

Evaluating the explicit pragmatic instruction of requests and apologies in a study abroad setting: the case of Chinese ESL learners at a UK Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the effects of an explicit instructional treatment, within a study abroad context, for improving the spoken pragmatic competence of Chinese English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in the UK. The intervention in this study specifically focused on the speech acts of requests and apologies, and the effects of differentiated training materials, i.e., paper-based versus computer-based tasks. Instructional effects were compared to a control group receiving no instruction to further investigate the extent to which exposure to the second language environment naturally enhanced the development of request and apology language.

The data were captured from 61 undergraduate Chinese learners of English. Two experimental groups (paper-based vs. computer-based training materials) participated in ten hours of explicit instruction on the linguistic and cultural aspects of making requests and apologies in an academic setting. A language contact questionnaire tracked learners' engagement with English outside the classroom. A pretest and multiple posttest design using oral and written production tasks analysed instructional effects over time, measured against the uninstructed control group. The oral task took the format of innovative computer-based virtual role plays, which were also employed for communicative practice with one of the experimental groups. The data were: i) rated for socio-pragmatic success by experienced tutors, and ii) linguistically analysed, including identifying what were considered the essential components for successful requests and apologies. Results showed that explicit instruction was highly effective, with the group using computer-based tasks outperforming the other groups. Some evidence of attrition was found in the longer term, however. Exposure to the L2 environment facilitated little change in the production of request and apology language though increased L2 interaction appeared concomitant with prolonged L2 stay. The outcomes underline the positive benefits of explicit pragmatic instruction and technology-enhanced teaching, but

indicate a need for regular input and practice opportunities for long-term retention of pragmatic knowledge

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List of key terms

| | |
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| ANOVA | Analysis of variance |
| CALL | Computer assisted language learning |
| CAPT | Computer-animated production task |
| CCSARP | Cross-cultural speech act realisation project |
| CEFR | Common Europe framework of reference for languages |
| CMC | Computer-mediated communication |
| COPT | Cartoon oral production task |
| DCT | Discourse completion task |
| EAP | English for academic purposes |
| EFL | English as a foreign language |
| ESL | English as a second language |
| FTA | Face-threatening act |
| HE | Higher Education |
| IELTS | International English language testing system |
| IFID | Illocutionary force indicating device |
| ILP | Interlanguage pragmatics |
| ISLA | Instructed second language acquisition |
| L1 | First language |
| L2 | Second language |
| LCP | Language contact profile |
| MET | Multimedia elicitation task |
| NNS | Non-native speaker(s) |
| NS | Native speaker(s) |
| NS-E | Native speakers of English |
| ODCT | Oral discourse completion task |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| SA | Study abroad |
| SLA | Second language acquisition |
| SPSS | Statistical package for the social sciences |
| WDCT | Written discourse completion task |

1. Introduction

This chapter first presents the motivation behind the current study and introduces its overall aims (1.1). A description of the theoretical background follows to contextualise the study within the construct of communicative competence and second language pragmatics research (1.2). Next, section 1.3 provides an overview of several theoretical frameworks shaping the current study, with the specific research questions outlined in section 1.4. The final section (1.5) outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the research and aims of the thesis

My interest in second language pragmatics research grew from my early experience as a practitioner at a British Higher Education (HE) institution, involved in coordinating and delivering English language pre-sessional programmes for international students¹. These programmes aim to help improve learners' language levels to those suitable for undergraduate study. It was noticeable that the teaching material had a predominantly lexico-grammatical focus which failed to help learners develop awareness of the socio-cultural aspects of language in order to be able to communicate effectively in English with their peers and members of staff. Anecdotal evidence from colleagues working with other international students on campus also found that despite achieving an appropriate level of grammatical and linguistic proficiency to study overseas on an undergraduate degree programme, international students are often unable to produce pragmatically appropriate language in interactions inside and outside the classroom (Halenko & Jones, 2011; Jones & Halenko, 2014). For instance, visiting students are often unable to successfully

¹ Parts of section 1.1 have been published in adapted versions as Halenko and Jones (2011), Jones and Halenko (2014).

formulate typical speech acts such as requesting information from a tutor or apologising for arriving late to class.

Research shows producing pragmatically appropriate language in a British context may be particularly problematic for international students from positive politeness cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987) such as Spain (Marquez-Reiter, 2000), Greece (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Pavlidou, 1998; Sifanou, 1992), Korea (Kim, 2008) and China (Gu, 1990) as their language can be perceived as rude if they do not adhere to expectations of the UK's negative politeness host culture during their study abroad experience (Garcia, 1989; Marquez-Reiter, 2000, Sifanou, 1992) (see chapter two for further discussion and debates on this issue). As Dalmau and Gotor (2007) explain: native speakers (NS) belonging to a positive face-based culture often perform speech acts at an inappropriate level of intensity when communicating in a negative-based culture due to applying inadequate sociopragmatic concerns and politeness, relative to the target culture (p. 293). In a study abroad academic environment, non-native speakers' (NNS)² language may lack the expected moves of such speech acts, making it difficult to follow, resulting in tutors having to work hard to 'fill in the gaps'. Academic staff have further reported that this could also frustrate other more competent learners in classes when interacting with such learners in groups (Halenko & Jones, 2011). Put simply, when studying overseas in an L2 environment, learners may get the grammar or words right but the pragmatics wrong and this can have a negative impact on how effective their communication is.

This thesis will focus on one specific cohort of international students: those from China, as they account for over 50% of the international student cohort on the British HE campus where this study is located. Second language pragmatics research suggests that the English as a second language environment (ESL) environment may have a positive influence on pragmatic language (e.g., Barron, 2002) but this is not

² I am aware of the sensitivity surrounding the use of the term 'non-native' but in the absence of more suitable terminology, this term will be adopted throughout the study.

always the case with visiting students in British HE institutions (e.g., Halenko & Jones, 2011). One of the most likely empirically-reported explanations for this is that the large cohorts of Chinese learners, in particular, seem to socialise and interact mainly within their own first language (L1) groups whilst on their study abroad, and so the rich variety of pragmatic input available in the second language (L2) cannot be utilised (e.g., Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013).

In order to address the issues raised, the objectives of this study are threefold. The first aim is to expand the body of research investigating the effects of explicit instruction on two specific speech acts, namely *requests* and *apologies*. Given the motivation for this study is to improve communication and interaction between British HE staff and international students on campus, these two speech acts were selected after being identified by academic colleagues, through a short email questionnaire, as being the most commonly used in oral and written exchanges with their NNS students. Furthermore, both requests and apologies are associated with negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). These two speech acts may be seen as particularly challenging for NNS from positive-politeness cultures such as China, as indicated earlier, so are deserved of specific empirical investigation. Secondly, a methodological innovation of this research is the design of an oral Computer-Animated Production Task (CAPT). The CAPT was devised to bring the real-world context to the students with the aim of developing and assessing their pragmatic skills. This mode of delivery was chosen for language development purposes: i) given the propensity for learners to actively use digital technologies outside of the classroom, and ii) for the additional interactive, audio-visual element provided in the material which was thought to be a more stimulating learning mode. For testing purposes, few attempts have been made in the last ten years to widen the range of data collection instruments despite encouragement to do so (e.g., Trosborg, 2010). The CAPT then, also aims to fill this research gap by providing an innovative

data collection tool for developing and assessing pragmatic competence, in addition to investigating if technology-enhanced practice improves learning.

Finally, the study seeks to identify if interaction in the study abroad environment alone is sufficient for developing pragmatic skills, without the aid of instruction, as empirical studies report mixed results (see chapter three).

1.2 Theoretical background to language learning

The notion of communicative competence in language learning was first defined by Hymes (1972) as a shift away from the Chomskyan (1965) view of language as a system isolated from context and use. Hymes introduced the importance of situating both the knowledge of language and the ability to use it in social contexts within the construct of communicative competence, thereby guiding the design of later influential frameworks. Researchers such as Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996) are among those credited with attempting to capture the essential components of communicative competence in second language acquisition (SLA).

Whilst Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) work implicitly embeds a pragmatic component, referring to the rules of use and appropriateness within *sociolinguistic competence*, Bachman and Palmer (1982), subsequently Bachman (1990), were the first to explicitly categorise it as a discrete element (Figure 1.1).

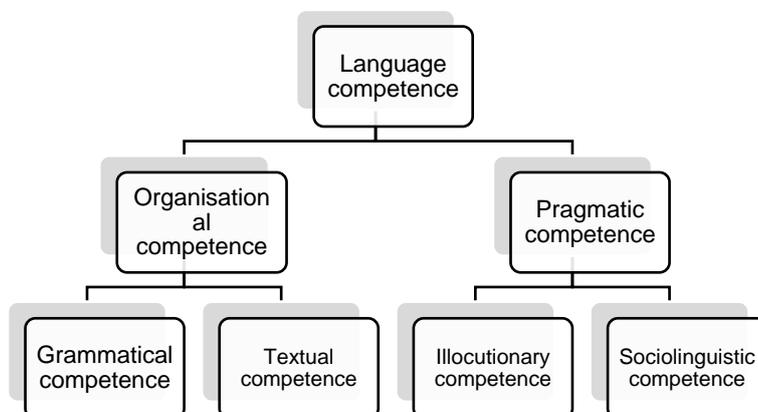


Figure 1.1. Bachman's (1990) components of communicative competence.

For Bachman, *language competence* entails an interrelated set of how linguistic communicative signals are organised (*organisational competence*) and their relationship to the users and communicative contexts within which they are used (*pragmatic competence*). Pragmatic competence then is the ability to use language in socially appropriate ways. This is further sub-divided, separating *illocutionary competence* from *sociolinguistic competence*. The former enables language users to express a wide range of functions, and to interpret the intended function of an utterance e.g., a request or an apology. The latter is a user's sensitivity to performing language functions in situationally appropriate ways such as a consideration of local cultural norms.

Collectively, these models of communicative competence demonstrate that it is not only grammatical knowledge that is a key tenet to communicative competence, but the acquisition of a functional and sociolinguistic control of language. For instance, when requesting a favour from someone, in addition to possessing the declarative knowledge of *what* forms and lexis are needed (*grammatical competence*), learners need adequate procedural knowledge of *how* to enact the request by considering its acceptability on the basis of the overall social context, the specific situation, the favour itself, and from whom they are soliciting the favour (*pragmatic competence*). The importance of the social aspects of interaction is echoed by a number of researchers who suggest that pragmatic competence must be reasonably well developed for successful communication in a second language (L2) (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2003; Rose, 2005).

Although pragmatic competence is acknowledged as an essential component of communicative competence, as discussed, the teaching of pragmatics is not generally synonymous with the second language classroom, with pragmatic-based instruction rarely making an appearance in curricula, in spite of the positive benefits reported in empirical research (e.g., Alcon-Soler & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Studies posit that, without any specific attention, NNS find pragmatics a difficult area to develop

(Cohen, 2008). This is supported by findings reporting clear disparities between linguistic proficiency and pragmatic competence even in advanced level learners of English (Kasper & Rose, 2003). If instruction is therefore key to improved competence (see Taguchi, 2015 for a meta-analysis on instruction), it is welcome news that features of pragmatic language are indeed teachable (Kasper, 1997). Pedagogical intervention has yielded successful results (e.g., Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Safont, 2003, 2005, Salazar, 2003; Taguchi, 2011, 2014; Takahashi, 2010), in particular when implementing explicit instructional techniques (e.g., Alcon, 2005; House, 1996, Rose, 2005; Rose & Ng Kwai-Fun, 2001; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama et al., 1997).

Despite acknowledging high quality input to be requisite to successful pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001), high quality input is not readily available to the teacher or learner. The inadequacies of textbooks as a reliable source of authentic pragmatic input inside the classroom have been heavily criticised (e.g., Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004), although the situation has improved in recent years with more focus on developing effective resources such as those described in Cohen and Ishihara (2010), amongst others. Outside the classroom, studies have illustrated the limited opportunities for genuine pragmatic input due to difficulties establishing NS contact (Barron, 2003) and problems with simplified, pragmatically inappropriate, input in NS-NNS exchanges (Yu, 2005). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) or computer-assisted language learning (CALL) may then present NNS with an excellent opportunity to address the aforementioned issues. Technology-based instruction offers learners simulated real-world contexts within the classroom, which may be particularly salient for learners who do not utilise the advantages afforded by a study abroad (SA) environment to develop their communication skills.

With regards to measuring pragmatic success, according to Kasper and Rose (2002), the 'prevailing practice' in ILP research is to employ NS norms as a comparative benchmark against which to assess non-native pragmatic competence. Whilst Barron

(2002) and Warga (2007), amongst others, accept that some kind of baseline is a useful, or indeed unavoidable (Roever, 2011) yardstick against which to measure NNS performance, the concept of the NS norm must also be viewed with caution. Within intercultural communication studies, the ongoing debates of what it means to be interculturally competent regularly profile the issues surrounding using a NS model, yet these discussions rarely permeate second language pragmatics research. Ortega (2005) feels this silence perpetuates the notions of “otherness and incompetence” in SLA research (p. 432). Indeed, the term NNS conjures feelings of negativity, focusing on differences and apparent deficiencies, rather than viewing L2 speakers as multicompetent users of language (Cook, 2002).

Specifically, critics outline the following difficulties with positing a NS ideal: first, selecting the appropriate L2 norm in a principled manner is a challenging task given the range of language varieties available, within which social class, gender and age-based variation is also likely (House & Kasper, 2000). Second, Cook (2002) suggests NS themselves also deviate from the standard norm so L2 speakers should be afforded the same concessions, given they are also multicompetent L2 users. The problem is NS interlocutors may be more forgiving towards L1 users than L2 users, as Dewaele (2008) notes. Third is the case of L2 users intentionally opting out, not wishing to completely converge with the NS norm in order to preserve and promote their own L1 identities (Kasper, 1997). In such cases, non-target-like behaviour is a conscious decision rather than being attributed to gaps in pragmatic knowledge. Barron (2002) comments that in fact exploiting non-nativeness may have the added benefit of preventing learners from being judged by the native speaker norm. Finally, as is described in chapter one, research has shown acquiring pragmatic knowledge to be a lengthy process, particularly in the absence of instruction. Whether NNS wish to achieve target-like levels or not may, therefore, often be an unrealistic goal. This

may be why some degree of convergence to the target is advocated as a preferable aim (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Giles, Coupland & Coupland, 1991; Kasper, 1997).

For the reasons described above, this thesis adopts a stance which avoids the promotion of direct NS and NNS comparisons. Instead, this thesis aims to focus on the distinctiveness of the learners' request and apology realisations in this study. Specifically, what pragmatic features make a successful request or apology. In addition, it will also highlight which aspects of non-target-like performance are considered acceptable and which are considered hearer-alienating, as described by Dalmau and Gotor (2007), and may therefore directly affect the outcome of each request or apology. For instance, interlocutors are arguably less likely to react negatively to a non-target-like address term such as, '*Dear teacher*' as an opening to a request, than a direct demand for help such as, '*I need a reference*'. Judging the appropriacy of the speech acts in this thesis is achieved by replacing measurements of comparable NS data with rating the learner data in terms of appropriacy of content for the given scenarios. This approach assumes not all non-target-like features matter in the sense that some may not directly affect the outcome of the request or apology, or cause communication breakdown. In this way, the study aligns itself to the notion of *communicative adequacy*, understood as "the degree to which a learner's performance is more or less successful in achieving the task's goals efficiently" (Pallotti, 2009, p. 596). Researchers suggest an over-reliance on assessing successful language use using traditional measures of linguistic complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) are insufficient (De Jong, Steinel, Florijin & Schoonen, 2012). CAF indices alone fail to account for aspects of language use such as pragmatic performance. For instance, it is highly possible for a speaker to achieve his or her communicative goal without the use of complex or accurate language (e.g., Kuiken, Vedder & Gilabert, 2010; Revesz, Ekiert & Torgersen 2014). This study further

hopes to shed more light on which aspects of pragmatic failure most affect pragmatic success in order to better inform future teaching practices.

Before turning to the specific research questions (1.4), the following section (1.3) briefly documents teaching and learning theories which frame the present investigation.

1.3 Theoretical frameworks of the current study

One of the main features underpinning this study is research into *instructed second language acquisition* (ISLA), given the classroom setting of the present investigation. This refers to learning the formal L2 classroom environment in contrast to 'naturalistic' acquisition through L2 exposure and interaction. According to Loewen (2015) ISLA "is a theoretically and empirically based field of academic inquiry that aims to understand how the systematic manipulation of the mechanisms of learning and/or the conditions under which they occur enable or facilitate the development and acquisition of a language other than one's first" (p. 2). Manipulation can occur by altering the instructional input to facilitate learning, or altering how learners engage with the input, for instance (Loewen, 2015). The idea that form focussed instruction (FFI) within communicative contexts is more effective than an exclusive focus on form or meaning is also the outcome of the last twenty-five years of research in ISLA (Spada, 2014).

Regarding the language learning process, Kasper and Rose (2002) contend, interventionist studies are generally underpinned by three interrelated SLA hypotheses; Schmidt's (1993) *Noticing Hypothesis*, Swain's (1996) *Output Hypothesis*, and Long's (1996) *Interaction Hypothesis*. This study is no exception. The first two hypotheses relate to separate stages in the language learning process. Firstly, given the explicit instructional approach adopted in this study, the proposal in the noticing hypothesis that linguistic forms can only serve as intake for learning if

learners actually '*notice*' them drives this present investigation. Secondly, the *Output Hypothesis* suggests several acquisitional roles for second language production, namely learners may notice gaps in their interlanguage during utterance production: learners require analysed knowledge for productive language use beyond formulaic speech, and repeated productive language use is requisite for automatization. The third, the *Interaction Hypothesis*, integrates both the noticing and output hypotheses and posits that negotiation of meaning through interactional adjustments facilitates language acquisition by connecting input, output and learner internal capacities. The metapragmatic input and discussions, alongside opportunities for collaborative communicative practice incorporated into the delivery, attend to these acquisitional needs outlined in the output and interactional hypotheses.

Finally, from an environmental perspective, language socialisation theory (e.g., Duff, 2007; Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986), which posits the acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge is simultaneously achieved through social interaction, further motivates this study. As Kecskes (2014) states, "pragmatic skills develop through socialisation in the given speech community" (p. 65), "where novices participate in concrete activities with experts" (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 42). In this sense, language is both a means and a goal of socialisation, and '*activity*' is fundamental to its success. The study abroad language contact survey conducted with participants in the present investigation aims to assess the extent of this activity in social interaction with members of the ESL community and the effect this has on pragmatic development.

1.4 Research questions

With these aims and theories in mind, the following research questions have been formulated for the overall study. The first research question can be viewed as the primary focus of the study, from which research questions two and three are secondary avenues of exploration.

1. How effective is explicit instruction in developing the pragmatic competence of requests and apologies in Chinese learners of English at a British Higher Education institution during a study abroad stay?
2. To what extent can computer-animated practice materials, eliciting an oral performance, contribute to the short- and long-term production of requests and apologies, in comparison to traditional paper-based activities, eliciting a written performance?
3. What role does the study abroad environment play in the pragmatic development of requests and apologies in Chinese learners of English at a British Higher Education institution during a study abroad stay?

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis begins with a review of existing pragmatics research within two broad themes: chapter two focuses on pragmatic development in terms of language acquisition theory, and identifies linguistic and cultural influences on performance. This chapter also specifically outlines the speech acts of *requests* and *apologies*, considering relevant empirical research in the Western and non-Western contexts. Chapter three then shifts to the instructional perspective and considers environmental factors such as instructed and non-instructed study abroad programmes, as well as pedagogical factors such as modes of delivery and instructional content which also influence pragmatic development in a variety of ways.

Before turning to the study proper, chapter four provides an overview of the SLA research design, and data collection instruments typically employed in second language pragmatics research, in order to contextualise the approach adopted in this thesis. Chapter five introduces the methodology of the study in this thesis, including details regarding the participants, methods of data collection and analysis.

In chapters six and seven, the results of the instructional intervention are initially presented from two perspectives. In 6.1 and 7.1, the qualitative results from NS rater judgements of appropriacy of the pragmatic language produced by the participant groups are introduced and compared. In 6.2. and 7.2., the results of a quantitative analysis of the linguistic content of the participant responses are presented and compared. The aim was to identify what are considered the essential components of request and apology language, in addition to what components are considered non-target-like which may affect the outcome of the request or apology. This two-step procedure is undertaken initially for *requests* in chapter six, followed by *apologies* in chapter seven. This language analysis of requests and apologies is preceded by the questionnaire results in chapter eight, elicited to determine to what extent request and apology language could be acquired from the environment alone. These three sets of results are then discussed in chapter nine in light of the literature that was reviewed in chapters two and three, followed by a discussion of the findings with reference to the initial research questions posed.

Chapter ten highlights this study's contribution to second language pragmatics research and pedagogical practice, in addition to considering future research directions.

2. Pragmatics and language learning

This initial chapter introduces principles and concepts specifically related to pragmatic-focused language learning which underpin the current thesis. Section 2.1 begins from the wider perspective of pragmatics and SLA to contextualise the study's main focus of second language pragmatics. Section 2.2 provides an overview of speech act and politeness theories which are fundamental to pragmatics discussion. This section includes debate concerning the interplay between language use and culture in the context of politeness theory by focussing on non-Western languages, given the Chinese background of the participants featured in this study. The review continues to then foreground the two speech acts under investigation; *requests* (2.3) and *apologies* (2.4), presenting the linguistic constituents of each and reviewing empirical studies employing Western and non-Western participants. A summary of the main issues presented concludes the chapter. The studies reviewed are either organised chronologically, or by design features or results which connect them.

2.1 An overview of L2 pragmatics and its development

The concept of linguistic pragmatics will be examined here and how the field has grown over the last 40 years to become a research focus in its own right. LoCastro (2003) posits that second language pragmatics is, "the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organised activities" (p. 15). The definition provided by Crystal (1997), however, is probably the most widely referenced, also placing social interaction at the heart of communication:

pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (p. 301)

These two areas of *choice* and *constraint* are conveniently differentiated by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) as pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components of pragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech, p. 11). In other words, it refers to the knowledge of linguistic resources available and the choices made to convey messages. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is the “sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, p. 10). It is primarily concerned with the effect constraints such as social distance and status will have when realising a communicative act.

This distinction, focused on assessing the linguistic resources that NNS use and their awareness of the sociocultural environment within which they operate, has been the basis of much second language pragmatic research to date. Second language pragmatics, also referred to as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), is seen as a sub-field of SLA and has been defined as “the study of nonnative speakers’ use and acquisition of pragmatic knowledge” (Kasper & Rose, 1999, p. 81). Some of the early seminal works in this area belong to Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), Bouton (1994), Olshtain and Cohen (1983, 1990), Thomas (1983), who were all among the first to empirically apply the notions of speech act theory within a range of languages, identifying cross-cultural and linguistic differences which may impede communication in a second language.

The first 20 years of investigations into ILP research yielded important empirical data, revealing that aspects identified as key to successful communicative competence in the areas of grammar, discourse and pragmatics, for instance did not develop concomitantly. Early studies provided evidence of disparities between NNS linguistic proficiency and pragmatic competence, even in advanced learners of English (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1982, 1983; Kasper, 1995; Rintell, 1981; Thomas, 1983). The initial starting point for this thesis builds on early investigations of L2 speech acts which have undertaken contrastive cross-cultural

comparisons, focussing on language use and production to illustrate NS/NNS differences. Studies have approached this from two main perspectives: the combination and arrangement of strategies chosen to formulate speech acts and the linguistic forms used to realise these. Early research predominantly focused on Western languages. Olshtain and Cohen's (1981) study comparing native Hebrew speakers' and native English speakers' apology language was one of the first detailed investigations which identified cross-cultural differences. The intermediate learners in Olshtain and Cohen's study employed explicit, performative apology verbs, admissions of responsibility and offers of repair much less frequently than the American students. This was explained by negative L2 transfer, and lower grammatical and sociocultural L2 competence.

The early seminal work in this area, however, belongs to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) which sought to establish large scale patterns of both request and apology strategies, across seven different languages (Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Hebrew, German, Danish). Although the study had a range of foci, collectively, deviations from native English speaker productions were evident in formulae produced and intensification. The CCSARP motivates the present investigation as this early work produced the first defined set of strategies relating to request and apology language, in addition to revealing shared or unique pragmatic features amongst the languages investigated. These aspects also play a key role in this study. Early investigations such as these have since provided further stimulus to investigate factors affecting pragmatic development which are underpinned by speech act and politeness theories described in the following section.

2.2 Speech act and politeness theories

2.2.1 Speech act theory.

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) are credited with developing speech act theory which helps shape our understanding of what is required for effective and appropriate communication. It is problematic to assign a clear definition of a speech act given that it is not a sentence or an utterance, but an act in itself. As Austin (1962) describes, language is more than making statements of fact, it has a performative function to carry out social actions such as in stating, '*I apologise*', has both a linguistic and social function. With this in mind, Austin (1962) posited that when producing utterances, a speaker actually performs three acts; *the locutionary act* (the utterances themselves), *the illocutionary act* (the speaker's intention behind the words, such as requesting or apologising) and *the perlocutionary act* (the effect of the utterance on the hearer).

Of the three acts described above, the illocutionary act, is said to be the underlying focus of speech act theory. Building on Austin's (1962) classifications of illocutionary acts, Searle's (1969) revised taxonomy is based on functional characteristics and incorporates five major groups; *representatives* (e.g., assertions), *directives* (e.g., requests), *expressives* (e.g., apologies), *commissives* (e.g., promises) and *declarations* (e.g., vows). The illocutionary act, also known as illocutionary force, provides a signal as to how the speaker wishes the utterance to be interpreted (Barron, 2002), and is typically realised by Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) such as performative verbs (e.g., requesting or apologising), or word order and intonation. For instance, '*Would it be possible to have an extension for my assignment?*' functions as a request by the speaker. An IFID is considered successful if the listener obliges and complies with the request. The success of utilising IFIDs appropriately, however, is less commonly achieved by NNS (Barron, 2003), the reasons for which have been one of the motivating drives for ILP investigations.

In order to realise the speech act itself, a number of semantic formulae (consisting of a word, phrase or sentence) may be chosen (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Yet, it is problematic to define an absolute set for any speech act since the choice of formulae depends on a number of factors. At best, we can estimate through empirical studies which formulae we would expect to encounter in given situations, as will be presented in chapter five. Early research by Searle (1975) and Fraser (1985) proposed that strategies for the realisation of speech acts across languages are essentially universal, or non-language specific, but their appropriate use may differ across cultures.

This notion of universality is reinforced to some degree in Olshtain (1989) where strong similarities in the realisation of apologies were found between Hebrew, Canadian-French, Australian English and German speakers. This idea has been strongly contested, however, in a number of studies which attribute language differences to cultural norms and values (Wierzbicka, 1985; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986). This suggests semantic formulae are in fact culture- and language-specific and is a claim also investigated in this thesis.

Speech acts are often performed indirectly (Searle, 1975) due to the expectancy that politeness or humour, for instance, be observed during verbal interaction with others. The principles of politeness and its influence on language use are considered in the proceeding sections.

2.2.2 Politeness theory.

A comprehensive review of politeness is beyond the scope of this thesis. Given its prominence in ILP debates, however, key principles of politeness do need to be considered in light of their importance in understanding what successful communication entails. Leech (2014) suggests being polite means “to speak or behave in such a way as to (appear to) give benefit or value not to yourself but to the other person(s)” (p. 3). He further suggests a series of ‘politeness’ characteristics, involving being non-obligatory, varying the degrees of application, and consideration of the existence of societal expectations of politeness behaviour, which is often ritualised and repetitive. The above features suggest politeness is both a linguistic and social/cultural phenomenon, organised as such by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) as ‘pragmalinguistics’ (the range of lexico-grammatical resources) and ‘sociopragmatics’ (the attendance to scales of horizontal/vertical distance between interlocutors, and the weightiness of the transaction), as described in chapter one. Acquisition of the former is said to be facilitated more easily as learners can be introduced to different degrees of politeness and their relevant linguistic forms. The latter is based on social and contextual judgements and is, therefore, a more difficult skill to acquire, as empirical research has reported (e.g., Barron, 2003; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Shardakova, 2005; Taguchi, 2015). Both, however, work in conjunction with one another so competency in both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of language are requisite for successful pragmatic performance.

Culture, in particular, has a strong influence on politeness and is a factor which occupies much of the debate when analysing language from a cross-cultural perspective. The acknowledgement that there are different ways of performing politeness in different cultures is recognised as one of the main sources of pragmatic miscommunication. For instance, the notion of directness (Searle, 1975) underpins both Leech’s (1983) and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) widely cited politeness

theories. Both comment on the close relationship between politeness and indirectness in many Western traditions, yet this is not the case for all cultures. China and Japan, for instance, are said to value directness as a key principle to being polite under the tenets of economy and clarity of language use, most apparent when performing requests (Lee-Wong, 1994). What is problematic for L2 communication is when this cross-cultural variation is applied incorrectly to the target culture: a common occurrence in the studies reviewed in this chapter.

Central to the concept of politeness within Brown and Levinson's work, developed from Goffman (1967), is the notion of '*face*'. Parallels between this concept and the phrase *losing face*, can be drawn. When loss of face occurs, we damage our public self-image which can lead to embarrassment so maintaining face is a sensitive issue. In Brown and Levinson's model, face comprises '*negative face*' (the right to privacy and freedom, unimpeded by others) and '*positive face*' (the desire to be liked and approved of by others). For Brown and Levinson, acts which fail to satisfy face needs are termed face threatening acts (FTAs), which also underpin politeness theory. The speech acts of *request* and *apology*, which form the basis to the present study, are both considered inherently face-threatening (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 for further discussion on this). To counteract this effect, participants must engage in redressive action to maintain polite behaviour and social harmony.

Further important components of the Brown and Levinson model, which are likely to influence a speaker's linguistic choices and have been drawn on in many existing pragmatics studies, including this present one, are the social variables of *power* (P): interpreted as power of control, social rank or authority, *distance* (D): classified as social similarity or familiarity, and *imposition* (R): understood as the burden placed on the addressee in terms of time, effort, financial or psychological cost. Furthermore, the model suggests a positive correlation between these variables and the degree of indirectness employed so that the greater the hearer's power, social distance and

degree of imposition of a request act, for instance, the greater the face threat will be. A greater threat leads to increased indirectness in the strategies employed. For instance, a request to borrow a book from an academic tutor, with whom you are not very familiar, is likely to be formulated with more indirectness than borrowing a book from a friend. Partial support for this correlation between politeness and indirectness has been identified in a number of pragmatic request studies, with a range of languages: Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006; Marquez-Reiter, 2000); Hebrew, German, Argentinian (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989); Greek (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). As for social variables, what is problematic for L2 communication is the different perceptions of *power*, *distance*, *imposition* amongst different cultures and speech communities. Given that cross-cultural variation has been identified, even in the studies noted above, Spencer-Oatey (1993), amongst others, recommends researchers engage in assessment checks to analyse participants' perceptions of P, D, R as part of the research design to increase external face validity.

Exploring politeness theory as a means of understanding its function within language, Brown and Levinson's landmark work has encouraged discussions around politeness to flourish, whilst, at the same time, been subject to heavy criticism. The main areas of critique include failure to acknowledge the social interdependence of 'face' (e.g., Spencer-Oatey, 2000), the emphasis on politeness as means of mitigation for face threatening acts (e.g., Leech, 2014), the 'universal' claim of politeness theory (e.g., Wierzbicka, 1985), and specifically its Western (Anglo-Saxon) bias (e.g., Matsumoto, 1988) which promotes an overemphasis on individual freedom and autonomy (e.g., Gu, 1990). Contemporary, alternate perspectives on the constituents of politeness have been motivated by this early work. Spencer-Oatey's (2000) '*rappport management*', defined as "the management of harmony-disharmony among people" (p.13), promotes social interdependence rather than a focus on the self in the Brown and Levinson model. Watts (2003), known for his description of politeness as '*politic*

behaviour', further underlines the interpersonal and social perspectives. In addition, scholars such as Gu (1990) and Ide (1993) favour a stance from an East Asian viewpoint, maintaining politeness needs to be considered in relation to cultural traditions which concern the role an individual plays within the larger context of the group and the traditional hierarchical society. All these aforementioned studies situate their work alongside Brown and Levinson's model, generally to highlight its inadequacies whilst positing the advantages of theirs, reflecting the influential nature of this framework.

As noted, the Brown and Levinson model is said to place an unbalanced emphasis on the rights of the individual without due consideration of how politeness operates in other cultures. Such distinctions have naturally led to cultural labels, even stereotypes, such as many Western European societies being considered negative-politeness oriented (focussing on the individual and their rights of privacy) e.g., Marquez-Reiter (2000); Sifanou (1992), and non-Western East Asian societies such as China and Japan, positive-politeness oriented, (emphasising a 'collectivist' group culture) e.g., Gu (1990); Yu (1999). To some degree, the notion that English-speaking countries operate within the norms of negative politeness has been empirically confirmed in terms of social behaviour e.g., Hofstede (2005); Ogiermann (2009), and production of request language showing a greater preference for indirect strategies e.g., Blum-Kulka et al (1989); Sifanou (1992). Equally, in terms of categorisation, empirical research also applies the terms *positive-politeness* and *collectivist* to many non-Western societies, particularly in China, Japan and Korea in East Asia (Gu, 1990; Ide, 1989; Mao, 1994; Matsumoto, 1989; Yu, 1999; 2011). These findings need to be viewed, however, under the caveat that there will be group differences within societies which do not necessarily conform and fall neatly into one or the other category. For instance, Culpeper and Haugh (2014) note that in the North of England, where the present study is based, terms of endearment such as, 'love'

(e.g., Can I help you, love?) and 'pet' (e.g., Are you OK, pet?) are common features of discourse within the public domain (as opposed to academia) which, in fact, relate more to aspects of positive, rather than negative, politeness. With regard to the East/West debate, Leech (2014) invites us to consider the concepts of Eastern group culture and Western individualist, egalitarian culture as simply positions on a scale, rather than absolutes. Since, he argues, all polite communication involves observation of both individual and group values, it appears that group values appear to dominate in Eastern culture and individual values appear to dominate in the West (p. 83).

In line with the aforementioned studies, this thesis will continue to adopt the terms positive and negative politeness in the ways described for convenience and general understanding, whilst acknowledging that these categorisations can be over simplistic. Despite the criticism levied towards Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this too will be the main theory applied to the current data and utilised in the discussions for three main reasons. Firstly, as noted by prominent figures in (im)politeness research (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Leech, 2014), a replacement account of politeness which is as accessible and thorough in its description has yet to be found. Secondly, to maintain cross-research comparisons, this model, most favoured in ILP research, is also adopted here to contextualise the current findings amongst existing investigations on requests and apologies. Finally, Chen and Hu's (2013) recent study suggests that a number of features of request behaviour such as high frequency of indirectness and observation of power and distance, show little variation between American and Chinese speakers, in spite of previous claims. Chen and Hu contend cultural differences may not be as extreme as to lead to the conclusion that there is an East-West divide in terms of politeness, at least as defined by Brown and Levinson. This is also a valuable area of investigation for this thesis to

determine the extent to which the notions described so far have a bearing on the linguistic output of the Chinese learners employed in this study.

Despite evidence to suggest there are similarities on some levels regarding politeness between Western and non-Western cultures (e.g., Chen & Hu, 2013; Wang, 2011), this is limited. Cross-cultural comparisons most frequently question the applicability of Brown and Levinson's claim of 'universality', in particular. This is explored further in the following section with specific reference to non-Western languages, given the focus of this thesis.

2.2.2.1. Challenges to the universality of politeness theory.

A number of researchers investigating cross-cultural and interlanguage behaviour in Chinese cultures have contributed to the debate of universality versus cultural-specificity, arguing that deep-rooted cultural values and conventions directly affect pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behaviour in the L2.

Firstly, the individualistic nature of positive 'face' (expressing solidarity, agreement and the desire to be accepted by others) versus negative 'face' (freedom of independence and avoiding imposition on others) proposed by Brown and Levinson, are challenged. While Yu (2003), amongst others, suggest the ultimate "goals of polite facework" (p. 1685) proposed by Brown and Levinson are not so different from those of Chinese speakers, researchers suggest that, in fact, the concepts of 'face' are fundamentally based on Western cultural norms which prioritise the 'self' (Gu, 1990; Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999; Zhang, 1995). In contrast, social harmony and seeking the respect of the group are central to Chinese culture (positive politeness), rather than accommodating individual desires and freedoms (negative politeness) which are said to be more of a concern in Western societies (Gu, 1990; Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011; Zhang, 1995). The Chinese appear to be motivated by being part of the whole and are communally-driven in direct contrast to the self-oriented

image of a Western society. In this case, it is unreasonable to assume Chinese speakers will automatically enter into and participate in interactions in this same way as native speakers of English in Western cultures given the latter are reported to place greater emphasis on 'negative politeness' in contrast to Chinese speakers who seem to value 'positive politeness' more highly (Yu, 2011).

Research on other non-English speaking cultures have also contested the applicability of Brown and Levinson's theories, supported by empirical evidence which suggests they have negligible relevance in collectivist societies such as Japan (Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki & Ogino, 1986; Matsumoto, 1988; 1989), Poland and Hungary (Suszczyńska, 1999), Poland (Wierzbicka, 1991), Greece and Germany (Pavlidou, 1994) and China (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994). As introduced earlier in this chapter, Spencer-Oatey (2000) suggests an alternative perspective for conceptualising face. She terms this 'rapport management' and proposes face sensitivities, interactional goals, and sociality rights and obligations to be the three central components. Spencer-Oatey's focus is less on the performance of politeness per se rather how this works in conjunction with interpersonal relations.

Secondly, Lee-Wong (1994) and Yu (1999) are among studies reporting 'directness' as a common strategy for Chinese speakers in conversation, which is reported as a marker of both politeness and sincerity in Chinese culture. Yu (2011) claims that whilst the typical conventionally indirect structure of *could you pass the phone?* may be regarded as an acceptable request by English speakers, this tentativeness potentially questions the sincerity of the interlocutor in Chinese culture and may therefore cause offence. As a result, Chinese beliefs heavily influence the semantics of their utterances adopting brevity and directness to display politeness: a feature of positive politeness societies. Kasper and Zhang (1995) note study abroad students in China concluded the interpretation of politeness in China was very different to their Western expectations. The students reported comments on age, salary and obesity

were approached in too direct a manner in China compared to Western conventions e.g., '*you are really fat*', '*you have a big nose*' (1995, p. 18), in addition to 'suggestions' being perceived as 'directives' because of the linguistic forms chosen. Such comments are not impolite in China and directives are considered appropriate in Chinese culture but can be unfamiliar, and uncomfortable, for Western students (Kasper & Zhang, 1995).

As noted above, politeness is generally considered to be marked by indirectness in western societies. Whilst a shared belief exists that indirectness does play a role in polite behaviour in China, this is realised in a different way. In request language, for instance, it is suggested indirectness is measured by the framework of the utterance (Yu, 2011; Zhang, 1995). External modification devices such as small talk and supportive moves, preceding the proposition, are fundamental to conveying indirectness, rather than internal modification such as modals and pronouns as evidenced in Western utterances. Faerch and Kasper (1989) found that for British English, German and Danish groups, internal modification is obligatory but external modification is optional. According to Yu (2011) and Zhang (1995), amongst others, in fact the opposite is true in Chinese culture. This difference in linguistic sequencing may have a significant impact on the success of the utterance if these are facilitated by negative L1 transfer. It suggests when interacting in the L2, Chinese learners of English are perhaps in a disadvantaged position unless politeness strategies from Western culture are known, and learners are equipped with the linguistic devices to manage their utterances.

Thirdly, contrasting East-West social structures may play a key role in how interactions are managed. Japan and China are described as 'vertical societies' (e.g., Matsumoto, 1988; O'Driscoll, 1996) where a clear hierarchy exists between social groupings. According to Yu (2011), the modern operation of these societies has clear links to historical feudal systems where obligation and imposition, for instance, are

required to be observed, particularly in professional relationships. In contrast, 'horizontal' societies of the West have relatively weak vertical ties and members of groups feel closest to those of the same rank and role: obligations are few between high-status and low-status members in comparison to vertical societies (O'Driscoll, 1996). This is likely to be influential in how interactions are managed between interlocutors and, therefore, which linguistic devices are employed for these to be successful. Kim (2008) suggests that based on the Confucian ideology of the important concepts of the family and group, age and position determine the responsibilities that one takes in South Korean culture. This means younger or less competent members of a group are more easily excused for a mistake, unlike older members whose mistakes reflect badly on them and group face is lost. South Koreans, therefore, execute apologies based on consideration of their positions and age within the group whereas in English, it is perfectly plausible to make a personal apology to an individual, without consideration of social groupings (Kim, 2008).

Finally, the significance of non-verbal apologetic behaviour in Eastern cultures has been found to be widely misinterpreted by English speakers (Hall, 1977; Kim, 2008). Hall (1977) describes Japan, South Korea and China as 'high-context' cultures where implicit understanding of the context may negate the requirement of an overt verbal apology, particular amongst in-group members. In the case of minor offences, this is commonly replaced by bowing, smiling and even silence: the latter considered to be one of the most important apologising strategies amongst intimates in South Korea (Kim, 2008). By contrast, 'low-context' Western cultures value clarity through explicit verbal communication and it is the speaker's responsibility to ensure meaning is conveyed through these means (Kim, 2008). Kim suggests misinterpretation by English speakers is common when a smile is used whilst making an apology. For South Koreans this relates to the "desire for rapid conflict resolution" (2008, p. 268)

but is likely to offend English speakers who may doubt the sincerity of the apology and question the speaker's character.

As in all of the above cultural variations, there is potential for a mismatch between the approaches taken by NNS of English from Japan, Korea and China and those from Western societies. In each case there are defined cultural expectations for what constitutes a successful exchange from both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic perspectives. There is a need, therefore, for learners to understand how politeness is realised in the target culture. At this point then, the discussion below turns to a more focussed look at how politeness operates in conversation, with a specific focus on the speech acts of *Requests* (2.3) and *Apologies* (2.4).

2.3 The speech act of Requests

Derived from Searle's (1976) classification of 'directives', requests are seen as illocutionary acts in which a speaker conveys to a hearer his/her wish for the hearer to perform an act which is of cost to them but has benefit to the speaker. This can be a request for verbal goods, such as information, or non-verbal goods, such as an object or service (Trosborg, 1995). It is characterised as a pre-event act given the expectation that the act will take place in the immediate or near future time. As the request imposes on the hearer, it is also, by nature, a face-threatening act (FTA). Within Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, a request specifically threatens the hearer's negative face (the freedom to be unimpeded by others) by creating this imposition.

To mitigate this FTA, a number of strategies can be undertaken to minimise the request, whilst maximising politeness at the same time. Figure 2.1 summarises a basic taxonomy of requests on which the current study is based. This taxonomy is influenced by the theories of Austin (1962), Searle (1976) and Brown and Levinson (1987), but draws more closely on the works of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) and

Trosborg (1995). A comprehensive table of classifications used in the present study can be found in chapter five. One of the most common ways a request may be minimised is through indirectness within the core component of the request, the head act, which conveys the speaker's wish/es. The head act comprises three main strategies; *direct*, *conventionally indirect*, and *non-conventionally indirect* which increase in indirectness, as outlined in Figure 2.1.

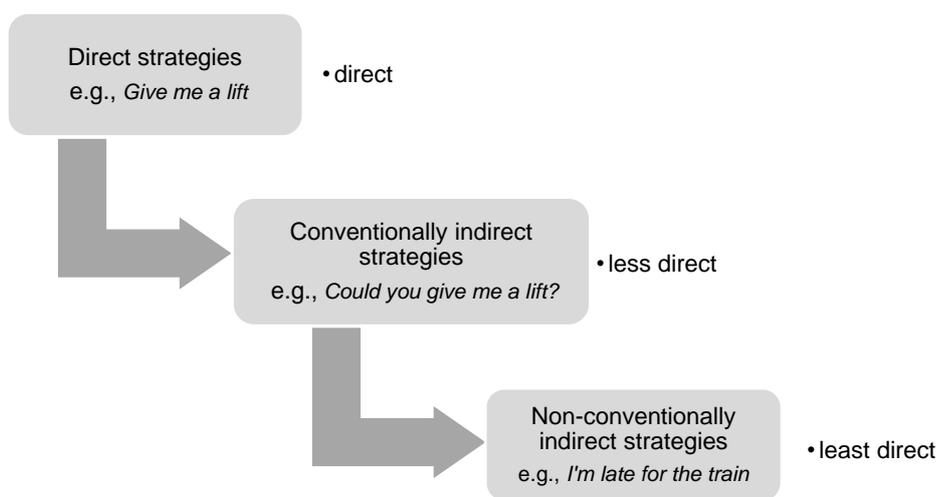


Figure 2.1. Strategy choice for request head acts.

First, *direct* strategies may be employed when the speaker wishes to explicitly state the illocutionary point of the utterance via performative verbs e.g., *I request a lift from you*, imperatives e.g., *Give me a lift*, or modals expressing obligation e.g., *You must give me a lift*. They fail to offer any options to the hearer so are considered the least polite. Next, *conventionally indirect strategies* (CID) question the hearer's ability and willingness to comply with the request e.g., *Could you give me a lift?* In this case, compliance is not taken for granted and a means to opt out is supplied, thereby lowering the risk of the speaker losing face by increasing indirectness. CID strategies typically comprise routinised formulae and those which are hearer-oriented i.e. *Could you...are generally considered more polite as a compliance option is provided.* Finally, the third strategy, *non-conventionally indirect* or '*hints*', are employed when

the speaker does not wish to overtly state the desired action but instead prefers to make a statement or ask a question. It requires the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's intent e.g. *'I'm late for the train'* ought to signal to the hearer that he/she might offer the speaker a lift to the train station. In addition to these levels of directness/indirectness, the request can also be analysed from different perspectives; hearer-oriented e.g., *Can you give me an extension?*, speaker-oriented e.g., *Can I have an extension?*, or a joint perspective e.g., *Could we make the hand in date next week?* or impersonal e.g., *Is there any chance of an extension?*.

The head act is able to function independently but is typically embedded within a range of mitigating supportive moves which serve to soften the request. These comprise internal and external modifiers. Internal modifiers are those which form part of the head act itself and include *softeners* which reduce the impositive force (e.g., *Could you possibly...*), *fillers*, items used to fill in the gaps of the utterance (e.g., *Could you, erm, possibly...*) or *alerters* which serve to gain the interlocutor's attention (e.g., *Excuse me...*). In contrast, external modifiers surround the head act, serving to further absorb the impact of the impending imposition. These include *preparators*, employed to set up the request (e.g., *Mr Waters, I've got a question about my assignment...*) and *grounders*, devices used to provide a reason or explanation for the request (e.g., *Could I have an extension? I've had computer problems*).

Observations about the context and social environment need to be made before deciding on the appropriate construction of the request itself.

Within existing request literature, a number of non-target-like language features have been reported as being culture- and language-specific for many Chinese native speakers when formulating L2 requests. Non-target-like features which have been reported more than once in existing literature have been selected as foci for this thesis and are summarised in Table 2.1. These language features were included within the intervention to satisfy the pedagogical aim of this study: enhancing the

quality (and quantity) of interaction between staff and students on a SA sojourn. With this in mind, non-target-like features which are most likely to trigger negative reactions and affect the outcome of the request, are of most interest in this study.

Table 2.1. Non-target-like features of requests reported for L1 Chinese speakers.

| Language feature | Explanation | Studies reporting language feature |
|---|--|---|
| Overuse of can/could as preferred conventionally indirect request strategy. | Limited range of conventionally indirect expressions employed with NS-C in comparison to NS-E. | Lin, 2009 Rose, 2000 Yu, 1999 |
| Overreliance on direct strategies. | Evidence of more direct strategies employed in comparison to NS-E. In particular, 'want' statements | Chen, 2006 Lee-Wong, 1994 Wang, 2011 Yu, 1999 Zhang, 1995 |
| Overreliance on speaker-oriented perspective | Requests structured more frequently with 'I' than 'you'. | Lin, 2009 Zhang, 1995 |
| Verbosity in request structure | Reliance on external modification devices such as grounders lead to lengthier, more verbose constructions. | Chen, 2006 Yu, 1999 Wang, 2011 Zhang, 1995 Kasper and Zhang, 1995 |
| Use of (multiple) explicit apology to signal politeness | Inclusion of apologies for the ensuing trouble the request may cause. Used as a marker of politeness. No evidence of this in NS-E data. | Yu, 1999 Zhang, 1995 |
| Little evidence of internal modification | Some NS-E patterns do not exist in Chinese e.g., verbal conditionals. Not a preferred device for expressing politeness | Yu, 1999 Fukushima, 2002 |
| Overreliance on external modification | NS-E rely more on internal modification devices. NS-C rely on external modification devices to show politeness | Wang, 2011 Yu, 1999 Zhang, 1995 |
| Because-therefore pattern in information sequencing | Reason preceding the problem is common in L1 utterances (apologies and requests). In contrast, the opposite structure (therefore-because) is preferred by native English speakers. | Chen, 2006 Kirkpatrick, 1991; 1992 Wang, 2011 Yu, 1999 |

Note.

NS-E = English native speakers.

NS-C = Chinese native speakers.

2.3.1 Western empirical request studies.

Over the last three decades a substantial body of research on requests across a number of languages has accumulated. Schauer (2009) claims the overwhelming interest shown in this speech act over any other is probably due to its high frequency of occurrence in daily interaction and the many ways requests can be formulated within a wide variety of contexts. This is particularly true of staff-student exchanges in academia, so it is worthy of further investigation in the present study.

As outlined in chapter one, empirical studies tend to adopt a comparative focus of learners' request production to examine the extent to which learners' pragmatic performance converges or diverges from that of English NS. Although this is not the approach undertaken in this thesis for the reasons described in chapter one, the following empirical request studies do draw conclusions on the basis of the NS/NNS dichotomy.

Findings from early studies reveal that regardless of learners' language background and proficiency level, there are clear disparities between NS and NNS (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Hill, 1997; Sifanou, 1992; Trosborg, 1995). Differences have been noted in lower frequencies of *conventionally indirect strategies* and *internal modification devices*, in addition to higher levels of *direct strategies* and *external modification devices* by NNS when compared with English NS. Similar patterns of request production continue to be reported in more recent studies, with a specific focus on the role proficiency plays (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; Octu & Zeyrek, 2008; Woodfield & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010).

In her single-moment study with 14 low proficiency Greek-Cypriot English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2012) found the learners showed a significant preference for external modification and undersupplied internal modifiers in comparison to the 16 American NS, employed for baseline data. She argues

internal modification maybe particularly sensitive to proficiency levels as her findings mirrored those from a number of other studies incorporating a range of low to high level EFL participants (e.g., Octu & Zeyrek, 2008; Woodfield, 2008).

Octu and Zeyrek (2008) reported comparable findings with their lower- and upper intermediate Turkish learners of English, elicited via interactive role plays.

Conventionally indirect strategies were employed by both the NS and NNS groups, though lower levels were recorded from the Turkish participants. Levels of internal modification increased with language proficiency but still fell short of target norms. External modification patterns did not, however, support previous studies that this was the preferred mitigating device amongst NNS.

Finally, Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010), examined requests from 89 ESL advanced learners of English from Greek, German and Japanese backgrounds. Significant differences in internal/external modification and request perspective were noted when compared to 87 British English speakers. Specifically, results revealed failure to internally modify a request, and an underuse of lexical politeness markers amongst the learner groups. Learners were further observed to overuse preparators in external modification and significantly underuse minimisers and apologies.

Continuing to review the literature on request behaviour, the following section focuses on investigations employing learners of English from non-Western backgrounds, whose findings may be pertinent to the data elicited for this thesis. The research documented below will include study participants from both Japan and China, given the cultural similarities and positive politeness values influencing behaviour and language in these two contexts (e.g., Gu, 1990; Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011).

2.3.2 Non-Western empirical request studies.

The development towards more target-like norms relative to greater proficiency levels is also a trend reported in a number of early studies employing Japanese EFL learners. Hill (1997), for instance, examined Japanese learners' production of requests at low, intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. A move towards NS levels as the learners' interlanguage developed was reported in terms of a decrease in direct strategies and an increase in overall indirectness. Regarding the presence of internal modification, Sasaki's (1998) examination of 12 Japanese EFL learners of English requests reveals a limited repertoire of internal modifiers, including conditionals, 'could'/'would' and the politeness marker 'please'. The author proposed a lack of linguistic development due to low proficiency levels as an explanation for this restricted range.

A second line of request investigations within the Asian context, considers the influence of negative language transfer, defined as "the projection of first language-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic onto second language contexts where such projections results in perceptions and behaviours different from those of second language users" (Maeshiba et al., 1996, p. 155). Lee-Wong (1994) and Zhang (1995) usefully catalogue L1 Chinese request strategies which provide an important backdrop to then examining the role of L1 interference and transfer. Overall results of these early studies suggest Chinese speakers consistently display a preference for direct forms through *imperatives*, *direct questions* and 'want' statements when formulating requests. This trend is claimed to be attributable to the Chinese preference for linguistic conventions which are economical, clear and explicit, in line with maintaining a positive public self-image, as opposed to the importance of individual self-image proposed through Brown and Levinson's theories (Lee-Wong, 1994; Zhang, 1995). This strategy is extended to situations involving close social relationships, even between status-unequal members. The closer the relationship,

the greater the tendency to be direct and explicit e.g., '*Give me a lift*', avoiding the need to solicit whether the request can be carried out, which is more common in English e.g., '*Could you give me a lift?*'. Direct strategies can be mitigated in L1 Chinese, though this is typically achieved through external supportive moves and small talk preceding the request, rather than internal modification, preferred by English speakers. Conventionally indirect structures e.g., '*could you/would you*', which maximise indirectness in English, are deemed more appropriate in situations involving maximum social distance in Chinese. For Chinese speakers, indirectness, and therefore politeness, is realised through the aforementioned external moves so the necessary face adjustments to others and oneself can be made (Lee-Wong, 1994; Zhang, 1995).

The findings from subsequent investigations into L2 patterns of request production, discussed below, reveal interesting similarities, said to be traceable to L1 negative transfer (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). From a pragmalinguistic perspective (linguistic forms) pragmatic transfer is understood as "the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to a particular linguistic material in L1 which influences learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in L2" (Kasper, 1992, p. 209.). From a sociopragmatic perspective (cultural norms), pragmatic transfer occurs when "the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretations and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts" (Kasper, 1992, p. 209).

Beginning with Yu (1999) who, in addition to a comparative focus of 40 Chinese ESL learners and 40 native Americans, also employed 40 Chinese participants using their L1 for analysis of transfer. Similar to the present thesis, the situations eliciting request forms centred on the role of a university student. Firstly, the findings from the Chinese NS group were similar to those identified in Lee-Wong (1994) and Zhang (1995). Secondly, the majority of the L2 behaviour was revealed to be appropriated

from the L1, including underuse of internal modifiers, more frequent use of direct strategies and external supportive moves such as small talk, '*grounders*' and '*please*' than the NS English group. The '*because-therefore*' pattern in information sequencing was a further point noted which resembled the learners' L1 style. Lin's (2009) findings also lend further support to the NS-NNS differences in request realisation found in Yu's study. In addition, Lin notes that English NS employ a much wider range of conventionally-indirect strategies in general. Both Yu and Lin, however, may have limited the scope of analysis by solely relying on the CCSARP for data coding which does not include the use of 'want' statements, for instance, often identified in Chinese request language. Further, both studies elicited data via a written production task, shown in section 4.2.1 to have undergone a great deal of methodological scrutiny, particularly when attempting to collect oral data through a written mode.

Fukuya and Zhang (2002) employed a pretest-posttest experimental design to analyse the performance of 20 Chinese learners of English in producing pragmatically appropriate high risk and low risk request head acts. In contrast to Yu's (1999) and Lin's (2009) comparative studies, a treatment group receiving implicit corrective feedback via recasts was measured against a non-treatment control group. Following 350 minutes of role-play practice, participants completed a written production task to elicit the requests, in addition to a Likert scale rating of their confidence levels. Pretest results suggested no significant between-group difference in the use of the eight request target forms. Posttest results, however, indicated that the control group lacked the same command of request use as the treatment group in some areas, including fewer instances of the target forms introduced and increased use of query preparatory questions '*can/could/will/would*'. The authors claim the success of the implicit treatment was attributable to the recasts encouraging learners to 'notice' the language features (Schmidt, 1993), and the gap between their interlanguage and target language systems. This strategy was also said to be

facilitated by the formulaic nature of request conventions which could be acquired and processed as whole expressions more easily and efficiently than sociopragmatic conventions, for instance. Disappointingly, a delayed test was not conducted to measure long term effects, however.

Trends reported in the aforementioned studies are corroborated in a more recent, comprehensive comparative analysis of native English and Chinese request production, though, again this evidence is extracted from written production tasks. Wang (2011) utilised visual aids (a photographed image depicting the context) alongside 10 situational prompts in his enhanced written production task for reinforcement and to 'promote a sense of immediacy' (2011, p.59). The results showed his two general English ($n=32$) and business English ($n=41$) learner groups exhibited a range of request features which diverged from the native Australian English speakers, employed for comparison purposes ($n=32$). Specifically, an underdeveloped repertoire of formulae was found, with further evidence of the struggle to master more complex (bi-clausal) expressions, common to the NS group: '*I was wondering if*', '*Would it/you be*'. According to Lin (2009), Wang (2011) and Yu (1999), this is because bi-clausal structures (main clause + subordinate clause) do not exist in Chinese e.g. *I was wondering if* (main clause) *I could have an extension for my essay* (subordinate clause)?' Internal modification was also employed less frequently by the learner groups. This included suggestions of underdeveloped sociopragmatic knowledge, evidenced in the non-target-like use of address terms such as '*sir*' and '*madam*' during service encounters. Corroborating previous studies, external modification was found to be more frequent and elaborate than their NS counterparts in terms of supportive moves, information sequencing and overall utterance length. For Wang, the primary cause of divergence amongst the learner groups at the strategic, lexical and sociopragmatic levels was negative L1 transfer.

A smaller collection of studies, specifically investigating pragmatic performance through email requests to faculty, shows evidence of similar non-target-like forms occurring in written request production too. Despite a focus on the written medium, this body of studies provides important insights into the causes of pragmatic divergence. Chen (2006) is one of the only longitudinal studies to incorporate a detailed individual case study investigation combined with a series of retrospective verbal reports, conducted at three defined points over a 36-month study period. This approach allowed an in-depth understanding of the changes in an L1 Chinese speaker's cognitive processes and developing discourse practices when formulating email requests over a longitudinal year study abroad experience in the US. The 266 emails collected revealed that, without guidance, the participant's implicit learning of appropriate email request practice was slow and limited in scope since there were no models to imitate, no explicit rules to follow as might be introduced in instruction, and rarely were opportunities presented to obtain feedback. Pragmatic problems outlined in the early stages of the participant's email practice included '*want*' statements embellished with unnecessary detail, lengthy and inductive structures, reliance on the student-oriented perspective ('*I*'), and no status-appropriate politeness conventions. Based on the interview data, most of these inappropriate practices could be traced back to the participant's first language pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic conventions. Slow but gradual improvements in the participant's email practices became evident in the production of shorter messages, greater use of the more indirect query preparatory strategy and more appropriate mitigating supportive moves.

Continuing the trend to investigate cognitive processes employed during speech act production, Chen (2015a) used concurrent and retrospective verbal reports to elicit participants' reasoning during and after performing an email request task. In contrast to Chen's (2006) collection of authentic emails, this study required 15 pairs of

intermediate Chinese learners to jointly construct two fictitious emails to professors whilst verbalising their thoughts in English or Chinese during the writing process. An audio recording of this task was replayed to the learners on task completion and an interview conducted in Chinese. Results showed that the learners employed a variety of politeness strategies, selected appropriate lexis and grammar in relation to the context, systematically worked through construction from opening to closing, and considered carefully the degree of politeness and quality of their reasoning. The author proposed collaborative practices such as verbal reporting to be useful for language development, given conversational interaction is theorised as a necessary condition for second language acquisition (Long, 1996). This approach may also help practitioners identify cultural and linguistic aspects (of email practice) which learners find the most difficult.

Chen's (2015b) intervention study attempted to address some of the issues concerning infelicitous language use when composing email requests to faculty. Results from 224 email scripts by EFL learners revealed improvements in the framing moves of email requests (subject, greeting and closing), following six hours of explicit instruction. Participants were less successful at adopting the content moves in the form of request strategies and relevant external supportive moves. The former gains were said to be attributable to the ease of acquiring formulaic expressions, whilst the content moves were considered more idiosyncratic and less controllable in a classroom setting. No delayed-posttest meant the retention of the input over the long term could not be measured.

Although employing Japanese participants in her study, Taguchi's (2006) methodological approach has direct relevance to this thesis due to the inclusion of native speaker rating scales to measure pragmatic appropriateness of requests responses, in addition to a linguistic analysis of the oral data. The findings supported studies reporting an increase in proficiency levels to be concomitant with the ability to

produce more target-like utterances (Hill, 1997; Roever, 2005; Rose, 2000, Trosborg, 1995). This trend, however, did not extend to the use of mitigated-preparatory strategies, '*I'm wondering if...*', '*Do you mind...*' suggesting that, despite their high frequency (100% use by the NS group), these complex forms were much more difficult to acquire even for high proficiency learners of English. The use of rating scales in this study uncovered two notable aspects in the measurement of pragmatic performance, absent from most speech act analyses which mainly focus on linguistic performance alone. First, despite noticeable grammatical errors in some responses, these were still evaluated as being pragmatically acceptable. This echoes Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) well-documented study which reported ESL instructors rating pragmatic performance more highly than grammatical accuracy, placing emphasis on the communicative aspect of language production. This is further underlined in the second finding that, despite the core request being realised with appropriate levels of directness and politeness, a number of responses still received low ratings due to poor discourse management, for instance. Overall, this study reveals successful pragmatic performance is dependent on a combination of discourse features and cannot be attributed to linguistic production alone. The study may have benefitted from an oral production task such as the CAPT which would have allowed more efficient capture of data, under controlled conditions, with the 59 participants. Instead, individual role plays of up to 25 minutes were conducted, and participants were permitted unlimited time to prepare.

In summary, research to date reveals several trends outlining non-target-like performance across a number of languages when investigating the formulation of requests in English. Specifically, NNS employ conventionally-indirect strategies less frequently than NS, and internal modification is found to be more challenging to incorporate than external modification devices, particularly for lower proficiency learners. Specific to learners from Chinese backgrounds, negative cultural and

linguistic transfer are common explanations for non-standard features of request production such as an overuse of direct strategies, a limited range of conventionally indirect forms, and verbosity. Subsequently, the review of requests conducted in this section is extended to the speech act of apologies in the next section; beginning with an initial overview of the apology act itself (2.4), followed by review of empirical investigations into apology language in Western (2.4.1) and non-Western (2.4.2) contexts.

2.4 The speech act of Apologies

As with requests, apologies are considered face-threatening acts (FTAs). To repair the damage of FTAs, interlocutors may engage in a number of facework strategies to 'redress' the incident which include apologies. Olshtain and Cohen (1983, p. 20) maintain that when an action, utterance (or lack thereof) causes offence on the part of the recipient(s), the culpable person(s) needs to apologise to re-establish social harmony. In other words, "[an] apology is an instance of socially-sanctioned H [hearer]-supportive behaviour" (Edmundson, 1981, p. 273) and defined as a post-act event (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

The conditions to the apology being fulfilled, however, are dependent on the culpable person acknowledging or recognising the offence has occurred, which may be determined by sociocultural norms just as linguistic norms will determine whether the utterance actually qualifies as an apology (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, p. 20). In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, the act of apologising is face-saving for the hearer and face-threatening for the speaker. Leech (1983) qualifies this by maintaining there is some kind of benefit for the hearer at a cost for the speaker through the act of apology, unlike requests which are costly in the reverse.

Researchers have posited a number of general and more detailed classifications for the semantic formulae contained in acts of apology. Most build on the influential work

of Goffman (1971) who describes apologising as 'remedial work' accomplished by *accounts* (excuses/explanations), *requests* (begging sufferance) and *apologies*. Goffman classifies apologies as either '*ritual*', motivated by social habits, or '*substantive*'- the wish to repair any damage or harm caused by the initial act.

The limited categorisations proposed by Goffman have since been modified and expanded by a number of scholars based on cumulative research conducted in the 1980s (Fraser, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Owen, 1983; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1987). As a result, these studies have developed and described a range of strategies to be undertaken for appropriate apology behaviour.

As introduced in chapter two, observational and interventional investigations often cite the seminal work of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) for a basic conceptual framework of the semantic formulae involved in apologising, though this is largely a reformulation of those proposed in the earlier studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Fraser, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Owen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987). It consists of a set of five formulae which individually may be considered sufficient to placate the hearer, although a combination, signifying a more intense apology, is also commonplace (see Figure 2.2). The apology may also be accompanied by a strategy to signal intensification (*I'm very sorry*) to amplify the speaker's regret (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007, p. 291). It is useful to view them on a continuum as Trosborg (1987) suggests. In this case, the cumulative total of formulae a) to e) in Figure 2.2 increase in directness and potential for placating the recipient:

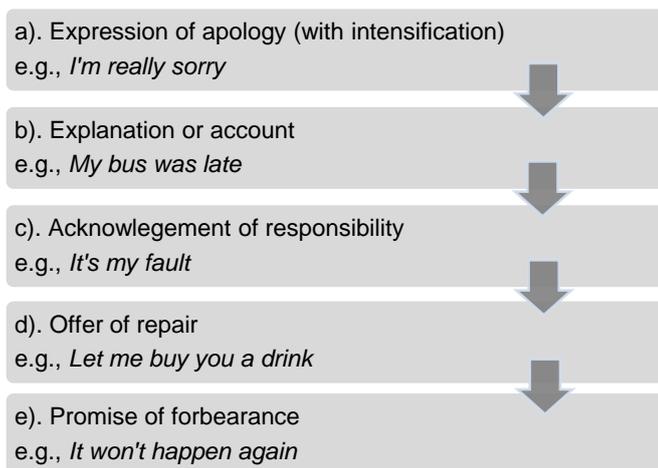


Figure 2.2. Formulaic strategies for the apology speech act (Trosborg, 1987).

Explicit expressions of apology a) are generally realised through some kind of performative verb such as ‘*apologise*’ or ‘*forgive*’. An *explanation* b) provides a reason for the violation or damage which has occurred and often provides supportive evidence to a). An *admission of responsibility* for the offence is realised through strategy c) which Nureddeen (2008) suggests is the “most explicit, most direct and strongest apology strategy” (p. 290). An *offer to repair* or pay for the damage caused is provided through d), whilst *promising not to repeat the offence* in the future is acknowledged in strategy e).

Strategies a) and b) are said to be the basis of any remedial work, whilst c) to e) are situation-dependent (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989) in the event further mitigation is required. In contrast, Bergman and Kasper’s (1993) review of a range of empirical apology studies have since concluded the essential components of an apology contained strategies a) and c); explicit expressions of apology and statements of responsibility (Holmes, 1990; House, 1988; Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1987) and it is the severity of the infraction which dictates the redressive strategy preferences (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1990; Maeshiba et al., 1996). A single apology in the form of an IFID may be adequate for being slightly late to meet a friend (ritual

apology), but a more elaborate formulation incorporating multiple strategies may be required if the offence is much more serious such as breaking a person's treasured possession (substantive apology). Contextual factors such as power and social distance between interlocutors also influence apology performance (Maeshiba et al., 1996).

Similar to the research on Chinese requests, Table 2.2 summarises non-target-like language features reported as being culture- and language-specific for Chinese native speakers when formulating L2 apologies. Due to the low number of empirical apology studies exclusively featuring Chinese participants, some non-target-like language features illustrated in Table 2.2, are also gleaned from studies employing South Korean and Japanese participants (*italicised in the table*). Similarities between these Asian cultures such as sharing common sociolinguistic variables like solidarity and in-group identity, and the reported comparable influences this may have on L2 production (Byon, 2004; Fukushima, 2002), justify their inclusion as they may provide further clarity on non-target L2 production and a greater evidence base from which the present study's results can be analysed. As with the previous chapter on *requests*, the non-target-like features which are most likely to trigger negative reactions and affect the outcome of the apology, are of most interest in this study.

Table 2.2. Non-target-like features of apologies reported for L1 Chinese speakers.

| Language feature | Explanation | Studies reporting language feature |
|--|--|---|
| Inappropriate use of 'I apologise'. | Socially inappropriate use or use considered 'excessive' for L2 context. | Linnell et al, 1992. |
| Inappropriate request for forgiveness. | 'Please forgive me' may be socially awkward and/or excessive in certain L2 contexts. Generally reserved for major offenses only in the L2. | Chang, 2010. |
| Inappropriate use of phrase for context. | Use of phrase e.g., 'take it easy' (when speaking to a higher status interlocutor). | Linnell et al, 1992. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Undersupply of admission of responsibility. | <i>Embedded in the L1 IFID so unlikely to be explicitly repeated as a supportive move (Kim, 2008). Negative L1 transfer may explain why L2 use of this strategy is uncommon.</i> | Linnell et al, 1992. Kim, 2008. |
| | No reason supplied for the Chinese learners in the Linnell et al (1992) study. | |
| Redress an offence with excessive offer of repair. | Although the utterance may be functionally adequate, it sounds socially awkward and is likely to have a negative effect on the L2 interlocutor. In contrast, such a move is not uncommon in the L1. | Linnell et al, 1992. |
| Use of an imperative which acts as a directive. | Common to learners with a lower level proficiency. Suggests negative L1 transfer where imperatives are a common linguistic feature. | Linnell et al, 1992. |
| Because-therefore pattern evident in information sequencing. | This syntactic structure where the reason precedes the problem is common in L1 utterances (apologies and requests). In contrast, the opposite structure (therefore-because) is preferred by native English speakers. | Yu, 1999. Lin, 2009 |
| Use of inappropriate address terms | Evidence of negative L1 transfer from the wide range of address terms which exist in Chinese and have a function beyond alerting attention. The selection reflects social relationships (Zhang, 1995: 36). | Zhang, 1995. |
| Intensification signalled by multiple apologies rather than adverbial internal modifiers | Often replaced by the production of multiple apologies to signal intensification as a result of L1 transfer in comparison to NS who use more adverbial internal modifiers such as 'really', 'so'. | Chang, 2010. |
| <i>'Explanation' strategy uncommon.</i> | <i>Preference for 'compensatory' strategies as producing an 'explanation' shifts the blame from the speaker causing potential to damage the speaker's image or for him/her to appear less sincere.</i> | <i>Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990. Kim, 2008.</i> |
| <i>'Promise of forbearance' strategy uncommon.</i> | <i>Promise of forbearance reported to be rarely used as it causes too much humiliation for the speaker.</i> | <i>Kim, 2008.</i> |

Performing an apology is complex. Indeed the combination and sequence of the multiple strategies available to realise these supportive moves differ cross-culturally. Examples of these cross-cultural differences in Western and non-Western contexts can be found even in early empirical research on apologies, as discussed in the next

sections. As with *requests*, the majority of apology studies adopt a NS/NNS comparative stance to assess pragmatic performance.

2.4.1 Western empirical apology studies.

Since the emergence of the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) similar smaller scale investigations into the realisation of apologies have since established corroborating evidence of deviation from NS norms (e.g., Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Nureddeen, 2008). From the number of studies available, those reviewed in the following section (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Shardakova, 2005; Suszczyńska, 1999) are limited to the three most recent investigations of apology language in Western contexts.

Suszczyńska (1999) undertook a cross-cultural analysis of apologies in American English ($N=14$), Hungarian ($N=20$) and Polish ($N=76$), based on data elicited from a written production task. Results revealed definite language-specific preferences for apology strategy choice, order, content and choice of linguistic forms. Specifically, few performatives were used in English expressions of regret but these were more frequent in the Hungarian and Polish data. Internal modification was favoured most by the English group who also produced routine-like strategy-sets of responses, which was not observed in the other groups. The author surmised the differences underlined the importance of identifying intercultural styles for successful communication.

Intercultural and linguistic divergence was also highlighted by Shardakova (2005) in her comparative study of 41 Russian NS and 90 American learners of Russian. NNS tended to oversupply IFIDs, and verbose explanations. A lack of conventional expressions which mirrored the Russian data was also noted. Building on the importance of identifying cross-cultural variation as outlined by Suszczyńska (1999), the author recommended specific instructional intervention given neither proficiency nor exposure aided the acquisition of formulaic apology language, in this study.

Finally, a comparative study of British NS and NNS apology language was also investigated by Dalmau and Gotor (2007) with 78 Catalan learners of English of mixed proficiency, specifically focusing on what they termed *hearer-alienating* features. Results from a written DCT of eight apology situations indicated that increased proficiency equated to more target-like performance. Divergence from the target norm, however, was noted in various aspects including some advanced learners' use of explicit apologies, e.g., '*I'm sorried*', '*apologize me please*', and inappropriate use of multiple explicit apologies within a response, in accordance with positive-face cultures. The authors claim the findings provide evidence of the difficulties acquiring sociopragmatic competence, and NNS challenges mapping positive politeness systems (Catalan) to negative politeness systems (British English).

Investigating apology behaviour in East Asian cultures is under-explored compared to research situated in Western contexts. It is only since a small growth in studies focussing on Japanese, Chinese, and Korean cultures evidencing clear disparities between East and West cultural values and norms, that increasing attention is being paid to the effect this might have on L2 production. At the same time, as mentioned previously, the evidence provided in these studies leads to questioning the applicability of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, at least in these geographical locations. This is despite studies such as Olshtain (1983) concluding that when speaking the language of a negative-face culture, NS of positive-face cultures have shown to apply a non-target-like level of intensity to apologies due to inadequate consideration of target-like politeness norms. The following review will focus on empirical apology studies which are closest to the present research in terms of examining East-West cross-cultural differences. For the purposes of this thesis, the review will be limited to empirical apology investigations located in East Asian cultures, namely Japan, South Korea and China.

2.4.2 Non-Western empirical apology studies.

One of the earliest non-Western apology studies aimed to assess differences in NS and NNS production of apologies and to what extent this was affected by language proficiency (Linnell, Porter, Stone & Chen, 1992). Similar to the present study, the participant data were captured orally in a single turn interaction but, in this case, the 20 NNS (from a range of L1s including Chinese) completed a verbal production task. Similar to a role play, the situations and initial prompt were presented orally by a researcher, with the expectation the participants supplied appropriate responses, as if interacting with an anonymous interlocutor. Although the results need to be considered tentatively given the multilingual background of the participants, and the considerable variation in L2 exposure (2 weeks to 6 years), the authors found some evidence of non-target-like apology forms in comparison to NS. These included the use of imperatives as directives, and redressing offences with excessive offers of repair. Significant differences were also noted in the undersupply of *explicit apologies, acknowledgements of responsibility and intensifiers*.

Park and Guan (2009) aimed to test the hypotheses that Americans were more likely to display apologetic behaviour when their negative face was threatened and, comparably, that native Chinese speakers would display similar behaviour when their positive face was threatened. Though some similarities between the two cultures were evident with regards to levels of intentions to apologise, results showed that the 'individualistic' American participants reacted more strongly when their negative face was threatened in a 'stepping on someone's foot' scenario, for instance. In contrast, when presented with a 'laughing when someone belches' scenario, the Chinese had stronger intentions to apologies in positive face-threatening situations such as this. Measuring actual apology behaviour, as in the present thesis, would have allowed more concrete conclusions to be drawn.

From a pragmalinguistic perspective, Tanaka, Spencer-Oatey and Cray (2000) provided counter-evidence to the stereotypical perception that the Japanese apologise more frequently than English speakers. They suggest this myth is based on the Japanese '*sumimasen*' being regarded as equivalent to the English '*I'm sorry*' when, in fact, it serves a number of functions in addition to an apology: expressing thanks, as a preface to a request, as an attention-getter, or as a leave-taking device. Their study reports that the use of explicit expressions of apology in the form of IFIDs was not significantly more frequent overall when compared to responses from British or Canadian NS. In fact, in specific scenarios where the complainant was at fault, the Japanese were much more reluctant to overtly apologise than the English-speaking respondents.

Kim (2008) offered a similar account of the South Korean phrase '*mianhada*' and how the meaning is underrepresented by the simplistic English translation of, '*I'm sorry*'. It, too, is multi-functional in its semantic meaning which includes thanking and requesting, in addition to apologising. When comparing the semantic formulae used to produce an apology in Korean, repair and use of intensifiers were more evident in the Korean data in comparison to Olshtain's (1989) data from Australian English, Canadian French and Hebrew. The forbearance strategy, however, rarely appeared as the author cited this was likely to "cause too much humiliation on the speaker's side" (2008, p. 274). An interesting feature of the data is that the participants in this study relied more heavily on the use of IFIDs which, in Korean, inherently includes a '*responsibility*' component. As a result, a separate admission of responsibility was much less frequent than in the other languages so direct comparisons between them were inconclusive. According to Kim, further limitations to cross-cultural comparability lie in the inadequacies of coding schemes which fail to acknowledge the frequent use of non-linguistic devices such as bowing, smiling and silence as a means of apologising in Eastern cultures like South Korea. For both Tanaka et al (2000) and

Kim (2008), achieving L2-like performance may therefore be more complex, rooted in the problematic notion of exactly what constitutes an apology, as has also been noted in some Western languages (e.g., Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991).

Following a series of semi-structured interviews with Japanese and American university students to investigate cultural variables affecting forms of apology in both countries, Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) reported instances of both cultural convergence and divergence. Examples of the former include the overwhelming preference for both groups to initiate apologies with an IFID, and to respond to the status and social differences of their interlocutors, for instance. The latter was evidenced in several ways. Firstly, the Japanese participants generally believed the act of apologising repaired the relationship, rather than improved it, which was the American perspective. Next, the use of more direct and extreme forms of apology expressions were evident in the Japanese data (a feature common to both Japanese and Chinese cultures). Finally, the Japanese opted for a more limited range of apologetic acts such as directly saying 'sorry' and offering to repair the situation. Mirroring Kim's (2008) findings, the Japanese students considered the interlocutor's status to be influential in how apologies were formulated and preferred compensatory strategies (*offer of repair*) twice as frequently as the Americans who favoured *explanations* to complement the initial IFID. Kondo (1997) suggests Japanese tend to undersupply explanations and excuses as it conflicts with the cultural expectation of being deferent. Repeated, direct expressions of apology are the preferred option as they humble oneself and appeal to the hearer. The concept of restoring and maintaining group harmony is offered as an explanation for many of the strategies adopted by the Japanese group; a recurring theme in East Asian pragmatic studies.

Of more direct relevance to the present study, Chang (2010) investigated the acquisitional order of apology sequences and linguistic forms by Chinese learners of English between the ages of nine and 19 years old, as proficiency levels increased.

Results, perhaps unsurprisingly, revealed that the IFID '*I'm sorry*' was the first emergent interlanguage strategy, and the one which proved to be the most frequent in all age groups. '*Explanation*' strategies, however, were not evident until the later stages of development. A developmental sequence emerged from the data allowing for the apology strategies to be ranked in order of acquisition from lowest to highest proficiency levels; (1) IFIDs or equivalent expressions of regret, (2) alerters and admissions of fact, (3) intensifiers, expressing concern, minimising and repairing damage, (4) explanation, lack of intent, promise of forbearance, acknowledgment, blame. This corroborates Dalmau and Gotor (2007) who suggest that face-threatening acts such as apologies are likely to be acquired very late in L1 or L2 due to the "potential for interpersonal conflict and high processing costs" (p. 290). Despite methodological issues with written production tasks, and their effectiveness of use with participants younger than nine years old as in one of the participant groups, Chang's study is still valuable for several reasons. The study aids understanding of the benefits of formulaic language at early stages of language development, and how linguistic proficiency and cognitive maturity are requisite to achieving more elaborate, and perhaps more appropriate, utterances.

To sum up, several features of apologies have been noted in the research to date. For instance, NS seem to rely on a limited range of performative verbs to realise apologies and favour internal modification devices as a mitigating strategy. Apologies produced by NNS from Asian cultures, on the other hand, have been found to exhibit a number of non-L2-like forms: an undersupply of promises of forbearance, admissions of responsibility, and explanations; an oversupply of repeated, direct apologies. What is indicative of many of these studies is a need to consider both form *and* function of the apology in the first language and target contexts. It would appear the latter is often overlooked as a possible cause of divergence, even though in a small number of studies, it has been shown to be a contributory factor.

From discussions so far in chapter two, we can surmise that firstly, pragmatic knowledge is an integral part of being a successful L2 communicator. Secondly, discrepancies exist between NNS pragmatic and linguistic competence, attributed to a range of factors such as language proficiency and environment. Finally, the act of conveying a message, such as a request or apology, may differ across cultures and languages suggesting avoiding the presupposition that all learners can rely on their L1 knowledge to inform pragmatic choices. Such conclusions, arguably, support the case for pragmatic instruction with second language learners, which will be the main focus of discussion in the next chapter.

3. Pragmatics and language teaching

This chapter marks a shift from the language learning perspective to the *sources* of pragmatic input: namely the target language environment and formal classroom contexts. First, this chapter situates pragmatic development within study abroad settings (3.1). Next, a move to consider classroom-based instruction in more detail is found in section 3.2, preceded by an overview of instructional design and teaching methods (3.3). The chapter concludes with a look at empirically-based suggestions of how pragmatic instruction may be enhanced in the classroom by introducing formulaic language (3.4), and technology (3.5) to support teaching and learning.

3.1 The effectiveness of study abroad (SA) programmes for pragmatic development

The teaching of foreign languages often incorporates an *instructed* or *uninstructed* period abroad in order for language learners to enhance their language skills and raise cross-cultural awareness. For the purposes of this study, the former is understood as SA programmes which incorporate explicit pragmatic instruction, whilst the latter relates to SA programmes where formal pragmatic instruction is absent.

Most language learners are keen to exploit L2 opportunities for language development which seem to be the chief motivations for undertaking short and long-term SA sojourns in target language environments. Instructed periods abroad rarely feature in SA research, whilst uninstructed sojourns dominate the SA literature (Alcon Soler, 2015). Intuitively, uninstructed SA programmes are beneficial for learners due to frequent exposure to contextualised, local communicative norms, and opportunities to practice the target language, and potentially gain feedback. The diversity of these opportunities means, in principle, learners have a ready supply of rich input on a daily basis to adapt to their own practices. On this basis, SA research has gained momentum in recent years, focusing on a range of language areas: oral fluency (e.g., Freed, 1995; Llanes & Munoz, 2009); listening (e.g., Llanes & Munoz, 2009); reading

(e.g., Dewey, 2004); writing (Freed, So & Lazar, 2003; Sasaki, 2009); vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Dewey, 2008; Llanes, 2010); L2 grammatical acquisition (e.g., Collentine, 2004); pronunciation (e.g., Diaz-Campos, 2004). The understanding of how to apply these skills according to different social contexts to achieve pragmatic competence is also highly important yet considerably underexplored in the SA literature (Beltran, 2014; Llanes, 2011).

Despite the advantages SA experiences can offer, research suggests, in reality, there is not always a positive association between the SA experience and improved language levels. This is particularly the case for pragmatic competence. The empirical studies reported in this chapter show varying degrees of success in acquiring target-like pragmatic competence, whilst aspects of non-target-like production remain. SA investigations generally also conclude that longer SA stays of nine months or more seem to yield better results (e.g., Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Kondo, 1997; Matsumoto, 2003, 2007; Schauer, 2009), than those of a shorter length (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011), which is potentially problematic for those opting for a single semester sojourn, and where pragmatic instruction is unavailable.

The following sections will review existing SA investigations, in addition to studies which have direct links to this thesis. It is important to note that whilst the stance of comparing NNS pragmatic production to NS is avoided in this thesis for the reasons outlined in chapter one, the studies cited in this chapter generally favour this dichotomy to measure NNS success. The first section begins with studies which have investigated predominantly *university level* native-English speakers' foreign language experiences in an uninstructed target culture where explicit pragmatic instruction is absent (3.1.1). This is followed by studies which have tracked similar groups from different non-native L1 backgrounds, during uninstructed *SA stays in English-speaking environments*, as this is the context for this thesis (3.1.2). Contact with the target language environment is then examined as an indicator of how this may affect

pragmatic development (3.1.3). Finally, given the research design of the present study, the discussion specifically examines investigations measuring the relationship between pragmatic instruction and exposure to the target environment (3.1.4).

3.1.1 Research from uninstructed SA programmes for native English students.

The international SA environment for native-English speakers has been extensively researched within a range of foreign language settings. Studies with a *request* or *apology* focus include work following students in: Spain (Bataller, 2010; Cohen & Shively, 2007- reviewed in section 3.1.4), France (Cohen & Shively, 2007- reviewed in section 3.1.4), Germany (Barron, 2003), China (Li, 2014), and Russia, (Shardakova, 2005). Much of the research investigates pragmatic development from an acquisitional perspective, with length of stay and language proficiency being the dominant independent variables for measuring pragmatic success. The *request* studies which follow are discussed chronologically, and end with a description of the only single study in this context available on *apologies*.

Of the two speech acts, observations of *request* language dominate investigations. Barron's (2003) seminal work with 33 Irish learners of German examined the acquisition of internal modifiers and the politeness marker 'bitte' (please). Findings revealed convergence to German NS during the SA stay, specifically the use of lexical and phrasal modifiers that were identified as much easier to acquire than syntactic modifiers which showed no developmental change. A NS-NNS mismatch was also evident in Bataller's (2010) study of 31 American learners of Spanish in their choice of request strategy. Following a role play task at the beginning and end of a four-month sojourn, target language production was evident in the use of more indirect strategies, which was not found in their choice of request strategies. Reported causes of the limited change were the short SA period, limited NS contact and unwillingness to adapt to the target. Li (2014) also reported the restricted five-

month period of exposure to the target environment as a factor for her 31 American learners of Chinese inability to achieve target-like levels of internal modification and choice of request strategy. NS raters were employed to judge the responses to a computer-based oral test. The positive impact of the SA was evident in more target-like production of external modification. Proficiency was not noted as influential to the results, unlike negative L1 transfer which was evident in the learners' inappropriate preference for conventionally indirect strategies over direct request strategies.

Proficiency is not reportedly linked to the production of apologies language either. Shardakova (2005) found that whilst increased proficiency was beneficial in expanding her 90 American learners' repertoire of Russian apologies, exposure was the most influential, even for the low proficiency group. Specifically, the author found evidence of the NNS expanding their range of apology tokens, increasing the use of direct expressions of responsibility, and reducing the number of inappropriate apologies (pragmalinguistic). In addition, there were more target-like perceptions of contextual factors such as distance and obligation which may influence the apology (sociopragmatic).

The subsequent section is extended to documenting the SA experiences of second language learners of English in Canada, the US and the UK, and provides participant groups comparable to the ESL participants in the present study. Interestingly, despite the differences in target language, the studies show similar degrees of divergence from the target, as described earlier.

3.1.2 Research from English-based uninstructed SA programmes for non-native students.

The influential role of the learning environment is also documented in a number of studies featuring ESL learners. Matsumura's (2003, 2007) longitudinal studies of advice strategy preferences of Japanese learners of English prior to, during (2003)

and following (2007) their study period abroad in Canada provides evidence of this. The elicited multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ) and self-reporting questionnaire data revealed improved competency during the four-month stay which was positively correlated to the amount of exposure to English, unlike proficiency which was only found to be a contributory factor. A decrease in gains was evident over time in the delayed tests completed on return to Japan, such as offering advice to higher status interlocutors. In this case, increases in opting out were evident, though this was the least preferred option during the SA stay. Matsumura suggests these changes may have been attributable to a return to indirect Japanese communication styles where opting out may be the preferred option with those of a higher social status.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) also found exposure to language, through peer interaction in this case, helped their multilingual participants to partially improve their use of suggestive language in academic advising sessions over a 14-week period, though some non-target-like features remained such as use of inappropriate forms of suggestive language and fewer mitigators than NS. Informal explicit input from the advisors themselves also accounted for the gains, supporting Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis that relevant and specific input is needed before change can occur.

More relevant to this thesis is a collection of studies investigating the influence of the English-speaking environment on developing appropriate *request* (Schauer, 2007, 2008, 2009; Woodfield, 2012) and *apology* (Kondo, 1997) language. Schauer's (2007, 2008, 2009) series of studies tracking German learners of English at the beginning, mid-way, and end of their UK sojourn evidenced the positive impact of the L2 for reduction of direct strategies and unhedged performatives. The author rationalised the non-native-like performance, however, was attributable to negative L1 transfer (requests in high imposition scenarios) and individual factors affecting request production (inconsistent use of internal and external modification amongst

participants). Request modification strategies were also an investigative feature of Woodfield's (2012) UK study of eight mixed-Asian graduates. Elicited through role plays tasks, her findings indicated the participants approximated NS norms of external modification over time with respect to an increased pragmalinguistic range and awareness of sociopragmatic effects. The opposite was true of internal modification which decreased in frequency of use and was limited in range, following eight months in the target community. The results in both of these studies cannot be generalisable to wider populations, however, due to small sample sizes. In addition, Schauer was unable to provide any clear indication of comparable proficiency levels amongst the participants which may have affected results.

Finally, Kondo (1997) examined the extent of Japanese learners' convergence to NS norms in the realisation of apologies after a one year stay in the US via a written production task, rather than an oral task. In most cases, isolation from the L1 and exposure to the L2 accounted for the production of apologies being closer to NS after contact than before, specifically in terms of more frequent offers of repair and explanations, and fewer direct apologies. Exceptions were evident in expressing excessive non-native-like concern for the hearer in some strategies, said to be traceable to the L1.

What links all the participants in the *request* and *apology* studies reviewed so far is pragmatic success is limited with no evidence of participants achieving target-like levels. As length of stay and proficiency are not considered reliable predictors of pragmatic development (Kasper & Rose, 2002), findings point to other factors being influential for pragmatic success. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2013), the complexity of researching SA gains means at least four variables need integrating into research design; i) environment, e.g., access to NS and quality of input (Iino, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Siegal, 1994); ii) the learner, e.g., individual differences (Kinging 2013; Kondo 2008; Schauer, 2008), including proficiency level (Felix-Brasdefer, 2004,

2007; Dalmau & Gotor, 2007); iii) pragmalinguistic (linguistic forms) and sociopragmatic (socio-cultural) features of pragmatics (Kondo, 1997; 2008); and iv) L2 interaction, e.g., frequency of engagement with NNS (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Diaz-Campos, 2004; Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2004; Kim, 2000; Matsumura, 2007; Shively & Cohen, 2008; Taguchi, 2008; 2011).

For the present investigation, the latter, interaction with the L2 environment, is an important variable. It was selected as an object of study for this investigation because anecdotal evidence suggests the majority of the international student community, where this study is based, do not regularly engage in the UK environment, preferring to socialise with their own L1 groups during a SA period, as reported elsewhere (e.g., Barron, 2006; Myles & Cheng, 2003). It is worthwhile pursuing empirical evidence for this hypothesis because, if proven, the findings could influence organisational change of SA stays in all institutions such as the increase in integrated social programmes. Language teaching might also capitalise on task-based learning, for instance, as a means of encouraging L2 interaction. The extent to which learners interact in the host community is one of the Research Questions behind this investigation so the following section surveys studies which have also explored the interplay between L2 interaction and language production.

3.1.3 Examining the effects of target language contact for pragmatic development.

As the understanding of, and interaction in, the social environment is fundamental to pragmatic development, examining language contact within it could be a direct indicator of how learners advance (or not) their pragmatic skills. As demonstrated in SA investigations which incorporate reflective journal writing as one way of recording interaction (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Shively, 2008; Winke & Teng, 2010), learners report regular L2 contact to be instrumental for observing cross-cultural differences, leading to modifications of their own behaviour and language towards the L2 target.

When learners do not take, or are not in a position to take up, opportunities for practice, however, the target language community is not likely to facilitate language development. These ideas are pursued in section 3.1.3.1 which documents empirical investigations tracking how East-Asian SA students have typically used their time, and examples of research instruments employed to measure this (section 3.1.3.2).

3.1.3.1 Empirical findings on learner contact with the L2.

It is understood that for successful communication to take place, learners must have interactional competence and a desire to participate in the target environment. In this sense *interactional competence* is defined as, “the relationship between participants’ employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed” (Young, 2008, p.100). Rather than enhancing learning, interaction and motivation have been reported as barriers to language development in SA settings. As reported in the studies reviewed below, NNS may neither view interaction as an important factor to language development, nor may they be motivated to use the benefits of the L2 context to advance their language levels.

Adopting both a quantitative and qualitative approach to measuring learner contact, Ranta and Meckelborg (2013) collected comprehensive data from 17 Chinese graduate students studying in Canada. The participants’ total amount of L2 use and type of L2 use was recorded for a 24-hour period over seven consecutive days: an exercise repeated once a month during their six-month stay. The results for the former indicated that English was utilised more than Mandarin overall for academic purposes, though more equal levels were found during social interaction and daily living. As for the latter, students were exposed to more written English through their study and oral exposure was limited to receptive activities such as listening to lectures and watching TV. Oral interaction was generally found to be consistently low, less than 50 minutes per day in many cases, but was also subject to much individual variation with high and low L2 engagers. The reasons behind the low oral interaction

pointed to issues with self-confidence and the learners own beliefs about how best to advance their English levels, which did not necessarily involve interaction.

SA in Canada was also the setting for Cheng and Fox's (2008) investigation, this time examining factors that influenced the academic acculturation of 56 undergraduate Chinese EAP students. The semi-structured interview data mirrored other SA findings (e.g., Myles & Cheng, 2003) that learners seem to rely heavily on their own L1 support groups, have difficulties establishing relationships with target language speakers, and were reluctant to use English due to perceived limitations in language proficiency. Directly contrasting most SA findings, however, most participants in this study played an active role in their own acculturation processes by developing their own learning and coping strategies, avoiding L1 groups for study purposes, and actively seeking opportunities to interact outside class. These differences are likely to be attributable to higher degrees of motivation when engaging in a full-time, long term overseas study programme, in contrast to a short-term SA sojourn embedded within a domestic university programme. Overall, there was considerable individual variation amongst participants which is a feature common to such studies.

Contradicting the high levels of motivation found in Cheng and Fox's study, Gao (2006) found considerable low levels of motivation for English learning with his 14 Chinese students studying in the UK for more than nine months. In this case, the retrospective interview data documented a decline in motivation levels for learning English post-arrival given the absence of the exam-driven agenda for learning English, as experienced in China. Once this pressure was replaced by a focus on coursework assessment in the UK, learners reported declined interest in learning more English and taking advantage of the SA environment. Non-linguistic gains in the form of viewing English study as a means of social and educational advancement on return to China, remained high. In other words, learners were much more

extrinsically, than intrinsically, motivated to learn English before, during and after a SA stay.

In their account of the linguistic, communicative, social and psychological variables which might affect students' willingness to communicate, Wen and Clement (2003) propose alternative reasons, rooted in Chinese culture, for low levels of motivation to engage in L2 interaction inside and outside the classroom. First, the authors claim an inherent unwillingness to communicate in public is part of Chinese endeavours to avoid any shame or embarrassment their language behaviours may cause. Given the Chinese sensitivity to public judgement in the L1, this sensitivity is very likely to be intensified when using a foreign language, which may account for the seeming unwillingness for some learners to communicate in the L2. Second, in-group, out-group membership is also cited as a reason for Chinese speakers distancing themselves from NS and their culture (out-group) and maintaining close networks with L1 in-group members with which they are more familiar and comfortable (Wen & Clement, 2003).

In sum, a small body of studies specifically investigating Chinese participants during SA stays has shown variability of engagement in the L2 environment and perceived benefits for language development. Motivation was found to be a key indicator for engagement in, or avoidance of, the L2 environment. Conventional approaches to measuring learner contact with the L2 environment are discussed in the following section.

3.1.3.2 Measuring L2 learner contact with the host environment.

Studies examining relationships between language contact and pragmatic gain, offer mixed results, so quantitative examinations of the amount of interaction time, beyond survey and interview data, are highly relevant to SA discussions. For instance, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011), Bella (2011), and Diaz-Campos (2004) all report

NS contact to be facilitative in learners' language development. Specifically, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos noted intensity of interaction to have a significant effect on recognition of pragmatic conventional expressions for their multicultural participants, whilst Diaz-Campos documented positive correlations between the environment and phonological acquisition for his L2 Spanish learners. Bella reported her 20 NNS with shorter lengths of residence ($M = 2$ years), who had extended interactional opportunities, produced more target-like behaviour of invitational refusals in Greece than 20 NNS with longer residences ($M = 4.5$ years) but less access to social contact.

Quantitative measurements of contact such as those described above, typically incorporate background questionnaires which are modified versions of Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter's (2004) self-reporting questionnaire, known as the Language Contact Profile (LCP). Originally developed by Seliger (1977), this instrument was the first published attempt to design a rigorous measure of quality and quantity of L2 contact, building on previous exposure questionnaire designs (e.g., Spada, 1986) and addressing historical reliability flaws. The LCP captures data on time estimates and frequency of contact more easily than qualitative journal entries. It allows for statistical analyses to establish between-variable correlations which offset the drawback of not being able to capture the finer details diaries and journal entries are able to provide.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to document various aspects of learners' language use, including the amount of time using the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in the target language, in addition to the amount of time engaging in a range of activities in the L2 (e.g., reading books, watching TV). In its entirety, the questionnaire comprises i) a four-page pretest for administration at the beginning of a SA period, eliciting participant background information and frequency of L2 contact with NS interlocutors (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly), and ii) a more detailed six page posttest, to be administered at the end of the SA period,

capturing intensity of learner interaction by days per week and hours per day, across a range of productive and receptive skills. With this in mind, the following outlines existing findings from *request* and *apology* studies which have also incorporated modified versions of the LCP instrument.

Studies incorporating L2 contact questionnaires of this kind demonstrate the facilitative effect of the target language context for different aspects of pragmatic development though individual variation is also observed. One of the comparisons conducted in Taguchi's (2008a) investigation was the relationship between gains in accuracy and speed of pragmatic comprehension and amount of language contact time. The contact questionnaire adopted here comprised 44 Japanese ESL learners documenting hours per day and days per week spent using English in a variety of productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (reading and listening) activities inside and outside the classroom. A product of these scores provided an overall estimate of total interaction time at two separate time periods (week 8 and week 19), during the participants' four-month sojourn in the US. Contrary to expectation, learners reported more contact hours in the earlier period in most skills areas, but the large Standard Deviations recorded, however, were indicative of considerable individual variation in amount of language contact for skills and time e.g. Amount of speaking at week 8: $M= 21.80$ hours per week, $SD= 20.60$; week 19: $M= 14.43$ hours per week, $SD= 10.12$. This suggests that not all the participants had equal opportunities, or failed to take advantage of them. Generally, the findings indicated the amount of time spent speaking and reading outside of class positively correlated with the gains in comprehension speed but not with accuracy. These improvements in processing real time information more efficiently were attributed to the SA environment which afforded learners plenty of practice opportunities and directly assisted their comprehension speed over time.

A similar period of investigation featured in Shively and Cohen (2008) but a modified version of the LCP was administered pre- and post-study abroad here with 67 US learners of Spanish. NS ratings of appropriate pragmalinguistic (linguistic form) and sociopragmatic (intercultural sensitivity) aspects of request and apology language were measured against a series of language contact variables. No correlations were evident for measures of intercultural sensitivity and only a small number of contact variables (host family and out-of-class contact) yielded statistically significant associations with gains in request and apology ratings. Overall, the learners were only modestly more target-like in performing requests (e.g. more frequent use of internal modification over time) and apologies (increase in use of the 'explanation' strategy), with some individuals shifting away from target and others maintaining L1 patterns.

In a study of requests and apologies by Korean learners of English, Kim (2000) examined links between age of arrival, language contact and target-like pragmatic behaviour. The language contact investigation included participants documenting activities across speaking, listening and reading skills, pre-dating the LCP. Findings suggested early arrivals with plenty of target language exposure outperformed learners who arrived later and had less exposure: '*time speaking English*' and '*work experience*' significantly correlated with request and apology ratings by NS.

In sum, exposure, it seems, is not a guaranteed predictor of pragmatic success and can be hampered by individual variability in terms of quality and quantity of interaction. The low likelihood of the popular one-semester SA stay yielding substantial positive pragmatic results then, given the limited short-term exposure, also leads researchers to recommend instructional intervention during SA to advance pragmatic success. To date, this area of instructed SA investigations is limited. The following section reviews a relatively small collection of studies investigating the relationship between SA instruction and exposure to the target language. This section

is pertinent given it is the main experimental design feature adopted for the present investigation.

3.1.4 SA instruction versus exposure studies with foreign language students.

The aforementioned SA investigations reveal three important trends. Firstly, sustained exposure to the target environment is key to development and maintenance of pragmatic competence (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Kondo, 1997; Matsumoto, 2003, 2007; Schauer, 2009). Secondly, it appears some pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms may not be fully acquired unless explicitly taught, regardless of speech act (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). Instruction may also aid in the reduction of negative first language transfer; commonly cited as being one of the primary causes of L1 divergence (Barron, 2003, 2007; Kondo, 1997; Li, 2014; Schauer, 2009).

Despite these recommendations, the extent to which instruction can enhance pragmatic competency alongside the SA environment is greatly underexplored. To the best of my knowledge, only four studies to date have directly investigated the instruction versus exposure dichotomy: Winkie and Teng (2010), Shively (2011), Cohen and Shively (2007), and Alcon Soler (2015). These studies are reviewed in the order of relevancy to the present study.

Winke and Teng (2010) examined the effect of an eight-week summer SA programme in China, enhanced by guided output practice via tutorials, workbook activities and integrated reflective journals. The American SA group ($n=19$) showed significant pretest-posttest improvements on a range of functional language including, complimenting, declining, bargaining and gift-giving, over this short period of time. The SA learners also commented that their understanding of cross-cultural differences and similarities was much clearer by the end of the programme. That the

SA group also outperformed an at-home control group needs to be interpreted with caution given this group received no instruction, and had no formal study of Chinese over the research period. Still, the within-group test differences found for the SA group and the positive learner feedback, underline the value of the explicit instruction for increasing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic awareness.

Phased explicit instruction within the host environment, supported by reflective journal writing were also features of Shively's (2011) study of eight American learners of Spanish during their 14-week SA semester. Though the focus specifically related to analysing naturalistic audio recordings of request language in service encounters, and employed only a small number of participants, similar positive results were reported as the learners shifted away from transferring first language pragmatic norms (e.g., speaker-oriented, indirect verb forms, low frequency of elliptical requests) to producing more target-like norms. Despite some resistance to using some target language features of requests (e.g., use of imperatives), and residual first language strategies (address terms and low frequency of politeness markers), the journal entries concluded the positive instructional consequences for building self-confidence when confronted with conflicting L2 norms.

Cohen and Shively's (2007) investigation of 86 American learners' semester-long SA sojourns in France and Spain also debates the instruction versus exposure approach. In addition to in-country self-study material and reflective journal entries, as described in Winke and Teng (2010) and Shively (2011), an experimental group received a two-hour pre-departure instruction and orientation on language and culture. From an acquisitional perspective, the findings indicated that the four-month exposure had been instrumental in the significant pretest-posttest gains achieved in both request and apology language. From an instructional perspective, however, the input received did not have a statistically significant effect, despite the six French and Spanish NS raters' awarding the instructed group higher scores for their responses

on a 10-item written production task. The authors acknowledge that as most of the intervention involved self-study material, the extent of the participants' engagement may have affected results. Other contributory factors included the reliance on written production data and the short interventional period.

Alcon-Soler (2015), most recently, examined 960 email requests from 60 Spanish teenagers following an instructional intervention. This is the only instruction versus exposure study situated in the UK, though the instructional period is comparatively short to most other intervention studies. Her ESL learner study based in England and methodological approach of multiple testing phases; post-arrival, post-instruction (+two months), and two delayed posttests (+three months, +seven months), closely resemble the investigation presented in this thesis. An experimental group participated in four x 20 minute sessions of instruction on request forms, sociocultural norms and discourse structure of appropriate academic email communication. The data were analysed against a control group to measure the effect of exposure against instruction. Unlike the present thesis, however, no formal L2 contact questionnaire was administered to any participant to measure L2 exposure, and possible environmental influences on pragmatic gains, during the study.

On the one hand, the findings revealed immediate short-term effects of instruction for the experimental group through increased frequency of request mitigators e.g., openers, softeners, intensifiers, and the use of '*could*' and '*please*'. These positive instructional effects declined after a three-month period. By the end of the academic year, no observable difference between the experimental and control groups was evident, indicating knowledge had been acquired implicitly through L2 exposure for the control group who had no instruction, to levels similar to those of the experimental group who did receive instruction. On the other hand, exposure could not account for all the qualitative changes e.g., use of mitigation strategies and softeners. In this

case, length of stay was insufficient and instruction helpful, for these pragmatic items, at least.

In summary, section 3.1 has outlined that target language exposure does not subsume pragmatic development, attributable to several factors. Though it seems proficiency is not directly linked, length of stay, frequency of L2 contact, and negative L1 transfer have been reported as potential interferences. Further, individual factors of the participants themselves are also said to account for the variability of findings in SA investigations. Whilst on the one hand investigations have shown L2 contact to play a facilitative role in developing pragmatic competence, establishing this L2 contact can be impeded by low levels of motivation and confidence, cultural barriers, and challenges permeating the safety net of L1 groups. Instruction has been found to be a successful means of stimulating pragmatic development, in particular for those on short SA stays. The case for pragmatics instruction is explored further in the next section.

3.2 Evidence for classroom-based pragmatic instruction

Building on the theoretical frameworks presented in chapter one, research has pointed to several other factors encouraging practitioners to consider the value of pragmatics instruction. Firstly, much of the pragmatic knowledge NS possess is intuitive with no codified rules of use (Cook, 2001). It is learned and developed through social interaction and, assuming accessibility, can be a slow process (Cohen, 2008; Taguchi, 2010). Estimates have suggested up to ten years (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985), yet some researchers suggest competency may never be achieved despite permanent residency in an L2 context (Cohen, 2008; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Secondly, L1 pragmatic transfer may positively or negatively affect NNS communication. Pragmatic transfer is defined by Kasper (1997) as, “use of L1 pragmatic knowledge to understand or carry out linguistic action in the L2” (p. 119).

On the positive side, adult learners in particular have access to a considerable amount of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge which can be successfully transferred to the L2: an understanding of social positions of power which affect linguistic choice, for instance. Conversely, by assuming similarities exist between the L1 and L2, negative L1 transfer can also occur (House & Kasper, 1987; Takahashi, 1996), resulting in possible communication breakdown (Thomas, 1983). Classroom instruction is one way proposed to help overcome these potential obstacles.

Finally, it is important to note that despite having some pragmatic awareness, NNS do not always manage to utilise this knowledge. As Kasper contends, learners will often rely on literal interpretation of utterances instead of utilising inference or contextual clues (1997, p. 3) due to low proficiency or limited exposure to the L2. Studies involving advanced NNS have supported this, highlighting clear imbalances between metalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Kasper, 1995). These differences also motivate the case for pragmatic instruction, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.3 The teachability of pragmatics

Kasper and Rose (2002) broadly categorise instructional studies into three types; '*teachability studies*', examining the extent to which pragmatic items are teachable in a classroom setting and typically adopting a one-group, pre-posttest design; '*instruction versus exposure studies*', comparing an experimental group, receiving instruction with a no-instruction control group; and '*studies incorporating a variety of instructional techniques to determine method-effect*'. As described in section 3.1.4, the present study falls into the instruction versus exposure category, but extends the focus to also measure the effectiveness of differentiated teaching materials.

The history of instructed ILP is brief in comparison to the focus on NS-NNS comparative studies. Research on the effectiveness of classroom instruction has targeted the development of a variety of language functions across languages; discourse markers (Wildner-Bassett, 1984, 1986; Yoshimi, 2001), pragmatic routines (Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay & Thananart, 1997), hedging in academic writing (Wishnoff, 2000), and pragmatic comprehension of implicature (Bouton, 1994; Kubota, 1995). Several studies have focussed on speech acts, including *compliments* (Billmyer, 1990; Rose & Ng, 2001), *refusals* (Alcon Soler & Guzman Pitarch, 2013; Kondo, 2010; Uso Juan, 2013); *requests* (Alcon-Soler, 2015; Codina-Espurz, 2008; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Fukuya & Clark, 2001; Martinez-Flor, 2012; Takahashi, 2001), and *apologies* (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Kondo, 1997; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Tateyama, 2001). Interestingly, in spite of the variability in lengths of instructional treatments from 20 minutes (Kubota, 1995) to a 15-week semester (Alcon Soler, 2005), positive treatment effects, using a variety of teaching approaches, are still noticeable in most studies.

One of the difficulties surrounding classroom instruction in pragmatics is where to start. This perhaps accounts for the relative few interventional studies in comparison to the many contrastive studies undertaken. As Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991) claim, the large number of language functions, speech acts, contexts and purposes do not facilitate this task easily. Until recently, this was further complicated by the lack of resources and methodological approach. For Bardovi-Harlig (1996), a key tenet of pragmatic-informed materials is to raise students' awareness that pragmatic functions exist, rather than to teach "the intricacies of conversation functions" (p. 325) as some NNS may choose not to aim for the NS ideal for reasons of preserving L1 identity and values so learners should be given the tools to analyse their own pragmatic development and the space to be allowed to make their own informed choices (Kasper, 1996).

With this approach in mind, Taguchi (2011) advocates that the key elements of teaching materials should include: i) social context, ii) functional language use, and iii) interaction within frameworks which promote pragmatic and intercultural competencies. Two such frameworks have been developed by Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2006), and Shively (2010). The former comprises six main stages, distributed between researching 1) and reflecting on 2) pragmatic concepts introduced, receiving instruction 3) and analysing pragmatic data 4), participating in communicative practice of the language 5), and receiving feedback 6). Shively's (2010) proposal extends these ideas to incorporate opportunities for autonomous, individual learning, known as *strategy instruction*. In this way, the advantages of the immersion context are utilised as learners are assigned tasks which encourage the collection of naturalistic data and participation in the local community using the speech acts studied. The main benefits of this *strategy instructed* approach are the development of autonomous learning, task-based activities which encourage engagement in the host environment, and independent learning which accommodates individual learner differences.

Whilst classroom-based input remains the main forum for pragmatic instruction and has proved highly beneficial, as seen above, results are inconclusive regarding the most effective instructional method. As classroom instruction is fundamental to this thesis, an exploration of the main teaching approaches is worthwhile at this juncture.

3.3.1 Explicit and implicit teaching approaches.

Discussions over the benefits of explicit versus implicit teaching approaches occupy much of the debate concerning the effectiveness of instructed SLA. One of the underlying issues to be addressed in the design of interventional studies is the choice of the explicit or implicit dichotomy, which is differentiated by the presence (explicit) or absence (implicit) of metapragmatic information as part of the instructional input (Alcon-Soler & Martinez Flor, 2008). Most studies to date incorporating EFL/ESL

learners have adopted an explicit teaching approach (Jeon & Kaya, 2006, Takahashi, 2010; Taguchi, 2015), which is often characterised by teacher-led introduction of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatics goals of the target language. Activities to promote learning in explicit treatments include awareness-raising tasks and activities providing communicative practice such as role plays (Kasper, 1996; Safont Jorda, 2004).

Overall, findings do show students having profited from explicit instruction (e.g., Bouton, 1994; Cohen & Tarone, 1994; Fukuya, 1998; Iwai, 2013; Kondo, 2010; Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Lyster, 1994; Uso-Juan, 2013; Wishnoff, 2000). Studies specifically targeting request and apology language also follow this positive trend; Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh, (2008, requests and apologies); Halenko and Jones, (2011, requests); Johnson and deHaan, (2013, requests and apologies); Martinez-Flor, (2008, requests), Safont Jorda, (2004, requests). Safont Jorda (2004) adopted a pre-posttest measure with 160 beginner-immediate level Spanish undergraduate students on an EAP course. Following one semester of explicit instruction targeting linguistic forms in oral and written requests, gains from two oral and written production tasks were analysed according to the amount and type of request head acts employed. Findings revealed an increase in quantity and type of request head act produced, post-instruction. Specifically, a higher frequency of conventionally-indirect strategies and fewer direct strategies were reported. Low level Spanish undergraduate EFL students were also the sample employed in Martinez-Flor's (2008) study though the pre-posttest design here examined the frequency and type of internal and external request modifiers. Six hours of explicit treatment were operationalised for 38 students through phased sessions consisting of awareness-raising and production activities. Positive instructional effects were again reported, with requests containing a greater number and variety of modifiers, and frequent

instances of fixed expressions. Neither study incorporated delayed tests to measure long term recall or attrition rates.

Halenko and Jones (2011)³ adopted a similar methodological approach with six hours of instruction on requests, emphasising pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic awareness, consolidated by substantial communicative practice. What differentiates the Halenko and Jones study is the British ESL setting, the inclusion of a control group and delayed test to determine short and long term instructional effects, and focus group data on the benefits of pragmatic classroom input. Positive post-instructional effects were clearly evident. According to NS raters, there were significant pretest-posttest improvements on request responses to a six-item production task, though these declined following a six-week period. The authors propose that even a short term focus on pragmatics embedded within existing language programmes can be beneficial, as also reflected in the learner interview comments. However, the authors suggest that sustained practice is required for long term retention of pragmatic request knowledge.

According to the most recent review of intervention studies employing designs suitable for measuring true explicit instructional effects (Taguchi, 2015), only two studies include a focus on apology language. First, Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh (2008) examined the teaching of both requests and apologies to an underexplored group of Iranian postgraduate non-native English speaking teacher candidates (NNESTCs) (experimental group = 25, control group = 27). Following seven hours of instruction, the responses from an error recognition task (judging pragmatic awareness) and a written production task (judging pragmatic production) were assessed for appropriacy on a five-point Likert scale. Despite any specific details as to the reason for improvements, the treatment was declared to be highly effective for both production

³ Some of the instructional material designed by the author of this present study was replicated in the training materials of Halenko and Jones (2011) to assess its effectiveness.

and awareness of request and apology language, based on the raters' pretest and posttest scores. For Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh, the instrumental motivation as pre-service English teachers to engage in the intervention was seen as the primary influence on the results.

Secondly, Johnson and deHaan's (2013) study also developing request and apology language with 22 undergraduate computer science students, illustrates the potential of technology-enhanced instruction (see section 3.5 for further discussion of technology-based pragmatic input). Utilising model conversations, a classroom online wiki space and digital video software, learners were able to perform, record, self-correct and reflect on their pragmatic outputs within business contexts, under the instructor's guidance. Pretest-posttest NS assessments revealed improved levels of accuracy and appropriacy for request and apology language, post-instruction.

Statistical differences were only noted in appropriacy, however, realised through fewer direct, simplistic formulations (as found in the pretest), replaced by increased modality, conventionally-indirect language and fixed expressions such as, '*I was wondering if*', after the treatment. For both the Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh, and Johnson and deHaan studies, delayed-posttests were not administered, nor were the value or effectiveness of teaching multiple speech acts investigated.

Explicit instruction has not consistently been found to be superior, as several studies comparing the explicit and implicit approaches have found. Kubota (1995), for instance, found initial gains from explicit instruction had disappeared by the time a delayed posttest was employed, Rose and Ng's (2001) pre- and posttests did not produce positive results on all of the assessment measures employed, and Martinez-Flor (2006) reported similar levels of effectiveness for both explicit and implicit treatments. Variability in operationalising these two methods is a suggested cause of the discrepancy in results (Taguchi, 2015). In fact, implicit interventions have yielded

positive results in their own right so this instructional approach cannot be entirely dismissed (e.g., Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Takimoto, 2009).

The implicit condition is generally characterised by the learners' inductive self-discovery of the target language features, designed to raise awareness. Fukuya and Zhang (2002) investigated the effects of implicit corrective feedback in the form of pragmatic recasts with a treatment and control group. The 20 intermediate level L1 Chinese speakers participated in seven 50-minute sessions of role play practice of request language, enhanced by the inclusion of pragmatic recasts for the treatment group. Results from a written production task of the same role play items revealed the treatment group used significantly more target-like forms than the control group. The authors attributed the noticeable effects of the implicit treatment to the recasts encouraging learners' to 'notice' the gaps between the interlanguage and target language forms. For Fukuya and Zhang, this was also aided by the formulaic nature of the recasts e.g., '*would you mind*', '*I was wondering if*', which they claim are expressions which can be easily stored as patterns. Takimoto (2009) furthermore attributed the 'noticing' hypothesis to findings that treatments involving the presence or absence of explicit instruction were equally effective. Following 40 minutes of treatment on polite request forms, no significant posttest or delayed-test differences were noted between the treatment groups, but all significantly outperformed a control group on a series of oral, aural and written tests.

What links the success of the implicit treatments in the above studies is that simple exposure is not sufficient. There is a need to first ensure learners' attention, and then direct this to noticing and to subsequent processing of the information to induce rules, given no overt explanation of the target features is available in this approach. This indicates, regardless of teaching method, Schmidt's (1993) hypothesis of noticing and processing information still needs to be observed. Put simply, when implicit instruction versus no-instruction designs are investigated, treatment gains are

generally exhibited, but performances by explicitly-instructed groups generally surpass those receiving implicit treatment (Taguchi, 2010 provides a comprehensive review). Given the general consensus of the superiority of explicit over implicit treatments, the explicit teaching approach was adopted for the instructional phase of this thesis.

The reported variability of instructional success may also be attributable to an interplay between instructional method and other external factors. Firstly, research evidences pragmatic instruction should be at least five hours to be effective (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Salazar, 2003; Uso-Juan, 2013). This is in contrast to Norris and Ortega's (2000) synthesis of grammar-focussed instructional studies which found shorter treatments of up to three hours were more beneficial. An important differentiation within target features is raised here, suggestive that perhaps L2 pragmatic instruction requires more attention through longer instructional periods than other language features such as grammar due to: i) the subconscious nature with which pragmatic knowledge is acquired by NS, ii) the fact that it has no codified rules, iii) the traditional emphasis placed on grammatical knowledge over pragmatic knowledge in the classroom, and iv) the fact that it is given little attention in language coursebooks. Secondly, individual learner differences such as proficiency (e.g., Codina-Espurz, 2008) and motivation (e.g., Takahashi, 2012) are also reported to have an impact on pragmatic development. The claim that motivation, for instance, may be restored or enhanced through use of technology as a medium for learning, is a key aspect of the present study. A recent innovation in pragmatics instruction has seen the incorporation of technology-enhanced learning and assessment materials for language development: a trend explored further in section 3.5. Finally, in addition to teachability, 'learnability' of the target feature is said to affect instructional success (Taguchi, 2010). For instance, Johnson and deHaan (2013) reported greater semantic gains at the macro-level when testing for appropriateness of request and

apology production than at the micro-level when measuring accuracy of response. In other words, politeness strategies and discourse moves were more easily retained and recalled from the instruction than knowledge of the linguistic form. A similar trend was evidenced in Sykes' (2009, 2013) online studies into developing request and apology behaviour. Findings revealed minimal change in choice of request strategies, in contrast to clear improvements in some aspects of apology language such as head acts. Sykes claims the structural and functional simplicity of apology formula at the lexical level facilitated learning. Findings such as these widen the debate concerning the benefits of the teaching and learning of formulaic language: an area discussed further in section 3.4.

In summary, several empirically-tested instructional frameworks and numerous offline and online practice activities now exist to help develop successful teaching programmes. In addition, the overwhelming evidence that explicit teaching approaches produce the most effective results provides further guidance for maximising learning outcomes. Still, the number of instructional studies falls short of comparative investigations and those adopting an instruction versus exposure approach are still heavily underexplored. The present study aims to fill that gap. The next sections assess the value of adopting formulaic language (3.4) and technology-based training materials (3.5) for classroom interventions, which are key features of the present study.

3.4 Formulae-based approach to developing pragmatic language

Formulaic language is seldom a focus of mainstream ILP studies, despite its acknowledgement as a central component for effective and efficient communication (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Schmitt, 2004; Sinclair, 1991; Wray, 2008). According to Bardovi-Harlig (2009), it is only since the early 2000s that an interest in examining formulaic language has seen a resurgence from Scarcella's (1979) earliest empirical work on L1 Spanish speakers which reported highly conventional target items in

English were difficult for NNS to acquire. Defining formulaic language is problematic due to its diversity (Schmitt & Carter, 2004) and the fact that numerous terms exist to describe it, e.g., formulaic speech, chunks, conventionalised forms, multiword units, prefabricated routines (Wray, 2002). However, Wray (2002) provides a good working definition for the current study:

a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 9)

Evidence for the frequent occurrence of formulaic language stems from social interactions, for instance, which often comprise associated prefabricated lexical chunks. The more recurrent these social situations, the more interwoven these lexical chunks become into the interactional routine. Consequently, when faced with recurrent communicative situations, these lexical chunks automatically come to mind. Sinclair (1991) terms this, the 'idiom principle'.

Retrieving and producing highly-routinised language chunks saves both time (Pawley & Syder, 1983) and effort (Wray, 2000). For L2 learners in particular, formulaic language can save mental capacity which can be used more effectively to internalise syntactic rules (Wang, 2011), relieves pressure on memory which may benefit L2 acquisition (Weinart, 1995), and is said to improve fluency (Fillmore, 1979). For these reasons, language learning from a formulae-based approach can be an effective learning strategy. Interlocutors also easily recognise formulaic language and, in fact, have an expectation that conventionalised sequences are used in order to expedite effective communication in many formal and informal situations.

This expectation of formulaic language production in recurrent social situations is pursued by Kecskes (2000a, 2000b) who adopts the term 'situation-bound

utterances' (SBUs) to describe a particular group of formulaic expressions which comprise prefabricated pragmatic units, used in social interaction. Whilst certain social situations require particular SBUs, SBUs themselves can also invoke the image of a certain social context when used, due to their highly conventionalised nature so a morning greeting such as, '*how are you?*' is considered just that, rather than an invitation to relay the finer details of one's recent life events. This issue of conventional versus literal meaning is a challenge for many NNS, regardless of first language. NNS tend to focus on literal interpretation (Kecskes, 2000a, 2000b), whilst their NS counterparts will typically recognise such a sequence as a conventionalised routine from its social context. This indicates that SBUs are culture-specific (Kecskes, 2016), so an understanding of the social norms of a speech community is dependent on the successful use and interpretation of formulaic language.

Research reports that NS speakers employ a greater differentiated range of formulaic language whilst NNS speakers tend to rely on a limited repertoire (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). In an L2 setting, Kecskes (2000b) notes that natural acquisition of SBUs is a slow process due to the need for frequent exposure. He suggests only after two years living in the US did his 88 multinational English learners begin to develop native-like control of SBUs. Prior to this, learners typically transferred their L1 knowledge, then engaged in overuse, before stabilising their command of SBUs. Findings were also subject to much individual variation, as well as noting that learners with greater L1-L2 cultural gaps were less inclined to adopt all of the formulaic sequences.

Much conventional formulaic language can be found in realising speech acts such as requests and apologies (Schmitt & Carter, 2004), but as Wray (2012) notes, "instructed L2 learners have an impoverished stock of formulaic expressions" (p. 236). Bardovi-Harlig (2009) and Kecskes (2000a) suggest lack of familiarity with expressions and sociopragmatic knowledge, overuse of familiar expressions, level of

proficiency, and inadequate L2 exposure as factors for this lack of resource. Within her study of a range of conventional expressions with 122 learners of English and 49 native English speakers, Bardovi-Harlig (2009) found a number of diverging features of apology production between the two groups. Firstly, in contrast to the more elaborate and varied linguistic forms preferred by NS, the data revealed that NNS preferred simple forms of apology, and often relied on the overuse of one particular form such as, *'I'm sorry'*. What Bardovi-Harlig terms *multifunctionality*, when learners' repertoire of expressions becomes more varied, appears to develop concomitantly with proficiency level. A linear relationship with proficiency also appeared true for a second group difference noted regarding the recognition of appropriate apology expressions but failure to produce these in a grammatically accurate way; *'I'm sorry for late'*, *'I'm sorry about my late'*. Finally, the data also revealed evidence of verbosity in the apology where NNS often continued to talk proceeding the conventional expression of apology, whilst for NS, the conventional expression itself was considered a sufficient mitigating device.

In sum, despite evidence that a formulae-based approach to language teaching can be highly effective, it is rarely adopted in pragmatics studies. That L2 learners also typically possess a limited range of formulaic expressions, and may be unaware how to use them correctly, also points to a need for further exploration of the benefits of a formulaic-based approach to pragmatic instruction. A further specific way of enhancing teaching through a technology-based approach is discussed in the following section.

3.5 The use of technology in pragmatics instruction

Digitally-mediated platforms for language learning have advanced the possibilities available for introducing greater access to context-rich input and opportunities for interaction. This is also the case for teaching pragmatics, with extensive research demonstrating clear benefits to facilitating instruction via CALL or CMC technologies

(e.g., Belz, 2008; Cohen, 2008; De Freitas, 2006; Gee, 2005; Sykes, Oskoz & Thorne, 2008; Taguchi, 2015). Firstly, authentic, meaningful interaction can be created through the use of online materials (Belz, 2008), enhanced by an, arguably, more dynamic and motivating learning environment (Taguchi, 2015). As in this study, interaction may be stimulated by the situational visuals provided by the settings, and the animated interlocutors who are also able to display a range of non-verbal signals such as facial expressions and gestures, thought to be as powerful as verbal cues, to enhance authenticity (Wik & Hjalmarsson, 2009; Yang & Zapata-Rivera, 2010) and create a highly contextualised learning experience. As Erben, Bau, Summers and Eisenhower (2008) state, “learners feel motivated when teachers incorporate aspects of technology to scaffold learning through the use of contextual cues such as images, icons and audio-visual elements” (p. 17). In addition, pressures from the face-threatening nature of apologies and requests, for instance, are alleviated in simulated contexts, allowing for a stress-free, ‘low-risk’ learning experience (Sykes et al, 2008), with a high emotional connection (De Freitas, 2006), which can be individualised and paced (De Freitas, 2006, Gee, 2005). Many of these advantages are illustrated in recent studies employing a range of online technologies for developing pragmatic competence. The development of request and apology pragmatic performance through the medium of technology is underexplored in ILP research. However, a small collection of studies, which have direct relevance to the present investigation of developing request and apology behaviour, mainly with East Asian ESL learners, are reviewed below.

Yang and Zapata-Rivera (2010) devised an innovative educational game to raise learner awareness of request language. Similar to the present study, the request game incorporated problem-solving tasks within a simulated academic context and included an animated agent as interlocutor. In contrast to the present study, which focussed on spoken interaction, learners engaged in conversation via cyber chat and

were provided with corrective formative and summative feedback on their written output. Questionnaire results from fifteen students (mainly from East Asia), studying on a US-based ESL programme, reported a high percentage of learner motivation and increased knowledge of formulating requests, following a 45-minute experience of using the game.

A digital game was also the basis for Sykes (2009, 2013) who explored the use of multiuser virtual environments for pragmatic development. In this study, a three-dimensional immersive environment named 'Croquelandia' was devised for learners of Spanish to improve their use of requests and apologies. Participants navigated a series of goal-directed activities or 'quests' with behaviour-based feedback provided by other group members or computer-generated players. Pretest and posttest DCT measures revealed little change in the strategies chosen to perform requests and apologies, though learners' pragmatic awareness revealed distinct improvements.

Mirroring the instructional delivery to multiple groups with differentiated training materials as adopted in this thesis, Eslami and Liu (2013) and Sydorenko (2015) investigated the request performance of two experimental groups from Taiwan and China respectively. The learners in the former study ($n = 78$) participated in either teacher-led classroom instruction or online group emails/discussions delivered by American graduate students. Measured against a control group ($n = 36$), the 10-week programme increased both experimental groups' request performance, which was not found for the control group. Though the teacher-led instruction appeared more beneficial than the CMC delivery, no statistically significant between-group differences were reported at the posttest stage, suggesting online modes of delivery may prove as effective as face-to-face interventions. In the latter study, Sydorenko's groups received the same explicit pragmatic input on requests, then engaged in language practice facilitated by either computer-delivered structured tasks (CASTs) using native-speaker models or learner-learner open-ended role plays. Both sets of

practice materials were found to have particular strengths. Specifically, CASTs proved more beneficial for improving pragmalinguistic aspects of requests as learners emulated the native speaker models, whilst the role plays allowed for more language creativity and authentic turn-taking practices.

In summary, sections 3.4 and 3.5 have highlighted two specific ways to enhance language acquisition through pragmatic instruction, which have proven to be successful: i) a focus on formulaic language, and ii) using technology for language learning. The use of formulaic language is said to be underdeveloped amongst many NNS but common to efficient communication and comprehension in social interactions. In contrast, the use of technology is a highly developed skill amongst most language users. Studies suggest incorporating technology-based resources can improve the language learning experience by increasing motivation, and offering learners simulated, low risk language practice environments. As seen in the studies reviewed, the multidimensional ways that technology can scaffold learning, such as enhancing content through audiovisual cues, can allow for a richer and more contextualised learning experience.

4. Background to the present study

Before turning to the study proper, this chapter foregrounds a number of key areas to set up the present investigation. The chapter begins a brief historical overview of research design to contextualise this thesis within current SLA research methodology (4.1). Section 4.2 provides an exploration of common pragmatic research instruments, and their associated benefits and challenges, to rationalise the selection of tools employed in this thesis. This leads to section 4.3 where current shortcomings of ILP research are noted with a view to foregrounding how the current study addresses these. The chapter concludes with the main aims (4.4), which are a summarised review of the Research Questions.

4.1 Methodological approaches to SLA research design

The epistemological basis for much applied linguistic research draws on both the positivist and constructivist paradigms (Cohen & Macaro, 2010; Duff, 2012): the former underpinned by scientific reason, objectivity, and quantitative research instruments; the latter led by social interaction, subjectivity, and primarily dependent on qualitative research measures. Creswell (2009) outlines a much longer track record for quantitative methodologies, with the experimentation of qualitative research instruments only starting to emerge in the 1990s. Further, this period also saw a procedural development of the mixed method design (Creswell, 2009), defined as “the combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 123). Still, according to Creswell (2009), the mixed method approach failed to achieve the same interest as the single research designs, until more recently. Duff (2012) explains this turn towards a more social perspective as a result of linguists’ increasing interest in sociocultural theories such as identity, and the effects that this has on an individual and their linguistic development. This social variable is very much an emphasis within this thesis also.

Methodological approaches in SLA research also follow a similar trend of quantitative/qualitative imbalance. As reviewed by Lazaraton (2005), 524 empirical SLA studies published in a range of established applied linguistics journals between 1991-2001 mainly employed quantitative research methods (86%), with both qualitative (13%) and mixed methods (1%) occupying a much smaller share. Cohen and Macaro (2010) extended this earlier review with 419 studies from the same journals between 2002-2007, and describe a similar high frequency of questionnaire and survey instruments but note a shift in their use. More recently, quantitative methods in SLA studies mainly capture participant background information (70%) rather than being employed as a data elicitation technique (30%). In addition, an increase in mixed method approaches is evident, though specific figures for this are not provided. This change seems to suggest that calls for mixed methods designs as a means of providing multiple perspectives to complex phenomena, are now more frequently addressed (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Taguchi, 2008b).

The rationale for choosing a mixed methods design in the present study was: i) to answer and explain different research questions; RQ1-2 require the collection of qualitative data from the instruction, whilst RQ3 requires a quantitative analysis of learner contact with the L2, ii) to provide a more comprehensive account of the findings, and iii) to provide greater validity through triangulation as each method only provides a partial view of the results. Within Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) major mixed method designs, the present study adopts a convergent parallel (QUAL+ QUAN) design given both the qualitative and quantitative data were elicited at the same time and relationships between them investigated. What sets this study apart is that the test administration took place at multiple points in time, but does not conform to Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) description of a multiphase design as the present study is neither large scale nor long term, and does not feature incremental research questions over the different time periods.

Within the overarching concept of a convergent parallel design, the present study adopts a quasi-experimental approach of the type described by Creswell (2009), in which the outcome of a treatment on nonrandomised subjects is measured: in this case, intact classes of learners on an existing English language programme. Experimental studies are characterised by the manipulation of a situation to determine if an independent variable (e.g., instruction) has some kind of effect on a dependent variable (e.g., language learning) (Cohen & Macaro, 2010). Experimental study designs are also considered “the most scientific as they try to emulate the natural sciences’ approach” (Cohen & Macaro, p. 114).

With regards to data analysis, a mixed methods approach was also selected to interpret and analyse the data. This involved quantifying the raters’ qualitative assessment of the responses for an SPSS analysis of treatment gains. A subsequent quantitative frequency count of language strategies employed for requests and apologies was then performed. In this way, multiple analyses of the findings could be undertaken to provide a more detailed understanding of the results. Further, triangulation of the data analysis also aimed to dilute potential biases in any one analytical approach, therefore increasing validity of the findings (Dörnyei, 2007).

4.2 Overview of data collection instruments in ILP research

It is the dichotomy of controlling variables whilst seeking authenticity of data which is a concern overshadowing data collection in ILP studies. An overview of archetypal written and oral instruments used to collect data in ILP will be briefly presented in the following sections as a means of highlighting the gap in the data collection pool to be filled by the computer-animated production task (CAPT) designed for this investigation.

4.2.1 Written discourse completion task (WDCT).

The written discourse completion task (WDCT), also known as a production task, is one of the earliest instruments devised to elicit NNS responses (Hinkel, 1997), and is still by far the most frequently used data collection instrument in ILP research (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 2002). In WDCTs, participants are presented with a situation in paper-based format in which a request (or other speech act), for instance, is believed to be the next relevant action e.g. *You have not completed your essay. You go to your tutor's office to ask for extra time.* Participants are then invited to note what they might say, or how they might react. Since the participant responses to the situations need to be assessed, WDCTs typically contain no more than twelve situations (see Jeon & Kaya's 2006 meta-analysis). The situations also typically include a range of interlocutors to examine if learners are able to adjust their interlanguage based on the social context and with whom they are speaking.

There are a number of administrative advantages to using the WDCT for data collection. By collating WDCT responses and analysing these, researchers are better able to assess current pragmatic competence amongst large numbers of NNS cohorts, as well as examine the strategies employed to achieve this. Other benefits of this tool are well-documented such as the ability to control both the sociolinguistic variables of the respondents (age, background, gender, linguistic profile) and those of the interlocutor (including social distance and status), allowing for greater data comparability. Its relatively simple administration, possible within short periods of time, has further added to its popularity. At the same time, the shortcomings of a WDCT are also widely acknowledged, not least because of the written mode employed to elicit oral data. This immediately calls its construct validity into question and is one of the main drawbacks. In addition, the simulated, non-interactive format of the instrument fails to replicate the experience of real-life interaction so the data captured may not truly represent what would be produced in an authentic exchange

(Golato, 2003). Variability in the DCT design has equally been found to cause variability in the responses produced such as the quality and quantity of the contextual information presented (e.g., Billmyer & Varghese, 2000), the presence of single or multiple turns (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), and even the amount of space available for the written response (e.g., Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). Finally, this test-like format, often administered in controlled conditions, raises concerns about the influence of task type on the quality of responses, particularly amongst certain L1 groups (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rose, 1994). Ways to capture more naturally-occurring discourse, in the form of oral production tasks, are therefore encouraged, but equally present their own challenges, as discussed in the following section.

4.2.2 Oral discourse completion task (ODCT).

That Oral Discourse Completion Tasks (ODCT) are also known as 'closed role plays' (e.g., Kaspar & Dahl, 1991) suggests, by definition, enhanced interaction between interlocutors in comparison to the WDCT due to the role play format. Added to this, the oral mode by which the data are elicited, means that construct validity of this as an instrument is also optimised in comparison to the WDCT. Unlike the WDCT, however, no standardised format exists for the closed ODCT to the best of my knowledge, and methodological details in ILP studies often remain vague. The exception is Yuan (2001) who provides a clear account of how the ODCT was operationalised in her study which examined compliments and compliment responses.

First, the instructions as well as the DCT scenarios were tape-recorded by a male and a female native speaker, both in their early 30s. Informants were invited to the researcher's residence individually, at the time of their choice. They listened to the scenarios one by one and responded to each scenario orally. A second tape-recorder was kept running to record the oral sessions in their entirety. (p. 274)

Whilst the format of a single turn response in an interaction with a pre-determined course and outcome remains the same as the WDCT, studies to date largely support the use of the ODCTs as a means of collecting more natural speech (e.g., Yuan, 2001). Versions of the ODCT were used as early as the 1980s (Olshtain & Cohen, 1981) but have failed to generate the same interest as the WDCT. This could be because the administration is logistically more complex with a need for multiple sets of audio recorders or specialised language laboratory settings. Data analyses are potentially more time-consuming too if transcription is required. Studies incorporating the ODCT have largely focussed on its value in comparison to other instruments. The findings suggest oral responses tend to be longer than their written counterparts (e.g., Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Yuan, 2001), provide data which has more features of spoken discourse (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; Yuan, 2001) and are less direct in content (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989).

The advantages of capturing oral data within face-to-face interactions have also been explored. Simulations of communicative interactions via open role plays, where a negotiated outcome is required, are perhaps the closest approximation to achieving authentic spoken data in an environment with some degree of control (Golato, 2003). Indeed the stimulus for oral production, the opportunity for multiple turn-taking, the online planning and decision making in addition to the face-to-face interaction are all typical features of authentic encounters, integral to this instrument's design. For these reasons, the open role play is a common method employed in ILP studies and its appeal continues as results regularly show the length and content of responses more closely mirroring authentic spoken discourse than data gathered from written or oral DCTs (e.g., Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; Sasaki, 1998; Yuan, 2001). That simulations are likely to elicit more instances of the language under investigation than in naturally-occurring discourse, given the dialogues are controlled, further adds to their appeal. Despite the richness of data to be found, from a procedural perspective,

it is more time-consuming to operationalise in comparison to the DCT instruments. Data transcription and coding too, can be a laborious task (Kasper & Dahl, 1991): features avoidable with DCTs. It is further suggested that the cognitive strain on the participants as they perform a specific role whilst simultaneously online planning and processing information to produce a response, may lead learners to underperform and fail to demonstrate their true capabilities (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Yuan (2001) also reported that response content and how this is conveyed did differ dramatically when comparing role plays and natural data. Some of the challenges described are avoidable in authentic settings and collecting naturally-occurring speech is arguably the ultimate target.

Whilst naturally-occurring data potentially present the best sample of what actually takes place in authentic conversation, the methodological issues attached to this cannot be overlooked and pose a number of obstacles for the researcher. They include, for instance: i) accessing the authentic settings and isolating sufficient interlocutors and 'events' in order to obtain the data, ii) ensuring that the data yield sufficient samples of the particular speech act under investigation, and iii) controlling sociolinguistic variables to ensure data comparability (Golato, 2003; Kasper & Rose, 2002). These features are much easier to control using simulated elicitations which adds to their appeal over ethnographical studies. Utilising field notes and audio recordings are typical approaches employed for capturing authentic discourse but are few in number in comparison to other methods discussed in this chapter. Field notes and recordings are largely employed as a benchmark against which other methods can be measured to determine data authenticity since naturally-occurring data is considered to be truly representative of actual language use. Multi-method investigations include Beebe and Cummings (1996); Felix-Brasdefer, (2007); Golato, (2003) and Yuan, (2001). One major drawback noted, however, is that studies eliciting natural data are typically context-sensitive such as Beebe and Cummings'

(1996) telephone conversations, and Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig's (1992) academic advising sessions whose interlocutors and linguistic context are very specific. Results are therefore more difficult to generalise due to their context-specific nature. In other words the speech act is limited to one main context or setting which may produce different results when investigated under different conditions or in natural settings.

4.2.3 Innovative data collection instruments (e.g., CAPT).

The rise in interest in pragmatics research has also seen an expansion of new and innovative data collection instruments. Rose's (2000) Cartoon Oral production task (COPT), modified more recently by Flores-Salgado (2011), has paved the way for the introduction of more innovative measures of data elicitation, enhancing learner interactivity by providing a visual stimulus to elicit oral data. Cartoon illustrations representing different social situations were depicted as the stimuli to capture the data, supported by brief L1 captions of the context. Participants were then recorded producing a range of requests, apologies and compliment-responses. Although the primary school participants employed in Rose's study may have been the chief motivation behind the COPT's design, it illustrates an effective means of eliciting spoken language under controlled conditions and was generally considered a success by the researchers, though the instrument itself was not under the spotlight. A further advantage of this method is its use with beginner level learners since there is no specific requirement for reading, writing or listening with this task. The ability to collect multiple data sets in controlled conditions is yet another advantage.

Schauer's (2004) Multimedia Elicitation Task (MET) refines the COPT further by adding an audio-visual element to a computer-based task, motivated by the need to address standardisation of instruments to ensure equal conditions amongst participant groups: a limitation previously highlighted in other instruments as well as

in the early COPT study. In the MET, oral data are elicited via a set of timed slides. Each scenario is presented through a content slide which provides a brief description of the event. Several seconds later, this is followed by a photographic image of the situation which is supported by an audio description. Schauer claims that both standardisation and learner engagement are enhanced through this instrument.

Both the COPT and MET have made worthwhile modifications to data collection design by promoting learner interactivity and considering data comparability. As introduced in this thesis, the CAPT also operates via a computerised presentation format to address issues around standardisation, yet improves the work to date by its unique features of combining an audio-visual element with synchronous exchange of dialogue. In the CAPT, though the interaction is limited to a single turn (see Appendix 1), the exchange increases the opportunities for eliciting authentic, naturally-occurring discourse, but in more controlled, comparable conditions than those presented through role plays or ethnographic recordings (see Figure 4.1). The added dimension of incorporating virtual worlds seeks to increase student engagement and refines previous attempts of enhancing the stimuli by uniquely incorporating both audio and 3D interactive visual elements not seen in the oral DCT, COPT or MET. This allows the interlocutor to enhance the utterances with non-verbal communication cues, for instance, to authenticate the exchange rather than relying on a visual 'still' (MET) or paper-based cartoon (COPT). What the CAPT provides is a range of opportunities for incorporating prosodic features (e.g., stress and intonation of voice) and paralinguistic features of language (e.g., gestures, body movements and facial expressions) which cannot be captured using the aforementioned tools. This makes the CAPT entirely innovative to the current data collection pool which exists in ILP research (section 5.2.2.1 discusses the CAPT in more detail).

In sum, if researchers were to chart the aforementioned data collection instruments for ILP on a scale of control and authenticity, it might be illustrated as in Figure 4.1

below (my own interpretation). Though this scale considers neither convenience nor practicality for the researcher in terms of operationalising these approaches, it suggests that WDCTs provide the least suitable means for capturing authentic data to assess pragmatic competence, whilst unscripted and unrehearsed NS-NNS exchanges in real time (naturally-occurring discourse) present the best opportunities. On the other hand, the WDCT gains merit for being better able to control sociolinguistic variables such as age, gender, background and linguistic competence as well as efficiently collecting multiple data sets; variables difficult to manage when collecting naturally-occurring discourse.

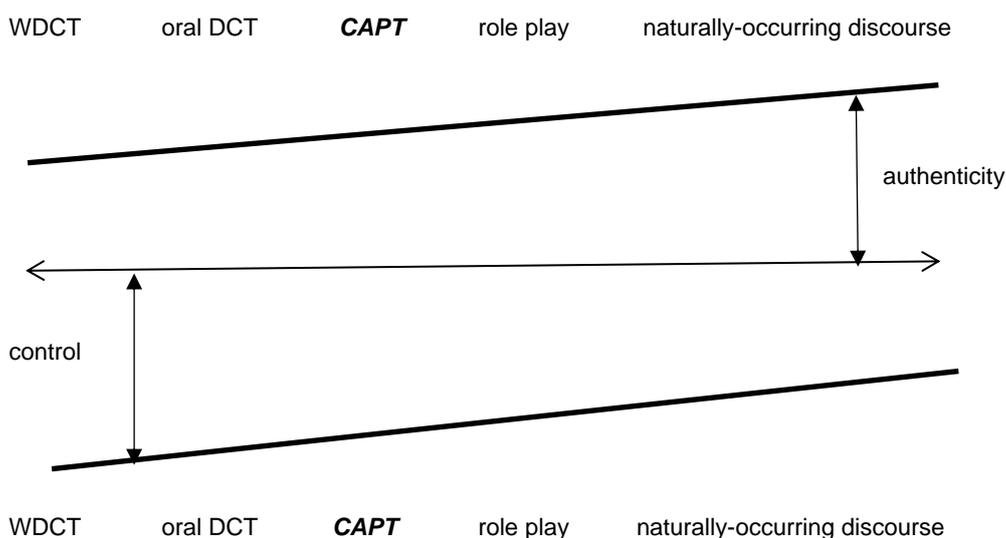


Figure 4.1. Common data collection instruments on a scale of authenticity and control.

An important point to note is that the diagonal lines do not represent a particular measure, nor is there a claim that the instruments follow such a uniform pattern, or are differentiated in such a linear way as Figure 4.1 suggests. It simply generalises an increase or decrease in the two variables of control and authenticity but more importantly, depicts the struggle researchers have in selecting an appropriate data

collection method and the compromises which often have to be made when doing this. Careful consideration of purpose is therefore key, in addition to a multi-method, triangulated approach. Having established a methodological base, the next section describes how the present study addresses existing limitations within ILP research.

4.3 Research gaps

Methodological shortcomings in current ILP research will be directly addressed in this thesis in several ways. First, as Llanes' (2011) meta-analysis of L2 gains in SA settings reports, few SA investigations are situated within a sojourn overseas and most offer an American perspective. The instructional setting within an ongoing UK-based SA sojourn featured in this thesis, addresses both of these issues.

Second, the discussions so far have indicated that technology plays a positive and effective role in language learning but, as acknowledged by Cohen (2008) and Taguchi (2015), to date no effort has been made to explore direct comparisons between technology-based learning and other more traditional forms in pragmatics instruction. In addition, "there is no such investigation in an experimental design using a pre-post comparison with a control group" (Taguchi, 2015, p. 15). The present study not only tests the effectiveness of the CAPT, which is an innovation to the field, but is extensive and unique in its comparison to traditional paper-based activities with multiple groups (experimental and control), multiple speech acts (requests and apologies), and at multiple points in time (including two delayed tests).

Third, the use of rating scales to assess overall effectiveness of responses, which goes beyond the trend to focus on linguistic forms alone, is also underrepresented in speech act analyses (Taguchi, 2006). The focus on using rating scales as a means of assessing pragmatic competency further avoids the well-documented challenges raised in chapter one regarding making direct comparisons to NS data to judge pragmatic success.

Finally, it is suggested that production task data alone are too crude a measure of pragmatic development in a SA setting. Research proposes methodological triangulation with data which captures participants' 'intensity of interaction' in the target environment in order to shed more light on the complex interplay between pragmatic development and study abroad (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Taguchi, 2015). The language contact questionnaire administered during the intervention in this thesis captures the extent of the participants' engagement in the L2.

4.4 Aims

The research questions outlined in chapter one can be summarised as three main aims as follows:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of a six-week explicit instructional period for developing pragmatic competence in the production of requests and apologies amongst Chinese learners of English at a British HE institution during their study abroad stay (RQ1).
2. To analyse the effects of the differentiated training material; traditional paper-based activities (PAPER group) versus computer-animated versions of the training material (CAPT group), by employing a pretest, posttest and delayed test design (RQ2).
3. To determine to what extent pragmatic knowledge of requests and apologies can be acquired naturally in the L2 environment by employing a non-instructed control group (RQ3).

5. Methodology

This chapter details the methodological approach adopted for this empirical study. To begin, the pilot study (5.1) is presented which aimed to validate the data collection instruments employed. The chapter then turns to the main study design (5.2), focusing on the participants, the instruments employed, and the overall data collection approach. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis procedure (5.3).

5.1 Pilot study

Two rounds of extensive piloting were conducted. The aim of the first round was to experiment with the format of the CAPT and WDCT data collection instruments, and to identify the optimum interval times between scenarios on the automated slide sequence within the PowerPoint presentation on the CAPT. In the next round, the second pilot trialled the CAPT and WDCT in controlled conditions to validate the adjustments made and the optimum times identified to use in the timed intervals within and between each slide on the CAPT. Prior to the pilot, this procedure was demonstrated and rehearsed as a class with two additional virtual role plays, depicting separate scenarios (apology to tutor for late submission of assignment, request to security guard to unlock flat). In addition, a perception questionnaire was administered to the participants at the end of the pilot to gauge their motivation and interest in the CAPT as a tool for language practice. None of the 17 pilot students participated in the main study, but all students were comparable to the final sample employed in terms of age, gender, background and linguistic profile.

A number of revisions were made to the instruments as result of the pilot rounds. First, three scenarios involving the 'landlady' character were removed as this interlocutor did not represent a campus member of staff. This character did not fit with the other interlocutors because it was situated in the informal home environment and

may have elicited different reactions and responses from the learners. Second, with the remaining nine scenarios, the researcher undertook a trial assessment of the responses, using the Likert scale to rate the appropriacy of the request and apology data. To limit the time participants spent completing the tasks as no reward was offered for participation, and the intention was to use a much larger participant sample in the main study, the decision was taken to reduce the final number of scenarios to six. This provided an equal number of scenarios for the three remaining interlocutors and aimed to reduce the raters' cognitive and physical workload. As six-scenario DCTs had been employed in earlier pragmatic investigations (e.g., Halenko & Jones, 2011; Johnson & deHaan, 2013; Shardakova, 2005), this was considered an acceptable adjustment. Finally, several lexical items needed clarification on both production tasks which were subsequently revised for the main study e.g., *assignment* revised to *essay*; *instructor* revised to *tutor*.

5.1.1 Results of the perception questionnaire.

Before implementing the CAPT in the main study, a perception questionnaire was administered to test the hypothesis that the CAPT would be viewed positively as a learning tool for greater engagement in language practice. Learners were asked to compare the computer-animated scenarios with traditional paper-and-pencil activities and base their preferences on the following criteria (the key words in brackets represent the coding for analysis):

- a) Which is more enjoyable? (*enjoyment*)
- b) Which is more realistic to a real life situation? (*realism*)
- c) Which is easier to complete in terms of task modality- written vs. spoken? (*ease*)
- d) Which has the more interesting format (reading the scenarios or watching the animations)? (*content*)

e) Which is more interesting to complete as a language learning activity? (*task type*)

f) Which is more helpful for developing skills to interact with native speakers?

(*usefulness*)

The results of the questionnaire can be found in Figure 5.1. The experimental group overwhelmingly preferred using computer-animation for the language practice of requests and apologies on all but one of the criteria. Results were less decisive regarding 'ease' but as neither instrument posed any particular difficulties, this was not unexpected. The hypothesis that the CAPT would be a motivating learning tool seems to have been supported in these results.

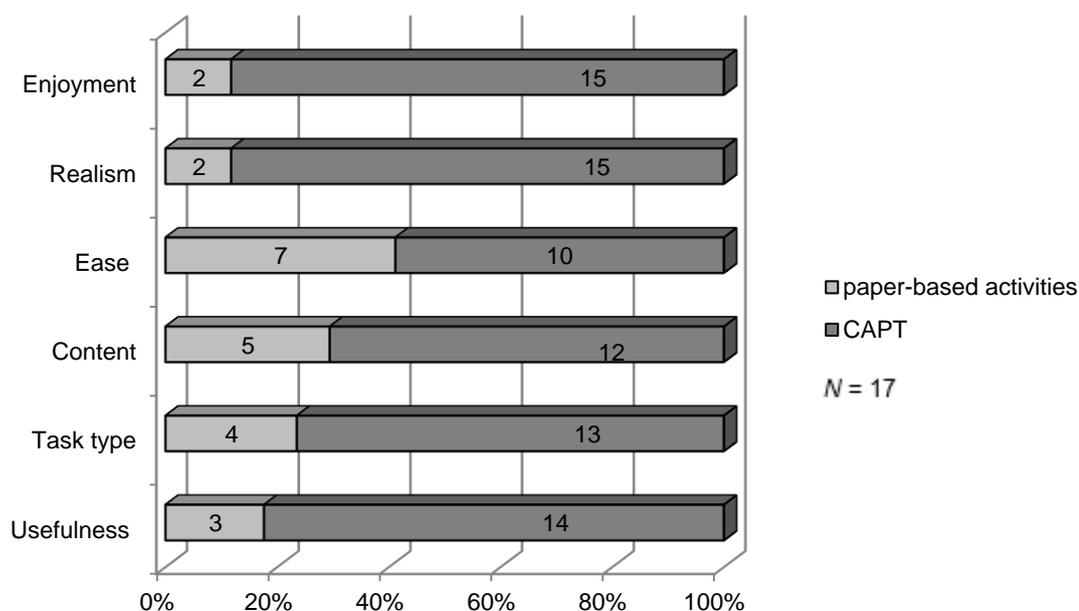


Figure 5.1. Results of the perception questionnaire: CAPT vs. paper-based activities for language practice.

5.2. Main study design

5.2.1 Participants.

The participants for the study were three intact classes of 61 Chinese undergraduate year 3 students comprising two intact classes of experimental groups and one control group:

- experimental group 1- an intact class of participants using the CAPT materials (CAPT = 24)
- experimental group 2- an intact class of participants using traditional paper-and-pencil activities (PAPER = 20)
- control group- an intact class which acted as a non-instructed control group (control = 17).

The need for a control group to measure the true effectiveness of instruction is widely advocated (e.g., Cohen & Macaro, 2010; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Norris & Ortega, 2000, Taguchi, 2008a). None of the learners in any of the three groups had previous study abroad experience but had been learning English between 9 and 11 years in China ($M = 10.85$, $SD = .44$). For two years prior to this study, the participants had been students on a business-related degree programme at one of two partner institutions in China and had arrived in the UK to complete their final year at the British Higher Education Institute in the North West of England, where this study was located.

All the participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 years ($M = 21.6$, $SD = 1.3$) with a gender distribution of 27 male and 34 female participants, conveniently distributed fairly evenly over the three groups. All learners had been in the UK for approximately one week at the time of the pretest (T1) to begin study on a summer pre-session English programme to improve their language level. The groups were randomly assigned for this research by the Director of Studies for the pre-session programme, then assigned to either an experimental or control group by the

researcher, based on group totals i.e. to provide a richer data set, the groups with the most participants were selected as the experimental groups.

Upon arrival in the UK, participants had an IELTS score of at least 5.5 which reflects an intermediate to upper intermediate proficiency level (CEFR B2 level). Due to challenges encouraging the experimental CAPT and PAPER groups to return voluntarily for the six-week delayed-posttest (T4) following the end of their course, the final sample totalled 33 learners (CAPT = 17, PAPER = 16) at this test stage.

Ethical approval for the pilot and main study was obtained from both the Lancaster University Ethics Committee and the Research Office of the Higher Education Institute, where the investigation was located. The inclusion of the instructional period within the general English component of the study programme, and that the instructor volunteered to be responsible for the classes, beyond the treatment cycle, meant there were no adverse pedagogical implications of conducting the research in this way. These conditions satisfied the need for reciprocity in that both the researcher and participants profited from the investigation (Creswell, 2009). Overall feedback was provided to the participants following the six-week delayed test (T4). This was also used as a strategy to incentivise the learners to return for this data collection stage. All participants voluntarily completed a consent form, detailing how the data would be used, assuring anonymity and confidentiality, and the ability to withdraw at any stage.

5.2.2 Instruments.

The instruments employed to elicit data in the main study comprised:

- one CAPT (oral mode).
- one WDCT (written mode).
- one self-evaluation questionnaire of English contact during the study abroad stay.

Unlike in many ILP studies, the CAPT and written DCT had a multifunctional design as: (i) testing tools to measure the effectiveness of the instruction (RQ 1), and (ii) classroom practice materials to examine long-term retention of the computer-animated format over paper-based class activities (RQ 2). At the testing stages, a total of six scenarios (three eliciting requests and three eliciting apologies) were presented to the learners in a combined format of the CAPT and WDCT (section 5.1 provided the rationale behind the six-scenario design). Similar computer-animated scenarios from the CAPT and written paper-based exercises were employed as in-class language practice activities during the instruction. Details regarding the testing stages and the instructional intervention are discussed later in 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2 respectively.

The interlocutors within the DCTs were characters whom the learners were likely to encounter in an academic context (a tutor, a librarian, a campus security guard), thereby increasing the external face validity of the instrument (Nureddeen, 2008). DCT construction typically incorporates Brown and Levinson's (1987) power (P)-social distance (SD) -imposition (R) variables in order to determine learner sensitivity to these when formulating speech acts: the hypothesis being that status-unequal requests, for instance, would command more indirectness than a status-equal request (see chapter two). Interlocutor familiarity (social distance) and size of request (imposition) are also influential factors to consider when formulating appropriate utterances. In the present study, social distance (+/- SD) was the only variable differentiating the scenarios. Otherwise, status-unequal dyads (+P) were constant, given the study's focus on staff-student interactions. Equally, predominantly higher imposition (+R) requests and apologies were included in the scenarios, as led by staff members' descriptions of situations typifying interactions with international students, elicited during the design of the test. Participants were therefore placed in familiar roles and situations, according to the academic context within which they were

currently studying, which are said to be key considerations to improve both the quality of response and construct validity of the tests (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Schauer, 2007). Table 5.1 provides an overview of the content within the CAPT and WDCT scenarios. The request and apology scenarios were alternated on the DCTs to avoid mechanical responses. In addition, the scenarios were reordered at the different test stages to reduce the effects of using identical testing material four times (pretest, posttest, delayed-test x 2) with the same experimental group participants.

Table 5.1. Content of the CAPT and WDCT scenarios.

| | Speech act (imposition) | Interlocutor (social distance, power) | Situation | Mode |
|---|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------|
| Scenario 1 Essay extension | Request (+R) | Tutor (-SD, +P) | You need more time to finish your essay. You go to your tutor's office to ask for more time. | CAPT |
| Scenario 2 Noisy party | Apology (+R) | Security guard (+SD, +P) | You had a party at your flat with friends. Some students complained to this security guard about the noise and you want to apologise. | CAPT |
| Scenario 3 Book a study room | Request (+R) | Librarian (+SD, +P) | You want to find out how to book a study room. You ask a library assistant about it. | CAPT |
| Scenario 4 Missed meeting | Apology (+R) | Tutor (-SD, +P) | You missed a meeting with your tutor but you did not email him to explain. You go to your tutor's office to apologise | WDCT |
| Scenario 5 Classroom access | Request (+R) | Security guard (+SD, +P) | You have left your mobile phone in a classroom but the building is now closed. It is very late but you go to the security office to ask if they can open the building for you. | WDCT |
| Scenario 6 Lost library book | Apology (+R) | Librarian (+SD, +P) | You have lost a book which you borrowed from the library. You go to apologise to a member of the library staff. | WDCT |

Note.

P = power, SD = social distance, R = imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

The third instrument, the questionnaire of English use during the study abroad stay, aimed to measure the frequency learners engaged in a range of English-medium activities to establish correlations between L2 interaction and 'natural' acquisition of request and apology language (RQ 3). Each instrument is described in detail in the following sections, beginning with the CAPT, the WDCT, and the study abroad language contact questionnaire.

5.2.2.1 The CAPT.

For the purposes of this study, an innovative and unique set of computer-animated materials were devised in the format of virtual role plays, employed for classroom language practice, and embedded within a testing instrument to measure the effectiveness of instruction. This original instrument, unique to the ILP field, was formally operationalised for the first time in this thesis and has been named the computer-animated production task (CAPT).

One of several Internet-based animated movie sites (Xtranormal)⁴ was selected to create the computer-animated scenarios for the CAPT. Movie-making sites such as this are increasingly available in the educational field, expanding the scope of incorporating technology into teaching. Computer-animated sites transform text scripts to animated movies using text-to-speech and animation technologies, and generally follow a similar design procedure. Users choose from a series of pre-designed sets and characters, and personalise the movie by adding movement, gesture and facial expressions to the characters, in addition to importing authentic voice recordings to further authenticate the interaction (chapter three discussed the benefits of virtual interaction). Once designed, these virtual role-plays were

⁴ This website no longer exists in its original format. At the time of writing this thesis, it is now marketed under the name 'nawmal' and can be accessed at www.nawmal.com.

embedded as short movie clips into a PowerPoint presentation and presented as an oral DCT at the testing stages.

Figure 5.2 illustrates one of the scenarios on the CAPT, devised using this technology. The CAPT required learners to observe the PowerPoint presentation incorporating three scenarios; two calling for a request (scenario 1: essay extension, scenario 3: book a study room) and one calling for an apology (scenario 2: noisy party). The scenarios featured a range of animated interlocutors and problems which the learners had to address by engaging in a brief, single-turn interaction with each animated character. Stills of the three-scenario oral CAPT used at the pretest (henceforth T1), immediate-posttest (henceforth T2) and delayed test stages (henceforth T3 and T4) can be found in Appendix 1. The original animated version of the CAPT can be located at the following online file sharing account: www.dropbox.com.

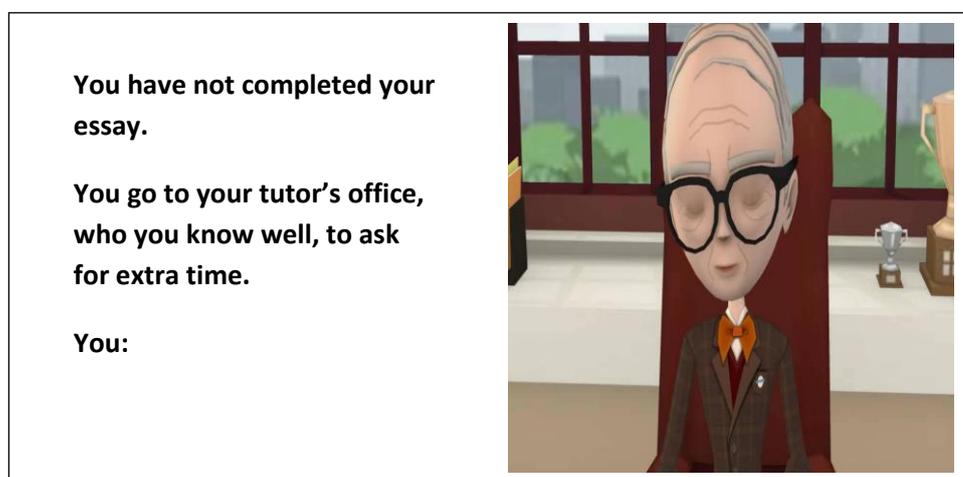


Figure 5.2. An example of the essay extension request scenario from the CAPT.

The procedure for completing the CAPT (Figure 5.3) begins with an initial instructional slide, directing learners through the main steps. In the following slides, learners are required to read the context of each scenario on the left of the screen,

accompanied by a still of the animation on the right (Figure 5.2). Following a seven-second timed interval, the movie clip on each slide automatically begins with the interlocutor opening the conversation with a brief gambit such as, “*Come in. You wanted to see me?*” Learners are then required to provide a single turn oral response, including a suitable apology or request, as suggested by the context. A 15-second timed interval is provided for the response before the next scenario is automatically presented. Once complete, a final slide thanks the learners for their participation and asks them to alert the researcher.

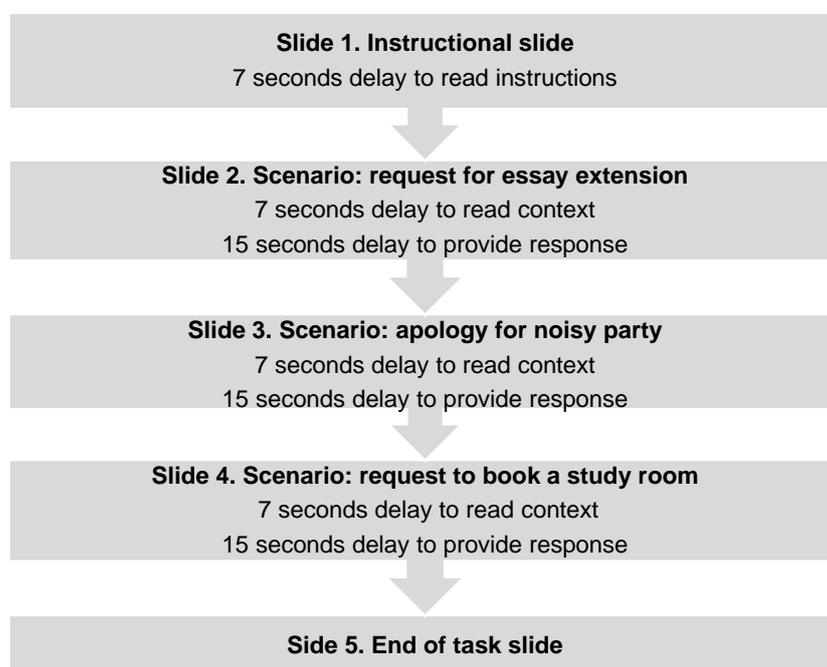


Figure 5.3. Procedure for completion of the CAPT.

5.2.2.2 The WDCT.

The WDCT followed an archetypal construct as depicted in Figure 5.4. In a paper-based exercise containing three scenarios; one calling for a request (scenario 5: classroom access to retrieve a mobile phone) and two calling for an apology (scenario 4: missed meeting with tutor, scenario 6: lost library book), participants were required to complete written responses to the interlocutor’s opening line in the text dialogue. First, learners were presented with the setting of the scenario e.g., ‘At

the tutor's office'. A description of the context and problem followed. For comparability of both the written DCT and CAPT, it was necessary to include the interlocutor's gender and age as additional information in the WDCT rubric, as these were features discernible in the animated version but not clear in the written instrument. Learners were then invited to provide a written version of their oral response. As the pilot showed the participants completed the WDCT in approximately the same time as the CAPT, no strict timings were set for the written DCT. The complete three-scenario WDCT used T1-T4 can be found in Appendix 2.

| |
|--|
| <p><i>At your tutor's office</i></p> <p>You missed a meeting with your tutor but you did not email him to explain. You go to your tutor's office, whom you know well, to apologise. He is 65 years old.</p> <p>Tutor: Thanks for coming. We had an appointment scheduled for last Tuesday but you didn't come.</p> <p>You:</p> |
|--|

Figure 5.4. An example of the missed meeting apology scenario from the WDCT.

5.2.2.3 The study abroad language contact questionnaire.

All 61 learners (CAPT = 24, PAPER = 20, control = 17) completed a two-part self-evaluation questionnaire on their English language use. Part A of the questionnaire elicited how frequently participants engaged in a variety of activities in English. Part B required learners to provide an overall skills-assessment for listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction. The participants had to rate statements presented on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was a simplified, revised version of Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter's (2004) Language Contact Profile. The original version was designed to focus on and assess oral performance (fluency and

proficiency), as these features were seen to be “sensitive to contextual variables” (Freed et al, 2004a, p. 174). The original questionnaire, therefore, did not require learners to comment on their written performance; an approach since taken in other language contact investigations (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2013; Taguchi, 2008a). As the primary aim of this study was to improve oral communication and interaction between staff and students in a study abroad HE environment, the revised questionnaire for this study did not reference written communication either.

Part A of the questionnaire comprised twelve statements to be rated by the participants to self-evaluate the frequency of their English use in each statement on a five-point Likert scale (0=never, 1=a few times a year, 2=monthly, 3=weekly, 4=daily). The first six statements focused on productive speaking skills i.e. how often participants communicated with the following six interlocutors in English: tutor outside of class, NS friends, classmates, English-speaking strangers, host family, and service personnel. For instance, ‘*Since coming to the UK, I try to speak English to my tutor outside of class*’. The final six statements to be rated in Part A focused on receptive reading and listening skills i.e. how often participants engaged in the following activities in English: watching English TV, watching English movies, reading English newspapers, reading English novels, reading English magazines, and listening to English songs. For instance, ‘*Since coming to the UK, I watch English language television*’.

To avoid the limitation of Ranta and Meckelborg’s (2013) examination of English use with people and activities from both inside and outside the participants’ study programme, the questionnaire in this thesis focused only on contact variables outside of their study. This meant a learner in the present study would volunteer to use English in all of the questionnaire situations, leading to results reflecting personal choice for L2 interaction, in contrast to combining this with mandatory L2 use during academic study, for instance, which may skew findings.

Part B was the shortest part of the questionnaire. Here, learners were asked to simply rate their English language ability on a five-point Likert scale from 'poor/beginner' (1 point) to 'native-like/excellent (5 points) across five skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and interacting. Learners assigned a numeric score in a box under each relevant skill.

The first questionnaire administered at T1 also elicited data regarding the learners' personal details (e.g., age, gender, years of English study) to collect background information and confirm homogeneity of the participant groups. The T1 questionnaire elicited responses based on the learners' experience of using English in China, pre-arrival. A sample of the T1 questionnaire is located in Appendix 3. The questionnaires administered at T2 (+ six weeks) and T4 (+ twelve weeks) were based on the learners' UK experience, and can be found in Appendix 4.

5.2.3 Data collection procedure.

This section details the two main data collection phases: the *instructional phase* (5.2.3.1) and the *testing phase* (5.2.3.2). The instructional phase is described first in the section below, and begins with a broad outline of the overall six-week intervention to develop request and apology language. This is followed by an explanation of the teaching framework employed for each of the six sessions, and example activities. A selection of the teaching resources utilised is also described. This section concludes with a description of a typical lesson sequence from the intervention.

5.2.3.1 Instructional phase.

Ten hours of explicit pragmatic instruction on *requests* and *apologies* were delivered over a six-week period. Instructional weeks 1, 4, 5, and 6 focussed equally on both requests and apologies, whilst weeks 2 and 3 provided a more detailed overview of requests and apologies respectively. Weeks 1 and 6 also incorporated testing stages for approximately one hour of class time (see Figure 5.5). The sessions were delivered as part of a pre-sessional English for academic purposes (EAP) summer

programme and were timetabled for two hours per week as ‘communication skills’ practice. The length of treatment was selected to maximise instructional effects. Jeon and Kaya’s (2006) meta-analysis of instructed pragmatic studies suggests, in the main, longer treatments of over five hours have proved more beneficial for learners. The effects of this explicit instruction would inform the outcome of RQ1.

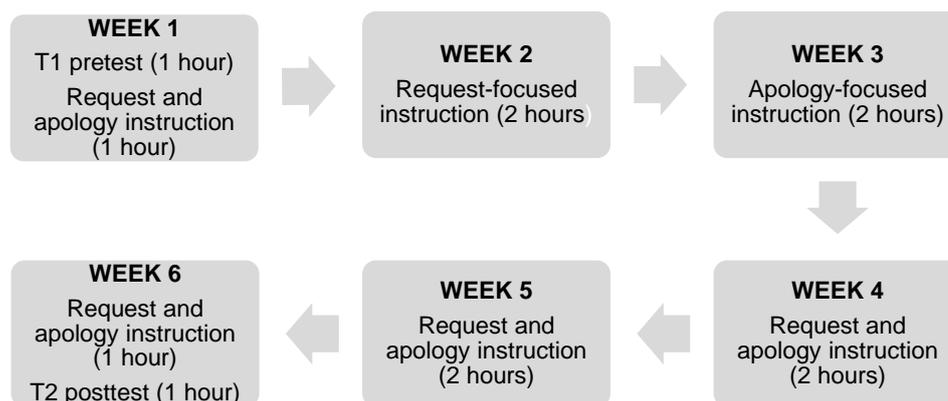


Figure 5.5. Six-week classroom-based instructional procedure.

Both experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) participated in the six weeks of explicit pragmatic instruction on requests and apologies. The researcher designed all of the classroom materials and provided the instruction. The input the two experimental groups received was differentiated by 40 minutes of controlled and freer language practice in each of the six sessions where the CAPT group used electronic tablets to work with computer-animated scenarios, in contrast to the PAPER group who completed more traditional paper-and pencil activities. These stages constituted the longest, most focused section of independent practice for the students so knowledge/discussion could be developed and language practised. Otherwise, the instruction was the same for both experimental groups and covered pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of request and apology behaviour. The effects of the differentiated training materials would inform the outcome of RQ2. Appendix 5 details

the six-week scheme of work for the intervention. Appendix 6 provides the instructional materials from teaching week 3 as an example.

The instructional framework employed in teaching weeks 2-5 (those not incorporating a testing phase), broadly followed Uso-Juan's (2010) five stages of awareness-raising and communicative practice activities: aspects of explicit instruction considered requisite for success (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). This is depicted in Figure 5.6. The organisation of the input and activities each week did not always conform to the stages and timings illustrated in 5.6, rather they were used as a guide for designing the training materials over the six-week period, and ensuring some form of awareness-raising and language practice activities featured in the training sessions.

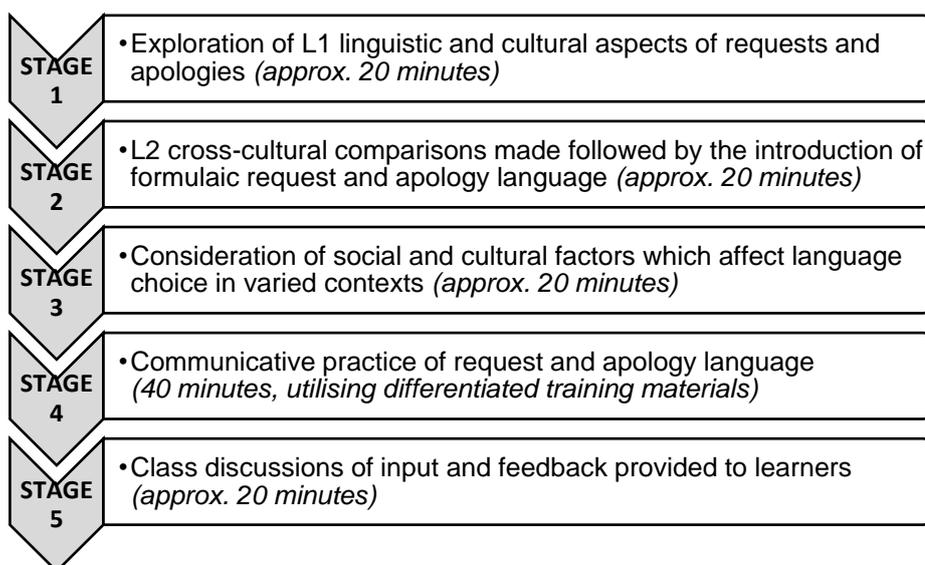


Figure 5.6. The instructional framework adopted for teaching request and apology speech acts.

At *stage one*, learners were first invited to explore both the linguistic and cultural aspects of requests and apologies in their first language, for approximately 20 minutes, to raise awareness. For instance, this was achieved through highlighting pragmatic errors in scripted dialogues in weeks 2 and 4, explicit quiz questions in week 3, and the creation of mind maps and discussion in week 5. At *stage two*,

cross-cultural differences were discussed from a second language perspective for approximately 20 minutes, and first and second language comparisons made, again utilising discussion or *noticing* activities such as highlighting pragmatic errors in scripted dialogues. At this stage, guided input from the instructor is required, to introduce formulaic expressions used to realise L2 requests and apologies, for instance, as in weeks 2 and 3. *Stage three* was the application of this knowledge to consider social and cultural factors which may influence the learners' choice of how requests and apologies are realised in different contexts. For instance, in week 4, learners were provided with authentic contrasting scenarios involving a range of social and cultural features to encourage reflection on aspects associated with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987) such as power, distance and imposition, and how these variables may affect language choice. This stage typically lasted for around 20 minutes. At *stage four*, once these connections had been made, learners were provided with opportunities for communicative practice for around 40 minutes. In this study, the CAPT group worked with other computer-animated scenarios on electronic tablets to extend opportunities for language practice. For example, one activity in week 3 involved being presented with a range of computer-animated scenarios, requiring learners to formulate appropriate apologies (paying attention to situation, context and interlocutor), before playing the animation to discover how well their suggestions matched. The final *stage five* (approximately 20 minutes) included teacher-learner discussions to summarise the input and provide feedback on the activities completed.

In terms of resources, learners were exposed to a range of oral and written materials in which the target pragmatic features could be observed such as excerpts from online videos, virtual role plays, and fictional and non-fictional written material. Prior to the presentation of specific metapragmatic explanation, an inductive approach to the self-discovery of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features from the materials

was adopted to encourage observation skills and analysis (Schmidt, 1993): techniques which could be transferred to day-to-day language practice. In the case of raising sociopragmatic awareness, for instance, learners had to remedy dialogues containing inappropriate requests or apologies by first deliberating what social aspects contribute to a successful or unsuccessful request or apology. Learners also offered their own examples of miscommunications over the instructional period which proved to be an effective resource for examples of challenging interactions. Where possible, this inductive learning approach was continued for all class activities to aid long term retention of input, and promote real-world learning and self-reflection strategies, as advocated by Shively's (2010) teaching framework.

Each lesson sequence typically included the following features:

1. Cross-cultural discussions of request and/or apology scenarios in academic contexts, considering power-social distance-imposition variables which may affect language choice.
2. Introduction of formulaic language sequences to realise requests/apologies. Cross-cultural discussions of linguistic similarities/differences between first and target languages.
3. Controlled and freer language practice activities to consolidate learning.
4. Review and class feedback on input.

5.2.3.2 Testing phases.

This section details the testing phases employed to measure both the effectiveness of the six-week intervention on requests and apologies, and the amount of target language contact participants encountered during the same time period. First, an overview of the testing phases for both instruction and language contact is described. Next, specific details of the instructional testing, followed by the language contact questionnaire are provided.

Participants were tested at four moments in time, as illustrated in Figure 5.7: a pretest (T1, week1), followed by an immediate-posttest (T2, week 6 immediately following treatment), and two delayed posttests (T3, 2 weeks after treatment; and T4, 6 weeks after treatment). Delayed tests were specifically employed to measure lasting instructional effects and longer term language contact: an approach not frequently adopted in ILP research, but highly recommended (Jeon & Kaya, 2006). Although there is no exact consensus about the length of delay employed in a study of this kind, it has been suggested that a delay of more than a week is optimal and three weeks or longer ideal (Schmitt, 2010, p. 157). In this study, the first delayed test (T3) was administered whilst access to all participants was still available and measured the short term delayed treatment effects. A T3 language contact questionnaire was not administered at this time, however, as two weeks was not considered a sufficient time lapse for any changes to be observed. The second delayed test (T4) helped to ascertain longer-term instructional effects. The language contact questionnaire was also administered at T4. Practical constraints meant that T4 relied on voluntary contributions.

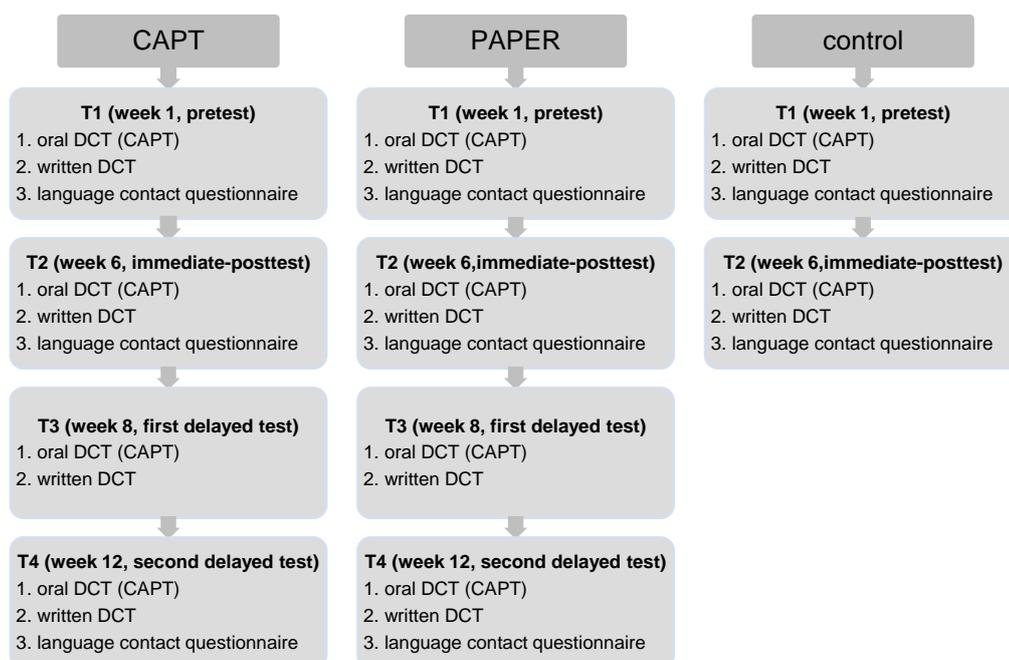


Figure 5.7. Testing procedure over the 12-week period (T1-T4) for the experimental groups (CAPT, PAPER) and control group.

Each test was administered in a language laboratory in the same building as the pragmatics training, either directly before (T1) or directly after the instructional period (T2) for the CAPT, PAPER and control groups. Regarding measurement of treatment effects, learners in the experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) were contacted by email and invited to attend the same language laboratory setting for the T3-T4 posttests to ascertain short- and long-term retention of the classroom input. The tests were a combination of both the WDCT and CAPT for two reasons. First, this approach avoided the different modes of language practice in the instruction benefitting the CAPT or PAPER group at the four assessment stages. Second, in this way, transfer-appropriate processing (TAP), of the kind described by Dekeyser (2007), was accounted for by ensuring the learning and assessment tasks shared similarities so knowledge could be easily transferred from one situation to another without impeding assessment outcomes. Each group was divided into two halves; one half completed the CAPT, followed by the WDCT, whilst the other half began with the WDCT, followed by the CAPT. Learners completed both tests in approximately 15 minutes.

The final aspect of the study, which sought to investigate the Chinese ESL learners' extra-curricular engagement in the L2 environment during their study abroad experience, was measured via a self-reporting questionnaire, as described in section 5.2.2.3 (see also Appendices 3 and 4). The aim of the questionnaire was for learners to evaluate their language contact and English language skills over specified periods of time in order for the researcher to ascertain frequency of engagement in the study abroad environment and to what extent this setting was influential in any language gains evident from the intervention. Following completion of the DCTs at T1 and T2, the experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) and control group all completed the study abroad questionnaire, with a time lapse of six weeks between each test stage. The experimental groups also completed the questionnaire at T4.

5.3 Data treatment and analysis

Addressing calls to evaluate learner responses from multiple perspectives to gain a more holistic view of pragmatic performance beyond just an analysis of linguistic forms (e.g., Taguchi, 2006), the findings from the instruction were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to enable a richer description of the data set. The procedure undertaken was as follows:

1. All the oral responses from the CAPT were recorded for analysis and assessment via Audacity software available at the research location.
2. Next, all 183 oral responses (61 learners x 3 scenarios) were transcribed verbatim from the Audacity recordings and, together with the 183 responses transferred from the WDCT, were presented in a non-descript and randomised order at T1 and T2 (total = 366 responses) so the raters were unaware of which responses came from which group or which format (written or oral). Appendix 7 illustrates the Likert scale assessment sheet provided to the raters.
3. Two female native English EFL tutors were recruited to rate the CAPT and WDCT responses from the experimental and control groups for overall effectiveness at T1 and T2. Tutors were selected over the use of corpus-based tools, for instance, for two reasons: i) the tutors' assessment provided a qualitative perspective to the data and their experience of using assessment scales to rate spoken and written performance qualified them for this task, and ii) the tutors represented the same higher status (+P) as the interlocutors described in the scenarios so they were in an excellent position to evaluate the participants' responses.
4. The raters were instructed to judge each request and apology independently. The request and apology responses were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale for pragmatic 'appropriateness', which determined to what extent the

responses were successful in terms of levels of directness and politeness, as dictated by the scenarios in Table 5.1. For the purposes of this study, ‘appropriateness’ is defined as, “the knowledge of the conventions of communication in a society, as well as linguistic abilities that enable learners to communicate successfully in L2.” (Taguchi, 2006, p. 513). The rating scale employed in Table 5.2 was adapted from Shively and Cohen (2008).

Table 5.2. Rating scale to evaluate participant request and apology responses.

| Rating score | Description |
|--------------|--|
| 5 | I would feel completely satisfied with this response |
| 4 | I would feel very satisfied with this response |
| 3 | I would feel satisfied with this response |
| 2 | I would not feel particularly satisfied with this response |
| 1 | I would not feel satisfied at all with this response |

The rating scale did not require attention to the grammatical accuracy of the responses, since the focus was on their overall effectiveness assessed in multidimensional way in terms of culture, medium and language, as described by Chen (2006). In this way, the success of the responses was evaluated from a sociopragmatic perspective.

- Both raters attended a standardisation meeting prior to the actual evaluation stage to explain the project, the instrument, the rating criteria and procedure. A number of practice items, followed by a comparison of ratings, were completed to achieve a final consensus. A rating of ‘3’ was discussed as being ‘of minimal satisfaction’ and was included as the cut off point for a response to be considered appropriate. Where queries were raised by the

raters during the evaluation stage, these were resolved in follow-up meetings with the researcher.

6. From a pragmalinguistic perspective, the content of the responses was subsequently coded and analysed by the researcher to investigate the types of request and apology strategies adopted over the twelve-week period. To understand which strategies were considered most effective for each scenario and which groups used these most successfully, at the different stages, all DCT responses awarded the highest scores of 4 (*very appropriate*) or 5 (*completely appropriate*) by the raters were isolated from the rest of the responses and classified according to original coding schemes for requests (Table 5.3) and apologies (Table 5.4). The frequencies of the strategies used were then noted so that between-group comparisons could be investigated (Appendix 8 illustrates the format of the researcher's coding sheet). Observing Cohen's (1988) guidelines, 20% of the data were coded by another tutor of the same background as the researcher. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient yielded a high interrater reliability of .97.
7. The analysis of strategies employed for requests and apologies was followed by a frequency count of non-target-like features at each test stage.

5.3.1 Coding scheme for request strategies.

The complexities of designing a one-size-fits-all coding scheme are evidenced in the frequent modifications made to the content and number of strategies devised in the original CCSARP classifications for many speech act studies (Blum Kulka et al., 1989). This is perhaps no more apparent than with requests. The large volume of studies on request speech acts have resulted in a number of comprehensive variants of the CCSARP which imply requests are a complex speech act to perform. In fact, the opposite is true from a native English speaker perspective. Research reports NS requests are far from elaborate, relying on a small pool of moves and linguistic

strategies (Aijmer, 1996). The complexities of coding schemes for requests in fact arise as a result of research on multiple languages to capture the many L1/L2 variants of requests which exist. Unlike earlier studies which tend to dissect the request to analyse one element such as head acts (Lee-Wong, 1994; Lin, 2009; Yu, 1999), or internal modification (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013), this thesis takes a holistic stance and investigates all the main components; head acts and internal/external modification strategies, as described in chapter two.

As the pilot data revealed no new emergent request strategies than those previously identified in earlier research, the request strategies chosen for the present study's coding scheme draw on several sources, using a top-down approach. First, a combination of the original CCSARP (Blum Kulka et al, 1989) and Trosborg's (1995) early work provides the majority of categories in the coding scheme. Second, the CCSARP list is further enhanced by strategies identified as common to L1 Chinese speakers in their L2 production of requests, e.g., 'want' statements (Chen, 2006; Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). No categories from previous research were rejected at this stage in order to capture the largest possible range of strategies utilised, particularly at the pretest stage. The coding scheme in Table 5.3 was devised based on these considerations.

Table 5.3. Coding scheme for request strategies.

| | Strategy | Definition | Example |
|-----------|-----------------|--|---|
| 1 | Direct | | |
| 1a | Imperative | "directly signals that the utterance is an order" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 204) | Give me an extension for my assignment |
| 1b | Performative | "a performative verb conveys the requestive intent, explicitly marking the utterance as an order" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 203) | I ask (request) that you give me an extension |
| 1c | Obligation | "the speaker exerts his/her own authority or refers to some authority | I should (have to) have an extension |

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | outside the speaker" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 202) | |
| 1d | Want statement | "the speaker expresses the desire that the event denoted in the proposition come about" (Zhang, 1995, p. 44) | I want (need) an extension |
| 2 | Conventionally indirect | | |
| 2a | Ability | "questions the hearer's capacity to perform the desired act" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 198) | Can (could) you give me/ (I) have an extension |
| 2b | Willingness | "questions the hearer's willingness to carry out the desired act which serves as a compliance-gaining strategy" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 199) | Would you give me an extension? |
| 2c | Suggestory | "the hearer's cooperativeness is tested by inquiring whether any conditions exist that might prevent the action from being carried out" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 201) | How about giving me an extension? |
| 2d | Possibility | "the utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition for the feasibility of the request [such as] possibility" (Wang, 2011, p. 62) | Is it/would it be possible to have an extension? |
| 3 | Non-conventionally indirect | | |
| 3a | Hints | "the requester can imply what he/she wants done. The desired action can be partially mentioned or left out altogether" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 192) | I'm having trouble finding the book I need for my assignment... |
| 4 | Internal modification devices | | |
| 4a | Softeners (downtoners) | "modifiers used by a speaker to modulate the impact his/her request might have on the speaker" (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989, p. 284) | Could you <u>possibly/perhaps</u> give me an extension... |
| 4b | Intensifiers | "adverbial intensifiers increase the impact of an utterance on the hearer" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 214) | I'm sure, really |
| 4c | Fillers (hesitators) | "the requester can convey he/she has certain qualms about asking" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 213) | Could you.. <u>erm/I wonder...</u> give me an extension? |
| 4d | Attention-getters/ Alerters | "to alert the hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act" (Zhang, 1995, p. 32) | Excuse me; Sir, madam/lady, teacher; Sorry to bother you |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|
| 4e | Politeness marker 'please' | "an optional element added to a request to bid for cooperative behaviour" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, p. 283) | please |
| 5 External modification devices | | | |
| 5a | Preparators | "it is important in the first place that the requester prepares his/her request carefully" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 216) | I have a problem..? |
| 5b | Grounders | "allows the speaker to give reasons, explanations or justifications for his/her request" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 218) | Could I have an extension? <u>I've had computer problems</u> |
| 5c | Disarmers | "the speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request" (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989, p. 287) | I hate bothering you/ If it's not too much trouble |
| 5d | Self-criticism | "the speaker takes the blame by denigrating him/herself so as to put the hearer in a position where compliance appears to be a benevolent deed" (Zhang, 1995, p. 63) | It's my fault./I made a mistake. |
| 5e | Sweetners | "paves the way for the request by establishing good feelings and cultivating an amiable atmosphere" (Zhang, 1995, p. 60) | If you give me an extension, <u>I promise to....</u> |
| 5f | Apologising | "the speaker apologises for the trouble the request will cause to the hearer" (Zhang, 1995, p. 62) | I'm sorry |
| 5g | Thanking | "expressions of gratitude offered for the anticipated compliance of the hearer" (Zhang, 1995, p.63) | Thank you/thanks |

Note.

The examples provided are fictitious in order to suit the appropriate strategy.

5.3.2 Coding scheme for apology strategies.

The variations of coding schemes for apologies are typically directed by the need to appropriately categorise empirical data amassed from a wide range of languages, as seen with requests e.g., British-English, Canadian, Japanese (Tanaka, Spencer-Oatey & Cray, 2000), Chinese (Chang, 2010), Hungarian and Polish (Suszcynska, 1999);

Russian (Shardakova, 2005); Sudanese Arabic (Nurreddeen, 2008), Thai (Bergman & Kasper, 1993).

The present study also devised a unique coding scheme for apologies (Table 5.4). As with *requests*, a top-down approach was first adopted to categorise the strategies, drawing on early apology investigations (e.g., Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka et al, 1989; Holmes, 1990; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987), in addition to more recent studies employing East Asian NNS as research participants (e.g., Chang, 2010; Kim, 2008; Rose, 2000; Tanaka et al, 2000). Again, no categories from previous research were rejected at this stage either in order to capture the largest possible range of strategies utilised, particularly at the pretest stage. The pilot data, however, also revealed emergent trends for particular types of *explanations* (highlighted as * in Table 5.4), so these were categorised and included as novel to the present data set. Table 5.4 was devised based on these considerations and findings.

Following Rose (2000), the apology strategies in Table 5.4 were grouped and divided into two main super-strategies; (A) the main apology strategy or illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) and (B) the subsequent supporting moves (adjuncts).

Table 5.4. Coding scheme for apology strategies.

| | Strategy | Definition | Example |
|----------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| IFID | | | |
| A1 | offer of apology | “explicit expression of apology by means of a performative verb such as ‘apologise’, ‘excuse’” (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, p.22) | I apologise |
| A2 | Expression of regret | “an expression of attitude towards the offense” (Owen, 1983, p. 71) | I’m sorry, I’m afraid |
| A3 | Request for forgiveness | “a request for restoration of balance” (Owen, 1983, p.71) | Please forgive me |
| Adjunct | | | |
| B1 | explanations | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| B1a* | Self-charge | the speaker acknowledges his personal behaviour, within his control, was the cause | I stayed up late watching TV |
| B1b | Self-deficiency | the speaker highlights personal weaknesses or neglectful behaviour as mitigating factors (Trosborg, 1995) | I lost it |
| B1c* | Health reasons | the speaker cites that due to poor health, he/she was unable to fulfil his/her duties | I had a headache |
| B1d* | Third party | the speaker cites fulfilment of alternative duties, beyond his/her control, as the mitigating factor | I had to help my friend move house |
| B2 | Blame strategies | | |
| B2a | Self-blame/admission of responsibility | “offender’s total acceptance and recognition of fault in causing the offence” (Kondo, 2008, p. 147) | It’s my fault |
| B2b | Blame-deflection | “he/she may blame a third party or even the complainer him/ herself” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 378) | I was told to do it |
| B3 | Offer of repair | “apologiser makes a bid to do something about or pay for the damage caused by the offence” (Kondo, 2010, p. 147) | I will buy a new one |
| B4 | Promise of forbearance | “apologiser promises that the offence will not be repeated” (Kondo, 2010, p. 147) | It won’t happen again |
| B5 | Intensifier | “adverbials intensifying part of the proposition such as an expression of regret or embarrassment” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 386) | Very, really, so |
| B6 | Alerter | “alert the hearer’s attention to the ensuing speech act” (Zhang, 1995, p. 32) | Teacher...excuse me... |

Note.

* indicates new categories for this study, based on responses from the pilot data. The examples provided are fictitious in order to suit the appropriate strategy.

5.3.3 Statistical analyses.

Following the manual data analysis by the raters and researcher, both the DCT data and questionnaire data were statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) version 22. Parametric tests were selected after establishing data were normally distributed through initial histogram checks. Data from the DCTs (before and after instruction) were partially analysed using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and paired t tests, in addition to a focus on frequencies of occurrence of specific request and apology formulae. Data from the questionnaires were analysed via a series of repeated measures and one-way

ANOVA comparisons, in addition to post-hoc independent and paired t tests. Normal distribution was again confirmed by non-significance found in Mauchley's tests in the repeated measures ANOVAs. The alpha level was set at .05. The proceeding findings are presented according to Norris, Plonsky, Ross and Schoonen's (2015) recommendations for the reporting of statistical analyses. The following chapter six provides a detailed analysis of the findings from these instructional and environmental (study abroad) perspectives.

6. Results: Request data

In this chapter, section 6.1 first reports on the results from the NS raters' assessment of the appropriateness of the T1 and T2 responses. Second, findings from the researcher's linguistic analysis of the type and frequency of request strategies employed across the three request scenarios are presented (6.2). The third section analyses language features reported to be culture- and language-specific to Chinese speakers which may affect their L2 production of requests (6.3). These language features were specifically targeted in the intervention having been identified in existing research as under- or inappropriately utilised when formulating requests, so this section also investigates the extent to which the learners revise their use of these non-target-like features, post-instruction.

6.1 Raters' assessment of the request data

As a reminder, two female native English ESL tutors rated the CAPT and WDCT responses for 'appropriateness' from both experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) and the control group at T1 and T2 to determine their success from a sociopragmatic perspective. The mean scores given are out of a possible maximum of 30 points (3 scenarios, maximum of 5 Likert-scale points per scenario x 2 raters). The Pearson correlation coefficient found acceptable-moderately high interrater reliability between the raters' scores (T1 = .73; T2 = .89). The three request scenarios (classroom access, essay extension, book study room) are presented in the data analyses below, focussing on T1 to T2 results.

Table 6.1 summarises descriptive statistics of the NS rater scores for the responses from the three participant groups (CAPT, PAPER, control). A one-way ANOVA reveals there no were significant differences and a small effect size between the groups at T1 with each group achieving slightly more than 50% of the maximum possible scores: $F(2, 58) = .663, p = .519, \eta^2 = .02$. This indicates between-group

comparability of request responses at the beginning of the study. In contrast, the T2 scores indicate there were statistically significant differences with a large effect size between groups; $F(2, 58) = 14.39, p < .001, \eta^2 = .33$.

Table 6.1. Descriptive statistics: NS raters' scores for request responses from the experimental and control groups T1-T2.

| Group | T1 <i>M (SD)</i> | T2 <i>M (SD)</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| CAPT (N=24) | 16.29 (3.25) | 19.96 (2.74) |
| PAPER (N=20) | 16.60 (3.23) | 17.55 (2.89) |
| Control (N=17) | 17.47 (3.37) | 15.47 (2.24) |
| Total (N=61) | 16.72 (3.26) | 17.91 (3.21) |

Note.

Maximum marks = 30

Post hoc tests (Tukey HSD adjustment) reveal exactly where these T2 differences lie; CAPT-PAPER groups ($p = .01$); CAPT-control ($p < .001$); PAPER-control ($p = .06$).

This firstly suggests the raters judged the CAPT group to have produced superior request utterances in comparison to both the PAPER and control groups at T2. It is notable, however, that the difference between the PAPER ($M = 17.55$) and control groups ($M = 15.47$) is approaching significance with the posttest mean score difference revealing a better performance from the PAPER group. This secondly indicates the experimental groups have both made gains on the control group's performance over the instructional period.

Further evidence of the CAPT group's success lies in a T1-T2 gain score analysis (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Descriptive statistics: Gain scores for request responses from the experimental and control groups T1-T2.

| Group | Gain score <i>M (SD)</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| CAPT (N=24) | 3.67 (4.40) |
| PAPER (N=20) | .950 (4.90) |
| Control (N=17) | -2.00 (3.02) |
| Total (N=61) | 1.20 (4.78) |

Note.

Gain scores calculated based on T2-T1 results

A one-way ANOVA reveals statistically significant between-group differences with a large effect size; $F(2, 58) = 8.89, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$. Post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD adjustment) confirm the superiority of the CAPT vs. control groups' performance ($p < .001$) and the non-significant gain differences between the CAPT-PAPER ($p = .096$) and PAPER-control ($p = .098$) groups.

A final within-group paired sample t-test of the raters' T1 to T2 scores confirm that the CAPT group made the greatest improvements post-instruction, according to the raters. This is evidenced in the statistically significant T1-T2 differences and moderate effect size found only with the CAPT group: *CAPT*; $t(23) = -4.08, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-5.52, -1.81], r^2 = .42$. *PAPER*; $t(19) = -.866, p = .39, 95\% \text{ CI } [-3.25, 1.35], r^2 = .04$. *Control*; $t(16) = -1.16, p = .26, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.49, .435], r^2 = .08$. In order to understand the reasons behind the success of the CAPT group's responses, investigations turned to identifying the specific request strategies and linguistic formulae employed by each group, which are presented in the following section.

6.2 Linguistic analysis of the request data

From a pragmalinguistic perspective, the content of the responses were analysed by the researcher to investigate the type and frequency of request strategy employed over the twelve-week period and what formulaic language was produced. The following procedure was adopted for this analysis:

1. All DCT responses awarded the highest scores of 4 (very appropriate) or 5 (completely appropriate) by the raters were isolated from the original data set. The aim was to understand which strategies were considered most effective for each scenario and which groups used these most successfully.
2. The content of these high-scoring responses were analysed by the researcher according to the coding schemes presented in chapter five on a scoring sheet- sample found in Appendix 8.
3. Following this, the strategies emerging as common to all the high-scoring responses for each scenario were identified, and noted as being requisite. Exclusively analysing the responses considered highly successful by the raters, helped to determine the minimum strategies considered requisite for each scenario. For instance, for the classroom access scenario, *alerter*, *request*, *self-criticism* and *apology* were common to all the high-scoring responses, and therefore considered requisite for success in this situation. The aim was to analyse the frequency of these requisite strategies to determine if group differences could explain the raters' preference for the CAPT group responses.

Tables 6.3-6.5 highlight these requisite strategies for each scenario, and present the percentages and number of participants who utilised at least one of these strategies when constructing requests. This analysis of linguistic devices is extended to also cover T3 and T4, beyond the raters' initial T1-T2 evaluations to determine short and long term instructional effects. The three request scenarios are discussed in turn below; classroom access (6.2.1), essay extension (6.2.2), book study room (6.2.3).

6.2.1 Linguistic analysis of classroom access scenario.

This scenario (interlocutor = campus security guard, + social distance) required learners to request out-of-hours access to a building in order to retrieve a mobile phone left behind in a classroom. An example of a successful response at T2 is;

'Excuse me. I'm sorry to disturb you (*alerter*) but would you mind helping me to find my mobile phone (*request*) please. I think I've left it in a classroom. It's my fault (*self-criticism*). I'm really sorry (*apology*)' (average rater score= 5).

Table 6.3. Frequency of requisite request strategies: classroom access scenario.

| Request Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Request (2b-2d) | 1 (4.17) | 2 (10) | 1 (5.88) | 18 (75) | 13 (65) | 3 (17.65) | 21 (87.5) | 12 (60) | 12 (70.59) | 8 (50) |
| Alerter (4d) | 17 (70.83) | 16 (80) | 11 (64.71) | 13 (54.17) | 15 (75) | 11 (64.71) | 19 (79.17) | 13 (65) | 10 (58.82) | 6 (37.5) |
| Self-criticism (5d) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 (58.33) | 5 (25) | 2 (11.76) | 10 (41.67) | 9 (45) | 6 (35.29) | 5 (31.25) |
| Apology (5f) | 10 (41.67) | 6 (30) | 8 (47.06) | 14 (58.33) | 9 (45) | 8 (47.06) | 9 (37.5) | 12 (60) | 7 (41.18) | 4 (25) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

2b-2d, 4d, 5d, 5f = strategy code (see section 5.3.1 for coding scheme).

The raters considered four strategies from the taxonomy presented in chapter five to be requisite for an appropriate request in this scenario; *alerter*, *request*, *self-criticism*, *apology*. Of the four requisite strategies, two strategies do not appear frequently at T1, whilst two are much more common. For the former less common strategies, the raters awarded the highest marks to learners who selected conventionally indirect core requests at the more polite end of the scale; strategy 2b- willingness e.g., 'Would you mind...?', strategy 2c- suggestory e.g., 'I was wondering if...', strategy 2d- possibility e.g., 'Would it be possible to...'. The ability modals (strategy 2a), 'can', 'could' as the alternative conventionally indirect choice were not considered appropriate for this scenario.

Reviewing the results in Table 6.3, only four learners from all three participant groups employed these polite sequences (2b-2d) in their requests at T1. The data reveals that, instead, learners relied most heavily on ability modals to convey the request (47

learners), followed by direct strategies (9 learners) in the form of 'want' statements e.g., '*I want...*', '*I hope...*', '*I need...*' at T1. The more polite request strategies are evident at T2 with around 75% of the experimental group learners selecting these more regularly. This trend is generally maintained to T3 and T4, although a higher number of CAPT group participants employ polite request strategies throughout; a difference which gradually increases between the two experimental groups to T4. In contrast, the control group showed little evidence of naturally acquiring these polite sequences from L2 interaction (total of 3 learners at T2), continuing to rely on inappropriate ability modals.

The second less common strategy at T1 is the admission of *self-criticism* as a means of further mitigating the request, appealing to the interlocutor's goodwill to comply. Learners demonstrated an awareness of this as an apology strategy in other areas of the data, but fail to include it in this request scenario. The data shows *self-criticism* is not a strategy chosen by any learner at T1 and only a small proportion of learners in the PAPER (x 5) and control (x 2) groups select this strategy at T2. In contrast, over 50% of the CAPT group employ this strategy at T2 but with gradual decreases in numbers to the delayed test stages. At T4, only approximately one third of the experimental groups continue to employ *self-criticism* so this strategy is not maintained to the same high levels as the polite requests.

Whilst polite requests and self-criticism were employed more frequently at T2, the requisite *alerters* and *apologies* are already commonly employed at the beginning of the study. Of the two strategies, *alerters* are employed more successfully with over half of participants employing these at each testing stage. The choice of alerter does change over time, however, with greater instances of the formulaic expression, '*sorry to bother you*', evident from the instructed groups at the posttest stages. In contrast, the control group tend to adopt more generic expressions such as, '*excuse me*' or basic greetings such as, '*good morning*', as employed by all groups at T1. The

strategy of including an *apology* within the request is utilised by just less than 50% of participants from each group at T1, demonstrating some pre-instruction awareness. This is followed by a general slight T2 increase, followed by a small decrease in frequency at T4.

6.2.2 Linguistic analysis of essay extension scenario.

The request for additional time to complete an assignment was selected as a highly relevant scenario for learners in a SA academic context (interlocutor = tutor, - social distance). An example of a successful request from the learner data is; 'Sorry to bother you (*alerter*). I'm sorry (*apology*) I have not complete my essay. I had a bad fever yesterday (*explanation*). Would it be possibly to give me some extra time to finish it? (*request*) (average rater score= 4).

Table 6.4. Frequency of requisite request strategies: essay extension scenario.

| Request Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Request (2b-2d) | 0 | 2 (10) | 0 | 16 (66.67) | 4 (20) | 1 (5.88) | 16 (66.67) | 0 | 9 (52.94) | 9 (56.25) |
| Alerter (4d) | 10 (41.67) | 9 (45) | 8 (47.06) | 14 (58.33) | 11 (55) | 9 (52.94) | 8 (33.34) | 4 (20) | 5 (29.41) | 3 (18.75) |
| Explanation (5b) | 10 (41.67) | 8 (40) | 6 (35.29) | 19 (79.17) | 11 (55) | 5 (29.41) | 22 (91.67) | 18 (90) | 13 (76.47) | 11 (68.75) |
| Apology (5f) | 22 (91.67) | 18 (90) | 14 (82.35) | 22 (91.67) | 18 (90) | 12 (70.59) | 16 (66.67) | 17 (85) | 10 (58.82) | 11 (68.75) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

2b-2d, 4d, 5b, 5f = strategy code (see section 5.3.1 for coding scheme).

From the raters' perspective, an expectation of similar requisite strategies to the classroom access scenario were identified in the researcher's analysis, despite the same high levels of imposition but increased familiarity between interlocutors; *alerter*, *apology*, *explanation*, *request*. What differs here is the need to provide a reason behind the request, replacing the self-criticism strategy from the previous scenario.

Similar trends from the classroom access scenario are also evident here in terms of non-salient and salient strategies at T1 (Table 6.4). In this case, the only non-salient strategy appears to be the raters' preference for polite conventionally indirect requests (strategies 2b-2d), as seen in the previous scenario, instead of the more common conventionally indirect use of ability modals (strategy 2a), to formulate the core request. Again, the use of 'can' and 'could', in addition to direct expressions using 'want' and 'need', are the most common strategy choices at T1 with all learners. At T2, there are few changes for the control group (+6%), small improvements for the PAPER group (+10%) and much greater use of polite requests for the CAPT group (+67%). The disparity between the experimental groups is maintained to T3 but not to T4. At this stage about 50% of the CAPT and PAPER groups employ polite requests.

As for the remaining internal and external requisite strategies; *alerter*, *explanation*, *apology*, the data reveals variability of awareness at T1, with *apologies* utilised by the majority of learners (at least 82%) in each group and just under 50% utilising *alerter*s and *explanations*. With the exception of an increase in use of *explanations* at T3, experimental group behaviour tends to follow the pattern of T2 increases, followed by gradual decreases at T3 and T4. It is also generally the case that more CAPT group than PAPER group participants adopt these strategies. The control group, on the other hand, fail to reach the levels achieved by the instructed groups at T2, maintaining their low pretest measures.

6.2.3 Linguistic analysis of book a study room scenario.

This scenario required the librarian to help with the learner's request to book a study room, with only two internal device strategies appearing to be common to all the high-scoring responses: *polite request* and *alerter*. A successful example from the learner data is; 'Excuse me (*alerter*). I was wondering if it will be OK to book a study room?' (*polite request*) (average rater score= 4).

Table 6.5. Frequency of requisite request strategies: book study room scenario.

| Request Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Request (2b-2d) | 2 (8.33) | 3 (15) | 1 (5.88) | 18 (75) | 9 (45) | 0 | 22 (91.67) | 6 (30) | 14 (82.35) | 10 (62.5) |
| Alerter (4d) | 14 (58.33) | 10 (50) | 9 (52.94) | 18 (75) | 11 (55) | 10 (58.82) | 19 (79.17) | 8 (40) | 15 (88.26) | 10 (62.5) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

2b-2d, 4d = strategy code (see section 5.3.1 for coding scheme).

According to the raters' assessment in Table 6.5, there is an expectation to employ the more polite conventionally indirect strategies, perhaps attributed to the greater social distance between interlocutors. As seen previously, the ability modals were not sufficient in this case, though these were the preferred initial choice for all group participants. Low T1 frequency of the polite strategies 2b-2d is again evident, with only six learners across the groups producing appropriate core requests. The use of polite requests increases sharply for the CAPT group post-instruction (+67%), marginally for the PAPER group (+30%), and the control group fails to use them at all at T2. These differences generally continue to the T3 and T4, with some gradual decreases over time. Greater numbers of the CAPT group participants, however, adopt the requisite strategies throughout.

6.2.4 Frequency of combined production of all key request strategies.

The data thus far reveal the following main findings: i) the control group fails to make any T1-T2 gains in producing appropriate request strategies for the scenarios presented. The data show that the control group produces repeated patterns of language considered inappropriate for these contexts, with little variability; and ii) the participants in both experimental groups, on the other hand, show considerable gain in their production of appropriate request language; (iii) the CAPT group almost consistently outperforms the PAPER group with higher numbers of participants

adopting the requisite strategies. It is useful to view these findings together to provide a clearer overview of group differences. Table 6.6 presents the percentages and number of participants who simultaneously produced *all* of the requisite strategies in each scenario, in contrast to Tables 6.3-6.5 which presented the frequencies of producing individual strategies.

Table 6.6. Frequency of combined production of all key request strategies by scenario (T1-T4).

| Scenario | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Classroom access 2b-2d, 4d, 5d, 5f | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 9 (37.5) | 2 (10) | 0 (0) | 8 (33.34) | 3 (15) | 4 (23.53) | 1 (6.25) |
| Essay extension 2b-2d, 4d, 5b, 5f | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 12 (50) | 2 (10) | 0 (0) | 10 (41.67) | 3 (15) | 8 (47.06) | 2 (12.5) |
| Book study room 2b-2d, 4d | 2 (8.33) | 3 (15) | 1 (5.88) | 15 (62.5) | 7 (35) | 1 (5.88) | 16 (66.67) | 8 (40) | 12 (70.59) | 11 (68.75) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants using these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

Unsurprisingly, few participants are able to produce the requisite language at T1, with no instances of appropriate strategy use for 'classroom access' or 'essay extension'.

At the posttest stages, though a decline in use is evident with the lapse of each posttest period, at T2 the CAPT group are 28% to 40% more successful at combining all of the strategies considered appropriate for each scenario. Variability of group performance over time periods 1-4 is best illustrated in Figures 6.1-6.3. These figures track the positive trajectory of the experimental groups between T1-T2, followed by a general trend of decline in appropriate request language at T3-T4, with the exception of the PAPER group's performance in the 'book study room' scenario. The superiority of the CAPT group performance is clear with higher number of participants adopting

the requisite strategies. In contrast, the control group fails to achieve any measureable success between T1-T2.

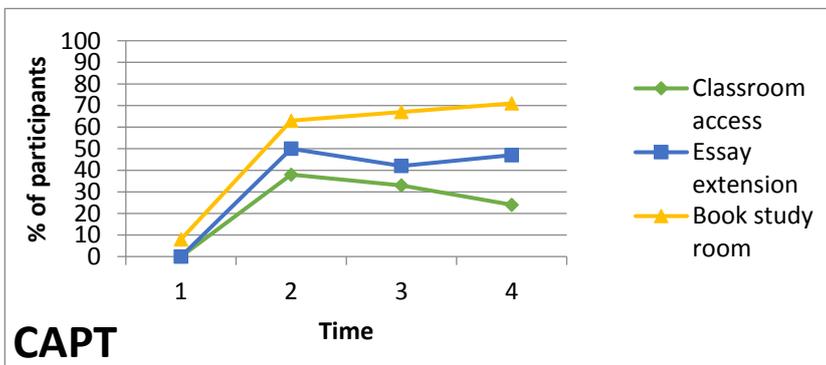


Figure 6.1. CAPT group performance of request production (T1-T4).

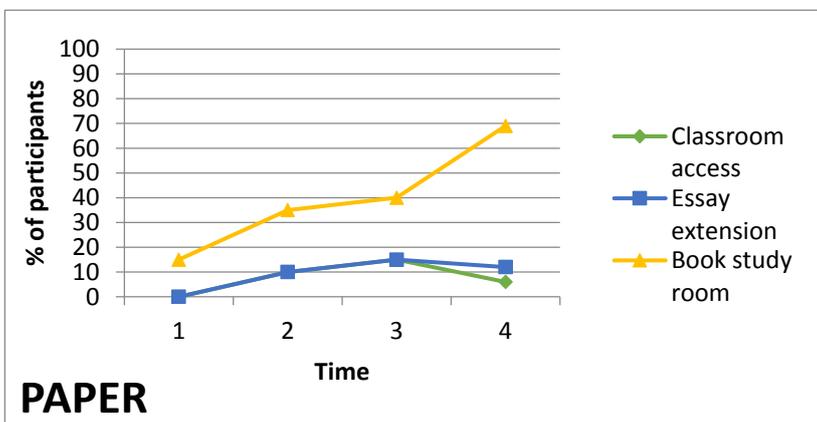


Figure 6.2. PAPER group performance of request production (T1-T4).

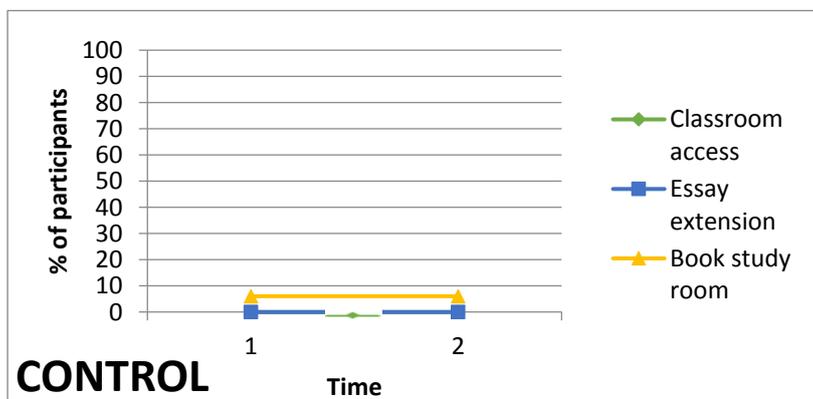


Figure 6.3. Control group performance of request production (T1-T4).

6.3 Non-target-like features of requests

As reported in chapter 2.3, non-target-like request features have been identified as common to Chinese L2 request production. Table 6.7 highlights the frequency use of i) *ability modals*, ii) direct '*want*' statements, iii) *speaker-oriented requests*, iv) *explicit apologies*, and v) *because-therefore patterns* in information sequencing of requests. The remaining non-target-like features of *verbosity*, and instances of *internal/external modification*, are not conducive to frequency counts so are discussed separately in section 9.2.

The frequency figures presented in Table 6.7 are the number of occurrences of each non-target-like feature across all three apology scenarios. The percentage figures are calculated based on maximum frequency divided by the actual frequency figures found in the data. Maximum frequency is each participant per group using each strategy once, per scenario:

$$\text{freq \%} = \text{actual frequency in data} \div (\text{N} \times 3 \text{ [scenarios]}) \times 100$$

A worked example of the CAPT group using '*overuse of ability modals, 'can', 'could'*', taken from Table 6.7 is as follows: $47 \div (24 \times 3) = 0.6528$ (65.28%).

Table 6.7. Non-target-like features of requests T1-T4.

| Language feature | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CTRL (N=17) | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CTRL (N=17) | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CAPT (N=17) | PAPER (N=16) |
| | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Overuse of ability modals, 'can', 'could'. | 47 (65.28) | 36 (60) | 32 (62.75) | 16 (22.22) | 13 (21.67) | 34 (66.67) | 10 (13.89) | 18 (30) | 15 (29.41) | 13 (27.08) |
| Overreliance on direct strategies. | 9 (12.5) | 9 (15) | 6 (11.76) | 0 | 7 (11.67) | 5 (9.8) | 1 (1.39) | 6 (10) | 0 | 3 (6.25) |
| Overreliance on speaker-oriented perspective. | 49 (68.06) | 40 (66.67) | 35 (68.63) | 20 (27.78) | 18 (30) | 38 (74.51) | 25 (34.72) | 26 (43.33) | 26 (50.98) | 30 (62.5) |
| Use of explicit apology to signal politeness. | 41 (56.94) | 35 (58.33) | 30 (58.82) | 40 (55.56) | 32 (53.33) | 31 (60.78) | 27 (37.5) | 34 (56.67) | 33 (64.71) | 25 (52.08) |
| Because-therefore pattern in information-sequencing. | 54 (75) | 54 (90) | 45 (88.24) | 38 (52.78) | 47 (78.33) | 43 (84.31) | 48 (66.67) | 48 (80) | 46 (90.2) | 48 (100) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants using each language feature.

% = total usage of each language feature as a percentage.

From the frequencies presented in Table 6.7, an overall pattern of decline of non-target-like request features can be observed for the experimental groups between T1-T2, which is generally maintained to T3-T4. This decline is not matched by the control group who generally maintain their T1 performance levels, producing equal amounts of non-target-like features within their request language at T1-T2. For this reason, the data presented in the following paragraphs focus only on variability within the experimental groups' request behaviour.

The experimental groups' trends can be further sub-divided to highlight non-target-like features which evidence: i) a considerable decline, and ii) features which appear more challenging to overcome, evidencing only minimal decline. First, the use of both *ability modals* and *speaker-oriented perspectives* when formulating requests decrease considerably post-instruction. At T1, 60%-65% of all participants select 'can' or 'could' for the core request, regardless of group. At T2, only 22% of both

experimental groups adopt this strategy which is generally maintained to T3 and T4.

These ability modals are typically replaced with more polite sequences such as,

'Would it be possible to...', 'I was wondering if...'

The change of perspective from speaker to hearer within the request also evidences a similar level of decline with 67-68% of all participant groups selecting the 'I' pronoun as part of the head act at T1 e.g., 'Can I get in the building?', 'Can I have an extension?', particularly for the classroom access and essay extension scenarios. T2 levels fall to 28% (CAPT) and 30% (PAPER), indicating a shift to the hearer-oriented perspective, 'Would you mind opening the building', 'Do you mind showing me how to book a study room'. A decline is also evidenced in the use of direct request strategies such as, 'I want...', 'I need...', although there are much lower levels of initial use in this case (CAPT= 13%, PAPER= 15%). Despite this, the CAPT group successfully remove this from their interlanguage completely, with the exception of one occurrence at T3. This is not the case for the PAPER and control groups who evidence similar T1 levels throughout. These low levels of direct strategies seem to contradict existing research highlighting high NNS levels of directness as a result of L1 transfer (e.g., Lin, 2009; Yu, 1999).

The second and final notable trend includes non-target-like features which also demonstrate a decline for the experimental groups, but at a much smaller level. This trend relates to the final two non-target-like features in Table 6.7; *explicit apology*, *because-therefore information sequencing*. At T1, over 57-59% of all participants incorporate an *explicit apology* within the request which declines by a minimal 1-5% at T2. For the CAPT group, a decline of around 20% continues to T3 and T4 which is not matched by the PAPER group. High levels of *because-therefore information sequencing* can be seen at T1 with 75-90% usage from all participants. Up to 22% fewer instances of this pattern are observed at T2 but this is not sustained to the delayed-test stages. T3 and T4 show another increase, approximating T1 levels.

In sum, the data reveal improved request performance for the experimental groups following treatment, though some attrition is evident which seems to increase with the lapse of each time period. Generally, there is also evidence that the CAPT group outperform the PAPER group, particularly when analysing performance at the lexical level with the decline of non-target-like features of requests. In contrast, poor levels of request performance are maintained by the control group throughout.

7. Results: Apology data

In the following, the results from the NS raters' assessments will be presented first (7.1), followed by the researcher's manual analysis of apology strategies employed across the three apology scenarios (7.2). Section 7.3 presents an analysis of language features reported to be culture- and language-specific which may affect L2 production of apologies for Chinese learners. Having been identified as under- or inappropriately utilised in earlier research when formulating apologies, (also confirmed in the present study's pilot data), these language features were therefore specifically targeted in the intervention to determine to what extent participants revised their use of these non-target-like language features, following treatment.

7.1 Raters' assessment of the apology data

The procedure for the raters' assessment mirrored that conducted for the request data. As a reminder, two female native English ESL tutors rated the oral and written DCT responses for 'appropriateness' from both experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) and the control group at the T1 and T2 to determine their success from a sociopragmatic perspective. The mean scores given are out of a possible maximum of 30 points (3 scenarios, maximum of 5 Likert-scale points per scenario x 2 raters). High interrater reliability using the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated as .80 at T1 and .91 at T2. The three apology scenarios (lost library book, noisy party, missed appointment with tutor) are presented in the data analyses below, focussing on T1 to T2 results.

Table 7.1 summarises descriptive statistics of the NS rater scores for the responses from the three participant groups (CAPT, PAPER and control). A one-way ANOVA reveals there were no significant differences between the groups at T1, with each group achieving about 50% of the maximum possible scores; $F(2, 58) = 2.60, p = .083, \eta^2 = .08$. This indicates between-group comparability of appropriateness of

responses at the beginning of the study. In contrast, the T2 scores indicate there were statistically significant differences between groups with a large effect size; $F(2, 58) = 30.84, p < .001, \eta^2 = .52$.

Table 7.1. Descriptive statistics: NS raters' scores for apology responses from the experimental and control groups T1-T2.

| Group | T1 <i>M (SD)</i> | T2 <i>M (SD)</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| CAPT (N=24) | 16.08 (3.45) | 21.46 (2.64) |
| PAPER (N=20) | 17.60 (2.44) | 19.00 (1.97) |
| Control (N=17) | 15.41 (3.02) | 14.65 (3.55) |
| Total (N=61) | 16.39 (3.11) | 18.75 (3.87) |

Note.

Maximum marks = 30

Post hoc tests (employing a Tukey HSD adjustment) reveal where these T2 differences lie; CAPT-PAPER groups ($p = .010$); CAPT-control ($p < .001$); PAPER-control ($p < .001$). As found in the request data, this suggests firstly the raters judged both experimental groups to have outperformed the control group at T2. Secondly, whilst the intervention seemed to have a positive effect on the experimental groups, the raters still considered the CAPT responses ($M = 21.46$) to be superior to the PAPER group ($M = 19.00$) responses with a statistically significant difference ($p = .010$).

Further evidence of the CAPT group's superior performance lies in a T1-T2 gain score analysis. A one-way ANOVA reveals statistically significant between-group differences with a large effect size; $F(2, 58) = 21.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .42$. Post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD adjustment) highlight the CAPT group responses to be more successful than the PAPER and control groups at the $p < .001$ level; CAPT-PAPER, $p < .001$; CAPT-control, $p < .001$; PAPER-control, $p = .110$).

A final within-group paired sample t-test of the raters' T1-T2 scores confirm that the CAPT group remained the highest performing group, according to the raters. This is evidenced in the statistically significant T1-T2 differences, with a large effect size, found only with the CAPT group: *CAPT*; $t(23) = -8.48, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-6.69, -4.06], r^2 = .76$. *PAPER*; $t(19) = -1.82, p = .09, 95\% \text{ CI } [-3.01, .21], r^2 = .15$. *Control*; $t(16) = 1.24, p = .23, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.54, 2.07], r^2 = .08$. In order to understand the reasons behind the success of the CAPT group responses, investigations turned to identifying the specific strategies and linguistic formulae employed by each group, which are presented in the following section.

7.2 Linguistic analysis of the apology data

Repeating the procedure conducted with the request data, the content of the responses were analysed by the researcher to investigate frequencies in the type of apology strategy employed over the 12-week period and what formulaic language was adopted. As a reminder, all DCT responses awarded the highest scores of 4 (*very appropriate*) or 5 (*completely appropriate*) by the raters were isolated and their content analysed according to the coding scheme presented in chapter five. As with the request data, the aim was to analyse the frequency of these requisite strategies to determine if group differences could explain the preference for the CAPT group responses. Tables 7.2-7.4 represent the percentages and number of participants who utilised at least one of the strategies considered key when constructing an apology. This analysis of formulae is extended to also cover T3-T4, beyond the raters' initial T1-T2 assessments to determine longer term effects. The three apology scenarios are discussed in turn below; lost library book (7.2.1), noisy party at flat (7.2.2), missed appointment with tutor (7.2.3).

7.2.1 Linguistic analysis of lost library book scenario.

From the apology taxonomy presented in chapter five, three strategies for the lost library book scenario (interlocutor = librarian, + social distance) were identified as requisite to a successful response in the researcher's analysis: *expression of regret*, *offer of repair* and some form of *intensifier* (Table 7.2). An example of a successful apology from the post-instruction learner data is; 'I'm so sorry (*expression of regret* + *intensifier*). I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I'll pay for the book' (*offer of repair*) (average rater score = 4).

Table 7.2. Frequency of requisite apology strategies: lost library book scenario.

| Apology Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Expression of regret (A2) | 22 (91.67) | 20 (100) | 15 (88.24) | 22 (91.67) | 20 (100) | 13 (76.47) | 22 (91.67) | 18 (90) | 17 (100) | 16 (100) |
| Offer of repair (B3) | 20 (83.33) | 14 (70) | 15 (88.24) | 23 (95.83) | 17 (85) | 13 (76.47) | 24 (100) | 17 (85) | 16 (94.12) | 12 (75) |
| Intensifier (B5) | 17 (70.83) | 18 (90) | 9 (52.94) | 18 (75) | 14 (70) | 9 (52.94) | 18 (75) | 16 (80) | 14 (82.35) | 13 (81.25) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

A2, B3, B5 = strategy code (see section 5.3.2 for coding scheme).

For 'expression of regret', the data shows, even at T1, formulaic language such as 'I'm sorry', with accompanying intensifiers, are common occurrences in the responses. This trend continues throughout the test stages, with the exception of a decrease in T1-T2 production for the control group. Of the three requisite strategies, *offer of repair* evidences the greatest increases in use for both experimental groups, though these are still marginal as the majority of the participants in each group are already using this strategy at T1. The shorter T3 posttest evidences that the T2 performance for the experimental groups is sustained. It is only at T4 where small decreases in frequency *offer of repair* and *intensifier* appear. In contrast, there is no

observable change in the *offer of repair* strategy for the control group, which remains consistently low throughout the test stages.

7.2.2 Linguistic analysis of noisy party at flat scenario.

The raters considered scenario two (interlocutor = security guard, + social distance) to need the fewest strategies; *expression of regret*, *promise of forbearance*. A successful example from the learner data is; 'I'm terribly sorry (*expression of regret*) about the noise. Because we have the party yesterday and it's all my fault. It will not happen again' (*promise of forbearance*) (average rater score = 4).

Table 7.3. Frequency of requisite apology strategies: noisy party at flat scenario.

| Apology Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Expression of regret (A2) | 19 (79.17) | 16 (80) | 13 (76.47) | 22 (91.67) | 19 (95) | 14 (82.35) | 23 (95.83) | 20 (100) | 15 (88.24) | 15 (93.75) |
| Promise of forbearance (B4) | 3 (12.5) | 2 (10) | 6 (35.29) | 19 (79.17) | 14 (70) | 5 (29.41) | 23 (95.83) | 20 (100) | 15 (88.24) | 12 (75) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

A2, B4 = strategy code (see section 5.3.2 for coding scheme).

As seen previously, *expression of regret* was salient to most learners at T1 in this scenario too and was proceeded by a small rise in the number of experimental group participants using this language at T2, following instruction (Table 7.3). The control group's performance remained static across test stages.

In terms of the *promise of forbearance* strategy and its formulaic sequence, '*it won't happen again*', or other variations of this, both experimental groups evidenced a sharp post-instruction increase of around 60% in production of this strategy, though more participants in the CAPT group than the PAPER group produced this language in two of the three posttests (T2 and T4). Little T1-T2 change is evident for the control

group with production remaining consistently low (less than half of the control group produced the *promise of forbearance* strategy at T2).

7.2.3 Linguistic analysis of missed appointment with tutor scenario.

From the raters' perspectives, the final scenario (interlocutor = tutor, - social distance), required the most strategies for a successful response, as presented in Table 7.4. The highest marks were awarded to responses containing all of the following four strategies; *expression of regret*, *explanation*, *admission of responsibility*, *promise of forbearance*. A successful example from the learner data representing this is; 'I'm really sorry (*expression of regret*) for missing the meeting. That day my friend got ill and I need to go to hospital (*explanation*). It's my fault (*admission of responsibility*). I promise that will not happen next time' (*promise of forbearance*) (average rater score = 5).

Table 7.4. Frequency of requisite apology strategies: missed appointment with tutor scenario.

| Apology Strategy | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Expression of regret (A2) | 21 (87.5) | 20 (100) | 16 (94.12) | 23 (95.83) | 18 (90) | 13 (76.47) | 18 (75) | 18 (90) | 12 (70.59) | 16 (100) |
| Explanation (B1a-B1d) | 19 (79.17) | 16 (80) | 6 (35.29) | 20 (83.33) | 18 (90) | 8 (47.06) | 22 (91.67) | 16 (80) | 16 (94.12) | 14 (87.5) |
| Self-blame (B2a) | 2 (8.33) | 1 (5) | 1 (5.88) | 19 (79.17) | 17 (85) | 0 (0) | 18 (75) | 18 (90) | 15 (88.24) | 10 (62.5) |
| Promise of forbearance (B4) | 4 (16.67) | 0 (0) | 5 (29.41) | 20 (83.33) | 20 (100) | 5 (29.41) | 21 (87.5) | 17 (85) | 17 (100) | 12 (75) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants producing one of these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

A2, B1a-B1d, B2a, B4 = strategy code (see section 5.3.2 for coding scheme).

In this scenario, the need for an *expression of regret* supported by an *explanation* were salient to the learners at T1 for this scenario and were strategies which they maintained successfully throughout the investigation, with observable improvements in use of the 'explanation' strategy for the experimental groups. This trend, however,

is accompanied by the control group under-performing (particularly in the production of an *explanation*) at all test stages.

All learner groups at T1 were the least successful at producing an *admission of responsibility* such as “*It’s my fault*” and a *promise not to repeat the offence* e.g., “*I promise it won’t happen again*” - both of which are considered to be key mitigators in this scenario. Less than one third of participants from each group produced these strategies. At least two thirds of participants in the experimental groups adopted these strategies much more successfully at the posttest stages. Again, the CAPT group still outperformed the PAPER group in three out of the four delayed-posttest measures at T3 and T4 for strategies (B2a- self-blame; 6-wk= +25%) and (B4- promise of forbearance; 2-wk= +3%, 6-wk= +25%). The control group’s T1 scores remained static to T2.

7.2.4. Frequency of combined production of all key apology strategies.

So far, the data reveal the following three main findings: i) the control group did not acquire the appropriate apology behaviour as evidenced in the experimental groups, and ii) the participants in the experimental groups produced more of the key mitigating strategies post-instruction, and iii) the CAPT group generally outperformed the PAPER group in the production of appropriate apologies at the majority of test stages. These findings are highlighted more clearly in Table 7.5 which represents the percentage and number of participants who utilised all of the strategies considered requisite for each scenario in contrast to Tables 7.2-7.4 which captured instances of employing at least one. In all of the T2-T4 stages, more participants in the CAPT group than the PAPER group produced responses including all of the ‘essential’ strategies for each scenario.

Table 7.5. Frequency of combined production of all key apology strategies by scenario.

| | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2-wk delayed) | | T4 (6-wk delayed) | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CTRL (N=17) * (%) | CAPT (N=24) * (%) | PAPER (N=20) * (%) | CAPT (N=17) * (%) | PAPER (N=16) * (%) |
| Lost library book A2, B3, B5 | 15 (62.5) | 12 (60) | 9 (52.94) | 18 (75) | 13 (65) | 7 (41.18) | 20 (83.33) | 13 (65) | 14 (82.35) | 9 (56.25) |
| Noisy party at flat A2, B4 | 3 (12.5) | 2 (10) | 4 (23.53) | 21 (87.5) | 13 (65) | 5 (29.41) | 22 (91.67) | 14 (70) | 16 (94.12) | 9 (56.25) |
| Missed meeting with tutor A2, B1a-B1d, B2a, B4 | 4 (16.67) | 1 (5) | 2 (11.76) | 21 (87.5) | 15 (75) | 1 (5.88) | 22 (91.67) | 12 (60) | 11 (64.71) | 11 (68.75) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants using these strategies.

% = percentage of group.

The findings presented so far indicate the experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) follow a positive trajectory throughout the twelve-week period, with the CAPT group outperforming the PAPER group for the majority of the time. Conversely, no clear patterns of development are observed for the control group, other than low T1 scores remaining static or decreases in production of apology strategies and associated formulaic language. These group features are best illustrated in Figures 7.1-7.2 which display the PAPER and CAPT groups' improved performance over T1-T4, in comparison to Figure 7.3, which tracks the more erratic performance of the control group over T1-T2.

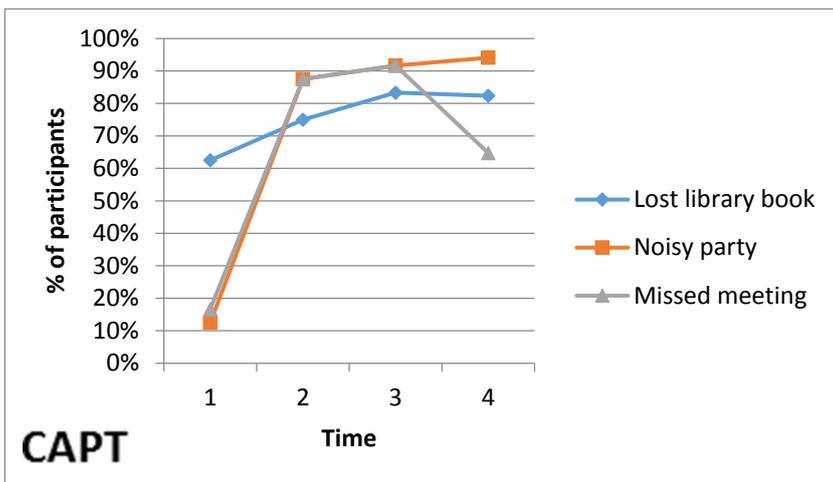


Figure 7.1. CAPT group performance of apology production (T1-T4).

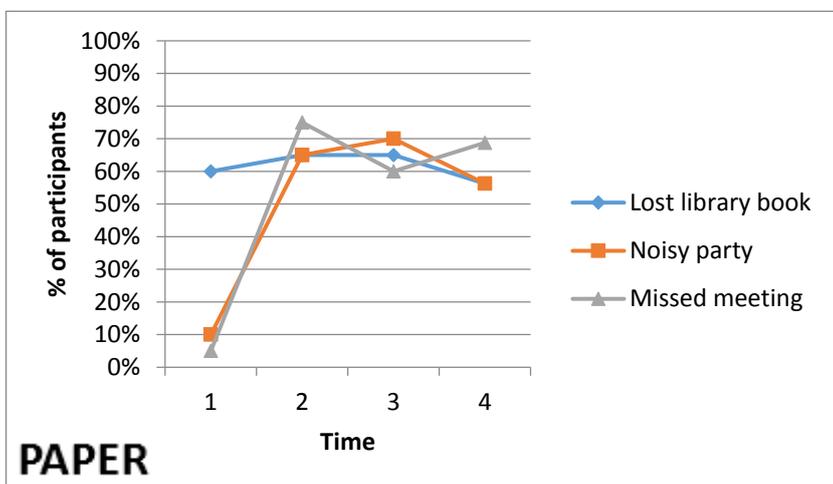


Figure 7.2. PAPER group performance of apology production (T1-T4).

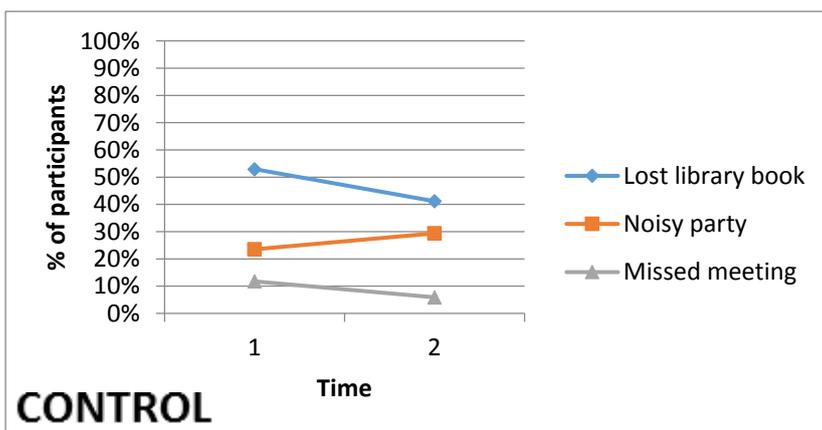


Figure 7.3. Control group performance of apology production (T1-T4).

7.3 Non-target-like features of apologies

Regarding findings from the apology data in the present study, Table 7.6 reveals a series of trends for the non-target-like language features before and after instruction. The frequency figures presented in Table 7.6 are the number of occurrences of each non-target-like feature across all three apology scenarios. The percentage figures are calculated based on maximum frequency divided by the actual frequency figures found in the data. Maximum frequency is each participant per group using each apology strategy once, per scenario:

$$\text{freq \%} = \text{actual frequency in data} \div (\text{N} \times 3 [\text{scenarios}]) \times 100$$

A worked example for the CAPT group producing '*inappropriate request for forgiveness*', taken from Table 7.6 is as follows: $9 \div (24 \times 3) = 0.125$ (12.5%)

Table 7.6. Non-target-like features of apologies T1-T4.

| Language feature | T1 (pretest) | | | T2 (immediate-posttest) | | | T3 (2wk-delayed) | | T4 (6wk-delayed) | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CTRL (N=17) | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CTRL (N=17) | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CAPT (N=17) | PAPER (N=16) |
| | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) | * (%) |
| Inappropriate use of 'I apologise' | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inappropriate request for forgiveness | 9 (12.5) | 7 (11.67) | 7 (13.73) | 0 | 1 (1.67) | 8 (15.69) | 0 | 1 (1.67) | 0 | 0 |
| Inappropriate use of phrase for context | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (1.67) | 0 | 0 |
| Excessive offer of repair | 1 (1.39) | 0 | 0 | 1 (1.39) | 0 | 2 (3.92) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Use of an imperative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (1.96) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Because-therefore pattern | 5 (6.94) | 4 (6.67) | 4 (7.84) | 2 (2.78) | 0 | 4 (7.84) | 0 | 1 (1.67) | 1 (1.96) | 1 (2.08) |
| Inappropriate address terms (sir, madam) | 19 (26.39) | 17 (28.33) | 10 (19.61) | 3 (4.17) | 1 (1.67) | 14 (27.45) | 1 (1.39) | 0 | 3 (5.89) | 3 (6.25) |
| Use of multiple apologies | 31 (43.06) | 34 (56.67) | 26 (50.98) | 17 (23.61) | 13 (21.67) | 24 (47.06) | 12 (16.67) | 10 (16.67) | 13 (25.49) | 14 (29.17) |
| Undersupply of admission of responsibility** | 2 (2.78) | 2 (3.33) | 1 (1.96) | 40 (55.55) | 29 (48.33) | 2 (3.92) | 43 (59.72) | 37 (61.67) | 23 (45.1) | 19 (39.58) |
| 'Explanation' strategy uncommon | 15 (20.83) | 10 (50) | 8 (15.69) | 28 (38.89) | 22 (36.67) | 4 (7.84) | 31 (43.06) | 26 (43.33) | 16 (31.37) | 16 (33.33) |
| 'Promise of forbearance' strategy uncommon | 5 (6.94) | 3 (5) | 5 (9.8) | 42 (58.33) | 32 (53.33) | 6 (11.76) | 47 (65.28) | 34 (56.67) | 22 (43.14) | 20 (41.67) |

Note.

* = actual number of participants using each language feature.

% = total usage of each language feature as a percentage.

** Explicit formulaic expressions containing the words 'fault', 'mistake', 'wrong' were scored as an admission of responsibility.

Firstly, at least 50% of participants, regardless of group, exhibited *inappropriate requests for forgiveness* across the three scenarios at T1. Each group was inclined to use the majority of these in the 'tutor' scenario, followed by 'library' and 'party'. The experimental groups opted to use none or very few requests for forgiveness at T2; a trend maintained to T3 and T4. This decline in use for the experimental groups is accompanied by sustained production (and slight increase) of *inappropriate requests for forgiveness* by the control group. These trends of T1 group comparability, followed by posttest decreases in inappropriate language use for the experimental groups, matched by sustained/increased control group production, can be seen with a number of other language features; the *'because-therefore' pattern* in the information sequencing of apologies and use of *inappropriate address terms*.

Reverse patterns of behaviour are evident when analysing the underproduction of particular apology strategies across the three participant groups. In this case, low T1 production is observed for all groups, followed by considerable experimental group increases, accompanied by no change in control group production. This trend is applicable to all three strategies highlighted as problematic in this study; *'admission of responsibility'*, *'explanation'* and *'promise of forbearance'*. The experimental groups' post-instruction increases for each of these strategies are; 72%, 28.5% and 75% respectively, which are maintained to T3, but evidence a slight decrease at T4.

In sum, the experimental groups appear to have profited from the intervention, producing more target-like apology strategies considered appropriate for each of the contexts. In addition, there are fewer instances of non-target-like features of apology, post-instruction. The CAPT group outperform the PAPER group as a rule, whilst the control group fails to improve its performance levels.

8. Results: Study abroad language contact questionnaire

All 61 learners (CAPT = 24, PAPER = 20, control = 17) completed a two-part self-evaluation questionnaire on English language use during their SA stay, as described in chapter five. The questionnaire was a simplified, revised version of Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter's (2004b) Language Contact Profile. The overall aim of the questionnaire was for learners to: i) evaluate the frequency of their productive and receptive English use, and ii) evaluate their overall language skills over the specified time periods. The outcome would identify to what extent the L2 environment was influential in any gains evident from the intervention.

As a reminder, part A of the questionnaire elicited how frequently the learners engaged in a variety of activities in English. Part B required learners to provide an overall skills-assessment for listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction in English. The questionnaire was administered at T1 (based on their experiences of using English in China- see Appendix 3), T2 (UK-based experience, six weeks post-arrival- see Appendix 4) and T4 (UK-based experience, twelve weeks post-arrival- see Appendix 4). This equated to a time lapse of six weeks between each test. The experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) were the only groups to complete the questionnaire at T4 as the focus was to measure retention of the instructional input over time and identify any links with L2 contact. A questionnaire was not administered at T3 as the time lapse of two weeks was not considered long enough to result in any change for the self-reporting questionnaire (see section 5.2.3.2 for an overview of the test administration). The results of parts A and B of the questionnaire are presented sequentially in the following two sections (8.1 and 8.2).

8.1 Questionnaire Part A results

The first part of the questionnaire required the learners to choose from a five-point Likert scale in order to self-evaluate the frequency of their English usage (0=never, 1=a few times a year, 2=monthly, 3=weekly, 4=daily) whilst engaging in specific speaking activities (productive use) or listening/reading activities (receptive use). Learners evaluated their own productive use of English (speaking to teachers, friends, classmates, strangers, service personnel) and receptive use of English (watching TV, watching films, listening to songs, reading newspapers, reading novels, reading magazines), at the three time periods (T1, T2 and T4). The *mean* scores are calculated out of maximum total of 48 points (6 questions on productive activities, 6 questions on receptive activities, max 4 points per question). Due to challenges encouraging the CAPT and PAPER groups' participants to return voluntarily following the end of their course, the final sample for T4 totalled 33 learners (CAPT = 17, PAPER = 16).

Section 8.1.1, firstly presents the results according to the participants' self-reported overall English use, combining both productive and receptive skills, to provide an initial overview. The two skills are subsequently divided to investigate differences within and between these two areas. Next, section 8.1.2 extends the results of the experimental groups to T4 to measure long-term environmental influences. This is followed in section 8.1.3 by a focus on the frequency of the individual productive and receptive activities undertaken by the participants. Finally, section 8.1.4 provides an overview of within- and between-group differences to investigate group variability.

The findings within each section are initially presented according to repeated measures ANOVAs, followed by subsequent post hoc tests. Where appropriate, relevant paired and independent t tests are then presented at the end of each section to test for further differences within the data. A summary of the main findings concludes each section.

8.1.1 CAPT, PAPER and control groups' self-evaluations of overall English use (combined productive and receptive use).

Table 8.1 summarises the descriptive statistics of the CAPT, PAPER and control groups' self-evaluations of their combined productive and receptive English use at stages T1 (China-based experience) and T2 (UK-based experience, six weeks post-arrival). The *mean* frequencies were calculated based on a cumulative total of both productive and receptive scores, divided by the number of participants in each group. Considering the maximum possible score of 48, all three groups self-evaluate the frequency of both productive and receptive English use at T1 to be low, with most participants reporting to seemingly use these skills only 'a few times a year'. By T2 (+ six weeks of UK-based experience), the frequency of engaging with English appears to show a marked increase for each group at comparable levels of between +20 to +21 marks, in comparison to their T1 scores. By this stage, productive and receptive English use is reported to beat least a 'weekly' activity.

Table 8.1. Descriptive statistics: CAPT, PAPER and control groups' self-evaluations of combined productive and receptive English use at T1 and T2.

| Group | T1 M (SD) | T2 M (SD) |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| CAPT (N=24) | 13.0 (5.62) | 33.6 (5.38) |
| PAPER (N=20) | 12.7 (4.62) | 33.5 (5.05) |
| Control (N=17) | 11.6 (2.50) | 31.6 (2.59) |
| Total (N=61) | 12.5 (4.57) | 33.0 (4.67) |

Note.

Maximum marks = 48.

A 2 (time) x3 (group) repeated measures ANOVA at T1 and T2 confirms the mean differences. In terms of the learners' self-evaluation of conducting activities in spoken English, there was a significant effect for time, with a very large effect size; $F(1, 58) = 782.4, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .93$. There were no significant differences, or evidence of effect sizes, between the groups overall; $F(2, 58) = 1.21, p = .305$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, nor

any interaction of time x group; $F(2, 58) = .11, p = .900$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$. These results indicate that all three groups self-report to have increased the frequency of their overall English use between T1 and T2, and at parallel rates.

To detect where these significant differences in *time* might lie, the above analysis was subsequently broken down by skill (productive and receptive). Table 8.2 summarises the descriptive statistics for T1 and T2 comparisons by productive and receptive activities.

Table 8.2. Descriptive statistics: CAPT, PAPER and control group self-evaluations of individual productive and receptive English use at T1 and T2.

| Group | T1 productive <i>M (SD)</i> | T2 productive <i>M (SD)</i> | T1 receptive <i>M (SD)</i> | T2 receptive <i>M (SD)</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| CAPT (N=24) | 3.54 (2.28) | 16.9 (2.25) | 9.50 (4.00) | 16.7 (3.47) |
| PAPER (N=20) | 3.05 (2.19) | 16.3 (2.72) | 9.60 (3.60) | 17.2 (3.27) |
| Control (N=17) | 3.18 (1.19) | 15.6 (1.18) | 8.41 (2.24) | 16.0 (1.94) |
| Total (N=61) | 3.28 (1.98) | 16.3 (2.21) | 9.23 (3.44) | 16.7 (3.04) |

Note.

Maximum marks = 24 for either productive or receptive use

In terms of productive English use, all three groups are comparable in their low self-assessment of this skill at T1, awarding themselves no more than 15% of the total 24 marks available (Table 8.2). These mean scores increase around fivefold at T2 which, again, is evident across all three groups. A 2 (time) x3 (group) repeated measures ANOVA T1 to T2, reveals a significant main effect of time and show a very large effect size; $F(1, 58) = 1048.02, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .95$. There were no significant differences or evidence of effect sizes between the groups overall; $F(2, 58) = 1.81, p = .172$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$, nor for the interaction of time x group; $F(2, 58) = .50, p = .609$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. These results indicate that all three groups report to show a parallel pattern across 'time' variables for productive English use.

Receptive English use revealed a smaller T1 to T2 difference between the mean scores than was evident with productive English use (Table 8.2), though all three

learner groups began T1 with around a 5-6 point gain on the productive English scores. This reveals receptive skills in English were recorded as being employed more frequently than productive skills at T1. At T2, however, only marginal differences between productive and receptive skills were evident, appearing to show that productive skills increased much more and were generally used as frequently as receptive skills, six weeks beyond the initial pretest. This is corroborated by a paired samples t-test which reveals a significant difference and very large effect size between productive and receptive gain scores T1 to T2; $t(60) = 11.4$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [4.62, 6.60], $r^2 = .68$.

As expected from the mean score data, a 2 (time) x 3 (group) ANOVA (T1 to T2) on receptive English use reveals a significant main effect of time with a very large effect size; $F(1, 58) = 239.6$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .805$. There was no significant main effect of group; $F(2, 58) = .98$, $p = .382$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, nor group x time interaction; $F(2, 58) = .078$, $p = .925$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. These results indicate that all three groups seemed to evidence comparable gains between T1 and T2 for self-reported receptive English use.

In summary, during the six-week period between T1 and T2, the CAPT, PAPER and control groups all reported an increase in their use of productive and receptive English language skills which was found to be statistically significant with large to very large effect sizes. Productive English use increased to a higher degree T1-T2 for all groups which was also found to be statistically significant with a very large effect size. Receptive English use remained higher than productive use at every test stage, for all groups. There were no statistically significant differences or observable effect sizes between the groups at any of the stages, suggesting all three groups' self-assessments showed an increase in the frequency of English use, at parallel rates. The next section presents findings from T4 for the experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) productive and receptive use of English. The T4 findings are presented alongside T1-T2 not only for the reader's convenience, but due to statistical variation

in the descriptive statistics where outputs have been calculated with listwise deletion due to missing data at T4. Comparisons between listwise and pairwise results reveal no significant differences, however; $p = .346$ (T1), $p = .794$ (T2). The *mean* and *standard deviations* for the whole population can be found in Table 8.2, as presented earlier.

8.1.2 Experimental groups' T1-T4 self-evaluations of productive and receptive English use.

The descriptive statistics in Table 8.3 reveal that the reported increased frequency of the CAPT and PAPER groups' productive skills at T2, are generally maintained to T4 (+ six weeks). However, at this point, both groups evidence a marginal decrease of around -1 point overall. This represents a self-assessed decrease in frequency from 'daily' to 'weekly' use on the original questionnaire.

Table 8.3. Descriptive statistics: Experimental groups' (CAPT and PAPER) self-evaluations of productive and receptive English use T1, T2, and T4.

| Productive | T1 M (SD) | T2 M (SD) | T4 M (SD) |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| CAPT (N=17) | 3.53 (2.29) | 17.1 (2.18) | 15.9 (1.92) |
| PAPER (N=16) | 3.00 (2.39) | 15.8 (2.83) | 15.1 (2.98) |
| Total (N=33) | 3.27 (2.32) | 16.5 (2.56) | 15.5 (2.49) |
| Receptive | | | |
| CAPT (N=17) | 9.47 (4.23) | 16.4 (3.36) | 17.1 (3.98) |
| PAPER (N=16) | 8.94 (3.09) | 16.7 (3.40) | 16.1 (3.89) |
| Total (N=33) | 9.21 (3.67) | 16.6 (3.33) | 16.6 (3.91) |

Note.

Maximum marks = 24 for either productive or receptive use.

A 3 (time) x2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA reveals, in terms of the learners' self-evaluation of conducting productive activities in spoken English, there was a significant main effect of time T1-T4 with a very large effect size; $F(2, 62) = 294.6$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .905$. There were no significant main effects of group though a small effect size was revealed; $F(1, 31) = 3.43$, $p = .073$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, nor evidence of

group x time interaction; $F(2, 62) = .205, p = .815, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .007$. These results indicate that both groups' self-reports of increasing their productive use of English between all three stages, were generally comparable.

Focussing on T2-T4, a 2 (time) x 2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA reveals no significant main effect of time or evidence of effect size; $F(1, 31) = 2.761, p = .107, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .082$. Similarly, there is no main effect of group or effect size; $F(1, 31) = 2.816, p = .103, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .083$, nor interaction effect between time and group; $F(1, 31) = .135, p = .715, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .004$. Whilst both groups evidence a slight decrease in frequency of productive English use T2-T4, it is, therefore, not statistically relevant.

Supplementary post hoc comparisons of productive activities for the experimental groups within the three time periods (T1, T2 and T4), using a Tukey HSD adjustment, reveal that there were significant differences overall between T1-T2 ($p < .001$) and T1-T4 ($p < .001$). This was not the case at the T2-T4 phase ($p = .320$).

To detect the exact location of this significance, paired t-tests were selected to identify differences within the CAPT and PAPER groups. Results indicate that both groups were comparable in reporting increases in the frequency of their English usage between T1-T2 which was found to be statistically significant with very large effect sizes; *CAPT*: $t(23) = -19.23, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-14.77, -11.90], r^2 = .94$.

PAPER: $t(19) = -16.34, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-14.95, -11.55], r^2 = .93$. This was also true for the T1-T4 phases; *CAPT*: $t(16) = -15.79, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-14.08, -10.75], r^2 = .94$. *PAPER*: $t(15) = -13.25, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-14.00, -10.1], r^2 = .92$. The T2-T4 phases revealed no significant differences for either group, though the CAPT group self-reported to use their productive skills more frequently with a large effect size; $t(16) = 2.06, p = .056, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.033, -2.39], r^2 = .21$, in comparison to the PAPER group's self-reports where a small effect size is observed; $t(15) = .728, p = .478, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.45, 2.95], r^2 = .03$.

The overall trend of increased frequency of learners' productive English, as reported above, is also evident with receptive English use (Table 8.3). Mixed results are evident at T4, with the CAPT group maintaining a positive trajectory in contrast to the PAPER group who evidence a slight decrease. As expected from the mean scores, a 3 (time) x 2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA illustrates a significant main effect of time on the learners' self-evaluation of their reading and listening activities in English with a very large effect size; $F(2, 62) = 69.71, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .69$. The trend for comparability amongst both groups was also evident here with no significant main effect of group or evidence of effect size; $F(1, 31) = .182, p = .067, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .006$, nor group x time interaction; $F(2, 62) = .396, p = .675, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .013$. These results indicate that both groups assessed themselves as increasing the frequency of receptive English use between all three stages at comparable rates, as mirrored in their productive scores.

Focussing on the T2 to T4, a 2 (time) x 2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA reveals no significant main effect of time or effect size; $F(1, 31) = .010, p = .920, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .0002$. Similarly, there is no main effect of group; $F(1, 31) = .114, p = .738, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .004$, nor interaction effect between time and group; $F(1, 31) = .794, p = .380, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .025$. Whilst there are contrasting T4 results for the CAPT and PAPER groups, as mentioned previously, these are, therefore, not statistically relevant.

Comparable trends are evident between the learners' reported productive and receptive English use between the three test stages. Supplementary post hoc pairwise comparisons, with a Tukey HSD adjustment, reveal significant differences between T1 and T2 ($p < .001$) and T1-T4 phases ($p < .001$). There was no significant difference to be found between the T2 and T4 phases ($p = .899$). These results mirror those found with the productive skill.

To detect the exact location of the differences, subsequent post hoc paired samples t-tests revealed that both the CAPT and PAPER groups reported to significantly increase the frequency of receptive English use between T1 and T2 with very large

effect sizes; CAPT= $t(23) = -8.90, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-8.89, -5.53], r^2 = .78$; PAPER= $t(19) = -8.07, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-9.57, -5.63], r^2 = .77$. This was also the case for differences between the T1 and T4 phases; CAPT= $t(16) = -7.05, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-9.95, -5.35], r^2 = .76$; PAPER= $t(15) = -8.03, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-9.10, -5.26], r^2 = .81$. Both groups consider themselves to have a greater receptive English use at T2 in comparison to their first arrival in the UK. This reported improvement is generally maintained to approximately the same level up to T4, though there is no evidence of increase or effect size as might be expected from the T1-T2 values; CAPT= $t(16) = -.731, p = .475, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.75, 1.34], r^2 = .03$; PAPER= $t(15) = -.536, p = .600, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.67, 2.80], r^2 = .02$. These increases again mirror productive English use, as reported earlier.

8.1.3 Experimental groups' T1-T4 self-evaluations of productive and receptive English use by activity.

An investigation into self-reported changes in frequency of specific activities over the three time periods, was also undertaken for both productive and receptive English use. The category 'productive use' (speaking) on the questionnaire was sub-divided into interaction with five specific interlocutors whom the participants were likely to encounter in a SA setting; instructors, friends, classmates, strangers (e.g., members of the public) and service personnel (e.g., bank staff, supermarket staff). For receptive use, the focus was on three listening activities (watching TV, watching films, listening to songs) and three reading activities (reading newspapers, reading novels, reading magazines).

As previous analyses in this section have revealed both the CAPT and PAPER groups display parallel patterns of behaviour for productive and receptive use at each test stage, the following analysis does not separate the investigation by group, but looks for overall trends in frequency of activities undertaken by the whole

experimental group sample, based on the 'time' variable. Table 8.4 displays the descriptive statistics which reveals several key trends.

Table 8.4. Descriptive statistics: Experimental groups' self-evaluations of T1-T4 productive and receptive English use by activity.

| Productive activity | T1 (N= 44) M (SD) | T2 (N= 44) M (SD) | T4 (N= 33) M (SD) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Communicate with instructor | 1.02 (.98) | 3.23 (.80) | 3.18 (.92) |
| Communicate with friends | .73 (.66) | 2.89 (.87) | 3.03 (.64) |
| Communicate with classmates | 1.00 (.92) | 3.84 (.43) | 3.33 (.85) |
| Communicate with strangers | .45 (.63) | 3.27 (.79) | 3.06 (.66) |
| Communicate with service personnel | .09 (.29) | 3.39 (.66) | 2.91 (.77) |
| Receptive activity | | | |
| Watch TV | 1.89 (.97) | 2.82 (.92) | 3.15 (.62) |
| Watch films | 2.36 (.87) | 3.14 (.73) | 3.03 (.85) |
| Listen to songs | 2.80 (.77) | 3.70 (.46) | 3.70 (.53) |
| Read newspapers | .95 (.86) | 2.41 (.92) | 2.24 (1.17) |
| Read novels | .68 (.83) | 2.45 (.88) | 2.18 (1.26) |
| Read magazines | .86 (.82) | 2.41 (.99) | 2.33 (1.21) |

Note.

Maximum score = 4 (0= never, 1= a few times a year, 2= monthly, 3= weekly, 4= daily).

8.1.3.1 Experimental groups' T1-T4 self-evaluations of productive English use by activity.

Reviewing the mean scores from a 3 (time) x 2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA, investigating trends in interaction with these interlocutors, T1-T2 reported changes in behaviour are noticeable. First, as evidenced by the mean scores, there was a significant overall main effect of time for interaction with all of the five different interlocutors at the $p < .001$ level, with very large effect sizes; *communicate with instructor*, $F(2, 62) = 64.3$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .68$; *communicate with friends*, $F(2, 62) = 96.2$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .76$; *communicate with classmates*, $F(2, 62) = 153.9$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .83$; *communicate with strangers*, $F(2, 62) = 160.3$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .84$; *communicate with service personnel*, $F(2, 62) = 349.9$, $p < .001$,

partial $\eta^2 = .92$. There was no evidence of group x time interaction for any of the interlocutors ($p = .332, p = .785, p = .242, p = .387, p = .145$), nor significant main effect of group ($p = .054, p = .624, p = .076, p = .635, p = .10$). These results indicate both the CAPT and PAPER groups assessed themselves as having increased their interaction with all five interlocutors at parallel rates.

Second, when scrutinising the mean scores by activity, T1-T2 trends are evident. At T1, the groups self-report not to engage with any of the specific interlocutors more than '*a few times a year*'. In fact, for communicating with service personnel, this is borderline '*never*'. The activities can be ranked from least to most frequent at T1 as follows; *service personnel > stranger > friends > classmates > instructor*.

Third, at T2 (+ six weeks), frequency of engagement with all of the interlocutors increases from '*a few times a year*' to at least '*weekly*' (with the exception of '*friends*') with the following ranking from least to most frequent; *friends > instructors > strangers > service personnel > classmates*. Communicating with '*service personnel*' and '*strangers*' increase and move up the ranking six weeks after T1. At T2, participants report to interact with these two interlocutors more frequently (albeit marginally) than '*friends*' and '*instructor*', in contrast to T1. Using English with '*classmates*' is still recorded as one of the most frequent activities but, at this stage, has moved from '*a few times a year*' to an almost '*daily*' activity, in comparison to T1. Finally, interaction with all five interlocutors on a '*weekly*' basis at T2 is shown to be maintained to T4 which equates to a 12-week L2 stay by this point. That said, with the exception of '*communicating with 'classmates*', the mean scores do illustrate a slight decrease (<1.0). Overall, the increases evident for productive skill (speaking) at the T1 and T2 stages are generally maintained to the T4 stage. Both experimental groups report to show parallel increases in English usage throughout, but these differences are found to be statistically significant at the T1 to T2, and T1 to T4 stages only. When investigating the interaction with the specific interlocutors presented on the questionnaire, participants reported to rarely interact with any of

them in English at T1. Learners' interaction with the interlocutors increased to a 'weekly' activity in most cases at T2 (+ six weeks) which was generally sustained to T4 (+ twelve weeks).

8.1.3.2 Experimental groups' T1-T4 self-evaluations of receptive English use by activity.

The findings in Table 8.4 confirm that learners report to engage in receptive activities more than productive ones. At T1, frequencies range from a 'few times a year' to almost 'weekly' but these are activity-dependent. Based on the participants' self-assessments, the activities at T1 can be ranked as follows from least to most frequent; *read newspapers* > *read novels* > *read magazines* > *watch TV* > *watch films* > *listen to songs*, and illustrates that 'reading' activities are less popular than 'listening' activities in English. At T1, learners report to engage in listening activities on a 'monthly' (TV and films) to 'weekly' (songs) basis which is a direct contrast to all T1 productive skills which are used 'a few times a year', at best. The preference for 'listening' over 'reading' is continued to T2 where the overall rankings remain fairly similar; *read magazines* = *read newspapers* > *read novels* > *watch TV* > *watch films* > *listen to songs*. Frequencies for both listening and reading activities increase further on similar trajectories to T2 (+ six weeks). Learners self-report using reading skills on a 'monthly' basis and listening skills increase to 'weekly' use, in general. At T4, however, the pattern shifts. Though still in use on a 'monthly' basis, the mean scores for reading activities decrease slightly, whilst all activities involving 'listening' continue to be reportedly used more and more frequently with 'listening to songs' almost becoming a 'daily' habit.

In summary, the experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) T1-T2 comparability in their patterns of reported productive and receptive English use continues to T4. At T4, the CAPT and PAPER groups generally maintain this higher engagement, though a slight decrease is evident overall but is not found to be statistically significant. At most of the stages, receptive skills are reported to generally remain higher than

productive for both groups. A breakdown of individual activities reveals a self-reported increase in frequency of use across the time variables. 'Speaking' increases in frequency from 'a few times a year' at T1 to 'weekly' at both T2 and T4. As for receptive skills, 'listening' is recorded as the most practised skill, increasing in frequency from 'monthly' to 'weekly' throughout the time periods. 'Reading', on the other hand, is recorded as the least common, increasing from 'a few times a year' to 'monthly' by T4.

8.1.4 Experimental within-group and between-group comparisons for productive and receptive English use T1-T4.

Having established comparability *between* the experimental groups in sections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3., it is useful to conclude this analysis of part A of the questionnaire with a brief look at *within* and *between* group trends for speaking (productive) activities and listening/reading (receptive) activities.

Beginning with within-group trends, paired sample t-test investigations into differences between productive and receptive use within each experimental group (Table 8.5) reveals all participant self-evaluations of their productive use of English at the beginning of their SA experience (T1) are noticeably small with much higher receptive engagement in English which is significantly different (around +6 points) with a very large effect size. This is the case for both groups; *CAPT*= $t(23) = -8.87, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-7.35, -4.57], r^2 = .77$; *PAPER*= $t(19) = -7.79, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-8.31, -4.79], r^2 = .76$.

T1-T2 activity sharply increases for both productive and receptive use as previously noted, although, at this stage, there is a marginal difference between skills; *CAPT*= $t(23) = .36, p = .725, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.803, 1.14], r^2 = .00$; *PAPER*= $t(19) = -1.24, p = .232, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.43, .63], r^2 = .07$. Learners significantly increased their productive English use to the point where there is greater parity (evidenced by no statistical significance) between speaking (productive) and listening/reading (receptive) activities in English.

This is in direct contrast to the T1 phase. At T4, reported group behaviour differs. For the CAPT group, receptive activities continue to increase, in contrast to a decrease in productive activities. This difference is found to be statistically significant with a small effect size; $t(23) = -2.19, p < .005, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.84, -.08], r^2 = .17$. As for the PAPER group, both productive and receptive skills marginally decrease at T4 with the difference between the skills approaching statistical significance with a small effect size; $t(19) = -1.85, p = .08, 95\% \text{ CI } [-3.30, .20], r^2 = .15$.

Table 8.5. Descriptive statistics: Paired sample t tests analysing experimental within-group comparisons for productive and receptive English use T1-T4.

| | T1 M (SD) | | T2 M (SD) | | T4 (M, SD) | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CAPT (N=17) | PAPER (N=16) |
| Productive | 3.54 (2.28) | 3.05 (2.19) | 16.8 (2.25) | 16.3 (2.72) | 15.8 (1.46) | 14.9 (2.91) |
| Receptive | 9.50 (4.00) | 9.60 (3.60) | 16.7 (3.47) | 17.2 (3.27) | 17.3 (3.30) | 16.5 (3.55) |

Note.
Maximum marks = 24

Independent t tests reveal no significant difference between the CAPT or PAPER groups' productive or receptive self-evaluations at any of the T1-T4 phases which confirms earlier analyses in sections 8.1.1.-8.1.3., reporting comparability between the groups at all test phases; T1; $t(42) = .725, p = .473, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.878, 1.86], r^2 = .01$ (productive); $t(42) = -.086, p = .932, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.44, 2.24], r^2 = 0$ (receptive); T2; $t(42) = .768, p = .447, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.936, 2.09], r^2 = .01$ (productive); $t(42) = -.480, p = .634, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.56, 1.57], r^2 = 0$ (receptive); T4; $t(31) = 1.01, p = .31, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.89, 2.65], r^2 = .03$ (productive); $t(31) = .723, p = .475, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.81, 3.79], r^2 = .02$ (receptive). The time periods between these phases are; T1-T2 (+ six weeks), T2-T4 (+ six weeks), T1-T4 (+ twelve weeks).

This indicates that both groups were comparable in terms of their self-reported use at each of these stages with the mean scores revealing an almost identical pattern of

behaviour for the two groups at each of the test stages. Any differences from the ANOVA results between the groups in their productive and receptive use of English at any of the stages are, therefore, not statistically relevant.

In summary, as evidenced by the absence of statistical significance on independent t test measures, the CAPT and PAPER groups have recorded comparable group behaviour in the following ways: i) infrequent use of productive skills but much higher receptive activity at T1, and ii) a sharp increase of both skills at T2 (+ six weeks) with little difference now evident between productive and receptive use; iii) significant decreases in use of both skills at T4, with the exception of the receptive skills within the CAPT group which continue to increase.

8.2 Questionnaire Part B results

The second and final part of the questionnaire required participants to evaluate a specified set of skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, interaction) to give an overall assessment of reported English use at each time period (T1, T2 and T4). As a reminder, the control group did not participate in the T4 stage.

On a Likert scale, learners were required to make a numeric selection between 1 (poor/beginner) and 5 (excellent/native-like) to self-assess their skills for the following five categories; listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction. The mean scores presented in this section, therefore, are calculated out of a maximum of 5. Section 8.2.1 presents the data for the CAPT, PAPER and control groups at the T1 to T2 stages. Section 8.2.2 focusses on the experimental groups only (CAPT and PAPER) and includes T4. This section concludes with an overview of within- and between-group differences for the five skills.

8.2.1 Experimental and control group comparisons of listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction skills T1-T2.

To identify differences between the evaluations of the five skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, interaction) at T1 and T2, the data were first submitted to a 2 (time) x3 (group) repeated measures ANOVA. A summary of the descriptive statistics for all five skills can be found in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6. Descriptive statistics: Experimental and control groups' T1-T2 self-evaluations of listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction skills.

| <i>M (SD)</i> | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| skill | stage | CAPT (N=24) | PAPER (N=20) | CONTROL (N=17) | Total (N=61) |
| listening | T1 | 2.88 (.74) | 3.10 (.55) | 2.76 (.66) | 2.92 (.67) |
| | T2 | 3.33 (.57) | 3.45 (.61) | 3.35 (.61) | 3.38 (.58) |
| speaking | T1 | 2.96 (.75) | 2.70 (.73) | 2.65 (.61) | 2.79 (.71) |
| | T2 | 3.33 (.48) | 3.05 (.61) | 3.18 (.53) | 3.20 (.54) |
| reading | T1 | 2.71 (.75) | 2.75 (.72) | 2.06 (.75) | 2.54 (.79) |
| | T2 | 2.83 (.57) | 3.10 (.64) | 2.76 (.56) | 2.90 (.60) |
| writing | T1 | 2.54 (.78) | 2.30 (.80) | 2.06 (.66) | 2.33 (.77) |
| | T2 | 2.75 (.53) | 2.85 (.67) | 2.76 (.56) | 2.79 (.58) |
| interaction | T1 | 3.04 (.70) | 2.65 (.75) | 2.94 (.66) | 2.89 (.71) |
| | T2 | 3.25 (.44) | 3.30 (.66) | 3.18 (.53) | 3.25 (.54) |

Note.
Maximum score = 5.

Similar trends between the skills and groups are evident throughout. All of the five skills show a significant main effect of time (T1-T2) with moderate to large effect sizes; *listening*, $F(1, 58) = 28.2$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .33$; *speaking*, $F(1, 58) = 18.7$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .24$; *reading*, $F(1, 58) = 13.2$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$; *writing*, $F(1, 58) = 21.5$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .27$; *interaction*, $F(1, 58) = 11.1$, $p = .002$, partial

$\eta^2 = .16$. The mean scores in Table 8.6 indicate learners reported an improvement in each of the skills between the first two test phases.

In addition, given no significance or effect size was found within group x time interaction for any of the skills, it can be concluded that the improvement was comparable between all three groups; *listening*, $F(2, 58) = .568$, $p = .570$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$; *speaking*, $F(2, 58) = .308$, $p = .736$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$; *reading*, $F(2, 58) = 2.40$, $p = .10$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$; *writing*, $F(2, 58) = 2.04$, $p = .139$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$; *interaction*, $F(2, 58) = 1.74$, $p = .184$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$.

Finally, no statistically significant main effect of group or evidence of effect size was found for *listening*, $F(1, 58) = .904$, $p = .411$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$; *speaking*, $F(1, 58) = 1.86$, $p = .16$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$; *writing*, $F(1, 58) = .946$, $p = .394$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$; *interaction*, $F(1, 58) = .746$, $p = .479$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. For *reading*, however, a significant main effect of group was evident, $F(1, 58) = 4.64$, $p = .014$, with a small effect (partial $\eta^2 = .14$).

The *mean* scores in Table 8.6 suggest the control group recorded consistently lower evaluations than the CAPT and PAPER groups at T1 and T2. This is confirmed in post hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD adjustment) which reveal a significant difference between the control and PAPER group ($p = .011$) and a difference which approaches significance between the control and CAPT group ($p = .084$). Reviewing the mean scores, however, the differences evident at each stage are marginal, with less than one point separating each group, so the above significance does not appear meaningful. The following section focusses on the experimental groups only (CAPT and PAPER) and includes the T4 phase. For the reader's convenience and due to descriptive statistics being calculated with listwise deletion because of missing data at T4, the T1-T2 results are also presented in the Tables which follow. The *mean* and *standard deviation* scores for the whole population can be found in Table 8.6, as

presented earlier. Comparisons between listwise and pairwise results reveal no significant differences, however; $p = .913$ (T1), $p = .666$ (T2).

8.2.2 Experimental group comparisons of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and interaction skills T1-T4.

The data were submitted to a 3 (time) x2 (group) repeated measures ANOVA to identify any differences in the skills between the three time periods (T1, T2 and T4).

The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7. Descriptive statistics: Experimental groups' T1-T4 self-evaluations by skill.

| skill | stage | <i>M (SD)</i> | | |
|-------------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | CAPT (N=17) | PAPER (N=16) | Total (N=33) |
| listening | T1 | 2.82 (.81) | 3.00 (.52) | 2.91 (.68) |
| | T2 | 3.24 (.56) | 3.38 (.62) | 3.30 (.59) |
| | T4 | 3.59 (.62) | 3.88 (.50) | 3.73 (.57) |
| speaking | T1 | 3.06 (.75) | 2.56 (.63) | 2.82 (.73) |
| | T2 | 3.41 (.51) | 3.00 (.63) | 3.20 (.60) |
| | T4 | 3.53 (.51) | 3.19 (.66) | 3.36 (.60) |
| reading | T1 | 2.59 (.80) | 2.75 (.78) | 2.67 (.78) |
| | T2 | 2.76 (.66) | 3.06 (.68) | 2.91 (.68) |
| | T4 | 3.00 (.79) | 3.50 (.63) | 3.24 (.75) |
| writing | T1 | 2.59 (.87) | 2.19 (.83) | 2.39 (.86) |
| | T2 | 2.71 (.59) | 2.87 (.72) | 2.79 (.65) |
| | T4 | 3.06 (.66) | 3.31 (.48) | 3.18 (.58) |
| interaction | T1 | 3.06 (.75) | 2.50 (.63) | 2.79 (.74) |
| | T2 | 3.24 (.44) | 3.25 (.68) | 3.24 (.56) |
| | T4 | 3.47 (.51) | 3.62 (.62) | 3.55 (.56) |

Note.

Maximum score = 5.

The analyses yielded a significant main effect of time for all five skills with very large effect sizes; *listening*, $F(2, 62) = 26.74$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .46$; *speaking*, $F(2, 62) = 12.90$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 partial $\eta^2 = .29$; *reading*, $F(1.71, 53.13) = 10.86$, $p < .001$ partial

$\eta^2 = .26$; *writing*, $F(2, 62) = 17.74$, $p < .001$ partial $\eta^2 = .36$; *interaction*, $F(1.77, 54.97) = 18.31$, $p < .001$ partial $\eta^2 = .37$.

With the exception of speaking, ($F(1, 31) = 5.79$, $p = .022$, small effect; partial $\eta^2 = .16$), group comparability of their reported performance was generally evident as the analyses did not highlight a significant main effect of group for the other skills or reveal any effect sizes; *listening*, $F(1, 31) = 1.39$, $p = .248$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$; *reading*, $F(1, 31) = 2.37$, $p = .134$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$, *writing*, $F(1, 31) = .001$, $p = .969$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$; *interaction*, $F(1, 31) = .708$, $p = .407$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$.

Group x time interaction was found for two skills with small effect sizes; *writing*, $F(2, 62) = 3.53$, $p = .035$, η_p^2 partial $\eta^2 = .10$; and *interaction*, $F(1.77, 54.97) = 4.37$, $p = .021$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$, but absent for the three remaining skills with no to small effect sizes; *listening*, $F(2, 62) = .233$, $p = .793$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$; *speaking*, $F(2, 62) = .241$, $p = .786$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$; *reading* $F(1.71, 53.13) = .925$, $p = .390$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$.

Given the somewhat complex picture of the above analyses, it is helpful to draw on subsequent post hoc findings for further clarification (Table 8.8). Paired sample t-tests focussing on skill (T1-T2, T2-T4, T1-T4) reveal significant differences at each time period, for each skill, as illustrated and summarised in Table 8.8; *listening* ($p < .001$; $p = .001$; $p < .001$), *speaking* ($p = .001$; $p = .169$; $p < .001$), *reading* ($p = .040$; $p = .001$; $p = .001$), *writing* ($p = .002$; $p = .002$; $p < .001$), *interaction* ($p = .004$; $p = .023$; $p < .001$). With the exception of T2-T4 speaking as italicised above, this indicates an overall picture of reported improvement for each skill with the lapse of each six-week period.

Table 8.8. Paired sample t-test results for experimental groups by skill.

| | stage | M (SD) | t | df | CI lower | CI upper | r ² |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------|----|----------|----------|----------------|
| listening | T1-T2 | .41* (.58) | -4.65 | 43 | -.59 | -.23 | 0.33 |
| | T1-T4 | .82* (.64) | -7.40 | 32 | -1.04 | -.59 | 0.63 |
| | T2-T4 | .42* (.66) | -3.68 | 32 | -.66 | -.19 | 0.30 |
| speaking | T1-T2 | .36* (.69) | -3.52 | 43 | -.57 | -.16 | 0.22 |
| | T1-T4 | .55* (.56) | -5.56 | 32 | -.75 | -.33 | 0.49 |
| | T2-T4 | .15 (.62) | -1.41 | 32 | -.37 | .07 | 0.58 |
| reading | T1-T2 | .23* (.71) | -2.12 | 43 | -.44 | -.01 | 0.94 |
| | T1-T4 | .58* (.87) | -3.81 | 32 | -.88 | -.27 | 0.31 |
| | T2-T4 | .33* (.54) | -3.55 | 32 | -.53 | -.14 | 0.28 |
| writing | T1-T2 | .36* (.75) | -3.22 | 43 | -.59 | -.14 | 0.19 |
| | T1-T4 | .79* (.89) | -5.07 | 32 | -1.11 | -.47 | 0.45 |
| | T2-T4 | .39* (.66) | -3.44 | 32 | -.63 | -.16 | 0.27 |
| interaction | T1-T2 | .41* (.90) | -3.02 | 43 | -.68 | -.14 | 0.16 |
| | T1-T4 | .76* (.66) | -6.57 | 32 | -.99 | -.52 | 0.57 |
| | T2-T4 | .30* (.73) | -2.39 | 32 | -.56 | -.46 | 0.15 |

Note.

* $p < .05$

This reported positive trajectory of gains at each stage is not consistent across groups, however. Appendix 9 summarises the CAPT and PAPER groups' self-reported competency by skill and test stage. The highlighted areas in Appendix 9 report disparity in statistical significance between the CAPT and PAPER groups. A number of trends can be surmised from these analyses. First, based on the self-assessments, both groups make significance gains at the $p < .005$ level with large to very large effect sizes for i) T1-T2, T1-T4 *listening and speaking*, (T2-T4 *listening only*); ii) T1-T4 *writing and interaction*. Though these gains differ in degree of significance as presented in Appendix 9, these may be less noteworthy as no statistical significance is found on independent t-test analyses and all confidence intervals cross 0 in Table 8.9, confirming overall

homogeneity between the CAPT and PAPER groups for each of these skills, at each stage.

Table 8.9. Independent t-test results for experimental groups by skill.

| | stage | M (SD) | | t | df | CI lower | CI upper | r ² |
|-------------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------|----|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | CAPT | PAPER | | | | | |
| listening | T1 | 2.88 (.741) | 3.10 (.553) | -1.12 | 42 | -.630 | .180 | .03 |
| | T2 | 3.33 (.565) | 3.45 (.605) | -.661 | 42 | -.473 | .240 | .01 |
| | T4 | 3.59 (.618) | 3.88 (.500) | -1.46 | 31 | -.688 | .114 | .06 |
| speaking | T1 | 2.96 (.751) | 2.70 (.733) | 1.15 | 42 | -.195 | .712 | .03 |
| | T2 | 3.33 (.482) | 3.05 (.605) | 1.73 | 42 | -.047 | .617 | .06 |
| | T4 | 3.53 (.514) | 3.19 (.655) | 1.67 | 31 | -.075 | .759 | .08 |
| reading | T1 | 2.71 (.751) | 2.75 (.716) | -.187 | 42 | -.491 | .408 | .08 |
| | T2 | 2.83 (.565) | 3.10 (.641) | -1.47 | 42 | -.633 | .100 | .05 |
| | T4 | 3.00 (.791) | 3.50 (.632) | -1.99 | 31 | -1.01 | .01 | .11 |
| writing | T1 | 2.54 (.799) | 2.30 (.801) | 1.01 | 42 | -.241 | .724 | .02 |
| | T2 | 2.75 (.532) | 2.85 (.671) | -.552 | 42 | -.466 | .266 | 0 |
| | T4 | 3.06 (.659) | 3.31 (.479) | -1.26 | 31 | -.665 | .157 | .05 |
| interaction | T1 | 3.04 (.690) | 2.65 (.745) | 1.81 | 42 | -.046 | .829 | .07 |
| | T2 | 3.25 (.442) | 3.30 (.657) | -.30 | 42 | -.386 | .286 | 0 |
| | T4 | 3.47 (.514) | 3.63 (.619) | -.781 | 31 | -.558 | .249 | .02 |

Note.

Maximum score = 5.

Second, in contrast, the remaining skills and time variables reveal distinct group differences (Appendix 9). No significance is found with the CAPT group other than T2-T4 *interaction* where significance is noted ($p = .041$). In contrast, the PAPER group make significant gains on all skills, over all time periods (with the exception of T2-T4 interaction): *reading*, $p = .031$, $p = .004$, $p = .002$; *writing*, $p = .001$, $p = .014$, $p = .000$; *interaction*, $p = .019$, $p = .000$. Despite this, referring back to the independent t-test results noted in Table 8.9, there is no statistical between-group significance which suggests any differences found between the groups may be less noteworthy. The *mean* scores in the earlier Table 8.7 confirm that there is < 1.0 difference in the

between group scores for each skill, at each test stage, and that the PAPER group is not necessarily weaker at any stage. This suggests the groups' reports of their overall skills were comparable at the start of each stage and the PAPER group made only marginally greater advances between stages (though this was almost 50% of the time periods analysed) according to their self-reporting.

Third, a basic pattern emerges between groups in terms of individual skills (Figure 8.1). Without exception, all groups report a small to moderate increase in competence for each skill, within the twelve-week test period. For the CAPT and PAPER groups, 'writing' is consistently awarded the lowest scores within the five skills, across all three test stages. This suggests, for these learner groups, *writing* is recorded as the most difficult skill to improve, or there were fewer opportunities to practise, or a combination of both. In comparison, firstly 'listening' then 'interaction' generally record the highest scores overall for these two groups.

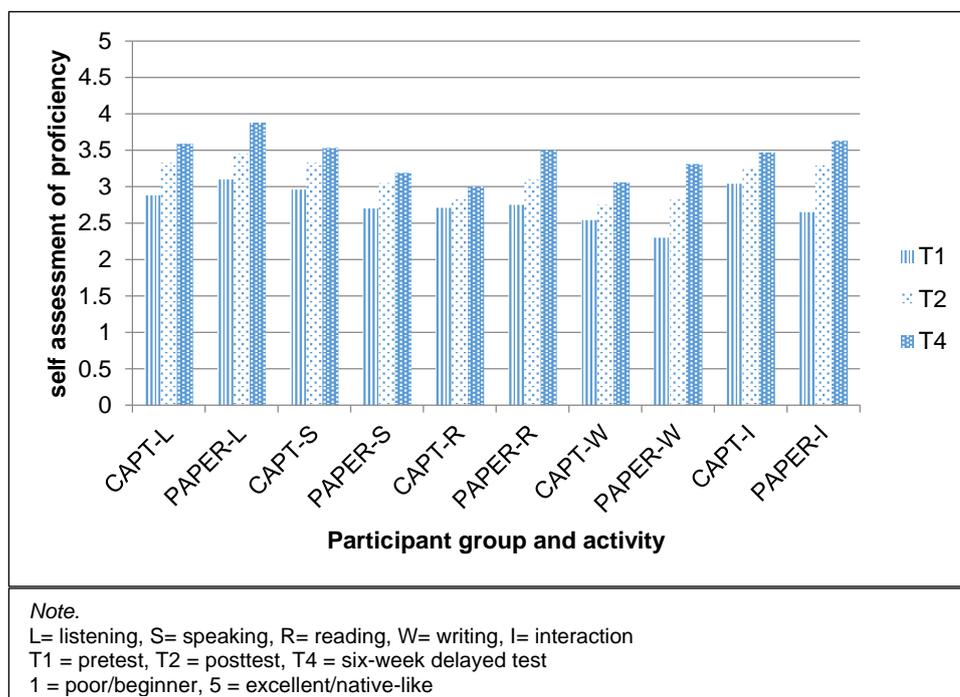


Figure 8.1. Evolution of skills assessment by the experimental groups T1, T2, T4.

In summary, the CAPT, PAPER and control groups self-report small to moderate increases in competence for each skill with the lapse of each six-week time period. Disparity in the CAPT and PAPER groups' evaluations at T1, T2 and T4 is observed but given the small margins in *mean* score differences, supported by no between-group statistical significance, these differences are not considered statistically meaningful. All three learner groups consistently report '*writing*' to be their weakest skill at each test stage, whilst '*listening*' and '*interaction*' generally record higher scores across the test phases. Interestingly, no maximum scores (5) were awarded for any skill, at any test phase. The highest score is generally, but not exclusively, awarded at T4 though this fails to reach '5' (excellent) for any skill.

9. Discussion

This chapter returns to discuss the original research questions underpinning this thesis. Section 9.1 firstly focuses on the effectiveness of the explicit instructional intervention. This includes observations specific to the request data (9.1.1) and apology data (9.1.2) regarding strategies and formulaic language employed T1-T4. The variability exhibited in the production of non-target-like requests and apologies concludes each of these sections. Section 9.2 continues the instructional theme but examines the effectiveness of the differentiated training materials in more detail. Finally, in section 9.3, the results from the two-part self-evaluation questionnaire on English language use are considered in relation to frequency of language use, prolonged L2 stay and pragmatic development.

9.1 Discussion of research question 1

How effective is explicit instruction in developing the pragmatic competence of requests and apologies in Chinese learners of English at a British Higher Education institution during a study abroad stay?

Several key findings are noticeable from the analyses in chapters six, seven and eight. First, regarding instruction, the study appears to show the teachability of speech acts in the classroom, providing a link between the explicit teaching of *requests* and *apologies*, and the improved performance of the experimental groups over the twelve week period. This finding lends support to previous research on the value of explicit instruction (e.g., Taguchi, 2015), sustained length of treatment (Jeon & Kaya, 2006), inclusion of awareness-raising and focussed classroom practice (e.g., Shively, 2008), and the need for learners' attention to be drawn to 'notice' language features for intake and production (Schmidt, 1993). Appendix 10 provides samples of the request and apology responses from the experimental and control groups T1-T4.

When considering the reasons behind the experimental groups' advances in request and apology production post-instruction, raising awareness of the local cultural expectations for what constitutes successful and appropriate language was highly effective. The claims that politeness is realised in different ways in different cultures (e.g., Leech, 2014; Ogiermann, 2009), and that the misapplication of L1 rules to L2 language use are a main source of pragmatic miscommunication (e.g., Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Sifanou, 1992), appear to hold true for the present investigation at the pre-instruction stage. For instance, whereas politeness is said to be marked by indirectness in Western cultures (Leech, 2014), Chinese speakers often value directness as a key politeness principle (Lee, Wong, 1994; Yu, 1999), which was evident in many of the pretest request responses. Furthermore, the pretest request and apology responses revealed substantial negative L1 transfer, most likely influenced by positive politeness in Chinese culture where group values dominate (Leech, 2014): sections 9.2 and 9.3 discuss this further. The intervention appears to have enhanced L2 sociopragmatic awareness, and reduce evidence of negative L1 transfer. The regularity of the cross-cultural discussions included in the intervention may have heightened the participants' cross-cultural sensitivity, whilst the introduction of a formulaic-based approach for request and apology language appears to have been a highly effective language learning strategy to also increase the learners' range of expressions.

9.1.1 Request language.

Given the specific academic context presented and the high status interlocutors featured in the scenarios at the test stages, learners did not need a varied repertoire of strategies to provide satisfactory responses, and could successfully rely on a limited range of polite core requests and alerters, with additional external moves for more sensitive requests (as seen in Tables 6.2-6.4). Whilst this is welcome news in terms of where focused instruction needs to be, learners clearly did not either initially

possess this requisite language or lacked the sociopragmatic knowledge to be able to apply the appropriate strategies within a particular scenario, suggesting that upon arrival in the UK learners are not fully prepared for basic staff-student communication in a SA stay. Only those participants exposed to instruction benefitted and exhibited more target-like request behaviour.

Improvements in request production are most notable in strategies which were underdeveloped at T1; *polite core request* (internal modifier) and *self-criticism* (external modifier). Whilst the use of conventionally indirect strategies by the majority of learners in this study supports literature that this is the preferred universal feature for realising requests (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989; Trosborg, 1995; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999), sections 6.2 and 6.3 show that, above all, ability modals were the preferred strategy choice at T1 and, consequently, few instances of the more polite core requests (bi-clausals), '*Would you mind...*', '*Would it be possible to...*', '*I (was) wonder(ing) if...*' are apparent. Research suggests native English speakers draw on a much richer and varied set of polite requests, such as those illustrated above, whilst NNS have a more limited range and are challenged by adopting the most appropriate for different social contexts (Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). Two possible explanations are offered for this cross-cultural variability. First, Yu's (1999) research shows Chinese EFL learners rarely use conditionals as a mitigating device as a result of L1 interference. Chinese language is described as a non-inflectional language which does not differentiate tense, case and person with different verb forms. This unfamiliarity with using past tense modals as conditionals such as '*Would*', as a politeness device, means they are seldom used in Chinese request language. Furthermore, as presented in section 2.3.2, bi-clausal structures do not exist in Chinese which pose further challenges when these are adopted frequently by English NS.

The complexity of bi-clausal structures may also account for their low frequency in Chinese learner data (Wang, 2011). For NS of English, bi-clausals provide an important syntactic device for polite situations or where imposition is high. Bi-clausal structures are typically longer, more elaborate and, therefore, syntactically challenging for learners of English. In contrast, and as exhibited in this present study at T1, Chinese participants typically opt for syntactically simpler and shorter requests, as can be effectively realised with ability modals. The fact that ability modals are also one of the earliest features learned (Chang, 2010) suggests a reason for its continued overuse. The learners in this study have yet to achieve an advanced stage of proficiency which may also be symptomatic of the reliance on ability modals. That the learners in the experimental groups were able to substitute their use of ability modals with more appropriate sequences such as the more challenging bi-clausals at T2 and beyond, supports the case for introducing these as formulaic wholes during input.

Direct strategies in the form of, '*I want*', '*I need*', also offer a way to formulate a request in an economical way, with much less processing effort (Lee-Wong, 1994). Nevertheless, direct strategies occur infrequently in the present data set, failing to corroborate earlier research. It is plausible that Brown and Levinson's imposition variables may account for this contradiction. According to Lee-Wong (1994), it would not be appropriate for Chinese speakers to use direct strategies in high imposition contexts, as presented in the test scenarios. Infrequent occurrence of direct strategy use is not entirely unexpected then in this study given the high status interlocutors. This gives the impression that Brown and Levinson's variables are indeed important considerations for Chinese speakers, mirroring previous observations (Yu, 1999).

The examples which follow to illustrate these points are labelled according to scenario / time (T) / group (CAPT, PAPER, control) / participant number (P). The data set reveals all responses employing direct strategies, independent of time period,

received the lowest scores of 1 or 2. This is likely to be attributed to the inappropriate use of directness (Sc3/T1/CAPT/P3; Sc1/T1/PAPER/P1), even when all other requisite conditions are satisfied (Sc2/T2/PAPER/P12). The latter case of Chinese L1 transfer dictates directness is commonly softened with the use of ‘please’ (Wang, 2011), as demonstrated in the first example in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1. Examples of direct strategy use in the request data.

| Scenario: Classroom access | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| T1 | PAPER: <i>Excuse me sir. I left my mobile phone in the classroom but the building is closed. So I want you to open the door please.</i> (average rater score = 1) |
| Scenario: Essay extension | |
| T2 | PAPER: <i>I'm sorry to bother you. I didn't complete the essay. I'm sick and bad coughing last week so it's my fault. I want another time for my essay. It won't happen again.</i> (average rater score = 2) |
| Scenario: Book a study room | |
| T1 | CAPT: <i>Excuse me lady. I want to find out how to book a study room.</i> (average rater score = 1) |

The second main request device to benefit considerably from instruction concerns the external modifier, *self-criticism* (see Table 9.2 reporting T1-T2 changes for participants P9 and P1). Unlike the polite core requests which featured in all scenarios, self-criticism featured only in the ‘classroom access’ scenario so this was likely to be a contextually-sensitive device to mitigate the high imposition and social distance. Whether participants were insensitive or perhaps had a different perception of the situation is unclear, but self-criticism as a mitigating device has not been reported as a feature of Chinese requests in earlier work (see Table 2.1). This example is illustrative of the necessity to have cross-cultural awareness to inform linguistic choices.

Table 9.2. Comparisons of self-criticism strategy use in the request data T1-T2.

| Scenario: Classroom access | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|---|
| T1 | CAPT: P9 | Sorry. My mobile phone has been left in a classroom. Can I go to the classroom to take my phone? (average rater score = 2) |
| T2 | CAPT P9 | I'm very sorry. I left my mobile phone in a classroom. It's my fault. I was wondering if you can open the building for me? (average rater score = 5) |
| T1 | PAPER: P1 | Hi. I have something wrong. My mobile phone was left in a classroom. But I cannot enter because now is too late to come in. So I want to go to classroom to find my phone. (average rater score = 1) |
| T2 | PAPER: P1 | Excuse me. Would it be possible to open the building for me? I am so sorry for asking you to do that. I have left my phone in the classroom. It's my fault. (average rater score = 4) |

Moderate improvements in request production can be observed with *alerters* (internal modifier), *explicit apologies*, and *grounders* (both external modifiers). All appear to be moderately salient for participants, pre-instruction. The social expectation to use appropriate address terms in Chinese culture (Lee-Wong, 1994) seems to have been transferred to the participants' requests in this data, though a shift to more formulaic expressions at T2, as described in section 6.2, may have been deemed more appropriate. In terms of external modification devices, both *explicit apologies* and *grounders* (explanations) have both been reported as common devices used to mitigate the imposition of a request and to mark politeness (Lin, 2009; Yu, 1999). The data in the present study supports this claim with around 50% of all learners employing grounders and at least 50% of participants employing explicit apologies at T1 in the relevant scenarios.

Another trend within the data is the variability of changes in non-target-like features of request language. Whilst all the features evidence some post-instruction decline for

the experimental groups, it was noted that there were varying degrees of success with which this was achieved (see section 6.3). Specifically, participants were able to revise their use of: i) ability modals, ii) direct strategies and iii) speaker-oriented perspective more successfully than their use of iv) explicit apologies and v) because-therefore pattern of information sequencing. It is likely that the former group of language features evidenced a greater decline as a direct result of the formulaic polite request expressions which were explicitly introduced as part of the instruction. These expressions typically comprised past tense modals and bi-clausal structures, as described above. Specifically, the instruction introduced the phrases; '*Would you mind*', '*Do you mind*', '*I was wondering if*', '*Would it be possible to*' (high power-distance-imposition variables) and '*Is it OK if*', '*Can I*', '*Could I*' (low power-distance-imposition variables). Consequently, ability modals, direct strategies, and speaker-oriented perspectives decrease post-instruction or are completely removed from the interlanguage, as learners adopt the relevant pre-fabricated wholes. In contrast, instances of *apologies* and *because-therefore information sequencing* remain high, although there is no evidence to suggest this reflected in lower scores.

The success of adopting these formulaic expressions lends support to research claims concerning their importance for effective communication (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Schmitt, 2004, Wray, 2008) and underlines how much formulaic language can, in fact, be found in speech acts such as requests (Wang, 2011). That the learners did not always have native-like command of these formulaic expressions post-instruction (see Table 9.3), but were still successful based on the raters' scores, raises two interesting points. Firstly, there does appear to be a social expectation that conventionalised expressions are used, as outlined in section 3.4. The influence of formulaic expressions is further underlined in that simply attempting to employ them, though not always syntactically or grammatically correct, was still considered positive, as reflected in the high raters' scores.

Table 9.3. Examples of non-target-like conventional expressions in the request data.

| Scenario: Classroom access | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| T2 | PAPER: P4 | <i>Excuse me sir. I'm a student here. I left my phone in a classroom. Could you possible open the door of the building for me? I'm very thank you for this.</i> (average rater score 4.5) |
| T2 | CAPT: P18 | <i>I'm so sorry that I left my mobile phone in the classroom. I was wonder if I can get my phone. It's my fault. It won't happen again.</i> (average rater score = 4) |
| Scenario: Essay extension | | |
| T3 | PAPER: P6 | <i>Sorry to bother you. I'm very sorry about that not completed my essay because I was sick these days. Would it be possibly to give me some extra for me to do this?</i> (average rater score = 5) |
| T4 | CAPT: P5 | <i>I'm very sorry about that because I spend more time to get some information. It's my fault. Would you mind to give me extra time? Thank you.</i> (average rater score = 4) |
| Scenario: Book a study room | | |
| T2 | CAPT: P11 | <i>I'm sorry. I don't know how to find out how to book a study room. Do you mind to help me find it?</i> (average rater score = 4) |
| T2 | CAPT: P5 | <i>Excuse me. Could you mind tell me how to book a study room. I'm a new student so I don't know how to do it.</i> (average rater score = 5) |

The second point concerns the perception of pragmatic competence versus grammatical competence for successful communication. As highlighted by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), ESL tutors in the host community overwhelmingly favoured pragmatic ability over grammatical ability, whilst the reverse was true for EFL tutors in the at-home environment. This perception of the importance of pragmatic awareness seems true for this data and the examples presented above. Thomas' (1983) seminal paper, seen as a driver of pragmatic studies, provides an

emphatic distinction between the consequences of pragmatic and grammatical errors: “while grammatical error may reveal a speaker to be a less than proficient language user, pragmatic failure reflects badly on him/her as a person” (p. 96-97). Academic contexts where regular staff-student contact takes place may be particularly sensitive to personal impressions, further highlighting the need to develop sufficient competency to produce pragmatically appropriate requests.

The non-target-like request features which evidence a much smaller decline in frequency may be attributed to implicit as opposed to explicit learning. Neither *apologies* nor *information sequencing* was explicitly targeted during the intervention, but instead were there to be implicitly learned through the specific expressions introduced and discussions of appropriate request language. It is plausible that, as learners were not specifically guided to notice these features or when to use them, that not every learner was able to adjust their existing practice. Consequently, these non-target-like features evidence a slower decline which further underlines the importance of explicit awareness-raising techniques, following Schmidt’s (1993) noticing hypothesis, which appears to be best facilitated by explicit instruction.

The final features to be discussed here concern the *underuse of internal modification* and the associated *overuse of external modification*. Both features are found to be inextricably linked as studies report Chinese learners typically rely on external modification at the expense of internal modification, though the reverse pattern is evident in native-speaker request production (Lin, 2009; Wang, 2011). Lee-Wong’s (1994) findings that the majority of *internal modification* is realised through relatively few strategies such as *please*, *apologies*, and address terms is also confirmed in this study’s data set. *Intensifiers* also feature to some degree as a means of increasing impact. The data yields no evidence, however, of *downtoners* or *hesitators*, as employed by NS, suggesting these need specific instructional attention.

Regarding *external modification*, this has been shown to be the preferred way for Chinese learners to increase politeness and the chances of the request being carried out (Chen, 2006; Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). The first explanation offered relates to previous comments that internal modification typical of NS is too complex and challenging for NNS. External supportive moves, on the other hand, are seen as an easier opportunity to achieve similar levels of mitigation and politeness: a strategy transferred from L1 culture where small talk and external modifiers preceding the request are the norm. Consequently, Wang (2011) notes that when making requests, the frequency of supportive moves such as ‘grounders’ typically increases for Chinese learners. A reported drawback of this reliance on external modification is requests which exceed typical native-speaker length and are often described as verbose (Chen 2006; Wang, 2011). Multiple grounders, in particular, are often the cause of extraneous detail within non-target requests. In this data set, rather than frequency, it seems the *content of grounders* was more influential on the scores, according to the raters (Table 9.4). In general, with all other requisite strategies being equal, explanations which are out of the speaker’s control appear more acceptable than those over which the speaker had a direct influence. For instance, explanations accredited to sickness were preferable to personal reasons such as being busy with friends, as the following examples illustrate;

Table 9.4. Examples of Grounders in the request data.

| Scenario: Classroom access | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| T2 | CAPT: P8 | <i>Sorry to bother you. I haven't complete my essay. I'm sorry because I was sick. Could you mind give me extra time to do it? (average rater score = 4)</i> |
| T3 | PAPER: P10 | <i>Yes, I'm very sorry I didn't complete my essay because I have some troubles of my bank. This is my fault. Would it be possible to have extra time? Thank you. (average rater score = 4).</i> |

| | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| T2 | CAPT: P4 | <i>Excuse me. Sorry to bother you professor but I'm really sorry for my essay because yesterday it's my best friend's party and I have to celebrate with her. It's my fault. Do you mind giving me extra time?</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| T2 | PAPER: P16 | <i>I'm so sorry I not complete my essay. Yesterday I go out and play with my friend so I can't complete the essay. It's my fault and would you mind giving me extra time? I promise it won't happen again.</i> (average rater score = 2) |

A further cause of verbosity is said to be attributed to NNS insecurities concerning their language ability; repetition and lengthier utterances can be a compensatory strategy to ensure the message is communicated (Wang, 2011), as in the following examples in Table 9.5;

Table 9.5. Examples of strategy repetition in the request data.

| Scenario: Book a study room | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---|
| T2 | CAPT: P4 | <i>Yes, I was wondering if you could help me to find out how to book a study room and I want to study in the library and use the School's internet services but I don't know how to do it so could you please help me to book a study room?</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| T3 | PAPER: P19 | <i>Yes, hello. I wonder if you can help me book a room for study because I didn't have a living room at home so I just asking could you help me book a study room. Thank you.</i> (average rater score = 2). |

To sum up, the data mainly support existing request research in terms of the effectiveness of explicit instruction. This was particularly evident with the underdeveloped T1 request strategies and non-target-like forms, attributed to challenges with L1-L2 mapping. Exposure to the L2 did not appear to be influential in the acquisition of request language without intervention. Language features considered requisite for successful production of requests, in the academic scenarios

presented, included observing politeness, use of formulaic language, quality of the *grounders*, use of internal modification and the need to avoid verbosity. In contrast, despite the data showing production of explicit apologies, information-sequencing and the grammatical accuracy of formulaic language was at times non-target-like, these appeared to have less relevance, and did not impact on the evaluation of the overall request responses.

9.1.2 Apology language.

In terms of the apology strategies produced by the participants, a general pattern of performance was observable evidencing both cultural convergence and divergence in the use of apology strategies. Firstly, where requisite production of strategies was salient to the learners at T1, all participants, regardless of group, continued to produce this language throughout the test stages. Slight improvements were evident for the experimental groups who had received instruction at the posttest stages, however. Areas which were already part of the groups' knowledge base include '*offer of repair*' and '*expressions of regret*': both of which are reported as being a universalistic feature across a number of languages (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, Trosborg, 1995).

Formulaic expressions such as '*I'm sorry*', are further reported as being one of the earliest chunks acquired by NNS, even at beginner level (Chang, 2010) which may also account for its high frequency in this data. In fact, several studies have reported the preference for Japanese learners of English (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper & Ross, 1996; Kondo, 1997), Korean learners of English (Byon, 2006), and Catalan learners of English (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007) to produce multiple explicit apologies, or IFIDs, to humble the speaker and appeal to the hearer in an apology situation, signalling '*I'm sorry*' to be 'substantive' rather than 'ritualistic' (Goffman, 1971), and ensuring genuine regret is emphasised. In addition, this use of more than one IFID is reported to be the preferred way to intensify an

apology in positive-face language systems in comparison to British English which typically incorporate internal IFID adverbials such as '*really*', '*terribly*' to signal intensification, within a single apology, due to their 'highly routinised' nature (Aijmer, 1996; Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Nureddeen, 2008; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1995). High levels of these features of multiple IFIDs to intensify the apology also appear in the Chinese participants' data from the present study (Table 7.7), though these reduce by at least 50% following instruction. In this case, it is plausible that the raters considered multiple apologies to be excessive rather than a means of conveying apologetic sincerity, and this may have had a negative effect on their overall assessments of the responses, at the T1 phases. The frequency of adverbial use to intensify the IFID was generally constant throughout each time period for all groups. Most adverbials appeared in the missed meeting with tutor scenario > noisy party > lost library book, and learners tended to opt for the following adverbials, in the order; '*so*', '*very*', '*really*'; a preference mirrored in Chang's (2010) Chinese learners of English. What changed is the introduction of the adverbial '*terribly*', following instruction, though this failed to reach the same levels with no more than 20% of the learners employing this.

Secondly, where learners failed to produce the requisite language at T1, marked improvements were evident in the experimental groups' performance, highlighting the success of the treatment. Trosborg (1987) notes that a single routinised formula is inadequate when the offence goes beyond a certain level and other strategies are needed for redressive action. This is true of the DCT contexts in this study where there appeared to be an expectation from the raters that the explicit apology would be enhanced with other strategies in each scenario. This seems to have become salient to the participants through instruction. As a general observation, this improved performance was sustained to T3 but slightly decreased at T4. The 'most improved' strategies following treatment included '*admission of responsibility*' and '*promise of*

forbearance'. Both the former and the latter are said to inherently threaten positive face (Nureddeen, 2008), so it is plausible this is the reason for initial avoidance, given the positive politeness culture associated with China. Conversely, the control group failed to match the experimental groups' performance, maintaining consistently low production of the requisite language.

Interestingly, both experimental groups almost consistently adopted the sequencing of strategies introduced in the intervention when producing their apologies at the posttest stages (Table 9.6), regardless of the number of strategies chosen to realise it; *explicit apology* › *explanation* › *admission of responsibility* › *offer of repair* › *promise of forbearance*. The examples presented below are labelled according to scenario / time (T) / group (CAPT, PAPER, control) / participant number (P).

Table 9.6. Sequencing pattern of strategy use in the apology data.

| Scenario: Lost library book | | |
|--|--------|---|
| T2 | CAPT: | Excuse me. I'm very sorry (<i>explicit apology</i>). I have lost a book that I borrowed in the library. I think I left it some place but I couldn't find it (<i>explanation</i>). It's my fault. (<i>admission of responsibility</i>) I'll pay for it. (<i>offer of repair</i>). It won't happen again (<i>promise of forbearance</i>). |
| | P4 | |
| | | (average rater score = 5) |
| Scenario: Missed meeting with tutor | | |
| T2 | PAPER: | I'm so sorry for missing a meeting with you (<i>explicit apology</i>). Last Tuesday I suddenly had an important thing about my family but I forgot told you about it (<i>explanation</i>). It's my fault (<i>admission of responsibility</i>). I should send an email to you next time (<i>offer of repair</i>). It won't happen again (<i>promise of forbearance</i>). |
| | P10 | |
| | | (average rater score = 4) |

This sequencing appears to have been an accessible formula for the participants to adopt, memorise and be able to reproduce, when required. The results are that their

utterances are successfully organised and their messages clear. Regarding language choices within these strategies, when formulaic expressions were taught such as, *'It's my fault'*, *'It won't happen again'*, these are reproduced most frequently and successfully within the apology utterances of the experimental groups, although at times the participants do not have complete command of them; *'It won't be to happen again'*, *'It won't be happened again'*. Even early research has shown English apologies to be extremely formulaic, governed by relatively few lexical items and syntactic patterns (e.g., Aijmer, 1996; Holmes, 1990; Trosborg, 1995). This may account for the success with which the instructed participants were able to master and reproduce these expressions successfully in a short period of time, which mirrors Sykes' (2009, 2013) that simplicity of formula facilitates learning at the lexical level, but is not always found at the form level with accuracy (Johnson & deHaan, 2013). These findings also offer further support to the positive benefits behind learning language as self-contained wholes, rather than individual items (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Kecskes, 2000; Schmitt, 2004; Wray, 2008).

By comparison, the control group is less successful at achieving organisation and clarity of message, without the benefit of instruction. The control group responses, also mostly begin the remedial action with an IFID such as 'I'm sorry'. Beyond this, there is no obvious pattern of strategy choice and order, which in itself is not necessarily a problem. However, supporting previous research (Chang, 2010; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1995), the data reveals the apologies produced by the control group on many occasions are verbose, whose messages are often impeded by disorganisation and structured with inappropriate piecemeal items of grammar and lexis extracted from their existing knowledge (see Table 9.7).

Table 9.7. Non-target-like pattern of strategy use in the apology data.

| Scenario: Noisy party | |
|------------------------------|--|
| T2 | Control: <i>Excuse me sir. I'm here to apologise to you because I had a party at my flat with my friend and there were students complaining to you about the noise and I think it's true that it's my mistake and I promise it won't again. I hope you can excuse me and I hope you can accept my sincere apology. Words can't describe how sorry I am. I wonder if there's anything I can do to make up for my mistake.</i> |
| P6 | |
| | (average rater score = 2) |

In addition, mirroring Linnell et al's (1992) findings, the control group often produced functionally adequate but syntactically inadequate forms (Table 9.8):

Table 9.8. Non-target-like linguistic forms in the apology data.

| Scenario: Lost library book | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| T2 | Control: <i>Yes madam. I lost a book. I am so sorry about that (explicit apology). Maybe I will try and find this book and if I still cannot find it, I will make compensation to this (offer of repair). It won't happen this thing again (promise of forbearance).</i> |
| P14 | |
| | (average rater score = 3) |

Regarding the non-target-like language features targeted during the instruction, two main findings are evident. Firstly, the instruction appears to have triggered a declining effect of inappropriate language use for the experimental groups by making the participants consciously aware of L1/L2 differences and the effects of negative L1 transfer. The CAPT and PAPER groups' production of '*inappropriate requests for forgiveness*', '*inappropriate address terms*' and the '*because-therefore*' pattern have all but disappeared at the posttest stages after these interlanguage features were targeted as infelicitous during treatment. '*Inappropriate address forms*' within the

alterer, in particular, have been replaced by suitable alternative fixed expressions, serving the same purpose of gaining the interlocutor's attention. Phrases such as, '*Sorry to bother you*', '*Excuse me*', were included in the instruction and subsequently adopted as more appropriate alternatives by the experimental groups.

Secondly, apology strategies reported to be underrepresented in L2 utterances have greatly increased as these become more salient for the experimental groups as key strategies to producing successful utterances. Research suggests that producing '*explanations*' is linguistically and cognitively demanding for learners (Trosborg, 1987; Chang, 2010). The data here shows an increase of around 50% following instruction but, interestingly, the participants only rely on a limited range of explanations such as '*having something important to deal with*' or '*being sick*', perhaps indicating this is a more complex strategy to master. From a cultural perspective, explanations and making excuses for an offense are reported to be uncommon in Asian cultures as these strategies conflict with the need to be deferent in a face-threatening situation (Kondo, 1997; Kim, 2008). This could further account for the low T1 production. Contrary to these positive outcomes, the control group continue to exhibit non-target-like behaviour throughout the 12-week period with little change to their strategy or languages choices.

This present study has found little or no evidence of other non-target-like language features reported in earlier apology research, particularly those identified in Linnel et al.'s (1992) study, namely; *inappropriate use of 'I apologise'* or phrase for the context, or *excessive offers of repair and imperatives*. Contrasting the Linnel et al. (1992) study, given the high status interlocutors and contexts featured in this study, it is unsurprising that there are no instances of '*I apologise*' being used inappropriately as its production does not appear out of place in any of the situations presented in the DCTs in this study. In fact, the raters awarded high scores to many responses containing this expression. Similarly, as shown in Table 9.9, there was only one

occurrence of an inappropriate phrase (T2 PAPER group participant) and two instances of the use of an imperative as a directive (T2 control group participants).

Table 9.9. Other non-target-like apology features in the present study.

| Inappropriate phrase | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Noisy party (T2) | PAPER: P15 | <i>Hi my mate. I'm sorry do a lot of noise in the hall. I will tell to him to don't make the noise. Sorry'</i> (average rater score = 1). |
| Use of an imperative | | |
| Missed tutor appointment (T2) | Control: P5 | <i>'That's why I'm here. I want to apologise for it. I should have emailed you for the miss but I forgot. Please arrange another one for me'.</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| Missed tutor appointment (T2) | Control: P17 | <i>'First of all I'm sorry I missed the meeting from last Tuesday. I forgot to sent the email to you. Please tell me some information from it.'</i> (average rater score = 2). |

Six instances of excessive offers of repair (highlighted in bold) are found in the T1 (CAPT x 1) and T2 data (CAPT x 1, control x 3) but such infrequent occurrences (from two participants) are not noteworthy, aside from presenting these as socially awkward examples to add to existing corpora on this feature (Table 9.10):

Table 9.10. Excessive offers of repair in the apology data.

| Excessive offer of repair | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Missed tutor appointment (T1) | CAPT: P24 | <i>I'm very sorry. I missed a meeting with you. But I didn't email you to explain. Now I want to give you a formal apology. And this is my gift for you, a potted plant. I hope you'll like.</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| Missed tutor appointment (T2) | CAPT: P24 | <i>I'm very sorry I missed a meeting with you but I didn't email you to explain. It's my fault. Last Thursday I have to go to hospital and this is my gift for you, a potted plant. I hope you'll like and next time I'll tell you immediately.</i> (average rater score = 2). |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Missed tutor appointment (T2) | Control: P6 | <i>I'm awfully sorry about it and I feel bad about it. I can do anything I can to make it up to you and please accept my sincere apology.</i> (average rater score = 1.5). |
| Lost library book (T2) | Control: P6 | <i>Excuse me madam. I'm sorry that I've lost a book I borrowed from the library. It's all my fault. I will do anything I can to make it up for you.</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| Noisy party (T2) | Control: P6 | <i>Excuse me sir. I'm here to apologise to you because I had a party at my flat with my friend and there were students complaining to you about the noise and I think it's true that it's my mistake and I promise it won't again. I hope you can excuse me and I hope you can accept my sincere apology. Words can't describe how sorry I am. I wonder if there's anything I can do to make up for my mistake.</i> (average rater score = 2). |
| Noisy party (T1) | Control: P1 | Oh sir. I'm so sorry to have such a big noises to disturb my neighbours and disturb you. I appreciate that it's my fault and I don't do that anymore, if that's ok. I think I should get punish and help you to do something to ease the pain. Again I'm so sorry to do that and I hope you can forgive us. (average rater score = 2). |

The data have highlighted several key findings. Firstly, whilst the claims for universality of language can be attested to in this study to some extent (inclusion of 'explicit apologies' and 'offers of repair'), this is outweighed by evidence in this study to suggest language use is culture-specific when analysing apology production for Chinese learners of English. Secondly, development of appropriate apology production may be particularly hindered by the inadequate application of first language positive-face value systems (e.g., China) to second language negative-politeness value systems (e.g., the UK) as a cause of miscommunication. The findings evidence that, at T1, most participants fall back on their first language pragmatic systems at some point, resulting in their utterances being negatively judged for appearing over-polite or impolite. Thirdly, this non-target-like behaviour largely continues for the control group during the 12-week period who have not benefitted from the training received by the experimental groups.

Overall, explicit pragmatic instruction has been found to be highly effective for both experimental groups (CAPT and PAPER) for developing successful request and apology language. Specifically, the results demonstrate that underdeveloped pragmalinguistic strategies at T1 improved significantly post-instruction at T2. For requests, these include the improved use of bi-clausal structures such as, '*I was wondering if*'. For apologies, these include expressions for not repeating an offence such as, '*It won't happen again*'. Improved sociopragmatic competence is also evident with participants seemingly becoming more sensitised to the context-dependent nature of strategy choice following treatment. Instructed participants appear more aware of the importance of strategies such as self-criticism (requests), admissions of responsibility (apologies) and promises not to repeat offences (apologies) in particular situations where, pre-instruction, L1 interference may have been accountable for unawareness or avoidance of these strategies. Negative L1 transfer seemed also to be the main factor for the non-target-like features of requests and apologies summarised from previous empirical investigations. Post-instruction, all the non-target language features identified at T1 evidenced some decrease, particularly at the lexical level.

Despite the improved experimental group performance T1-T2, marginal attrition in most language areas was evident over T3 and T4, though the results still indicated an improvement on T1 levels. This suggests sustained, spaced classroom practice may be more conducive for longer term recall than intensive, isolated treatments which lack continued attention and practice. Alongside the recommendation that instruction and practice are regularly revisited to maximise learning potential, that the control group failed to make any observable gains in the absence of instruction, supports the claims that pragmatic competence is indeed a difficult area to master (Cohen, 2008; Taguchi, 2015), and that sociopragmatic competence, in particular, may be more

challenging and tends to develop at a much later stage in natural conditions (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Shardakova, 2005).

Whilst not a specific focus of this thesis, incorporating the instruction of multiple speech acts within one treatment has proved effective, and some insights into how some speech acts may be more amenable to either lesson design from a practitioner's perspective, or to learning from a student's perspective, have emerged. For instance, when researching and designing the instructional materials for both speech acts, the complexity of the number of request strategies, and position within and surrounding the head act, was more time-consuming to organise into a practical set of training materials. On the other hand, the set of five main apology strategies with accompanying formulaic expressions were easily fashioned into a convenient 'five-step plan' to present to the learners, within the relatively short instructional period. Indeed, the results show participants did appear more well-disposed to the accessible way in which the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of apologies were packaged and delivered within the intervention, than with requests. In addition, a reduction of non-target-like features of apologies was evident to a greater effect than with requests.

Linked to the issue of learnability, the success with which the experimental groups adopted request and apology formulaic expressions, and sustained their use, was an unexpected outcome of this study. The claims that formulaic language relieves pressure (Weinart, 1995) and is easily recalled (Kecskes, 2000a, 2000b) cannot be entirely verified in this study in the absence of any supporting data. However, suggestions that formulaic language is highly routinized (Pawley & Syder, 1983), and saves time and effort (Wray, 2000) seem to hold true in the findings presented. Most notably, the fact that the majority of formulaic expressions introduced were short, fixed strings of words seem to advantage the learners. The expressions appeared to be highly recognisable and required little processing to understand them. As a result,

the learners expanded their repertoire of formulaic expressions at T2, in comparison to the T1 performance which evidenced a limited repertoire, characterised by an overuse of a small number of basic formulaic expressions, as seen in previous studies (Wang, 2011; Yu, 1999). That the learners employed formulaic language but did not always use these expressions accurately is in line with earlier investigations (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009, Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Johnson & deHaan, 2013). What sets the results in this study apart is that the raters' assessments show that accuracy when producing formulaic expressions is *not* requisite to successful use. It appears the intention to employ appropriate expressions is adequately recognised, which placates the need for complete command of their grammatical forms, as long as the message is clear. This finding further acknowledges the importance of pragmatic competence over grammatical competence in the ESL setting, as reported previously (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

9.2 Discussion of research question 2

To what extent can computer-animated practice materials, eliciting an oral performance, contribute to the short- and long-term production of requests and apologies, in comparison to traditional paper-based activities, eliciting a written performance?

Within the explicit instructional framework, the two experimental groups employed (CAPT and PAPER) were subjected to the same treatment conditions, but differentiated by practice materials. This allowed for a closer examination of different training approaches and any subsequent effects on request and apology production between the groups.

Whilst the intervention appears to have had a positive effect on the PAPER group's pragmatic development of apologies, the CAPT group intervention seems to have been more beneficial (see Appendix 10), based on both the NS raters' assessment of

the responses and the higher number of CAPT participants producing requisite mitigating strategies for *requests* (+8.3 learners at T2, +6.6 learners at T3, +3.3 learners at T4) and *apologies* (+9.6 learners at T2, +7.6 learners at T3, +7.0 learners at T4).

Regarding short-term recall of requests and apologies, both groups benefitted from the instruction but the CAPT group, who used computer-animated practice materials, almost always outperformed the PAPER group at T2 in terms of the quality of response, according to the raters. Statistical analyses of the T1-T2 rater differences evidenced this in several ways, including gain score differences between the CAPT and PAPER groups which were found to be statistically significant.

In the case of long-term recall, results were less decisive as both groups evidenced declines in the production of requisite strategies at T3 and T4. Overall, however, the CAPT group still maintained some advantage with several more participants producing the appropriate request and apology language on each scenario. The decrease in sustainability of the input for both experimental groups suggests the need for regular attention and review beyond the treatment cycle.

When investigating the content of responses produced by the two groups, and the superior CAPT performance, the picture is clearer. This was a useful exercise to determine the reasons behind group variability, and demonstrated that the CAPT group produced better quality responses in terms of appropriacy, and on more occasions following treatment. For instance, the CAPT group produced at least 10% more requisite request and apology strategies at T2 but, in some scenarios, production of requisite strategies improved as much as 40%. In addition, non target-like features of request and apology language evidenced a greater decline in comparison to the PAPER group.

Given that both of these experimental groups were assessed as comparable at the start of the study, and experienced almost identical levels of L2 contact during the instructional period, it suggests the CAPT group have been advantaged by the well-documented links between motivation and learning success when exposed to technology-enhanced instruction. Six months beyond the treatment phase, anecdotal feedback from several participants, who cited examples of successful request or apology post-instruction encounters, suggests the intervention itself was effective and valuable. The participants also made reference to the innovative training materials used in class. These comments support the positive results from the pilot perception questionnaire. Administered with a comparable participant group, '*enjoyable*', '*realistic to real life*' and '*helpful for developing interactive skills with NS*' were the top three criterion for preferring the CAPT as a learning tool. These equate to the claims that CALL materials are more motivating (Taguchi, 2015), provide authentic, meaningful interaction (Belz, 2008), and offer low risk, simulated opportunities for communicative practice (Sykes et al., 2008). Revisiting Erben et al's (2008) reference to contextualised learning, it is reasonable to suggest that in this study, as with those previously reviewed, the CAPT instrument seems to have acted as a scaffolding mechanism for learning by offering greater exposure to meaningful and highly contextualised input. As Cercone (2006) states, "learning and memory are context driven [and] learning should be meaningful for the student." (p. 306). With these contributory factors in mind, *both* the mode of delivery, with the enhanced audiovisual cues, and the learners' positive experiences of the innovative computer-animated tool, may be the underlying reasons for the CAPT group's overall success.

9.3 Discussion of research question 3

What role does the study abroad environment play in the pragmatic development of requests and apologies in Chinese learners of English at a British Higher Education institution during a study abroad stay?

In addition to the intervention, the language contact questionnaire captured participant engagement in the L2 during the SA period. Acknowledging that the findings presented are based on participant self-reports, the limitations of which are discussed in chapter ten, the data seem to evidence that increased engagement in English use, with individual variation, is concomitant with prolonged SA stay, at least for the participants in this study. These observations support findings in much SA research (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bella, 2011; Taguchi, 2008a). Further, whether the groups received instruction or not, does not seem to have had an overall impact on these findings, as evidenced by the lack of statistically significant differences and negligible effect sizes between group behaviour at any of the test stages. The main findings from each test stage (T1-T4) are summarised below.

Given the participants are basing their T1 evaluations on their English use pre-arrival to the UK, it is not unexpected that '*service personnel*' and '*stranger*' are interlocutors with whom they have little need or opportunity to interact in English. Despite the participants reporting communication in English with '*instructors*' and '*classmates*' to be their most frequent activity at the pretest stage, the low marks awarded (equated to '*a few times a year*'), is still somewhat surprising and suggests, at least from a spoken English perspective, learners are unlikely to have acquired the levels of experience of using English interactively, needed for a SA stay. The traditional Chinese teaching and learning practices may account for these results. Firstly, according to Chen, Warden and Chang (2005) the emphasis in the Chinese classroom is often reported to be on reading, writing and grammar to enhance exam

performance, at the expense of oral skills. Gu and Maley (2008) posit Chinese learners can face an academically challenging transition from classroom-based, textbook-focussed learning in China, to the student-centred, interactive demands of UK-based teaching and learning. Secondly, the different cultures of learning where high achievers in China can rely on memorisation techniques are learning strategies not likely to prepare SA students for the benefits of learning through social interaction (Gao, 2006). Thirdly, according to Wen and Clement (2003), a reluctance to communicate is inherent in Chinese cultural values, supporting the data from the present study which reveals, in contrast to speaking in English, listening and reading are more popular activities at T1. The findings further suggest watching English films and listening to English songs to be popular resources for English as at least a '*monthly*' activity on average for the participants at T1. This is a trend which could be exploited more in the Chinese classroom for the benefit of English language learning.

It is encouraging to witness much greater engagement, on at least a weekly basis, with the specific interlocutors at T2, six weeks beyond arrival. This does not support findings of a reluctance to engage in the host environment as documented in previous investigations (Barron, 2006; Cheng & Fox, 2008; Gao, 2006; Myles & Cheng, 2003). Increased engagement in English with *service personnel* and *instructors*, in particular, is likely to be symptomatic of the study abroad stay which necessitates independent interaction in a wide range of academic and public encounters. Although institutional support is available for handling more complex tasks such as dealing with visa issues, and often SA participants look for support from their own strong L1 networks, learners must still interact with native speakers to some extent to get day-to-day tasks done. This is illustrated in the post-arrival (+ six weeks) findings demonstrating learners in this study self-report to frequently engage with all the interlocutors who might be considered key in a study abroad stay. The only exception to this increase is interacting in English with '*friends*'. Inside the

classroom, the evidence suggests learners are encouraged to use English with their peers within that setting. Outside the classroom, however, findings from other SA studies confirm anecdotal evidence from the researcher's own institution that SA participants are most likely to interact with other users of the same L1 and cultural background, as noted by Ranta and Meckelborg (2013), Cheng and Fox (2008), amongst others. The popularity of watching English films and listening to English songs is maintained from T1 but increases in frequency to at least a 'weekly' activity six weeks after arrival in the UK.

At T4, 12 weeks beyond arrival in the UK, interaction with '*friends*' does become a weekly activity, whilst interaction with service personnel decreases slightly. The former result may be explained by increased confidence in using English by this stage, the likelihood social connections have been made after three months, and encouragement from tutors to interact as much as possible outside the classroom. Using English as a lingua franca in interaction with other international students could also explain this as learners have had the opportunity to develop their friendship networks in class and within international student societies, for instance. The latter could be explained by the lack of need to engage with such a range of service personnel post-SA arrival. Certainly in the first few weeks, there are a number of formalities such as opening a bank account which necessitate face-to-face NS interaction. Post-arrival, this is less so and, in fact, many typical service encounters can be facilitated online which, increasingly, even applies to shopping for food. This circumvents the need to interact face-to-face with service personnel on as regular a basis. Contact with English via online interaction should not be underestimated as a rich source of input. Indeed, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) call for extending the LCP domains of L2 contact to include online platforms and social media.

The findings from part A illustrating increased frequency of engagement in the SA environment with the lapse of each six-week period, support the overall trend in part

B for the participants to self-report improvement in their listening, speaking, reading, writing and interaction skills also across these time periods. Notwithstanding the results should be interpreted with the caveat that perceived levels of skill is not that same as measured levels of skill, the findings still illustrate a concomitant improvement in the participants' self-evaluations of their listening and interaction skills, which is likely to be the outcome of this greater engagement in the SA environment. Mirroring the findings in Part A, the intervention does not seem to have affected the groups' self-assessments of these skills in Part B, as comparability between the groups is generally evident with only marginal differences.

No observable change in group behaviour was evident for the control group at the end of the treatment period, contrasting the results found with the instructed groups (Appendix 10). This finding corroborates the need for intervention for pragmatic development for several reasons. First, no link has been identified in this study between exposure to the second language environment and natural acquisition of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of language needed to produce successful requests or apologies. This lack of development may be indicative of the short 12-week period covered in this study. Felix-Brasdefer (2004) and Schauer (2009) also reported SA stays of at least nine months were needed for signs of pragmatic development. Specifically regarding apologies, Kondo (1997) reported Japanese learners needing a one year US study abroad period to show signs of approximating aspects of target-like strategy choice and perceptions of contextual factors with apologies. Second, learners may not have been provided with the requisite feedback needed to change their language behaviours, particularly with sociopragmatic feedback which may require a more sensitive approach. Third, L2 contact, and pragmatic development, may have been impeded by issues of self-confidence and the preference to stay in L1 groups, as earlier studies with Chinese

learners have reported (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Myles & Cheng, 2003; Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013; Wen & Clement, 2003).

In summary, and based on the findings of the self-reporting questionnaire, all three groups (CAPT, PAPER, control) significantly increased their L2 contact over the three months at comparable rates, and assessed their reading, writing, speaking, listening and interaction skills as also developing concomitantly with the lapse of each time period. This demonstrates that far from isolating themselves and withdrawing to their own first language groups (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Myles & Cheng, 2003) this Chinese cohort reports to embrace the study abroad environment, interacting on a daily to weekly basis in English, depending on the activity. For this study, it is plausible that although a generally significant increase in English contact for all groups is observed, this contact may not have always linked directly to the type of scenarios captured in the tests, or learners did not always capitalise on the opportunities for practising requests and apologies which the environment may have provided. Communication in service encounters, for example, was significantly increased for both experimental groups but this can of course include a range of situations within and around the academic setting. It is also possible that a longitudinal study of longer duration may yield different results and that the three-month period may not have been sufficient for a positive correlation to be found for these particular speech acts, as noted in previous studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Schauer, 2009).

10. Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to explore the efficacy of explicit teaching methods for improving the request and apology performance of Chinese native speakers during a UK study abroad, academic sojourn. Within this, the thesis further considered the role of differentiated teaching materials and the influence of the second language environment for improving pragmatic performance. This concluding chapter begins with section 10.1 which outlines the contributions this study has made to our understanding of pragmatic development from theoretical, methodological and pedagogical perspectives. The limitations and suggested future lines of research are then summarised (10.2), followed by concluding remarks (10.3).

10.1 Contributions

This thesis extends current knowledge in several ways. This section first reports on the theoretical contributions of the study (10.1.1), before turning to the methodological contributions (10.1.2). As one of the drivers of this study was to identify how direct application of the results might maximise learners' SA experiences in the UK, section 10.1.3 outlines what contributions have been made to enhance instructed SA programmes.

10.1.1 Theoretical contribution.

Chapter one outlined aspects of SLA theory which underpinned the present study, namely *instructed SLA*, Schmidt's (1993) *noticing hypothesis*, Swain's (1996) *output hypothesis*, and Long's (1996) *interaction hypothesis*. This study has provided new empirical support for all of the above theories in a number of unique ways: the instructional training materials for both speech acts were designed to promote inductive learning whereby the participants undertook self-discovery tasks to *notice* linguistic features, and worked out patterns which were regularly *communicatively practised*. Teaching two speech acts alongside one another is unique to

interventional studies and has been shown to be highly effective. Applying knowledge to simulated *interactive* language production tasks through the use of virtual role plays is also a unique feature of this study. Combining these three theoretical stances, within the unique instructional design and resources, seems to have had a positive effect on the performance of the instructed groups.

The study also provided specific ways of optimising classroom learning in ISLA. That the participants were offered contextualised opportunities for language practice, simulating situations which they might encounter themselves in an academic environment, may have been effective. One of the features underpinning ISLA is how can instructional effects be maximised in the classroom? One such way is to manipulate the learning conditions, as described in chapter one. To my knowledge, this is first study to incorporate differentiated practice materials to manipulate learner engagement, and may also be unique to the British academic SA setting. The findings indicated that the use of technology via the CAPT activities enhanced learning and recall of the request and apology input, but also provides clearer evidence that some speech acts may be more amenable to instruction than others.

This study also enhances our understanding of the role social interaction in the environment plays in pragmatic development. Tracking the participants' L2 contact at the pre-, post-, and delayed-test phases, alongside the intervention, is a distinct design feature of this study. The claim that pragmatic development is not easily acquired in a natural environment seems to have been verified with the control group's inability to advance their request and apology pragmatic knowledge, despite reporting that their social interaction progressively increased over time. The short three month experimental period may account for these results, or the quality or frequency of opportunities to use request and apology language, at least in this study. The data suggest that despite efforts to engage in the L2, these interactions may not necessarily supply what is needed to advance pragmatic knowledge: some aspects

such as requests and apologies may need initial (and repeated) stimulation from instructional input. This finding makes an original contribution to the SA research and existing literature on instructed second language programmes.

10.1.2 Methodological contribution.

This thesis addressed a number of methodological gaps in ILP research. First, the original design of the intervention, which included multiple experimental groups, successfully facilitated an analysis of not only explicit instruction, but comparisons of differentiated language practice materials to measure their effectiveness against one another. In addition, employing more than one group provided for a larger data set to also compare the two instructional targets side by side, and the ease with which requests and apologies could be taught and learned. To the researcher's knowledge, the use of multiple experimental groups for these ends has not been attempted in ILP research to date. This study therefore provides a foundation on which to build similar methodological designs in the future to further our understanding of the effectiveness of pragmatics training materials and the amenability of different pragmatic targets to instruction.

Second, the study introduced a methodological innovation in the form of the CAPT to train students and elicit learner data. Work is needed to refine the instrument but it has gone some way to creating more authentic interactions through virtual interlocutors with native accents and dialects, and who displayed prosodic language features and non-verbal signals to enhance the simulated interaction. At the same time, the CAPT still retained the benefits of being able to effectively capture large amounts of data in a controlled setting. That the virtual role plays embedded within the tool were also adapted for classroom language practice materials demonstrated their flexibility to be used in multiple ways. There is additional scope for using the virtual role plays as self-access materials and investigating the efficacy of this approach for developing pragmatic competence outside of classroom-based learning.

For instance, Timpe-Laughlin, Wain and Schmidgall (2015), among others, provide detailed suggestions of how pragmatic training materials can be embedded within online platforms.

Finally, this study is only one of a few investigations comparing instruction versus exposure of requests and apologies in an SA setting. Furthermore, focusing on interlocutor perceptions when measuring the success of the request and apology responses, rather than comparing the learner data to their NS counterparts, is also rarely employed and therefore a unique feature of this investigation. Measuring performance through NS ratings also suited the main aim of the study which was to improve staff-student communication in a SA academic context, and avoided the assumption that total target-like convergence was either preferable or necessary for successful communication. In addition, a distinctive outcome of employing rating scales also diverted the focus to what pragmatic aspects were important to get right in order not to affect the outcomes of the request or apology, and which pragmatic infelicities were overlooked as nonessential. To my knowledge, this has not been directly addressed in previous studies. Due to the changing face of how English is used internationally (e.g., Cook, 2002), the debates surrounding the native-speaker ideal need to be considered more in ILP research design.

10.1.3 Pedagogical contribution.

The intervention employed in this study has provided unique evidence for both the design of instructional interventions and ways of maximising teaching and learning within it. This is important since it appears pragmatic knowledge of requests and apologies at least, does need initiating through formal instruction. Several frameworks for classroom-based teaching of pragmatics now exist (e.g., Cohen & Ishihara, 2010; Shively, 2010; Uso-Juan, 2010), and the one adopted for the present study (Uso-Juan, 2010) was found to be successful. Practitioners might be more

confident to pursue the inclusion of pragmatics on curricula as more studies such as this test the validity of instructional designs.

This study has contributed several distinctive insights into some of the specific ways learning could be maximised within an instructional programme;

- i) *Identification of interlanguage gaps in learners' pragmatic knowledge.*
Assessing aspects of pragmatic saliency and interlanguage gaps is useful at the beginning of the intervention to identify which pragmatic aspects need most instructional attention. Future investigations could take a systematic approach to this through some form of (pragmatic) needs analysis of the kind traditionally implemented in ELT (see historical overview in West, 1994).
- ii) *Formulae-based input may be particularly effective.* As Schmitt and Carter (2004) claim, using one or more formulaic sequences is the preferred realisation of many language functions such as requests and apologies. Taken together with the cognitive advantages of learning in this way (e.g., Wang, 2011; Wray, 2000), as discussed in section 3.4, the introduction of formulaic language proved highly successful in this study. An original aspect of this study is also that teaching learners what *not* to say and when *not* to say it, when formulating requests and apologies, is as equally as important as teaching learners how to get it right. This was addressed when non-target-like features of requests and apologies were highlighted within the instruction as potentially *hearer-alienating* (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007).
- iii) *The need for clarification of the learners' intended communicative goal and interlocutor expectations.* Teacher-student discussions need to instil learner confidence about realistic communicative goals, incorporating pragmatics, and how these might be best achieved inside and outside the

classroom. In addition, this study suggests interlocutor expectations favour pragmatic competence over grammatical competence, as reported in Bardovi-Harlig, 1998). This also needs to be a central feature of pragmatic input.

- iv) *The Technology can enhance pragmatic teaching materials and learning outcomes.* This study appeared to verify the benefits of technology-enhanced teaching and learning, as outlined in chapter three. For the first time, this study contributes empirical evidence that even short periods of engagement with technology such as the CAPT, as a medium for pragmatic development, can produce more beneficial results than working with traditional paper-based activities. Similar results have previously been reported in the wider contexts of language learning (e.g., Butler, 2015; Sykes et al., 2009). Specifically, it appears the multi-dimensional aspects of online materials such as the CAPT, in terms of textual clues being enhanced by audio-visual elements, is likely to have offered greater exposure to comprehensible input for the learners.

The findings of this study will be of interest to academics and practitioners who work with international students from East Asia, and China in particular. A 2016 survey by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) stated that of the almost 500,000 non-UK students in 2014-15, Chinese speakers “far exceeds any other nationality” (UKCISA, 2016). The findings of this study then may help shape the content of other instructed SA programmes, particularly in positive-negative politeness contexts.

10.2 Limitations and directions for future research

This section will first outline the limitations to the study, then identify future lines of research which can capitalise on its findings.

In terms of the research design, the participant profile was restricted to a relatively small sample of undergraduate learners of one nationality, studying in intact groups on an academic, English-speaking SA setting. The findings may thus not be generalisable to other learner groups and contexts. Recent meta-analyses have recommended broadening the scope of L1 groups of different proficiency levels and ages, studying a range of foreign languages to avoid the high concentration of studies employing university level participants studying English as a second language (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2015).

In addition, this study only captured pragmatic development and language contact over a short period of time (three months). Future research could measure either natural acquisition or maintenance of instructed pragmatic input over an extended period of time, particularly as previous reports have indicated pragmatic development is a gradual process in the absence of instruction (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Where interventions do take place, participants should be monitored and tested more frequently, over a longer period. The results from this study indicate the onset of attrition two-weeks beyond the posttest. A longitudinal study might identify whether there is a turning point at which learners start to naturally acquire target-like forms and production increases, and whether there is a turning point at which instructional benefits decrease. Further, correlations between length of instructional periods and how long pragmatic knowledge/awareness is maintained have yet to be addressed. This may be resolved by the inclusion of multiple delayed tests or Jeon and Kaya's (2006) suggestion of a '*process test*' which measures weekly or bi-weekly interim test results to provide information on developmental transitions.

Several questions remain unanswered in the study. For instance, why did learner contact with the L2 increase and were their motivations for engaging more in the L2 personal or necessary? What contributed to the ease with which formulaic language was learned during the instruction? Enhancing the study with retrospective verbal reports or post-instruction interviews may have provided the qualitative data to answer these questions: an approach which has yielded interesting findings to date. Taguchi (2002) employed simulated recall to investigate conversational implicature among eight Japanese learners of English and found the method revealed their mental processes and individual differences during task completion. In the event the research procedure limits the capacity to undertake post-instruction analyses of this kind, qualitative information could be gleaned by extending or replacing the language contact questionnaire with phased journal entries to also trace affective factors and individual differences, for instance, as undertaken in other studies (e.g., Cohen & Shively, 2007; Winke & Teng, 2010). This would shed further light on the complex interplay of factors contributing to the success, or failure, of SA experiences.

Related to data collection tools, it must be acknowledged that the language contact questionnaire was based on learner self-reports, and that results should be indicative rather than conclusive, given the information is based on learner estimates which may be inaccurate or untruthful. Still, trends can be drawn upon to provide a clearer picture of the influence of environmental factors. Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) advocate future language contact questionnaires also elicit synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication patterns in the SA context as online communication becomes more of an integral part of daily life and academia, providing an additional rich source of input for learners.

The limitations of operationalising the CAPT as an instructional tool and data collection instrument for the first time must also be recognised, and work needs to continue to develop its design. Firstly, regarding the scenario content, while improved

request and apology performance was established post-instruction, this was within the boundaries of high status interlocutors and high imposition variables. What is not clear, however, is to what extent the participants would be equally sensitive to situations containing a range of power-distance-imposition variables, and be able to appropriately self-select from request and apology strategies, according to the sociopragmatic context given. A different study would be needed to investigate this. Secondly, it was assumed the participants would perceive the power-social distance-imposition variables in the scenarios in the way they were intended. This cannot be verified, however. To avoid this possible mismatch in perceptions between researcher and participant, other investigations have employed either '*situation assessment questionnaires*' to determine if the scenarios presented are perceived and rated similarly by different language groups (eg., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Kim, 2008; Maeshiba et al, 1996), or the content of the scenarios themselves are drawn from comparable participants' personal experiences (e.g., Chang, 2010). Finally, as Su (2010) proposes, it may have been prudent to include another speech act such as refusals or complaints to act as a distractor within the collection of CAPT and WDCT scenarios. This could have pre-empted any response sets resulting from exposure to requests and apologies alone.

10.3 Concluding remarks

The current study has expanded the scope of existing knowledge regarding the effects of explicit pragmatic instruction of requests and apologies to Chinese learners of English, specifically exploring the role of technology-enhanced practice materials and the second language environment for improving pragmatic competence. This study adopted an approach to isolate language features which both L1 Chinese users and L1 British-English users share, those which were considered requisite for successful requests and apologies, and those which were considered hearer-alienating (as described in chapter one) in the academic context presented. In this

way, underdeveloped features of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic language, which might trigger negative reactions, could be identified to promote a more targeted approach to instructional programmes.

What this study has shown is that L2 learners need clear guidance and training to notice and explore interlanguage pragmatic differences, specifically regarding requests and apologies since access to, and exploitation of, this information is not guaranteed through L2 exposure alone. Further, Chinese ESL learners are challenged by the pragmatic norms of an English-speaking environment, and are not fully equipped with the necessary skills to engage as successfully as they could be in a SA setting in the absence of guided and targeted instruction. This thesis has therefore attempted to outline several opportune ways pragmatic instruction can be facilitated in the language classroom. As in this study, researchers are encouraged to push the boundaries of existing ILP investigations, particularly from methodological and pedagogical perspectives, so outcomes may have a direct impact on learner experiences, whilst enhancing our understanding of pragmatic development a little further each time.

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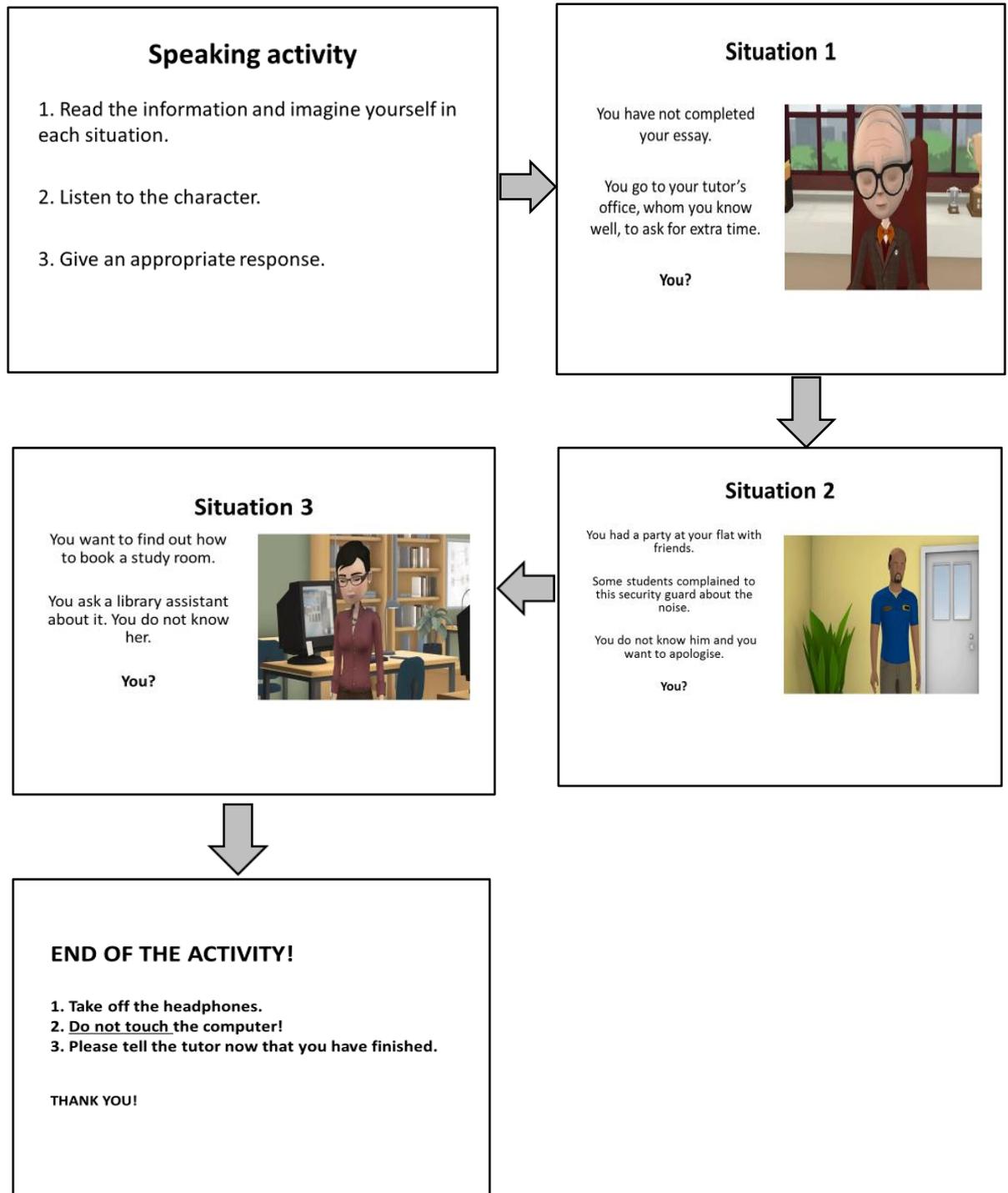
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Appendix 1: Original slides from the CAPT



Appendix 2: The WDCT

Writing activity

Instructions:

Read each situation below and try to imagine yourself being involved in the conversation. Please write what you would say, using as many words as you wish in the spaces provided. If you would not say anything in a particular situation, please explain why.

1. At your tutor's office

You missed a meeting with your tutor but you did not email him to explain. You go to your tutor's office, whom you know well, to apologise. He is male and is 65 years old.

Tutor: Thanks for coming. We had an appointment scheduled for last Tuesday but you didn't come.

You:

2. At the security office

You have left your mobile phone in a classroom but the building is now closed. It is very late but you go to the security office to ask if they can open the building for you. You speak to a man you have not met before. He is male and 50 years old.

Security guard: Hi there. What can I do for you?

You:

3. At the library

You have lost a book which you borrowed from the library. You go to apologise to a member of the library staff. You have not met her before. She is female and 38 years old.

Library staff member: Hello. Is there something I can help you with?

You:

Please complete your details below

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Name (and English name) | |
| Age | |
| Male / female | |
| Email address | |

Appendix 3: Study abroad language contact questionnaire (T1)

Chinese and English names.....

Background Information

1. Gender: Male / Female

2. Age: ____

3. Country of birth:

4. What is your native language? (circle) 1 *English* 2 *Chinese* 3 *Other*

5. What language/s do you speak at home? (circle) 1 *English* 2 *Chinese* 3 *Other*

6. In what language/s did you receive the majority of your pre university education?

1 *English* 2 *Chinese* 3 *Other*



7. Have you ever been to an English-speaking region for the purpose of studying English?

Yes / No

7a. If yes, *when?*

7b *Where?*

7c. For how long? (circle) a. *1 semester or less* b. *2 semesters* c. *more than 2 semesters*

8. Have you studied English in school in the past at each of the levels listed below? If yes, for how long?

a. Elementary school: No / Yes: (circle) *less than 1 year* *1–2 years* *more than 2 years*

b. Junior high (middle) school: No / Yes: (circle) *less than 1 year* *1–2 years* *more than 2 years*

c. Senior high school: No / Yes: (circle) *less than 1 year* *1–2 years* *more than 2 years*

d. University/college: No / Yes: (circle) *less than 1 year* *1–2 years* *more than 2 years*

Part A: All of the questions that follow refer to your use of English, not your native language.

On average, how often did you communicate with native or fluent speakers of English in English in the year before this course?

Prior to this course, I tried to speak English to:

a. my teacher outside of class

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

b. friends who are native or fluent speakers of English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

c. classmates

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

d. strangers whom I thought could speak English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

e. a host family, if living in an English-speaking area

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

f. service personnel (eg, bank clerk, cashier)

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

On average, how often did you do these activities in English in the year before this course?

a. watching English language television

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

b. reading English language newspapers

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

c. reading novels in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

d. listening to songs in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. Daily

e. reading English language magazines

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

f. watching movies in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

Part B: Your language ability

In the boxes below, rate your language ability in each of the languages that you know. Use the following ratings: **Poor/beginner 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent/native-like**

| Language | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing | Interacting |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| English | | | | | |
| Chinese | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 4: Study abroad language contact questionnaire (T2 and T4)

Living in the UK

Chinese and English name:

.....



Part A: Using English

On average, **how often** do you communicate with native or fluent speakers of English **in English** since coming to the UK?

Since coming to the UK, I try to speak English to:

a. my tutor outside of class

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

b. friends who are native or fluent speakers of English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

c. classmates

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. Daily

d. strangers whom I thought could speak English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

e. a host family, if living in a English-speaking area

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

f. service personnel (eg, bank clerk, cashier)

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

On average, **how often** do you do these activities **in English** since coming to the UK?

Since coming to the UK, I...

a. watch English language television

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

b. read English language newspapers

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

c. read novels in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

d. read English language magazines

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

e. listen to songs in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. daily

f. watch movies in English

0. never 1. a few times a year 2. monthly 3. weekly 4. Daily

Part B: Your language ability

In the boxes below, rate your language ability in each of the languages that you know. Use the following ratings: **Poor/beginner** 1 2 3 4 5 **Excellent/native-like**

| Language | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing | Interacting |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| English | | | | | |

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 5: Scheme of work for the six-week explicit instructional period

| Session | PAPER group* | CAPT group* | Approx. time on task in minutes |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Week 1 T1 oral and written DCTs administered in the language laboratory. Study abroad language contact questionnaire administered | | | 50 |
| Main activity: Mind maps Discussion | a) Mind map potential situations where may need to make a request / apologise with familiar settings provided (university, shop, in the street) | a) Mind map potential situations where may need to make a request / apologise with familiar settings provided (university, shop, in the street) | 15 |
| | b) Choose 5 appropriate to university, study abroad context. Class discussions of cultural differences (China vs. UK). When and where to request/apologise, length and content of apology discussed. | b) Choose 5 appropriate to university, study abroad context. Class discussions of cultural differences (China vs. UK). When and where to request/apologise, length and content of apology discussed. | 20 |
| | c) 6 paper-based scenarios presented on cards. Groups/pairs grade situations according to imposition / brevity of offence via discussion / oral response. Socio-cultural follow-up discussions. China vs. UK differences. | c) 6 CAPT scenarios presented on PPT. Groups/pairs grade situations according to imposition / brevity of offence via discussion / oral response. Socio-cultural follow-up discussions. China vs. UK differences. | 40 |
| Week 2 Request focus Main activity: Listening | a) SS read 6 of paper-based pre-scripted role plays in small groups. 3 role plays contain examples of infelicitous requests. Group discussions to highlight errors. | a) SS watch 6 pre-scripted role plays in small groups via CAPT. 3 role plays contain examples of infelicitous requests. Group discussions to highlight errors. | 25 |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|----|
| Reading Role play | b) Members of groups to highlight error. SS suggest language which may be more pragmatically appropriate for each context. Class feedback and language- focussed discussion. | b) Members of groups to highlight error. SS suggest language which may be more pragmatically appropriate for each context. Class feedback and language-focussed discussion | 35 |
| | c) T introduces 6 formulaic request sequences which may be appropriate for each situation. Language-focussed instruction. SS to use sequences to suggest appropriate alternatives to (a) | c) T introduces 6 formulaic request sequences which may be appropriate for each situation. Language-focussed instruction. SS to use sequences to suggest appropriate alternatives to (a) | 20 |
| | d) Practice via 6 paper-based exercises as used in activity (a). Test-teach-test approach incorporated. Class discussion of how responses are now different from activities (a) and (b). | d) Practice via 6 computer-animated scenarios used in activity (a). Test-teach-test approach incorporated. Class discussion of how responses are now different from activities (a) and (b). | 40 |
| Week 3 Apology focus Main activity: Reading Discussion | Review of request language a) SS are given 7 social contexts and examples of apologies- paper-based format. SS to complete appropriate response | Review of request language a) SS are given 7 social contexts and examples of apologies- CAPT format. SS to complete appropriate response | 20 |
| | b) SS must identify characters and offence. Discussion on appropriacy of language. Language focus. L1 transfer? Introduction of 5-step apology. Controlled practice | b) SS must identify characters and offence. Discussion on appropriacy of language. Language focus. L1 transfer? Introduction of 5-step apology. Controlled practice | 70 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|----|
| | Practise responding to apologies | Practise responding to apologies | |
| | c) Discussions highlighting cultural comparisons and appropriate social behaviour in the UK d) SS shown PAPER materials again for further discussion. Have your ideas changed? | c) Discussions highlighting cultural comparisons and appropriate social behaviour in the UK d) SS shown CAPT materials again for further discussion. Have your ideas changed? | 20 |
| Week 4 | a) SS given 8 of written dialogues and examples of requests / apologies- paper-based | a) SS watch and are presented with 8 dialogues and examples of requests / apologies via PPT (CAPT) | 20 |
| Main activity: Reading Writing | b) SS match context with request / apology (there are more examples than required each may be used more than once). Focus on differences between spoken and written | b) SS match context with request / apology (there are more examples than required each may be used more than once). Focus on differences between spoken and written | 60 |
| | c) SS must change characters for each situation (e.g. increased social distance and power relationships) and amend requests/apologies as appropriate. Focus on typical sequencing in speech acts within spoken and written requests and apologies- paper-based | c) SS must change characters for each situation (e.g. increased social distance and power relationships) and amend requests/apologies as appropriate. Focus on typical sequencing in speech acts within spoken and written requests and apologies- CAPT-based | 25 |
| Week 5 | a) SS highlight intensifiers in apologies and downgraders in requests | a) SS highlight intensifiers in apologies and downgraders in requests | 30 |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|----|
| Main activity: Reading | b) Discussion of situational appropriate language | b) Discussion of situational appropriate language | 30 |
| Writing Speaking | c) SS transform 6 dialogues to include intensifiers and downgraders. Focus on spoken language and use of intonation and stress- paper-based | c) SS transform 6 dialogues to include intensifiers and downgraders. Focus on spoken language and use of intonation and stress - CAPT | 40 |
| Week 6 | a) SS given 6 individual scenarios (texts) and characters as paper-based activities | a) SS given 6 individual scenarios (texts) and characters via PPT (CAPT) | 15 |
| Main activity: Role play | b) SS must adopt character and role play scenes with a number of different SS using appropriate language of apologising / requesting and responding. SS decide whether to accept or not. Scenarios presented on cards for reading | b) SS must adopt character and role play scenes with a number of different SS using appropriate language of apologising / requesting and responding. SS decide whether to accept or not. CAPT scenarios utilised | 30 |
| | c) Class feedback and discussions about language used. Alternatives elicited to consolidate previous language work | c) Class feedback and discussions about language used. Alternatives elicited to consolidate previous language work | 20 |
| T2 oral and written DCTs administered in the language laboratory. Study abroad language contact questionnaire administered | | | 50 |
| <i>Note.</i> * Activities highlighted in bold denote where the format was differentiated between paper-based and CAPT activities. | | | |

Appendix 6: Sample of instructional materials (week 3)



Slide 1

Communication quiz- requests

1. Which 2 phrases should you use when making a big request or being very polite?
2. Which 2 phrases should you use when making a small request to a teacher or stranger?
3. What phrase should you use to start a conversation with a stranger?
4. What phrase should you use to start a conversation with a teacher?

Slide 2

What would you say?

1. You can't find the train station. You go to a coffee bar to ask for directions
2. You ask a stranger on the tube to help you carry your heavy bags
3. You ask your teacher to write a reference for you

Slide 3

Communication practice

You can't find the train station

You go into the coffee bar and ask someone for directions

You say?

Slide 4

Possible answer

1. Do you mind telling me where the train station is?

Slide 5

Communication practice

You ask a stranger to help you carry your heavy bags

Slide 6



Possible answers

1. I was wondering if you could help me with my heavy bags please?
2. Would it be possible to help me with my heavy bags?

Slide 7

Communication practice

You need a reference from your tutor to apply for a course.

He is very busy but you go to see him to ask for the reference.

You say?



Slide 8



Possible answers

1. I was wondering if you could write a reference for me?
2. Would it be possible to write a reference for me?

Slide 9



Responding to requests

| | |
|--|---|
|  |  |
| Yes, sure! No problem! Of course! | Sorry but.... I'm afraid.... |

Slide 10



Apologies- language review

1. Oops
2. Sorry / I'm sorry
e.g. I'm sorry about the mess
e.g. I'm sorry for making the mess

1. I'm _____ sorry (so, really, very, **terribly**)
2. I'm afraid... (used when giving bad news)

"I apologise" is more used for written than spoken English

Slide 11



Apologies

1. Read the short situations and write an appropriate apology for each one.
2. Match the answers to the situation.
3. What can you say before giving bad news?
4. What often follows the "I'm sorry"...

Slide 12



Apologies

There are 5 steps in an apology

1. Say sorry (e.g. **I'm terribly sorry you have been waiting**)
2. Give a reason or explanation (e.g. **The bus was late**)
3. Say you are responsible (e.g. **It's my fault**)
4. Offer to fix the problem (e.g. **Let me buy you a coffee**)
5. Make a future promise (e.g. **It won't happen again!**)

★ Small apology = use 1. and 2.
★ Big apology = use all 5 steps!

Slide 13



You try!

Your friend has been on holiday and you have been looking after their cat. One day, the cat escaped from your kitchen and you haven't seen it since!

Your friend has returned from holiday and comes to your house to collect her cat.

She says, "Thank you SO much for looking after Timmy. I hope he hasn't been any trouble. Where is he?"

You say?

Slide 14



Things to remember!

DON'T...

1. Say **'sir/madam'** when starting the conversation.
2. Say **'I apologise...'**
3. Say **'please forgive me'**
'can you forgive me?'

Slide 15

You did not pay the rent for your flat this month. You go to the accommodation office to apologise



Slide 16



Student says...

"I'm sorry. I am waiting for my parents to send me the money. I apologise for that. It won't happen again"

• "I'm so sorry. It's my fault. Can I give it to you next week?"

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Apology | 1. Apology |
| 2. Reason | 2. Reason |
| 3. Responsibility | 3. Responsibility |
| 4. Fix the problem | 4. Fix the problem |
| 5. Make a future promise | 5. Make a future promise |

Slide 17

You have broken a window in your flat. You go to the security guard to apologise



Slide 18



Student says...

"I'm very sorry. There is a broken window in my flat. It's my fault. Can you fix it?"

1. apology
2. reason
3. responsibility
4. fix the problem
5. make a future promise

"Hello sir. I have something important to tell you. I have broken a window in my flat. I will pay for the repair. I hope you can forgive me."

1. Apology
2. Reason
3. Responsibility
4. Fix the problem
5. Make a future promise

Slide 19

You were chatting with your friends in the library. Some students complained about the noise. You go to apologise to the library assistant



Slide 20



Student says...

"Hi madam. Sorry for the noise. It won't happen again".

1. Apology
2. reason
3. responsibility
4. fix the problem
5. make a future promise

"I'm sorry. I'm a new student here and I didn't know the rules. Please forgive me."

1. Apology
2. Reason
3. Responsibility
4. Fix the problem
5. Make a future promise

Slide 21



Responding to apologies

- Never mind
- Don't worry about it
- That's ok
- No problem

Slide 22

Appendix 7: Sample of NS raters' evaluation sheet for apology scenario: lost library book

Read the description of the scenario presented. Circle each response with a numeric score between 1-5, according to how *appropriate* you think each response is in the academic context provided.

5 = I would feel completely satisfied with this response

4 = I would feel very satisfied with this response

3 = I would feel satisfied with this response

2 = I would not feel particularly satisfied with this response

1 = I would not feel satisfied at all with this response

Scenario 1

You have lost a book which you borrowed from the library. You go to apologise to a member of the library staff. You have not met her before. She is female and 38 years old.

I'm really sorry. I borrowed a book from the library but I have lost it. I will pay the book's money. It's my fault. It won't happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Excuse me. I was sorry about that. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I will pay for it and it will never happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

I am terribly sorry. I lost the book from the library. It's my fault. I borrow it to my friend. I will give you the money now. It's my fault.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Excuse me. I'm very sorry. I have lost a book that I borrowed in the library. I think I left it in some place but I couldn't find it. It's my fault. I'll pay for it. It won't happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Hello I so sorry. I careless lost book. Maybe my friend took the book. That is my fault. I will find it back this week. I promise it won't happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

I'm so sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I'll pay you this week. It won't happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

I'm very sorry for losing the book in library. Because I took the book to the café and I lost it. It's my fault. I will buy a new book. It won't happen again.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Appendix 8: Sample of researcher’s coding sheet for apology strategies employed (CAPT group, lost library book scenario)

CAPT group

| | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|
| Participant 1 | Yes, I'm really sorry lady. I borrowed a book from the library but I have lost it. I felt very sorry about it. I will pay the book money for my apologisation. | I'm really sorry. I borrowed a book form the library but I have lost it. I will pay the book's money. It's my fault. It won't happen again. | Hello, I'm so sorry. I forgot to see you yesterday. Because I have to do some important things yesterday. I careless lost a book, maybe my friends take wrong book. That is my fault. I will seek the book again from my friends. I t won't happen again. | I'm very sorry, I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I thought I forget it in my class but I can't find it anymore. It's my fault, I will take responsible for it. What should I do next. |
| | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | | |
| | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | | |

Participant 2

Excuse me madam. I have to apologise to one thing. In fact I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I'm so sorry about that.

Excuse me. I was sorry about that. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I will pay for it and it will never happen again.

Sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I am so so so sorry about that because I went outside yesterday. It is my fault I will pay for it and it will never happen again.

Sorry, I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It is my fault. I will pay for it and it will never happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 3

I am sorry for that I lost the book. What should I do for the lost book?

I am terribly sorry. I lost the book from the library. It's my fault. I borrow it to my friend. I will give you the money now. It's my fault.

Sorry for disturbing you. I am terribly sorry that I lost the book I took it out and forgot to take it back. It is my fault. I would buy a new book for you. It won't happen again.

I'm very sorry, I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I thought I forget it in my class but I can't find it anymore. It's my fault, I will take responsible for it. What should I do next.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 4

I'm sorry, I had lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I'm so sorry about that. Could you please tell me how can I do for library?

Excuse me. I'm very sorry. I have lost a book that I borrowed in the library. I think I left it in some place but I couldn't find it. It's my fault. I'll pay for it. It won't happen again.

Excuse me, I'm sorry to bother you. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I borrow this book for preparing my exam. I though I left it in study room but I can't find them. I'm so sorry about this, I'll pay for the book. It's all my fault. It would never happen again, I promise.

I'm very sorry, I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I thought I forget it in my class but I can't find it anymore. It's my fault, I will take responsible for it. What should I do next.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 5

Hello. Well, I careless lost a book before I borrowed the book from library. I really sorry for that. Could you tell me how could I do now. Thank you

Hello I so sorry. I careless lost book. Maybe my friend took the book. That is my fault. I will find it back this week. I promise it won't happen again.

Hello, I'm so sorry. I forgot to see you yesterday. Because I have to do some important things yesterday. I careless lost a book, maybe my friends take wrong book. That is my fault. I will seek the book again from my friends. I t won't happen again.

Hello, I terribly sorry. I lost a book. Maybe my friend take wrong book yesterday. That's my fault. I will find the book from my friend. It won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|
| Participant 6 | <p>Hello, I'm so sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. How can I deal with it.</p> | <p>I'm so sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I'll pay you this week. It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm really sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I cannot remember where the book is. It is my fault. may I pay this book. I will never do it again.</p> | <p>Excuse me. I'm really sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. And I have not met you before. I did not know I put this book on the table in my home, my friend took it go out. It is my fault, may I pay it for you. I will never do it again.</p> |
| | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | | |
| | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|--|---|--|--|
| Participant 7 | <p>Sorry. I have lost a book that I borrowed from the library. I am so sorry. But now I don't know to do what to express my apologies. You can say something that I can do it.</p> | <p>I'm very sorry for losing the book in library. Because I took the book to the café and I lost it. It's my fault. I will buy a new book. It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm so sorry for losing the book which borrowed from the library. Because of my careless. It's all my fault. I'll pay for the book. It will not happen again.</p> | <p>I am so sorry about losing the book. Because of my careless. It is all my fault. I will pay for this book. It would never happen again.</p> |
| | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | | |
| | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |

Participant 8

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Hello nice to meet you. I so sorry. Yesterday I had lost a book. Can you tell me what should I do lady?</p> | <p>Hello. Nice to meet you. I so sorry. Yesterday I had lost a book. I forgot to take the book. It's my fault. Can you tell me what I should do lady? I apologise for that. It won't happen again.</p> | <p>Hello I'm sorry. Because I forgot where is I put down the book. It's my fault. I'm apologise to you. I will buy a new book to put in library. I'm promise next time I mustn't lost book.</p> | <p>Hello, I'm so sorry. I was lost a book from the library. Because I went to London with my friends. It's my faults. I want to apologise to you. I will buy a new one to return. I promise next time I will not lose book.</p> |
| <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> |
| | | | |
| <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> |
| | | | |

Participant 9

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Hello madam! My name is Xand I was studied in Uclan of IBC. I was very sorry about that I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. What should I do after about that?</p> | <p>I'm sorry. I lost a book because I have many things to do that time. It's my fault. I'll pay for the book. It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm terribly sorry about that I've lost a book which I rent. I've lost somewhere cos I was busy lately. I would find out the book. It wouldn't happen again.</p> | <p>Hello. I'm very sorry about that I lost a book from the library. That's my fault. I'll find it and return to you.</p> |
| <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> |
| | | | |
| <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> |
| | | | |

Participant 10

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Excuse me madam. I'm so sorry to lost the book which borrowed from the library. How should I do something to deal with that. | Excuse me. I'm so sorry to lost the book which I borrowed from the library. How should I do something to deal with that and it won't happen again. | I'm terribly sorry about that I've lost a book which I rent. I've lost somewhere cos I was busy lately. I would find out the book. It wouldn't happen again. | Hi Madam. I'm sorry about that I lost the book which I borrowed from library. It's my fault. I will try to find it out if it's possible. It will not happen again I promised. |
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 11

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| I'm terribly sorry that I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library madam. Should I pay for that book? | Excuse me. I was sorry about that. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I will pay for it and it will never happen again. | I'm sorry to lost the book that borrowed from the library. Because yesterday I was busy to do my homework and happened something. It's my fault. I'll pay for you and I promise that it won't happen again. | I'm very sorry, I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I thought I forget it in my class but I can't find it anymore. It's my fault, I will take responsible for it. What should I do next. |
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 12

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Yes. I'm very sorry. I lost the book from the library. Can you help me to solve this event madam?</p> | <p>I'm very sorry. I lost my book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I'll bring you a new one. It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm terribly sorry about that I've lost a book which I rent. I've lost somewhere cos I was busy lately. I would find out the book. It wouldn't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm terribly sorry about lost the book. I forgot it in classroom and I can't found it when I back to classroom. It is my fault and it won't happen again.</p> |
| <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> |
| | | | |
| <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> |
| | | | |

Participant 13

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Excuse, I'm very sorry to you. I lost a book that borrowed from the library. It's not my mind but in fact it's my mistake and a big mistake. I wish you can forgive to me in your kind hearted and mother like capacity.</p> | <p>I'm so sorry for I lost a book. It's my fault. I may lose it in shopping. I will pay for this book and it won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm sorry to lost the book that borrowed from the library. Because yesterday I was busy to do my homework and happened something. It's my fault. I'll pay for you and I promise that it won't happen again.</p> | <p>Excuse me. I'm so sorry. I lost my book because I forgot to take it from my classroom. It's my fault. I will pay the money for the library office. I promise it won't happen again.</p> |
| <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> | <p>A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d</p> |
| | | | |
| <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7</p> |
| | | | |

Participant 14

Excuse me. I was lost a book borrowed from the library before. I can't find it. I'm very sorry. What can I do to find it or other solutions.

Excuse me. I was lost a book borrowed from the library before. I'm terribly sorry. What can I do to find it or other solutions?

Excuse me, I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I'm very sorry that. I will buy a new one to borrow back.

Hello, I terribly sorry. I lost a book. Maybe my friend take wrong book yesterday. That's my fault. I will find the book from my friend. It won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 15

Hi madam. I'm sorry to lost the book that I lost from this library. What should I do for this thing. I feeling very sorry for this thing.

Hello madam. I'm terribly sorry to lost the book that I borrowed from this library. I lost it in class. I will pay for this book. It's my fault. I feeling very sorry about this thing and it won't happen again.

I'm terribly sorry about I lost the book which I borrowed from library. I forgot it in classroom and I can't find it now. It is my fault. I will pay for this book and I promise it won't happen again.

I'm terribly sorry about lost the book. I forgot it in classroom and I can't found it when I back to classroom. It is my fault and it won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Participant 16 | I'm so sorry madam. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. That's all my fault. I would to pay the fault. | I'm terribly sorry. I have left the book which I borrowed in my travel. It's my fault. I will pay for it. It won't happen again. | I'm so sorry. I lost the book which I borrowed from the library because of my careful less. It's all my fault. I'll pay for the book. It won't happen again. | I'm terribly sorry. I lost one book which I borrowed from library., because I forgot it on one café. It's all my fault. I will pay for it. It won't happen again. |
| | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | | |
| | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|---|---|
| Participant 17 | Hello, I must to apologise with you. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. | I'm so sorry I lost a book which I borrowed. I think maybe I leave at the coffee bar. It's my fault. I will buy a new one to return and I won't do it again. | Excuse me I'm terribly sorry I have lost the book borrowed from here. I think maybe I left it in the coffee shop. It is my fault. I will payment for it or buy a new one. It will not happen again. | Hello, I terribly sorry. I lost a book. Maybe my friend take wrong book yesterday. That's my fault. I will find the book from my friend. It won't happen again. |
| | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d | A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | | |
| | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 | B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Participant 18 | Sorry. I had lost a book which I borrowed from here. What should I do if I lost the book? | I'm sorry I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. Can I apologise to you? It won't happen again. | Excuse me. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I'm sorry to feel about it. What should I do that I make a mistake. | I'm sorry to feel about I lost the book which I borrowed from the library. Can you help to solve the problem and what can I do for it. I will not lost the book again. |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 19

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Hello how are you? I lost my book which borrowed from the library and could you mind tell me how to deal with this?</p> | <p>Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you. I'm so sorry about the book. I forget to take the book from class. It's my fault. I will pay the book fees and I promise it won't happen again.</p> | <p>Excuse me. I am so sorry. I lost the book. Because I forgot to take it from my class. It's my fault. I can pay the book fee and I promise it won't happen again.</p> | <p>Excuse me. I'm so sorry. I lost my book because I forgot to take it from my classroom. It's my fault. I will pay the money for the library office. I promise it won't happen again.</p> |
|--|--|---|--|

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 20

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>I'm very sorry. I lost a book. I'll pay for the lost book. Could you tell me how much about it?</p> | <p>I'm very sorry. I was in a hurry to lend the book in a shop. It's my fault. I will pay for the lost book. Could you tell me how much about it? It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm really sorry, I would go to lesson in a hurry and left the book at the restaurant which is lost. That's my fault. I would pay for the lost book, It won't happen again.</p> | <p>I'm very sorry. I went to a meeting and forgot the book at the restaurant, so that I lost it. That is my fault, I'll pay for the book. It won't happened again.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 21

I'm so sorry. I think I have lost the book which I borrow from here. So I want to apologise this thing to you.

Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you. I 'm so sorry I think I lost the book which I borrow from here. I want to apologise this thing to you.

Excuse me, I'm sorry to bother you. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library it's my fault. I promise it won't happen again I will pay the money for it.

I'm terribly sorry about lost the book. I forgot it in classroom and I can't found it when I back to classroom. It is my fault and it won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 22

Hi lady nice to meet you. I'm terribly sorry I lost a book which I borrowed from here. Please could you tell me what should I do now? Thanks.

I'm sorry to bother you. I have lost a book which I borrowed from here. Please could you tell me what I should do because I forgot it.

Excuse me, I'm sorry to bother you. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library it's my fault. I promise it won't happen again I will pay the money for it.

Excuse me. I'm so sorry. I lost my book because I forgot to take it from my classroom. It's my fault. I will pay the money for the library office. I promise it won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 23

Hello I'm really sorry. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I just travelled to another place and I lost a book on some place. I cannot find it. I can pay for the book. I'm so sorry about this thing.

Hello. I'm really sorry. I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I just travelled to another place and I lost a book on some place. I will pay for the book. It's my fault. It won't happen again.

Hi, I'm really sorry, I borrowed a book from the library. But I lose the book, because I travelled to another country, I lose the book there, I can pay for the book, It's all my fault, It won't happen again. I promise.

I'm very sorry, I've lost a book which I borrowed from the library. I thought I forget it in my class but I can't find it anymore. It's my fault, I will take responsible for it. What should I do next.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Participant 24

I'm sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. What should I do now?

I'm terribly sorry. I have lost a book which I borrowed from the library. It's my fault. I'll pay for the book and I will not lost it again.

I'm so sorry that I lost a book which I borrowed from the library. Last week I moved the house. Then the book was not found. It's my fault I will pay the money on book. And I'll pay attention on it.

Excuse me. I'm so sorry. I lost my book because I forgot to take it from my classroom. It's my fault. I will pay the money for the library office. I promise it won't happen again.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A1 A2 A3 B1a B1b B1c B1d |
| | | | |
| B2a B2b 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | | | |

Appendix 9: Experimental group gain scores by skill at three time periods (T1-T2, T2-T4, T1-T4).

| skill | stage | M (SD) | | t | | df | | p | | CI- lower | | CI- upper | | r ² | |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER | CAPT | PAPER |
| listening | T1-T2 | -.46 (.66) | -.35 (.49) | -3.41 | -3.20 | 23 | 19 | .002 | .005 | -.74 | -.58 | -.18 | -.12 | .34 | .35 |
| | T2-T4 | -.35 (.49) | -.50 (.82) | -2.96 | -2.45 | 16 | 15 | .009 | .027 | -.61 | -.94 | -.10 | -.07 | .35 | .29 |
| | T1-T4 | -.77 (.56) | -.88 (.72) | -5.61 | -4.87 | 16 | 15 | .000 | .000 | -1.05 | -1.26 | -.48 | -.49 | .66 | .61 |
| speaking | T1-T2 | -.38 (.71) | -.35 (.67) | -2.58 | -2.33 | 23 | 19 | .017 | .031 | -.68 | -.66 | -.08 | -.04 | .22 | .22 |
| | T2-T4 | -.12 (.60) | -.19 (.66) | -.81 | -1.15 | 16 | 15 | .43 | .27 | -.43 | -.54 | .19 | .16 | .04 | .08 |
| | T1-T4 | -.47 (.51) | -.63 (.62) | -3.77 | -4.04 | 16 | 15 | .002 | .001 | -.74 | -.96 | -.21 | -.30 | .47 | .52 |
| reading | T1-T2 | -.13 (.74) | -.35 (.67) | -.83 | -2.33 | 23 | 19 | .42 | .031 | -.44 | -.66 | .19 | -.04 | .03 | .22 |
| | T2-T4 | -.24 (.56) | -.44 (.51) | -1.73 | -3.42 | 16 | 15 | .10 | .004 | -.52 | -.71 | .05 | -.16 | .16 | .44 |
| | T1-T4 | -.41 (.94) | -.75 (.78) | -1.81 | -3.87 | 16 | 15 | .09 | .002 | -.90 | -1.16 | .07 | -.34 | .17 | .50 |
| writing | T1-T2 | -.21 (.83) | -.55 (.61) | -1.23 | -4.07 | 23 | 19 | .23 | .001 | -.56 | -.83 | .14 | -.27 | .06 | .47 |
| | T2-T4 | -.35 (.70) | -.44 (.63) | -2.07 | -2.78 | 16 | 15 | .06 | .014 | -.71 | -.77 | .008 | -.10 | .21 | .34 |
| | T1-T4 | -.47 (.87) | -1.13 (.81) | -2.22 | -5.58 | 16 | 15 | .04 | .000 | -.92 | -1.56 | -.02 | -.70 | .24 | .68 |
| interaction | T1-T2 | -.21 (.59) | -.65 (1.14) | -1.74 | -2.56 | 23 | 19 | .09 | .019 | -.46 | -1.18 | .04 | -.12 | .12 | .26 |
| | T2-T4 | -.24 (.44) | -.38 (.957) | -2.22 | -1.57 | 16 | 15 | .04 | .14 | -.46 | -.89 | -.01 | .14 | .24 | .14 |
| | T1-T4 | -.41 (.51) | -1.13 (.62) | -3.35 | -7.27 | 16 | 15 | .004 | .000 | -.67 | -1.46 | -.15 | -.80 | .41 | .78 |

Note.

The highlighted areas report disparity in statistical significance between the CAPT and PAPER groups.

Appendix 10: Sample request and apology responses from the experimental and control groups (T1-T4)

| Request scenario: Essay extension from tutor | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 |
| CAPT | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores* Participant 10 | Yes, excuse me I can't complete my essay because I have some important things so I missed my essay so I want to know when I can get extra time. <i>(average score=1)</i> | I'm very sorry sir. I've not completed my essay because I was ill. Next time I will complete my essay on time. Thank you. <i>(average score=2)</i> | Sorry very sorry because I was not in last weekend so I cannot complete my essay so tomorrow I will complete it, I promise. <i>(average score=2)</i> | Sorry sir because I was ill so I cannot finish my essay. I will give you next week. Sorry. <i>(average score=1)</i> |
| Improvements T1-T2* Participant 3 | Sorry I have not completed my essay because my friend is sick and I come with him to hospital so please give me one day to finish this. <i>(average score=1)</i> | I'm sorry to bother you. I was wondering if I could have the extra time for the essay? It's my fault. I was sick. I don't do it again. <i>(average score=4)</i> | I'm so sorry to bother you. I have not completed my essay. It's my fault. My mother was ill. I took care of her a week so could you give me extra time to complete my essay? I never it again. <i>(average score=4)</i> | Excuse me. I'm so sorry to bother you. I have not completed my essay because my mother was and took care for her all the week. Could you please give me another extra time? Thank you. <i>(average score=4)</i> |
| PAPER | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores* Participant 9 | I'm so sorry. Can you give me more time sir? <i>(average score=1)</i> | I sorry I didn't complete the essay. I'm sick and bad coughing in last week. I want to book another time to fix my essay. <i>(average score=2)</i> | I'm sorry I didn't complete the essay because I have a bad fever in these days so I want to have more time to finish the essay. I will finish it as soon as I can. <i>(average score=1)</i> | I have not completed my essay because I have a fever for a while so can I have more time? Is it ok? <i>(average score=2)</i> |
| Improvements T1-T2* Participant 18 | I'm sorry for my late. I apologise. Will you give me more time? Thank you. | Sorry to bother you. I haven't complete my essay because I had a bad fever yesterday so I wonder to have extra time and I promise it won't be happened again. | I am very sorry to bother you for I haven't complete my essay because I have bad cold yesterday so no time to complete it. Could you mind to give me a chance to retry it and I promise it won't happen again. | So sorry to bother you. I haven't complete my essay because I had a bad fever. Would it be possible to extend the time? I will finish it. So sorry. |

| | (average score=1) | (average score=4) | (average score=4) | (average score=4) |
|--|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Control | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores | I'm really sorry for I did not complete my essay. Sorry and I try to want to ask for extra time for you. (average score=2) | I'm so sorry about that but I think after just several days I will complete it. (average score=1) | N/A | N/A |
| Improvements T1-T2 | X | X | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Note.</i> * The examples illustrated show T1-T2 linguistic features (appropriate or inappropriate) are sustained to T3 and T4 for the experimental groups. | | | | |

| Apology scenario: Missed meeting with tutor | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 |
| CAPT | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores* | X | X | X | X |
| Improvements T1-T2* Participant 23 | Sorry teacher. I'm sorry missing our appointment. Could you please forgive me? (average score= 2) | Excuse me. Sorry to disturb you. I'm so sorry for missing the appointment because I was sick. Please can we arrange for another time? (average score=4) | Excuse me. I'm terribly sorry to bother you. I missed the meeting with you and I didn't email you to explain because I had a cold and I left my phone. It is my fault. Could I have a meeting with you in another time? I promise it won't happen again. (average score= 5) | I'm terribly sorry about this thing. I was sick and I forgot to send the email to you. It is my fault. I apologise for this thing. It won't happen again. (average score= 4) |
| PAPER | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores* | X | X | X | X |
| Improvements T1-T2* Participant 9 | Sir I am sorry about that I missed the meeting because I illd last Tuesday. (average score= 1) | I'm so sorry. I missed the meeting because I illd at last week. It's my fault about I didn't email you to explain. I will send an email before meeting if I cannot go. It won't happen again. (average score=4) | Sorry to bother you. I'm terribly sorry. I missed the meeting because I was illd but I didn't email you to explain. It's my fault. Next time I must email you. It won't be happen again. (average score=4) | I'm terribly sorry. I missed your meeting because I was illd but I did not email you before. It's my fault. Next time I will email you before. I promise it's won't be happened again. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|-----|-------------------|
| | | | | (average score=4) |
| Control | | | | |
| Low T1-T2 scores* Participant 3 | Oh sorry, there is something that I had to do and I could not go. I'm sorry. (average score= 1) | Oh tutor I'm really sorry for the meeting. I hope you can forgive me. I won't next time. (average score=2) | N/A | N/A |
| Improvements T1-T2* Participant | X | X | N/A | N/A |
| High scores T1-T2* | X | X | N/A | N/A |
| <i>Note.</i> * The examples illustrated show T1-T2 linguistic features (appropriate or inappropriate) are sustained to T3 and T4 for the experimental groups. | | | | |