Input in the EFT Setting: focus on the teachers' awareness and use of requests, suggestions and advice acts

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Abstract

Within the area of second language acquisition it has been assumed that the three conditions to acquire different aspects of the target language include pertinent input, opportunities for output and feedback. Regarding the first condition and focusing on pragmatic issues, learners' opportunities for input in the foreign language classroom are limited to two main sources, namely those of materials and teachers' output. Previous research examining the presentation of pragmatic information in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) materials has demonstrated an artificial and decontextualised use of language. However, paying attention to the second source, there are no previous studies which have focused on both teachers' awareness and production of a particular pragmatic aspect. In this respect, the present study aims at analysing a group of university teachers' degree of grammatical and pragmatic awareness on the one hand, and their production of exhortative speech acts, those of requesting, suggesting and advising, on the other. In so doing, we attempt to ascertain whether teachers' output may be regarded as appropriate input in the foreign language classroom. Results show that teachers are more aware of grammatical errors than pragmatic violations. Moreover, their production of the three speech acts analysed, particularly suggestions and advice acts, make us finally state, in line with Bardovi-Harlig (1992, 1996), that it would be beneficial to develop teacher training programs on pragmatics.

1. Introduction

Pragmatic competence has been ascertained as one of the main elements in different models of communicative competence (Alcón, 2000a; Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia *et al.*, 1995), since it is considered a necessary ability in order to communicate efficiently in the target language. As stated by Cenoz (1999), in contrast to focusing merely on linguistic competence, which is a static concept based on grammatical rules and related to individuals (i.e. concrete monolingual native speakers), there is a need to pay attention to aspects of communicative

competence, regarded as a social and dynamic construct based on the negotiation of meaning between two or more speakers. Taking into account the relevance of the pragmatic component, the field of interlanguage pragmatics, which investigates learners' acquisition and use of pragmatic aspects in the second or foreign language, has recently been addressed as an important interdisciplinary area within the field of second language acquisition (SLA).

Research within this area has illustrated that the theoretical conditions for second language acquisition include the following assumptions:

(1) Learners' need for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985)

(2) Learners' need for output (Swain, 1985, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1995)

(3) Learners' need for feedback, on both meaning (Pica, 1994) and form (Williams, 1999).

Regarding the first of these three conditions, Krashen's (1985) theory of comprehensible input has suggested that processing input for the comprehension of message meaning is necessary in order to convert input into acquired knowledge. Krashen (1978) also makes the distinction between input and intake, since language input refers to those utterances the L2 learners are exposed to, whereas intake implies that type of input that serves the purpose of language acquisition. Apart from comprehensible input, VanPatten (2000) also distinguishes three more kinds of input that have been discussed in the SLA research over the last thirty years. These refer to simplified, modified and enhanced input. In relation to this research, it has been investigated whether different types of input simplifications (Hatch, 1983), modifications (Long, 1983) or alterations in the way input is presented to learners (VanPatten, 1996) result in increased comprehension. However, in spite of these attempts to analyse input from several perspectives, VanPatten (2000) argues that this research has remained external to the learner, and questions such as "what happens to input during online comprehension" (2000: 291) are absent from input research. In this sense, VanPatten (1995, 1996) has proposed a model of input processing that pays attention to the kind of form-meaning connections that learners make during comprehension. A key issue within this model is the analysis of intake.

Corder (1967) was the first scholar to use this term, and similarly, VanPatten (1996) has also analysed intake as the result of input processing. In contrast, other researchers (Chaudron, 1985; Gass, 1988, 1997) have considered intake as a process consisting of different stages of assimilating information. In fact, Gass (1988) developed a theoretical framework which integrated four main components, namely those of noticed input, comprehended input, intake, and

integration into learners' interlanguage system. According to this author, the first stage of acquisition deals with the noticing of input, which may be caused as a result of saliency. However, not all noticed input may be comprehended, and not all comprehended input becomes intake. It is only when the intake is clearly encoded by the learner, that it becomes an integrated part of learner's implicit knowledge. Noticing, regarded as the initial stage for second language acquisition, has also been considered by Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001). In fact, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis supports the idea that conscious noticing is the necessary condition for converting input to intake. Moreover, as suggested by Schmidt and Frota (1986), it is when learners compare what they have noticed in the input with what they are able to produce according to their interlanguage system, that noticed input becomes accommodated intake available to any subsequent language acquisition processes.

Considering this process in the context of the foreign language classroom, it is believed that in order for input to function as intake, it must be presented in a form that can be processed by the learner. As Trosborg (1995) points out, particularly in this setting it is possible, at least to a certain extent, to shape and adapt input to learners' needs. This kind of adapted language used by teachers in second language (L2) classrooms when addressing their learners constitute a special register known as *teacher talk*, whose characteristics involve a simplified register, syntactic simplification, reduced length of utterances, and no ungrammatical speech. In this situation, the learner is completely dependent on the teacher for input, and this input, as reported in several studies (Alcón, 2001a; Ellis, 1992; Trosborg, 1995), is hardly optimal for learning, and more concretely for offering learners opportunities to develop their pragmatic competence in the target language. In fact, as claimed by Alcón (2001a) in her study on the academic advising session, the positive input provided by teachers was not enough to help learners to develop their pragmatic competence in the academic setting.

Furthermore, as suggested by Swain (1985, 2000), input opportunities are not enough for language learning. Thus, we turn to the second condition for SLA, that is, the output hypothesis developed by Swain (1985), which focused on pushing learners into language production. The opportunities for pushed output, which refers to the production that is characterised by precision, coherence, and appropriateness, are regarded to be the necessary conditions for a learner to be able to acquire a second language. In fact, Swain (2000) argues that not only comprehending, but also producing the target language, is what makes learners notice how the language is used in order to express their intended meaning. Swain (1995) also proposed three functions for output that can be

identified in this process. The first function, the noticing function, refers particularly to the fact that learners may notice a gap between what they try to say and what they actually can say. Regarding the second function, that is, the hypothesis-testing function, Swain (1995: 131-132) considers that learners "may use their output as a way of trying out new language forms and structures". Finally, the metalinguistic function encourages learners to reflect on the forms being produced. One example of this theoretical condition may be observed in Kanagy and Igarashi's (1997) longitudinal study of English-speaking children's comprehension of pragmatic routines in Japanese. According to the researchers, by initiating L2 speech, the children created opportunities to produce output, which then triggered additional input from the teacher including negative feedback. Therefore, pragmatic needs were regarded as a significant factor in the language production process, influencing what types of teacher input emerged as output in the earliest stages of L2 acquisition.

Swain (1985) also claimed that output opportunities must be combined with feedback if our aim is to combine communication and accuracy. In this sense, after examining the two first theoretical conditions for SLA, namely those of comprehensible input and learners' need for output, the third and final condition points to learners' need for feedback, which has also been referred to as negative input (Pica, 1996). As raised by Alcón (2000b), research has shown that language learners can be pushed by their interlocutors' feedback to produce more sociolinguistically appropriate and accurate correct target language (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Pica, 1994; Van den Braden, 1997). Additionally, an important distinction has been made between negotiation of meaning, whose main aim is to restore and/or maintain mutual understanding in a conversation, and negotiation of form, in which one interlocutor tries to push the other towards a more appropriate utterance. Taking into account the former, studies conducted by Gass and Varonis (1985), Varonis and Gass (1985) and Doughty and Pica (1986) have shown that repair occurs when there is some kind of communication breakdown that makes language learners notice a difference between their own production and the intended target language. It is when this breakdown occurs that speakers try to achieve a way of understanding each other through negotiation of meaning. Some of the techniques employed when repairing the communication problem have adopted requests for clarification and requests for confirmation. Paying attention to the second type of negotiation, that is negotiation of form, Lyster (1998a, 1998b) has also identified different techniques, such as recasts or explicit corrections, that perform the function of pushing learners to reprocess their own linguistic resources in order to repair their errors. In this sense, through negotiation of form techniques, the teacher can guide and provide corrective feedback to their students making learners

aware of their own output. Examples of corrective feedback in the realm of pragmatics can be found both focusing on meaning, such as Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1996) study based on academic advising sessions; or on form, in which Omar (1992) found two occurrences where NSs of Kiswahili corrected other NSs regarding choice of forms in conversational openings.

The three conditions mentioned above have been regarded as essential for the acquisition of any aspect in the target language. Concerning pragmatic issues, Kasper claims that:

> The acquisition of pragmatic knowledge requires many of the same conditions as the acquisition of other types of L2 knowledge: There must be pertinent input, the input has to be noticed, and learners need ample opportunity to develop a high level of processing control in order to access relevant knowledge quickly and effectively in different communicative contexts (Kasper 1996: 148).

Taking this assumption into consideration, different scholars in the field of interlanguage pragmatics support the need for rich and contextually appropriate input in the classroom (Bardovi-Harlig, 1997, 2001; Judd, 1999; Kasper, 1996, 1997, 2001). In fact, in foreign language contexts learners' opportunities for learning particular pragmatic items of the target language are much more restricted than in second language environments, since the only two input sources learners are exposed to are teachers' output and English Language Teaching (ELT) materials (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, 2001; Kasper, 1997, 2001). On the one hand, research focusing on the pragmatic information that materials may offer to foreign language learners (Alcón and Safont, 2001; Alcón and Tricker, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 1991; Boxer and Pickering, 1995; Meier, 1997) has demonstrated an artificial and decontextualised presentation of the different pragmatic aspects examined. On the other hand, concerning teachers' output as a source of input in the EFL classroom, there are only a few studies which have dealt with the type of input teachers produce in this particular setting.

In a study on suggesting in the academic advising setting, Alcón (2001a) examined teachers' production of suggestions and the use of mitigators. The author showed that teachers' output could be regarded as positive input for learners. However, learners' output opportunities were not corresponded with a teachers' pertinent feedback, which made the author conclude that only being exposed to the language or having opportunities for language use are not enough for developing non-native speakers' pragmatic competence. Dealing with a different speech act, namely that of requesting, Alcón (2001b) also investigated whether the foreign language classroom offered learners opportunities to be exposed and make use of requests. The author found that learners' oral

production did not show an appropriate use of requesting. Thus, Alcón (2001b) concluded that neither input nor output, two of the necessary conditions to acquire the pragmatic aspects of the target language, occur in the EFL classroom, so she argued for further research that analyses whether EFL teachers' degree of pragmatic awareness and production influences learners' pragmatic competence. Taking these findings into account, Martínez-Flor *et al.*, (in press) examined teachers' output when requesting in a particular academic setting: that of the oral interview. Results indicated that although teachers made use of a wide range of request act formulae, thus offering learners chances for pragmatic input, students' production was very limited. In this sense, it was again claimed that learners' mere exposure to input in the foreign language classroom does not seem to be enough to develop their pragmatic competence.

Bearing in mind all the above-mentioned studies, and the necessity to conduct more studies examining the source of input in the foreign language classroom, in this paper we attempt to analyse the input produced by teachers regarding one particular pragmatic aspect, namely that of exhortative speech acts. On the one hand, following Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study, which also dealt with English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL teachers, we devote our study to analysing teachers' degree of grammatical and pragmatic awareness in order to ascertain which aspect teachers pay more attention to. On the other hand, we are also interested in analysing their production of requesting, suggesting and advising in particular contextual situations. In so doing, we are focusing on teachers' output in the EFL setting. The present study thus addresses the following research questions:

(a) Do EFL teachers at the University setting show the same degree of grammatical and pragmatic awareness?

(b) Could university teachers' production of requesting, suggesting and advising be considered as a kind of appropriate input in the EFL context?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Subjects for our study were twenty female university teachers from the Department of English and Romance languages at Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain). Their age ranged between 27 and 43 years old, the average age being 31.1 years. All of them were teaching different disciplines from the

three faculties the University is divided into, namely the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Law and Economics, and the Institute of Technology and Experimental Sciences.

2.2 Procedure and Material

The materials employed to collect data from our subjects involved the use of two written questionnaires, an awareness test and a production test. Both instruments were created by the *LAELA*[1] research group for the purposes of conducting research in interlanguage pragmatics.

The written questionnaires were done on two different days. Firstly, we distributed the awareness test (see Appendix A), which consisted of 20 different situations that varied according to degrees of familiarity and social distance in making the particular three exhortative speech acts under study, namely those of requests, suggestions and advice acts. The participants of the study were asked to evaluate each situation taking into account whether the utterances were grammatical or ungrammatical, and appropriate or inappropriate. By means of this test, we aimed at ascertaining whether teachers were more aware of grammatical mistakes or pragmatic violations. Secondly, our subjects were told to express what they would say in each of the 20 situations the production test consisted of (see Appendix B). These situations also varied in terms of familiarity and social distance between the interlocutors. By means of this test, we analysed teachers' production of the speech acts both quantitatively, i.e. examining the amount of each appropriate speech act produced, and qualitatively, i.e. analysing what kind of linguistic realisation strategies the participants employed when producing those speech acts. In order to make our analysis we focused on three different typologies.

As far as *requesting* is concerned, we have followed Trosborg's (1995) suggested taxonomy of this particular speech act (see Table 1 below), since it is built on previous research within the area of pragmatics (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1976), as well as on the basis of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model distributed into on-record and off-record strategies. Moreover, this typology has also been reformulated following the studies carried out by House and Kasper (1981), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Safont (2001a). As can be observed in Table 1, Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy is mainly divided into the strategies of indirect requests, conventionally indirect requests (either hearer-oriented or speaker-based), and direct requests. Additionally, we decided to include an extra group of other types of strategies in case these might occur.

Table 1. Request strategy types (based on Trosborg, 1995: 205)

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE
Indirect	Hints	Statement
Conventionally indirect (hearer-oriented)	Ability Willingness Permission Suggestory Formulae	Could you...? Can you...? Would you...? May I...? How about...?
Conventionally indirect (speaker-based)	Wishes Desires/needs Obligation	I would like... I want/need you to... You must... You have to...
Direct	Performatives Imperatives Elliptical phrase	I ask you to... Lend me your car. Your car.
Other types of strategies		

Concerning *suggestions*, we have adopted a typology based on Alcón and Safont's (2001) taxonomy, since the taxonomy proposed by these authors deals with research from the field of pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. First of all, it addresses those universal pragmatic strategies (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996) of indirect and direct types, and this assumption also takes into account Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness to directness scale. Additionally, following Thomas (1995), suggestions are distributed paying attention to the interactional meaning which underlies their occurrence, and the context in which they might be performed. These criteria are very important in order to distinguish this speech act from the other two directive speech acts addressed in this study, that is, requests and advice acts. Finally, Alcón and Safont's (2001) typology of suggestion formulae includes Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's Maxim of Congruence (1993), which implies the appropriateness of specific strategies according to the speakers' status in a given situation. Apart from all this investigation on which the taxonomy is based, we have also considered Koike's (1994: 521) proposal of some commonly used expressions of suggestions in English. Thus, as might be observed in Table 2 below, the taxonomy adopted for this study, similar to the one presented for requesting, follows the types of indirect, conventionally indirect, direct and other types of strategies.

Table 2. Suggestion strategy types
(based on Alcón and Safont, 2001: 10; Koike, 1994: 521)

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE
Indirect	Hints	I'd like you to... We can/could...
Conventionally indirect	Possibility **Probability** Specific Formulae	I wonder if you could... It may/might... How/What about...? Let's... Why don't you /Why not...?
Direct	Declarative Performative	You can/could... I suggest you to...
Other types of strategies		

Finally, regarding *advice*, we have considered Alcón and Safont's (2001) suggested typology of this particular speech act. Since it is similar to suggestions, it is built on the basis of previous research in the field of pragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Wunderlich, 1980) and interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). Moreover, we have also taken into account Hinkel's (1997: 11-12) classification of advice acts. Thus, similarly to the two previous taxonomies of the speech acts of requesting and suggesting, advice acts are distributed into indirect, conventionally indirect, and direct strategies, to which we have added yet another category which is 'other types of strategies' (see Table 3).

Table 3. Advice strategy types
(based on Alcón and Safont, 2001: 10; Hinkel, 1997: 11-12)

| TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE
Indirect	Hints	You want to pass, don't you?
Conventionally Indirect	Conditional Probability Specific formulae	If I were you, ... It might be better for you... Why don't you...? Isn't it better for you...?
Direct	Imperative Neg.imperative Declarative Performative	Be careful! Don't worry! You should... You ought to... I advice you to...
Other types of strategies		

3. Results and discussion

As previously mentioned, our study was designed to investigate teachers' awareness and use of exhortative speech acts in the EFL context in order to ascertain whether their output may be considered as a kind of appropriate input for learners to develop their pragmatic competence.

3.1 Results related to the first research question

Our first research question addressed whether teachers showed the same degree of grammatical and pragmatic awareness. Figure 1 shows teachers' grammatical and pragmatic awareness on the one hand, and the suggestions they provided in order to correct the grammatical mistakes and pragmatic violations on the other.

Figure 1. University teachers' grammatical and pragmatic awareness.
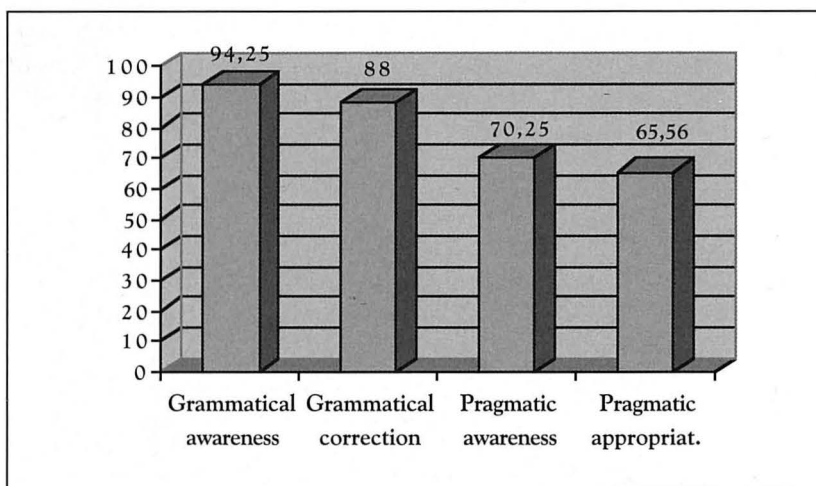
As can be seen in Figure 1 above, University teachers had a higher percentage of grammatical awareness than pragmatic awareness, achieving almost 100% of grammatical awareness (94.25%), whereas their pragmatic awareness accounted for only a 70.25 %. This finding might be due to the fact that teachers are used to correcting students' exams and, thus, to checking for grammatical mistakes. In this sense, detecting ungrammatical sentences comes more natural to them than the identification of pragmatic appropriateness of different situations. Moreover, this result was also found in Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study, in which Hungarian EFL teachers obtained 100% grammatical recognition of errors, whereas they only rated 79.2% for pragmatic errors.

As far as teachers' correction of those sentences that were found grammatically incorrect or pragmatically inappropriate, Figure 1 also illustrates that teachers' grammatical correction was higher (88%) than their correction of inappropriate situations (65.56%). These findings, as stated above, may have been caused by a focus on grammatical and linguistic items over those dealing with pragmatic aspects.

Thus, we may state that University teachers show a higher degree of grammatical than pragmatic awareness. This fact might influence their output in the foreign language classroom, and thus affect the kind of input learners receive as far as exhortative speech acts is concerned. To this respect, in line with Bardovi-Harlig (1992, 1996), we believe that teachers should receive training about pragmatics in the target language.

3.2 Results related to the second research question

Regarding our second research question which involved teachers' production of the three exhortative speech acts of requesting, suggesting and advising, Figure 2 below presents the percentages obtained for each speech act.

Figure 2. University teachers' production of exhortative speech acts.
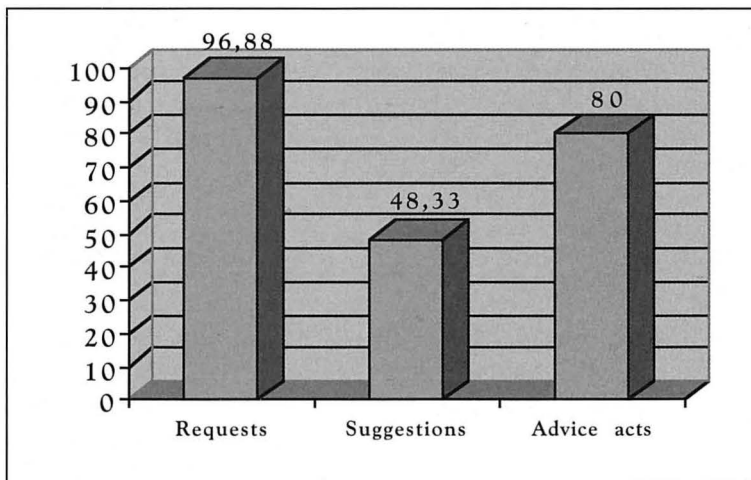

As displayed in Figure 2, teachers' use of requests amounted to a 96.88%, almost 100%. In contrast, their production of suggestions accounted for only a 48.33 per cent, nearly half the total of possible realisations. Finally, the number of appropriate utterances expressing the speech act of advising (80%) was greater than that of suggestions, but not so high as in the case of requests.

Apart from examining the amount of speech acts produced by our participants in quantitative terms, we shall also deal with the type of request, suggestion and advice realisation strategies employed by this group of EFL teachers in qualitative terms. Thus, the next three subsections aim at presenting each of these three speech acts.

3.2.1 Use of request linguistic realisation strategies

Firstly, we will focus on the speech act of requesting, following Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy of this particular speech act. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of request realisation strategies into the types of indirect, conventionally indirect (both hearer-oriented and speaker-based), direct, and other types of strategies.

Figure 3. Distribution of teachers' use of request realisation strategies.
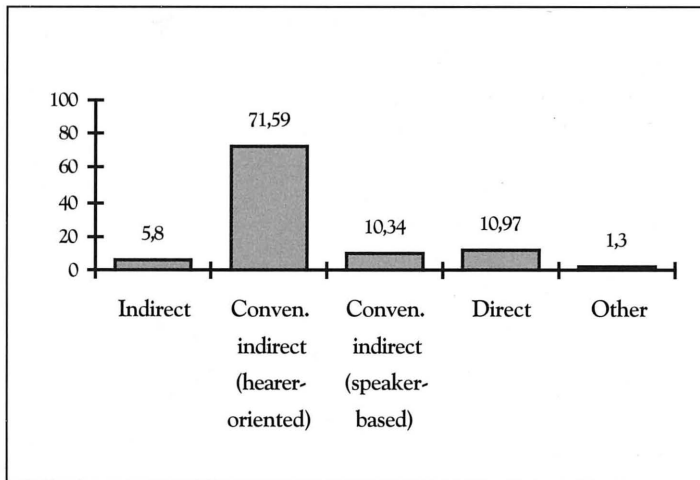
As depicted in the previous Figure, the type most frequently employed involved the conventionally indirect strategies oriented to the hearer, which amounted to 71.59%. This type, although to a lesser extent, was followed by direct requests (10.97%) and conventionally indirect strategies based on the speaker (10.34%). Finally, teachers employed only 5.8% of indirect request strategies and a 1.3% belonged to other types of strategies, which consisted of questions.

A more detailed analysis of the different request formulae performed by our participants showed that among the conventionally indirect strategies, the

request linguistic realisations most frequently used addressed willingness and ability strategies. Thus, the use of willingness structures, which amounted to 25.8%, involved not only the structure *Would you ...?*, but also the expressions *Would you mind + V-ing ...?*; *Would you be so kind as to ...?* or *Would you mind if I ...?*. Additionally, their production of requests consisted of elaborate utterances, which not only contained the speech act itself, but also a pre-request that provided explanations and reasons which mitigated the face-threatening nature of this speech act:

Example (1)
Situation 16 (see Appendix B):

- You work as a secretary in a tile factory. You need two days off because your mother is ill. What do you say to your boss?:

I've just talked to my mother. She's very ill and she needs my help. Would you mind if I take two days off, please?

The previous example shows that before stating the speaker's intentions explicitly, s/he prepares the request itself by providing some explanations and by softening it through the use of mitigators, such as *just* and *please*. In this sense, our subjects employed a high variety of modification devices including *excuse me, please, just, really* and *thank you.*

These findings are in line with previous studies focusing on English adult learners' use of request realisation strategies (Safont and Alcón, in press) and on University teachers from other Departments (Safont, 2001b). Participants in these studies made use of conventionally indirect strategies (above all ability and willingness strategies) as opposed to the employment of other types of strategies. Moreover, both studies were subject to an instructional period that favoured participants' use of other strategies such as hints (indirect) and performatives or imperatives (direct). Thus, in light of these results, and following Bardovi-Harlig's (1996, 2001) studies, we believe that teachers may be aware of specific pragmatic aspects in order to make their output more appropriate in the EFL classroom to develop their learners' pragmatic competence.

3.2.2 Use of suggestion linguistic realisation strategies

Focusing on the speech act of suggesting, Figure 4 presents the distribution of the suggestion realisation strategies according to indirect, conventionally indirect and direct types.

Figure 4. Distribution of teachers' use of suggestion realisation strategies.
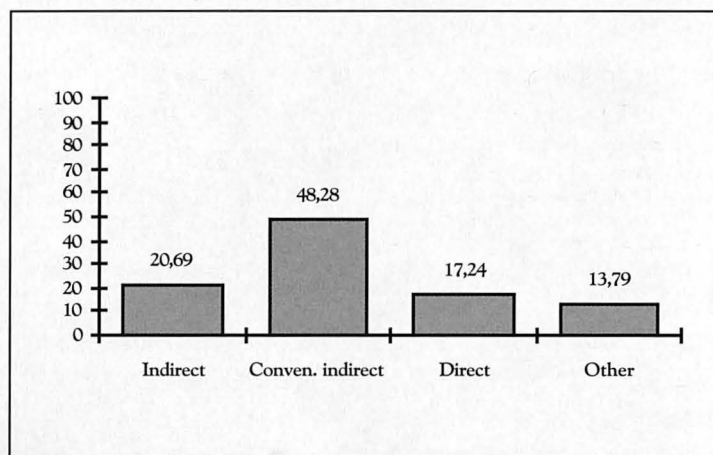
In contrast to the speech act of requesting analysed before, which was highly performed by the use of conventionally indirect strategies, suggestion linguistic formulae were realised by means of the different types of strategies. Among them, the most frequently employed type of suggestions involved the use of conventionally indirect strategies accounting for a 48.28 per cent on the overall strategy use. This was followed by the indirect type amounting to a 20.69 per cent, and finally nearly the same percentage was obtained for the direct type (17.24%) and other types of strategies (13.79%).

Following both Alcón and Safont's (2001) typology and Koike's (1994) assumptions about suggestions, a more detailed analysis of the different suggestion formulae performed by our participants indicate that the suggestion formulae most frequently employed involved the use of specific formulae, since the total percentage of this strategy amounted to 31.04% distributed into the expressions *How/What about ...?* (10.34%); *Let's ...* (6.90%); and *Why don't you/Why not ...?* (13.8%). Moreover, it is worth mentioning that our subjects employed suggestions from all kinds of structures, even the expressions *I'd rather...* and *I'd prefer...*, which belonged to the group referring to other types of strategies. However, the specific structure most frequently employed entailed the indirect type realised by the structure *We can/could ...* (17.24%).

Example (2)
Situation 9 (see Appendix B):

- The marketing manager of a tile factory is planning a new strategy for this year's Cevisama which involves offering free wall tiles to visitors. At a meeting s/he says:

In my opinion it would be a good idea if we could offer free wall tiles to visitors in Cevisama this year.

As illustrated in the previous example, mitigators were also used when expressing a suggestion, although not as frequently as when requesting. The mitigators used were *I think, in my opinion* and *maybe.*

Our results are thus in line with Alcón's (2001a) study, in which teachers' production was analysed in a particular academic setting, that of the advising session. The author, following Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) Maxim of Congruence, found that teachers were active participants producing a high percentage of suggestions and also a high degree of mitigators when employing this particular speech act. Nevertheless, Alcón concluded that teachers' positive output was not enough to develop learners' pragmatic competence.

3.2.3 Use of advice linguistic realisation strategies

Finally, the third speech act we examined referred to advising. In the same way as the two previous speech acts analysed, Figure 5 below also presents teachers' percentage of the particular advice realisation strategies employed, taking into account indirect, conventionally indirect, direct and other types of strategies.

Figure 5. Distribution of teachers' use of advice realisation strategies.
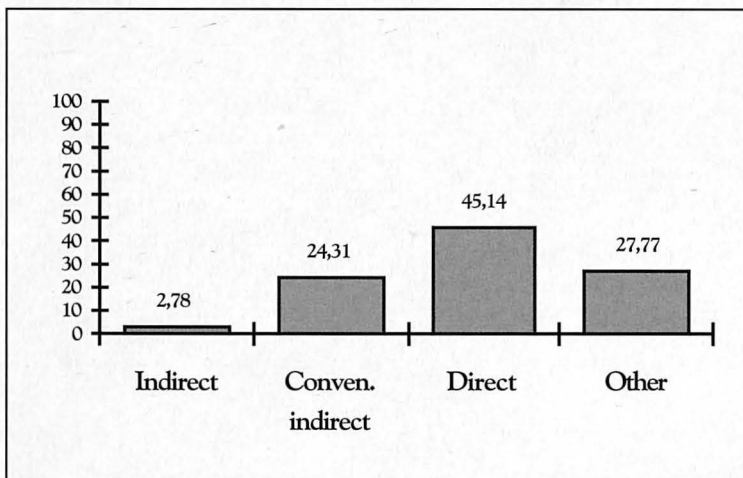
The type of advice strategies most frequently employed was the direct type, amounting to 45.14% (nearly half the overall strategy use). One outstanding

aspect depicted from the figure above involves the scarce use of indirect strategies. These findings are supported by the study carried out by Alcón and Safont (2001), who examined a corpus containing spontaneous speech. The authors not only found that native speakers employed a high percentage of direct advice strategy types (62%), but also that no instances of indirect advice realisations were encountered.

Paying attention to a more detailed analysis of the different advice formulae, following Alcón and Safont's (2001) and Hinkel's (1997) taxonomies of advice linguistic realisation strategies, the advising strategy most frequently employed by our subjects pointed to the use of the declarative structure by means of the modal verb *should*, which amounted to 27.78%. Another relevant aspect to be mentioned refers to the variety of strategies used, since they provided instances of all the advice structures included in the taxonomy. However, teachers' use of other types of strategies, such as *I recommend you to ...*, *You need to ...*, *You must ...* could have been due to a situation of transfer from their L1 to the target language. In this sense, further research is needed in order to examine this phenomenon in this particular EFL context, since this type of production may affect the type of input learners are going to receive as far as advice acts is concerned.

Concerning the use of modification devices, it seems worth mentioning the fact that most of the direct occurrences were mitigated by the use of *I think*, *maybe*, *perhaps* and *just*.

Example (3)
Situation 17 (see Appendix B):

- Your brother has failed all subjects this year. He does not want to tell your parents. You say to him:

I think you should tell them. If you don't talk to them, they will find it out, and it will be worse.

4. Conclusion and pedagogical implictions

The present paper aimed at analysing teachers' degree of grammatical and pragmatic awareness on the one hand, and their production of exhortative speech acts on the other. On the basis of previous research in the field, we were interested in ascertaining whether teachers' degree of pragmatic competence could be regarded as pertinent input for learners in the EFL classroom. Results from our study showed that teachers had a higher level of grammatical awareness

than pragmatic awareness. Moreover, concerning their production of the different speech acts analysed, they produced more appropriate requests, followed by advice acts, and to a lesser extent, by suggestions.

We would also like to comment on certain limitations that may be attributed to our study, which may also lead to the need of conducting further research. Firstly, we have only dealt with twenty teachers. Dealing with a higher number of participants would have possibly involved different results. Moreover, we only distributed two written questionnaires. Perhaps the use of oral tasks would have provided us with more varied outcomes. In fact, if we are to consider teachers' production as a specific type of input for learners in the classroom, it would be very interesting to conduct research on real oral classrooms where the interaction teacher-students may be transcribed and analysed.

Bearing in mind the outcomes from the present study, we would like to highlight some important pedagogical implications. In line with Bardovi-Harlig (1992, 1996, 2001) and Kasper (1997), we believe that it would be beneficial to develop training programs on pragmatics if our aim is to provide the necessary conditions in the classroom to make learners develop their pragmatic competence. These authors have argued that the model of teacher-fronted instruction, in which teachers tell what to do and learners receive orders, does not contribute to foster learners' development of their pragmatic competence. To this respect, in order to bring pragmatics into the classroom, it is necessary that teachers become aware of the different developmental processes learners may go through in order to acquire the pragmatic items of the target language. Thus, there is a need to promote a shift from teacher-centered classrooms to the development of more student-centered activities, such as drama, simulations and role-play. In this sense, it is vital to bring into the classroom authentic native speaker input through the use of audiovisual media. As claimed by Kasper (1997: 125) "authentic discourse is crucial" in order to make learners aware of the right kind of input. In line with this assumption, Bardovi-Harlig (1996: 34) suggests that "it is important that learners observe native speakers in action". We believe that making teachers aware of the importance of bringing real input into the classroom will positively contribute to make their learners become more communicatively competent in the target language.

To sum up, and despite the fact that our study is subject to certain limitations, we believe that our results are encouraging, since no previous studies analysing teachers' degree of pragmatic competence have been conducted on both awareness and production. Additionally, findings from this study show us the kind of input learners may be exposed to in the classroom as far as teachers' output is concerned. Nevertheless, as raised above, further research on the

analysis of the three conditions necessary to acquire pragmatic aspects in the foreign language classroom, namely those of input, output and feedback, might help us prepare specific teacher training programs, materials and syllabus design.

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Note:

APPENDIX A: AWARENESS TEST

Name (or Nickname): ....

✍ **Complete the following with information about yourself.**

A. Age: _____

B. Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

C. Years studying English: _____

English courses taken:

- School: _____
- High School: _____
- University: _____
- Other public or private institutions: _____
- Names of course books studied or materials: _____

D. Mother tongue (First Language): _____

What language do you use?

	Catalan/Valencian	Castilian/Spanish	Other: ....
With your parents/ at home			
With your friends			
When you go shopping			
In class			
With your teachers			

E. In your opinion, which is your proficiency level in these languages

	Catalan/Valencian	Castilian/Spanish	English	Others: ....
Bad (no idea)				
A little				
Good				
Excellent				

✔ **State whether the following sentences or expressions are correct or incorrect and/or if they are appropriate or inappropriate to the situation. If they are incorrect (or inappropriate) write down the correct answer. PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS.**

1. A girl is very thirsty. She arrives at a bar and asks:
   - *Could you gave me something to drink?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

2. A woman is cooking and she needs some salt. She asks her neighbour:
   - *Would you lend me some salt, please?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

3. A friend of yours does not know whether to take English or French as a foreign language. You
   tell him/her:
   - *Maybe you should took English.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate☐   Inappropriate ☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

4. A group of politicians are deciding about their electoral program. One of them says:
   - *I think we needs to make a list with all our ideas.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

5. An old man goes to the market. He asks one of the greengrocers:
   - *Could you show me that fresh tomatoes, please?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

6. A student has to finish an important composition for the following day, but s/he doesn't have enough time to finish it. S/He asks the teacher:
   - *Would I be able to hand the essay next week, please?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate☐

   SUGGESTION: ....

7. Two strangers are on a train. One of them has just finished reading the newspaper. The other asks him/her:
   - *Would you mind lend me the newspaper, please?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

8. Two friends are watching TV at one's house. One feels cold and tells his/her friend:
   - *Is getting cold in here, isn't they?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

9. A couple goes to a restaurant and the waiter tells them.
   - *I think you should have Spanish omelette as a starter.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

10. A policeman says to a driver that is parking his/her car in a forbidden area.
    - *I would advise you to parking your car in differents place, please.*

    Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

11. A member of the jury that is confused to a judge after a trial:
    - *Why don't you tell us what we are supposed to do now?*

    Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

12. In a hotel a woman tells the receptionist:
    - *My heating don't work. Go and repairing it!*

    Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

13. In a library a person approaches the librarian and says:
    - *I want read one of Shakespeare's plays.*

    Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

14. Two strangers are on a bus. One of them has put his/her bag on an empty seat. The other person says:
    - *I want to seat down.*

    Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

15. At the dentist's. A patient has a terrible toothache. The dentist tells him/her:
   - *I advise you take some aspirins.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

16. Two workmates are at their office desk. One of them has found a better job but
   he/she does not know what to do. His/her partner says:
   - *If I were you, I would take that new opportunity.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

17. A person has had problems with some workmates lately, because he/she earns more money than them
   and performs the same kind of job. His/her boss tells him/her:
   - *How about ignore them?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

18. A child to his father while having dinner:
   - *Excuse me, would you be so kind as to pass me the salt, please?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

19. The general manager of a company to an employee that arrives late too frequently:
   - *I suppose you would like to continued working for this company, wouldn´t you?*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

20. You are arranging a summer camp with your classmates and one of your partners
   says:
   - *I would suggests visiting the Canary Islands.*

   Correct ☐   Incorrect ☐   Appropriate ☐   Inappropriate ☐

SUGGESTION: ....

APPENDIX B: *PRODUCTION TEST*

Name (or Nickname): ....

✍ **Read these situations and write down what you would say in English.** PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS.

1. You arrive in Zaragoza and go to the hotel. You want to know what number your room is. You say to the receptionist:

2. Two friends are having dinner in a restaurant. One asks the other to pass him/her the bread. S/he says:

3. Two strangers are on a bus. The window is open and one of them feels cold. S/he tells the other person:

4. Two women who do not know each other are sitting together on a train and it is a non-smoking area. One of the women starts smoking. The other woman says:

5. You have a very difficult exam tomorrow. You need help. You tell a classmate:

6. You go to the cinema with another friend. There are two films you like but you have to choose. You say:

7. You have invited a very important person to a meeting. After the meeting, there are several possible things to do. You say:

8. You have an important exam next Friday. There is a great party the night before and you do not know what to do. Your friend tells you:

9. The marketing manager of a tile factory is planning a new strategy for Cevisama which involves offering free wall tiles to visitors. At a meeting s/he says:

10. A person you have just met tells you that s/he suffers from stress. You tell that person:

11. A person sitting next to you has written a message using his/her mobile phone but s/he does not know how to send it. You say to that person:

12. At a restaurant a person does not know whether to have soup or paella. The waiter says:

13. You have decided to study one year in England, and you need to choose four subjects from a list of ten. You visit your tutor and s/he tells you:

14. You work at the post office and a person comes to your desk and says that his/her letter should reach its destiny in 24 hours. You tell that person:

15. You have a very heavy suitcase and cannot open the train door to get out at your station. You ask a person sitting next to you to help you. You say to this person:

16. You work as a secretary in a tile factory. You need two days off because your mother is ill. What do you say to your boss?

17. Your brother has failed all subjects this year. He does not want to tell your parents. You say to him:

18. You work at the information desk in Manises airport and a person that has just arrived (13:00h) tells you that s/he needs to meet a friend in the city centre (Valencia) at 13:30h. You say to this person:

19. In an office a boss asks his/her secretary to photocopy a report for him/her. What does he/she say to his/her secretary?

20. Your boyfriend/girlfriend is not happy with his/her studies. S/He does not like any of his/her subjects and s/he fails all his/her exams. You tell him/her: