active are the same meaning".***

6.1.2.2.4. Actual wording in criticism response modifier realizations

Although the learners in the different groups did not differ in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticism responses, they seemed to produce a different range of internal modifiers. Table 6.20 illustrates the range of internal modifiers that each group displayed. As can be seen, the high beginners and the intermediate learners showed a more limited range of linguistic realization structures than their advanced peers. For example, their "syntactic modifiers" were only realized by the modal structure "***would***" (eleven out of eleven instances for the high beginners and two out of two instances for the intermediate learners) whereas the advanced learners made use of all the listed modal structures (three instances of "***may***", three instances of "***might***", and three instances of "***would***"). Also, for "hedges", the less proficient learners did not employ "***sort of***" and "***kind of***", phrases that the advanced group employed, but rather drew on the simple structure "***something like that***". Regarding "understaters", the two lower proficiency groups also seemed to use quite a narrow range of

structures such as "***some/sometimes***" and "***just/only***" and did not use such structures as "***a little bit***", "***not very (really)/ not many (enough)/ almost/ slightly***", and "***quite/rather***".

Table 6.20: Range of internal modifiers used by three groups of learners

Range: Group:	Beginners (N =12)	Inter. (N =12)	Advanced (N =12)
	F	***F***	***F***
1. Syntactic modifiers:			
May	0	0	3
Might	0	0	3
Would	11	2	3
2. Hedges			
Sort of (kind of), tend to	0	0	4
Something (like that), that sort of thing	0	1	4
3. Understaters			
A little (bit)	0	0	1
Some, sometimes	9	3	4
Not very (really), not many (enough), almost, slightly	0	0	4
Just, only	2	3	3
Quite / rather	0	1	5

6.1.3. Summary of findings

This chapter has compared the three different proficiency groups' performance of criticisms and criticism responses in order to address the issue of L2 pragmatic development with regard to these two speech acts. Overall, the main findings can be summarized as follows:

At the sociopragmatic level:

(1) No differences were found in the learners' use of CSs and CRSs as they became more proficient in the L2. They all performed similarly but deviated considerably from the Australian NS group.

(2) The only difference among the three groups was the greater use of criticism modifiers (but not criticism response modifiers) by the more proficient learners (intermediate and advanced learners) as compared to the high beginners. However, despite this difference, the higher proficiency learners still modified their criticisms far less frequently than the Australian NSs.

At the pragmalinguistic level:

(3) Again, no differences were found in terms of the learners' use of CFs and CRFs as they became more proficient in the L2. They all performed similarly but differed significantly from the Australian NS group.

(4) However, in terms of the amount of talk, the advanced learners produced much longer criticisms and criticism responses than their intermediate and high beginner peers whereas no such differences were found between the two latter groups. Nor were such differences found when the three groups of learners were compared with the Australian NSs in terms of the number of words they produced per criticism. Nonetheless, when it came to criticism responses, the learners, irrespective of their proficiency level, differed from the Australian NSs, who produced much less talk.

(5) As the learners became more proficient in the L2, they tended to draw on a wider range of linguistic devices for realizing criticisms and criticism responses. This was the case for the realizations of both CFs and CRFs and internal modifiers.

(6) Finally, regarding the choice of internal modifiers, of the five major types ("hedges", "understaters", "downtoners", "subjectivizers", and "cajolers"), the advanced and intermediate learners tended to employ "hedges" and "cajolers" more frequently to mitigate their criticisms, but not criticism responses.

The results seem to indicate that the differences found among the learners were pragmalinguistic rather than sociopragmatic. Also, although the higher proficiency learners may have performed better than their lower proficiency peers in some aspects (e.g. the frequency of use of modifiers, the range of linguistic realization devices, and so on), they still fell short of full native-like performance of the two speech acts. For example, they were more verbose than the NSs in realizing their criticism responses. They also modified their criticisms noticeably less frequently and experienced considerable difficulty in realizing these modifiers in a native-like way. Finally, they made different choices regarding pragmatic strategies and semantic formulas than did the NSs.

6.2. DISCUSSION

The following sections discuss the development of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence in the learners' use of criticisms and criticism responses as their proficiency levels in the TL increased. Generally, little evidence of any development was found in the present study.

6.2.1. Sociopragmatic development in the learners' performance of criticisms and criticism responses

As Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein (1986) found with regard to modifiers of apologies, this study found that the strongest difference among the three proficiency groups of learners lay in the area of modifiers to criticisms, rather than in the pragmatic strategies ***per se***. Indeed, there was a greater use of criticism modifiers as the learners' proficiency levels increased. For instance, while the high beginners rarely modified the illocutionary force of their criticisms, with the result that their criticisms

were quite 'strong', the intermediate and advanced learners modified their criticisms significantly more frequently (***p*** <.05).

However, this was no longer the case when it came to the criticism response data, where the learners did not differ in the frequency with which they used modifiers (***p*** >.05), regardless of their L2 proficiency levels. More interestingly, this was also no longer the case when it came to the criticism questionnaire data, where the high beginners made use of almost as many criticism modifiers as the advanced learners (.91 modifier per CF as opposed to 1.3 for the advanced learners) and even more than the intermediate learners (who produced an average of only .71 modifier per CF), especially in the case of internal modifiers (cf. M =.76 for the high beginners and M =.68 for the intermediate learners). In the criticism response questionnaire data, the high beginners also far exceeded their intermediate peers in terms of the frequency with which they used modifiers, with a mean of .45 as compared to .09 for the intermediate group and more or less the same as the mean of .47 for the advanced group. Importantly, they were found to produce more internal modifiers than both the intermediate and advanced groups (cf.: M =.40 for high beginners, compared to M =.36 for advanced learners and M =.06 for intermediate learners).

When interviewed in the playback session, 83.3% of the lower proficiency learners revealed that when required to produce spontaneous speech, they gave priority to the accurate conveyance of their messages rather than to making these messages sound more polite. In contrast, as many as 33.3% of the intermediate learners and 50% of the advanced learners reported giving greater priority to politeness than accuracy.

These results seem to consolidate the claim in the previous chapter that, as competent L1 users, the learners seemed to possess quite well-developed universal

sociopragmatic knowledge. That is, they were well aware of the universal face-damaging nature of these two speech acts and, thus, of the necessity to mitigate their speech acts in order to reduce any offence that they may give to the hearer. One thing that seemed to inhibit them from achieving this was their lack of fluency in the L2, which caused them to prioritize message clarity at the expense of politeness. In other words, it was their limited linguistic competence that hindered them from doing what they ***knew*** was sociopragmatically required. When they developed better control over language production as their L2 proficiency increased, or when they had more time for information processing (as in the written condition of the questionnaire) things were different. According to this interpretation, sociopragmatics may not be too hard an aspect for even low-level learners to acquire, provided that they have sufficient exposure to the target sociopragmatic input. As Kasper (1997) has pointed out, probably most adult learners enjoy a fair amount of sociopragmatic knowledge for free, thanks to their universal pragmatic knowledge.

One area where the learners from different proficiency groups in the present study did not differ was in their use of criticism and criticism response strategies and formulas (***p*** >.05). For example, irrespective of their L2 proficiency levels, all preferred "demands" as a CF, which the Australian NS group totally avoided. They also opted to resist criticism by expressing "disagreement" and providing "justification" for themselves far more frequently than the Australian NS group, regardless of which proficiency group they belonged to (which may explain why their criticism responses were necessarily longer than the NSs'). This finding echoes that of Takahashi and Beebe (1987), who also observed no significant variation in refusal strategies by undergraduates (i.e. lower proficiency) and graduates (i.e. higher proficiency).

When interviewed in the playback session about their use of criticism and criticism response strategies and formulas, many of the learners, including the higher proficiency ones, displayed an incomplete L2 sociopragmatic knowledge. For instance, except for four advanced learners and a high beginner, the 22 learners who actually used or commented on the use of "advice" (realized by "***should***") said they considered it to be a 'polite' and 'soft' way of giving criticisms. This may reflect a transfer of L1 sociopragmatic knowledge, as some of the learners revealed in the interview: "***Vietnamese people usually advise one another, seniors advise juniors, people of the same age advise one another. This is a good way which is accepted by the society. It is soft***" (English translation) (see Chapters 7 and 8 for more details).

The question of why proficiency was found to have so little effect on the learners' use of criticism and criticism response strategies and formulas is intriguing. While there is no easy answer, one possible reason, as Takahashi and Beebe (1987, cited in Ellis,1994, pp. 180-181) suggest, may be that pragmatic development is not much "affected by just a few years' difference in school in the EFL context". To put it another way, it is the limited exposure to target norms in the EFL classroom that may have limited even the more proficient learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge, especially in the case of challenging tasks such as criticizing and responding to criticisms in an L2. The failure of advanced learners to perform speech acts in a native-like way, including both their failure to modify their speech acts in accordance with the target norms and their different usage of realization strategies and formulas has been observed in many other ILP studies (see Ellis, ibid. for a review).

6.2.2. Pragmalinguistic development in the learners' performance of criticisms and criticism responses

Like the low proficiency learners in Scarcella (1979), the high beginners in this study seemed to employ a much more restricted range of linguistic realization devices compared to the more proficient learners. For example, when realizing "suggestions", they seemed to rely heavily on the modal verb "***can***" and rarely made use of other more complex structures such as conditional clauses (***If-clauses)*** and infinitive (***It's better to + inf.).*** It seems reasonable to suggest that this was caused by a lack of full control over complex structures in spontaneous communication (see Meisel ***et al.,*** 1981; Bialystok, 1993), because in the written questionnaire data, the learners made greater use of the latter structures (e.g. "***If-clauses"*** were employed in 4 out of 9 instances) thanks to having more processing time.

Unlike the above case, however, the high beginners displayed a much narrower range of modifiers (e.g. no "hedges") and linguistic devices to realize those modifiers even in the written questionnaire, thus suggesting limited lexical and grammatical knowledge of the L2. For instance, a majority of their "understaters" were linguistically realized by "***some + N"*** (33 out of 40 instances for the case of criticisms and nine out of nine instances in the case of criticism responses) and "downtoners" by "***maybe"*** (ten out of ten instances in the case of criticisms)**.** Such realizations of "understaters" as "***a little (bit)", "not very (really)/ not many (enough)/ almost/ slightly",*** or "***just/ only",*** and "***quite/ rather"*** were almost entirely absent. So were such realizations of "downtoners" as "***perhaps", "probably",*** and ***"possibly"***.

What is more, these low proficiency learners also produced criticisms and criticism responses that were much less elaborate and more repetitive, which, according to

Takahashi and Beebe (1993), is very typical of second language learners who are lacking in both fluency and proficiency in the TL. Indeed, their criticisms were noticeably shorter than those produced by the advanced group. This drawback became even more evident when, in the playback interview, they reported difficulty in selecting appropriate language to criticize and thus resorting to whatever linguistic structures were at their disposal.

The intermediate learners, however, did not seem to exhibit a wider range of linguistic realization devices except in the case of "suggestions" and “demands”, although they appeared to employ a wider variety of modifiers (e.g. use of “cajolers” and “hedges”) and their criticisms and criticism responses at times were more elaborate. Most of this group’s “understaters”, for instance, were linguistically realized by structure “***some + N”*** (20 out of 29 instances for the case of criticisms – Table 6.16) and “downtoners” by “***maybe”*** (12 out of 12 instances for the case of criticisms – Table 6.16), like the high beginners.

This lack of a difference between the high beginners and the intermediate learners was probably due to the narrow gap in their proficiency. In fact, the proficiency levels of the learners in this study were determined by their overall IELTS scores (see Chapter 3), whereby a score of 5.0 was categorized as "high beginning level" and a score between 5.5 and 6.0 was classified as "intermediate level". Apparently, the gap between a score of 5.0 and a score of 5.5 is not wide enough to capture differences, if any, in pragmatic knowledge.

As might be expected, the advanced learners in this study displayed the widest range of linguistic realization devices and modifiers, thus suggesting both better L2 linguistic knowledge and a better control over language processing. Their “suggestions”, for

example, were realized by a relatively wide variety of linguistic structures, ranging from the modal verb "***can"*** and "***why don't you"*** to the performative "***I suggest",*** infinitive structures ("***It's better"***), and conditional structures ("***If-***clauses"). Their "demands" were no longer realized by the modal verb "***must".*** They also made use of various structures such as "***a little (bit)", "some/ few", "not very (really)/ not many (enough)/ almost/ slightly", "just/ only", "quite/ rather"*** to realize "understaters" and "***perhaps/ possibly/ probably",*** and ***"maybe"*** to realize "downtoners". Their "hedges" were no longer realized only by the simple expression "***something like that"***. Instead, they made use of "***kind of/ sort of", "seem to/ tend to"*** and so on to express uncertainty. The content of their criticisms and criticism responses was also more elaborate than their lower proficiency peers'.

Nonetheless, despite all this progress in comparison with their less proficient peers, the advanced learners still seemed to have considerable difficulty in performing the two speech acts in native-like ways. For example, like the high beginners and the intermediate learners, the advanced learners continued to rely more heavily on lexical devices than on syntactic devices for performing modifiers. They relied predominantly on "subjectivizers" (***"I think"***), "understaters" ("***a little bit***"), "cajolers" (***"I mean"***), and "downtoners" ("***maybe***") while rarely making use of "modal structures" and almost ignoring "past tense with present time reference", which accounted for up to 29% of the NS modifier realization.

These differences can be explained by a number of factors. First, one cause might be the transfer of L1 pragmalinguistic routines, which do not involve the use of modal structures and verb tense for modification (see chapter 7). Another cause might be insufficient pragmalinguistic knowledge of the L2 modification, possibly also reinforced by an absence of complete control over more complex and cognitively

demanding L2 forms. Importantly, this finding also seems to suggest that lexicalized expressions of modality were probably acquired earlier than grammaticalized expressions, given the abundant presence of the former and the scarcity of the latter in even the advanced learners' data. This is also in line with the findings of Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000).

6.2.3. Concluding remarks

Overall, the findings of this study seemed to be in line with many other existing ILP studies, such as those of Blum-Kulka and Oshtain (1986) (who found differences in external modification by proficiency levels), Trosborg (1987, 1995) (who found an increased use of modality markers by learners as their L2 proficiency increased), and Omar (1991) (who found a failure to conform to the more elaborate L2 pragmalinguistic norms by both lower and higher proficiency groups of learners despite some improvement by the latter). L2 pragmatic development seems to be dependent on an increase of L2 linguistic competence. In this study, as the learners became more proficient, they tended to be more able to mitigate their criticisms and vary their linguistic choices in criticism and criticism response realizations thanks to better L2 linguistic knowledge plus better control over language processing. This seems to support Bialystok's (1993) claim that the major challenge for learners in the acquisition of L2 pragmatics is to gain control over processing. The current study also found greater evidence of pragmalinguistic development by proficiency levels than of sociopragmatic development, as differences were more evident in the learners' choice of linguistic realization devices than in their choice of criticism and criticism response strategies and formulas.

CHAPTER 7:

PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

IN THE LEARNERS' CRITICISMS AND CRITICISM RESPONSES

The present chapter seeks to answer Research Question 3: "To what extent was pragmatic transfer evident in the learners' criticisms and criticism responses?". To this end, a comparison will be made between the learners, the Australian NSs, and the Vietnamese NSs in their use of criticisms and criticism responses.

The chapter is organized into two sections. The results section, based mainly on the role-play data, reports on instances of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer identified in the learners' criticisms and criticism responses. It also reports on instances where transfer was expected but did not actually occur. The discussion section, making use of relevant interview data, provides an interpretation of the results within the context of pragmatic transfer research.

7.1. RESULTS

The present study adopts Kasper's (1992) definitions of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer. Sociopragmatic transfer refers to the process whereby learners' subjective judgment of the equivalence between L1-L2 contexts affects the social perceptions underlying their interpretation and production of criticisms and criticism responses in the L2. Pragmalinguistic transfer, on the other hand, involves the process whereby learners' subjective judgment of L1-L2 equivalence with regard to the assignment of illocutionary force and politeness value to particular linguistic material influences how they linguistically realize criticisms and criticism responses in the L2 (see Chapters 1 and 2 for more details). Thus, instances of sociopragmatic transfer in

the present chapter include the use of L1-induced criticism and criticism response strategies and modifiers. Instances of pragmalinguistic transfer include the use of L1-induced semantic formulas and linguistic realizations of these formulas and modifiers. However, again, as was argued in previous chapters, the use of L1-induced semantic formulas in some cases can also well be a manifestation of sociopragmatic transfer as it also involves the transfer of L1 social and contextual perceptions.

A distinction between positive and negative transfer is also made in the present chapter. Based on Kasper (1992), the kind of transfer that results in IL behavior that is consistent with the target norms is regarded as "positive". On the other hand, the kind of transfer that causes IL deviation from the target norms is considered "negative". As suggested by Kasper (ibid.), positive transfer in this study is statistically based on a lack of significant differences in the frequencies with which a pragmatic feature is used by the learners and the two NS groups (IL = L1 = L2). Negative transfer, in contrast, is statistically based on:

1) the similarity between the learners and the Vietnamese L1 group concerning the frequencies with which they use a pragmatic feature (IL = L1)

2) plus a significant difference between the learners and the Australian L1 group in that feature (IL ≠ L2)

3) and a significant difference between the Vietnamese L1 and Australian L1 groups in that feature (L1 ≠ L2).

Where there is an absence of statistical significance, transfer may also be identified based on the researcher's knowledge of the Vietnamese language as a Vietnamese NS when this is validated by the interview data.

The major statistical procedures employed in this chapter include ***one-way*** ANOVA tests, which are appropriate in cases of normal data distribution, and Kruskal-Wallis tests in the absence of normal data distributions. Where significant differences were found, LSD ***post hoc*** ANOVA and manual calculations were also used to find where the differences occurred. The level of significance was set at .05.

7.1.1. Sociopragmatic transfer

7.1.1.1. Sociopragmatic transfer in learners' criticisms

7.1.1.1.1. Criticism strategies

No evidence of L1 positive or negative transfer was found in the learners' use of CSs. If we recall Chapter 5, the learners tended to produce far fewer direct criticisms but noticeably more indirect criticisms than the target group (***p*** <.0035). This preference for indirectness might be expected to reflect an influence from the learners' L1 sociopragmatics. However, Figure 7.1 shows that the Vietnamese L1 group employed a considerable number of direct criticisms (M = .66), similar to the Australian L1 group (M = .77). Likewise, they did not make use of indirect criticisms so frequently (M = .31). Besides, a one-way ANOVA test with LSD ***post hoc*** run for the mean difference in the number of direct criticisms produced by each group found a significant difference only between the learners and the Australian NS group (***p*** = .001), but not between the Australian NS and the Vietnamese NS groups or between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** >.05) (F =6.278, df =2, ***p*** **=.**003). Another one-way ANOVA test with LSD ***post hoc*** run for the mean difference in the number of indirect criticisms produced by each group also found a significant difference between the learners and the Australian NS group (***p*** = .006) and between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** = .044), but not between the Australian NS and the Vietnamese NS groups (***p***

>.05) (F =. 6922, df =2, ***p*** =.002) (Table 7.1). Apparently, the learners' preference for indirectness constitutes a pragmatic behavior unique to themselves rather than L1 transfer.

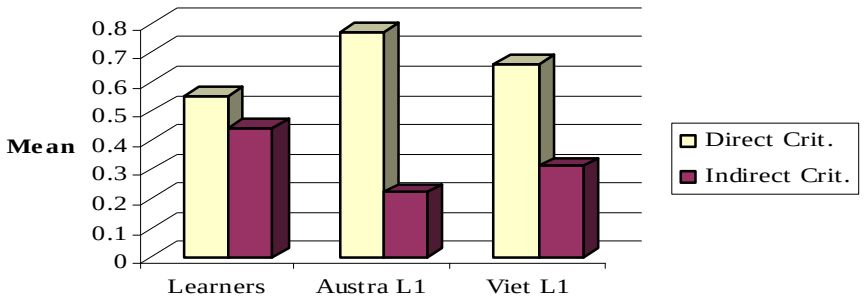


Figure 7.1: Mean number of CSs produced by learners and two NS groups

Table 7.1: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for differences in mean number of direct and indirect criticisms produced by learners, Australian NSs and Vietnamese NSs

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			***F***	***P***
Strategies:	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Direct	328/597	.55	.17	83/120	.77	.21	171/271	.66	.18	6.278	.003
Indirect	269/597	.44	.17	37/120	.22	.21	100/271	.31	.19	6.922	.002

7.1.1.1.2. Criticism modifiers

Unlike their choice of CSs, the learners' choice of how often to modify their criticisms appears to be L1-induced. In Chapter 5, the learners were found to generally mitigate their criticisms significantly less frequently than the target group (***p*** <.0035). Figure 7.2 shows that the Vietnamese NS group also tended to modify their criticisms infrequently. Indeed, while on average the learners produced a mean of 1.6 modifiers per CF and the Vietnamese NS group produced a mean of 1.2 modifiers per CF, the corresponding mean produced by the Australian NS group was 3.9, twice as high as

the mean produced by the learners and three times as high as the mean produced by the Vietnamese NS group (Figure 7.2). A one-way ANOVA test with LSD ***post hoc*** run for these three groups revealed a significant difference between the learners and the Australian NS group (***p*** =.001) and between the Australian NS and the Vietnamese NS groups (***p*** =.001), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (F =34.406, df =2, ***p*** =.001) (Table 7.2). This suggests that the learners may have been influenced negatively by their L1 sociopragmatic judgments with regard to how often to modify criticisms.

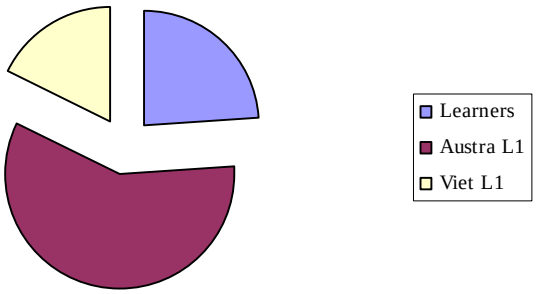


Figure 7.2: Use of modifiers by learners, Australian NSs, and Vietnamese NSs

Table 7.2: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for differences in mean number of criticism modifiers produced by learners, Australian NSs, and Vietnamese NSs

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			***F***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Crit. Mod.	858/597	1.6	.94	447/120	3.9	1.1	315/271	1.2	.29	34.406	.001

<u>7.1.1.1.3. Proficiency effects</u>

The intermediate learners' criticism modifiers deviated most from the Vietnamese NS group while approximating the Australian NS group most closely. Figure 7.3 indicates

that an average intermediate learner produced a mean of 2.2 modifiers per CF, far exceeding both the high beginners and the Vietnamese NS group, who produced means of .98 and 1.2 modifiers respectively. In fact, only the intermediate group was found by a one-way ANOVA test (F =24.583, df = 4, ***p* =.**001) with LSD ***post hoc*** to differ significantly from the Vietnamese NS group in the frequency of use of modifiers (***p*** =.003) (Table 7.3). The other two proficiency groups were similar to the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** >.05), suggesting that they were closer to the Vietnamese native group than their intermediate peers. Table 7.3 also shows that although the intermediate group still lagged significantly behind the target group (***p*** =.001) in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticisms, they seemed to approximate this group more closely than did the high beginning and advanced learners.

Table 7.3: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for difference in the mean number of criticism modifiers produced by three proficiency groups of learners and two NS groups

Group: Modifiers:	H. begin. (N =12)	Inter. (N =12)	Adv. (N =12)	Aus. L1 (N =12)	Viet L1 (N =12)	***F***	***P***
Frequency	258 / 242	225 / 133	375 / 222	447 / 120	315 / 271	24.58	.001
Mean	.98	2.2	1.7	3.9	1.2	3	
St. Deviation	.30	1.2	.58	1.1	.29		

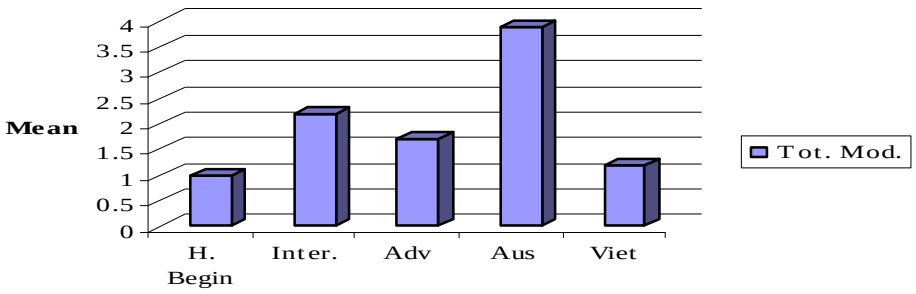


Figure 7.3: Mean number of criticism modifiers by three learner groups and two NS groups

7.1.1.2. Sociopragmatic transfer in learners' criticism responses

7.1.1.2.1. Criticism response strategies

Negative L1 sociopragmatic transfer was suggested in the learners' distribution of "total acceptance" and "total resistance" strategies in responding to criticisms. Table 7.4 shows that the learners tended to differ from the Australian NS group while approximating the Vietnamese NS group in their choice of these two strategies.

Indeed, whereas the Australian NSs tended to accept criticism with a very high frequency (M =.95) and rarely resisted it (M =.05), the learners and the Vietnamese NS group made quite regular use of these two strategies. In fact, the respective ratios of .56 and .57 for "total acceptance" and .37 and .41 for "total resistance" showed only a small gap between the two strategies (Figure 7.4).

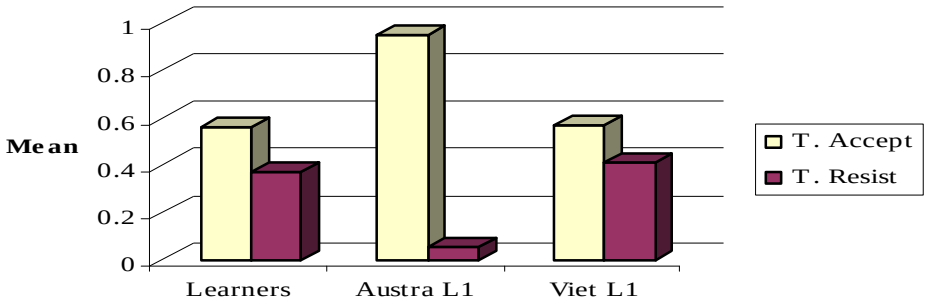


Figure 7.4: Use of "total acceptance" and "total resistance" by learners, Australian NS, and Vietnamese NSs

A Kruskal-Wallis test found a statistically significant difference in the distribution of the two strategies among these three groups (df = 2, ***p*** <.05, see Table 7.4). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations made for "total acceptance" found that this difference lay between the

Australian NSs and both the learners and the Vietnamese NSs (***p*** = .001), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NSs (***p*** >.05).

Likewise, manual ***post hoc*** calculations made for "total resistance" found a significant difference between the Australian NSs and both the learners (***p*** = .001) and the Vietnamese NSs (***p*** = .001), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NSs (***p*** >.05). The learners in this case seemed to fall back on their L1 discourse style when performing in the target language.

Table 7.4: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs among learners, Australian NSs, and Vietnamese NSs

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			c^2	***P***
Strategies:	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
T. Accept.	95/168	.56	.31	54/57	.95	.12	57/98	.57	.24	15.328	.001
T. Resist.	68/168	.37	.30	3/57	.05	.12	38/98	.41	.24	13.803	.001

7.1.1.2.2. Proficiency effects

No proficiency effects were evident for CRSs. The results presented in Chapter 6 indicated that the learners did not differ in their choice of "total acceptance of criticisms" and "total resistance to criticisms" as they became more proficient in the L2 (***p*** >.05). All three proficiency groups of learners significantly differed from the Australian NSs in both strategies (***p*** <.05) (Chapter 6), but were similar to the Vietnamese NS group (Table 7.5 in Appendix 7). This suggests that when it came to the performance of criticism responses in the L2, the learners were all equally influenced by L1 strategies, irrespective of their L2 proficiency levels.

7.1.2. Pragmalinguistic transfer

7.1.2.1. Pragmalinguistic transfer in learners' criticisms

7.1.2.1.1. Criticism formulas

No evidence of L1 positive or negative transfer was found for "identifications of problem". As was seen in Chapter 5, the learners employed this formula far less frequently than the target group (***p*** <.0035). Yet, this did not seem to be an L1-induced choice as they also lagged far behind the Vietnamese NS group in the frequency with which they employed this formula (Figure 7.5). Table 7.6 indicates a mean of .57 for the Australian NS group and a mean of .50 for the Vietnamese NS group, but only a mean of .32 for the learners. A Kruskal-Wallis test run for the mean difference in the number of "identifications of problem" produced by each group also found a statistically significant difference (χ^2 = 13.106, df = 2, significant at ***p*** =.001). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations found that the differences occurred between the learners and both the Australian NSs (***p*** = .001) and the Vietnamese NSs (***p*** = .002), but not between the Australian NS and Vietnamese NS groups (***p*** >.05).

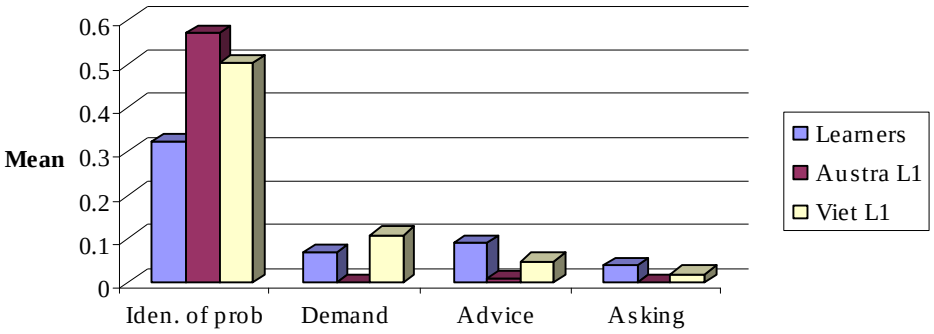


Figure 7.5: Use of CFs by learners and two NS groups

"Expressions of disagreement", "suggestions", "demands", "advice", and "asking/ presupposing", on the other hand, seemed to result from L1-induced choices by the learners. Table 7.6 demonstrates that "expressions of disagreement" and "suggestions" were employed with no significantly different frequencies among the learners, the Vietnamese NSs, and Australian NSs (p >.05). According to Kasper (1992), this may suggest L1 positive transfer. Concerning "demands" and "advice", Figure 7.5 demonstrates that these CFs were employed overwhelmingly by the learners and their peers in the Vietnamese NS group while being totally avoided ("demands") or hardly ever used ("advice") by the Australian NSs. "Asking/presupposing", in comparison with "demands" and "advice", was used less frequently by the learners (M =.04) and the Vietnamese NS group (M =.02). However, similarly to "demands" and "advice", "asking/ presupposing" was also avoided by the Australian NS group (M =.00). The fact that these three formulas were employed by both the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (though infrequently in the case of "asking/presupposing") but were totally absent in the Australian NS data suggests negative transfer. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests run for the mean differences in the number of "demands", "advice", and "asking/presupposing" produced by each group also revealed significant differences (df =2, p <.05) (Table 7.6). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations found that these significant differences lay between the Australian NS group and both the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (p <.05), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (p >.05) except in the case of "demands" (p =.046), where the Vietnamese NSs' use exceeded that of the learners. This seems to indicate that the learners' preference for these three formulas was likely negatively influenced by their L1 pragmalinguistic routines.

Table 7.6: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CFs produced by the learners, Australian NSs, and Vietnamese NSs

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			c^2	***P***
Strategies:	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Identification of problem	218/597	.32	.18	62/120	.57	.27	123/271	.50	.20	13.106	.001
Expression of disagreement	61/597	.06	.09	13/120	.12	.30	13/271	.04	.03	1.271	.530
Demand	56/597	.07	.10	0/120	.00	.00	35/271	.11	.09	13.281	.001
Suggestion	64/597	.10	.11	25/120	.15	.17	18/271	.05	.06	1.658	.437
Advice	54/597	.09	.11	2/120	.01	.03	19/271	.05	.05	6.557	.038
Asking/ Presupposing	32/597	.04	.05	0/120	.00	.00	8/271	.02	.03	7.693	.021

7.1.2.1.2. Internal modifiers to criticisms

As can be seen in Figure 7.6, “syntactic modifiers” were employed with quite a high frequency by the Australian NS group (M =.52) while being almost unused by the learners (M =.03) and entirely absent in the Vietnamese NS group’s data (M =.00). This difference was found to be statistically significant by a Kruskal-Wallis test (χ^2 =39.085, df = 2, ***p*** =.001) (Table 7.7). The results of manual ***post hoc*** calculations also showed that the differences lay between the Australian NS group and both the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** = .001), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (***p =.***284). Since the Vietnamese NS group did not use this type of modifier at all, the learners’ low frequency of use seems indicative of negative L1 influence.

The above L1 influence became even more obvious when each instance of “syntactic modifier” produced by the learners was investigated further. Out of the 15 "syntactic modifiers" that were observed in the learners' data, 14 involved modal structures with ***"may", "might”*** (which were more or less equivalent to the Vietnamese modal verb “***có***

thể"), and only one involved "past tense with present time reference", which was "***I thought***" by an intermediate learner. Notably, no case of "modal past tense with present time reference" (e.g. "***could/ would/ may/ might have done***") was present in the learners' data while structures of this type were abundant in the Australian L1 data (14 out of 68 instances of "syntactic modifiers"). Since the Vietnamese language does not have grammatical tense (past, present, future) and expresses modality by means of modal verbs, this seems to show that the exclusion of "past tense with present time reference" and "modal past tense" on the part of the learners and their reliance on modal verbs instead was due to L1 influence.

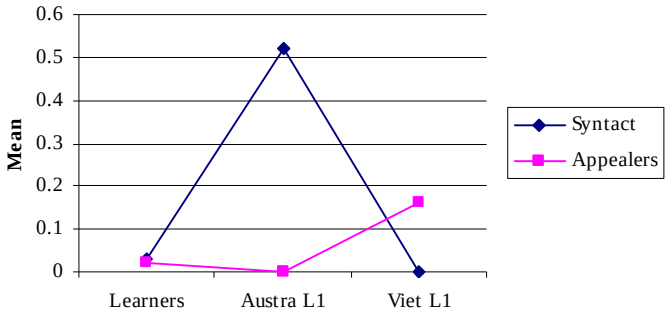


Figure 7.6: Number of "syntactic modifiers" and "appealers" produced by learners and two NS groups

Unlike "syntactic modifiers", "appealers" were a common feature of the Vietnamese pragmatics but not of the Australian pragmatics. Figure 7.6 shows that this type of modifier was plentiful in the Vietnamese L1 data (M =.16) while absolutely absent from the Australian NS data. It also shows that the learners did make use of "appealers", though infrequently (M =.02). The fact that this type of modifier was not used by the Australian NS at all but was employed by both the learners and the Vietnamese NS group suggests an instance of negative transfer. A Kruskal-Wallis test also found a statistically significant difference among the three groups for "appealers"

(χ^2 =21.438, df =2, ***p*** =.001) (Table 7.7). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations found that the difference was between the Australian NS and the Vietnamese NS groups (***p* =.**001), supporting the above claim.

Table 7.7: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of "syntactic modifiers" and "appealers" produced by learners, Australian NSs, and Vietnamese NSs

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			c^2	***P***
Strategies:	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Syntactic mod	15/ 597	.03	.10	68/ 120	.52	.23	0/ 271	.00	.00	39.085	.001
Appealers	15/ 597	.02	.04	0/ 120	.00	.00	52/ 271	.16	.14	21.438	.001

7.1.2.1.3. Actual wordings in criticism realizations

Probably, the most obvious indication of L1 negative transfer in the learners' linguistic realizations of criticisms was their overwhelming use of the modal verbs "***must***" and "***should"*** when expressing "demands" and "advice" respectively. Indeed, out of the 56 instances of "demands" made by the learners, 21 (equal to 37.5%) were realized by "***must***", which was, to some extent, equivalent to the Vietnamese modal verb "***phải***" used in expressing obligation. Likewise, out of 54 instances of "advice", 46 (equal to 85.2%) were realized by "***should",*** which was in many ways equivalent to the Vietnamese modal verb "***nên"*** used in expressing advice**.** What is more, they did not use "***should have done"*** at all**,** which is a structure that does not occur in Vietnamese grammar. These results seem to suggest that the learners had relied on their L1 when verbalizing these two CFs in the L2.

Further evidence of learners' falling back on their L1 linguistic resources is probably seen in their use of "disarmers" when criticizing in English. For example, some learners preferred to "disarm" their criticisms by making an apology to their interlocutor for what they said or were going to say, as is commonly done in Vietnamese: "***Xin lỗi, nhưng …" (i.e. I'm sorry but …")***. E.g.: "***sorry but in my opinion if you give MORE examples for the idea that ah you want to against it make your idea not clearly ah not clearly, "but I think that <every problem (.2) must be seen from TWO sides> (…) I'm sorry ah <everything has TWO SIDES: POSITIVE and NEGATIVE>".*** Note that the Australian NS group did not "disarm" by offering an apology in similar situations. Instead, they preferred to minimize the offence of their criticisms by degrading the seriousness of the problems or finding an excuse for the interlocutor e.g.: "***you had a few spelling mistake (.) but I think that's because you're writing pretty quick, (.) ^nothing too M:Ajor***", or "***there's no specific examples or values but it's certainly not easy to do off the top of your head (.) so I wouldn't expect that***".

7.1.2.1.4. Proficiency effects

No proficiency effects were found for CFs and "syntactic modifiers". As was seen in Chapter 6, the learners demonstrated no difference according to proficiency levels. When compared with the Australian NS and the Vietnamese NS groups, they were found to significantly deviate from the former group (***p*** <.05) (Chapter 6) while demonstrating similarity to the latter group (Table 7.8 in Appendix 7), indicating that they were all influenced by the L1.

7.1.2.2. Pragmalinguistic transfer in learners' criticism responses

7.1.2.2.1. Criticism response formulas

Just as the learners seemed to accept criticisms less frequently while resisting them more frequently than the Australian NSs, they also appeared to produce fewer "agreements" and more "disagreements" and "justifications" (see chapter 5 for more details). This pragmatic behavior suggests a possible L1 influence since the learners, while deviating considerably from the target group, tended to demonstrate a relatively similar frequency to the Vietnamese NS group in their use of the above formulas. Indeed, on average the learners produced a mean of .27 "agreement", .16 "disagreement", and .31 "justification" per criticism response, which was very close to the respective corresponding means of .37, .14, and .31 produced by the Vietnamese NS group (see Figure 7.7). A Kruskal-Wallis test found a statistically significant difference among the three groups in the use of all the three formulas (df =2, $p < .05$) (Table 7.9). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations found that this difference occurred between the Australian NS group and both the learners and the Vietnamese NS group ($p = .001$), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group ($p > .05$), indicating the presence of L1 negative transfer.

Also a different CRF characterizing the "acceptance of criticism", "seeking for help" seemed to be preferred by the learners to a greater extent than the Australian NSs ($c^2 = 9.993$, df =2, $p < .05$). The fact that it was preferred by both the learners (M =.05) and the Vietnamese NS group (M =.06) but not employed by the Australian NSs at all (M =.00) seems to indicate negative L1 transfer (see Figure 7.7 and Table 7.9). This interpretation was further supported by the results of the manual ***post hoc*** calculations, which showed a significant difference between the Australian NS group and both the learners ($p =$

.014) and the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** =.001), but not between the learners and the Vietnamese NS group (***p*** =.144).

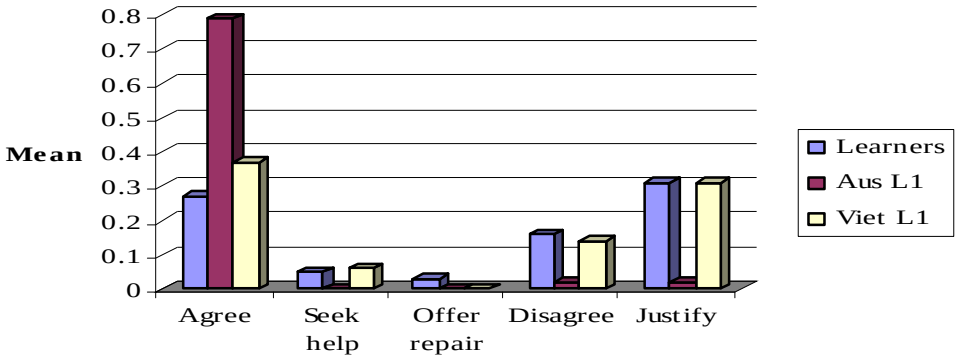


Figure 7.7: Use of "agreement", "seeking help", "offer of repair", "disagreement", and "justification" by learners and two NS groups

Table 7.9: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of selected CRFs produced by learners and two NS groups

Group:	Learners (N =36)			Australian L1 (N =12)			Vietnamese L1 (N =12)			*c2*	***P***
Strategies:	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Agreement	148/525	.27	.21	84/104	.79	.21	84/229	.37	.25	22.222	.001
Seeking help	22/525	.05	.07	0/104	.00	.00	13/229	.06	.05	9.993	.007
Offer of repair	15/525	.03	.08	0/104	.00	.00	0/229	.00	.00	7.781	.020
Disagreement	95/525	.16	.13	2/104	.02	.04	40/229	.14	.11	14.194	.001
Justification	176/525	.31	.22	2/104	.02	.04	65/229	.31	.22	16.962	.001

"Offer of repair", on the other hand, was probably a unique choice by the learners as it was used only by them (M =.03) while missing entirely from both the Vietnamese NS and Australian NS groups (M =.00) (Figure 7.7). This difference was statistically confirmed by the results of a Kruskal-Wallis test ($\chi 2$ = 7.781, df =2, ***p*** =.020, see Table

7.7). Manual ***post hoc*** calculations also showed that the difference was between the learners and both the Australian NS and Vietnamese NS groups (***p***<.05), but not between the two latter groups (***p*** >.05).

7.1.2.2.2. Actual wording in criticism response realizations

Almost no trace of L1 linguistic features was found in criticism responses, except for the learners' realizations of "disarmers" by means of an apology (e.g. "***I'm sorry but I don't agree with you"***), as was also found in criticism realizations (reported in ***7.1.2.1.4***). There were even a few instances where the learners realized criticism responses in a different way from both the Australian NSs and the Vietnamese NSs. For example, they verbalized their "agreements" or "disagreements" with criticisms by bare performative expressions such as "***I agree with you"*** and "***I disagree with you"*** or "***I don't agree with you***", which neither of the Australian NS and Vietnamese NS groups used. Such linguistic realizations were unique to the learners' IL.

7.1.2.2.3. Proficiency effects

As with CFs, no proficiency effects were evident for CRFs. Firstly, the learners showed no difference in the frequency of use of various CRFs, such as "agreement", "seeking for help", "disagreement", and "justification" (***p*** >.05). What is more, they all demonstrated a significant difference from the target group (***p*** <.05) (Chapter 6) but a similarity to the native group (Table 7.10 in Appendix 7), regardless of their proficiency levels. All these results indicate that proficiency did not play as important a role as was expected.

7.1.3. Summary of findings

This chapter has sought to address Research Question 3: "To what extent was pragmatic transfer evident in the learners' criticisms and criticism responses?" Evidence of both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer was found.

At the sociopragmatic level:

(1) The learners were found to be influenced by their L1 perceptions of politeness with regard to how often they modified their criticisms and in their choice of CRSs.

At the pragmalinguistic level:

(2) The learners were found to transfer various L1 semantic formulas such as "expressions of disagreement", "suggestions", "demands", "advice", and "asking/ proposing" in realizing indirect criticisms and "seeking for help" in realizing criticism responses. They were also found to be influenced by their L1 pragmatics in the low frequency with which they used "agreement" in accepting criticisms and the high frequency with which they used "disagreement" and "justification" when resisting criticisms.

(3) In addition, L1 transfer was also indicated in the learners' avoidance of "syntactic modifiers" and overuse of "appealers".

(4) Finally, the learners were found to fall back on L1 linguistic material in realizing a number of CFs and CRFs and modifiers.

There appear to be more cases of negative transfer than positive transfer. That is, the type of transfer that the learners experienced seemed to make them different from the target norms rather than similar to them.

Another noteworthy finding in this chapter was that there were a few instances where the learners' deviation from the target norms was expected to be related to transfer but this was in fact not the case. Rather, it seemed to be unique to them, for example in the case of CSs, or the CF "identification of problem" and the CRF "offer of repair", or in the linguistic realizations of "agreement" and "disagreement".

Finally, concerning the relationship between proficiency levels and transfer, effects were only found for criticism modifiers. Specifically, the intermediate learners were the only group that deviated considerably from the Vietnamese NS group in the frequency with which they tended to modify their criticisms. In contrast, the high beginners and the advanced learners showed no such differences from the Vietnamese NS group. In general, however, no proficiency effects were found among the learners.

7.2. DISCUSSION

Generally, more cases of pragmalinguistic than of sociopragmatic transfer were found in the present study, probably due in part to its design. Since social variables such as the relative power and distance between interlocutors were controlled in this study, the interaction was restricted to that between status equal interlocutors. It is, therefore, hard to guess how the learners' contextual assessments might have changed in other social scenarios, such as in higher-to-lower and lower-to-higher status criticizing and responding to criticism situations. It is in those unequal status situations that sociopragmatic transfer was found more often in previous research (see Chapter 2).

Sociopragmatic transfer in the present study was mainly reflected in the learners' assessments of politeness underlying their preference for the criticism response strategy "total resistance to criticisms" and their little use of modifiers (i.e. overall politeness style). Pragmalinguistic transfer, on the other hand, was noted in their

preference for such semantic formulas as “advice” and “demand” and in the linguistic realizations of these formulas, which affected the illocutionary force and politeness value of the two speech acts, and in their preference for the internal modifier “appealers” over “syntactic modifiers”.

7.2.1. Sociopragmatic transfer in the learners’ use of criticisms and criticism responses

In many instances the different operations of politeness in the Vietnamese and the Australian cultures seemed to adversely affect how the learners went about performing criticisms and criticism responses in the TL. Indeed, more cases of negative transfer were found than cases of positive transfer in the learners’ use of these two speech acts.

7.2.1.1. The case of “total resistance to criticism”

The Australian conversational style tends to avoid challenging one’s interlocutor (see the maxim of Agreement in Leech, 1983) as this threatens the other’s face (see Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987). When arguments are unavoidable, they tend to be ‘hedged’ as much as possible. However, this does not seem to apply to the Vietnamese culture, where ‘private face' is not stressed as much as discernment (see Nwoye, 1992 in Chapter 2 for the conception of private as opposed to public face). Coming from the culture that values conformity to the social rules over individual face-wants, Vietnamese people thus do not normally hesitate to engage in oppositional talk such as argumentation and disagreement, especially when they find this necessary. This could explain why the learners tended to resist their interlocutors’ criticisms relatively frequently (39.8% of the time) compared to the Australian NSs (5% of the time). (It should be noted that the learners did not differ from the Australian NSs in the topics of

their criticisms, except in the case of grammar, on which they made more comments. Thus, it is unlikely that the learners produced more resistance because of the topic effects – see Chapter 5). Presumably, they mistakenly regarded this behavior as pragmatically appropriate in the L2 culture, as it would be in their own culture, so they did not hesitate to refute the criticism that they received.

7.2.1.2. The frequency of use of modifiers

Another example of the influence of L1 politeness style is the learners' infrequent use of modifiers. As mentioned earlier, Vietnamese NSs rarely "hedge" their opinions. On the contrary, there seems to be a belief that the more strongly an opinion is put, the more convincing it will be**.** In the present study, the Vietnamese NS group modified the illocutionary force of their speech acts with a fairly low frequency (M =1.2 for criticisms, M =.21 for criticism responses) compared to the Australian NS group (M =3.9 for criticisms, M =.39 for criticism responses). Like them, the learners also did not mitigate their speech acts frequently (M =1.6 for criticisms, M =.64 for criticism responses). Even in the case of criticism responses where they were expected to use more modifiers than the Australian NSs, they failed to do so (see Chapter 5). The learners' under-use of modifiers seems more likely to have been influenced by L1 pragmatic routines rather than caused by modality reduction. This can be concluded because they were not found to employ more modifiers in the written questionnaire (when they had more processing time), although they did employ more semantic formulas that they considered 'polite' such as "advice" and "suggestions".

7.2.2. Pragmalinguistic transfer in the learners' use of criticisms and criticism responses

7.2.2.1. The cases of "advice" and "demand"

Most likely, the learners' employment of "advice" and "demand" was influenced by their L1 cultural values. As mentioned earlier, the Vietnamese culture is collectively rather than individualistically orientated. There seems to be little sense of privacy or personal space. Instead, the sense of community is quite strong, which often makes Vietnamese NSs, by and large, feel responsible for other people's deeds, especially for helping the people who have done something wrong to correct themselves. Giving "advice" or even "demands for change" in this case is not usually considered 'interfering' or face-threatening as it would probably be in the Australian culture. Rather, it is regarded as demonstrating care, sincerity, and friendliness, which seem to constitute the perception of politeness in Vietnamese culture (c.f. the maxim of Generosity in Gu, 1990, who discussed politeness values in the Chinese culture).

Therefore, the relatively frequent occurrence of "advice" in the Vietnamese NS (including the learners') data was perhaps reflective of this cultural value. Indeed, when asked in the ***post hoc*** interview about their use of "advice", 18 out of 26 (69%) users said they regarded this as a polite way of pointing out other people's errors since in the Vietnamese culture "giving advice" was also polite (see Chapter 7). For example, a learner said: "***Vietnamese people usually advise one another, senior advises junior, people of the same age advise one another. This is a good way which is accepted by the society. It is soft."*** (English translation)

Likewise, many instances of the learners' "demands" might also have been an indication of this L1 influence. When interviewed, twelve out of the 19 learners who

employed this CF commented that it was important to emphasize rules and make their peers realize their errors, without being aware that this could be inappropriate in the L2. For example, a learner said: "***I think it's reasonable to use "must" here (...). When we need to make other people aware of their errors, we'd better use this structure"*** (English translation)**.** Another also commented: ***"Ah here it is compulsory for the writer to identify which type of essay he is required to write. Otherwise, he could go off track, so there is much of obligation here, so I must use the structures "you must" and "you have to". I wanted him to know that before he starts writing the essay he needs to determine what type of essay it is/ Ah there are many ways of criticizing but I think these structures are used when someone is obliged to do something. Otherwise they could sound strong/ Yes as I said before, in this situation they are appropriate because I need to make him see his errors and understand that this is the rules"*** (English translation).

In terms of "advice" and "demand" linguistic realizations, many learners also reported perceiving a similarity between the L1 and L2 in the playback interview. For example, a learner said: "***I think they*** (i.e. "***should***" and "***nên"***) ***are equivalent in terms of politeness and ah semantically "should" is "nên" if translated into Vietnamese***" (English translation). Another commented: "***I think "must" is equivalent to "phải" in Vietnamese***". Presumably, it was this perception of L1–L2 equivalence that contributed to the learners' overuse of "***should"*** and "***must"*** when they gave "advice" and "demands" in English (c.f. Kellerman's discussion of the relationship between psychotopology and transferability in Chapter 2). Indeed, some learners explicitly admitted having transferred these two structures from the L1: "***I transferred from Vietnamese, for example in Vietnamese I would also say You shouldn't do this You shouldn't do that. So ah because I often said so in Vietnamese I also translated it into English, because "should" and "nên" were equivalent. They***

were both polite"; "ah I usually say so in Vietnamese ah You must do this You must do that so when I translated it into English, it was influenced by my Vietnamese" (English translation).

Interestingly, these findings are very similar to those of a pilot study of mine (Nguyen, 2003) and to those in a study by Kasper (1982). For example, in that pilot study it was also found that "advice" was preferred by ESL learners of mixed L1s (Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese), accounting for 28.6% of their total CF use. What is more, it was also linguistically realized by "***should***" in all the 12 instances where it occurred. Kasper (1982) also found that her German ESL learners used "***must***" inappropriately when giving suggestions in English. She explained this use in terms of a transfer from German "***mussen***" which was "reinforced by inappropriate grading of the rules expressing obligation in the learners' course book" (p.104). While it is clear that the learners' inappropriate use of "***should***" and "***must***" in this study was mainly influenced by their L1, the fact that learners from other L1 backgrounds also favored these two structures gives support to Kasper's claim that factors other than L1 transfer (e.g. instruction) may have been at work. Chapter 8 in this thesis will discuss additional factors that emerged from the learners' interview data.

7.2.2.2. The case of "syntactic modifiers" and "appealers"

The learners' use of "syntactic modifiers" and "appealers" in this study constituted other instances of pragmalinguistic transfer. Unlike English, the Vietnamese language often employs semantic rather than formal means to realize different grammatical categories. For example, verb tense is generally lexicalized by adverbials of time such as "***hôm qua***" (yesterday), "***hôm nay***" (today), and ***"ngày mai"*** (tomorrow). Sometimes it can be realized by auxiliary verbs such as ***"đã"*** (past)***, "đang"*** (present)***, "sẽ*** (future). However, these auxiliary verbs require no morphological change to the main verb and

are used only for the purpose of emphasizing the action or event expressed by the main verb. Thus, they still express lexical meanings rather than grammatical meanings. Modality in Vietnamese is also often realized by lexical means such as modal particles (***"à", "ư", "nhỉ", "nhé",*** etc), which are somewhat similar to English "appealers" ("***okay***", "***yeah", "right",*** etc), rather than by syntactic means such as modal verbs or past tense as in English. Presumably, that is why the learners in this study made little use of "syntactic modifiers" when mitigating their criticisms and resorted to lexical modifiers such as "appealers", which were not used at all by the Australian NS group.

7.2.3. Concluding remarks

While transfer was evident in the learners' use of criticisms and criticism responses as indicated above, there were also instances where expected transfer was not found. For example, the learners in the present study seemed to opt for indirect criticisms (such as "indicating standard", "correction", "demand for change", "advice of change", "suggestion for change", and "hinting") noticeably more frequently than the target group and even their peers in the Vietnamese NS group ($p < .05$). This could possibly be evidence of what Ellis (1994) refers to as "playing it safe", i.e. when the learners were not sure of the appropriateness of a certain pragmatic feature, they decided to make less use of it (c.f. Edmondson and House, 1991 cited in Ellis, 1994). Or as Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) claim, as newcomers to new culture, learners may be inclined to employ less severe strategies than do native speakers, to avoid at all costs being considered impolite.

Another example of non-transfer, on the other hand, seems to lend support to Kellerman's (1977, 1978, 1983, 1986) idea of "prototypicality" (i.e. learners' perception of the specificity vs. universality of an L1 characteristic) (see Chapter 2 for more

details). A learner, for example, who did not transfer the L1 structure "***nên"*** (somewhat equivalent to ***"should"***) when realizing "advice" in English, revealed in the ***post hoc*** interview that he thought the two structures were not equivalent in terms of politeness although they may be in terms of propositional content. He said that while "advice" of this type sounds polite in Vietnamese, it does not necessarily sound so in English. Likewise, a few learners, who did not transfer "***phải"*** (somewhat equivalent to "***must"***) when realizing "demands" in English, explained in the ***post hoc*** interview that this structure was inappropriate in English although it sounded fine in Vietnamese. Apparently, in these cases it was the learners' perception of the specificity of certain L1 structures that influenced their decision not to transfer them.

With respect to the question of how proficiency correlates with transfer, it was found that generally, as learners became more proficient in the L2, they seemed to be less influenced by their L1 in the use of criticism modifiers. However, in the case of the advanced and the intermediate learners, the latter group tended to do better in the sense that they employed criticism modifiers significantly more often than the Vietnamese NS group while the former group did not. This happened mainly because the intermediate learners produced a great number of external modifiers, pushing up the total number of modifiers that they produced compared to the advanced learners, who produced more internal but fewer external modifiers than their intermediate peers (see Chapter 6). Interestingly though, where linguistic realization was concerned, advanced learners were found to transfer more complex L1 linguistic structures such as in this "disarmer": "***hmm well, since ah ((laugh)) to err is human ((laugh)) so I'm very I mean very afraid of ah say (.) recognizing or correcting the mistakes with grammatic ah grammatical mistakes and vocabulary mistakes***", whereas the intermediate learners seemed to rely on the much simpler L1 "disarmer" ***"I'm sorry but …"***. This finding is consistent

with Blum-Kulka (1982), Takahashi and Beebe (1987), Olshtain and Cohen (1989), and Hill (1997), who assume a positive correlation between proficiency and transfer as they believe that transfer can only take place when L2 learners have gained sufficient TL resources to make it possible (see Chapter 2 for more details).

In summary, this study adds further evidence of pragmatic transfer to the existing body of ILP research (see Chapter 2 for a review). Despite this contribution, however, a word of caution should be given here. As many transfer researchers (e.g. Takahashi, 1996) have warned, it is not always possible to determine when learners fall back on their mother tongue and when they draw on universal pragmatic knowledge or previously acquired (L***n***) pragmatic knowledge. One possible way to identify whether a pragmatic error is L1-induced or IL-specific, as Ellis (1994) suggests, is to conduct a two-dimensional study, in which data are collected from not only learners, the TL group, and the NSs of the learners' mother tongue, but also from a group of the NSs of the TL who also learn the learners' mother tongue. In this study, it would have been preferable to have gathered data from a group of Vietnamese EFL learners, a group of NSs of Australian English, a group of NSs of Vietnamese, and a group of Australian learners of Vietnamese as a foreign language, as did Baba (1999) in her study on American-Japanese compliment responses (see Chapter 2). However, given that such a group of Australian learners of Vietnamese as a FL was not available for my research purposes, all the assumptions about transfer in this study are based largely on the performance of the Vietnamese EFL learners as compared with the Vietnamese NS and Australian NS groups and on reported information about the learners' pragmatic decision-making from the ***play-back*** interviews. Within these constraints, therefore, the findings of this chapter should be seen as suggestive and tentative rather than conclusive.

CHAPTER 8:

THE RETROSPECTIVE INTERVIEW

The present chapter analyzes and discusses the retrospective interview data collected from 36 learner-participants after they had completed the peer-feedback task (RP). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the interview has two purposes. Firstly, it was designed to investigate the factors that may have affected the learners' choice of pragmatic strategies for realizing criticisms and criticism responses that were found in the role play data (Research Question 4). For this purpose, the learners were asked questions regarding their L2 pragmatic knowledge (e.g. ***Could you tell me about your language choice? How did you decide to say what you did? What do you think the Australian NS would have said in a similar situation? Would you have said it differently had your interlocutor been an NS?*** etc.), L1 influence (e.g. ***What would you have said in a similar Vietnamese situation?***), processing issues (e.g. ***What were you concentrating on when you criticized? Did you consider the hearer's reaction? What language were you thinking in?*** etc.), and learning experience (e.g. ***Have you ever seen that language use?***) (see Appendix 6). Secondly, the interview was used for the purpose of triangulation of data, i.e. the combination of different data sources "to maximize information" on complex issues (Neumann, 1995 cited in Barron, 2001, p.80). This helps to reduce possible task bias and enhance confidence in the objectivity and reliability of the findings (Kasper, 1998 cited in Barron, 2001).

Given these purposes, the results section of the present chapter reports the learners' stated influences on their choice of pragmatic strategies when performing criticisms and criticism responses in the target language. In the discussion section, these findings

are interpreted and validated in combination with the relevant findings from the role play and questionnaire data.

8.1. RESULTS

8.1.1. Reported influences on learners' choice of criticism and criticism response realization strategies and formulas

Table 8.1 presents the number of times and the number of learners who referred to each factor that they regarded as an influence on their language usage when criticizing and responding to criticism in English (also see Appendix 10). Overall, the explanations fall into four categories: (1) L2 pragmatic knowledge, (2) L1 influence, (3) processing difficulties, and (4) learning experience.

Table 8.1: Learners' accounts of their criticizing and responding to criticism strategies

Sources of influence	Reference to	No of mentions	No of learners
1. L2 pragmatic knowledge			
-Considerations of politeness	-the use of positive remarks, "advice", "suggestions", & hints	68	33/36
-Perceptions of L2 culture	-directness	10	8/36
-Need for explicitness	-the use of "demand" & other unmitigated utterances	18	14/36
-Overgeneralization	-the grading of modal verbs, the use of "disagreement" & "advice"	8	6/36
2. L1 influence			
-Translation and transfer	-the use of "advice" & "demand"	18	11/36
-Perception of L1-L2 similarity	-the use of "should", "must", & "have to"	27	20/36
3. Processing difficulties			
-Focus on message clarity	-the lack of modality markings	44	24/36
-Automatization	-the lack of modality markings, the use of "should"	62	22/36
4. Learning experience			
-Textbooks	-the use of "should", "must", & "disagreement"	9	9/36
-Instruction	-the use of "should", "must", & "disagreement", social factors	22	18/36
-Teacher-talk	-the use of "should" & "must"	12	11/36

Table 8.1 (continued)

Sources of influence	Reference to	No of mentions	No of learners
-Peers	-the use of unmitigated "disagreement"	7	6/36
-Media	Directness	4	4/36

8.1.1.1 L2 pragmatic knowledge

8.1.1.1.1. Considerations of politeness:

On a total of 68 occasions the learners referred to 'politeness' when explaining their strategies for criticizing and responding to criticisms. They often used such words as "soft/ strong language", "friendly/ intimate way", "appropriate/ acceptable way", "avoid hurting", "lessen the harshness", and so on when commenting on their speech acts. The following is a typical comment:

(1) "***When criticizing or giving feedback to someone we need to choose 'soft' language to avoid hurting him or her. Here I just suggested some changes to her essay so I just said "I find it maybe better if you use one of the linking words or some of them". I think a suggestion was more appropriate than a strong comment in this case."*** (English translation)

Of these comments, 12 were about the use of "compliments". For example, 12 out of 36 (33.3%) learners stated that they prefaced criticisms with positive remarks in order to mitigate any possible offence. Consider the following English translation:

(2) "***I have learnt many helpful structures in English. Before we criticize someone, we need to acknowledge that person's positive points. If we want to reduce the shock that we cause them, we should first give them positive remarks. Then we can talk about their negative points in a soft way, I think so."***

Another 17 comments were about the use of “advice” as a CF. Specifically, the learners who used this semantic formula explained that it was a “polite” and “friendly” way of criticizing (example 4). For the same reason, the learners who did not employ this formula commented that they should have used it (example 5).

(4) ***I criticized her (***i.e. the listener) ***by giving advice because that was only my opinion and she was not obliged to follow it. She could decide for herself. That was only my suggestion for her but not my imposition on her. Giving advice is a more polite and friendlier way to criticize compared to other ways.”***

(5) ***“I should have used the structure “You should” but because my English is not good, so in spontaneous situations I tended to speak out the words I did not intend. For example here I should have said “You should ah you should divide this part into two parts” (…) “You should” is soft advice.”***

(English translation)

8.1.1.1.2. Perceptions of L2 culture:

On eight occasions the learners referred specifically to the L2 culture when explaining their criticisms and criticism responses. For instance, eight learners, who employed direct strategies, believed the NS preferred to express his or her opinion directly:

(6) “***I think NSs usually express their ideas directly. If they do not agree with the listener, they would probably also say “I don’t agree with you.”*** (English translation)

Due to this perception 18 out of 22 learners (82%) who demonstrated over-explicitness, when asked whether they thought the Australian NS would criticize in the same way as them in a similar situation responded “***Yes***”:

(7) "***Yes I think they*** (i.e. NS) ***would say it in the same way. I think they are also direct and like to express their ideas directly"*** (English translation)

Also, 19 of them (86.3%) said they would have not criticized differently, had their interlocutor been an NS:

(8) "***If he*** (i.e. the listener) ***had been a native speaker, I would still have said "I don't agree with you"*** (English translation).

8.1.1.1.3. Need for explicitness:

On a total of 18 occasions the learners referred to the need to emphasize their opinions as they sought to explain their over-explicit speech acts. Phrases which they often used included "defend my opinion", "defend to the end", "emphasize my opinion", "truly argue", "make the listener understand/ realize his/ her error", and so on. The following is a typical comment:

(9) "***When we argue, we usually want to defend our opinion. Sometimes we use strong words just because we want to emphasize our opinion, defend it, and make the listener understand it."*** (English translation)

Of these comments, eight concerned the use of "demand". Specifically, eight out of 15 (53.3%) learners who employed "demand" stated that when giving feedback about something obligatory such as grammatical rules, this formula was an optimal choice and politeness was not a consideration:

(9) "***Because I think I was talking about grammatical rules ah grammatical rules must be accurate so I used that structure*** (i.e. demand)/ ***Yes grammar ah grammar has rules and they must be used correctly/ Yes because this is a grammatical rule and she was obliged to use it correctly so politeness was irrelevant here."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.1.4. Overgeneralization:

On a total of 8 occasions the learners were found to over-generalize their knowledge of how to use a particular structure or semantic formula from their previously acquired knowledge (example 10).

(10) "***Ah "can" is softer than "should". It shows our respect to the listener because we don't impose our opinion on him or her. So I think "cannot" is softer than "should not."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.2. L1 influence

8.1.1.2.1. Transfer and translation

On a total of 18 occasions the learners mentioned transfer from the L1 when commenting on their criticisms and criticism responses. For example, four high beginners commented that they deliberately fell back on their L1 resources when they were lacking the L2 structures needed to convey their intended meaning, although they were aware that this translation might not have been accurate:

(11) "***In the conversation I was spontaneous and I did not want to stop to think what structure was the best to use. And actually I did not know what could be the best structure to use in criticizing. So I normally used Vietnamese structures but I also know that this use might have been inaccurate in English."*** (English translation)

Three other high beginners reported "transferring" the use of "advice" "***You should***" and "demand" "***You must***" from the L1:

(12) ***"Ah I usually say so*** (i.e. "You must do this") ***in Vietnamese so when I translated it into English, it was influenced by my Vietnamese"***

(13) "***I transferred it*** (i.e. the use of advice) ***from Vietnamese. For example, in Vietnamese I would also say "You shouldn't do this. You shouldn't do that". So ah because I often said so in Vietnamese I also translated it into English."***

(English translation)

Also, when asked what language they were thinking in, six high beginners reported always thinking in Vietnamese and then translating into English:

(14) "***I was trying to think in English as my teacher advised but I did not improve. I was still thinking in Vietnamese and then translating into English.***" (English translation)

Two reported thinking in English only in familiar situations and thinking in Vietnamese otherwise:

(15) "***Sometimes I had reflexes in English. When the situation was familiar to me, for example, I was able to think directly in English. But for more sustained speech, I thought in Vietnamese, and then translated into English."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.2.2. Perception of L1-L2 proximity

On a total of 27 occasions the learners mentioned that they perceived a similarity between the L1 and L2 in the use of a particular structure in terms of both meaning and politeness value. For example, 18 out of 26 (69%) learners who offered "advice" by means of the structure "***should",*** or commented on it, said that it was equivalent to the Vietnamese structure "***nên"***:

(16) ***"I think they*** (i.e. "***should***" and "***nên*** ") ***are equivalent in terms of politeness degree and ah semantically "should" is " nên" if translated into Vietnamese."*** (English translation)

Likewise, 9 out of 12 learners (75%) who employed the structure "***must***" perceived a correspondence between it and the Vietnamese structure "***phải":***

(17) ***"I think "must" means "phải" in Vietnamese."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.3. Processing difficulties

8.1.1.3.1. Focus on message clarity

When explaining the lack of markings for modality in their criticisms and criticism responses, the learners mentioned on 44 occasions that when under communicative pressure they chose to give priority to message clarity over modality:

(18) "***At that time I just wanted to convey my ideas as accurately and quickly as possible."*** (English translation)

What is more, when asked "***Did you consider the hearer's reaction before criticizing?",*** 18 out of 36 (50%) learners said "***No"***, supporting the above claim about their preference for message clarity at the expense of politeness. Six of them (16.6%) said they could not recall this event; however when cross-checked with their answers to the question "***What did you pay attention to when criticizing?"*** later in the interview, they reported trying to be precise rather than polite:

(19) "***I concentrated on what to criticize and how to express it precisely but not what word to use to sound polite. Whatever word came along, I used it."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.3.2. Automatization

On a total of 62 occasions the learners referred to "spontaneity" when explaining their use of a particular semantic formula or linguistic realization structure. They often commented that most of the time they were spontaneous and automatic and that

rather than be selective, they tended to draw on those structures that seemed most accessible to them at the time of speaking:

(20) "***Ah this utterance*** (i.e. "You should") ***has become a reflex. I didn't plan to say it."***

(21) ***"When I was speaking English, I was quite spontaneous, and employed whatever structure that came off the top of my head. I did not select the language to use."***

(English translation)

In many instances, the learners also commented on processing difficulties as being one of the constraints on their ability to select the language to use. The phrases they often used in their comments included "couldn't control", "couldn't find better alternatives at that time", difficult to choose words", "used words that were not intended", "reflex is too slow", and so on. The following are typical examples:

(22) "***Sometimes I couldn't control what I said/ I have not been used to speaking English, so sometimes I used words that were not intended ."***

(23) "***Many times I thought in one way but I spoke in another way ah because my English competence, generally speaking, is not perfect, not native-like."***

(English translation)

They also commented that if they could say what they had said again, they would have said it differently:

(24) "***Sometimes I had to be spontaneous and ah thinking back about it I wondered "Oh gee why did I use that structure, why did I not use a better one?"*** (English translation)

8.1.1.4. Learning experience

8.1.1.4.1. Textbooks

On 9 occasions the learners referred to textbooks as a source of information on the linguistic structures that they employed. For example, 5 out of 17 (29.4%) learners who used the structure "***should"*** commented that they had learned from textbooks that it is a polite structure:

(25) "***There are a number of alternative structures such as "must", "should", "ought to", "have to" and among them "should" is the most polite and friendliest."*** (English translation)

One of them also found the structure "***should"*** in textbooks used for the purpose of criticizing:

(26) "***I have seen it*** (i.e. "should") ***many times in the textbooks. In the dialogues in the textbooks, for example, it is used to give feedback to other people."*** (English translation)

Two out of 12 learners (16.6%) who employed the structure ***"Must"*** mentioned that they had learned from textbooks that this structure is used to talk about rules and principles:

(27) "***I read in the grammar book that "Must" expresses rules and obligation."*** (English translation)

One learner mentioned that they had learned the expression of disagreement "***I don't think so"*** from dialogues in textbooks:

(28) "***I've seen it*** (i.e. the expression "***I don't think so"***) ***in the dialogues in my textbook."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.4.2. Instruction

On a total of 22 occasions the learners referred to instruction as a source of influence on their choice of a particular semantic formula or linguistic realization structure. For instance, 11 out of 17 learners (64.7%), who employed the structure "***should",*** reported being instructed that it was a polite and friendly way of giving "advice":

(29) "***My English teachers said that when giving advice we should use such a "soft" structure as "should."*** (English translation)

What is more, one advanced learner even reported that modal structures such as "***should"*** were introduced to her at a very early stage of learning. Thus, they became thoroughly automatized and could even override other more appropriate but newly acquired linguistic structures:

(30) "***Since I started learning English at high school, I have got used to this structure*** (i.e. "should"). ***It is like a habit. And although now I am aware that it is not an appropriate way to give advice and have learnt other alternative structures, I still keep coming back to use it when I do not pay enough attention."*** (English translation)

Only four learners reported being instructed that the structure "***should"*** could be interpreted as an imposition of the speaker's will on the listener. As a result, these learners avoided using it as long as they managed to pay attention:

(31) "***My teacher said that the structure "should" is quite strong and there are many other alternative options."*** (English translation)

Likewise, 4 out of 12 learners (33.3%) who employed the structure "***must***" also commented that they had learned from their teachers that it is an appropriate way to express obligations, rules, and principles:

(32) "***My teacher said* that "Must" is a modal verb used with bare infinitives. *My teacher also said that it is used to talk about rules and principles.*"** (English translation)

One learner reported being instructed on the expression of disagreement "***I don't quite agree with you"***:

(33) "***This structure*** (i.e. "***I don't quite agree with you"***) ***was the structure that the teacher provided after correcting us. Ah when we said "You should or you shouldn't" she corrected us and gave us some sample structures to practice."*** (English translation)

Another learner was instructed that age does not affect register in language use within Western communication culture:

(34) "***My teacher said* that in Vietnam the junior needs to respect the senior but that in Western culture people don't show that respect very clearly."** (English translation)

8.1.1.4.3. Teacher talk

On 12 occasions the learners reported learning a particular linguistic structure by observing how their teachers corrected or gave feedback to them and other classmates. For example, seven learners reported thinking that the structure "***should"*** was an appropriate way of giving "advice" because their teachers also used it when correcting the class:

(35) "***I have seen it (***i.e. "should") ***used many times. For example, if we receive a bad mark, my teacher usually says "You should be more careful" or "You should work hard."*** (English translation)

One learner mentioned that her teacher used the structure "***must***" when giving instruction about grammatical rules. This learner believed that "***must"*** was an appropriate form when talking about rules and principles:

(36) "***My teacher also used this verb*** (i.e. "***Must"***) ***when giving instruction on grammar."*** (English translation)

One learner also mentioned that he had observed use of the expression of disagreement "***I don't agree"*** from his teachers giving feedback to the class:

(37) "***My teachers are also very direct. If they don't agree with you on a problem they also say "I don't agree with you."*** (English translation)

Three other learners reported learning how to preface their criticisms with positive remarks by observing their teachers giving feedback to them:

(38) "***My teacher always talks about the good points first although sometimes we have just very few good points. Then follows "But" or "However" and a number of bad points but we still find it okay. No problem."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.4.4. Peers

On seven occasions the learners reported observing use of the expressions of disagreement "***I don't agree with you"*** and "***I disagree with you"*** from their classmates and peers:

(39) "***I think that the structures of this kind*** (i.e. "***I don't agree with you"***) ***I have heard many times. Like my classmates usually use them ah when discussing an issue ah to express their disagreement with the opinion of others."*** (English translation)

8.1.1.4.5. Media

Finally, on four occasions the learners mentioned that they had formed an idea that Westerners were direct from watching Western movies and TV programs:

(40) "***I knew it from Western movies, yes they*** (i.e. Westerners) ***are very direct."*** (English translation)

Overall, this section presents those factors that the learners as a whole group reported as influencing their choice of pragmatic strategies for criticizing and responding to criticisms. These factors generally came from four sources: L2 pragmatic knowledge, L1 influence, processing difficulties, and learning experience. The next section presents each proficiency group's account of these factors.

8.1.2. An analysis of the interview data according to proficiency groups

Table 8.2 summarizes the sources of influence reported by each proficiency group of learners. The numbers next to each source represent the number of occasions on which it was mentioned by each group and their sums.

Overall, the summary seems to indicate that L2 proficiency level also influenced the way in which the learners decided to criticize and respond to criticism in the L2. Firstly, as the learners' proficiency level increased, they seemed less likely to believe in the need to express their intended meanings explicitly. As seen in Table 8.2, while the high beginner group mentioned the need for explicitness 8 times and the intermediate group 7 times, the advanced group mentioned it only three times. Additionally, the advanced group did not report on generalization whereas the high beginner and intermediate groups reported drawing on it 5 and 3 times, respectively.

Table 8.2: Occurrence of sources of influence according to proficiency group

Sources of influence	No. of mentions by each group			Total No. of mentions
	H. Begin.	Inter.	Advanced	
1. L2 pragmatic knowledge				
-Considerations of politeness	25	19	24	68
-Perceptions of L2 culture	5	3	2	10
-Need for explicitness	8	7	3	18
-Overgeneralization	5	3	0	8
2. L1 influence				
-Translation and transfer	15	2	1	18
-Perception of L1-L2 similarity	13	11	3	27
3.Processing difficulties				
-Focus on message clarity	24	11	9	44
-Automatization	35	18	9	62
4. Learning experience				
-Textbooks	5	2	2	9
-Instruction	5	9	8	22
-Teacher-talk	7	3	2	12
-Peers	2	1	4	7
-Media	3	1	0	4

There were also fewer claims about reliance on the L1 as the learners' proficiency increased. Table 8.2 indicates that the high beginner group reported on direct translation and transfer from the L1 a total of 15 times while the intermediate group reported translating from the L1 only twice and the advanced group once. When asked which language they were thinking in, half of the high beginner group (6 out of 12) claimed always to think in Vietnamese and then translate into English and 16.6% of them (2 out of 12) claimed to think directly in English only in familiar situations. Only 25% (3 out of 13) claimed that they were thinking directly in English for the whole peer-feedback conversation. In contrast, the intermediate group reported relying on Vietnamese only for complex thoughts and the advanced group reported always thinking directly in English.

The advanced learners also tended to choose the language of criticism based on the impact that it could have on the interlocutor rather than on its linguistic equivalence

with L1 corresponding structures. Consider this example in which the learner explained the mismatch in terms of linguistic structure between her criticism given in the L1 ("***probably you should elaborate more on it***") and that in the L2 ("***yeah I think you might it MIGHT be better if you elaborate on it a bit a little bit more I think. yeah***?"):

(41) R: ***Could you please talk about this mismatch?***

L: ***I think ah because ah when speaking English I use ah I care about how to maintain the idea ah my intended meaning. I think these two utterances are equivalent ah they both can convey what I mean. ah because I am focused on the listener, like when I say something, what impact does it have on the listener? And I think that in this case my English and Vietnamese criticisms were equivalent.***

R: ***Can I paraphrase your statement? So you mean that the two utterances were equivalent in terms of the impact that they had on the listener?***

L: ***Yes. They were equivalent in terms of politeness value.***

(English translation)

Indeed, Table 8.2 also shows that while the high beginner group mentioned the similarity between a particular L2 linguistic structure and an L1 structure 13 times and the intermediate group 11 times, the advanced group did so only three times.

What is more, as their L2 proficiency increased, the learners tended to change their focus of attention, giving more priority to modality. Indeed, 83.3% (10 out of 12) of the high beginners reported focusing more on being understood correctly rather than trying to be polite when criticizing. Only 66.6% (8 out of 12) of the intermediate learners and 50% (6 out of 12) of the advanced learners did so. Table 8.2 also shows that the high beginner group mentioned message clarity 24 times in total, while the

intermediate group did so only 11 times and the advanced group 9 times. Notably, the number of times the learners mentioned automatization also decreased sharply from the lower to the higher proficiency groups. For example, the high beginners mentioned it a total of 35 times whereas the intermediate and the advanced group mentioned it only 18 and 9 times, respectively.

Lower proficiency learners also seem to benefit less from classroom management discourse used by their teachers as compared to their higher proficiency counterparts. In the interview data, a high beginner revealed that when receiving feedback from the teacher, he and his classmates could understand the content of this feedback but could not figure out how 'strong' or 'soft' it was:

(42) "***He was quite direct, for example, if we made an error, he corrected it immediately. But of course we learners did not understand the emotive color of the words he used. We did not know how strong or soft they were. From what he said we only understood what was erroneous but we did not understand the criticism at a more delicate level.*** (…) ***The specific words that he*** (i.e. his teacher) ***used I cannot recall because of my limited English competence. And I think many of my classmates were the same. We could understand what he said but we could not remember the exact wording."*** (English translation)

In contrast, none of the intermediate or advanced learners reported the same experience.

8.1.3. Summary of findings

This section summarizes the learners' stated influences on their choice of criticizing and responding to criticism strategies. In general, these influences come from four sources: (1) learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge, (2) L1 influence, (3) learners' processing difficulty, and (4) learners' learning experience.

Among the four sources, processing difficulty was mentioned the most often (106 times), followed immediately by L2 pragmatic knowledge (104 times). Learning experience was mentioned 54 times and L1 influence was mentioned 45 times.

Regarding (1), the consideration of politeness was the most frequently mentioned influence on the learners' choice of pragmatic strategies (68 times). Regarding (2), the perception of L1-L2 similarity was the most often cited influence (27 times). Regarding (3), automatization was mentioned the most often (62 times) and finally, regarding (4), instruction and teacher-talk were the most often cited sources of pragmatic information on the linguistic realization structures employed by the learners (22 and 12 times, respectively).

The interview data also indicate differences between the three proficiency groups in terms of their most often cited influential factors. For example, the high beginner group reported direct translation and transfer from the L1 (15 times), perception of L1-L2 similarity (13 times), and processing difficulty (59 times) more often than the other two groups. These findings lend support to the findings from the role play data (see Chapter 6).

8.2. DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, the interview employed in the present study has two purposes. First, it is aimed to investigate the influential factors behind the learners' pragmatic choices when performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism (Research Question 4). Second, it is used to triangulate the role play and questionnaire data in order to provide a more reliable interpretation and comprehensive discussion of the findings. Accordingly, the following sections address the findings from the

interview in conjunction with the findings from the role play and the questionnaire and in relation to the two above-mentioned purposes.

8.2.1. What does triangulation of the data reveal about factors influencing the learners' choice of strategies when criticizing and responding to criticism?

The results section indicates that the learners' choice of criticizing and responding to criticism strategies is the result of a number of overlapping influences such as L2 pragmatic knowledge, pragmatic overgeneralization, transfer of L1 pragmatics, processing ability, L2 linguistic competence, and learning experience such as instruction, textbooks, and classroom discourse. Cross-checking with the role play and written questionnaire data supports these findings. In the following sections, these influences will be discussed with reference to relevant findings from the role play and questionnaire data.

8.2.1.1. L2 pragmatic knowledge

The metapragmatic information (i.e. the information about one's "awareness of and ability to clearly express rules of speaking" – Barron, 2002, p.104) provided by the learners in the retrospective interview seems to indicate that in many instances their L2 pragmatic knowledge is incomplete. This accounts for several instances of their non-native use of criticisms and criticism responses as revealed in the role play data.

For example, the previous chapters found that a number of learners overused "demand" to give feedback to their friends' essays. The interview data reveal that in many instances, they did not realize the inappropriateness of this use. For example, 53.3% of them who realized "demand" by the structure "***must"*** thought it was an appropriate way of expressing rules and principles. Likewise, there was a misconception that English NSs preferred 'directness', which was wrongly perceived

by the learners as involving a lack of modality. 82% of the learners who demonstrated over-explicitness, when asked whether they thought the Australian NS would criticize in the same way as them in a similar situation, responded "***Yes***". Not surprisingly, due to this conception, they produced many over-explicit criticisms and criticism responses such as bald "disagreements".

Others, who tried to be polite, misused "advice" due to their misconception of the pragmalinguistic form-function mapping of this CF. For instance, 89.5% of learners who employed "advice" thought it was a polite way of criticizing. A few learners, who demonstrated correct knowledge of the pragmalinguistic function of this CF, still misused it due to lack of knowledge of sociopragmatic constraints. For example, one learner who considered the semantic formula "advice" to be "obligatory" and "imposing" believed that it was still acceptable among people of equal social status:

(43) "***It depends on the relationship between the interlocutors. If two friends or two people of the same social status say "You should do this" to each other, it is simply advisory. It's not too strong or imposing. But if a teacher says "You should do this" to his or her student, it may imply obligation."*** (English translation)

Notably, all instances of pragmatic overgeneralization in the present study such as mistaken pragmalinguistic use of the modal verb "***can"*** in negation or simplification of a disagreement expression (***I disagree/ I don't agree)*** are also a consequence of insufficient knowledge of the L2 pragmatics, as reported by the learners in the interview (see 8.1.1.1.4).

8.2.1.2. Pragmatic transfer

Chapter 7 found that in the absence of L2 pragmatic knowledge, the learners might have transferred a number of L1 pragmatic routines, such as a preference for

"demands" and "advice" as CFs, the tendency to challenge one another in replying to criticisms, and the low frequency of mitigating criticisms and criticism responses. During the interview, many learners commented that they were influenced by their L1 when selecting these routines. For example, they reported preferring to give "advice" because this is an acceptable practice within Vietnamese culture, encouraging intimacy rather than personal space. On the other hand, they also reported the belief that once one engages in "true argumentation", one needs to put forward strong opinions in order to sound convincing with the result that they produced many over-explicit utterances (see Chapter 7 for more discussion of Vietnamese culture).

The learners' retrospective reports about their perception of the L1 and L2 pragmatics support Kellerman's (1983) theory of transferability. Put briefly, Kellerman identifies three factors that affect transferability. These include psycholinguistic markedness (i.e. learners' awareness of the specificity or universality of an L1 feature), the reasonable entity condition (i.e. TL reasonableness assumption by learners in the absence of TL knowledge), and psychotypology (i.e. learners' belief regarding the distance between their L1 and the TL) (see Chapter 2). In the present study, since the learners presumed that "advice" was a 'friendly' way of criticizing in the L2 just as in their L1 and that strong argumentation is appropriate when people need to defend their opinion, they made extensive use of "advice", "demands", and "disagreements" (i.e. the reasonable entity condition). Since they also perceived proximity between "***nên***" and "***should"*** and between "***phải"*** and "***must"***, they reported transferring these two L1 structures when respectively realizing "advice" and "demand" in the L2 (i.e. psychotypology). It should be noted that in the present study non-transfer occurred in cases where the learners did not perceive any correspondence between an L1 structure and that of the

L2. For example, those learners who did not perceive any correspondence between "***n*ê*n***" and "***should"*** did not engage in the transfer of this structure.

The interview data also revealed two types of communication transfer (i.e. the use of the L1 for comprehension and production of the L2 in a specific communicative situation – see Ellis, 1994, pp 336-338) or what the learners referred to as "translation". One is strategic transfer, which involves learners' reliance on the L1 to solve a specific communication problem despite their awareness of the non-transferability of the structure. For example, four high beginner learners admitted deliberately resorting to their L1 resources when they were lacking the L2 structures needed to convey their intended meaning, although they were aware that this translation might not have been accurate. The other type of communication transfer is automatic transfer, which takes place when highly automatized L1 routines override the awareness of non-transferability. For example, an advanced learner reported that her automatic use of the structure "***You should"*** to give "advice" was due to L1 influence, even though she was aware that this might not be an appropriate use in English (also see Olshtain, 1983 in Chapter 2 for further such findings). Importantly, these types of transfer could not have been identified from the role play data.

8.2.1.3. Processing issues

A combination of the interview, role play, and questionnaire data provides important information on processing issues, especially the cognitive difficulties which faced the learners in spontaneous interaction and which they deemed partly responsible for many of the over-explicit utterances produced in this condition.

Chapters 5 and 6 found that in the role play situation the learners demonstrated inappropriate explicitness in realizing criticisms and criticism responses due to a lack

of modality markings in these two speech acts. Evidence of this modality reduction was also apparent from the interview data when a comparison was made between the learners' intended meaning as expressed in the L1 and its realization in the L2. The following examples reflect what Kasper (1982, p.107) refers to as "L1 transfer with reduction" or the psycholinguistic process whereby learners "preserve the illocution and propositional content" of what they intend to say based on their L1 knowledge, but reduce the modal component:

(44) L1 intended meaning: "***Some of your ideas sound interesting but there are some I don't really agree with"***

L2 realization: ***"I don't agree with you"***

(45) L1 intended meaning: "***It might be necessary to give a definition of public transport"***

L2 realization: "***Hmm when you say using public transport, is it necessary to give a definition what the public transport is"***

When interviewed, many of the learners commented that under the pressure of online speech production, they concentrated first and foremost on the basic speech act. To put it another way, they focused on ensuring that their intentions were precisely understood before making themselves sound polite. Others reported choosing fluency over modality: they would rather not pause to select appropriate linguistic realization structures at the expense of speech flow. As a result, these learners tended to simplify their language by resorting to simple structures that were most accessible to them at the moment of speech production and by reducing modality in order to cope with the competing processing demands. In many instances, the learners commented that had

they had more time to plan their utterances, they could have made their utterances more polite.

Indeed, when completing the written questionnaire, the learners generally produced a higher mean of “advice” and “suggestions” – the two CFs that they considered “polite” - than did they in the role play, although the differences were not after the alpha required for Bonferroni correction (see Chapter 4 for more details). This seems to indicate that in the un-pressured written condition, the learners could pay more equal attention to what to say and how to say it than in the spontaneous speech condition.

Interestingly enough, however, the learners did not produce a greater number of modifiers when performing criticisms and criticism responses in the written questionnaire. In fact, they even produced fewer modifiers in the questionnaire than in the role play although the differences were not statistically significant (see Chapter 4 for more details). These results suggest that although the written condition allowed them to pay more attention to politeness, the learners still did not mitigate their criticisms and criticism responses to a greater extent. Presumably, this was the result of a lack of L2 pragmatic knowledge combined with the transfer of L1 pragmatic routines as discussed in the previous sections.

8.2.1.4. Instruction, textbooks and classroom discourse

Research has shown that the misleading information that teachers (both via their instruction and classroom management discourse) and textbooks sometimes inadvertently introduce to learners may hinder rather than promote their learning of L2 pragmatics (Kasper, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig 2001). For instance, teachers may present input in such a way that biases learners to the overuse of some pragmatic strategies and the avoidance of others (Mir, 1992; Beebe and Takahashi, 1989; Takahashi and

Beebe, 1993; Widjaja, 1997). Teacher-talk in teacher-fronted classrooms usually does not serve as a pragmatically appropriate model for learners (Ellis, 1992) for it involves a narrow range of speech acts (Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos, 1976), a lack of politeness markers (Lorscher and Schulze, 1988), a monopolization of discourse organization and management by the teacher (Lorscher, 1986; Ellis, 1990), and thus also a restricted range of discourse markers (Kasper, 1989). Textbooks may also present speech acts unrealistically as they are often based on NS intuition rather than empirical research (Pearson, 1985; Myers-Scotton and Bernstein, 1988; Wolfson, 1989; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynold, 1991; Ohshtain and Cohen, 1991; Han, 1992; Boxer and Pickering, 1995; Bouton, 1996) (see Chapter 2 for more detail).

Although the present study did not conduct any classroom observation of the use of the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticism within textbooks, it found from the learners' retrospective reports several instances of teacher-induced errors, which in many cases interplayed with L1 transfer. For example, 64.7% of the learners who employed the structure "***You should"*** commented that they were explicitly taught that this was a polite way of giving "advice" or feedback to their interlocutors. They also claimed that their teachers often used this structure when correcting their essays and that dialogues in textbooks displayed similar usage.

Likewise, in the case of "demand", many learners held the view that it was a pragmatically appropriate CF to use when principles and rules were involved, perhaps because they had not been taught important pragmalinguistic information about this strategy. As these learners pointed out, the structure "***must***" and "***have to"*** were only taught in terms of grammatical properties and semantic meanings by both textbooks and teachers. Apparently, in those cases, it was the misleading input given via learning

materials, teacher-talk, and insufficient pragmatic instruction by teachers that encouraged the learners to draw incorrect conclusions.

8.2.2. What does triangulation of the data reveal about pragmatic development in the learners' use of criticisms and criticism responses?

When cross-checked with the production data, the retrospective data reveal some insights into L2 pragmatic development. The following sections discuss evidence of pragmatic development from the triangulation of data, the relationship between proficiency and transfer, and grammatical constraints on pragmatic development.

8.2.2.1. Evidence of pragmatic development from the triangulation of data

One significant difference between the three proficiency groups of learners was the higher frequency of use of criticism modifiers by the intermediate and advanced learners as compared to their high beginner peers (see Chapter 6). This finding was supported by the retrospective data which showed that as the learners became more proficient in the L2, they were more likely to pay attention to both the propositional content of their speech acts and modality marking. This also suggests a better control over processing, or a more developed procedural knowledge by the higher proficiency learners (see Bialystok, 1993).

8.2.2.2. Pragmatic transfer and proficiency

The findings from the role play and the interview data suggest a complex relationship between L2 proficiency and L1 transfer, as is often claimed in the transfer literature (see Chapter 2). On the one hand, it was found that the high beginners were closest to the Vietnamese L1 group in the frequency with which they modified the illocutionary force of their criticisms, thus suggesting a negative correlation between L2 proficiency

and L1 transfer (see Chapter 7). This finding was supported by the interview data which showed a decreased reported rate of L1 transfer for the higher proficiency learners. For example, it was found that 66% of the high beginners claimed to transfer from the L1 while only 5.7% of the intermediate learners and 2.7% of the advanced learners reported such transfer. In a few instances, it was also found that the higher proficiency learners reported selecting L2 speech act realization structures based on the impact that these structures might have on the listener rather than on their linguistic equivalence with the L1.

On the other hand, it was also found that the advanced learners were more able to engage in the kind of transfer which requires a mastery of complex L2 linguistic material, thus suggesting a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and L1 transfer (see Chapter 7). The issue, however, seems even more complex when the groups of intermediate and advanced learners were compared. Contrary to what was expected, it was found that compared to the advanced group, the intermediate group deviated further from the Vietnamese L1 group in the frequency with which they mitigated their criticisms. This finding seems to suggest a possibly non-linear developmental path in terms of L1 transfer.

8.2.2.3. Grammatical constraints on pragmatic development

Like any ILP developmental study, there is a need here to raise the question of the relationship between pragmatics and grammar in learners' developing IL since the development of pragmatic competence is believed to be closely linked to that of grammatical competence (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

Research has established that grammatical competence does not necessarily imply pragmatic competence since even advanced learners do not fully acquire L2 pragmatic

knowledge (Kasper, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). On the other hand, there is also the issue of whether grammatical competence constitutes a prerequisite for the development of pragmatic competence. According to Kasper and Rose (2002), there have been two contradictory hypotheses in this regard. One is the precedence of pragmatics over grammar (i.e. grammatical competence is not required for pragmatic acquisition) with evidence coming from studies such as Schmidt (1983), Koike (1989), and Ellis (1992, 1997). The other is the precedence of grammar over pragmatics (i.e. grammatical competence is required for pragmatic acquisition) with evidence coming from Karkkainen (1992), Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2001), and Hill (1997) (also see Kasper and Rose, ibid., for further such findings).

The present study does not take the position that grammar and pragmatics are necessarily two totally independent entities as the issue of the precedence of one competence over the other may imply. Rather, its findings only suggest that the learners' limited grammatical competence could restrict their capacity to produce linguistic action in a native-like way. Specifically, the learners sometimes learned grammatical forms but did not learn all their functions, with the result that they did not always put them to the correct pragmatic use. In other cases, they did not achieve full control over some complex grammatical forms due to a lack of fluency in the L2, with the result that they did not use these forms despite their knowledge of them.

The most obvious evidence for this claim is that the learners, while displaying knowledge of modal structures, rarely used them for modification. Chapter 6 found that the advanced learners drew on modal structures in realizing "suggestions" in only four out of 26 instances and the high beginners and intermediate learners in only one out of 22 and 16 instances respectively, much less frequently than the Australian NSs. To mitigate criticisms and criticism responses, the learners tended to rely on lexical

forms such as "subjectivizers" (***"I think", "In my opinion"***), "downtoners" (***"maybe"***), and "understaters" (***"quite", "a little"***) rather than grammaticalized expressions of modality such as "***could", "would",*** or "past tense". Presumably, although they knew the primary function of such structures (e.g. expressing ability / possibility, etc.), they were probably less aware that they could also be used for mitigation. Alternatively, there may also have been a lack of control over more complex and cognitively demanding structures (see Meisel ***et al.,*** 1981), as sometimes reported by the learners in the interview (see 8.1.1.3). This finding echoes that of Karkkainen (1992) and Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000) who found a similar reliance on simpler lexical forms to mark pragmatic intent even by learners with knowledge of grammatical expressions of modality.

The interview data also supported the claim of grammatical constraints on pragmatic performance. Firstly, it was found that lower proficiency learners had had more difficulties in expressing their intended meanings in the L2 than their higher proficiency peers. In many instances of the interview data, for example, the lower proficiency learners expressed processing difficulty due to limited L2 competence, which seemed to inhibit them from activating politeness realization devices in spontaneous speech conditions. With regard to the relationship between L2 competence and learning opportunities, the interview also showed that lower proficiency learners, constrained by their limited linguistic competence, tended to benefit less from the input needed for pragmatic development provided by their teachers. For instance, a low proficiency learner reported being unable to understand the degree of modality in his teacher's criticisms, and thus, failed to benefit from observing how criticisms were delivered.

8.2.3. Concluding remarks

The objective of the present chapter was to analyze and discuss the interview data in regard to Research Question 4: "What factors may have influenced the learners' choice of pragmatic strategies in performing criticisms and criticism responses?" This question was also addressed in relation to developmental issues.

Generally, in the interview the learners reported a number of influential factors: L2 pragmatic knowledge, L1 transfer, processing difficulties under communicative pressure, and influences from misleading instruction, textbooks, and classroom discourse.

With regard to developmental issues, the relationship between pragmatic transfer and L2 proficiency and that between L2 grammatical competence and L2 pragmatic development were discussed in the light of the findings triangulated from three different sources: the role play, the questionnaire, and the interview. The main points can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the relationship between transfer and proficiency seems complex. On the one hand, the more proficient learners were found less likely to rely on the L1 thanks to their more developed knowledge of the L2 pragmatics. On the other hand, since they were no longer constrained by a low degree of L2 proficiency, they were found to have had sufficient linguistic resources to express their L1 intentions through the L2. Secondly, with regard to the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic development, it was found that a lack of grammatical competence can restrict a learner's capacity to produce linguistic action in a native-like way.

A word of caution, however, should be raised in regard to the reliability of the interview data. As noted by some researchers (see Gass and Mackey, 2000), stimulated

recalls are not free from limitations. For example, some processes, especially those acquired implicitly, may not be entirely available for conscious reporting (Seliger, 1983; Schmidt cited in Robinson, 1992). Some processes may also be too complex to be accurately verbalized (Cohen, 1987, 1991). The respondents may also be unable to recall all their thoughts at the time of retrospection and offer post hoc rationalization instead (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Basturkmen ***et al.,*** 2004). The present study made several efforts to minimize the above possibilities by (1) conducting the interview shortly after completion of the peer-feedback task, when the learners' memory was still fresh, (2) conducting it in the learners' L1 so that they could freely express their thoughts, (3) always replaying the cassette tape for the learners when asking them a question related to the instances of inquiry, (4) avoiding the questions "why" and "why not" as they were believed to overload the informants' memory, (5) avoiding leading questions and feedback in response to the informants' answers except back-channeling (e.g. Hmm, huh, yeah), and (6) not probing further if the answer was "I don't remember" or "I don't know" (see Gass and Mackey, 2000). The present study also employed a triangulation of data in the hope of reducing possible task bias and enhancing the objectivity of the findings. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that all these precautions may not completely eradicate the disadvantages of the technique.

CHAPTER 9:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of the present study was to explore the development of L2 pragmatic competence with specific regard to two little-researched speech acts, namely criticizing and responding to criticisms. IL data were collected from 12 high beginner, 12 intermediate, and 12 advanced Vietnamese EFL learners, via a written questionnaire and role play, and were analyzed with reference to L1 and L2 baseline data collected from 12 Vietnamese and 12 Australian NSs via the same written questionnaire and role play. Additional metapragmatic data were collected from the learners via a retrospective interview. The main findings of the study are summarized in section 9.1. The methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical implications are presented in section 9.2. The limitations of the study are discussed in section 9.3 and suggestions for further research are made in section 9.4.

9.1. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The present study provided a typology of realization strategies for the two little-researched speech acts. It also addressed the following research questions:

(1) In what ways did the Vietnamese EFL learners differ from the Australian NSs in performing the speech acts of criticizing and responding to criticisms in English?

(2) To what extent was pragmatic development evident in the performance of criticisms and criticism responses by the learners of different proficiency levels?

(3) To what extent was pragmatic transfer evident in the learners' performance of criticisms and criticism responses?

(4) What factors may have affected the learners' choice of pragmatic strategies for realizing criticisms and criticism responses?

The major findings can be summarized as follows:

9.1.1. Research Question 1:

The Vietnamese EFL learners criticized and responded to criticisms in a very different way from the Australian NSs, suggesting non-native L2 pragmatic competence for most of the learners. In criticizing, for example, they tended to be less direct than the Australian NSs by producing fewer direct but more indirect strategies. However, this lack of transparency in terms of the illocutionary force of their criticisms did not mean that these criticisms were necessarily more 'polite' according to the target norms. In fact, the learners employed quite 'offensive' indirect criticisms such as "demands", the use of which may create an impression that the speaker dictated the behavior of the hearer (Murphy and Neu, 1996), and "advice", which could be considered 'imposing' in cultures which stress personal space (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987). What is more, these criticisms were mitigated with a much lower frequency than those produced by the Australian NSs, making the learners appear quite untactful interlocutors.

When responding to criticisms, the learners produced more "disagreements" and fewer "agreements" than the Australian NSs, a tendency that differs from the NS conversational norms and politeness (see Brown and Yule, 1983 and Leech's Agreement Maxim, 1983). They also expressed these "disagreements" in a nonnative-like way, e.g. by directly refuting criticisms, asserting their own opinions, claiming freedom of thought, challenging criticisms, or even questioning the validity of the criticism. What is more, they did not employ more modifiers than the Australian NSs

although they produced a greater number of “disagreements”, which needed more hedging.

Another notable finding was a larger variability in the learners’ choice of criticism and criticism response strategies and formulas compared with the Australian NSs. For example, while none of the NSs made “demands” when criticizing, 52.8% of the learners used this formula with more than half believing that it was an appropriate choice. Likewise, when responding to criticisms, whereas the Australian NSs were constant in their tendency to agree with rather than challenge the interlocutor, the learners were divided between acceptance and resistance. This variability may reflect their uncertainty about the appropriate norms of the TL.

9.1.2. Research Question 2:

Little evidence of any pragmatic development was found in this study. The strongest difference between the groups was found in their use of modifiers to criticisms (but not criticism responses)**.** As the learners’ proficiency levels increased, they increasingly tended to mitigate their criticisms with the result that the criticisms became less strong. This was found to be the case especially for internal modifiers where the advanced learners exceeded both the high beginners and the intermediate learners (who produced the greatest number of external modifiers of the three groups). The more proficient learners also employed a wider range of internal modifiers and linguistic devices to realize these modifiers.

No difference, however, was found in the learners’ choice of pragmatic strategies and semantic formulas as they became more proficient in the L2. Perhaps the only evident difference was in their use of linguistic devices to realize these strategies and formulas, with the higher proficiency learners employing a wider variety of linguistic structures.

To account for such a small difference, it has been argued that pragmatic development, especially in the case of challenging tasks such as criticizing and responding to criticisms in an L2, was limited by the EFL learning context, as the learners had had restricted exposure to the target norms (see Takahashi and Beebe, 1987 for further such discussions).

As concerns the extent to which each proficiency group approximated the target norms, this study found that although the higher proficiency learners outperformed their less proficient peers in certain aspects, they still fell short of full native-like pragmatic competence. Firstly, they lagged far behind the Australian NSs in the frequency with which they mitigated their speech acts. Secondly, like their less proficient peers, they also experienced considerable difficulty in realizing these modifiers in a native-like way (e.g. heavy reliance on lexicalized modality). Finally, they made different choices of pragmatic strategies and semantic formulas compared to the NSs (e.g. preference for "advice" and "demand" in criticism realization and "disagreement" in criticism response realization).

As regards the issue of pragmatic acquisition, this study lends support to Bialystok's (1993) processing model and Meisel ***et al.*** (1981)'s complexification hypothesis. Specifically, Bialystok claims that the major challenge for learners in the acquisition of L2 pragmatics is to gain control over processing. The present study found that the main reason for the higher proficiency learners' greater use of internal modifiers is perhaps their better processing ability in spontaneous communication, when compared with their less proficient peers. The low proficiency learners, on the other hand, had quite well-developed universal pragmatic knowledge but their lack of fluency in the L2 prevented them from employing this knowledge for L2 communication. The reason for this claim is that while the lower proficiency learners

employed significantly fewer modifiers than the higher proficiency learners when performing in the role play, they did not necessarily do so when performing in the questionnaire. On the contrary, they even exceeded their more proficient peers in the total number of modifiers as well as the number of internal modifiers when they had more processing time in the written condition.

This study also found evidence to suggest that lexicalized modifiers tend to emerge earlier than grammaticalized modifiers in the learners' IL, thus supporting Meisel ***et al.***'s (1981) complexification hypothesis (see Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig, 2002 for further such findings). Meisel ***et al.*** argue that the order of acquisition of L2 forms is dependent on their structural complexity and the processing demands involved; thus syntactically complex structures, which are also more cognitively demanding, are usually acquired later than simpler structures which require a minimum of processing capacity. The fact that lexicalized modifiers were abundant in the learners' data from this study whereas grammaticalized modifiers were rare, although the latter did increase slightly according to the learners' proficiency levels, indicates that (1) lexicalized modifiers are acquired earlier and (2) the learners, regardless of their proficiency levels, had difficulty using grammaticalized modifiers, partly because they had not yet gained full control over these complex structures.

9.1.3. Research Question 3:

Initial evidence of pragmatic transfer was found in the learners' use of pragmatic strategies to realize criticisms and criticism responses. For example, because Vietnamese culture regards giving "advice" or even "demands" as demonstrating care, sincerity, and friendliness, the learners tended to employ these two formulas quite frequently when criticizing. Since argumentation is also acceptable within

Vietnamese culture, the learners tended to engage in frequent resistance to criticism without being aware that this behavior may make them 'assertive' interlocutors, when viewed from the perspective of Western cultures.

Additional evidence of L1 influence was found in the learners' rare use of modifiers, especially of "syntactic modifiers" such as modal structures and past tense. Vietnamese people tend to believe that strong arguments may be more convincing than hedged arguments and therefore do not often "hedge" their opinions. This may explain the learners' lower frequency of mitigating criticisms and criticism responses when compared with the Australian NSs. What is more, Vietnamese grammar does not possess expressions of modality which correspond to the English expressions. Instead, it expresses modality via modality particles (lexical forms), which are more or less similar to the English "appealers". This may explain why the learners, while making significantly less use of modifiers, especially of "syntactic modifiers" than the Australian NSs, employed more "appealers", as did the Vietnamese L1 group.

The present study also found evidence to support Kellerman's (1983) transferability hypothesis, especially with regard to his "reasonable entity condition" and "psychotypology". It found that in the absence of L2 knowledge, the learners assumed that giving "advice" and "demands", and "disagreeing with criticisms", are pragmatically appropriate in the TL as they are in their L1 and thus transferred these uses into their IL (i.e. reasonable entity condition). It also found that since the learners presumed a correspondence between the L1 structure "***nên***" and the L2 structure "***should"*** and between the L1 structure "***phải"*** and the L2 structure "***must***", they transferred these two L1 structures when realizing "advice" and "demand" in the L2. Those learners who did not perceive such proximity did not engage in transfer (i.e. psychotypology).

Little evidence was found of the relationship between transfer and proficiency. The only notable proficiency effect was the higher proficiency learners' increasing use of modifiers, thus further deviating from the Vietnamese L1 group, compared to their high beginner peers. However, this increase was non-linear as the intermediate group was found to deviate further from the Vietnamese L1 group than the advanced group. On the other hand, it was also found that the advanced learners produced more complex L1-based "disarmers" than the intermediate learners (see 7.2.3), suggesting that more proficient learners may have greater L2 linguistic resources available to them in order to express their L1 intended meanings.

9.1.4. Research Question 4:

In the retrospective interview the learners reported a number of overlapping and interacting influences on their choice of criticizing and responding to criticism strategies. The first influence was their incomplete L2 pragmatic knowledge, which accounted for several of their non-native utterances in the role play data. For example, they reported that their extensive use of "demand" and "advice" was, in many instances, due to their perception (misplaced) that these two semantic formulas were pragmatically appropriate in the L2. Their employment of bald "disagreements" was also caused by the perception that English NSs preferred 'directness', which they wrongly perceived as involving a lack of modality. Notably, the learners also reported practicing overgeneralization in the absence of L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge.

The second influential factor was transfer of L1 pragmatic rules. Two types of transfer were found here. Firstly, the learners reported overusing a number of strategies and semantic formulas such as "demands" and "advice" when criticizing, and "resistance to criticisms" when responding to criticisms in the L2 as a result of L1 influence. In

many instances, the learners reported perceiving L1-L2 proximity regarding the use of these routines. This was an indication of learning transfer. Furthermore, there were various instances of communication transfer in which the learners reported falling back on their L1 for a specific communicative problem despite their awareness of non-transferability (strategic transfer) or when highly automatized L1 rules overrode their awareness of non-transferability (automatic transfer).

The learners also reported being affected by their processing ability when participating in spontaneous conversations. In fact, this factor was mentioned most frequently among the reported sources of influence. In many instances, the learners mentioned that processing difficulties under communicative pressure had caused them to focus on message clarity and fluency at the expense of modality. This factor may provide a partial explanation for the great number of over-explicit utterances that the learners produced in the role play data.

Learning experience was reported as a further influence on the learners' pragmatic-decision making. In the retrospective interview, the learners mentioned teacher instruction, teacher-talk, textbooks and other sources of information such as classmates or the media as factors affecting their choice of a particular strategy or realization structure. For example, their frequent choice of the structure "***You should"*** to realize "advice", while mainly caused by L1 transfer, was reinforced by their teachers' instruction that this was a 'polite' way of criticizing and was further consolidated by their teachers' use of this formula when giving feedback or correcting them and their classmates. The choice of the structure "***must***" to realize "demands" was reinforced by the instruction in their grammar books that this structure is used to talk about rules and principles. Their use of explicit "disagreements" (***"I disagree"/ "I***

don't agree") was also explained as being an influence of their classmates, who realized "disagreements" in this way but were not corrected by their teachers.

9.2. IMPLICATIONS

9.2.1. Methodological implications

The innovative data collection method used in the present study may help to contribute to the long-debated issue regarding the optimal data collection method within ILP research. In this study a peer-feedback task (i.e. a modified role play) was used to elicit spontaneous criticisms and criticism responses from the interlocutors. It was designed as follows. Firstly, the interlocutors were required to write a 250 word argumentative essay on the pros and cons of public transportation versus private transportation. Then they were arranged into dyads to read and give oral feedback on three main aspects of each other's essays: (1) organization; (2) arguments, ideas and evidence; and (3) grammar and vocabulary, based on prompts given by the researcher. In this way, relatively naturalistic criticisms and criticism responses were elicited as the interlocutors were not asked to perform in 'imaginary' situations: writing argumentative essays and giving peer-feedback were part of their academic life. They were also not asked to take on social roles different from their own as students. At the same time, the topic of the criticisms and criticism responses was controlled as were the relative power (equal status) and distance (neutral) between interlocutors. The peer feedback task thus met the requirements for spoken data collection methods, such as the ability to elicit 'relatively natural data' and at the same time to control social and contextual variables. To date, only a few ILP studies have employed this method, e.g. Baba (1999) and Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2001).

The present study also contributes to the methodology of ILP research, with regard to the relationship between data elicitation instruments and research purposes. Firstly, a comparison of the two data sets elicited via the written questionnaire and the role play found that although the written questionnaire did not generate data which were as close to natural speech as those generated by role play, these data were nevertheless useful. Since the written questionnaire was less imposing on the learners' processing capacity, it allowed them to perform to the best of their competence. Thus, useful information about the learners' declarative knowledge of L2 pragmatics could be collected. This provided interesting insights in addition to the findings about the learners' procedural knowledge generated by the role play data. Secondly, the use of a retrospective interview to probe into the learners' pragmatic decision-making has contributed to evidence of the usefulness of this method in researching metapragmatic awareness and processing issues and illuminating performance data. This is an important contribution as, to date, only a few ILP studies have employed this technique.

9.2.2. Theoretical implications

The present study makes a number of contributions to the body of speech act research. From a linguistic perspective, by drawing on the preconditions of criticisms and criticism responses, this study provides a more detailed and fuller definition of these speech acts than previously available and thus probably distinguishes them more effectively from similar speech acts. In the present study, criticisms were identified based on four preconditions such as "H's inappropriate action", "undesirable consequences of this action for H or public", "S's dissatisfaction with this action", and "S's hope for a change in H's future action". The second precondition distinguished criticisms from "complaints" and "blames", while the three remaining preconditions

were shared by all three speech acts. Specifically, criticisms were made not because H's action was seen as being a cost to S. This was, however, the case for complaints and blames. Criticism responses were defined as the verbalized reaction to the criticisms given. This study is also among the first to provide a detailed typology of realization strategies for criticizing and responding to criticisms.

From the perspective of ILP, the present study is, to the best of my knowledge, the first to investigate how criticisms and criticism responses are used by L2 learners in an academic context. Although criticisms and criticism responses are observed to occur frequently in academic settings and are found to be challenging even by NSs, little is known about how these speech acts are used by L2 learners, and thus the findings of the present study are significant. Additionally, by seeking to address important issues within ILP, such as how learners generally develop L2 pragmatic competence over time and how L2 proficiency affects transfer, the present study extends the small but fast growing body of developmental ILP research in particular and SLA research in general. Specifically, it lends support to a number of theories in the field such as Meisel's ***et al.*** (1981) complexification hypothesis, Bialystok's (1993) processing model, Mitchell and Myles's (1998) model of fluency development, and Kellerman's (1983) transferability hypothesis.

9.2.3. Pedagogical implications

The results of the study suggest two implications for pedagogy. One is related to the need for instructional intervention and the other is related to the presentation of criticisms and criticism responses to L2 learners via classroom discourse and teaching material.

Firstly, the present study found that in most instances learners produced non-native like speech act realizations as a consequence of their incomplete L2 pragmatic knowledge. This finding calls for an enhancement of the learners' awareness with regard to the pragmalinguistic realization of these two speech acts in English and also relevant sociopragmatic constraints. Explicit instruction may be preferred here, based on Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Schmidt, 1993, 1995, 2001) which claims that attention to the form-function mapping of L2 linguistic structures is required for learners to acquire these structures. This claim is further strengthened by the findings of many recent ILP studies concerning the advantages of explicit instruction over implicit instruction (see Kasper and Rose, 2001 for a review).

It should be noted, however, that in calling for instructional intervention, the present study is by no means suggesting that teachers should address every NS deviation displayed in their learners' performance. Not every deviation should be equated with pragmatic failure. As shown by the ILP literature (see Chapter 2), L2 learners do not always desire total convergence with NS pragmatic behavior. Rather, they may just seek to become competent L2 users while still maintaining their own cultural identity. Besides, NNS total convergence is not always welcomed by the NS. As Kasper (1997, p.12) points out, this may sometimes be perceived by the NS as "intrusive and inconsistent with the NNS's role as outsider to the L2 community". In such a case, some divergence as a marker of non-membership may be desirable. The implication, therefore, is that as long as learners' different behavior does not cause communication misunderstanding or breakdown, it should be accepted by teachers. This is because, as claimed by Giles ***et al.*** (1991) cited in Kasper (ibid.), successful communication sometimes means optimal rather than total convergence.

Secondly, in the present study the learners reported that many of their pragmatic choices were influenced by classroom discourse and textbooks. Since teacher-talk does not always serve as a pragmatically appropriate model for learners, given the unequal teacher-learner roles and power (Ellis, 1992), L2 teachers need to ensure that their learners avoid overgeneralizing classroom pragmatic behavior in a different social situation. Also, since textbooks constitute a crucial source of input, especially in the FL context, there is undoubtedly a need for research-based rather than NS intuition-based descriptions of speech acts if textbooks are to offer realistic input to learners. This is because NS intuition-based descriptions do not always accurately represent NS language in use, and thus can provide learners with misleading information (see Kasper, 1997 for further such discussion). Grammar books also need to present pragmalinguistic meanings in addition to semantic meanings and grammatical rules. This would help to avoid cases where learners make inaccurate pragmalinguistic use of a particular L2 structure due to a lack of knowledge of its form-function mapping. An example of this is the overuse of the modal structures "***should***" and "***must***" for criticizing by the learners in the current study.

9.3. LIMITATIONS

While the present study provides some methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical implications for ILP research in particular and SLA research in general, it is not free from limitations. These limitations are found in the design of data collection instruments, the choice of participants, and the study design.

9.3.1. Data collection instruments

The design of the data collection instruments employed in the present study is not without problems. For example, the written questionnaire did not allow for the

respondents (1) to engage in multiple-turn exchanges and (2) to opt out, thus making its data even less representative of real communication. Thus, generalizations should not be based on the results of the written questionnaire.

The role play, although made as 'naturalistic' as possible, was not a truly authentic conversation since (1) it was designed for research purposes rather than naturally motivated by the interlocutors and thus, (2) may have induced some degree of consciousness on the part of the interlocutors. Also, (3) it explicitly required that the participants find at least one unsatisfactory point about their peer's essay to criticize, and thus (4) may have biased them towards criticizing even when were not inclined to do so. Although efforts were made to make the task more natural by (1) assigning the same social roles as their own to the participants (i.e. student-student peer feedback) and (2) allowing for positive feedback (i.e. compliments), these efforts only reduced the above disadvantages to a certain extent.

What is more, the role play controlled the relative social status (equal) and distance (neutral) between the interlocutors and the topic of criticisms and criticism responses. On the one hand, this made comparison easier. On the other hand, this restriction meant that the findings did not provide much insight into the sociopragmatic aspects of criticisms and criticism responses as discussed in previous chapters. Additionally, it may not be appropriate to generalize the findings to other criticizing and responding to criticism situations where the relative power and distance between interlocutors are different.

Finally, the retrospective interview may be prone to difficulties regarding the learners' ability to accurately recall and report their past thoughts. This is because (1) some processes, especially those acquired implicitly, may not be entirely available for

conscious reporting, and (2) some processes were too complex to be accurately verbalized. To avoid the situation where learners may offer ***post hoc*** rationalization due to their inability to recall, this study (1) conducted the interview shortly after the learners' completion of the peer-feedback task when their memories were still fresh, (2) always replayed the cassette tape when asking the learners a question, (3) did not ask the questions "why" and "why not" as these questions may overload the informants' memory, (4) did not ask leading questions and provide feedback to the informants except back-channeling (e.g. Hmm, huh, yeah), and (5) did not probe further when the answers were "I don't know" or "I don't remember". The interview (6) was also conducted in the learners' mother tongue to make sure that they understood the questions and could express themselves freely and (7) data were triangulated to reduce task effect (see Gass and MacKey, 2000). However, these efforts may not have completely eliminated the disadvantages of the technique. Given this, the findings from the interview data should be treated with caution.

9.3.2. Choice of participants

Firstly, generalizations cannot be made about how Vietnamese NSs, Vietnamese EFL learners, and Australian NSs criticize and respond to criticisms since the participants did not represent the whole respective populations. For example, the Australian NS participants were predominantly from Queensland State. The participants of the three L1, IL, and L2 groups were also all university students. Besides, the learners' group was quite special: they were academically outstanding students who were going to Australia for university study on an Australian government-funded scholarship. Hence, the findings may have been different if the present study had involved (1) Australian NSs from other states of Australia, (2) Vietnamese and Australian NSs who

were not university students, (3) Vietnamese EFL learners who were more representative of the population, and (4) Vietnamese ESL learners.

Secondly, the present study found little proficiency effect, especially between the high beginner and intermediate levels, because these two groups were quite similar in L2 proficiency. The learners were grouped into different proficiency levels based on their most recent IELTS scores. An overall band score of 5.0 was assigned to the high beginner level whereas an overall band score of between 5.5 and 6.0 was classified as intermediate. It seems as though the difference between a 5.0 and a 5.5 was not substantial enough to capture differences, if any, in pragmatic knowledge.

Another concern was that this study involved high beginners rather than true beginners. With the focus on L2 pragmatic development, it would have been preferable for an ILP study to involve true beginners. However, in the case of the present study, it was almost impossible to find such learners at PDTP. The recruitment of students outside PDTP was undesirable, as it would have been much more difficult to determine which target norms they were learning, due to a lack of conformity in the use of English textbooks in Vietnam. (The question of which target norms L2 learners are exposed to is crucial in ILP research, especially in the case of L2 English, due to the existence of varieties of English in the world). More importantly, since criticisms and criticism responses are quite challenging speech acts, the learners sampled had to have at least some basic English to be able to perform the peer-feedback task. High beginners were, therefore, perhaps more suitable candidates than true beginners, although the exclusion of the latter made it impossible to investigate the earliest stage of the learners' ILP development.

9.3.3. Study design

Another concern with the design of the present study concerns pragmatic transfer. As highlighted by a number of researchers (see Takahashi, 1996), transfer is a 'tricky' area because it is not always possible to determine whether a pragmatic error was the result of L1 transfer or developmentally unique. One possible way to identify whether it is L1-induced or IL-specific, as Ellis (1994) suggests, is to conduct a two-dimensional study, in which data are collected from not only learners, L1, and L2 groups, but also from a group of the L2 NSs who also learn the learners' L1. However, a group of Australian learners of Vietnamese FL was not available for this purpose in the present study. Thus, the findings about transfer are based only on a comparison of the Vietnamese EFL learners and the Vietnamese NS and Australian NS groups. Given these limitations, the findings about transfer in the present study should be treated with caution.

9.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research might consider examining the effects of the learning context on L2 acquisition of criticisms and criticism responses. As mentioned earlier, failure to find a proficiency effect on L2 pragmatic development in the current study can be explained by the FL context, which provided learners with insufficient exposure to the TL. It would be interesting, therefore, to know whether (1) the SL context and (2) the length of stay in the TL environment would make a difference.

Additionally, besides looking at differences between proficiency groups, it would also be useful to investigate learners' improvements over time in their use of criticisms and criticism responses, especially in their use of modality, as the current study found that modality was an important part of performing these two face-threatening speech acts.

The present study found the greatest differences between the three proficiency groups in the area of modality and this was also the area in which indications of an acquisitional order were noted. It would be useful, therefore, if further research were to focus on changes in learners' use of various types of modality over time. This issue could not be investigated fully in the present study because of its cross-sectional nature. Future research would require a longitudinal study.

Finally, based on the categorization of realization strategies for criticisms and criticism responses provided by the present study, further research might also investigate the effects of instruction. It would be of interest to know the extent to which instruction facilitates L2 pragmatic use and development of these speech acts and whether explicit instruction would prove to be more effective than implicit instruction in this regard.

NOTES

Chapter 1

(1) In the earlier version by Canale and Swain (1980), pragmatic competence does not necessarily figure as a term among the three components but rather, it is subsumed under "sociolinguistic competence".

(2) Contrastive pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics both compare different speech communities. The main difference, however, is while contrastive pragmatics focuses mainly on pragmalinguistics with a view that speech acts operate by universal principles of politeness, cross-cultural pragmatics believes in culture-specific language use and thus focuses on both sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics (Barron, 2002).

Chapter 2

(1) Initially, Austin made a distinction between constatives (i.e. utterances subject to truth/falsity verifiability) and performatives (i.e. utterances to do things). Later, as problems were found with his conceptualization of performatives, Austin no longer contrasted constatives and performatives. Alternatively, he posited that performatives and constatives are special sub-cases of a general theory of illocutionary acts.

(2) Searle's conceptualization of indirect speech acts originated from Austin's notions of explicit and implicit (or "primary" as Austin preferred to call them) performatives. However, Searle's dichotomy between direct and indirect speech acts differs from Austin's distinction between explicit and implicit performatives in that Searle's point of departure is based on what is actually the case. In other words, his theory is based on the fact that people perform a speech act whenever they use language rather than

on the purely linguistically descriptive “performativity” of an utterance, i.e. whether an utterance contains a performative verb or not (Mey, 1993).

(3) Felicity conditions are stated by Austin as follows:

A. (I) There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect; and (II) the circumstances and persons must be appropriate as specified in the procedure

B. The procedure must be executed (1) correctly and (2) completely;

C. Often (I) the person must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions, as specified in the procedure, and (II) if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must so do.

Austin suggested that the violations of these conditions are not of equal importance. The violations of A and B conditions lead onto “misfires”, i.e. the failure of the intended actions. On the other hand, the violations of C conditions are “abuses” or “insincerities”, which are not easily detected at the time of the utterance in question and with which the action is still performed, yet insincerely.

(4) The other four processes include transfer-of-training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material.

(5) Kasper also emphasizes that the boundary between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics is not always clear-cut and seems even less so when it comes to the discussion of indirectness. In an example provided by Kasper, the decision about whether to account for the offence one has made by apologizing can involve both

sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic choices. This is because accounting for an offence can be seen as one of semantic formulas characterizing the speech act of apologizing but it is at the same time also governed by one's assessment of relevant contextual factors and social perceptions.

(6) The linguistic approach to transferability focuses on the relationship between L1 transfer and linguistic markedness (i.e. the relative degree to which a linguistic feature is less 'basic' or more 'special' than others – Ellis, 1994). The most influential study in this line of research is Eckman's Markedness differential hypothesis (MDH). Eckman (1977) claims that the areas of the TL which differ from the NL and are more marked than the NL will cause learning difficulty. The degree of difficulty will be determined by the relative markedness of those areas. On the other hand, the areas of the TL which differ from the NL but do not demonstrate more markedness than the NL will not cause any problem. This approach has been criticized for overlooking learners' perceptions of the structure of their NL and the TL (Gass, 1979). It is doubtful whether a feature described as being typologically more marked than others by linguists is actually perceived so by L2 learners, i.e. whether it is "psychologically real for L2 learners" (Faerch and Kasper, 1987, p. 122).

(7) Schmidt distinguished between 'noticing' and 'understanding', referring the former to "conscious registration of the occurrences of some event" and the latter to "the recognition of some general principle, rule, or pattern" (1993, p.29).

Chapter 3

(1) Only ILP studies with a focus on speech act production are included.

(2) No information was given on learners' proficiency levels by Kondo (1997) and Kasanga (1999)

(3) In this study, RPs also included what Kasper (1999) referred to as "elicited conversations"

Appendix 1: Sample Ethics Forms [1]

(English translation) [2]

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Criticizing and responding to criticism in a foreign language: A study of Vietnamese learners of English.

To: Learner-participants

My name is Minh Thi Thuy Nguyen. I am a doctoral student at The University of Auckland. For the purpose of my dissertation, I am conducting research to find out to what extent Vietnamese EFL learners differ from native English speakers in criticizing and responding to criticisms in English, how they acquire the knowledge of how to criticize and respond to criticism in English, and whether their mother tongue and culture affect this and to what extent. In this research study criticism is defined as negative evaluation on someone's works, choice, or products for which he or she may be held responsible. This negative evaluation is given in hope of influencing the hearer's future actions for his or her own benefits as viewed by the speaker or to communicate the speaker's dissatisfaction, discontent with, or dislike for what is done by the hearer but without implying that what he or she has done brings undesirable consequences to the speaker.

You are invited to participate in my research and I would appreciate any assistance you can offer me. As part of my dissertation I am conducting a peer-feedback task. In this task you and your peer are expected to give oral feedback in English [3] on what you think are weaknesses in each other's previous English essay. This is to investigate how you criticize and respond to criticisms in English [4]. Before you are selected as the participants of my study, I will need to collect your personal information through a Background Questionnaire. I will also need to collect information on your English proficiency levels, specifically your pre-test IELTS results through your teachers [5].

The peer-feedback task would take half an hour to complete. I would also like to interview you after you complete the task [6]. The interview would take half an hour. I would also prefer to audio-tape your peer-feedback conversation and interview. You are under no obligation to give your personal information, to have your pre-test IELTS

results obtained by me (7), to be interviewed (8) and to have your conversation and interview audio-taped. This would only be done with your consent and you can withdraw information any time up to 30 June 2003.

If you are willing to participate in my study, please let me know by filling in the Background Questionnaire, signing the consent form and giving them to me. All information you provide in the Background Questionnaire is confidential and your name will not be used.

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please ask me now or contact me at the following address:

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For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:

The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office - Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Tel. 64 9 373-7999 ext. 7830

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 24/1/2002 for a period of 03 years, from 24/1/2002 Reference 2001/323

(1) The information sheets used for prospective participants of Vietnamese L1 and Australian L1 groups were similar to this one but excluded (5), (6), (7), and (8).

(2) This is the English translation of the Vietnamese version given to prospective learner – participants and participants of Vietnamese L1 group.

(3) and (4) Vietnamese L1 group were going to perform in Vietnamese.

CONSENT FORM [9]

(English translation) [10]

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Criticizing and responding to criticisms in a foreign language: A study of Vietnamese learners of English.

Researcher: Minh Thi Thuy Nguyen

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information traceable to me at any time up to 30 June 2003 without giving a reason.

□ I agree to take part in this research.

□ I agree / do not agree that the peer-feedback conversation and the interview [11] that I will be participating in will be audio-taped.

□ I agree / do not agree to have my IELTS pre-test results obtained from my teacher by the researcher [12].

Signed: Name (please print clearly):

Date:

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 24/1/2002 for a period of 03 years, from 24/1/2002 Reference 2001/323

[9] The forms used for prospective participants of the Vietnamese L1 and Australian L1 groups were similar to this one but excluded [11] and [12].

[10] This is the English translation of the Vietnamese version given to prospective learner-participants and participants of Vietnamese L1 group.

Appendix 2: Sample Background questionnaire for IL group

(English translation) (1)

You have just been given and have understood an explanation of my research study. You have also had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. If you are willing to participate in my study, please complete the following questionnaire and give it to me. You can be confident that all the information collected about you through this questionnaire will be used for the purpose of my study only and will not be revealed to anyone. Please note that the confidential information provided by you will help me to select participants who match a particular profile. Your answers are voluntary, but complete information will help to ensure the success of this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name:…….....

Gender:……Age: …….....

Local address:…….....

…….....

Telephone:……..(day)…….....(evening)

Major field(s) of study:…….....

Course of study (please circle): Undergraduate Postgraduate

How long have you been learning English?.....

Your recent IELTS results:

Please indicate the sub-scores as well as the overall band score

Speaking: Listening:

Reading: Writing:

Overall band score:

How do you assess your English proficiency level (please circle):

Speaking:	***Advanced***	***Intermediate***	***Beginners'***
Listening:	***Advanced***	***Intermediate***	***Beginners'***
Reading:	***Advanced***	***Intermediate***	***Beginners'***
Writing:	***Advanced***	***Intermediate***	***Beginners'***

English-speaking countries (if any) that you have stayed in:

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Country name	Length of stay
……	……
……....	……..
……....	……..
……	……..

The nationalities of your native English-speaking teachers (if any):

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Nationality	How long have you been learning (did you learn) English with them?
……	……
……....	……..
……....	……..
……	……..

The nationalities of your native English-speaking friends or acquaintances (if any):

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Nationality	How often do (did) you meet with them? (e.g. everyday, once a week, etc.)
……	……
……....	……..
……....	……..
……	……..

English-speaking TV programs (if any) that you watch(ed):

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Country of production	How often do (did) you watch them? (e.g. everyday, once a week, etc.)
……	……
……....	……..
……....	……..
……	……..

English-speaking radio programs (if any) that you listen(ed) to:

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Country of production	How often do (did) you listen to them? (e.g. everyday, once a week, etc.)
……	……
……....	……...
……....	……...
……	……...

Foreign language(s) other than English that you speak and proficiency level(s):

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Language	Proficiency level
……	……
……....	……...
……....	……...
……	……...

Specific time most convenient for you to come for data collection:

……

……

(1) A Vietnamese version was used for IL group. This is its English translation.

Sample Background Questionnaire

For Australian L1 and Vietnamese L1 groups [2]

You have just been given and have understood an explanation of my research study. You have also had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. If you are willing to participate in my study, please complete the following questionnaire and give it to me. You can be confident that all the information collected about you through this questionnaire will be used for the purpose of my study only and will not be revealed to anyone. Please note that the confidential information provided by you will help me to select participants who match a particular profile. Your answers are voluntary, but complete information will help to ensure the success of this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name:…….....

Gender:……..Age: …….....

Local address:…….....

…….....

Telephone:…….(day)…….....(evening)

Major field(s) of study:…….....

Course of study (please circle): Undergraduate Postgraduate

Foreign language(s) that you speak and proficiency level(s):

Skip this question if it is non-applicable.

Language	Proficiency levels
……...	……..
……...	……..
……...	……..
……...	……..

Specific time most convenient for you to come for data collection:

…….....

…….....

[2] The same format in Vietnamese language was used for Vietnamese L1 group

Appendix 3: Sample writing task

Your university lecturer has asked you to write an essay on the following topic:

People who travel to the city to work each day should use only public transport. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

You should write at least 250 words in English.

You are required to support your arguments with relevant information and examples based on your own ideas, knowledge, and experience.

Appendix 4: A peer feedback task [1]

Instruction: You have written a 250 word argumentative essay. Now show it to your friend and work in pairs. Take as much time as you need to read your friend's essay. Try to find something you are unsatisfied with about the essay and comment on it. Does your friend think the same? Discuss with him or her some of the things you think are wrong with the essay. Your friend will also give comments on your essay. Do you agree with his or her ideas?

Do not try to discuss two essays at the same time. Work on one essay at a time only. You may discuss between yourselves whose essay to work on first.

Note:

1. It is important that you understand the task completely, so before you start you are encouraged to ask questions if you find any detail you are not sure of.

2. Although the task requires you to comment specifically on the points you are unsatisfied with in your friend's essay, you can also comment on the good points (if any) in his or her essay.

You may want to ask yourself the following questions when giving feedback on your friend's essay:

Organization:

1. Does the essay directly discuss the topic?

2. Is there a clear organizational structure, i.e. does it have three parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion?

3. Is the introduction brief and to the point? Does it indicate the main ideas that the writer will discuss in the body?

4. Are there several paragraphs in the body, each making a different specific point?

5. Is there a brief conclusion that summarizes the main points in the argument?

6. Are the ideas properly linked?

Ideas:

7. Is the writer's opinion clear or do you think the writer is not quite sure what he or she thinks?

8. Are the ideas relevant and well supported by evidence and examples?

9. Are the arguments presented logically?

10. Are the arguments developed from one paragraph to another or does the writer just repeat himself or herself?

Grammar/vocabulary:

11. Is there a variety of sentence structure and vocabulary or is there a lot of repetition?

12. Are the linking words (i.e. words used to link ideas) helpful or do they confuse you?

13. Are the sentences grammatically accurate?

(1) The same format in Vietnamese language was used for IL and Vietnamese L1 groups.

Appendix 5:

Sample Questionnaire [1]

You have been explained the purpose of my research study and invited to participate in the peer-feedback task as part of the data collection procedure. Your completion of this questionnaire will also help to ensure the success of the study and is therefore highly appreciated.

Please read the instruction and the given situations carefully and write your answers in English [2] in the space provided under each situation. It is important that you understand the requirements completely, so before you start, you are encouraged to ask questions if you find something you do not understand.

Thank you for your assistance.

Criticisms

Instruction: In reference to the essay that your friend has written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations?

Situation 1: What would you say to your friend if you thought his or her essay was not very well organized, so it was rather difficult to follow his or her ideas?

You: ……
……
……
……
……
……

Situation 2: What would you say to your friend if you thought in some instances he or she didn't support his or her arguments with relevant examples and evidence, so these arguments were hard to convince readers?

You: ……
……
……
……
……
……

Situation 3: What would you say to your friend if you thought he or she sometimes wandered off the topic?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

Situation 4: What would you say to your friend if you thought he or she didn't often make use of linking words, so the essay seemed to lack cohesion?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

Criticism responses

Instruction: In reference to the essay that you have written, what would you say in the following hypothetical situations?

Situation 1: What would you say if your friend said your essay was not very well organized, so it was rather difficult to follow your ideas?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

Situation 2: What would you say if your friend said in some instances you didn't support your arguments with relevant examples and evidence, so these arguments were hard to convince readers?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

Situation 3: What would you say if your friend said you sometimes wandered off the topic?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

Situation 4: What would you say if your friend said you didn't often make use of linking words, so the essay seemed to lack cohesion?

You: ……

……

……

……

……

……

For researcher's use only:	
Respondent's name:	Gender:
Group:	Age:
IELTS overall score:	

(1) The same format in Vietnamese language was used for IL and Vietnamese L1 groups

(2) Vietnamese L1 group were required to write their answers in Vietnamese

Appendix 6: The retrospective interview

(English translation) [1]

This interview sheet is not a fixed guideline in the sense that the interviewer can add more or modify probes according to the responses of the learners.

Questions:

1. Could you please tell me a bit about your language choice in this episode?

2. Could you please tell me a bit about how you went about what to say in this episode?

3. What would you say in a similar Vietnamese context?

4. Do you think the Australian NS would say the same?

5. What do you think about these English and Vietnamese structures?

6. Have you ever seen language used in this way?

7. Do you remember what language you were thinking in before you said this?

8. What were you concentrating on when you made your criticism?

If the learners say: "I don't know", accept the answer and move on. Instead of asking "Why did you say that?", encourage them to talk more on the topic by asking "Could you explain a bit further?". Use back-channeling "Umm", "Mm", or "go on", "I see", "Okay" during the interview. Be a "warm body" than a talkative conversational partner.

[1] The interview was conducted in Vietnamese.

Appendix 7: Additional tables of findings

Chapter 4

Table 4.5: Results of Paired Sample ***T*** tests for differences in the mean number of direct and indirect criticism strategies between the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CSs	Role play *(N = 47)*			Questionnaire *(N = 47)*			T	***P***
	f	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
Direct criticism	464 / 792	.63	.20	170 / 308	.53	.28	2.018	.049
Indirect criticism	330 / 792	.37	.20	138 / 308	.46	.28	1.958	.056

Table 4.6: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs "total acceptance of criticism" and "total resistance to criticism" between the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CRSs	Role play *(N = 47)*			Questionnaire *(N = 47)*			Z	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
Total acceptance	164 / 262	.63	.31	110 / 188	.59	.31	1.077	.282
Total resistance	91 / 262	.31	.29	70 / 188	.36	.29	1.106	.269

Table 4.8: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of "demands" and "suggestions" between the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CFs	Role play *(N = 47)*			Questionnaire *(N = 47)*			Z	***P***
	f	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
Demand	70 / 792	.05	.08	14 / 308	.04	.10	1.414	.157
Suggestion	93 / 792	.11	.12	53 / 308	.20	.20	2.405	.016

Table 4.10: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of "explanations", "disagreements", and "justifications" between the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CSFs	Role play *(N = 47)*			Questionnaire *(N = 47)*			Z	***P***
	f	***M***	***SD***	***f***	***M***	***SD***		
Explanation	25 / 700	.03	.08	28 / 282	.07	.13	1.429	.153
Disagreement	112 / 700	.13	.14	46 / 282	.17	.17	1.153	.249
Justification	199 / 700	.24	.23	34 / 282	.11	.19	2.562	.010

Table 4.12: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of criticism internal modifiers and criticism response modifiers between the role play and the questionnaire

Task	Role play (N = 47)			Questionnaire (N = 47)			Z	P
	f	*M*	*SD*	*f*	*M*	*SD*		
Crit. Inter. Mod.	772 / 792	1.1	.71	317 / 308	.95	.83	1.794	.073
Total CR Mod.	335 / 700	.51	.50	148 / 282	.48	.44	.328	.743

Table 4.15: Results of Paired Sample *T* tests for differences in the mean number of direct and indirect criticism strategies produced by learners in the role play and the questionnaire

Task CSs	Role play (N = 47)			Questionnaire (N = 47)			T	P
	f	*M*	*SD*	*f*	*M*	*SD*		
Direct criticism	253 / 459	.56	.17	/ 134	.50	.22	1.139	.266
Indirect criticism	206 / 459	.43	.17	/ 134	.49	.22	1.060	.299

Table 4.16: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs “total acceptance of criticism” and “total resistance to criticism” produced by learners in the role play and the questionnaire

Task CRSs	Role play (N = 47)			Questionnaire (N = 47)			Z	P
	f	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*M*	*SD*		
Total acceptance	56 / 126	.51	.29	60 / 104	.57	.31	.428	.669
Total resistance	65 / 126	.40	.28	42 / 104	.40	.29	.092	.927

Table 4.17: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of “identifications of problem”, “demands”, “advice”, and “suggestions” produced by learners in the role play and the questionnaire

Task CFs	Role play (N = 47)			Questionnaire (N = 47)			Z	P
	f	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*M*	*SD*		
Iden. of problem	169 / 459	.34	.18	44 / 134	.26	.23	1.572	.116
Demand	38 / 459	.05	.06	3 / 134	.02	.06	2.831	.005
Advice	38 / 459	.09	.09	29 / 134	.21	.19	2.571	.010
Suggestion	52 / 459	.10	.11	24 / 134	.19	.18	1.978	.048

Table 4.18: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of "agreements", "explanations", "seeking help", "disagreements", and "justifications" produced by learners in the role play and the questionnaire

Task / CRFs	Role play (*N = 47*)			Questionnaire (*N = 47*)			Z	*P*
	f	*M*	*SD*	*f*	*M*	*SD*		
Agreement	98 / 427	.27	.23	23 / 143	.14	.14	2.272	.023
Explanation	8 / 427	.01	.04	4 / 143	.02	.05	.338	.735
Seeking help	13 / 427	.02	.05	19 / 143	.12	.15	2.813	.005
Disagreement	75 / 427	.19	.14	29 / 143	.18	.19	.135	.893
Justification	142 / 427	.32	.22	8 / 143	.05	.12	2.632	.008

Table 4.19: Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests for differences in the mean number of modifiers produced by learners in the role play and the questionnaire

Task	Role play (*N = 47*)			Questionnaire (*N = 47*)			Z	*P*
	f	*M*	*SD*	*f*	*M*	*SD*		
Criticism Mod.	675 / 459	1.6	.98	135 / 134	1.0	.55	2.872	.004
Crit. Inter. Mod.	374 / 459	.91	.40	125 / 134	.85	.57	.470	.638
CR Mod.	271 / 427	.71	.51	45 / 143	.33	.29	2.893	.004
CR Ext. Mod.	37 / 427	.09	.13	6 / 143	.05	.09	.937	.349
CR Inter. Mod.	234 / 427	.62	.45	39 / 143	.27	.26	2.988	.003

Chapter 5

Table 5.6: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of criticism response modifiers between learners and Australian NSs

Group: / CR modifiers	Learners (*N =36*)			Australian L1 (*N =12*)			*Z*	*P*
	F	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*M*	*SD*		
Total modifiers	858 / 597	.64	.47	449 / 120	.38	.51	2.029	.042

Table 5.8: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of "expressions of disagreement", "advice", and "suggestions" between learners and Australian NSs

Group: / CFs	Learners (*N =36*)			Australian L1 (*N =12*)			*Z*	*P*
	F	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*M*	*SD*		
Disagreement	61 / 597	.06	.09	13 / 120	.12	.30	.998	.318
Advice	54 / 597	.09	.11	2 / 120	.01	.03	5.712	.017
Suggestion	64 / 597	.10	.11	25 / 120	.15	.17	.627	.531

Table 5.10: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of words per criticism between learners and Australian NSs

Group:	Learners *(N =36)*			Australian L1 *(N =12)*			***Z***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
No of words	17,228 / 168	116.4	63.6	5,443 / 57	151.5	137.7	1.205	.235

Table 5.16: Results of Mann Whitney U tests for differences in the mean number of "explanations" between learners and Australian NSs

Group: CRF	Learners *(N =36)*			Australian L1 *(N =12)*			***Z***	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Explanation	17 / 597	.02	.05	9 / 120	.09	.14	1.802	.071

Chapter 6

Table 6.1: Results of One-way ANOVA tests for differences in the mean number of direct and indirect criticism strategies among three proficiency groups of learners

Group	High Beginners (***N=12***)			Intermediate (***N=12***)			Advanced (***N=12***)			F	***P***
CSs	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Direct	137 / 242	.56	.21	66 / 133	.52	.14	125 / 222	.58	.18	.354	.704
Indirect	105 / 242	.43	.21	67 / 133	.47	.14	97 / 222	.42	.17	.283	.755

Table 6.4: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CRSs among three proficiency groups of learners

Group	High Beginners (***N=12***)			Intermediate (***N=12***)			Advanced (***N=12***)			F	***P***
CRSs	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Total accept.	39 / 75	.54	.19	30 / 44	.63	.38	26 / 49	.50	.33	.977	.614
Partial accept.	3 / 75	.02	.06	0 / 44	.00	.007	2 / 49	.12	.29	1.353	.508
Total resist.	33 / 75	.42	.19	14 / 44	.34	.37	21 / 49	.36	.37	.874	.646

Table 6.6: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of criticism response modifiers among three proficiency groups of learners

Group	High Beginners (***N=12***)			Intermediate (***N=12***)			Advanced (***N=12***)			χ^2	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
CR Mod.	98 / 203	.52	.24	64 / 104	.61	.62	154 / 217	.78	.49	2.557	.278

Table 6.7: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of criticism response modifiers produced by three learner groups and Australian NS group

Modifiers	Group:	High beginners (N = 12)	Intermediate learners (N = 12)	Advanced learners (N = 12)	Australian NS (N = 12)	χ^2	***P***
CR. modifiers	***F***	98 / 203	64 / 104	154 / 217	35 / 104	6.231	.101
	M	.52	.61	.78	.38		
	SD	.24	.62	.49	.51		

Table 6.8: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CFs among three proficiency groups of learners

Group CFs	High Beginners (***N=12***)			Intermediate (***N=12***)			Advanced (***N=12***)			χ^2	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Disagree	29 / 242	.10	.10	6 / 133	.03	.04	26 / 222	.06	.09	2.761	.251
Iden. of problem	85 / 242	.29	.14	45 / 133	.28	.17	88 / 222	.40	.22	1.185	.553
Demand	24 / 242	.07	.07	15 / 133	.10	.14	17 / 222	.05	.08	.461	.794
Advice	19 / 242	.08	.09	10 / 133	.09	.13	25 / 222	.09	.11	.185	.912
Suggest	22 / 242	.09	.09	16 / 133	.12	.14	26 / 222	.09	.08	.012	.994

Table 6.14: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of criticism internal modifiers among three proficiency groups of learners

Group	High Beginners (*N=12*)			Intermediate (*N=12*)			Advanced (*N=12*)			χ^2	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Understater	41/242	.16	.07	30/133	.29	.25	55/222	.24	.14	3.310	.191
Downtoner	10/242	.03	.06	12/133	.08	.12	16/222	.07	.10	1.287	.526
Subjectivizer	91/242	.35	.14	42/133	.32	.21	64/222	.26	.15	2.724	.256

Table 6.17: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the mean number of CRFs among three proficiency groups of learners

Group CRFs	High Beginners (*N=12*)			Intermediate (*N=12*)			Advanced (*N=12*)			χ^2	***P***
	F	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***	***F***	***M***	***SD***		
Agreement	53/203	.28	.13	34/108	.29	.28	55/216	.24	.21	.563	.755
Disagreement	35/203	.16	.11	18/108	.17	.18	39/216	.16	.11	.217	.897
Justification	71/203	.33	.18	31/108	.24	.26	74/216	.35	.23	1.319	.517

Chapter 7

Table 7.5: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the means of CRSs produced by three learner groups and Vietnamese NSs

Group: CRSs		H. beginners (N =12)	Inter. (N =12)	Advanced (N=12)	Viet (N =12)	χ^2	***P***
Total	***F***	39/75	30/44	26/49	57/98	1.048	.790
Acceptance	***M***	.54	.63	.50	.57		
	SD	.19	.38	.33	.24		
Total	***F***	33/75	14/44	21/49	38/98	1.192	.755
Resistance	***M***	.38	.33	.34	.41		
	SD	.22	.37	.32	.24		

Table 7.8: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the means of CFs and "syntactic modifiers" produced by three learner groups and Vietnamese NS group

	Group:	H. beginners (N =12)	Inter. (N =12)	Advanced (N=12)	Viet (N =12)	χ^2	***P***
Demand	***F***	24 / 242	15 / 133	17 / 222	35 / 271	2.842	.417
	M	.07	.10	.05	.11		
	SD	.07	.14	.08	.09		
Advice	***F***	19 / 242	10 / 133	25 / 222	19 / 271	.275	.965
	M	.08	.09	.09	.05		
	SD	.09	.13	.11	.05		
Asking / presupposing	***F***	12 / 242	11 / 133	9 / 222	8 / 271	2.055	.561
	M	.06	.04	.02	.02		
	SD	.07	.05	.02	.03		
Syntactic modifiers	***F***	3 / 242	3 / 133	9 / 222	0 / 271	6.146	.105
	M	.007	.02	.08	.00		
	SD	.02	.05	.16	.00		

Table 7.10: Results of Kruskal-Wallis tests for differences in the means of CRFs produced by three learner groups and Vietnamese NS group

CRFs	Group:	H. beginners (N =12)	Inter. (N =12)	Advanced (N=12)	Viet (N =12)	$\chi 2$	***P***
Agreement	***F***	56 / 203	36 / 104	56 / 217	84 / 229	1.876	.598
	M	.28	.29	.24	.37		
	SD	.13	.28	.21	.25		
Seeking help	***F***	7 / 203	10 / 104	5 / 217	13 / 229	6.298	.098
	M	.02	.09	.02	.06		
	SD	.04	.10	.04	.05		
Disagreement	***F***	37 / 203	18 / 104	40 / 217	40 / 229	.442	.931
	M	.16	.17	.16	.14		
	SD	.11	.18	.11	.11		
Justification	***F***	71 / 203	31 / 104	74 / 217	65 / 229	1.531	.675
	M	.33	.24	.35	.31		
	SD	.18	.26	.23	.22		

Appendix 8: Individual means produced by learners and Australian NSs
(Arranged from the highest to the lowest)

B: High beginners I: Intermediate A: Advanced ——: Mean break line

1. Individual means of "direct criticisms" and "indirect criticisms"

Direct criticisms					Indirect criticisms				
	Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)			Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)	
No	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***	***No***	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***
L 1	B	.99	NS 1	1.0	L 1	B	.75	NS 1	.69
L 2	A	.85	NS 2	1.0	L 2	I	.75	NS 2	.50
L 3	A	.85	NS 3	1.0	L 3	A	.75	NS 3	.40
L 4	B	.80	NS 4	.90	L 4	I	.69	NS 4	.25
L 5	B	.78	NS 5	.88	L 5	B	.68	NS 5	.24
L 6	A	.70	NS 6	.80	L 6	B	.64	NS 6	.23
L 7	A	.69	NS 7	.77	L 7	A	.63	NS 7	.20
L 8	I	.69	NS 8	.75	L 8	I	.58	NS 8	.12
L 9	A	.66	NS 9	.75	L 9	A	.55	NS 9	.10
L 10	I	.66	NS 10	.60	L 10	A	.52	NS 10	.00
L 11	I	.66	NS 11	.50	L 11	A	.50	NS 11	.00
L 12	B	.64	NS 12	.32	L 12	I	.50	NS 12	.00
L 13	I	.63			L 13	I	.50		
L 14	I	.63			L 14	I	.50		
L 15	A	.61			L 15	B	.50		
L 16	A	.61			L 16	B	.50		
L 17	B	.60			L 17	B	.48		
L 18	I	.54			L 18	B	.46		
L 19	B	.54			L 19	I	.46		
L 20	B	.52			L 20	B	.40		
L 21	B	.50			L 21	A	.39		
L 22	B	.50			L 22	A	.39		
L 23	B	.50			L 23	I	.37		
L 24	B	.50			L 24	I	.37		
L 25	I	.50			L 25	B	.36		
L 26	A	.50			L 26	I	.34		
L 27	A	.48			L 27	I	.34		
L 28	A	.45			L 28	A	.34		
L 29	I	.42			L 29	A	.33		
L 30	A	.37			L 30	I	.31		
L 31	B	.36			L 31	A	.30		
L 32	B	.32			L 32	A	.25		
L 33	I	.31			L 33	B	.22		
L 34	B	.25			L 34	B	.20		
L 35	I	.25			L 35	A	.15		
L 36	A	.25			L 36	B	.01		

2. Individual means of CRSs “total acceptance” and “total resistance”

Total acceptance					Total resistance				
	Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)			Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)	
No	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***	***No***	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***
L 1	B	1.0	NS 1	1.00	L 1	I	1.0	NS 1	.40
L 2	I	1.0	NS 2	1.00	L 2	I	1.0	NS 2	.33
L 3	I	1.0	NS 3	1.00	L 3	A	1.0	NS 3	.00
L 4	I	1.0	NS 4	1.00	L 4	A	.72	NS 4	.00
L 5	I	1.0	NS 5	1.00	L 5	B	.66	NS 5	.00
L 6	I	1.0	NS 6	1.00	L 6	A	.66	NS 6	.00
L 7	A	1.0	NS 7	1.00	L 7	B	.64	NS 7	.00
L 8	A	1.0	NS 8	1.00	L 8	B	.60	NS 8	.00
L 9	I	.72	NS 9	1.00	L 9	B	.50	NS 9	.00
L 10	B	.66	NS 10	1.00	L 10	B	.50	NS 10	.00
L 11	A	.66	NS 11	.66	L 11	I	.50	NS 11	.00
L 12	A	.66	NS 12	.60	L 12	I	.50	NS 12	.00
L 13	A	.63			L 13	A	.50		
L 14	B	.60			L 14	B	.40		
L 15	B	.60			L 15	B	.40		
L 16	B	.60			L 16	B	.40		
L 17	B	.60			L 17	I	.40		
L 18	I	.60			L 18	A	.40		
L 19	A	.60			L 19	A	.37		
L 20	B	.50			L 20	B	.33		
L 21	B	.50			L 21	I	.33		
L 22	B	.50			L 22	A	.33		
L 23	I	.50			L 23	I	.28		
L 24	I	.50			L 24	B	.20		
L 25	A	.50			L 25	A	.20		
L 26	B	.40			L 26	B	.00		
L 27	I	.40			L 27	B	.00		
L 28	B	.33			L 28	I	.00		
L 29	I	.33			L 29	I	.00		
L 30	A	.33			L 30	I	.00		
L 31	A	.28			L 31	I	.00		
L 32	B	.22			L 32	I	.00		
L 33	I	.00			L 33	A	.00		
L 34	I	.00			L 34	A	.00		
L 35	A	.00			L 35	A	.00		
L 36	A	.00			L 36	A	.00		

3. Individual means of “identifications of problem” and “demands”

Identifications of problem					Demand				
	Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)			Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)	
No	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***	***No***	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***
L 1	A	.88	NS 1	1.0	L 1	I	.38	NS 1	.00
L 2	I	.66	NS 2	.80	L 2	I	.33	NS 2	.00
L 3	B	.63	NS 3	.75	L 3	A	.24	NS 3	.00
L 4	A	.62	NS 4	.75	L 4	I	.23	NS 4	.00
L 5	A	.61	NS 5	.70	L 5	B	.20	NS 5	.00
L 6	A	.57	NS 6	.70	L 6	B	.19	NS 6	.00
L 7	I	.50	NS 7	.60	L 7	A	.16	NS 7	.00
L 8	B	.45	NS 8	.60	L 8	A	.15	NS 8	.00
L 9	A	.44	NS 9	.35	L 9	A	.15	NS 9	.00
L 10	I	.43	NS 10	.33	L 10	I	.14	NS 10	.00
L 11	B	.38	NS 11	.30	L 11	A	.12	NS 11	.00
L 12	I	.36	NS 12	.00	L 12	I	.12	NS 12	.00
L 13	B	.35			L 13	B	.12		
L 14	A	.35			L 14	B	.09		
L 15	B	.33			L 15	B	.09		
L 16	I	.28			L 16	B	.07		
L 17	I	.27			L 17	B	.07		
L 18	B	.27			L 18	B	.05		
L 19	B	.27			L 19	A	.04		
L 20	A	.26			L 20	A	.00		
L 21	I	.26			L 21	A	.00		
L 22	A	.25			L 22	A	.00		
L 23	A	.25			L 23	A	.00		
L 24	I	.23			L 24	A	.00		
L 25	B	.23			L 25	A	.00		
L 26	A	.22			L 26	I	.00		
L 27	B	.21			L 27	I	.00		
L 28	A	.20			L 28	I	.00		
L 29	I	.20			L 29	I	.00		
L 30	B	.18			L 30	I	.00		
L 31	B	.16			L 31	I	.00		
L 32	A	.16			L 32	I	.00		
L 33	I	.15			L 33	B	.00		
L 34	B	.13			L 34	B	.00		
L 35	I	.12			L 35	B	.00		
L 36	I	.00			L 36	B	.00		

4. Individual means of “agreements”, “disagreements”, and “justifications”

Agreements					Disagreements					Justifications				
Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N = 12)		Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N = 12)		Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N =12)	
No	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***	***No***	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***	***No***	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***
L1	I	1.0	NS1	1.0	L1	A	.50	NS1	.16	L1	A	.78	NS1	.16
L2	I	.93	NS2	1.0	L2	I	.50	NS2	.10	L2	I	.70	NS2	.10
L3	A	.65	NS3	1.0	L3	A	.46	NS3	.00	L3	B	.64	NS3	.00
L4	A	.60	NS4	.90	L4	I	.42	NS4	.00	L4	I	.62	NS4	.00
L5	B	.52	NS5	.90	L5	I	.41	NS5	.00	L5	A	.60	NS5	.00
L6	I	.50	NS6	.89	L6	A	.37	NS6	.00	L6	A	.57	NS6	.00
L7	I	.50	NS7	.89	L7	B	.36	NS7	.00	L7	I	.50	NS7	.00
L8	B	.45	NS8	.80	L8	A	.28	NS8	.00	L8	B	.50	NS8	.00
L9	B	.42	NS9	.66	L9	A	.27	NS9	.00	L9	B	.50	NS9	.00
L10	I	.40	NS10	.50	L10	A	.25	NS10	.00	L10	B	.47	NS10	.00
L11	I	.40	NS11	.50	L11	B	.24	NS11	.00	L11	A	.44	NS11	.00
L12	A	.38	NS12	.33	L12	B	.23	NS12	.00	L12	B	.42	NS12	.00
L13	B	.32			L13	B	.21			L13	I	.40		
L14	B	.30			L14	I	.20			L14	B	.38		
L15	B	.28			L15	A	.20			L15	B	.38		
L16	A	.26			L16	B	.19			L16	A	.35		
L17	A	.26			L17	B	.18			L17	I	.33		
L18	I	.25			L18	B	.14			L18	A	.30		
L19	I	.25			L19	A	.14			L19	I	.28		
L20	A	.25			L20	A	.14			L20	B	.28		
L21	B	.23			L21	A	.13			L21	A	.26		
L22	B	.20			L22	A	.13			L22	A	.25		
L23	A	.20			L23	I	.12			L23	A	.25		
L24	B	.16			L24	I	.10			L24	B	.22		
L25	B	.16			L25	I	.10			L25	A	.20		
L26	A	.14			L26	B	.08			L26	B	.18		
L27	A	.14			L27	B	.05			L27	B	.14		
L28	B	.12			L28	A	.04			L28	I	.10		
L29	I	.10			L29	B	.00			L29	B	.00		
L30	B	.08			L30	B	.00			L30	I	.00		
L31	A	.04			L31	I	.00			L31	I	.00		
L32	I	.00			L32	I	.00			L32	I	.00		
L33	I	.00			L33	I	.00			L33	I	.00		
L34	I	.00			L34	I	.00			L34	I	.00		
L35	A	.00			L35	A	.00			L35	A	.00		
L36	A	.00			L36	A	.00			L36	A	.00		

5. Individual means of criticism modifiers

Total number of modifiers					External modifiers					Internal modifiers				
Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N = 12)		Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N = 12)		Learner (N = 36)			Aus NS (N =12)	
No	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***	***No***	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***	***No***	***Gr.***	***M***	***No***	***M***
L1	I	5.3	NS1	6.0	L1	I	3.6	NS1	3.4	L1	A	1.8	NS1	3.2
L2	I	3.6	NS2	5.9	L2	I	3.3	NS2	2.7	L2	A	1.5	NS2	3.0
L3	I	2.5	NS3	4.5	L3	I	2.2	NS3	2.7	L3	I	1.6	NS3	2.8
L4	I	2.5	NS4	4.2	L4	A	1.7	NS4	2.2	L4	I	1.4	NS4	2.5
L5	I	2.5	NS5	4.2	L5	I	1.5	NS5	2.1	L5	I	1.4	NS5	2.4
L6	A	2.5	NS6	4.1	L6	I	1.1	NS6	1.9	L6	A	1.2	NS6	2.2
L7	A	2.4	NS7	3.6	L7	A	1.1	NS7	1.7	L7	A	1.2	NS7	2.0
L8	A	2.3	NS8	3.2	L8	A	1.1	NS8	1.4	L8	I	1.2	NS8	1.5
L9	A	2.2	NS9	3.0	L9	B	1.0	NS9	1.4	L9	I	1.1	NS9	1.4
L10	A	2.2	NS10	2.9	L10	A	1.0	NS10	1.2	L10	I	1.1	NS10	1.3
L11	I	2.0	NS11	2.9	L11	I	.92	NS11	1.1	L11	A	1.0	NS11	1.0
L12	I	2.0	NS12	2.6	L12	I	.87	NS12	.90	L12	I	1.0	NS12	.80
L13	I	2.0			L13	I	.81			L13	B	1.0		
L14	I	1.8			L14	I	.77			L14	B	.82		
L15	A	1.7			L15	A	.76			L15	A	.77		
L16	B	1.5			L16	I	.72			L16	A	.75		
L17	B	1.5			L17	A	.66			L17	A	.75		
L18	A	1.4			L18	B	.63			L18	A	.71		
L19	A	1.4			L19	A	.55			L19	B	.71		
L20	A	1.3			L20	B	.54			L20	A	.70		
L21	B	1.3			L21	I	.52			L21	A	.63		
L22	I	1.2			L22	A	.46			L22	B	.63		
L23	I	1.2			L23	B	.43			L23	A	.62		
L24	A	1.1			L24	A	.42			L24	B	.58		
L25	A	1.0			L25	A	.41			L25	B	.57		
L26	B	1.0			L26	B	.36			L26	B	.54		
L27	B	1.0			L27	B	.36			L27	B	.54		
L28	B	.99			L28	B	.35			L28	B	.53		
L29	A	.95			L29	A	.35			L29	I	.46		
L30	B	.90			L30	B	.32			L30	B	.45		
L31	B	.89			L31	A	.28			L31	B	.42		
L32	B	.78			L32	B	.25			L32	I	.38		
L33	B	.77			L33	I	.20			L33	B	.33		
L34	B	.63			L34	B	.19			L34	I	.33		
L35	B	.58			L35	B	.09			L35	I	.26		
L36	I	.46			L36	B	.07			L36	I	.25		

6. Individual means of words per criticism and criticism response

No of words per criticism					No of words per criticism response				
	Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)			Learners (N = 36)		Australians (N =12)	
No	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***	***No***	***Group***	***Mean***	***No***	***Mean***
L 1	A	302.0	NS 1	555.0	L 1	B	198.6	NS 1	75.0
L 2	B	259.0	NS 2	183.3	L 2	A	187.0	NS 2	48.4
L 3	A	228.0	NS 3	180.5	L 3	A	162.3	NS 3	20.3
L 4	A	204.0	NS 4	171.0	L 4	B	160.0	NS 4	15.0
L 5	A	190.0	NS 5	163.0	L 5	I	150.0	NS 5	10.0
L 6	I	167.5	NS 6	144.5	L 6	A	142.0	NS 6	9.0
L 7	I	166.0	NS 7	109.2	L 7	I	135.5	NS 7	8.3
L 8	B	153.7	NS 8	93.0	L 8	B	124.5	NS 8	8.1
L 9	A	152.6	NS 9	67.1	L 9	A	111.0	NS 9	5.4
L 10	A	149.6	NS 10	66.3	L 10	A	110.0	NS 10	2.3
L 11	A	140.1	NS 11	53.6	L 11	B	110.0	NS 11	1.0
L 12	A	139.7	NS 12	31.7	L 12	A	99.5	NS 12	.00
L 13	I	135.0			L 13	I	96.5		
L 14	A	129.1			L 14	A	91.0		
L 15	B	127.5			L 15	A	88.4		
L 16	I	118.0			L 16	A	78.0		
L 17	I	106.3			L 17	A	72.3		
L 18	A	105.3			L 18	I	68.6		
L 19	B	104.4			L 19	I	68.0		
L 20	I	98.5			L 20	B	59.6		
L 21	A	92.2			L 21	I	50.0		
L 22	I	82.5			L 22	B	49.7		
L 23	B	82.0			L 23	B	40.0		
L 24	I	78.5			L 24	I	38.0		
L 25	I	78.0			L 25	A	37.4		
L 26	B	77.5			L 26	B	37.4		
L 27	I	70.8			L 27	B	29.0		
L 28	B	68.8			L 28	B	27.0		
L 29	A	66.8			L 29	A	23.4		
L 30	I	61.0			L 30	I	23.1		
L 31	I	54.3			L 31	B	23.0		
L 32	B	47.7			L 32	B	20.5		
L 33	B	47.5			L 33	I	19.3		
L 34	B	47.4			L 34	I	18.0		
L 35	B	40.8			L 35	I	14.0		
L 36	B	20.6			L 36	I	9.5		

Appendix 9: Summary of the learners' interview data

Learners	Pragmatic knowledge				L1 influence		Processing difficulty		Learning experience				
	Politeness	L2 culture	Explicitness	Generalize	Translation and transfer	L1-L2 similarity	Automatize	Message content	Textbooks	Instruction	Teacher-talk	Peers	Media
High beginners:													
L1	√			√		√			√	√			
L2	√		√								√	√	
L3	√	√			√		√	√	√				√
L4	√					√	√	√	√		√		
L5	√				√	√	√	√		√	√		
L6	√		√			√	√	√		√	√		
L7	√		√		√	√	√	√					
L8	√		√	√	√			√	√				√
L9	√			√	√	√	√	√					
L10	√	√			√	√	√	√		√	√		
L11	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		√		√
L12					√		√	√		√	√		
Intermediate learners:													
L13	√	√		√	√	√	√					√	
L14	√					√	√			√			
L15	√		√			√		√	√	√			
L16	√					√	√			√			
L17	√		√		√	√		√			√		
L18	√		√			√	√	√		√			
L19		√	√			√	√	√		√			
L20	√	√				√	√		√				
L21	√		√	√		√		√		√			
L22	√		√			√		√		√			
L23	√							√			√		
L24	√			√			√	√		√			√
Advanced learners:													
L25	√												
L26	√							√					
L27	√		√				√	√		√		√	
L28	√	√	√				√						
L29	√				√			√		√		√	
L30	√	√					√				√	√	
L31	√									√			
L32	√						√	√	√	√			
L33	√						√		√	√			
L34	√						√						
L35	√					√		√			√		
L36			√			√		√				√	

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