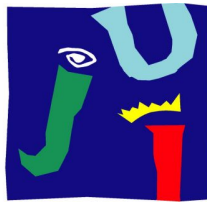


**ENGLISH STUDIES DEGREE**

**FINAL UNDERGRADUATE  
DISSERTATION**



**UNIVERSITAT  
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**Developing Requests in EFL  
Instructional Contexts:  
The Role of Age**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
FTAs	Face Threatening Acts
L1	First Language
LF	Lingua Franca
NS	Native Speaker
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

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## ABSTRACT

*Over the last five decades, the field of pragmatics has grown largely, so many researchers have attempted to provide useful approaches to teach pragmatics in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational contexts. As English is taught all around the world, interaction between foreigners can only be achieved by this common language. However, speakers' pragmatic competence is necessary to make this interaction successful since it involves not only knowing the grammatical rules but also the behaviours that go beyond language. However, coursebooks used in EFL contexts do not provide the necessary pragmatic information to develop speakers' pragmatic knowledge (Kasper 2001; Kasper & Roever 2005). Hence, this paper proposes a teaching approach covering such deficiencies by taking into account the role of age in the instruction of request speech acts. Following this purpose, this study first explores significant research in pragmatics such as the speech act theory (Austin, 1962 & Searle, 1969) and the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Then, focusing on communicative competence, a detailed representation of the different models proposed throughout the years is developed. Afterwards, the theoretical conditions for Second Language (SL) learning are described in order to apply and consider them in the present teaching proposal. The last two sections of the theoretical background are devoted to the explanation of the request speech act and the role of age in the instruction of it. Regarding the pedagogical proposal, input, output and feedback are provided in a teaching plan disaggregated into five main processes following Usó-Juan's (2010) approach for the instruction of requests.*

Keywords: pragmatics, communicative competence, pragmatic competence, teaching proposal, speech acts, request speech act, age.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The English language is a Germanic language that emerged in England and it is currently the mother tongue of about 375 million people. Today, English is the third language in the world with the greatest number of native speakers, after Chinese and Spanish. The countries where English is the first language (L1) are the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Nigeria, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand. However, also considering those non-native speakers who use the language for communicating, English could be considered the most spoken language in the world. As the linguist David Crystal (2008) points out, the number of non-native speakers of English is greater than that of native speakers.

At the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century there was a process of dissemination of English that was truly noticeable as it spread throughout the world and become one of the most widespread languages in history. In this way, languages that were previously considered very important such as French, German or Italian moved down to a second place giving the prominence to English. This growth of the English language was caused in large part by the phenomenon of globalization, since the borders that existed between different countries disappeared, thus unifying many parts of the world with respect to social, economic and political aspects.

Therefore, it can be established that globalization has played a very important role since it has helped English become the main

language of international discourse and the Lingua Franca (LF) in many regions among speakers whose L1 are different. Besides, in most educational systems teaching English as a second language is obligatory, which has meant an increase in terms of cultural knowledge due to the influence of the Anglo-Saxon countries. In addition, it should also be noted that English has been introduced in many countries through music and television (e.g. films or serials).

Hence, English is the most learned language in the world and the official language in approximately sixty sovereign states. Currently, it has been estimated that there is a total of two billion English speakers. Therefore, learning English is necessary nowadays and, consequently, an effective teaching methodology which not only focuses on the grammatical aspects of English but also on pragmatics. It is important to know how to communicate with others in a natural way so learners should study culture, education, customs, traditions, and different ways of saying the same thing, among many other things. Therefore, teachers must renew their methodologies and be updated to the new times since, as languages evolve, people also change their behaviours. Accordingly, this study aims to develop a teaching proposal that integrates pragmatics in EFL educational contexts, with a specific focus on requests and the variable of age.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a linguistic discipline that emerged as a reaction to the structuralist theories of language developed by researchers such as Chomsky (1965) and Saussure (1959), who did not pay attention to the real use of language in specific contexts, instead, they focused on isolated linguistic structures. However, this discipline was not recognized as an independent field of linguistics until 50 years ago when several philosophers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) shared their ideas and established this science of language.

The term of pragmatics was first introduced by the linguist Charles Morris in 1938, who defined it as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters”. Since then, a great number of scholars have provided different definitions of this concept (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Kasper, 1992; Yule, 1996; Mey, 2001, among others). Nevertheless, the definition which is considered to be the most relevant was given by Crystal (2008, p. 379):

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 an act of communication.

This definition establishes that pragmatics studies the real use of language taking into account the extralinguistic aspects of a

conversation which may condition the way of speaking, the meaning of utterances, and the effect language may have on other speakers of a conversation depending on the social context. As stated by Taguchi and Roever (2017), a communicative act involves the speaker's' ability to make the right choices of the linguistic forms in order to adapt to different contexts and situations.

In addition, Crystal's (2008) definition is somehow related to the knowledge dimensions established by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) regarding general pragmatics, since it is crucial for a Foreign Language (FL) learner to acquire not only the grammatical and phonological knowledge but also the pragmatic competence: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. On the one hand, pragmalinguistics is defined as the grammatical part of pragmatics which involves the resources provided by a language that are used to make particular illocutions (Leech, 1983). Specifically, these resources are the linguistic aspects that speakers use when they communicate a message. Therefore, speakers choose the appropriate pragmatic strategies to transmit interpersonal and relational meanings such as the level of direct and indirectness, routines, and linguistic forms that intensify or soften the utterances (Kasper & Rose, 2001). It also refers to the ability of speakers to modify the strategies they use depending on the contextual variables of a communicative act (Harlow, 1990). On the other hand, sociopragmatics refers to the sociological side of pragmatics (Leech, 1983), in other words, the social factors that are hidden behind an utterance of a communicative act (Kasper & Rose,

2001) such as power, social distance and degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Hence, these knowledge dimensions are of great relevance in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as they are connected and must be combined in order to produce pragmatically successful utterances. In fact, it is important to consider the use of the different forms of the speech acts in particular contexts when learning a FL (Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2008). For this reason, speech act theory will be considerably developed in the next section of this paper on the basis of Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969, 1976) ideas.

### *2.1.1 Speech Act Theory*

One of the most significant theories in the field of pragmatics is speech act theory. The first scholar who introduced this theory was Austin (1962) although Searle (1969) also contributed noticeably to extend it.

Speech acts are defined as “the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication” (Searle, 1969, p. 16). These units are utterances which have particular functions in a communicative act (CARLA, 2015). Therefore, speech acts are used daily and include compliments, thanking, criticisms, congratulating, greeting, offers, complaints, refusal, invitations, requests, and apologies.

Speech act theory originated from the works of John Langshaw Austin, who was an Oxford philosopher of ordinary language. This researcher shared his tenets in the lectures he gave at Oxford called

*Words and deeds*, and then, in the William James Lectures he gave at Harvard University in 1955. Finally, Austin's work was published in 1962 under the title *How to do Things with Words*. The linguist noticed that language is not only used to communicate information (constative utterances) but also to do or perform actions (performative utterances), which can be felicitous or non-felicitous. In fact, he relied on the concept of performative to demonstrate that, after an intervention in a conversation, action is required irrespective of whether it contains a speech act verb. Therefore, Austin (1962) classified speakers' utterances in a three-fold taxonomy including i) locutionary, ii) illocutionary, and iii) perlocutionary acts:

- i) Locutionary acts represent the acts of producing linguistic utterances. In other words, they are the result of a combination of words forming a sentence.
- ii) Illocutionary acts refer to the intentions of the speaker who has produced a particular utterance.
- iii) Perlocutionary acts stand for the physical action which is performed after an utterance has been said. That is, the effect or consequences that a statement has on the hearer.

This classification of acts is based on the idea that in a conversation, speakers produce utterances with the aim of verbalising their thoughts (locution) but at the same time they are performing an act (illocution) which has an effect on the listeners (perlocution). The main focus of speech act theory is the illocutionary act, which is in fact also known as the 'speech act' (Barron, 2003). In order to perform an

appropriate speech act, the speaker should adapt to the circumstances and persons of the conversation (Austin, 1962).

There are many different ways of interpreting locutionary acts since speakers can decide which illocutionary act may be the most suitable for the context. For instance, the locution 'John will do his homework' could be said in different illocutionary acts such as 'John, do your homework' (order), 'John, will you do your homework?' (question) or 'John will do his homework' (prediction). Consequently, Austin (1962) attempted to classify the different types of illocutionary acts and distinguished between verdictives (acts of exercising judgment), exercitives (acts of exercising power or influence), commissives (acts of assuming an obligation), behabitives (acts of adopting an attitude), and expositives (acts of clarifying reasons, arguments, and communications).

However, the American philosopher John Searle (1969), who was a pupil of Austin, argued that this taxonomy was incomplete since speech acts had other specific functions. Consequently, he further developed speech act theory proposing a different classification of illocutionary acts according to the functions performed (Searle, 1976, pp. 1-16):

- i) Representatives/Assertives: Acts that are considered to be true by the speakers, e.g., statements, claims.
- ii) Directives: Speech acts which lead the hearer to perform an action, e.g. requests, advices.

- iii) Commissives: Illocutionary acts in which the speaker commits him/herself to carry out an action that will take place in the future, e.g. promises, refusals.
- iv) Expressives: Linguistic acts whose main function is expressing the speaker's attitude towards state of affairs, e.g. apologies, compliments.
- v) Declarations: Utterances that once they have been said by the speaker, the conditions of something or someone become institutionally altered since there is a relationship between the propositional content and the external world, e.g. pronouncements in a marriage or baptism.

In addition, Searle's (1969, 1979) contribution influenced the indirectness-politeness association. Speech acts can be performed in two main different ways: directly and indirectly. In direct speech acts, the speaker's intention can be clearly recognized through the words of the utterance. However, in indirect speech acts the intention of the hearer is hidden behind the words, but it can be understood by the listener due to the fact that interlocutors have the same background information (Searle, 1976). According to Blum-Kulka (1987), there are two types of indirect speech acts: conventional and non-conventional. The former occurs when the speaker's intentions are projected in language, for example the sentence 'can I borrow your pencil?' is conceived as a request. The second occurs when the context plays a crucial role in understanding the speaker's intentions, for example the utterance 'I don't have any pencil' could be understood as a request in



some specific situations (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008). Therefore, indirect speech acts are commonly associated with politeness in conversation (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008).

### *2.1.2 Politeness Theory*

The concept of politeness has been one of the major focus in the field of pragmatics since the late 1970s as it is the basis of interpersonal relations among speakers. Consequently, many theories have arose with the aim of explaining the universal conventions of language usage. Politeness has been defined as the ability to choose the appropriate conversational strategies to produce utterances which adapt to the communicative context (Holmes, 2006). In addition, it is also related to the impact that such utterances may have on the listener's behaviour and the interaction itself. The most important linguists who developed studies related to politeness were Lakoff (1977), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987), the latter being the founders of the Politeness Theory.

The American scholar Lakoff (1977) offered a description of politeness in language focusing on the idea that social factors must be taken into account in communication. Thus, she proposed the three maxims of Formality (“Don’t impose” and “Remain aloof”), Hesitancy (“Allow the addressee his options”), and Equality (“Act as though you and the addressee were equal; make him feel good”). Furthermore, the author Leech (1983) is considered to be the most important advocate of the conversational-maxim view of politeness. He attempted to propose

an explanation of how people use real language and the reason of using indirect speech acts. Consequently, he established a different classification of maxims including Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy, which he considered to be essential for politeness.

Nevertheless, the most important authors who developed the Politeness Theory were Brown and Levinson (1987). This theory is based on Goffman's (1967, p. 5) notion of *face*, which is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Therefore, the terms *losing face* and *saving face* mean being humiliated or the opposite (Hickey & Vázquez-Orta, 1994). In other words, *face* makes reference to the social identity of speakers, which can be threatened by any imposition of a speech act. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61), *face* is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and it can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. Therefore, speakers may pay attention to the other speakers' faces in order to maintain their own face. In addition, *face* can be positive or negative. While the positive face is related to the speaker necessity to be accepted by others, the negative face is associated with the wish to be independent from others.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory stated that there are some speech acts such as refusals, requests and complaints which are considered to be Face Threatening Acts (FTA). These acts are characterized by going against the needs of the other person's face,

either the positive or the negative. Consequently, they proposed a scheme shown in Figure 1 representing the possible politeness strategies for saving the hearer's face and minimize the threat.

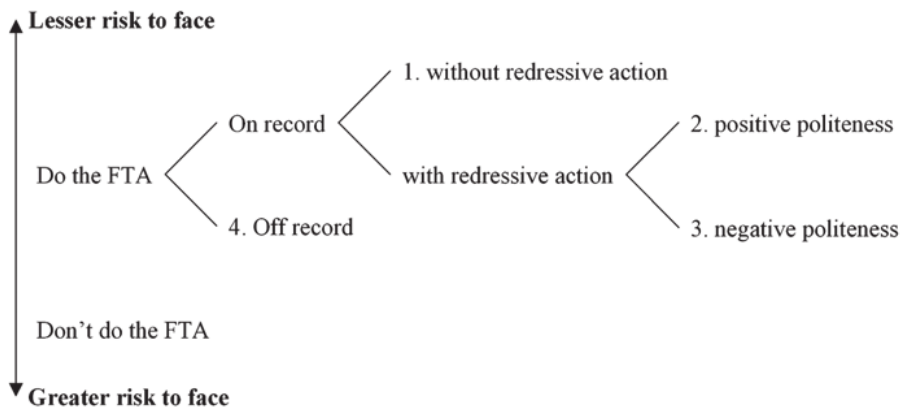


Figure 1. Strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are some situations where FTAs are inevitable. Therefore, they distinguished two main ways of performing it. On record refers to the strategy of using direct and clear acts, which is usually applied among people who have a close relationship. Contrarily, off record strategy stands for the indirect acts which avoid imposition towards the listener. In addition, doing an act without a redressive action is a synonym of doing it inadequately while doing it with redression reflects the appreciation of others' positive face (positive politeness) or negative face (negative politeness).

Furthermore, the Politeness Theory emphasizes that there are three independent social variables which influence the choices of these politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987):

- i) Social distance between the speaker and the hearer, that is, the degree of social similarities and differences they have.
- ii) Relative power of the speaker over the hearer, that is, the degree of imposition of the speaker's proposition on the hearer.
- iii) Absolute ranking of impositions refers to the right that the speaker has to produce the speech act and the manner in which the hearer receives the imposition.

### *2.1.3 Communicative Competence Framework*

The term 'communicative competence' was introduced by the linguist Dell Hymes (1967, 1972) as a reaction to Chomsky's (1957, 1965) theories of language, which established that the notion of competence referred solely to the grammatical rules of a language. However, Hymes (1972) argued that the sociocultural rules should also be taken into consideration in order to acquire the communicative competence. He defined this concept as the ability to use language appropriately.

As a result of this debate, this notion became the main subject of study of many researchers, who proposed different models of communicative competence including different components with the aim of applying them to language teaching (Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). However, some linguists' contributions focused on language assessment (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). The chronological evolution of the

communicative competence models for language teaching is represented in Figure 2.

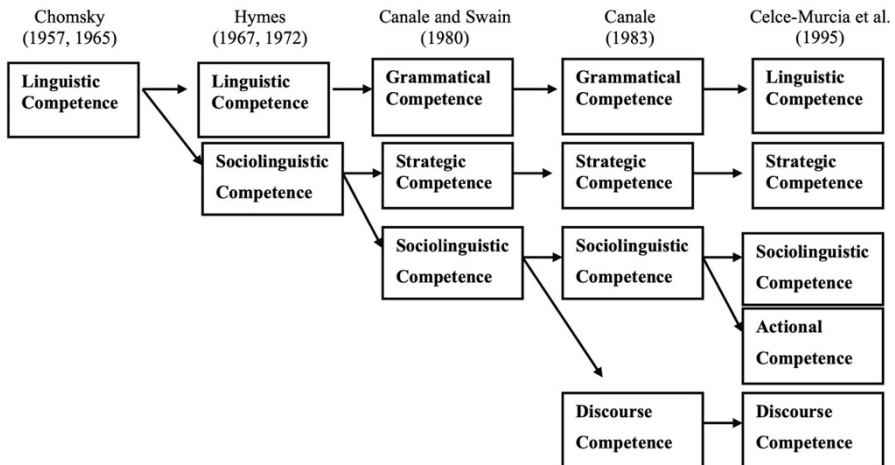


Figure 2. The chronological evolution of 'communicative competence' (Celce-Murcia, 2008, p. 43)

With respect to the proposal established by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), it is represented in a pyramid surrounded by a large circle that symbolizes that everything is related to each other. Inside the pyramid there is a smaller circle in the centre in which the discursive competence appears, which is considered the most important for Celce-Murcia (1995). In each peak of the triangle there is a competence, the sociocultural competence is in the highest point, and the ones below are the linguistic and the actional competences. There are three arrows coming out from the middle circle towards the three peaks of the triangle pointing to the other competitions to show that they interact with each other constantly. Therefore, the main idea of this model of communicative competence is that the lexical-grammatical resources,

the socio-cultural context and the organizational action skills are combined to form the discourse. Finally, the large circle surrounding the pyramid symbolizes the strategic competence, which allows the speaker to negotiate meanings as well as to solve problems due to the communicative and cognitive strategies (Figure 3).

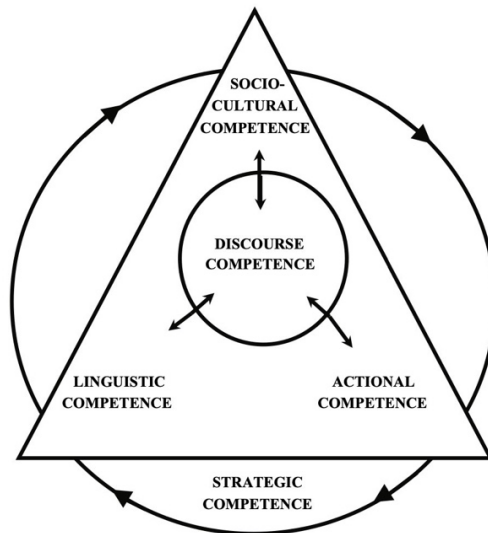


Figure 3. Schematic representation of communicative competence in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995, p. 10)

However, later Celce-Murcia (2008) proposed a new model to describe the communicative competence for language teachers based largely on the previous one (Celce-Murcia, 1995) but this time giving a more important role to the formulaic language and paralinguistic elements of face to face oral language (Figure 4). This model of communicative competence is regarded as the most complete and accepted.

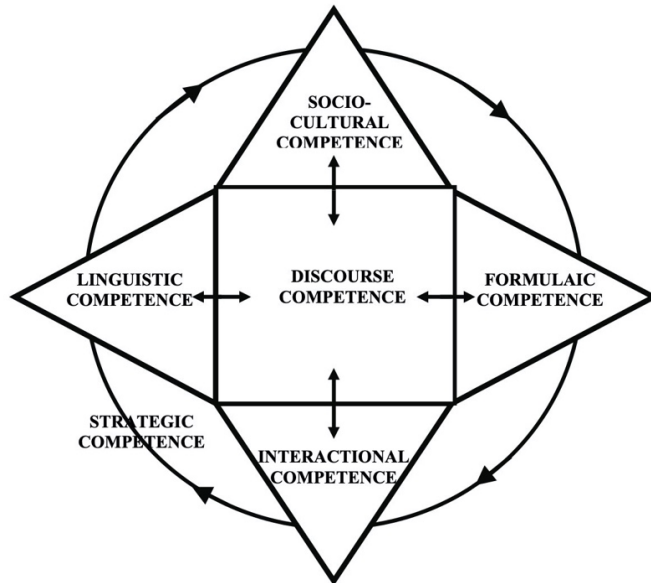


Figure 4. Revised schematic representation of ‘communicative competence’ (Celce-Murcia, 2008, p. 45)

Celce-Murcia (2008) defined each of the competences as follows:

- i) Discourse competence involves the ability to organize words and sentences in order to obtain a consolidated spoken or written text.
- ii) Sociocultural competence refers to the speakers’ pragmatic knowledge.
- iii) Linguistic competence includes four types of knowledge: phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic.
- iv) Formulaic competence makes reference to certain chunks of language which are fixed and are used in everyday conversations.

- v) Interactional competence consists of actional competence, conversational competence and nonverbal/paralinguistic competence.
- vi) Strategic competence refers to the knowledge of communication strategies and how to employ them.

Following this, many language teaching researchers have focused their attention on the development of learners' communicative competence in a FL (Kasper & Rose, 2002). In this regard, three main theoretical conditions necessary for FL learning and teaching have been established, which are described in the next section of this paper.

#### *2.1.4 Theoretical conditions for SL learning and teaching*

Pragmatic competence has become very important since it is an important component of the communicative construct. However, it has been generally observed that there is a lack of representation of pragmatics within classrooms, so students have little opportunities to put in practice their pragmatic knowledge. In order to teach pragmatics, three main conditions should be provided: input, output and feedback (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). *Input* refers to the language samples that students are exposed to. *Output* refers to the production of the language by the learners and the opportunity to practice their knowledge. Finally, feedback refers to the data learners receive with information about their mistakes. These three conditions are crucial for developing learners' pragmatic competence and, therefore, for the learning of speech acts (Kasper, 2001).



According to LoCastro (2003), learners receive input through the teacher, the materials or other learners. Firstly, ‘teacher talk’ is defined as the special language which adapts to the students’ needs by simplifying register, syntax, length of sentences and grammar (Trosborg, 1995). Teachers provide learners with the politeness rules, the correct use of formulaic expressions, and the diverse linguistic forms that can be employed in different contexts.

With respect to the materials provided for the input, Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010) distinguished between written or audio-visual materials. On the one hand, written materials include textbooks, on which the majority of teachers rely (Vellenga, 2004). However, pragmatics in textbooks is rarely explored because they focus on the linguistic aspects rather than the sociocultural aspects (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 2001; Vellenga, 2004). On the other hand, audio-visual materials are very important when teaching pragmatics since authentic material extracted from films and serials is very useful to show real samples of the FL culture to students. This material gives opportunities to the learners to expand their knowledge of the sociocultural aspects of the FL. Therefore, giving this input to students is essential because this is the closest that students will be to the pragmatic language use of the other culture (Rose, 1997). Furthermore, Taguchi and Sykes (2013) argued that input could also be received through technology. Learners can practice their pragmatic knowledge through different websites devoted to language learning. Moreover, learners can engage in conversation with native speakers of the FL through the synchronous

and asynchronous computer-mediated communication (González-Lloret, 2008). Also, virtual social platforms are another option for learning pragmatics (Taguchi, 2011).

Finally, collaborative practice and interactions among learners are another way to receive input as students can learn from their peers (Ohta, 1995, 1997, 2001; Alcón, 2002). The teacher can prepare speaking activities in groups in order to encourage students to demonstrate their pragmatic and linguistic abilities. In this way, their motivation can increase for learning the FL from other students. Thus, it has been proved that active participation has a colossal power for pragmatic acquisition in the classroom (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

With regard to output, learners also need to practice their learned knowledge to acquire pragmatic competence. As LoCastro (2003) stated, output facilitates fluency in the FL. Teachers can push learners to produce language giving them opportunities to interact. This is called ‘pushed output’ and it is defined as “the production that is characterised by precision, coherence, and appropriateness” (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, p. 13). In addition, teachers should also provide students with the sociocultural information necessary to develop their pragmatic skills. LoCastro (2003) also claimed that it is very important for students to interact between them because in this way they can ask for clarification or confirmation, take risks and also express themselves in different ways. For instance, role-play activities are a great way to provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meanings and exchange

information focusing on the two knowledge dimensions of pragmatics, which are sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics.

Corrective feedback, the third condition necessary for the acquisition of pragmatics, is also necessary if the main aim is to combine communication and accuracy. According to Pica (1996), Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Alcón (2000), feedback can favourably alter learners' production of utterances in a sociolinguistic way. There are two main types of giving feedback: explicit and implicit. While the former refers to the direct way of informing the students that he or she has made an error, the second involves using different techniques to state that an error has occurred. For example, these techniques can be either confirmation checks, clarification requests, or recasts. Therefore, explicit and implicit corrective feedback along with the other two conditions for FL learning and teaching (i.e. input and output) are essential for developing pragmatics in the classroom and the correct use of speech acts (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

## 2.2 Request speech act

Speech acts can be defined as “the basic units of linguistic communication” (Searle, 1969, p. 16). Particularly, request speech acts have been the main focus of attention of many scholars throughout the history of pragmatics (Trosborg, 1995; Barron, 2003; Baranova & Dingemans, 2016; Stavans & Shafran, 2017, among many others). In fact, speakers' intentions have been largely analysed within the field of

pragmatics since communication is based on the speakers' need to transmit a specific intention or attitude (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

Requests are defined by Searle's (1976) as the illocutions by which speakers ask the listener to do something. In other words, the requester makes an utterance in a direct or indirect way in order to make the requestee understand that some action is being required (Trosborg, 1995). Speakers can increase the degree of politeness by performing indirect requests instead of direct, thus, they show consideration towards the hearer (Trosborg, 1995; LoCastro, 2003; Safont, 2008). In addition, the degree of imposition can be softened or intensified by using peripheral modification devices. Therefore, it has been concluded that requests are mainly composed by the request head act and the modification devices (Trosborg, 1995; Sifianou, 1999; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Safont, 2008).

On the one hand, the request head act refers to the categories in which requests are classified according to their function and it is independent. Trosborg (1995) classified the request realisation strategies according to the degree of directness, including direct, conventionally indirect and indirect requests. Firstly, direct requests are usually presented in the form of an imperative or performative since they are made explicitly. Secondly, conventionally indirect requests can be hearer-oriented when they are formulated as an ability, willingness, permission of suggestory formulae, or contrarily, speaker-oriented when they are wishes or desires of the person who make the request. Lastly, indirect requests are the ones in which the speaker's intention is

not explicitly made (i.e. hint). This classification of the request strategies (head acts) is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Taxonomy of request realisation strategies (Trosborg, 1995, p. 205)

REQUEST STRATEGIES	
CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES
1. <i>Direct:</i>	
• Obligation:	<i>You must/have to lend me your car</i>
• Performatives:	<i>I would like to ask you to lend me your car</i>
• Imperatives:	<i>Lend me your car/ Your car (please)</i>
2. <i>Conventionally indirect (hearer-based):</i>	
• Ability:	<i>Can/ Could you lend me your car?</i>
• Willingness:	<i>Would you lend me your car?</i>
• Permission:	<i>May I borrow your car?</i>
• Suggestory formulae:	<i>How about lending me your car?</i>
3. <i>Conventionally indirect (speaker-based):</i>	
• Wishes:	<i>I would like to borrow your car</i>
• Desires/needs:	<i>I want/ need to borrow your car</i>
4. <i>Indirect:</i>	
• Hints:	<i>I have to be at the airport in half an hour</i>

On the other hand, the modifying devices are those which are used to complement the speech act in order to soften or intensify the utterance. Alcón et al. (2005) distinguished two main types of modification devices in requests: internal and external. On the one hand, internal modifiers are defined as the particular words or utterances which are included inside the speech act to modify the focus of the request (e.g. openers, softeners, intensifiers and fillers). On the other hand, external modifiers are those which are usually located

before or after the request and are used to prepare the hearer or to increase the degree of politeness (e.g. preparators, grounders, disarmers, expanders, promise of reward and please) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Taxonomy of peripheral modification devices in requests (Alcón et al., 2005, p. 17)

<b>MODIFICATION DEVICES</b>	
<b>TYPES</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>Internal Modification:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Openers:</li> </ul>	<p><i>Do you think you could open the window?</i> <i>Would you mind opening the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Softeners:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understandment:</li> <li>○ Downtoner:</li> <li>○ Hedge:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Could you open the window for a moment?</i> <i>Could you possibly open the window?</i> <i>Could you kind of open the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intensifiers:</li> </ul>	<p><i>You really must open the window.</i> <i>I'm sure you wouldn't mind opening the window.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fillers:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hesitators:</li> <li>○ Cajolers:</li> <li>○ Appealers:</li> <li>○ Attention-getters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>I er, erm, er - I wonder if you could open the window.</i> <i>You know, you see, I mean</i> <i>OK?, Right?, yeah</i> <i>Excuse me...; Hello...; Look...; Tom...; Mr. Edwards...; father... ..</i></p>
<b>External Modification:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preparators:</li> </ul>	<p><i>May I ask you a favour?... Could you open the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grounders:</li> </ul>	<p><i>It seems it is quite hot here. Could you open the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disarmers:</li> </ul>	<p><i>I hate bothering you but could you open the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expanders:</li> </ul>	<p><i>Would you mind opening the window?... Once again, could you open the window?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promise of reward:</li> </ul>	<p><i>Could you open the window?... If you open it, I promise to bring you to the cinema.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Please</li> </ul>	<p><i>Would you mind opening the window, please?</i></p>

### 2.3 The role of age in the instruction of requests through serials

The instruction of pragmatics has been deeply studied since it is very important to find effective ways to teach this area of linguistics which has become very important today. In order to teach request speech acts, many researchers have proposed different methodologies to integrate pragmatics in the classroom. For instance, the use of audio-visual resources has been an option widely considered by several researchers (Abrams, 2014; Bozavli, 2017; Mishra, 2018), who have shown that it is a very effective way of teaching pragmatics in EFL contexts. Hence, audio-visual sources such as TV serials, films or videos are regarded as authentic material adequate to the instruction of pragmatics (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

In addition, requests may not always be equally formulated when addressing to others since there are many social factors which influence the way speakers behave and use language. Especially, age is an influential factor that should be taken into account when teaching pragmatics in EFL contexts. Therefore, some researchers have focused on the way speakers from different ages perform requests and the different strategies they use.

The recent study by Febriani and Hanidar (2019) analysed and compared the use of request strategies among characters who appeared in the American TV serial named Full House. They had different ages and were divided into three age groups (i.e. adult, teenager, and children). The study classified the requests performed by the main characters of the serial according to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984)

theory on request directness level. In addition, the relative power (e.g. low, equal, high) and social distance (e.g. close, medium, distant) among them was also taken into account to see how they influence the choice of requests. Results showed on the one hand that the adult group was more likely to use direct requests when addressing to children. These direct requests were not considered impolite, instead, they showed closeness between the speakers. On the other hand, children mostly used indirect request when addressing to adults, teenagers and other children, which reveals that although they seem to be very close to each other, they still use indirect forms to show politeness. Nevertheless, in some cases they preferred being more direct when addressing to other children. Finally, teenagers used indirect requests when addressing to adults in order to sound more polite and achieve their purpose.

In relation to the influence of the social variables, all age groups preferred to perform direct request strategies whenever the social distance between speaker and hearer was close. Nevertheless, when the social distance was distant, the choice of the request strategy varied depending on the speaker's authority or power. When the power is equal, direct strategies are the most predominant among speakers. However, when the power is high speakers can choose the strategy they consider the most appropriate. Finally, the speakers use indirect requests only when the power is low.



In a similar vein, Barón and Ortega (2018) conducted a study to investigate the influence of age on pragmatic performance. To carry out this study, 80 people from different ages participated, which were 40 Spanish and Catalan EFL students and 40 English native speakers (NSs). Both groups were divided according to their age into two groups: youths and adults. The main task of the participants was to write an email addressed to their teacher asking whether they could do an exam on a different date since they had not been able to attend on the initial date. Results from this study revealed that younger Spanish and Catalan EFL students tended to use direct request strategies due to the fact that they considered that the specific situation provided required a low degree of social distance and imposition. However, younger English NSs were more likely to use indirect requests since they believed that the situation required a higher degree of social distance and imposition. Nevertheless, no differences were found between the requests formulated by older Catalan/Spanish speakers and older English NSs. Both groups used similar indirect requests due to the fact that they considered more appropriate to keep a high social distance and degree of imposition. Therefore, this study showed that young and adult EFL learners largely differed in their use of requests although young and adult NSs did not show notorious differences in their performances.

From the information above, it can be deduced that the role of age as well as the social variables are very important in the instruction of pragmatics since adults and children do not use language in the same way. For this reason, speakers cannot address to young or old people in

the same way, so they should learn which the most appropriate strategies are depending on age and contextual variables. Hence, an effective way to teach requests is through the use of serials, which provide learners with authentic material with which students can learn from semi-real situations. In the light of these assumptions, the main aim of this study is to provide a research-based pedagogical proposal for teaching requests, considering the variable of age.

#### 2.4 Purpose of the study

Languages in the world are used differently and that is one of the reasons why people behave in such a distinct way depending on the country and the culture. In addition, the ways of speaking also vary among age groups, regardless of the country of birth. For instance, children and adults use language very differently so the way they communicate with others differs greatly. In terms of pragmatics, the choices that speakers make and the constraints they encounter are not the same for everyone. Hence, the instruction of pragmatics should pay special attention to those influential factors which are crucial to avoid losing someone's face. Thus, whenever speakers need to perform FCAs, they will know which strategy is the most appropriate according to the hearer of the conversation. With all this information in mind, and in an attempt to provide a new and effective way to teach pragmatics, the present study aims at designing a teaching proposal for students in High School to develop appropriate requests which adapt to the age of the hearer.

All things considered, the teaching approach that will be developed in this paper will be based on previous research in pragmatics, especially the speech act theory (Austin, 1962 & Searle, 1969), the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987), the communicative competence scheme (Celce-Murcia, 2008), the taxonomy of request realisation strategies (Trosborg, 1995), and the taxonomy of peripheral modification devices in requests (Alcón et al., 2005). Thereby, the main purpose of this teaching proposal is to present an approach which helps learners of a FL to acquire the pragmatic knowledge needed to be successful in making requests depending on the context. Moreover, the teaching proposal involves three different conditions which are needed to gain the appropriate pragmatic knowledge to make requests: input, output and feedback (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). In addition, the proposal consists of five main processes which belong to the instructional method for requests learning proposed by Usó-Juan (2010).

### 3. TEACHING PROPOSAL

This study includes a teaching proposal intended to present an approach which helps learners of an FL to acquire the pragmatic knowledge needed to be successful in making requests according to the social context and the age of the hearers. Therefore, this teaching proposal would take into consideration the Politeness Theory developed by Brown & Levinson (1987), which emphasizes that there are three

independent social variables which influence the way people use language, and in this case, the way people make requests. These variables are mainly the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the relative power of the speaker over the hearer, and the absolute ranking of impositions, which refers to the right that the speaker has to produce the speech act and the manner in which the hearer receives the imposition.

Moreover, the teaching proposal explained here involves the three conditions which are needed to gain the appropriate pragmatic knowledge to make requests: input, output and feedback (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). Input refers to the information that students receive in order to acquire knowledge. Output refers to the production of the language by the learners and the opportunity to practice their knowledge. Feedback is very important since students must be aware of their mistakes so that they can improve their learning. These three conditions are crucial for developing learners' pragmatic competence and, therefore, for the learning of speech acts (Kasper, 2001).

This proposal is addressed to students in High School which are aged between thirteen and sixteen years old. These students are learning EFL and they have a A2 level according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL) (2018). Regarding the classroom characteristics, this proposal has been conceived for a classroom of around twenty or thirty students. Therefore, it can be applied in any school since the number of students in a classroom is the same.

In relation to the class plan, the instructional method for requests learning consists of five processes (Usó-Juan, 2010): (1) learners' L1 exploration (2) learners' FL exploration, (3) learners' recognition, (4) learners' production and (5) learners' feedback.

Table 3. Lessons' schedule of the teaching proposal

Stages	Lessons	Activities
1. Learners' L1 exploration	Lesson 1	1.1 Raising awareness Activity 1: <i>Requesting in mother tongues!</i>
2. Learners' FL exploration	Lesson 1	1.2 Comparing L1 and FL requests Activity 2: <i>How's your English?</i>
3. Learners' recognition	Lesson 2	2.1 Sociopragmatics Activity 1: <i>Kahoot Full House!</i> 2.2 Pragmalinguistics Activity 2: <i>Recognising requests!</i>
4. Learners' production	Lesson 3	Activity 1: <i>Writing emails!</i> Activity 2: <i>Role-plays!</i>
5. Learners' feedback	Lesson 4	Activity 1: <i>Feedback of the emails!</i> Activity 2: <i>Discover the request!</i>

### 3.1 Learners' L1 exploration

Exposure to adequate input is necessary so that students obtain the basic information about the specific aspect they have to learn, in this case requests. Therefore, the first stage is learners' L1 exploration, in which the teacher first introduces to the students in Lesson 1 the main aspects of pragmatic competence (pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics) and information about the specific speech act they are

going to work on. In this way, learners can have a better understanding of the request strategies (Trosborg, 1995) and mitigating devices (Alcón et al., 2005). Once students have received this input, students will complete some awareness-raising questions. Activity 1 is called *Requesting in mother tongues!* (see Appendix A.1) and it is divided into two different activities. The first one consists in answering some awareness-raising questions related to the role of age in the performance of requests so that students can ponder about the influential factors that exist. The second activity consists in reading six different situations and imagining which request would be the most appropriate in each situation in the students' L1. The students should pay attention and take into account different social variables such as the age of the addressee, the social distance, the relative power and the ranking of impositions between the speakers. Hence, the situations are addressed to people of different ages (e.g. children, people from the same age of the learners, adult people) and different social distance (e.g. family members or unknown people). Once the activity has been completed, students are encouraged to compare their answers with their partners in order to compare and learn from others. Basically, the purpose of this introductory activity is to understand the term 'requests' in their mother tongue and pave the floor for understanding requests in English.

### 3.2 Learners' FL exploration

Input in English is necessary to develop students' knowledge and communicative competence in the FL. Therefore, in the second part of Lesson 1, students can compare L1 with FL requests. Activity 2 is called *How's your English?* (see Appendix A.1) and it contains the same six situations from the previous activity but this time with a multiple-choice answer in which three different requests in English appear. In this way, students can compare the request they have written in their L1 and choose the request that they consider to be the most appropriate in English. After doing this activity, they are asked to write down the differences they have found between their L1 and FL and the factors they think that influence the way the requests are performed.

### 3.3 Learners' recognition

In addition, in Lesson 2 students are provided with real samples of requests by using authentic material, the American TV serial called *Full House* (see Appendix B). Activity 1 is called *Kahoot Full House!* (see Appendix A.2) and students will see two different scenes where two different request strategies appear. The first scene shows a child aged three making a request to his father (see Appendix B.1) while the second scene shows an adult speaker aged thirty making a request (see Appendix B.2). Once they have seen these two videos, learners will do two different *Kahoots* which ask questions related to the sociopragmatic aspects of the conversations (i.e. distance, power, imposition, age). In this way, they can recognise the different social

variables between both scenes. Then, Activity 2 is called *Recognising requests!* (see Appendix A.2) and it consists in showing one more time the two scenes but this time students should pay attention to the pragmalinguistic factors since they are asked to complete a table with the differences they find between both scenes with regard to the request head acts and mitigating devices. Also, they are asked about the role of age in the choice of strategy. Learner's conscious awareness of the differences and similarities between requests made by different speakers will make them realise that age plays a crucial role when making a request.

### 3.4 Learners' production

Opportunities for communicative practice are essential for students to demonstrate their abilities and put into practice the knowledge they have acquired. Therefore, following Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010), Lesson 3 includes both written and oral activities for communicative practice. On the one hand, Activity 1 is in the written mode and it is called *Writing emails!* (see Appendix A.3), which consists in writing two different emails addressed to people with whom they have the same social distance but who have different ages in order to see how age influences the way they address to others. On the other hand, Activity 2 is called *Role-plays!* (see Appendix A.3) and it consists in showing two different scenes from the same serial *Full House* in which characters are having a conversation in requesting situations (see Appendix B.3 and B.4). These scenes will be played out until the part



when a request is going to be performed. At this point, the video will be paused, and, in pairs, students will have to write down the request they think suits in the context. In both cases, students will be provided with the essential sociopragmatic information about the characters such as the speakers' social distance, power, rank of imposition and the interactional and contextual factors that take place in the scenes. Thus, they will have the necessary information to role-play how they think the request will be in each conversation. Then, both of the students will have to represent the conversation orally in front of the class with their own proposals of requests. In order to evaluate their performance, other students will complete in pairs the 'Handout 1. Analysis of the Role-plays' (see Appendix A.3).

### 3.5 Learners' feedback

Finally, after students have completed the previous activities and have produced requests, feedback is necessary so that learners can compare their work with the appropriate requests for both the written and the oral activities. Feedback for these two activities is provided to learners from both the teacher and their classmates since it is a great way to encourage students to learn one from another. With regard to Activity 1 *Writing emails!* of Lesson 3, students will make peers and exchange their emails in order to evaluate them. Students will peer review each other's emails and complete 'Handout 2. Feedback to mother's email' and 'Handout 3. Feedback to best friend's email' in Activity 1 called *Feedback of the Emails!* (see Appendix A.4). Once

they have completed them, they will have to give them back to their partners and explain them the reasons of their corrections as well as answer any doubts they may have. With respect to feedback given from *Activity 2 Role-plays*, the two scenes will be shown again to the students but this time the videos will not be stopped, so students can see the real requests. The scripts of the conversations will be shown in *Activity 2 Discover the request!* (see Appendix A.4) so that they can check the authentic request strategies performed and compare them to their own proposals. Also, an explanation for those specific choices is given so that learners can become aware of the situational variables that affect the pragmalinguistic form of communicative acts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Communication involves not only knowing the grammatical rules of a language but also its cultural norms. Hence, FL learners must be familiar with the way native speakers of the language talk and behave. For this reason, research on the instruction of pragmatics has been the main focus of many linguists whose main aim is to establish effective strategies for a successful learning. Therefore, the present paper first provided an overview of pragmatics in order to explore the importance of the choices that speakers make when using the language according to specific social and cultural norms. Likewise, this paper developed relevant theories of pragmatics such as the speech act theory and politeness theory for a better understanding of the pragmatic paradigm. Following, communicative competence was also deeply

explored as it is the basis for a successful communication, and the theoretical necessary conditions to acquire an FL. Finally, the last two sections of the paper were devoted to the basis of this study: request speech acts and the role of age in their performance. Bearing in mind that requests have been the most researched speech act due to the fact that it is considered a FTA which can lead to misunderstandings and pragmatic failures, this paper developed a teaching approach to integrate pragmatics in the classroom considering the role of age for developing requests.

The pedagogical approach proposed in this paper was motivated by the fact that there are many proposals which aim to provide useful activities to develop requests but none of them takes the role of age into account, which is a very influential factor in pragmatics. Therefore, the activities developed in the teaching proposal have been created taking into consideration the age of the learners (speakers or writers) and the age of the 'supposed' listeners or readers. With regard to the structure of the proposal, the three main conditions for an effective learning (input, output and feedback) were considered following the five processes proposed by Usó-Juan (2010). However, this paper has a notable limitation which needs to be acknowledged. The teaching proposal has not been implemented, so any problem that could arise has not been considered. For instance, the time established for each activity can be altered due to a lack of time when some external conditions interfere in the classroom. Hence, the number of lessons established in the approach could vary depending on the situation encountered.

With that respect, this approach is expected to be finally implemented in an EFL educational context as well as further developed once it has been put into practice. In addition, learners' personal and academic characteristics should be a requirement for the enforcement of this pedagogical approach in order to obtain successful results. In other words, learners' personal beliefs, opinions, freedom of choice, creativity, personal thoughts, ways of acting, and values should never be left aside since students have to be motivated when learning without feeling forced to learn something. Moreover, it would be interesting to make adaptations of the proposal to the technological world by using digital tablets, computers, smartphones, among many others. In this way, learners would probably be more engaged since they have grown in this new technological world and are more familiar with electronic devices than books. Consequently, students would adopt a positive attitude towards the FL and would acquire the pragmatic knowledge faster, which in the end, is the final objective.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Lessons

#### *Appendix A.1. Lesson 1: Learners' L1 and FL exploration*

## LESSON 1. LEARNERS' L1 and FL EXPLORATION


### 1.1) Raising awareness

#### Activity 1. Requesting in mother tongues!



#### 1. Answer the following questions.

- ❖ Do you change the way you address others depending on their age?  
Why?

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- ❖ Do you think the level of directness varies depending on the age of the hearer? Why?

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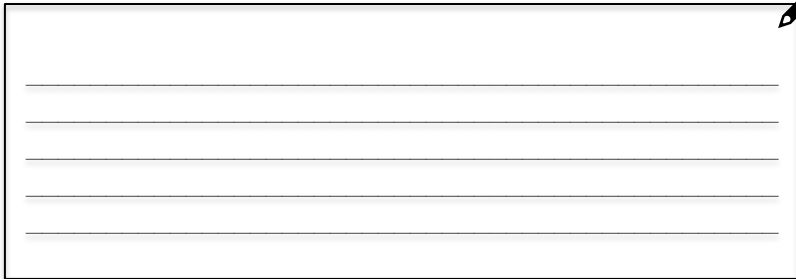
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- ❖ What other factors do you consider when making a request?

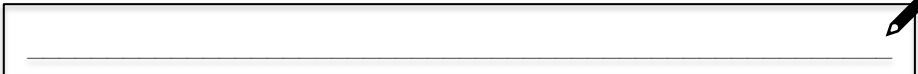


- 2. Read the six situations below and imagine what you would say in your mother tongue in each context. Take into consideration the age of the hearer and the sociolinguistic factors.**

#### **Situation 1:**

Your parents have gone on a travel and you have to take care of your little brother. He has smeared his t-shirt of chocolate. Ask him to take off his clothes to wash them.

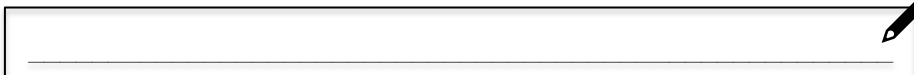
Sociolinguistic factors: Close social distance, high relative power, medium imposition.



#### **Situation 2:**

You are celebrating your aunt's birthday at her home with all of your family. You are very thirsty and there is no water on the table. Ask her for water.

Sociolinguistic factors: Medium social distance, low relative power, low imposition.




### Situation 3:

You have a meeting tomorrow with your teacher to talk about an exam. Unfortunately, you will not be able to attend the meeting. Ask your teacher if the meeting can be done another day.

Sociolinguistic factors: Distant social distance, low relative power, low imposition.

---




### Situation 4:

You are having a party at your friend's house. You are very hungry because you could not have dinner. Ask your friend for food.

Sociolinguistic factors: Close social distance, equal relative power, low imposition.

---




### Situation 5:

It is your first day of class in a new school and you do not know anyone. You have forgotten your pencil case. Ask for a pen to someone.

Sociolinguistic factors: Distant social distance, equal relative power, low imposition.

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### Situation 6:

You are going to give particular classes to a child who wants to learn English. However, when you start to give your explanations, he does not pay attention. Ask him to listen to you and be focused.

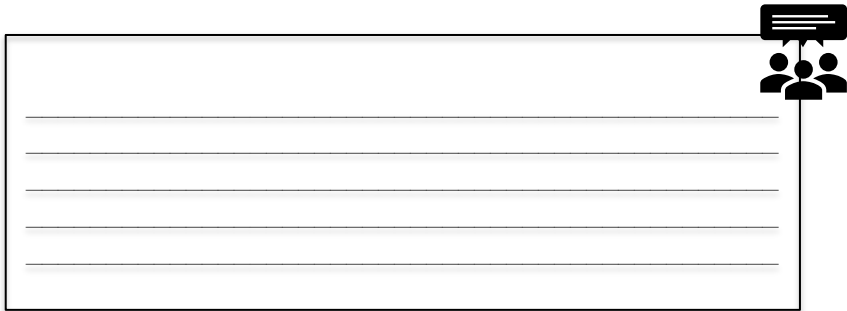
Sociolinguistic factors: Medium social distance, high relative power, high imposition.

---





- 3. Make groups of three and share your answers with your classmates in order to compare them and discuss your choices.**



A large rectangular box with a black border, containing five horizontal lines for writing. In the top right corner, there is an icon of three people silhouettes with a speech bubble above them, indicating a group discussion or sharing activity.

## 1.2) Comparing LI and FL requests

### Activity 2. How's your English?



1. Look at the possible answers in English to the same situations and choose the one you think would be the most appropriate.

#### Situation 1:

Your parents have gone on a travel and you have to take care of your little brother Jim. He has smeared his t-shirt of chocolate. Ask him to take off his clothes to wash them.

- a) Dear Jim, could you please take your clothes off?
- b) Jim, take off your clothes right now!
- c) I would like to wash your clothes.

#### Situation 2:

You are celebrating your aunt's birthday at her home with all of your family. You are very thirsty and there is no water on the table. Ask her for water.

- a) Go for water now.
- b) I am wondering if I could drink some water.
- c) Can I have some water, please?

### Situation 3:

You have a meeting tomorrow with your teacher to talk about an exam. Unfortunately, you will not be able to attend the meeting. Ask your teacher if the meeting can be done another day.

- a) Sorry, I will not be able to attend the meeting tomorrow. Could it be possible to change the meeting for another day?
- b) I can't go to the meeting, let's change it.
- c) Please, change the meeting because I'm not able to go.

### Situation 4:

You are having a party at your friend's house. You are very hungry because you could not have dinner. Ask your friend for food.

- a) I would like to know if I can have some food.
- b) Oh, I'm very hungry. Do you have something to eat?
- c) Give me food right now.

### Situation 5:

It is your first day of class in a new school and you do not know anyone. You have forgotten your pencil case. Ask for a pen to someone.

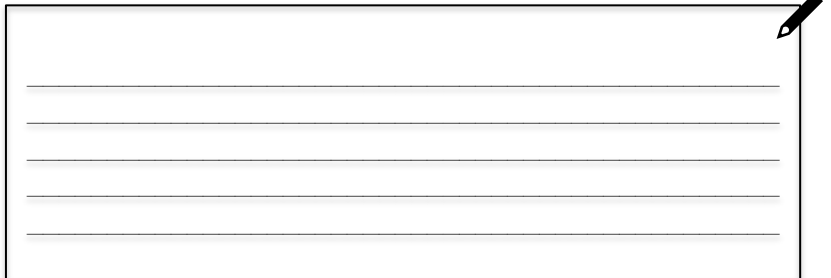
- a) Would it be possible to obtain a pen from your pencil case?
- b) Give me your pen please.
- c) Excuse me, I have forgotten my pencil case. Can I borrow your pen, please?

### Situation 6:

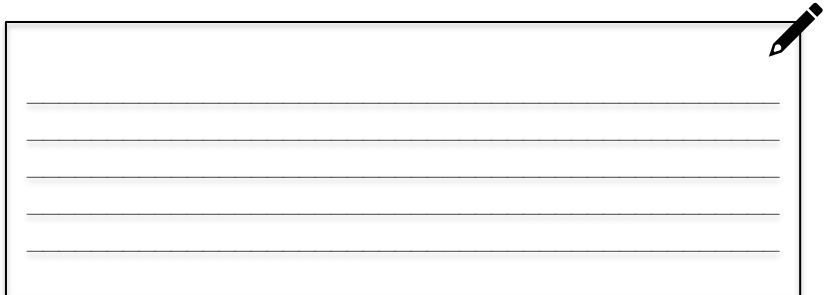
You are going to give particular classes to a child named John who wants to learn English. However, when you start to give your explanations, he does not pay attention. Ask him to listen to you and be focused.

- a) Come on John, try to be focused and we will finish earlier.
- b) Shut up and listen to me!
- c) Could you please be able to pay attention to my explanations?

2. Now, compare the requests you have chosen with the ones you have written in your mother tongue. Do you find any difference or similarity?



3. Do you think age influences the choice of requests in the same way in your mother tongue and in English? Why?



## LESSON 2. LEARNERS' RECOGNITION

### 2.1) Sociopragmatics

#### Activity 1. Kahoot *Full House!* ¿?

25 mins



1. Watch and pay attention to the two different videos that are going to be shown which are scenes from the TV serial named Full House.



2. Now it's time to play Kahoot about the sociopragmatic information of the conversations.

## Kahoot scene 1

Do you think the age of the child has influenced the choice of request strategy?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ No, because age does not influence.

◆ Yes, because the age is an influential factor.

kahoot.it Game PIN: 5053318

What is the speakers' social distance?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ Close

◆ Medium

● Distant

kahoot.it Game PIN: 5053318

What is the children's relative power over his father?



Skip

25



0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ Equal

● High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 5053318

What is the father's relative power over his sons?



Skip

25



0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ Equal

● High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 5053318

What is the father's degree of imposition?



Skip

25



0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 5053318

## Kahoot scene 2

Do you think the age of the lady has influenced the choice of request strategy?



Skip

25



0  
Answers

▲ Yes, age is an influential factor.

◆ No, age is not an influential factor.

kahoot.it Game PIN: 6513256



What is the speakers social distance?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ Close

◆ Medium

● Distant

kahoot.it Game PIN: 6513256

What is the wife's relative power over her husband?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ Equal

● High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 6513256

What is the husband's relative power over his wife?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ Equal

● High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 6513256

What is the husband's degree of imposition?



25



Skip

0  
Answers

▲ Low

◆ High

kahoot.it Game PIN: 6513256

## 2.2) Pragmalinguistics

### Activity 2. Recognising requests!



25 mins

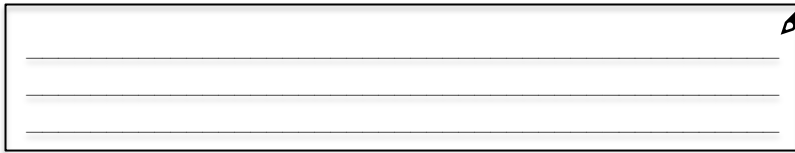


1. Watch again the two scenes and now pay attention to the request head acts and their mitigating devices to complete the following table.

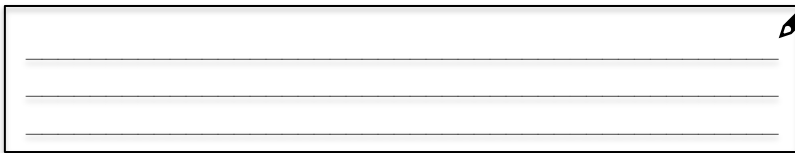


SCENES	REQUEST HEAD ACTS	MITIGATING DEVICES
1		
2		

**2. Are they appropriate for their age? Why?**



**3. Does the same linguistic realisation could be used in both scenes? Why?**



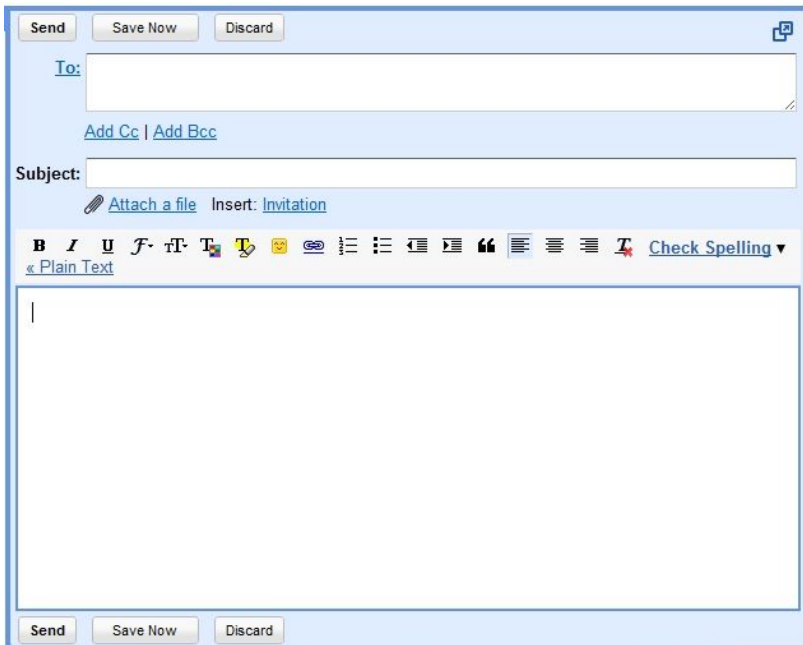
## LESSON 3. LEARNERS' PRODUCTION

### Activity 1. Writing emails!

30 mins 

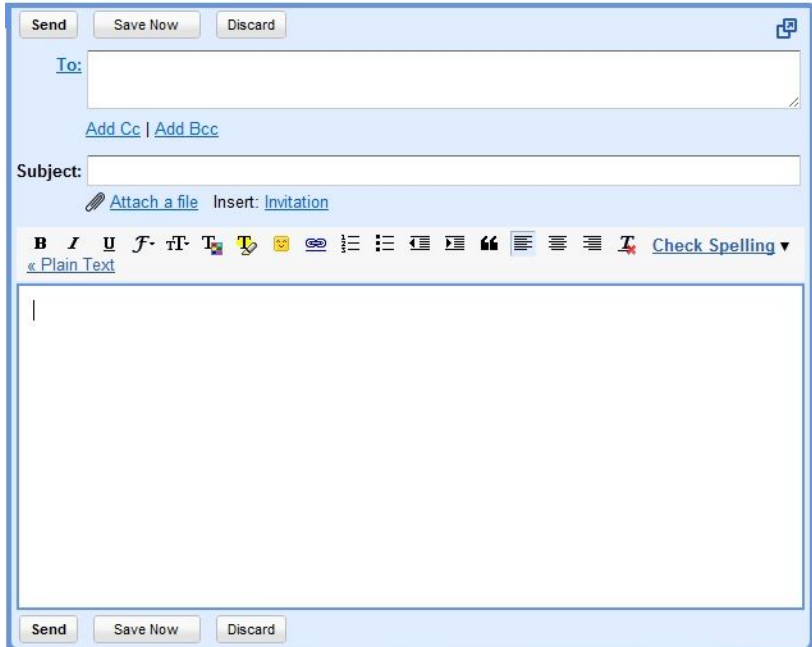
1. Your favorite singer is coming to your town next week and you have bought the ticket for the concert, but you don't have your driving licence. You need someone who takes you to the concert, which is more than one hour away from your city. Therefore, in this activity you have to write two different emails addressed to people with whom you have the same social distance (close) but who have different ages (e.g. your mother and your best friend).

#### A) Email to your mother:




The image shows a screenshot of an email composition window. At the top, there are three buttons: "Send", "Save Now", and "Discard". Below these is a "To:" field with a cursor. Underneath the "To:" field are links for "Add Cc" and "Add Bcc". The "Subject:" field is empty. Below the subject field, there is a link for "Attach a file" and a dropdown menu for "Insert:" with "Invitation" selected. A rich text toolbar is visible, containing icons for bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), font color (F), text color (T), background color (T), link (chain), unlink, bulleted list, numbered list, indent, outdent, quote, unquote, text color, and a "Check Spelling" button. Below the toolbar, there is a "Plain Text" link. The main body of the email is a large empty text area with a cursor. At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Send", "Save Now", and "Discard".

## B) Email to your best friend:



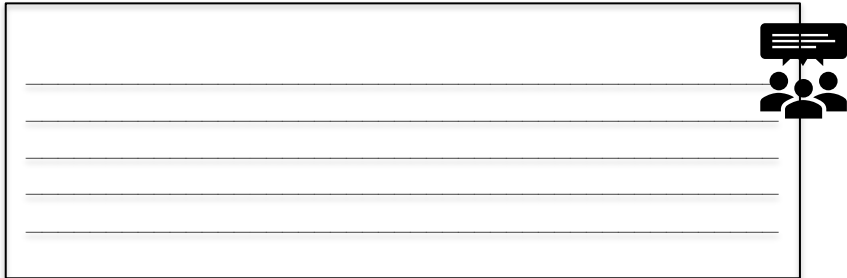
### 2. Make groups and discuss the following questions.

- ❖ To what extent does age have influenced the way you performed the request? Justify your answer.



A large rectangular box with a black border, intended for group discussion. It contains five horizontal lines for writing. In the top right corner of the box, there is an icon representing a group of three people with a speech bubble above them, indicating a group discussion or chat.

- ❖ **Do you think age is more influential than the social distance between speakers when making a request? Justify your answer.**



## Activity 2. Role-plays!



30 mins



1. You are going to watch two different videos which are scenes from the TV serial *Full House*. These scenes will be played out until the part when a request is going to be performed. At this point the video will be paused and, in pairs, you have to write down the request you think suits in the context. Then, both of you will have to represent the conversation orally with your own proposals of requests.

### Situation 1:

D.J. has arrived home and she has gotten a traffic ticket. She does not want to tell her parents about that because they will get angry with her. Therefore, her sisters Stephanie, who has heard the conversation, tells D.J. that she will not tell it to their parents only if she can borrow her clothes and accessories. Although D.J. did not want to lend her clothes, now she is forced to do it because she wants to keep it in secret.

**Sociopragmatic information:** The conversation is between Stephanie, Michelle and D.J. The speakers' social distance is close because they are siblings. In addition, they have equal power because they are both teenagers (13 years old).

Stephanie: You mean...you want us to keep something from father?

Michelle: We couldn't.

D.J.: Okay, what do you guys want?

Stephanie:



## Situation 2:

Derek, Michelle and Denise are at school playing Frisbee. Suddenly, Derek throws it to the top of a high fence. He is very happy that he is the best in the game because he has thrown the frisbee the highest. However, Michelle gets angry with him because the frisbee now was lost on a tall fence and she is going to make a request to Derek so that he goes and brings the frisbee back.

**Sociopragmatic information:** Michelle and Derek are close friends so the social distance between them is close. The speakers' power is equal since they have the same age (8 years old).

13. Derek: Okay, here it goes. [Throws the Frisbee]

wow...just floating right up there.

14. Michelle:

**2. Now, write down which type of request strategy you have chosen and discuss the role of age in the choice of strategy.**

3. Complete the following handout while your classmates are interacting.

### Handout 1. Analysis of the Role-Plays

#### ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE-PLAYS

Analysing group: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Level of formality? 1    2    3    4    5
2. Is the request performed direct?  no  yes (1 2 3 4 5)
3. Is the request polite?  no  yes (1 2 3 4 5)
4. Which strategy was used to perform the request?
5. Were any mitigating devices used? Name them.
6. Is the request appropriate for the age of the hearer?  
 no  yes (1 2 3 4 5)
7. Pragmatic tone. Is the language behavior sincere?  
 no  yes (1 2 3 4 5)
8. Non-verbal communication or body language? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the speakers' social distance?  
 Close     Medium     Distant
10. What is the speakers' relative power?  
 Low     Equal     High
11. What is the speakers' rang of imposition?  
 Low     Mild     High
12. Additional comments:

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## LESSON 4. LEARNERS' FEEDBACK

### Activity 1. Feedback of the Emails!

20 mins



1. Now, it's time to evaluate. Make peers and exchange your emails. Read carefully your partner's email and complete the 'Handout 2. Feedback to Classmates' Emails'. Once you have completed it, give it back to your partner and explain him/her the reasons of your corrections and let him/her ask you any doubts that he/she may have.

### Handout 2. Feedback to mother's email

#### FEEDBACK TO MOTHER'S EMAIL

Name of the reviser: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the sender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Level of formality? 1    2    3    4    5

2. Level of politeness? 1    2    3    4    5

3. Is the request appropriated for the addressee?

no yes (1    2    3    4    5)

4. Which strategy is used to perform the request?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Has the sender considered the age of the addressee to make the request?

no    yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**6. Has the sender considered the social distance with the addressee?**

no   yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**7. Has the sender considered the relative power over the addressee?**

no   yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**8. Has the sender considered the imposition of the addressee?**

no   yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**9. Is the request performed direct?**

no   yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**10. Does the request sound natural in English in this particular context?**

no   yes (1    2    3    4    5)

**11. Is the request literally translated from their mother tongue?**

no     yes    I don't know

**12. Grammar mistakes?**

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**13. Additional comments:**

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### Handout 3. Feedback to best friend's email

#### FEEDBACK TO BEST FRIEND'S EMAIL

Name of the reviser: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the sender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Level of formality? 1 2 3 4 5

2. Level of politeness? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Is the request appropriated for the addressee?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

4. Which strategy is used to perform the request?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Has the sender considered the age of the addressee to make the request?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

6. Has the sender considered the social distance with the addressee?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

7. Has the sender considered the relative power over the addressee?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

8. Has the sender considered the imposition of the addressee?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

9. Is the request performed direct?

no yes (1 2 3 4 5)

**10. Does the request sound natural in English in this particular context?**  
 no  yes (1 2 3 4 5)

**11. Is the request literally translated from their mother tongue?**  
 no  yes  I don't know

**12. Grammar mistakes?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**13. Additional comments:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 2. Discover the request!

25 mins



1. Now, you'll see the entire video in order to check the original request.

### Situation 1

#### Script:

Stephanie: You mean...you want us to keep something from father?

Michelle: We couldn't.

D.J.: Okay, what do you guys want?

Stephanie: Well...for starters, **how about taking a little tour of your closet?**

D.J.: Okay, you little rats can borrow my clothes.

**Request strategy:** Conventionally indirect (hearer-based): suggestory formulae.

**Explanation:** The reason why Stephanie has used this request strategy is because there is no gap between both speakers. She uses a teasing way to make the request because D.J did not want to lend any accessory of her closet, but now she must do it in order to keep the secret.

### Situation 2

#### Script:

Derek: Okay, here it goes. [Throws the Frisbee]  
wow...just floating right up there.

Michelle: **Why don't you float up there and get it?**

Denise: I'll go. I'm not afraid of climbing that.

**Request strategy:** Conventionally indirect (hearer-based): suggestory formulae.


**Explanation:** Michelle is expressing her annoyance through her request because of the use of the verb 'float'. Moreover, she is trying to mock Derek because he has thrown the frisbee very high. In addition, she is addressing directly to Derek with the pronoun 'you' because she wants to highlight that it is his fault. Michelle has used this request strategy because she wanted to sound sarcastic.



## Appendix B. *Full House* Scripts

Synopsis: *Full House* is an American TV series (1987), which is set in a Victorian house in San Francisco and follows the adventures of an unconventional family. One of the protagonists, Danny Tanner, father, journalist and obsessed with cleaning, becomes a widower after the death of his wife and he has to take care of his three daughters by himself: Michelle (six months), Stephanie (three years old) and DJ (twelve years old). As the situation was overcoming him in his new role as a single and hardworking father, Danny asks for help from his best friend Joey and his brother-in-law Jesse, who move to live with the Tanners in order to raise the three girls. In addition, Joey and Jesse will also have to take care of their own children, who will be born a couple of years later. Therefore, we can see how three men have to take care of three girls of various ages and teach them how to behave in a good manner and be polite with other people.

### Appendix B.1. *High Anxiety* (S07E07)

 from minute 00:07:13 to 00:07:50

Context: This is a conversation between Jesse, Alex and Nicky. Jesse is the father of the family and he is laying on the sofa with his two sons Alex and Nicky, who are three years old. Jesse is looking at different wallpapers in a sample book and trying to choose one to open the Smash Club. Suddenly, one of his sons, Alex, makes a request because he wants his father to tell them a story since they are bored.

1. Alex: **Tell me a story, please.**
2. Jesse: Ooh boys, this is not a story book. It's a sample book.
3. Nicky + Alex: Please, Daddy.
4. Jesse: Okay, alright, alright.

(Febriani and Hanidar, 2019)


Appendix B.2. *High Anxiety (S07E07)*

⌚ from minute 00:08:08 to 00:08:36

Context: This is a conversation between Jesse and Becky. They are a married couple who have two sons. Jesse, the father, is playing with his son Alex when the mother, Becky, makes a request to her husband because she has realised that his son needs to go to the toilet, so she is requesting Jesse to bring him there.

5. Becky: Oh, Jess, **why don't you take a break and see if you can**
6.           **get Alex to use the potty?**
7.           He's doing his got-to-go dance.
8. Jesse:   Oh, yeah, yeah, alright. Come one, come on, son.

### Appendix B.3. *Support Your Local Parents (S07E12)*


 from minute 00:10:04 to 00:10:23

Context: D.J. has arrived home and she has gotten a traffic ticket. She does not want to tell her parents about that because they will get angry with her. Therefore, her sisters Stephanie, who has heard the conversation, tells D.J that she will not tell it to their parents only if she can borrow her clothes and accessories. Although D.J did not want to lend her clothes, now she is forced to do it because she wants to keep it in secret.

7. Stephanie: You mean...you want us to keep something from father?
8. Michelle: We couldn't.
9. D.J.: Okay, what do you guys want?
10. Stephanie: Well...for starters, **how about taking a little tour of**
11. **your closet?**
12. D.J.: Okay, you little rats can borrow my clothes.

(Febriani and Hanidar, 2019)

Appendix B.4. *High Anxiety (S07E07)*

 from minute 00:09:22 to 00:09:43

Context: Michelle, Denise and Derek are at school playing Frisbee. Suddenly, Derek throws it to the top of a high fence. He is very happy that he is the best in the game because he has thrown the frisbee the highest. However, Michelle gets angry with him because the frisbee now was lost on a tall fence and she is going to make a request to Derek so that he goes and brings the frisbee back.

13. Derek: Okay, here it goes. [Throws the Frisbee]  
wow...just floating right up there.
14. Michelle: **Why don't you float up there and get it?**
15. Denise: I'll go. I'm not afraid of climbing that

(Febriani and Hanidar, 2019)

