

PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
FACULDADE DE LETRAS

CRISTIANE RUZICKI CORSETTI

**THE ENHANCEMENT OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCIES VIA
LISTENING ACTIVITIES**

PORTO ALEGRE

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Thesis submitted as a prerequisite to obtain the Masters degree from the Post-graduation programme of Faculdade de Letras da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul.

Advisor: Jorge Campos da Costa PHD

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RESUMO

A comunicação verbal abrange a decodificação de formas linguísticas e a interpretação de significados implícitos, o que pode ocasionar problemas para aprendizes que desejem se comunicar em contextos de segunda língua. Esta dissertação apresenta um panorama de teorias pragmáticas que abordam o tema “inferências e comunicação verbal”, a fim de destacar fenômenos pragmáticos que afetam o significado de enunciados, especificamente atos de fala, implicaturas conversacionais generalizadas e particularizadas e estratégias de polidez. Uma análise crítica de modelos de competência comunicativa detalha as habilidades que aprendizes necessitam desenvolver para atingir seus objetivos comunicativos e também faz uma revisão da noção de competência pragmática. Posições acerca do desenvolvimento pragmático destacam a importância de proporcionar input pragmático a aprendizes. Este estudo também propõe um modelo alternativo de competência pragmática em comunicação verbal, enfocando a compreensão pragmática e objetivando caracterizar o que dificulta a compreensão e produção de significados pragmáticos por parte dos aprendizes. A descrição das sub-competências inferencial, conversacional-interacional e sociolinguística incluiu análises pragmáticas de transcrições de atividades de compreensão auditiva, retiradas de livros-texto preparatórios para o exame “IELTS” e de recursos online. Esta dissertação também investigou o papel de atividades de compreensão auditiva como uma proposta metodológica alternativa, visando promover o desenvolvimento pragmático. Um projeto empírico, que incluiu um projeto de sala de aula com um grupo de oito aprendizes preparando-se para o exame IELTS, corroborou as seguintes hipóteses: a fim de atingir proficiência em compreensão auditiva, aprendizes necessitam de prática inferencial, visto que inferências semânticas e pragmáticas inserem-se na comunicação verbal; aspectos semânticos e pragmáticos, que afetam a significação dos enunciados, podem ser destacados através de atividades de compreensão auditiva que enfocam sub-habilidades específicas de compreensão auditiva. Os resultados do projeto de sala de aula sugeriram que atividades de compreensão auditiva têm o potencial de aprimorar diretamente a sub-competência inferencial, mas foram inconclusivos com relação às sub-competências conversacional-interacional e sociolinguística.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação Verbal, Inferências, Competência Pragmática, Segunda Língua, Atividades de Compreensão Auditiva

ABSTRACT

Verbal communication comprises the decoding of linguistic forms and the interpretation of implicit meanings, which may pose a problem to language learners who wish to communicate in L2 contexts. This thesis presents an overview of pragmatic theories addressing the theme “inferences and verbal communication” in order to highlight pragmatic phenomena which affect utterance meaning, namely speech acts, generalized and particularized conversational implicatures and politeness strategies. The critical analysis of communicative competence frameworks details the abilities learners need to develop so as to achieve their communicative purposes and it also reviews the notion of pragmatic competence. Views on pragmatic development stress the importance of providing learners with pragmatic input. This study also proposes an alternative framework of pragmatic competence in verbal communication, which addresses pragmatic comprehension and attempts to characterise what gets in the way of learners comprehending and producing pragmatic meaning. The description of the inferential, conversational-interactional and sociolinguistic sub-competencies included the pragmatic analyses of listening transcripts taken from “IELTS” coursebooks and online resources. This thesis also investigated the role of listening comprehension activities as an alternative methodological approach to promote pragmatic development. An empirical project which included a classroom project carried out with a group of eight learners preparing for the IELTS examination corroborated the following assumptions: in order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication; semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills. The results of the classroom project suggested that listening comprehension activities are potentially capable of directly enhancing the inferential pragmatic sub-competency but were inconclusive with regard to the conversational-interactional and sociolinguistic sub-competencies.

Key-words: Verbal Communication, Inferences, Pragmatic Competence, Second Language, Listening Comprehension Activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language students whose main learning goals relate to verbal interaction in L2 face the multifaceted nature of verbal communication. While communication encompasses the interpretation of encoded information, the decoding of linguistic signs does not suffice to account for the richness and subtleties of verbal communication. Grice (1975) indicates that natural language communicates more than the linguistic meaning of utterances for, when people verbally interact, they also communicate implicit meanings. When people communicate with each other, they communicate meanings, information, propositions, thoughts, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and emotions (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995). In the inferential model of communication, communicators provide evidence of their intentions and hearers infer them from the evidence provided. Therefore, verbal communication also includes the making of inferences. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995, p.22), “an inferential process starts from a set of premises and results in a set of conclusions which follow logically from, or at least warranted by, the premises”.

Pragmatics is essentially concerned with inferences (LEVINSON, 1983) and investigates aspects which affect utterance meaning. In order to interpret the full meaning of utterances, listeners rely on sentence meaning aspects as well as on features which operate at utterance level. While semantic inferences relate to the decoding of utterances conveying propositions via the application of phonological, syntactic, morphological and lexical rules, pragmatic inferences are based on the distinction between what speakers literally say when using words and what their communicative intention is when using these words, which often goes beyond what is said. Pragmatic theories addressing the theme “inferences and verbal communication” highlight pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral interaction, namely speech acts, conversational implicatures and politeness strategies. When verbally interacting in L2, learners face the challenge of interpreting these pragmatic inferences in order to understand speakers’ intended meanings and respond linguistically appropriately to them.

Communicative competence frameworks address the abilities second language learners need to develop in order to successfully communicate in L2 contexts. They usually include a code component and a use component, of which pragmatic competence is a sub-competency. However, the characterisation of what pragmatic competence comprises varies depending on

the perspective adopted. For instance, pragmatic competence may refer to sociolinguistic knowledge to use language appropriately to communicative situations. Yet, the ability to produce and interpret pragmatic meaning seems to involve more than the sociolinguistic dimension.

In addition, different views on pragmatic development acknowledge the importance of providing pragmatic input in order to enhance learners' communicative abilities. Krashen's input hypothesis (1985) indicates that in order to develop the ability to speak, firstly acquirers need a lot of exposure to comprehensible input. In other words, comprehension precedes production. Therefore, receptive skills play a role in the second language teaching programme. Considering learners' communicative needs, listening comprehension activities offer a great source of comprehensible input and resemble real-life communication. Furthermore, listening comprehension processes include both bottom-up and top-down processing micro-skills which, when combined, enable the activation of pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral discourse. Thus, listening comprehension activities may also be used to foster pragmatic development.

The subject of this thesis is the enhancement of pragmatic competencies via listening activities. I will address the following main research question: What are the pragmatic phenomena embedded in verbal communication which may pose a problem to learners when communicating in L2 contexts? The sub-questions which I intend to answer are as follows:

1. How are inferences embedded in verbal communication?
2. What are the abilities and pragmatic phenomena which constitute pragmatic competence constructs?
3. What is the importance of pragmatic comprehension considering learners' communicative needs?
4. How can teachers promote pragmatic development in L2 learning situations?
5. What is the role of listening comprehension activities in the enhancement of pragmatic sub-competencies?

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The aims of chapter one are to present an overview of pragmatic theories which address the theme "inferences and verbal communication" and to highlight pragmatic phenomena derived from these theories which have an impact on verbal

communication. These features will be further referred to in the characterisation of pragmatic competence constructs in chapter two. In addition, chapter one will also attempt to stress the role of inferences in verbal communication so as to justify an inferential component within an alternative pragmatic competence construct to be proposed in chapter two.

The aims of chapter two are four-fold: to present a critical overview of communicative competence frameworks which include the notion of pragmatic competence, to highlight the importance of pragmatic comprehension within a pragmatic competence construct, to present different views on pragmatic development, and finally, to propose an alternative model of pragmatic competence in verbal communication. This framework will include three components and will be characterised by pragmatic phenomena addressed in chapter one. In order to illustrate these pragmatic sub-competencies, transcripts from listening comprehension activities from IELTS coursebooks and online resources will be pragmatically analysed.

The main aim of chapter three is to justify the choice of listening comprehension activities as a methodological approach to pragmatic development. The descriptions of the nature of listening comprehension processes and of taxonomies of listening comprehension micro-skills will attempt to demonstrate how pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral discourse may be highlighted via a strategy-based approach to listening. In addition, I will describe an empirical project carried out with a group of eight learners preparing for the IELTS examination at a language institute in the south of Brazil in the first semester of 2009.

The theoretical aims of the empirical project are to corroborate, refute or reject the following assumptions:

1. In order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication;
2. Semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills;
3. Following a strategy-based approach, listening activities can directly and indirectly enhance the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies to be proposed in chapter two.

Finally, the empirical project findings will be based on a classroom project developed with a group of learners studying English as a foreign language. For the purposes of this thesis, English as a foreign language and English as a second language learning situations will be both referred to as English as second language (L2). In addition, communicating in L2 contexts may refer to situations in which learners verbally interact with native speakers of the target language or with speakers of different first languages in L2. Considering the notion of English as a Global Language (CRYSTAL, 2003), the abilities to be proposed in the alternative framework of pragmatic competence aim at enabling learners to successfully and appropriately communicate in L2 contexts. Learners are not expected to copy native speakers' linguistic models but to be able to fulfil their communicative needs in L2.

1 PRAGMATICS

The study of meaning is usually associated with semantics. However, the investigation of what meaning encompasses depends on the theoretical perspective adopted. Philosophers of language such as Frege and Russell investigated the relations between linguistic expressions and events in the world to which these words refer to. Other semantic schools include the analysis of arguments through rules of formal logics and theories of argumentation which address the effect of semantic chunks in texts. A lexical perspective focuses on the semantic relations between lexical items in sentences such as synonymy and polysemy. A question one raises: does a semantic perspective suffice to account for the unpredictable, spontaneous and illogical nature of verbal communication? After all, oral discourse reflects speakers' roles and attitudes, speaking purpose and context.

Pragmatics is about utterance meaning. An utterance is a sentence in an actual context. **Utterances** lie at the core of pragmatic investigation as they possess a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic properties (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995). On many occasions, speakers convey their intended meanings via implicit forms which are not encoded in the sentence uttered. The real-time situational context and the shared knowledge by speakers and listeners enable some information to be assumed. Speakers produce pragmatic phenomena such as speech acts and implicatures expecting listeners to interpret these inferences, which may make sense only in specific communicative contexts.

The main aim of this chapter is to present an overview of pragmatic theories which address the theme "inferences and verbal communication". It also aims at highlighting pragmatic phenomena derived from these theories which have an impact on verbal communication. These constructs will be referred to in chapter two, in the characterisation of pragmatic sub-competencies learners need to master in order to successfully interact in L2 contexts. In addition, an implicit objective of this chapter is to highlight the importance of inferences in verbal communication so as to justify an inferential component within a pragmatic competence construct which will be proposed in chapter two, section 2.5.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In section 1.1, I will compare possible definitions for pragmatics in order to narrow its scope as a linguistic sub-field which investigates aspects

affecting the meaning of utterances. In section 1.2., I will introduce some features comprising the semantic-pragmatic interface which play a role in the understanding of utterance meaning. In section 1.3, I will present Speech Act Theory (AUSTIN, 1962, SEARLE, 1969) and Conventional and Conversational Implicatures (GRICE, 1975) as classical pragmatic theories which focus on “beyond saying”. Finally, in section 1.4, I will address Neo-Gricean theories which revisit Grice’s Conversational Implicatures and Conversational Maxims: Politeness (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987), Relevance (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995), The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature (LEVINSON, 2000) and The Non-Trivial Connectivity Theory (COSTA, 2005).

1.1 THE SCOPE OF PRAGMATICS

Defining Pragmatics has promoted a lot of controversy amongst linguists due to a wide range of possible scopes for this field. Levinson (1983) provides the reader with an extensive discussion on the scope and vagaries of the definitions presented. He starts his argumentation by analysing traditional definitions such as “syntax is taken to be the study of the combinatorial proprieties of words and their parts, semantics to be the study of meaning, so pragmatics is the study of language usage” (LEVINSON, 1983, p.5). However, such a definition for pragmatics is far too limited in scope and does not account for context – dependent aspects of verbal communication. “Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding”. (LEVINSON, 1983, p. 21).

In the above definition, the term **language understanding** is used to draw attention to the fact that, above all, understanding an utterance involves the making of inferences that will connect what is said to what is mutually assumed or what has been said (LEVINSON, 1983). For Levinson, the main strengths of this definition are that, firstly, it acknowledges that pragmatics is essentially concerned with inference and, secondly, it does not make distinction between semantics and pragmatics along the encoded/unencoded line. However, Levinson points out that this definition fails to include the study of interaction between linguistic knowledge and the entirety of the participants’ encyclopaedic knowledge, and it also calls for some explicit characterisation of the notion of context.

As Levinson (1983) states, pragmatics is essentially concerned with inferences. When we make an inference, we arrive at a hypothesis, idea or judgment based on other knowledge, ideas or judgment. An inference is the reasoning which leads to a conclusion drawn from a premise. There are different types of inferences. On one hand, **classical deductive inferences** are forms of reasoning based on rules of formal logic. These inferences are necessarily valid, not defeasible¹ and can be demonstrated (ALLWOOD, ANDERSSON & DAHL, 1977; SPERBER & WILSON, 1995). **Semantic and pragmatic inferences**, on the other hand, comprise the meaning of utterances which may be conveyed via explicit or implicit forms. **Semantic inferences** relate to the decoding of utterances via the application of phonological, syntactic, morphological and lexical rules, and whose propositions² may or may not express truth-conditions. **Pragmatic inferences** are based on the notion of implicatures proposed by Grice (1975), who emphasised the distinction between what words mean, what a speaker literally says when using them and what the communicative intention of the speaker is when using the words, which often goes beyond what is said.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1995, p.15), the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance constitutes what is usually known as the **context**, “a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world”. For the authors, it is these assumptions, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. Levinson (1983) narrows the notion of **context** to the selection of features that are culturally and linguistically relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances. These features include having knowledge of role and status, spatial and temporal location, formality level, medium, appropriate subject matter and register.

Another type of **pragmatic inference** is the **presupposition** phenomenon (LEVINSON, 1983). In a broad sense, attempts at defining presupposition share the idea that it describes “any kind of background assumption against which an action, theory, expression or utterance makes sense or is rational” (LEVINSON, 1983, p. 21). In a technical sense, “presupposition is restricted to certain pragmatic inferences or assumptions that seem at least to be built into linguistic expressions and which can be isolated using specific linguistic tests” (LEVINSON, 1983, p. 168). In his book “Pragmatics”, Levinson (1983) presents a historical overview of the

¹ A defeasible inference can be cancelled (by contextual features, false arguments, invalid argumentation and contradiction) (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995).

² A proposition is what a sentence says about the world (ALLWOOD, ANDERSSON & DAHL, 1977).

evolution of the concept of **presupposition**, based on philosophers of language such as Frege, Russell and Strawson, who discussed the nature of **reference** and **referential expressions**.

Levinson (1983, p.199) describes two main classes of semantic theories currently available to linguists: the semantics of truth-conditions and another class “that assumes that all semantic relations are definable in terms of translations of sentences in atomic concepts or semantic features”. In truth-conditional semantics, **presupposition** has been characterised as a kind of **entailment**³ whereas the latter semantic school is concerned with “the context-independent, stable meanings of words and clauses, leaving to pragmatics those inferences that are special to certain contexts” (LEVINSON, 1983, p. 204). Considering the second perspective, the linguist advocates that **presupposition** belongs to pragmatics and not to semantics. Levinson (1983) concludes that the **presupposition** phenomenon still needs to be further investigated and is an important ground for the study of how semantics and pragmatics interact.

Returning to the discussion on the scope of pragmatics, David Crystal’s (1997) commonly cited definition emphasises the **social interactional domain** of pragmatics:

Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (CRYSTAL, 1997, p.301).

Kasper and Rose (2002) explain that the above definition describes one side of the semiotic triangle from Charles Morris’s theory (1938)⁴, by relating the sign and its interpreters. Thus, pragmatic meaning arises from the choices, which are governed by social conventions, between linguistic forms. Kasper and Rose (2002) clarify that these constraints are partly universal, partly activity- and genre-specific. Second language learners face the challenge of working these constraints out so that they are able to understand implicit meanings, recognise speech acts and produce utterances which carry the illocutionary force⁵ they have in mind and are appropriate to the communicative situation they are in.

³ An entailment is a clause which logically follows from the sentence asserted (YULE, 1996).

⁴ Charles Morris was a philosopher of language who originally coined the term **Pragmatics** as “the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters” (LOCASTRO, 2003, p.5).

⁵ According to Searle (1979), an illocutionary force is the communicative force of an utterance which has a specific purpose other than that conveyed by the words.

The social interactional domain of pragmatics will be addressed under **Speech Act** and **Politeness Theories**, in the subsequent sections.

To sum up, the scope of pragmatics as a linguistic sub-field can be narrowed to the investigation of phenomena which affect the understanding of utterances. Levinson's discussion (1983) highlights that pragmatics is essentially concerned with the making of inferences. While **semantic inferences** relate to the decoding of utterances via the application of phonological, syntactic, morphological and lexical rules, **pragmatic inferences** include phenomena such as **conversational implicatures**, **presupposition** and **speech acts**. In the next sub-section, aspects comprising the **semantic-pragmatic interface** will be described so as to account for **utterance meaning**.

1.2 MEANING AND THE SEMANTIC- PRAGMATIC INTERFACE

When people communicate with each other, they communicate meanings, information, propositions, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, among others (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995). As previously mentioned, the study of meaning is traditionally associated with semantics. Levinson (1983) regards the distinction between **sentences** and **utterances** of utmost importance to both semantics and pragmatics with regard to the characterisation of meaning. For Levinson (1983), a **sentence** is an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar whereas an **utterance** is the issuance of a sentence, a sentence-analogue, or a sentence-fragment, in an actual context. Therefore, Levinson (1983) places **sentence-meaning** within semantics and **utterance-meaning** within pragmatics.

LoCastro (2003) advocates that in order to assign meaning to a speaker's language, the first step to be taken is the establishment of the abstract meaning of the words and phrases which give the potential meaning of each element, typically found in a dictionary. Therefore, **sentence-meaning** addresses questions like "What does X mean?" – being "X" a word, a phrase, a verb or any attached morpheme. When a word is **polysemous**, i.e. it possesses more than one meaning, **sense**⁶ guides listeners towards the meaning the speaker intends that word

⁶ The notion of sense was first coined by the philosopher of language Frege, who tried to explain why sentences which lacked proper referents in the real world could be meaningful. He made the distinction between sense and

to have in that particular instance of use. LoCastro (2003, p. 40) presents the following example to illustrate ambiguity of meaning:

A: You look smart - that colour suits you.

B: Oh, thank you.

Speaker (A) could be referring to either (B)'s clothes or demeanour. The co-text "*that colour really suits you*" helps listeners to narrow down the word meaning to clothes. Therefore, LoCastro points out that processing meaning within the framework of semantics entails use of context; in this example, a limited co-text of the individual sentence. However, establishing pragmatic meaning of an utterance requires the additional consideration of the physical and socio-cultural context as well as the co-text.

On exploring **sentence-meaning**, it is important to consider the lexical items and semantic relations which foster the global understanding of a sentence. According to Marconi (1997), the ability to use words may be called **lexical competence** and is an essential ingredient of **semantic competence** (i.e. **knowledge of meaning**). But what does this ability consist of? What kind of knowledge and which abilities have an effect on it? Marconi (1997, p. 2) advocates that being able to use a word comprises two abilities which are, to a large extent, independent of each other:

- a) Having access to a network of connections between that word and other words and linguistic expressions;
- b) Knowing how to map lexical items onto the real world: being capable of both **naming** (selecting the right word in response to a given object or circumstance) and **application** (selecting the right object or circumstance in response to a given word).

The former ability is called **inferential** as it underlies our inferential performances (such as interpreting a general regulation concerning animals as applying to "cats") whereas the latter is called **referential**. Marconi (1997) defines **inferential competence** as the ability to manage a network of connections among words, which affects performances such as **semantic inference, paraphrase, definition, retrieval of a word from its definition and synonymy**.

reference and proposed that "such sentences retain their sense or meaning even if they lack referents and thus fail to have a truth value" (LEVINSON, 1983, p. 170).

In Marconi 1991, the author called this ability **the inferential aspect of lexical semantic competence**, taking into consideration that artificial systems which try to model human lexical competence are capable of modelling (only) this side of competence and that such systems are essentially inferential devices. Marconi (1997, p. 60) adds that the ability to draw semantic inferences is also crucial to lexical competence.

Referential competence, on the other hand, “has been characterised as the ability to apply words to the real world” (MARCONI, 1997, p.64). It underlies performances such as **naming**, **answering questions** concerning the obtaining situation, **obeying orders** like “*Close the door*” and **following directions**. According to Marconi (1997), these performances are partly based on the ability to recognise objects and actions, which is not purely a linguistic ability. A subject may successfully recognise an object in the real world without being able to retrieve its name. Furthermore, some philosophers of language have disregarded **referential competence** as part of semantic competence since laypeople’s inability to identify instances of a word like “uranium” in the real world, for example, does not necessarily indicate lack of linguistic knowledge but rather lack of scientific expertise. In Marconi’s view (1997, p. 65), however, we may lack full recognitional ability but still possess some ability to discriminate between objects, for instance, to differentiate between a metal like “uranium” and a fruit like “apple”. Consequently, it makes sense to regard such ability as part of **referential competence** (MARCONI, 1997).

Returning to the distinction between **sentence-meaning** and **utterance-meaning**, Levinson (1983, p. 18) regards the latter as “the pairing of a sentence and a context, namely the context in which the sentence was uttered”. Levinson (2000) defines this layer of meaning as **utterance-token-meaning** as it relates to inferences made in actual contexts by actual recipients with all of their rich particularities. However, Levinson (2000) also adds an intermediate level of meaning entitled **utterance-type meaning** based on **preferred** or **default interpretations** generated by default usage rules associated with certain linguistic structures. **Utterance-type meaning** comprises more than encoded linguistic meaning but less than the full interpretation of an utterance (CARSTON, 2004). The distinction between these two types of **pragmatic inferences** will be addressed in section 1.4.3.

According to LoCastro (2003), **utterance-meaning** may also be labelled as **contextual meaning** since it is rather rare in pragmatics for an utterance to be studied outside its context,

which comprises the linguistic **co-text** (as in **sentence-meaning**) and **paralinguistic variables** such as **prosodic features** (intonation and stress patterns). **Paralinguistic elements** do not occur alone, they accompany **linguistic items** by clarifying and adding meaning, and in the case of **prosodic features**, frequently conveying the speaker’s attitude and mood.

Prosody encompasses features like **stress, intonation** and **tone**. **Stress** is the pronunciation of a word or syllable with more force than the surrounding words or syllables and it helps listeners to identify key information within an utterance. Secondly, when uttering a sentence, speakers generally raise or lower the pitch of their voice, forming pitch patterns. They also give some syllables in their utterances a greater degree of loudness and change their speech rhythm. These phenomena comprise **intonation**, which helps listeners to identify whether an utterance is a question, a statement or a command, to imply the unsaid and to identify attitude. Lastly, **tone** is “a change in pitch that affects the meaning and function of utterances in discourse” (RICHARDS, J.; PLATT, J.; WEBER, H, 1990, p. 294).

Besides prosodic features, LoCastro (2003, p.42) indicates that speakers may also rely on **shared background knowledge** in order to narrow down the meaning of an utterance. In addition, **reference** must also be assigned so that listeners recognise who or what is being referred to in the context of the utterance. In the two-lined dialogue below, speaker (B) takes it for granted that speaker (A) knows the subjects being referred to.

A: How was school today?

*B: **Those boys** are really getting on my nerves!*

The above example illustrates **exophoric reference** as the expression “those boys” refers to some entity outside the text (exo=outside). In this example, “those boys” could refer to a group of students who may be bullying speaker (B), information which is also shared by speaker (A).

Exophoric reference often requires knowledge of the socio-cultural context in which the text is found. As another example, during the presidency campaign in the USA in 2008, a motto became really popular: “*Yes, we can*”. The pronoun “we” refers to the American people who

believed they could make a difference by supporting Barak Obama, the democrat candidate who eventually won the elections.

Endophoric reference, on the other hand, refers to linguistic elements that are present in the linguistic text itself (endo= inside). LoCastro (2003) indicates that the most common form of **endophoric reference** in English is **anaphora**, where the analyst has to go backwards in the text. The following three examples have been taken from Yule (1996, p.23):

1) In the film, a man and a woman were trying to wash a cat. The man was holding the cat while the woman poured water on it. He said something to her and they started laughing.

Yule (1996) uses the above example to explain how **anaphora** works. In English, initial reference is often indefinite (*a man, a woman and a cat*) while the definite noun phrases (*the man, the cat, the woman*) and the pronouns (*it, he, her and they*) are examples of **anaphoric reference**.

(2) I turned the corner and almost stepped on it. There was a large snake in the middle of the path.

The second example illustrates a less frequent **endophoric reference: cataphora**. The pronoun “it” is used first, and the interpretation is put on hold until the noun phrase “*a large snake*” is presented in the next line.

(3) Peel an onion and slice it. Drop the slices into hot oil. Cook for three minutes.

Zero anaphora, or **ellipsis**, occurs when the interpretation requires us to identify an entity, as in “*Cook (?) for three minutes*” and there is no linguistic expression present. Yule (1996) suggests that the use of **zero anaphora** as a means of maintaining reference clearly creates an expectation that the listener will be able to infer who or what the speaker intends to identify.

Finally, according to Yule (1996), the key to making sense of **reference** lies on the pragmatic process whereby speakers select linguistic expressions with the intention of identifying certain entities and with the assumption that listeners will collaborate and interpret those expressions.

LoCastro (2003, p. 45) states that **reference** is an important feature of language use and is collaborative in nature: “it depends on shared knowledge between the speaker and the addressee and influences the listener’s ability to infer the speaker’s intended meaning”.

To sum up, the study of meaning and the investigation of the semantic-pragmatic interface pose a challenge to second language students. Not only do learners need to master the meaning of lexical items but also realise the effect that semantic relations and pragmatic phenomena have on speakers’ intended meanings. **Sentence-meaning** aspects such as **synonymy**, **polysemy**, **semantic inference**, **paraphrase**, **naming** and **application** comprise **lexical competence**. Likewise, features that operate at utterance level like **context**, **prosody**, **shared background knowledge** and **reference** are fundamental in the interpretation of pragmatic inferences that implicate “beyond saying”.

1.3 CLASSICAL PRAGMATIC THEORIES

Within the realm of pragmatics that focuses on “beyond saying”, John L. Austin (1962) and Hebert Paul Grice (1975) were philosophers of language whose work is fundamental to contemporary pragmatic theories. Austin was intrigued by the way speakers use words to do different things. The making of “a suggestion”, for instance, depends not only on the literal meaning of the words used, but on the speaker’s intention and the institutional and social setting in which the linguistic activity takes place. Austin’s ideas were further exploited by his student, John R. Searle (1969), who developed the **Speech Act Theory** by creating taxonomy of **speech acts**. Similarly, Grice’s **Conversational Implicatures Theory** is based on his distinction between what someone says and what someone implicates by uttering a sentence. These two theories will be described in the next sub-sections.

1.3.1 Speech Acts

Speech Act Theory is grounded on the principle that when people want to express themselves, they produce utterances and, at the same time, perform acts via these utterances.

These acts are called **speech acts** and are an integral part of the teaching of English as a second language. The analyses of different exponents used to perform speech acts and of their level of formality and degree of imposition serve as a basis for the teaching of language functions such as “requests”, “apologies” and “refusals”, among others. Widdowson (1978) explains that when we produce an utterance in the course of a normal communicative activity, we simultaneously do two things: we express a proposition of some kind, and by doing so we perform an **illocutionary act** of some sort.

Austin (1962) initially argued that a better understanding of the nature of language must involve a better understanding of how language is embedded in social situations, and of the various actions that it can be used to perform. Austin proposed a three-fold distinction among related acts which take place every time an utterance is produced:

1. **Locutionary Act:** the basic act of saying something; uttering words with certain sense and reference;
2. **Illocutionary Act:** utterances which carry a certain conventional force such as a “promise” and a “warning”. The **illocutionary act** is performed via the communicative force of an utterance, i.e. the **illocutionary force**.
3. **Perlocutionary Act:** the effect speakers produce upon the feelings and actions of their interlocutors.

According to Yule (1996), among these three dimensions, the **illocutionary force** is the most discussed as it is what “counts as”. The same **illocutionary act** might carry different **illocutionary forces** as we can observe in the following examples (YULE, 1996, p.49):

Illocutionary Act: “*I’ll see you later.*” (=A)

Illocutionary Force:

1. [I predict that] A.
2. [I promise you that] A.
3. [I warn you that] A.

Yule (1996) clarifies that in order to identify what force the speaker intends the utterance to have, listeners can make use of two devices: **the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)** and **felicity conditions**. An **IFID** may be a verb within the utterance that explicitly

names the act being performed. For instance, in the utterance “*I warn you that....*” the verb “**warn**” indicates “a warning”. Such a verb is called a **performative verb**. In the absence of performative verbs, **word order**, **stress** and **intonation** might be used as **IFIDs**.

Secondly, **felicity conditions** are certain expected or appropriate circumstances that aid the recognition of an intended **illocutionary force**. Searle (1969) developed **Speech Act Theory** as a theory of the constitutive rules underlying the successful performance of **illocutionary acts**. These rules are classified as:

1. **Propositional content conditions:** rules which put conditions on the propositional content of some **illocutionary acts**, e.g. in the case of “a promise” or “a warning”, the content must be about a future event;
2. **Preparatory conditions:** rules which tell what the speaker will imply in the performance of the **illocutionary acts**. In the case of “a promise”, for instance, firstly, the event will not happen by itself, and secondly, the event will have a beneficial effect;
3. **Sincerity conditions:** rules which tell what psychological state the speaker expresses to be in, e.g. for “a promise”, the speaker genuinely intends to carry out the future action;
4. **Essential Conditions:** rules which tell us what the action consists in essentially. By the act of uttering “a promise”, for example, the speaker thereby intends to create an obligation to carry out the action as promised.

Bearing these conditions in mind, Searle (1979) proposed a taxonomy of **illocutionary acts** into five mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive classes:

1. **Representative or Assertive:** statements which commit the speaker to the truth of the assumption expressed; for example, “asserting”: “*It’s raining.*”
2. **Directive:** speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something; for example, “commanding”: “*Close the door.*”
3. **Commissive:** speech acts which commit the speaker to the performance of a future action; for example, “promising”: “*I’ll finish the paper by tomorrow.*”
4. **Expressive:** speech acts which convey the speaker’s emotional attitude to the assumption expressed; for instance: “*I’m so happy to be here.*”

5. **Declarative:** statements which bring about the state of affairs described in the assumption expressed; for example: *“I now pronounce you husband and wife.”*

Yule (1996) summarises an alternative approach to distinguish types of **speech acts**, based on **sentence structure** versus **function**. A fairly basic structural distinction between three general types of **speech acts** is provided, in English, by the three basic sentence types: **declarative**, **interrogative** and **imperative**. In this framework, **speech acts** can be divided into two categories:

1. **Direct Speech Acts:** utterances in which there is a direct relation between the structure and the function, for instance, a **declarative** used to make “a statement”: *“I ‘m a bit tired.”*

2. **Indirect Speech Acts:** utterances in which there is an indirect relation between the structure and the function, for example, a **declarative** used to make “a request”: *“I was wondering if you could lend me your book.”*

Yule (1996) also indicates that **indirect speech acts** are usually associated with greater politeness in English than direct ones. He concludes by saying that the analysis of **speech acts** is a useful way of studying how more gets communicated than is said. In addition, Perna (1992) states that **Speech Act Theory** facilitates the understanding of what speakers need to know in order to effectively and appropriately communicate in their mother tongue.

Summarising, it is common sense amongst pragmatists that the study of **speech acts** plays a vital role in the study of the **pragmatic meaning of utterances**:

Perhaps the single most uncontroversial assumption of modern pragmatics is that any adequate account of utterance comprehension must include some version of speech-act theory. As Levinson (1983, p. 226) says, speech acts remain, along with presupposition and implicature in particular, one of the central phenomena that any general pragmatic theory must account for. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p. 243).

Speech acts will be further addressed in section 1.4.1, within **politeness strategies** and **face threatening acts**. The role of **speech acts** in **L2 pragmatics** will be discussed in chapter two within **communicative** and **pragmatic competence** constructs. **Speech acts** will be illustrated in the characterisation of **pragmatic sub-competencies** in section 2.5.

1.3.2 Conventional and Conversational Implicatures

As previously mentioned, the **Gricean Theory of Conversation** starts with a sharp distinction between what someone says and what someone implicates when producing an utterance. **Conventional Implicatures** relate to what a speaker literally says and are determined by the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered and also contextual processes of disambiguation and reference fixing. **Conversational Implicatures**, on the other hand, relate to what a speaker implicates (beyond saying) and are associated with the existence of some rational principles and maxims which govern conversation.

According to Levinson (1983), Grice's **Implicature Theory** is a theory about how people use language and is based on a set of over-arching assumptions which guide the conduct of conversation:

Our talk exchanges...are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or a set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction...at each stage, some possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (*ceteris paribus*) to observe. (GRICE, 1975, p. 45).

Following the above reasoning, Grice (1975) proposes some guidelines which underlie the efficient co-operative use of language, which jointly express a general **co-operative principle**. These guidelines are defined in terms of four **conversational maxims** (IN: LEVINSON, 1983, p. 101-102):

The co-operative principle: Make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

1. The Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- (i) Do not say what you believe to be false.
- (ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2. The Maxim of Quantity

- (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
- (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

3. The Maxim of Relation (Relevance)

Make your contributions relevant.

4. The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

- (i) Avoid obscurity.
- (ii) Avoid ambiguity.
- (iii) Be brief.
- (iv) Be orderly.

In other words, speakers respecting the conversational maxims would speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information. However, real life communication will seldom meet these requirements. Grice acknowledges the fact that people flout these maxims in the normal course of a conversation and, above all, this flouting of maxims indicates that a speaker is trying to say something else beyond the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered. In order to convey the implicit meaning of an utterance, speakers rely on a deeper level of co-operation which goes beyond surface meaning. **Conversational implicatures** are then **inferences** which arise to preserve the assumption of co-operation.

To illustrate the deeper layer of the cooperative principle, let us examine the following examples provided by Levinson (1983, p. 102):

A: Where's Bill?

B: There's a yellow VW outside Sue's house.

If taken literally, (B)'s response fails to answer (A)'s question, flouting the **Maxims of Quantity** and **Relevance**. However, this apparent failure of co-operation indicates that (B) is relying on (A)'s co-operation to interpret the implicit meaning of the utterance: Bill has a

yellow VW and therefore may be in Sue's house. In order to arrive at this conclusion, Grice proposes that hearers should apply the following model so as to calculate **conversational implicatures**:

1. Process and arrive at the conventional meaning of the utterance;
2. Check the conventional meaning against the Co-operative Principle;
3. Check the context of the utterance;
4. Check background information;
5. Consider that numbers 1-4 are mutual knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer;
6. Calculate any implicatures.

Returning to the distinction between **conventional** and **conversational implicatures**, the former are generated by the meaning of certain particles like the sentential connectors "but" or "therefore". Let us consider the following examples taken from the University of Stanford website (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatics>):

1. *He is an Englishman, therefore he is brave.*
2. *He is an Englishman and he is brave.*
3. *His being brave follows from his being English.*

According to Grice, in (1) and (2) the speaker has said the same. The difference is that (1) entails (3), being a **conventional implicature** conveyed by the meaning of "therefore", and not by the flouting of the conversational maxims.

Conversely, Grice distinguished between kinds of **conversational implicature**: **generalized** and **particularized**. In Grice's terms, **generalized conversational implicatures (GCI)** arise without any particular context or special scenario being necessary whereas **particularized conversational implicatures (PCI)** require such specific contexts. Levinson (1983, p. 126) uses the following examples to illustrate this distinction:

1. *I walked into a house.*
GCI: The house was not my house.

There seems to be a **generalized implicature** conveyed by the use of the indefinite article “a” (house), which implicates that the house is not closely related to the speaker.

2. A: *What has happened to the roast beef?*

B: *The dog is looking very happy.*

PCI: *Perhaps the dog has eaten the roast beef (based on the fact that the dog is looking very happy).*

Thus, **particularized implicatures** are generated by saying something in virtue of some particular features of the context. Levinson (1983) adds that most of the floutings or exploitations of the **conversational maxims** are particularized, and that irony, for instance, requires particular background assumptions to rule out the literal interpretations. For Grice, any kind of non-literal use that relies in special circumstances like tautologies⁷, metaphor and hyperbole can be explained in terms of **particularized implicatures**.

According to Levinson (2000, p.15), **conversational implicatures** are held to display various distinctive features as a result of inferential derivation:

1. **Cancellability** (i.e. **defeasibility**): the property of being an inference defeatable by the addition of premises;
2. **Non-detachability**: any expression with the same coded content will tend to carry the same implicatures;
3. **Calculability**: the more or less transparent derivation of the inference from the premises that include the assumption of rational conversational activity;
4. **Non-conventionality**: the non-coded nature of inferences and their parasitic dependence on what is coded.

Levinson (2000, p.15) extends Grice’s characterisation of **conversational implicatures** by adding two more features:

5. **Reinforcability**: it is also possible to add explicitly what is anyway implicated with less sense of redundancy than it would be the case if one repeated the code content;

⁷ A tautology is an apparently meaningless expression in which one word is defined as itself, for instance, “business is business” (YULE, 1986, p.135).

6. **Universality:** as inferences are derived ultimately from fundamental considerations of rationality, we expect a strong tendency to universality.

To conclude, Grice's **Co-operative Principle**, **maxims** and **conversational implicatures** have raised a lot of controversy amongst linguists. The following questionings about the co-operative principle appear on the Stanford University website:

Are all of them necessary? Do we need more? Are they normative or descriptive? What's their exact role in the theory of implicatures: Are they principles that speakers and hearers are assumed to observe in rational communication, or simply theorist's tools for rational reconstruction? Does the CP require from speaker and hearer further cooperation towards a common goal beyond that of understanding and being understood? What is clear is that Grice attributes to these principles an essential role for the definition and the interpretation of conversational implicatures. (<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatics>>).

Sperber and Wilson also comment on Grice's **Implicature Theory**:

Grice's ideas on implicatures can be seen as an attempt to build on a commonsense view of verbal communication by making it more explicit and exploring its implications. In his *William James Lectures*, Grice took one crucial step away from this commonsense view towards theoretical sophistication; but of course one step is not enough. Grice's account retains much of the vagueness of the commonsense view. Essential concepts, mentioned in the maxims are left entirely undefined. This is true of *relevance*, for instance: hence appeals to the "maxim of relation" are no more than dressed-up appeals to intuition. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p.35-36).

Nevertheless, Grice's unquestionable contribution to the study of **utterance-meaning** via the notion of conversational implicatures remains unchallenged and fundamental to the underlying principles of contemporary pragmatic theories such as Brown and Levinson's **Politeness Theory** (1987), Sperber and Wilson's **Theory of Relevance** (1995), Levinson's **Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures** (2000) and Costa's **Non-Trivial Connectivity Theory** (2005), which will be described in the subsequent sections.

1.4 NEO-GRICEAN THEORIES

1.4.1 Politeness

Politeness is a theory about social interaction. When people verbally interact, politeness phenomena are reflected in their linguistic behaviour. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.55) claim that human communication is governed by politeness rules which account for “the linguistic minutiae of the utterances with which persons choose to express themselves in quite unrelated language and cultures”. Although language usage may apparently seem nonsensical at times, there are some universals which characterise **politeness** and whose nature is rational. Thus, **politeness** is seen as a universal principle which is basic to the production of social order and a pre-condition of human cooperation.

Within the realm of **politeness**, Brown and Levinson (1987, p.61-62) present the following universal features shared by all competent adult members of a society:

1. **Face:** the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, which can be of two kinds:
 - (a) **Negative face:** freedom of action and freedom of imposition; the want of every competent member that his actions be unimpeded by others;
 - (b) **Positive face:** the positive consistent self-image or personality claimed by interactants, crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of; the want of every member that his wants be desired to at least some others.
2. **Rationality:** certain rational capacities, in particular consistent modes of reasoning from ends to means that will achieve those ends.

Considering the concepts of **face** and **rationality** above mentioned, Brown and Levinson (henceforth B&L) state that some acts produced by speakers intrinsically threaten **face**, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the **face wants** of the addressee (H) and or of the speaker (S). By “acts”, B&L refer to what is intended to be done by verbal or non-verbal communication. **Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)** can be characterised as those that threaten **negative face** and those that threaten **positive face**. B&L advocate that when

speakers perform FTAs, they use four super-strategies: **bald on record**, **positive politeness**, **negative politeness** and **off record**.

In a **bald-on-record strategy**, (S) wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy (H)'s face. Thus, he chooses a more direct form such as direct imperatives, e.g. *"Lend me your book"*. In order to minimise (H)'s face threat, (S) may use **mitigating devices** such as *"Please"* or *"Would you"*. Generally speaking, speakers performing FTAs via **bald-on-record strategies** comply with Grice's Conversational Maxims.

Nevertheless, the authors claim that neither do utterances in general meet the Gricean maxims nor do natural conversations proceed in such a brusque fashion, mainly because of the desire to give some attention to **face**. In a verbal interaction, speakers may flout Grice's maxims when trying to cooperate with each other or by showing respect for the **face wants** or **needs** of their interlocutors:

Politeness is then a major source of deviation from such rational efficiency, and is communicated precisely by that deviation. But even in such departures from the Maxims, they remain in operation at a deeper level. It is only because they are still assumed to be in operation that addressees are forced to do the inferential work that establishes the underlying intended message and the (polite or other) source of departure – in short, to find an implicature, i.e. an inference generated by precisely this assumption. (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987, p.95).

The second strategy-type, **positive politeness**, is oriented towards the positive face of (H). In other words, **positive politeness** is redress directed to (H)'s **positive face**. The potential face threat of an act is minimised by the assurance that (S) wants some of (H)'s wants. (S) may make use of positive **politeness strategies** by claiming common ground. B&L (1987, p.102) propose the following **positive politeness strategies**, based on three principles: claim common ground (strategies 1 to 8), convey that (S) and (H) are co-operators (strategies 9 to 14) and fulfil (H)'s want (strategy 15).

1. Notice, attend to (H)'s interests, wants, needs, etc.: *"You must be hungry"*; *"It's a long time since breakfast"*; *"How about some lunch?"*
2. Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with (H): *"How absolutely marvellous!"*
3. Intensify interest to (H): *"I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see?"*
4. Use in-group identity markers: *"Help me with this bag here, will you, pal?"*

5. Seek agreement: by relying on safe topics or repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said;
6. Avoid disagreement: by pretending to agree, telling white lies, using opinion hedges⁸;
7. Presuppose/raise/assert common goal: by gossiping, small talk, etc.;
8. Joke;
9. Assert or presuppose (S)'s knowledge of and concern for (H)'s wants: *"Look, I know you want the car back by 5.00, so should(n't) I go to town now?"* (making a request);
10. Offer, promise;
11. Be optimistic: *"Look, I'm sure you won't mind if I borrow your typewriter."*
12. Include both (S) and (H) in the activity: *"Let's have a cookie then."*
13. Give or ask for reasons: *"Why not lend me your cottage for the weekend?"*
14. Assume or assert reciprocity: *"I will do X for you if you do Y for me."*
15. Give gifts to (H) such as goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation.

B&L (1987, p. 129) claim that while "**positive politeness** is the kernel of familiar and joking behaviour", **negative politeness** "is the heart of respect behaviour". (S) recognises and respects (H)'s **negative-face wants** and will not interfere with (H)'s freedom of action. **Negative politeness** is specific and focused and performs the function of minimising the degree of imposition that the **FTA** carries. **Negative politeness** may be achieved by **on record** delivery or redress of a **FTA**. The authors propose the following framework of **negative politeness strategies** (1987, p.131), illustrated by examples of formulaic language taken from LoCastro (2003, p.117):

1. Be conventionally indirect: *"Could you please ...?"*
2. Question, hedge: *"I don't suppose you could..."*
3. Be pessimistic: *"You don't have any....., do you?"*
4. Minimise the imposition: *"I just dropped for a second to ask..."*
5. Give deference: *"We very much look forward to..."*
6. Apologise: *"I am sorry to bother you, but..."*

⁸ "In the literature, a **hedge** is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected"(BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987, p.145). In other words, **hedges** are caution expressions that speakers use in order to avoid direct responsibility for what they say. These phrases may be used to save their own face or the addressee's.

7. Impersonalise (S) and (H): avoid the pronouns “I” and “you”: “*It appears we may have to...*”
8. State the **FTA** as a general rule: “*Passengers will refrain from...*”
9. Nominalise: “*I am surprised at your failure to ...*”
10. Go **on record** as incurring a debt, or as not indebting (H): “*I’d be eternally grateful if you could...*”

Finally, **off-record strategies** illustrate communicative acts done in such a way that their communicative intention is not clearly interpreted. When doing a **FTA**, (S) may want to avoid direct responsibility for his act by using **off-record strategies** which involve indirect uses of language and inferences. It is (H)’s task to interpret the communicative intention to the act, whose implicatures may be cancelled by (S) at any point. B&L (1987, p. 211) claim that the comprehension of indirect language encompasses two stages:

1. A trigger⁹ serves notice to (H) that some inference must be made.
2. Some mode of inference derives what is meant (intended) from what is actually said, this last providing a sufficient clue for the inference.

In other words, (S) wants to do a **FTA** via indirect forms and gives (H) some clues hoping that (H) notices them and interprets what he really intends to say. B&L suggest that the basic mechanism to do this is to invite conversational implicatures via the violation of Grice’s Maxims. Thus, the authors (1987, p.214) propose the following **off-record strategies**:

A) Violate Relevance Maxim:

1. Give hints: “*It’s cold in here*” = Communicative intention (c.i.) Shut the window.
2. Give association clues: “*Oh God, I’ve got a headache again*” = (c.i.) (S) wants to borrow (H)’s swimsuit in order to swim off his headache.
3. Presuppose: “*I washed the car **again** today*” = (c.i.) (S) presupposes that he has done it before and the utterance implicates a criticism.

B) Violate Quantity Maxim:

4. Understate:

⁹ The trigger may be some violation of Grice’s maxims whose main objective is to preserve face.

A: “*What do you think of Harry?*”

B: “*Nothing wrong with him*” = (c.i.) I don’t think he is very good.

5. Overstate: “*I tried to call a hundred times, but there was never any answer*” = (c.i.) apologising for not getting in touch.
6. Use tautologies: “*War is war*” =(c.i) excuse

C) Violate Quality Maxim

7. Use contradictions:

A: “*Are you upset about that?*”

B: “*Well, yes and no*” = (c.i.) (S) cannot tell the truth.

8. Be ironic: “*Lovely neighbourhood, eh?*” (in a slum) = (c.i.) His neighbourhood is terrible.
9. Use metaphors: “*Harry is a real fish*” = c.i. He drinks like a fish.
10. Use rhetorical questions: “*How was I to know...?*” = (c.i.) I wasn’t.

D) Violate Manner Maxim:

11. Be ambiguous: “*John’s a pretty sharp cookie*” = (c.i.) Either a compliment or an insult.
12. Be vague: “*Looks like someone may have had too much to drink*”
13. Over-generalise: “*The lawn has got to be mown*” = (c.i.) implying an order
14. Displace (H): “*Marry, could you help me with Maths?*” = (c.i) aiming at receiving help from somebody else present in the room.
15. Be incomplete, use ellipsis: “*Well, I didn’t see you...*”

The above super-strategies demonstrate how speakers can use **politeness strategies** in order to produce and minimise **FTAs**, based on the notions of **positive** and **negative face**. At one end of **politeness**, **bald-on-record strategies** include direct forms such as imperatives and basically refer to conforming to Grice’s **Conversational Maxims**. In order to minimise a possible **FTA**, speakers may use **mitigating devices**. At the other end, **off-record strategies** rely on the flouting of the **Conversational Maxims** and encompass indirect uses of language and **inferences** which need to be interpreted by addressees. **Positive politeness strategies** are oriented towards the positive face of (H) and may be used to convey common ground, and as a result, minimise potential **FTAs**. Conversely, **negative politeness strategies** are aimed at minimising the degree of imposition **FTAs** carry, respecting (H)’s freedom of action.

According to B&L (1987), women have a tendency to use more elaborated **positive-politeness strategies** than do men among men in most cultures.

All things considered, **politeness strategies** play a role in cross-cultural communication. While some acts may be considered as minor **FTAs** in some cultures, in other cultural contexts they may be regarded as highly **FTAs**. Therefore, in order to successfully communicate in L2 contexts, learners benefit from the interaction of **politeness strategies** with **sociolinguistic knowledge**. **Politeness strategies** and **sociolinguistic knowledge** will be addressed in chapter two, section, 2.5.3.

1.4.1.1 Politeness and Conversation Analysis

B&L (1987) acknowledge that **FTAs** do not necessarily inhere in single actions and may be conveyed by a series of acts (and responses) that are not themselves **FTAs**. These series of conversational acts might be also studied from a **conversational structure** perspective (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), which places conversational location as a crucial determinant of how an utterance is understood. According to Levinson (1983), the study of conversation is closely related to pragmatics as it is clearly the prototypical of language usage and also provides insights into pragmatic phenomena such as aspects of deixis and presupposition. **Conversation Analysis (CA)** is an empirical approach which relies on inductive methods: “search is made for recurring patterns across many records of naturally occurring conversations” (LEVINSON, 1983, p.287).

Among **CA** findings (SACKS, SCHEGLOFF & JEFFERSON, 1974; GOODWIN, 1981), **conversation** is characterised by **turn-taking** : a speaker (A) talks, then stops and then another speaker (B) starts talking, and then stops, and speaker (A) starts talking again, so on. However, Levinson (1983) highlights that around five per cent of the speech stream is delivered in **overlap** which describes moments in which two speakers speak simultaneously. The mechanism that governs **turn-taking** is called a **local management system** which operates on a turn-by-turn basis. A **turn** is built by syntactic units, such as sentences, clauses, nouns phrases, which are identified as turn units by prosodic and intonational means. The end

of such a unit constitutes a **transition relevance place (TRP)**, i.e. a point at which speakers may get the control of the **floor**, which is the right to speak.

In most cultures, when two people participate in a conversation, it is commonly regarded as polite social behaviour that each speaker should wait for the other's turn to finish in order to linguistically respond to it. In other words, speakers are expected to be aware of **turn-taking** conventions. Nonetheless, if both speakers adopt a **high involvement style**¹⁰, for example, they may fight for the **floor**. Once a speaker gets the **floor**, he may use **floor holding devices** such as **hesitation fillers**. These are expressions like “*you see*”, “*the thing is*”, “*yeah*”, “*um*”, which give speakers the time to organise their ideas and, at the same time, prevent interruption from other participants. Speakers who produce an extended turn also expect listeners to indicate that they are following what is being said. **Backchannel signals** or **backchannels** are vocal indications of attention used by listeners to signal that they are following the speaker's message (YULE, 1986).

Summing up, **CA** findings provide an insight on aspects which may affect the perception of polite linguistic behaviour in cross-cultural contexts. Metaphorically speaking, a verbal interaction can be compared to a chess game in which the two players' face wants are at stake. Aspects such as **turn taking conventions**, **overlap**, **hesitation devices** and **backchannels** can affect the flow of a conversation. These features will be further discussed and exemplified in the characterisation of the conversational-interactional pragmatic sub-competency, chapter two, section 2.5.2.

1.4.2 Relevance

Relevance is a theory of communication and cognition. It partially rests on Grice's notion of conversational implicatures and places **relevance** as its super Maxim. Its range of applications varies from linguistics, cognitive sciences, anthropology to pedagogy, not to mention sub-fields like pragmatics, semiotics, and advertising. In their second edition of “Relevance”

¹⁰ A **High Involvement Style** describes speakers who participate actively in the interaction, speak fast, with almost no pausing between turns, and with some overlap or even completion of the other's turn. A **High Considerateness Style**, on the other hand, illustrates speakers who use a slower rate, expect longer pauses between turns, do not overlap, and avoid interruption or completion of the other's turn (YULE, 1996).

(1995), Sperber and Wilson (henceforth S&W) review areas previously criticised by other theorists and also include a description of how the theory evolved so far.

A fundamental addition to the revised version of Relevance are the two claims that S&W (1995, p.260) make about **relevance**, one about cognition and the other about communication:

- (1) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.
- (2) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

The First Principle originates from the idea that cognition is a biological function and that cognitive mechanisms are adaptations. As such, they are a result of a process of Darwinian natural selection and “have evolved in small incremental steps, mostly consisting in the selection of a variant that performed better at the time than other variants that were around” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p.261-262). The performance of variants may be related to qualitative and quantitative benefits. Selection pressures for the former vary perpetually with changes in the genotype and the environment whereas selection pressures for the latter improvements are a relatively stable factor. Thus, *Ceteris paribus*, i.e. greater benefits or lower costs are always a good thing. In addition, S&W (1995, p.266) claim that there is one general and essential way in which human cognition exhibits good design: “by tending to allocate its resources to the processing of available inputs in such a way so as to maximise the effective cognitive effects”. In short, the **cognitive principle of relevance** advocates that human cognition tends to be organised so as to maximise relevance.

The **communicative principle of relevance**, on the other hand, is related to theories of communication. S & W (1995) contrast two extreme approaches: the **code** and the **inferential theories**. In the **code model**, human languages are seen as codes and these codes associate thoughts to sounds. “Communication is achieved by encoding a message, which cannot travel, into a signal, which can, and by decoding this signal at the receiving end”. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p. 4). Although the **code model of verbal communication** is only a hypothesis, S&W highlight its well-known merits and less-known defects:

Its main merit is that it is explanatory: utterances do succeed in communicating thoughts, and the hypothesis that they encode thoughts might explain how this is done. Its main defect, as we will shortly argue, is that it is descriptively inadequate:

comprehension involves more than the decoding of a linguistic signal. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p. 6).

In the **inferential model**, communication is achieved by communicators providing evidence of their intentions and hearers inferring the intended meanings from the evidence provided. In other words, communication is achieved by the audience recognising the communicator's informative intention. This model is based on Grice's co-operative principle and fails to explain how the maxims are to be used in inferences aiming at the recognition of informative intentions. S&W suggest that hearers can recognise informative intentions by the observation of the communicators' behaviour, by using one's knowledge of people in general and of the individual in particular, by inferring which of the effects of this behaviour the speaker could have predicted and desired and then by assuming that these predictable and desirable effects were also intended.

S&W (1995) conclude that the **code** and **inferential theories** are not incompatible as they can be combined in different ways. Verbal communication involves both **coding** and **inferential processes**. Therefore, the authors propose an improved version of the **inferential theory**, the **ostensive-inferential model**. S&W add that this improved model is not supposed to be regarded as the basis of a general theory of communication, but to be combined with the **code model** in order to provide an account of verbal communication.

Following this comparison, the second claim that S&W (1995) make is what they define as **the communicative principle of relevance**, originally used in 1986 to contrast with other pragmatic principles such as Grice's **Co-operative Principle**. It is grounded in the **First Principle** which assumes that the cognitive behaviour of another human is predictable enough to guide communication. As previously mentioned, **the (Second) Principle of Relevance** states that every act of **ostensive communication** communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance, which was revised as follows (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p. 270):

Presumption of optimal relevance (revised):

- (a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it.
- (b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

S&W (1995, p. 271) state that “unlike Grice’s maxims, neither the principle nor the presumption of relevance is presented as a goal to be pursued or a rule to be followed by the communicator”. It is rather a description claim about the content of a given act of **ostensive communication**:

We claim that a presumption of optimal relevance is communicated by any act of ostensive communication. Given our definition of ostensive communication, for this to be true it must be mutually manifest to communicator and addressee that the communicator has the informative intention of making the presumption of relevance manifest to the addressee. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p. 271).

Furthermore, S&W (1995) rely on two hypotheses in order to characterise the **inferential nature of communication**. Firstly, they implicitly assume that the process of **inferential comprehension** is **non-demonstrative** as communication may fail even under the best of circumstances. What an addressee can do is to construct an **assumption** on the basis of the evidence provided by the communicator’s ostensive behaviour. Such an assumption may be confirmed but not proved. Secondly, S&W explicitly assume that the process of **inferential comprehension** is **global** (having free access to all conceptual information in memory) as opposed to **local** (deductive reasoning either context-free or sensitive only to contextual information from a set domain).

Factual assumptions are “basic assumptions, entertained as true descriptions of the world but not explicitly represented as such” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, P.74). They may be regarded as more or less likely to be true. In order to establish the initial strength of an **assumption**, S&W indicate that factual assumptions are acquired from four sources: **perception**, **linguistic decoding**, **assumptions** and **assumption schemas** stored in memory, and **deduction**. Firstly, perceptual mechanisms assign to a sensory stimulus a conceptual identification of that stimulus, for instance, “*The doorbell is ringing*”. Under normal conditions of perceptions, these elementary descriptions of stimuli become strong assumptions. The linguistic input mechanisms assign to a particular type of sensory stimulus a logical form. However, the decoding of logical forms does not suffice for the recovery of propositional forms. Thus, conceptual memory functions as a huge repertory of assumptions which come with a certain degree of strength:

Assumptions constructed by completing assumption schemas come with initial plausibility which may make them worth processing; their subsequent strength depends on their subsequent processing history. Given a set of assumptions as

premises, further assumptions can be derived as conclusions of a deductive process. (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p.83).

All things considered, S&W (1995) claim that the formation of assumptions by deduction is a key process in non-demonstrative inference and that new assumptions inherit their strength from the assumptions used in deriving them. S&W (1995) indicate that a deductive rule system is a very efficient means to limit the number of assumptions that have to be separately stored in memory, to access the conclusions of arguments, to draw out the implications of newly acquired conceptual information, and to increase the impact of this information on a stored conceptual representation of the world. While assumptions derived from encyclopaedic memory are regarded as old information, assumptions retrieved from perception or linguistic decoding count as newly presented information which becomes old while being processed.

Therefore, S&W propose to investigate the effect of newly presented information on old information drawn from an existing representation of the world. S&W (1995, p.109) define **contextualisation** as a deduction based on the union of new information and old information: “To modify or improve a context is to have some effect on that context”. However, S&W claim that the addition of new information that duplicates old information or that is entirely unrelated to old information does not count as an improvement to the context. Utterances bear **contextual effects** when they add new and related information, strengthen an old assumption or provide evidence against it, perhaps leading to its abandonment.

In addition, S&W believe that the notion of **contextual effect** is essential to the characterisation of **relevance**. They argue that having **contextual effects** is a necessary condition for **relevance**, and other things being equal, the greater the contextual effects, the greater the relevance. S&W also claim that **contextual effects** are brought about by mental processes which involve a certain effort, a certain expenditure of energy, which has to be taken into account when assessing **relevance**. Thus, S&W propose the following framework of **degrees of relevance** (1995, p. 125):

Extent condition 1: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large;

Extent condition 2: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small.

In short, they propose that the more relevant an assumption is, the less effort is required to process it.

A final consideration about **relevance** relates to how **contexts** are determined. When people engage in conversations, listeners hope that the assumption being proposed is relevant, otherwise they would not bother trying to process it at all. Then, they try to choose a **context** which will justify that hope, maximising **relevance**. Therefore, a context is chosen once it is relevant to an individual.

Another important addition to the second edition of **Relevance** relates to **explicit communication** and the **explicit-implicit distinction**. S&W (1995, p.256) indicate that Grice failed to realise that his **Co-operative Principle** and **Maxims** could help other aspects of pragmatic interpretation than the recovery of **implicatures**: “with **disambiguation** and **reference assignment**, for example, which he saw as contributing not to what is implicated but to what is (explicitly) said”. For S&W, in **disambiguation** and **reference assignment**, the first interpretation consistent that meets the hearer’s expectation of relevance is the one the hearer should choose.

S&W (1995) introduce the notion of **expliciture** to draw the distinction between the **explicit-implicit content** of an utterance. An **utterance** is a perceptible modification of the physical environment which makes manifest a variety of assumptions. S&W (1995, p. 178) highlight that “verbal communication proper begins when the speaker is recognized not as just talking, not even just as communicating by talking, but as saying something to someone”. An **expliciture** is an explicitly communicated assumption which is a development of the logical form encoded by the utterance. By contrast, any assumption, not explicitly but implicitly communicated, is an **implicature**.

Carston (2004), a proponent of **Relevance Theory** explains that the notion of **expliciture** originated from the relevance framework, as a partner to the more common term **implicature**. Although the term **expliciture** may be related to the Gricean notion of “what is said”, it also departs significantly from it given that an **expliciture** “involves a considerable component of pragmatically derived meaning, in addition to the linguistically encoded meaning” (CARSTON, 2004, p.3). Carston suggests that a key factor in the derivation of an **expliciture** is that it may involve a **free enrichment**, i.e. the incorporation of conceptual material

pragmatically inferred, on the basis of rational communication behaviour. For instance, in the sentences uttered “*Mary and Paul went up the hill [together]*” and “*Sarah left John and [as a consequence] he became clinically depressed*”, the expressions in brackets are free enrichments. According to Carston (2004, p. 17), “without these developments of the logical form, in most contexts the interpretation of the utterance would not satisfy the presumption of optimal relevance”.

To illustrate the distinction between the **explicit-implicit content** of an utterance, S&W (1995, p.179) present the following set of assumptions derived from the sentence “*It will get cold*” uttered by Mary to Peter at dinner time:

- (a) Mary’s utterance is optimally relevant to Peter.
- (b) Mary has said that the dinner will get cold very soon.
- (c) Mary believes that the dinner will get cold very soon.
- (d) The dinner will get cold very soon.
- (e) Mary wants Peter to come and eat dinner at once.

Assumption (a) is a premise underlying the **communicative principle of relevance**: every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance. Assumptions (b-d) include as sub-parts one of the logical forms encoded by the utterance, and are, therefore, **explicatures** which are constructed inferentially. This inferential process is described as follows: “by using contextual information to complete and enrich this logical form into a propositional form, which is then embedded into an assumption schema typically expressing an attitude to it” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995, p.181). **Disambiguation** and **reference assignment** operate at this inferential level taking into consideration that Peter has decided that “*It*” refers to “dinner”, “*will*” refers to the immediate future, , and that “*cold*” means “inducing cold” rather than “experiencing cold”. Assumption (e), on the other hand, is an **implicature** as it is not a development of one of the logical forms encoded by the utterance but constructed on the basis of contextual information and by developing assumptions schemas derived from encyclopaedic memory.

The distinction between the **explicit-implicit content** of an utterance is further developed by Levinson (2000) in his theory of **Generalized Conversational Implicature**, which will be addressed in the next section.

To conclude, S&W's **Relevance** (1995) is an extremely challenging and thought-provoking theory as it accounts for **cognition** and **communication**. It regards human cognition as a biological function which tends to be organised so as to maximise relevance. It highlights that verbal communication involves both **coding** and **inferential processes** and proposes an improved **ostensive-inferential model**, which views communication as a collaborative process involving **ostention** and **inference**. It characterises **inferential comprehension** as **non-demonstrative** and indicates that addressees make assumptions based on speakers' ostensive behaviour and on encyclopaedic knowledge. These assumptions trigger new assumptions or inferential chains which can be confirmed but not logically proved. It also highlights the role **contextualisation** and **contextual effects** play in the characterisation of relevance and advocates that the more relevant an assumption is, the less effort is required to process it.

Due to its wide scope, **Relevance** has numerous applications. One of the main aims of chapter two is to characterise **pragmatic sub-competencies** and, consequently, investigate **pragmatic comprehension**. Thus, the **principle of relevance** will be applied in order to demonstrate how the triggering of inferential chains can affect the understanding of pragmatic inferences. In chapter three, a subsidiary aim is to describe listening activities which can promote pragmatic development. Thus, the role of **contextualisation** in the activation of **top-down processing skills** will be highlighted in section 3.3.

1.4.3 The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures

In 2000, Levinson published "Presumptive Meanings: the Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures", in which he further addressed some questions previously raised in 1983 related to the **semantic-pragmatic interface**. The main point he defends is the existence of **preferred** or **default interpretations** which form the basis of a new radical theory of meaning. According to Levinson (2000), Grice's distinction of different types of utterance content was a fundamental advance in the theory of meaning. As previously described in section 1.2.2, **coded content** could be divided between "the said" and "the conventionally implicated" whereas **inferred content** described **particularized** or **generalized implicatures**. In this composite view of meaning, the theory of **Generalized**

Conversational Implicatures (henceforth **GCI**s) plays a small role in a general theory of communication as it attempts to account for one relatively small area of pragmatic inference.

Standard theories of communication rely on the assumption that there are only two levels of meaning: a level of **sentence-meaning** (to be described within a theory of grammar) and a level of **speaker-meaning** (investigated by pragmatic theories). **Speaker-meaning** or **utterance-token –meaning** describes inferences made in actual contexts by actual recipients with all of their rich particularities. However, this traditional two-fold division “underestimates the regularity, recurrence and systematicity of many kinds of pragmatic inferences” (LEVINSON, 2000, p. 22). Therefore, Levinson proposes a level of systematic pragmatic inference based not on direct computations about speaker-intentions but on general expectations about how language is normally used. This third level of meaning is called **utterance-type-meaning**.

GCI is a theory about **utterance-type meaning**. **GCI**s are default inferences that capture our intuitions about a preferred or normal interpretation. In other words, these intuitions give rise to **presumptions, default inferences**, about both content and force. According to Levinson (2000, p. 23), it is at this intermediate level that **speech acts, presuppositions, conventional implicatures, felicity conditions, conversational pre-sequences**, and above all, **generalized conversational implicatures** operate. Levinson adds that this third layer of meaning is not a novelty if we consider Austin’s (1962) three-way distinction between **locutionary, illocutionary** and **perlocutionary acts**, previously described in section 1.2.1, which corresponds to **sentence-meaning, utterance-type-meaning** (intermediate layer formed of conventions or habits of use) and **speaker-meaning** respectively.

In order to illustrate the distinction between the two levels of pragmatic inferences (**generalized** versus **particularized conversational implicatures**), Levinson (2000, p. 16) presents the following examples:

Example 1

A: *What time is it?*

B: *Some of the guests are already leaving.*

GCI= Not all the guests are already leaving.

PCI= It must be late.

Example 2

A: *Where's John?*

B: *Some of the guests are already leaving.*

GCI= Not all the guests are already leaving.

PCI= Perhaps John has already left.

Although the utterance-form "*Some of the guests are already leaving*" carries different **particularized conversational implicatures (PCI)** which may be attributed to the Maxim of Relevance, there is a shared inference that "not all of the guests are in the process of leaving" which applies to both contexts. This preferred inference is obtained by the statement of the form: "**Some x are G**".

Levinson relies on three heuristics in order to limit the range of possible default interpretations conveyed by a single utterance. These heuristics are closely related to three of Grice's conversational maxims, but rather than rules, they are primarily inferential heuristics which motivate the behavioural norms.

The First (Q-) Heuristic states that "What isn't said, isn't". It corresponds to Grice's first **Maxim of Quantity**: make your contribution as informative as required. This maxim is usually considered to be responsible for **scalar implicatures** which are induced from ranked sets of alternates, for instance, **quantifiers** or **scalar adjectives** (LEVINSON, 2000, p.36):
 "Some of the boys came."

+> (scalar implicates) Not all of the boys came.

Considering the **(Q-) Heuristic**, Levinson advocates that such sets of alternates provide the basis of the following sorts of inference (2000, p.36-37):

a) *Some of the boys came*

+> not all

b) *Three boys came in*

+> not four

c) *Possibly, there is life on Mars*

+> not certainly

d) *Not all of the boys came*

+> some did

e) *If John comes, I'll go*

+> maybe he will, maybe he won't

f) *John tried to reach the summit*

+> he didn't succeed

g) *Her dress was red*

+> not red and blue

The Second (I) Heuristic states that “What is expressed simply is stereotypically exemplified”. Rephrasing this heuristic in Carston's words (2004, p.3): “What is said in a simple (unmarked) way represents a stereotypical situation”. It relates to Grice's second **Maxim of Quantity**: Do not make your contribution more informative than required. It presupposes the idea that what can be taken for granted does not need to be explicitly stated as it exemplifies a stereotype, for instance (LEVINSON, 2000, p. 37):

“If you mow the lawn, I'll give you \$5.”

+> Only if you mow the lawn, will I give you \$5.

The Third (M) Heuristic states that “What is said in an abnormal way isn't normal; or marked message indicates marked situation”. It relates to Grice's **Maxim of Manner**: Be perspicuous (avoid obscurity of expression and prolixity). It contrasts with the second heuristic, for when a marked expression is used, it is suggested that the stereotypical interpretation should be avoided. To illustrate marked expressions, Levinson (2000, p. 39) presents an example which contains more sophisticated linguistic input:

“The corners of Sue's lips turned slightly upward.”

+> Sue didn't exactly smile.

Levinson (2000) summarises the functions of his heuristics:

Our heuristics recommend to the speaker the selection between forms that might invoke the relevant relations, so that, for example, minimal forms will pick up stereotypical or otherwise more specific interpretations, maximal forms will discourage this, and forms that are weaker than others on a scale of informativeness will implicate that the stronger forms may not hold. (LEVINSON, 2000, P. 258-259).

Another important aspect of **GCI theory** is the way in which it differs from the **Relevance framework**. Levinson (2000) challenges Sperber and Wilson's reductionist view which

places implicatures as a side effect of a tendency to extract the maximal inferences for the minimal psychic effort. On the one hand, S&W regard all inference involved in implicature derivation as deductive, and therefore, monotonic¹¹. Levinson, on the other hand, states that these inferences are non-monotonic in character. Secondly, Levinson claims that **Relevance** is incapable of making empirical (right) predictions partly because the theory is not clearly articulated but partly because the factor of cognitive effort is not empirically measurable. Conversely, in **GCI theory**, the **utterance-types** are sufficient to produce preferred interpretations which are intuitively right¹² as “**GCI**s are inferences that appear to go through in the absence of information to the contrary” (LEVINSON, 2000, p. 42).

Furthermore, another challenging claim Levinson (2000) makes relates the role **GCI**s play in the assignment of truth-conditional content. To his mind, such pragmatic inferences can affect true condition via processes of **disambiguation** and **reference assignment**, and **intrusive constructions**, amongst others. In a review of **GCI theory**, Carston (2004) draws attention to Levinson’s interesting notion of **intrusive constructions** as a class of constructions which include negations, conditionals, disjunctions and comparatives. These constructions are called intrusive due to their inner property: “the truth conditions of the whole expression depend on the implicatures of some of its constituent parts” (LEVINSON, 2000, p. 213-214). Following this perspective, Levinson then proposes that truth-conditional semantics depends on these pragmatic inferences or, in other words, on presumptive meanings.

To sum up, Levinson’s **GCI theory** largely contributes to the investigation of the **semantic - pragmatic interface** with the addition of an intermediary level of meaning entitled **utterance-type meaning**. These presumptive meanings are inferred from the structure of utterances and licensed by three heuristics. Levinson (2000) also makes a sharp distinction between **GCI**s and **PCI**s and places the former as a possible feeder of true-conditional content. Levinson’s **generalized conversational implicatures** will be exemplified in the characterisation of pragmatic sub-competencies, namely the inferential sub-competency, in chapter two, section 2.5.1.

¹¹ In deductive systems, a monotonic argument is nondefeasible, i.e. it cannot be cancelled.

¹² For a comparative analysis of both theories, see Levinson (2000, p. 55-59).

1.4.4 Revisiting Conversational Implicatures and Relevance

In his Masters thesis, Costa (1984) revisits Grice's **Implicature Theory** by proposing a re-organisation of the conversational maxims and also by introducing a **logical-pragmatic calculus** for **particularized conversational implicatures**. Similarly to S&W's initial studies on **Relevance** (1986), Costa (1984) intuitively suggests that the notion of relevance is more powerful than it was originally portrayed in Grice's **Co-operative Principle** framework (1975). Therefore, Costa advocates that the notion of relevance should be elevated to a general super maxim due to its articulating nature of relation present at all levels of co-operation. In other words, Costa suggests that the understanding of implicatures relies on the assessment of relevance at the following levels of relation:

- between "the said" components (logical forms, proposition and entailment);
- between "the said" and the topic;
- between "the said" and the communicative act;
- between "the said" and "the implicated";
- between "the implicated" and the topic;
- between "the implicated" and the communicative act.

Furthermore, Costa (1984) regards relevance as a pragmatic property of the conversational co-operative phenomenon as opposed to Grice's **Relation Maxim**, which, in his opinion, should be kept as a separate maxim but re-phrased as "be adequate" so as to avoid ambiguity. Thus, Costa phrases his relevance super maxim in the communicative act as "Be as relevant as possible". Conversely, Costa also contrasts his notion of relevance to S&W's cognitive principle of relevance, which relates to a cost-benefit idea previously presented in section 1.3.2.

Considering relevance as a pragmatic function which defines the relation between the components of a communicative act, Costa (1984) presents the following **non-trivial**¹³ **deductive calculus**, which includes the notion of relevance in its derivation:

¹³ The notion of non-triviality opposes to formal logics that only have mechanical formulas.

- A-** Interlocutor 1 (makes a question)
- B-** Interlocutor 2 (answers it)
- C-** Context (set of potential propositions or assumptions either known by A and B or likely to be accepted as plausible)
- U-** Utterance (said by B)
- Q- Implicature (Peter is at Mary's house)**

(A) *Where's Peter?*

(B) *There's a black Audi outside Mary's house.*

(C) Context

- {(B) fancies Mary}
- {Mary fancies (B)}
- {(B) has a black Audi}
- {(B) and Mary are single}
- {And so forth...}

1. (B) has stated (U).
2. (B) must be cooperating.
3. (B) knows that (A) is aware of (C).
4. On stating (U), (B) will only be relevant if he or she intends that (A) understands (Q).
5. (B) has not tried to prevent (A) from understanding (Q).
6. Therefore, (B) has stated (U) and implicated (Q).

Costa's **non-trivial deductive calculus** is a theoretical construct which attempts to provide a logical framework for inferences drawn from implicit meanings of utterances in **natural language**. However, neither does it aim at reproducing the mental processes produced by both speakers nor does it follow the strictness of classical logics. This model reinforces the idea that conversational implicatures are indeterminate and shows the role context plays in reducing the innate subjectivity of context-dependent inferences. The notion of context is reduced to relevant propositions and, as a result, inferences are drawn based on the relation among (A), (B) and (C).

In his subsequent **Non-Trivial Connectivity Theory**, Costa (2005) presents an alternative theoretical construct which attempts to describe the innate human tendency for communication. Costa (2005) grounds his theory on the following principles:

1. The Principle of Non- Trivial Connectivity: there is an innate tendency for non-trivial connectivity which is to be understood as basic human communication. In Costa's words, the "human mind/brain" is cognitively orientated towards a communicative connection. Costa defines **non-trivial** as the propriety of a connection that is not merely mechanical but interactive and creative.

2. Human language is essentially syntax (form), semantics (content) and pragmatics (usability). Costa assumes the Chomskian perspective that human language possesses a specialised faculty in the "mind/brain" expressed by means of **Universal Grammar**¹⁴. However, he adds that **Universal Grammar** has a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic property in which the nature of a structure is its representational potentiality and usability.

3. The Principle of Communicative Interactivity: taking into consideration the natural tendency for connectivity, forms of social organisation build communicative codes and their usage rules, such as different languages. Therefore, interactivity characterises the nature of language as a genetic property for the expression of languages as social constructs. The syntactic, semantic and pragmatic universal principles genetically rooted ground variations in social parameters that differentiate languages.

4. The Principle of Descriptive and Explanatory Adequacy of Linguistics in its Interfaces: Costa assumes that linguistics, and therefore, semantics, should be descriptively and explanatorily adequate for a methodological commitment of internal and external interfaces. Cognitively speaking, this principle relates to the investigation of the language faculty on its frontiers with other modules. Costa advocates that the innateness of this faculty represents the core of scientific investigation for a linguistic theory which might have external interfaces with natural and cognitive sciences such as biology, psychology and physics. If we consider semantics as a linguistic sub-theory, there seems to be an undeniable internal interface with syntax. As far as communication is concerned, the semantic-pragmatic interface

¹⁴ Universal Grammar as defined by Chomsky (1976, p. 29): "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages...the essence of human language".

(previously described in section 1.1) contributes to the study of utterance-meaning, especially if we take into consideration the role of context. The internal interface would then work as a restriction on descriptive adequacy.

An interesting assumption Costa (2005) makes is that **the principle of non-trivial connectivity** is innate and composed of syntactic-semantic and pragmatic structures that represent human language in its most elementary form. While syntax deals with sentences, semantics addresses lexis and propositions, and pragmatics deals with utterances. Therefore, Costa suggests that these three areas have an impact on communicative competence, of which pragmatic competence is a sub-component and whose scope will be extensively characterised in chapter two.

Summarising, Costa's studies largely contribute to the investigation of inferential processes in natural language. His re-organisation of Grice's maxims and inclusion of relevance as a super-maxim are soundly illustrated via the **non-trivial deductive calculus**. Furthermore, his theory of **Non-Trivial Connectivity** provides a very interesting and challenging insight into the nature of communication. Finally, his notions of external and internal interfaces license the investigation of scientific phenomena present in different areas or sub-fields and whose inter- or intra-disciplinary findings are likely to be richer in terms of potentiality of application.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, we saw that verbal communication involves both **coding** and **inferential processes**. The scope of pragmatics was narrowed to the investigation of aspects affecting the meaning of utterances, namely the making of inferences. An utterance was defined as the issuance of a sentence in an actual context. The comparison between sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning aspects suggested that the full interpretation of utterances relies on lexical competence (MARCONI, 1997), i.e. the ability to use words, as well as on aspects which operate at utterance level such as context, prosody, shared background knowledge and reference assignment. Semantic inferences were defined as the decoding of utterances conveying propositions via the application of phonological, syntactic, morphological and

lexical rules whereas pragmatic inferences were said to be based on Grice's notion of implicatures (1975).

The main aim of this chapter was to present a theoretical overview of pragmatic theories addressing the theme "inferences and verbal communication". Within classical theories, speech acts were defined as acts performed via utterances. Austin's (1962) three-fold distinction of speech acts was addressed and it was suggested that the illocutionary force is the most investigated dimension as it conveys speakers' intended meanings. Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts (1969) was also referred to as well as the characterisation of direct and indirect speech acts. It was suggested that indirect speech acts are also usually associated with greater politeness.

The second classical pragmatic theory, conventional and conversational implicatures (GRICE, 1975), highlighted the distinction between what speakers say and what they implicate when producing an utterance. It was stated that conventional implicatures are determined by the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered while conversational implicatures relate to what speakers implicate (beyond saying) and are associated with the existence of some rational principles and maxims which govern conversation. It was acknowledged that the flouting of these maxims indicates that speakers are trying to say something beyond the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, relying on a deeper level of cooperation.

The Neo-Gricean theories revisited Grice's notions of implicatures and conversational maxims. Politeness (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987) was defined as a theory about social interaction, as a universal principle basic to the production of social order and as a precondition of human cooperation. The politeness universals of face and rationality were introduced as well as the notion of face-threatening acts. It was indicated that four super-strategies may be used to produce face-threatening acts and minimise their effect. The description of bald-on-record and off-record strategies emphasised the compliance with and the flouting of Grice's Conversational Maxims, respectively. Similarly, the comparison between positive and negative politeness strategies demonstrated how speakers can use and manipulate language in order to create different effects on addressees and achieve their communicative aims.

Relevance (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995) was acknowledged as a highly influential theory since it accounts for cognition and communication. Its underlying principles were highlighted and an ostensive-inferential model was proposed, grounded on the idea that communication is a collaborative process involving ostention and inference. It was argued that addressees make assumptions based on speakers' ostensive behaviour and on encyclopaedic knowledge, triggering inferential chains. Contextualisation was seen an essential ingredient for the characterisation of relevance and it was advocated that the more relevant an assumption is, the less effort is required to process it.

The main contribution of the theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures (LEVINSON, 2000) was the addition of an intermediary level of meaning to the semantic-pragmatic interface: utterance-type –meaning. Speech acts, presuppositions, and generalized conversational implicatures were claimed to operate at this level. It was argued that this level of systematic pragmatic inference is based on general expectations about how language is normally used. Generalized conversational implicatures were re-defined as default inferences or presumptive meanings that capture our intuitions about a preferred or normal interpretation and are licensed by heuristics. GCIs differ from particularized conversational implicatures as the latter are context-dependent.

Costa's initial studies (1984) stressed the importance of relevance as a conversational super maxim that affects the understanding of implicatures. The illustration of Costa's non-trivial deductive calculus demonstrated a logical characterisation of pragmatic inferences in natural language. The subsequent principle of non-trivial connectivity (2005) was claimed to be innate and composed of syntactic-semantic and pragmatic structures that represent human language in its most elementary form. Thus, syntax, semantics and pragmatics were said to have an impact on communicative competence.

To conclude, the description of the above theories attempted to highlight the role inferences play in verbal communication. During a verbal interaction, speakers produce speech acts, conventional implicatures, generalized and particularized conversational implicatures and addressees need to be able to interpret them in order to respond linguistically appropriate to speakers' intended meanings. In addition, politeness phenomena are reflected in interactants' linguistic behaviour and have an impact on successful communication.

Considering that learners usually study a second language for communicative purposes, pragmatics seems to be closely related to communicative competence constructs as the latter aim at characterising the abilities language learners need to develop in order to successfully communicate in L2. In the next chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate the role inferences and pragmatic phenomena described in chapter one have in the characterisation of pragmatic and communicative competence constructs.

2 PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

As previously mentioned in chapter one, pragmatics is closely related to communicative competence constructs. Among many other challenging tasks, when learners verbally interact with other people in a second language, they need to be able to interpret speech acts and conversational implicatures in order to respond linguistically appropriately to the situation. Communicative competence constructs usually include a code and a use component, of which pragmatic competence is a sub-competency, and describe the abilities second language learners need to possess in order to successfully communicate in L2 contexts. According to Dell Hymes (1972, p. 281), a person who acquires communicative competence acquires knowledge and ability for language use with respect to whether (and to what degree) something is: formally possible; feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available; appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; and is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.

Interlanguage pragmatics studies the pragmatic development of second language learners by focusing on non-native speakers' use and acquisition of pragmatic competence of a second language. However, what abilities pragmatic competence encompasses depends on the perspective adopted. The main aim of this chapter is three-fold: to present a critical overview of communicative competence frameworks which include the notion of pragmatic competence, to highlight the importance of pragmatic comprehension within a pragmatic competence construct, and by doing so, to propose an alternative model of pragmatic competence which acknowledges the role inferences play in verbal communication. In order to characterise the sub-competencies of this alternative model, pragmatic phenomena addressed in chapter one will be referred to. A subsidiary aim of this chapter is to present different views on pragmatic development.

This chapter is divided into five sections. In section 2.1, I will describe the scope of interlanguage pragmatics and what pragmatic phenomena it investigates. In section 2.2, I will present Leech (1983) and Thomas's (1983) dichotomy of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics in order to relate pragmatics to second language acquisition and communicative competence constructs. In section 2.3, I will detail Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale's (1983) and Bachman's (1990) frameworks of communicative competence and

their characterisation of pragmatic competence. The role of pragmatic competence and pragmatic comprehension in interlanguage development will also be discussed. In section 2.4, I will present different views on whether pragmatic competence can be taught: Kasper (1997), Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) and Scarcella (1990). The objectives of pragmatic instruction will also be detailed. In section 2.4.1, sources for pragmatic instruction will be addressed.

In section 2.5, I will comment on the previous characterisations of pragmatic competence and will propose an alternative model of pragmatic competence in verbal communication consisting of three sub-competencies: inferential competence (representing the notion of pragmatic comprehension), conversational- interactional competence (representing the notion of pragmatic production) and sociolinguistic competence (representing the notion of appropriateness and interacting with both comprehension and production dimensions). The characterisation of these sub-competencies will be presented in the subsequent sub-sections. In addition, transcripts from IELTS listening activities will be used to illustrate the different aspects that integrate these pragmatic dimensions and affect utterance meaning.

2.1 INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

It is commonly accepted that culture plays a role in language behaviour. In cross-cultural communication, the successful interpretation of speakers' intended meanings largely depends on each interactant's own cultural norms of interpretation (LOCASTRO, 2003). At production level, the linguistic social actions speakers of a particular language engage in reflect their underlying worldviews. In short, interactants' **cultural schemata**, i.e. pre-existing knowledge structures based on experience in their first-language culture, affect the interpretation and production of pragmatic meaning.

Moreover, manifestations of cultural models of thought are embedded in talk both at micro and macro levels. LoCastro (2003) states that micro-level behaviour includes prosodic features, listener behaviour, turn-taking, conversational routines, conventional indirectness and speech act realisation, among others. From a macro-level perspective, the following features have an impact on cross-cultural communication: attribution of illocutionary force,

perception of politeness, and violation or adherence to Grice's co-operative principle. Aspects such as mismatches between form and function, the transfer of socio-pragmatic norms from the first-language culture and unawareness of taboo topics in a second language culture can hinder cross-cultural communication.

Cross-cultural pragmatics studies the impact of the above features in cross-cultural communication. According to Yule (1996), it also investigates differences in expectations based on **cultural schemata**. Yule adds that studies in **cross-cultural pragmatics** reveal that all interactants speak with a **pragmatic accent**, i.e. aspects of their talk that indicate what they assume is being communicated without being said. Yule suggests that in order to develop the capacity for cross-cultural communication, more attention to an understanding of what characterises **pragmatic accent** in L1 and L2 should be given.

Cross-cultural pragmatics can be sub-divided into **contrastive pragmatics** and **interlanguage pragmatics**. The former compares **speech acts** across cultures and languages in order to understand how culture is embedded in talk. LoCastro (2003) indicates that **contrastive pragmatics** views participants of communicative acts as full members of the target language community¹⁵. **Interlanguage pragmatics**, on the other hand, is "the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (KASPER & BLUM-KULKA, 1993, p. 3).

As the focus of this thesis is on language learners studying English as a second language in Brazil, I will be narrowing the scope of this chapter to **interlanguage pragmatics (ILP)** henceforth). The concept of **interlanguage** refers to a second language acquisition construct proposed by Selinker (1972) which accounts for the developing system of learners that is neither that of their L1 nor that of the L2 (LOCASTRO, 2003). An **interlanguage** is "a stage on a continuum within a rule governed system that is developed by L2 learners on their path to acquire the target language" (HUANG, 2007, p.125). As this intermediate system is unstable, we as teachers can operate at this transitory level by selecting suitable classroom activities and procedures to promote pragmatic development.

¹⁵ For more information on **contrastive pragmatics**, please refer to LoCastro (2003, p. 226-249).

Broadly speaking, the main focus of **ILP** investigation is on **linguistic action**. By **linguistic action** LoCastro (2003) means **speech acts** and their enactment by learners. In a narrow sense, LoCastro (2003) states that **ILP** specifically investigates what gets in the way of a learner's comprehending and producing pragmatic meaning. Most **ILP** research has involved English and has addressed the following features (KASPER & BLUM-KULKA, 1993, p. 4-7): attribution of illocutionary force, perception of politeness and of indirectness, the role of linguistic form versus contextual information, the impact of the L1 background and of stereotypes of L2 language behaviour, the processing of conventional and conversational implicatures, the perception of social status and of degree of imposition.

Most of these phenomena were described in the first chapter of this thesis as they are constructs of **classical** and **Neo-Gricean pragmatic theories**. They play a role in **second language acquisition** and **learning processes** since learners need to be aware of them so as to be able to understand and produce pragmatic meaning. In the next sub-section, Leech (1983) and Thomas's (1983) dichotomy of **pragmalinguistics** and **sociopragmatics** will be addressed in order to relate **pragmatics** to **second language acquisition** and **communicative competence** constructs.

2.2 PRAGMALINGUISTICS AND SOCIOPRAGMATICS

The scope of **pragmatics** as a linguistic sub-field was addressed in the introductory section of chapter one. While Levinson (1983) highlights that pragmatics is essentially concerned with the making of inferences, Crystal's largely cited definition (1997) emphasises the social interactional domain of pragmatics. In addition, Röver (2005) suggests that it is Leech (1983) who provides the most convenient starting point for relating **pragmatics** to **second language acquisition** by narrowing the scope of his discussion to general linguistics and by describing two culturally bound facets of pragmatics: **pragmalinguistics** and **sociopragmatics**.

In Leech (1983) and Thomas's (1983) two-fold division of **pragmatics**, **pragmalinguistics** is "the more linguistic end of pragmatics where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (LEECH, 1983, p. 11). **Pragmalinguistic competence** encompasses interactants' knowledge of strategies for

realising speech intentions and the linguistic items used to express these intentions (RÖVER, 2005). In other words, **pragmalinguistics** refers to the resources speakers use for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings (KASPER, 1997). For instance, communicative acts may be intensified or softened depending on the choice of linguistic forms which convey different degrees of directness or of indirectness.

Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (LEECH, 1983, p. 10). **Sociopragmatic competence** encompasses knowledge of the social conditions governing language use (RÖVER, 2005). It refers to the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative acts (KASPER, 1997). **Sociopragmatic competence** presupposes participants’ awareness of degrees of relative power, social distance and degree of imposition involved in a specific communicative act (BROWN AND LEVINSON, 1987) and of their rights and obligations (THOMAS, 1983). For example, speakers performing a **speech act** may have the intended illocutionary force wrongly interpreted by addressees due to cultural differences and, as a consequence, trigger an undesired perlocutionary effect.

According to Röver (2005), it is rather difficult to draw a clear line between what belongs to each domain when analysing performance data. **Pragmalinguistic** and **sociopragmatic competencies** are intrinsically intertwined for two main reasons. Firstly, language use is invariably contextual. Secondly, both competencies are involved in producing and comprehending speech intentions. However, Röver (2005) suggests that this division is theoretically and empirically useful and that research shows that learners can be more advanced in one of these competencies than in the other.

Röver (2005) also adds that by constructing, testing and revising hypotheses about syntactic, semantic and phonological features of the target language, learners therefore arrive at an approximation of what Selinker (1972) called **interlanguage**. The following quote summarises the role both dimensions play in the development of **pragmatic competence** of learners in a second language:

The task for the learner consists of building up a knowledge base of conventional strategies and forms for expressing speech intentions on the paralinguistic side, discovering the social rules of that target language community on the sociopragmatic side, and mapping pragmalinguistic conventions on the sociopragmatic norms. (RÖVER, 2005, p.4).

In the next section, aspects deriving from the **pragmalinguistic** and **sociopragmatic competencies** will be dealt with under the notion of **pragmatic competence**. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale's (1983) and Bachman's (1990) constructs of **communicative competence** will be detailed as well as their characterisation of **pragmatic competence**. The role of **pragmatic competence** in **interlanguage development** will also be discussed.

2.3 PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

First of all, the notion of **competence** originates from Chomsky's dichotomy of **competence** and **performance** (1957). **Linguistic competence** is the portion of knowledge native speakers possess of the linguistic system of their mother tongue. It encompasses knowledge of grammar, phonology and lexis, all essential areas for the production and understanding of any sentence in any language. Based on a finite set of rules and elements, speakers are able to produce an infinite number of sentences¹⁶. **Performance**, on the other hand, is the actual use of the linguistic knowledge to produce written sentences or utterances. It corresponds to the way speakers behave linguistically. Not only is language users' **performance** affected by their **linguistic competence** but also by non-linguistic factors such as social conventions, beliefs, emotional attitudes and cultural background. Dell Hymes (1972) first coined the term **communicative competence** in opposition to Chomsky's dichotomy, which, in his view, failed to include socio-cultural factors.

From a **second language acquisition** viewpoint, the notion of **communicative competence** has strongly influenced methodological approaches, course design and classroom-based research as from the 80's. According to Niezgodá and Röver (2001), definitions of **communicative competence** usually include at least two components: a **code component** and a **use component**. The former describes a language user's knowledge of syntax, morphology, semantics, lexis, and phonology whereas the latter relates to the ability to use language appropriately for a purpose within a given context. Among the most influential frameworks for the characterisation of **communicative competence** are Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) and Bachman's (1990).

¹⁶ This phenomenon is called **recursivity** and is the core feature of Universal Grammar.

In the first model, Canale and Swain (1980) sub-divide **communicative competence** into three sub-competencies, which are later extended by Canale (1983) to four:

1. Linguistic or grammatical competence: consists of the knowledge of the basic elements of communication such as sentence patterns, morphological inflections, lexis and phonological or orthographic systems;

2. Sociolinguistic competence: consists of the social and cultural knowledge required to use language appropriately with reference to formality, politeness and other contextually defined choices; it refers to the degree sentences are produced and understood appropriately;

3. Discourse competence: refers to the knowledge of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres and situations;

4. Strategic competence: includes the strategies and procedures relevant to language learning, language processing and language production. It activates knowledge of the other competencies and helps language users to overcome communication difficulties.

Generally speaking, the degree of importance of the above competencies in this **communicative competence** construct largely depends on the perspective adopted. The discourse proponents Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 16) regard **discourse competence** as the central competency since “this is where everything else comes together”. In other words, the realisation of all of the other competencies is done through discourse. From a pragmatic perspective, Niezgodna and Röver (2001, p.64) state that **sociolinguistic competence** comprises both **appropriateness of meaning and form** (echoing Leech and Thomas’s distinction of **sociopragmatic** and **pragmalinguistic competencies** respectively) and, therefore, represents the notion of **pragmatic competence**.

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) accept Canale and Swain’s framework of **communicative competence** with two major revisions. Firstly, Scarcella and Oxford (1992, p.72) extend the notion of **discourse competence** to refer to “verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic knowledge underlying the ability to organise spoken and written texts meaningfully and appropriately”. The authors highlight that some researchers favour the term **conversational competence** to refer to this broader definition of **discourse competence** related to **conversations**. Secondly,

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) expand the original concept of **strategic competence** to include all types of compensation strategies that make up for missing knowledge such as **guessing from context** in reading and listening and **paraphrasing** and **circumlocution**¹⁷ in speaking and writing.

In a second model of **communicative competence**, Bachman (1990, p.80) states that “the ability to use language communicatively involves both knowledge of or competence in the language, and the capacity for implementing it, or using this competence”. Therefore, Bachman (1990) proposes a theoretical framework of communicative language ability which includes three components: **language competence**, **strategic competence** and **psychophysiological mechanisms**¹⁸. In other words, **communicative competence** is seen as “a dynamic system in which **world knowledge** and **language competence** feed into **strategic competence**, which defines the degree to which linguistic intentions are efficiently executed” (NIEZGODA & RÖVER, 2001, p. 64). **Strategic competence** then interacts with **psychophysiological mechanisms**, which refer to “the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon” (BACHMAN, 1990, p. 84). Lastly, these mechanisms interact with the context of a particular situation.

In Bachman’s framework of communicative competence (1990), **language competence** comprises **organizational competence** and **pragmatic competence**. Both language sub-competencies consist of several categories which interact with each other and also with features of the language use situation. **Organizational competence** encompasses **grammatical** and **textual** abilities. **Grammatical competence** consists of a number of independent competencies which are involved in language usage¹⁹ such as the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology. **Textual competence** includes the knowledge of rules governing text formation. Bachman (1990) adds that a text is essentially a unit of language (spoken or written) consisting of two or more utterances or sentences that are structured together according to rules of **cohesion** and **rhetorical**

¹⁷ **Circumlocution** refers to using too many words to express oneself, usually to avoid saying something clearly.

¹⁸ For more information on **strategic competence** and **psychophysiological mechanisms**, see Bachman (1990, p.98-110)

¹⁹ “Language usage” refers to the function of a linguistic item as an element in a linguistic system” (WIDDOWSON, 1978).

organization. Therefore, **textual competence** also encompasses **conversational language use** and conventions involved in establishing, maintaining and terminating conversations.

Bachman (1990) places **pragmatic competence** as a sub-competency of **language competence**. **Pragmatic competence** or **pragmatic knowledge**, as revised by Bachman & Palmer (1996, p.69), “enables us to create or interpret discourse by relating utterances or sentences and texts to their meanings, to the intentions of language users, and to relevant characteristics of the language use setting”. In Bachman’s original framework (1990), **pragmatic competence** comprises two features: **illocutionary competence** and **sociolinguistic competence**.

Illocutionary competence aids the interpretation of the relationships between utterances or sentences and texts and the intention of language users (BACHMAN & PALMER, 1996). According to Kasper (1997), it refers to the knowledge of the communicative action (in both written and spoken modes) and how to carry it out. From a **Speech Act** perspective (Austin, 1962, Searle, 1969), which only focuses on spoken discourse, **illocutionary competence** enables interlocutors to interpret the illocutionary force of a speech act (see section 1.2.1). **Illocutionary competence** or **functional knowledge**, as revised by Bachman & Palmer (1996, p.69-70), comprises knowledge of four categories of language functions:

1. Ideational: functions which enable us to express or interpret meaning in terms of our experience of the real world and include the use of language to express or exchange information about **ideas, knowledge** or **feelings**. Utterances performing these functions include descriptions, classifications, explanations, and expressions of anger and sorrow.

2. Manipulative: functions which enable us to affect the world around us. They include **instrumental functions** (getting other people to do things, for example, “requests” and “suggestions”), **regulatory functions** (controlling what other people do, for instance, “rules” and “regulations”) and **interpersonal functions** (establishing, maintaining and changing interpersonal relationships like “greetings” and “compliments”).

3. Heuristics: functions which enable us to use language to extend our knowledge of the world around us, for instance, when using language for teaching and learning, for solving problems, and so on.

4. Imaginative: functions which enable us to use language to create an imaginary world or extend the world around us for humorous or aesthetic purposes such as jokes, figures of speech and poetry.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) conclude that these four categories of **language functions** are by no means mutually exclusive. They do not usually occur only in individual or isolated utterances. On the contrary, most language use involves the performance of multiple functions in connected discourse. The following quote summarises Bachman's original views on these functions and how they relate to **sociolinguistic competence**:

While **illocutionary competence** enables us to use language to express a wide range of functions, and to interpret the illocutionary force of utterances or discourse, the appropriateness of these functions and how they are performed varies from one language use context to the next, according to a myriad of sociocultural and discursal features. (BACHMAN, 1990, p.94).

Bachman (1990, p. 94) defines **sociolinguistic competence** as “the sensibility to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context”. Therefore, **sociolinguistic competence** fosters the performance of language functions in ways that are appropriate to that context. It encompasses the following abilities: sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to differences in register, sensitivity to naturalness and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. To illustrate the second ability, if learners need to make a particular request in L2, they should be able to select functional exponents appropriately according to the degree of formality of the situation and the degree of imposition the request carries. For instance, an employee asking to borrow the boss's car is likely to select the functional exponent “*I was wondering if you could lend me your car?*” as opposed to “*Could you lend me your car?*” and “*Lend me your car, will you?*”.

All things considered, Bachman's (1990) framework places the notion of **pragmatic competence** as a sub-category of **communicative competence** as the former comprises the ability to use language appropriately according to a specific situational context. Bachman claims that attempts to validate the various components of different communicative competence constructs have not been conclusive enough while Bachman and Palmer (1992) were able to demonstrate how **grammatical** and **pragmatic competencies** are closely associated with each other.

Furthermore, Garcia (2004) states that while the importance of **pragmatic competence** in the language ability construct is well-acknowledged, its role in **interlanguage development** has only recently begun to be investigated empirically, especially in terms of comprehension of oral language. According to Garcia (2004), **pragmatic comprehension** refers to the comprehension of pragmatic meaning via spoken discourse. In Thomas's model (1995), **pragmatic comprehension** involves the comprehension of **speech acts** and **conversational implicatures**. As previously mentioned in chapter one, **speech acts** (AUSTIN, 1962, SEARLE, 1969) describe acts performed via utterances while **conversational implicatures** (GRICE, 1975) relate to what a speaker implicates beyond saying, which needs to be inferred by the hearer.

Garcia (2004) suggests that second language students need to be able to comprehend meaning pragmatically in order to:

- 1) understand speakers' intentions;
- 2) interpret speakers' feelings and attitudes;
- 3) differentiate speech act meaning such as the difference between "a directive" and "a commissive";
- 4) evaluate the intensity of speakers' meaning, such as the difference between "a suggestion" and "a warning";
- 5) recognise sarcasm, joking, and other facetious behaviour;
- 6) be able to respond appropriately.

Concluding, the models of **communicative competence** and **pragmatic competence** described in this chapter share the underlying principle that **pragmatic competence** is a multi-faceted construct and consists of sub-competencies. In other words, **pragmatic competence** encompasses a number of abilities second language learners need to master in order to comprehend and produce pragmatic meaning and respond linguistically appropriately to communicative situations. Nonetheless, are these abilities learnt, acquired, transferred from L1 or developed?

The next section will tackle this controversial issue by presenting some views based on current research on **pragmatic development**, referring to the previous characterisations of

pragmatic competence (LEECH, 1983, THOMAS, 1983, CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983, BACHMANN, 1990).

2.4 PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT

Several empirical studies have attempted to investigate whether **pragmatic competence** can be taught in a second language. On one hand, Kasper (1997, p.1) states that the notion of **competence**, whether pragmatic or linguistic, is not teachable: “**Competence** is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use or lose”. According to Kasper (1997), Bachman’s framework of communicative competence (1990) clearly indicates that **pragmatic competence** is not extra or ornamental. It is not subordinated to knowledge of grammar and textual organization but co-ordinated to formal linguistic and textual knowledge. Based on this perspective, **pragmatic knowledge** may not need to be explicitly taught as it may simply develop alongside lexical and grammatical knowledge, without requiring any pedagogical intervention.

In addition, Kasper (1997) argues that adult learners receive a considerable amount of L2 **pragmatic knowledge** for free for two main reasons. Firstly, some **pragmatic knowledge** is universal as “competent adult members of any community bring a rich fund of **universal pragmatic knowledge** and abilities to the task of learning the pragmatics of another language” (KASPER & ROSE, 2002, p. 164). Consequently, adult learners are usually aware of the following **universal pragmatic features**, among others (KASPER & ROSE, 2002, p. 165):

1. Turn-taking conventions, repair, the sequential accomplishment of actions and preference organisation (conversation analysis features);
2. Acts of speaking, writing, and using hybrid modalities such as the main categories of illocutionary acts (AUSTIN, 1962, SEARLE, 1969);
3. Specific communicative acts: greetings, leave takings, requests, suggestions, invitations, offers, refusals, acceptances, (dis)agreements, apologies, complaints, compliments, expressions of gratitude;

4. Conversational implicature (GRICE, 1975), inferencing heuristics and indirectness (SEARLE, 1975);
5. Indexicality as an implicit expression of epistemic²⁰, affective and social stance and contextualisation;
6. Politeness as a mutually face-saving strategy (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987);
7. Major realisation strategies for communicative acts, such as levels of directness in requesting;
8. Routine formulae for managing recurrent communicative events;
9. Sociopragmatic variability in actional and linguistic choices.

Secondly, **positive transfer** from L1 may facilitate learners' acquisition of **pragmalinguistic** and **sociopragmatic** knowledge in L2 (KASPER, 1997). For instance, when there is a direct correspondence between form and function in L1 and L2, learners can successfully convey their intended meanings using the corresponding forms. Similarly, learners may only need to make small adjustments in their social categorisation when participants' distributions of rights and obligations and their relative social power are equivalent in L1 and L2 contexts.

On the other hand, educational psychology research suggests that learners do not transfer available knowledge to new tasks. To make matters worse, "L2 recipients often tend towards literal interpretation, taking utterances at face value rather than inferring what is meant from what is said and underusing context information" (KASPER, 1997, p.4). Another aspect that may hinder the understanding and the production of pragmatic meaning is **negative transfer**. According to Röver (2005), **negative transfer** includes the translation of L1 routines which do not convey the same illocutionary force in the target language, the distribution and frequency of pragmalinguistic realisations of "apologies" and the directness level of "requests", among others.

Returning to the central question whether **pragmatic competence** can be taught, Kasper (1997) advocates that teachers should raise learners' awareness of what they already know in terms of **pragmatic knowledge** and encourage them to transfer this knowledge to L2 contexts. As far as the need for explicit teaching is concerned, Kasper (1997) highlights that the most compelling evidence that L2 pragmatic instruction is necessary comes from learners

²⁰ Epistemic refers to cognition, involving knowledge.

whose L2 proficiency is advanced but whose unsuccessful pragmatic performance does not originate from cultural resistance. The findings of Bouton (1988), for instance, indicate that the interpretation of **implicatures** is still a problem area even for advanced ESL learners.

Grounded on the results of ten classroom-based studies examining the effect of pragmatic instruction, Kasper (1997) proposes a list of **awareness-raising activities** and **activities for communicative practice** whose aim is to help learners become more effective and successful communicators in L2. Through **awareness-raising activities**, learners can acquire **sociopragmatic** and **pragmalinguistic** information as these observation activities help learners to make connections between linguistic forms, pragmatic functions, their occurrence in different social contexts and their cultural meanings. **Communicative practice activities** give learners the opportunity to take alternating discourse roles as speaker and hearer, experience different speech events and perform different communicative actions. Kasper (1997) concludes saying that teachers face the challenge of arranging learning opportunities in a way that learners benefit from the development of pragmatic competence in L2.

Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) favour the explicit teaching of pragmatics in the L2 classroom. After the observation of a number of EFL learners, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) came to the conclusion that students demonstrated a clear need for pragmatic instruction. Firstly, learners showed significant differences from native speakers in language use in areas such as **the execution and comprehension of specific speech acts, conversational functions** such as “greetings” and “leave takings” and **conversational management** such as “back channelling²¹” and “short responses”.

Secondly, without the explicit teaching of pragmatics, language learners’ **pragmatic competence** varies a lot regardless of their language background or language proficiency. In other words, learners who are at an advanced level of linguistic competence do not necessarily show a similar advanced level of pragmatic competence. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) advocate that **pragmatic instruction** should be integrated into courses syllabi at early levels. By exposing learners to pragmatic input at early stages, teachers may be able to reduce the mismatch between **grammatical** and **pragmatic knowledge**.

²¹ Backchannels are vocal indications such as ‘uh-huh’, used to signal that the listener is paying attention to the speaker’s turn.

A third view addresses the impact of communication breakdowns in second-language acquisition. According to Scarcella (1990), frequent **communication difficulties** in the target language community can affect a person's ability to reach short and long-term goals and also hinder second language acquisition. By **communications difficulties** Scarcella (1990) means the particular problems that result when conversationalists do not share the same knowledge of the rules governing conversation which enable the subtle and complex coordination of thematic development, turn-taking and topic change. Based on studies reporting **communication difficulties** faced by subjects who had lived in the target language community for a considerable period of time, Scarcella (1990) concludes that many adult learners never master the conversational skills of the second language.

Scarcella (1990, p. 344) suggests that learners' failure to achieve **conversational competence** (i.e. **discourse competence in conversations**) may be accounted for by the following reasons:

- Learners may not receive enough exposure to the second language;
- Learners may not have enough direct experience conversing with native speakers;
- Some conversational features may be acquired late in the language acquisition process since they are neither perceptually salient nor easily understood;
- Learners may inappropriately transfer L1 routines to L2 contexts;
- Speakers may wish to maintain their own cultural ties;
- The target culture may discourage learners from mastering the language too completely;
- L1 community members may consider learners who speak "too fluently" in L2 as linguistic renegades or traitors;
- Learners may feel that prejudice rather than linguistic differences prevents them from gaining socio-economic power in the target language community.

Therefore, Scarcella (1990) argues that it may be more important for instructors to provide learners with **positive learning experiences** rather than it is for instructors to devote concentrated effort teaching learners the conversational features that enable speakers to overcome conversational difficulties. **Positive learning experiences** include motivating learners to acquire the second language despite communication difficulties.

A final consideration about pragmatic development relates to instructors' goals when teaching L2 pragmatics. According to Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003), the main aim of

pragmatic instruction is to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic phenomena and offer them a range of options for interaction. Learners are not expected to comply with a particular target-language norm but be familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) conclude that pragmatic instruction enables learners to maintain their own cultural identities, to participate more fully in target language communication, and to gain control of the force and outcome of their contributions. Successful communication is the result of optimal rather than total convergence. Finally, pragmatic development in a second language also helps learners to expand their perception of the target language and those who speak it.

Considering Kasper (1997) and Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor's (2003) perspectives, second language teachers face the challenge of providing learners with classroom activities which promote the development of pragmatic knowledge as from early levels. If teaching practices are adequately adjusted to learners' needs of pragmatic instruction, the latter are more likely to be able to communicate adequately in the target language. In conclusion, learners who undergo pragmatic enhancement activities are more likely to achieve their communicative aims. The next sub-section will examine sources for pragmatic instruction.

2.4.1 Sources for pragmatic instruction

According to LoCastro (2003), Krashen's notion of **comprehensible input**²² (1982) has demonstrated the importance of providing appropriate, adequate and rich input to foster learners' **pragmatic development**. Thus, LoCastro (2003) describes the effect the following sources of input have on pragmatic instruction: **teachers, classroom and supplementary materials** and **other learners**. Firstly, **teachers** who master the L2 code well and are familiar with pragmatic principles are able to provide pragmatic information such as basic rules of politeness, social conventions and contextual appropriateness. Teachers can also allocate class time for discussions on pragmatic differences between L1 and L2 and encourage positive transfer.

²² Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) will be addressed in chapter three.

Secondly, teachers can make use of **classroom** and **supplementary materials** such as textbooks, dictionaries, videos, multimedia and tests to assist pragmatic development. LoCastro (2003) adds that teachers should select materials judiciously so that the discourse levels portrayed in the materials are appropriate to learners' age group, interests and needs and that the samples of language sound authentic and natural.

In a comparative study of **ETL textbooks**, Vellenga (2004) indicates that learning pragmatics only from current coursebooks is highly unlikely. Vellenga (2004) analyses eight EFL and ESL textbooks focusing on the use of metalanguage, explicit treatment of speech acts, and metapragmatic information such as discussion(s) of register, illocutionary force, politeness, appropriacy and usage. Her findings show that textbooks include a small amount of explicit metapragmatic information, which is not supplemented by teachers' manuals. Based on teacher surveys, Vellenga highlights that teachers rarely bring in supplementary materials related to pragmatics. Thus, in order to provide enough information for the acquisition of pragmatic competence in L2, a **pragmatically friendly textbook** should include the following features (VELLENGA, 2004, p.23):

- a) Awareness-raising activities;
- b) Extralinguistic contextual information for all language samples;
- c) Provision of a variety of language forms to accomplish a certain speech act;
- d) Rich cultural information to enable socio-pragmatic choices.

A final source of pragmatic input is what **learners** bring to their L2 classroom, their sociocultural backgrounds and expectations. LoCastro (2003, p.318) states that "learners' goals for learning L2 are primarily a function of the social environment they grew up, their experiences with the world at large, and the value they attach to become a proficient user". There seems to be a direct relationship between a positive level of motivation for learning an L2 and the willingness to develop pragmatic ability. In addition, research suggests that positive transfer and motivation²³ are intertwined. Learners should be given the opportunity to transfer what they already know in terms of pragmatic knowledge to L2 contexts but also need to be motivated to do so.

²³ For information on integrative and instrumental motivation, see Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner and Macintyre (1993). For strategies to promote motivation, see Dornyei (1994).

To sum up, LoCastro (2003) suggests that teachers have most of the responsibility for the development of pragmatic competence in L2. By providing authentic models of language use and pragmatic information, by selecting suitable activities and supplementing textbooks and by motivating learners and encouraging positive transfer, learners are bound to achieve an adequate level of competence to communicate effectively and successfully in a second language.

2.5 PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN VERBAL COMMUNICATION: AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK OF SUB-COMPETENCIES

The theoretical constructs of **pragmatic competence** presented in the previous sections do not address **pragmatic comprehension** specifically and refer to both **oral** and **written forms** of discourse. Leech (1983) and Thomas's (1983) two-fold distinction of pragmatics makes it clear that the **pragmalinguistic** and **sociopragmatic** dimensions are intertwined as both competencies are involved in **producing** and **comprehending** speech intentions (RÖVER, 2005). In Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale's (1983) framework, **sociolinguistic competence** refers to the knowledge to use language appropriately whereas **discourse competence** refers to the ability to combine discursual features to produce **oral** and **written texts**. Similarly, Bachman's framework of **communicative competence** (1990) places **pragmatic competence** as a language sub-competency which enables the **production** and the **interpretation** of oral and written discourse (BACHMAN & PALMER, 1996).

In addition, as most research on **pragmatic development** of non-native speakers focuses mainly on **pragmatic production**, it seems theoretically valid to attempt to characterise **pragmatic comprehension** more extensively so as to investigate what gets in the way of second language learners understanding **pragmatic meaning**. Since **pragmatics** is essentially concerned with the making of inferences (LEVINSON, 1983), it seems legitimate to include an **inferential component** within a **pragmatic competence** construct. Hopefully, such an investigation may lead to an insight on how teaching practices may be adjusted so as to foster **pragmatic comprehension** and, as a consequence, enable learners to successfully interpret verbal interactional exchanges.

Based on the notions of **pragmalinguistics** and **sociopragmatics** (LEECH, 1983, THOMAS, 1983), on previous characterisations of **pragmatic competence** within frameworks of **communicative competence** (CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983, BACHMAN, 1990) and on my experience as an EFL teacher preparing learners for international exams and as an oral examiner for Cambridge ESOL Main Suite Examinations, I suggest an alternative framework for the characterisation of **pragmatic competence in verbal communication**. In this alternative model, **pragmatic competence** encompasses three components: **inferential competence** (representing the notion of **pragmatic comprehension**), **conversational-interactive competence** (representing the notion of **pragmatic production**) and **sociolinguistic competence** (representing the notion of **appropriateness** and interacting with both **comprehension** and **production** dimensions).

2.5.1 Inferential Competence

As previously described in chapter one, an **inference** can be defined as the reasoning which leads to a conclusion drawn from a premise. While **classical deductive inferences** are based on rules of formal logic and are necessarily valid, **semantic and pragmatic inferences** relate to **sentence meaning** and **speaker or utterance meaning**, respectively. In addition, **utterance-type-meaning** refers to a level of systematic **pragmatic inference** based on general expectations about how language is normally used (LEVINSON, 2000). According to Levinson (2000), pragmatic phenomena such as **speech acts**, **presuppositions**, **conventional implicatures**, **felicity conditions**, **conversational pre-sequences** and **generalized conversational implicatures** operate at this level.

As stated in section 2.3, **pragmatic comprehension** may be characterised as the comprehension of **speech acts** and **conversational implicatures** (THOMAS, 1995). With regard to **speech acts**, Van Dijk (1977, p. 213) defines **pragmatic comprehension** as “the series of processes during which language users assign particular conventional acts, i.e. illocutionary forces, to each other’s utterances”. The following channels or sources of information play a role in the **assignment of the illocutionary force** of utterances (VAN DIJK, 1977, p. 214):

1. Properties of the structure of the utterance, as assigned on the basis of grammatical rules;
2. Paralinguistic properties such as prosodic features, gestures and facial expressions;
3. Actual observation or perception of the communicative context;
4. Knowledge or beliefs in memory about the speaker and his or her properties, or about other properties of the actual situation;
5. More in particular, knowledge or beliefs with respect to the type of interaction going on, and the structures of preceding contexts of interaction;
6. Knowledge or beliefs derived from previous speech acts, both at micro (or local) level and at macro (global) level;
7. General semantic, in particular conventional, knowledge about (inter)action, rules, especially those of pragmatics;
8. Other kinds of general world-knowledge (frames).

Likewise, as previously mentioned in chapter one, the successful interpretation of **implicatures** by second language learners depends not only on students' **lexical and semantic competencies** (MARCONI, 1997) but, in the case of **conversational implicatures**, on paralinguistic features such as **context, prosody, shared background knowledge, cultural schemata** and **reference assignment** (LOCASTRO, 2003).

Therefore, considering that **pragmatic comprehension** involves the comprehension of **speech acts** and **implicatures** (THOMAS, 1995) and, more broadly speaking, the interpretation of **pragmatic inferences**, the **inferential component** of **pragmatic competence** is grounded on **the theoretical framework of inferences** presented in chapter one, including **the semantic-pragmatic interface**. I will be presenting five short extracts taken from listening activities from a textbook entitled "Insight into IELTS" by Jakeman and McDowell (1999) in order to illustrate different types of **implicatures** and **speech acts** and how linguistic and paralinguistic features affect their interpretation.

The pragmatic analyses of the extracts will be of a mixed nature as their aim is to characterise the **inferential component of pragmatic competence** rather than detail or compare individual theories. The taxonomy of **illocutionary acts** and the assignment of **illocutionary force** refer to Austin (1962) and Searle's theories (1969), **conventional implicatures** portray the Gricean original model (1975) while the distinction between **generalized** and **particularized conversational implicatures** relies on Levinson's **presumptive meanings**

(2000). Sperber and Wilson's **relevance principle** (1995) will also be applied so as to illustrate the triggering of inferential chains which would bear the most contextual effects in those contexts.

Extract 1 - dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.166)

- (1) *Girl: Mum! What do you think of my new shirt? Do you like it?*
 (2) *Woman: OH, it's...uh...lovely, darling.*
 (3) *Girl: Oh Mum.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a mother and her daughter talking about a new shirt.

- (1) **Directive speech act, illocutionary force:** asking for opinion.
 (2) **Particularized conversational implicature:** the mother implies that she does not like the shirt very much by using **hesitating devices** such as “uh” and by expressing a bit of **irony** via the lexical item “lovely”.
 (3) **Applying the Relevance Theory:** When daughters buy new clothes, mothers usually comment on their new outfits and may even compliment their children on their choice. In this dialogue, the mother did not. The daughter had to ask for her mum's opinion and the mother hesitated. When people hesitate to express their opinion, they are probably not very sure about what to say. If the mother had really liked the shirt, she would not have hesitated to express her opinion. Thus, the girl realises her mum is being ironical and expresses her disappointment by saying “Oh Mum”.

Extract 2 - dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.166)

- (1) *Customer: I bought this mobile phone on Friday...*
 (2) *Assistant: Is there a problem with it, sir?*
 (3) *Customer: Well, primarily, it does not appear to function outside the metropolitan area, which means it fails to function as a mobile phone as far as I can see.*
 (4) *Assistant: Right, I'll just have a word with the manager and see what we can do.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a customer and a shop assistant talking about an item recently bought.

- (1) **Representative or assertive speech act, illocutionary force:** stating a proposition.
 (2) **Directive speech act, illocutionary force:** asking a question.

(3) Particularized conversational implicature:

- **Anaphoric reference** (considering the first line of the dialogue): “it” = mobile phone bought on Friday;

- **Use of the hedge** “as far as I can use” to indicate what the speaker is saying may not be totally accurate;

-**Presupposition:** the speaker assumes mobile phones are supposed to work outside metropolitan areas; the speaker implies that there is a problem with the mobile phone recently bought because it does not function outside the metropolitan area.

(4) Commissive speech act, illocutionary force: promise; hearer acknowledges the problem and commits himself to a future action, i.e. to talk to the manager.

Extract 3 - dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.160)

(1) *Student: I'm afraid I haven't been able to finish the history essay, and I was hoping that you would give me an extension.*

(2) *Lecturer: When do you think you could let me have it?*

(3) *Student: Well...I should be able to finish it by next Monday.*

(4) *Lecturer: Well..., OK. As long as I can have it by then. That'll be fine.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a student and a lecturer talking about a history essay.

(1A) Directive speech act, illocutionary force: request; also an **indirect speech act** as it uses a declarative form to make a request;

(1B) The first part of the utterance “*I'm afraid I haven't been able to finish the history essay...*” is also an **expressive speech act (illocutionary force:** apologising) used as a **politeness strategy** to lessen the impact of the request²⁴.

(2A) Directive speech act, illocutionary force: asking a question. It is a **direct speech act** as the speaker uses an interrogative form to make a question.

(2B) It is also a **particularized implicature** as the syntactic structure “*you could let me have it*” allows the speaker to imply that he is not particularly happy about giving the student an extension. This example corroborates the idea that **conversational implicatures** may be conveyed not only via lexis and phonology but also syntax.

(3) Representative speech act, illocutionary force: stating a possibility.

²⁴ This strategy will be examined in terms of politeness in the sociolinguistic sub- competency, section 2.5.3.

(4A) Generalized conversational implicature: maybe the teacher will receive the work by next Monday, maybe he will not. The **GCI** is generated by the use of the **intrusive construction** “*as long as*”, which expresses a condition.

(4B) Particularized conversational implicature: the teacher implies that he is not particularly happy about giving an extension by using the **hesitation device** “*well*”. The teacher also implies that the student may get into trouble if he does not submit his essay by Monday.

Extract 4 - dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.167)

(1) *Teacher: Michael, did you do this work yourself?*

(2) *Student: Yes, sir. Of course I did.*

(3) *Teacher: It seems to have been remarkably well done, for you!*

(4) *Student: Guess I had a good day, sir.*

(5) *Teacher: Michael, I wasn't born yesterday.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a teacher and a student talking about a school work.

(1) Expressive speech act, illocutionary force: challenging the authenticity of a student's work. It is also an **indirect speech act** as the speaker uses an interrogative form to express his disbelief.

(2) Representative speech act, illocutionary force: asserting the authenticity of his work.

(3) Particularized conversational implicature:

- **Anaphoric reference** (considering the first line of the dialogue): “*It*” = this work;

- **Presupposition:** the speaker assumes the quality of work is too high to have been done by the student; the speaker implies that the student has handed in somebody else's work by using the lexical items: “*remarkably well done*” and “*for you*”.

(4) Particularized conversational implicature: the speaker resorts to **irony** to account for the high quality of his work. The speaker implies that on a good day, he would be able to do a work of remarkably high quality.

(5) Applying the Relevance Theory: the teacher is probably familiar with the quality of his student's work. There is the shared knowledge that some students may hand in somebody else's work and pretend it is theirs. The quality of the work handed in is higher than that of what his student usually produces. The student has not been able to justify it. Consequently, the teacher comes to the conclusion that the student is lying. The teacher makes manifest his

conclusion ironically by using the idiomatic expression “*I wasn’t born yesterday*”, which means “Do not try to cheat on me” in this context.

Extract 5 – monologue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.168)

Speaker: This is how to approach writing an essay. First, you should read the question carefully. Then you should make some notes covering your main ideas. After that you can start writing.

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: someone giving instructions on how to write an essay.

- **Cataphoric reference:** “*This*” refers to the two suggestions which will be mentioned afterwards (reading the question carefully and making some notes);
- **Conventional implicature:** You should only start writing after reading the question carefully and after making some notes covering your main ideas. The sequence is given by the **signpost words**²⁵ (sentential connectors): “first”, “then” and “after”. There is no flouting of the conversational maxims.

The first four analyses illustrate pragmatic phenomena embedded in verbal communication. Speakers perform **speech acts**, convey different **illocutionary force**, produce **generalized** and **particularized conversational implicatures** via linguistic and paralinguistic means, relying on some level of cooperation with listeners. In the case of **conversational implicatures**, speakers imply something hoping that listeners will be able to infer it **pragmatically**, based on **previous knowledge** and **contextual information**. In addition, speakers who wish to provoke a humorous effect on their audience or on interlocutors, by using **irony** or by **telling jokes**, are more likely to resort to **particularized conversational implicatures**, as the analyses of extracts **one** and **four** suggest.

The last example attempts to demonstrate that even in **monologic discourse**, speakers address someone (an audience) expecting some form of co-operation. In more formal lectures, speakers may state their propositions relying on the **conventional meaning** of words and using **signpost words** in order to facilitate the audience’s understanding. Nonetheless, **reference** still needs to be assigned, being collaborative in nature.

²⁵ Signpost words enable speakers to introduce ideas and provide a framework for what speakers say in more formal speech such as a lecture or a talk (JACKMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999).

To sum up, the analyses of the first four extracts highlight the role inferences play in verbal communication. However, some of what is implied or referred to may be **culturally-specific**. In other words, the comprehension of **pragmatic meaning** is also affected by **sociolinguistic** aspects. The impact of **sociolinguistic knowledge** on **pragmatic comprehension** will be detailed in section 2.5.3. Furthermore, the next chapter will focus on an alternative methodological approach to pragmatic development. The extracts from “Insight into IELTS” will be further referred to in the description of listening comprehension activities which may be used to enhance pragmatic comprehension, section 3.3.

2.5.2 Conversational-Interactional Competence

Bachman (1990) places **conversational language use** under **textual competence**, a sub-competency of **organizational competence**, as a text refers to both written and oral modes of discourse. In other words, in Bachman’s model, the ability to manage a conversation does not belong to **pragmatic competence** but to **textual competence**. However, Crystal’s definition (1997) clearly indicates that **pragmatics** refers to the study of language from the point of view of **users**, in the case of verbal communication “interlocutors”, including the choices they make and the constraints they encounter in using language in **social interaction**. Consequently, **conversation management** seems to fit more into an interactive scenario consisting of **speakers**, **a communicative event** and **a context** rather than as a property of **textual competence**.

Generally speaking, **written texts** and **oral texts** have very distinctive features. According to Ur (1996, p. 159-161), while **written discourse** is fixed and stable so that reading can be done at any time, speed and level of thoroughness by readers, **oral discourse** takes place in real time. Listeners face the challenge of following what is said at the speed set by speakers, although they may occasionally request for clarification. Secondly, a **written text** is usually explicit as it makes clear the context and references. In a **verbal interaction**, the real-time situational context and the shared knowledge by speakers and listeners mean that some information can be assumed and does not need to be made explicit (relying on Grice’s cooperative principle).

Furthermore, the content of a **written text** is usually presented more densely whereas the information in speech is diluted and conveyed by many other words, including repetition, redundancy and the use of fillers. Ur (1996) indicates that a written text is more organised and carefully planned, takes longer to produce, conforms more to conventional rules of grammar, includes more precise vocabulary and uses a generally accepted variety of the language. Conversely, in an **oral interaction**, speakers usually improvise as they speak, use self-correction and paraphrasing techniques, produce an apparently disorganised stream-of-consciousness kind of discourse, hesitate a lot and, in the case of native speakers, may produce a regional variety of the language.

In addition, Richards (2006) highlights the complexity of the **speaking skill** by presenting other composite features of **oral discourse**: composed of unit ideas (conjoined short phrases and clauses), may be planned (e.g. a lecture) or unplanned (e.g. a conversation), employs more vague and generic words than written language, employs fixed phrases, contains slips and errors reflecting on-line processing, involved reciprocity (i.e. interactions are jointly constructed) and shows variation (e.g. between formal and casual speech), reflecting speaker roles, speaking purpose and the context.

All things considered, the ability to engage in an oral interaction is complex enough to deserve a separate characterisation from the ability to produce written discourse, especially within a pragmatic competence construct. Ur (1996, p. 161) adds that people speak far more than they write and that “speech is more important for survival and effective functioning in society than writing is”. Therefore, in order to help learners to communicate well in a second language, it is important to examine what **conversational competence** encompasses and also consider the **functions** speakers perform in **oral discourse**.

As previously mentioned in section 2.3, the term **conversational competence** may be used to refer to **discourse competence** in **conversations** (SCARCELLA & OXFORD, 1992), following Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale’s (1983) **communicative competence** framework. In a narrower sense, Richards and Sukwiwat (1985) state that **conversational competence** describes the speaker’s knowledge of how **speech acts** (AUSTIN, 1962, SEARLE, 1969) are used in social situations and is defined with reference to **utterances**.

Moreover, the investigation of how utterances are used shows that many have a recurring and predictable nature and are associated with particular social situations and with particular types of interactions (RICHARDS & SUKWIWAT, 1985). These utterances may be referred to as **conversational routines** and may include several different types of conventional utterances:

- a) Some are situational formulas such as “*Have a seat*”, “*Nice to meet you*”, “*How are you*”, “*See you later*”, “*Sorry I’m late*” and “*Yes, Please*”;
- b) Some accompany particular speech acts, such as “*Don’t mention it*”, as a way of minimising the need for thanks;
- c) Some signal direction within discourse, marking speaker attitudes towards what has been said or what is to be said (**hedges**) such as “*As a matter of fact*”.

Richards and Sukwiwat (1985) conclude that many social events and speech acts require the use of **conversational routines**. These help define speech situations and their appropriate use is a vital component of social competence in a language. Therefore, their model of **conversational competence** comprises both the appropriate use of **speech acts** and **conversational routines**.

From a macro-perspective, **speech acts** and **conversational routines** are embedded in a broader framework which is **language in use**. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 1) highlight that “the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use”. Brown and Yule (1983) provide a starting point for the characterisation of the **functions of speaking** by making a distinction between **interactional** and **transactional functions of language**. The former functions are involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes whereas the later focus on the exchange of content consisting of factual or propositional information.

Richards (2006) extends Brown and Yule’s dichotomy to a three-fold framework for the characterisation of the **functions of speaking: talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance**. **Talk as interaction** refers to what is normally meant by conversation and describes interaction which serves a primarily social function such as when people meet, exchange greetings, small talk, chit chat and recount recent experiences. The focus is more on the speakers and how they wish to present themselves to each other (recalling Brown and Levinson’s notion of **face** and **politeness strategies**) rather than on the message.

The nature of **talk as interaction** can be summarised as follows (RICHARDS, 2006): has a primary social function, reflects role relationships, reflects speaker's identity, may be formal or casual, uses conversational conventions, reflects degrees of politeness, employs many generic words, uses conversational register and is jointly constructed. In order to **talk as interaction**, learners need to master the following skills, among others:

1. Opening and closing conventions;
2. Choosing topics;
3. Making small talk;
4. Recounting personal incidents and experiences;
5. Turn-taking;
6. Using adjacency-pairs;
7. Interrupting;
8. Reacting to others.

Richards (2006) suggests that the mastery of **talk as interaction** may be particularly difficult for language learners. Students have reported a sense of awkwardness and of searching for words when faced with situations which required **talk as interaction**. Among the possible examples of **talk as interaction** situations are: chatting to adjacent passengers during a plane flight, chatting to school friends over coffee, students chatting to their professor while waiting for an elevator, telling friends about an amusing weekend experience and hearing them recount similar experience.

Conversely, **talk as transaction** refers to situations where the focus is on what is actually said or done. Therefore, the central focus is on the message and making oneself clearly and accurately understood as opposed to **talk as interaction**. According to Burns (1998), **talk as transaction** may be distinguished between activities where the main focus is on giving and receiving information and where the participants focus mainly on what is said or achieved, and transactions which focus on obtaining goods and services.

Richards (2006) states that **talk as transaction** includes the following characteristics: has a primarily information focus, focuses on the message, employs communication strategies, may contain frequent questions, repetitions, comprehension checks, negotiation and digression and

does not presuppose error-free language. Learners may need to be able to perform the following activities (speech acts) in situations which involve **talk as transaction**:

1. Explaining a need or intention;
2. Describing something;
3. Asking questioning;
4. Confirming information;
5. Justifying an opinion;
6. Making suggestions;
7. Clarifying understanding;
8. Making comparisons;
9. Agreeing and disagreeing.

Considering the above skills, it is noticeable that **talk as a transaction** features are an integral part of the syllabus of a large number of EFL textbooks. Students are usually exposed to these functions via grammatical items or functional exponents. According to Richards (2006, p. 4), examples of **talk as transaction** include: classroom group discussions and problem solving activities, discussing needs repairs to a computer with a technician, discussing sightseeing plans with a hotel clerk or a tour guide, making a telephone call to obtain flight information, asking someone for directions in the street, buying something in a shop and ordering food from a menu in a restaurant.

Lastly, **talk as performance** refers to public talk which transmits information before an audience such as morning talks, public announcements and speeches. According to Jones (1996), speakers must include all the necessary information in the text, hence the importance of topic as well as textual knowledge. Richards (2006) highlights the following features of **talk as performance**: focuses on both message and audience, reflects organisation and sequencing, presupposes form and accuracy, resembles written language and is often monologic. Learners need to master the following skills in order to **talk as performance**:

1. Using an appropriate format;
2. Presenting information in an appropriate sequence;
3. Maintaining audience engagement;
4. Using correct pronunciation and grammar;

5. Creating an effect on the audience;
6. Using appropriate vocabulary;
7. Using appropriate opening and closing;

To sum up, the characterisation of the **functions of speaking** (BROWN & YULE, 1983, RICHARDS, 2006) provides teachers and researchers with a detailed account of the type of activities learners might engage in during a verbal interaction in a second language. In order to perform these functions, learners need to be able to produce different **illocutionary acts**, which may include **conversational routines**. In addition, when managing **dialogic discourse**, speakers also rely on conversation analysis features such as **turn taking conventions**, **hesitation fillers** and **backchannels** in order to hold or alternate the floor.

Therefore, based on Richards and Sukwiwat's (1985) notion of **conversational competence**, Richard's (2006) framework of **functions of speaking** and **conversation analysis** features presented in chapter one, I propose an alternative **conversational-interactive component** within a pragmatic competence construct. This extended model encompasses speakers' ability to produce **illocutionary acts** conveying the intended **illocutionary force** as well as the ability to manage **dialogic** and **monologic** discourse.

I do not use the term **conversational-interactive** to refer to the concept of **interactive competence** which "involves learning particular patterns of interaction and behavior both vis-à-vis the other learners in the classroom as well as with the teacher" (RICHARDS & LOCKHART, 1994, p.141). I name it **conversational-interactive** as both types of dialogic and monologic discourse illustrate **verbal interaction in real life communicative situations** in which speakers **converse** either to interlocutors or to an audience. Thus, the sub-skills involved in each type of oral discourse can be summarised as follows:

1. Managing dialogic discourse:

- Opening and closing conventions (including conversational routines and formulaic language);
- Making small talk;
- Turn-taking conventions (recognition of transition relevance place);
- Using adjacency-pairs;
- Holding the floor (hesitation fillers and floor holding devices);
- Interrupting politely (using functional exponents and overlapping);

Reacting to others (paralinguistic features such backchannels and prosody);

Knowledge of functional exponents used for performing **interactional** and **transactional functions** such as “presenting an opinion”, “justifying an opinion”, “asking for opinion”, “clarifying understanding”, “making suggestions”, “agreeing” and “disagreeing”.

2. Managing monologic discourse:

Using an appropriate register (oral presentations, lectures, speeches);

Presenting information in an appropriate sequence (using signpost words);

Maintaining audience engagement (coherence of ideas);

Creating an effect on the audience (jokes, irony).

Similarly to the characterisation of the **inferential component**, I will be presenting two extracts taken from listening activities from “Insight into IELTS” in order to illustrate the **conversational-interactional component** of pragmatic competence. As **speech acts** and their corresponding **illocutionary force** were formally demonstrated in the previous section, I will be focusing mainly on the exemplification of the above **sub-skills** and on the **functional exponents** used for performing **illocutionary acts**, in **talk as interaction** and **transaction** activities.

Lastly, a third extract will be used to exemplify managing monologic discourse, in a **talk as performance** situation. The selected extract comes from an online site, organised by the British Council in conjunction with Cambridge ESOL, which provides information and materials for the IELTS examination: <<http://www.cambridgeesol.org>>. The transcript was also used as part of a pre-test whose objective was to assess students’ **pragmatic competence** in English. The assessment instrument as well as the empirical project I carried out with a group of students preparing for the IELTS examination in the first semester of 2009 will be described in the final section of chapter three, section 3.4.

Extract 1 - dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.163)

(1) *Jill: Hello, Sue...fancy meeting you here! It is Sue Johnson, isn't it?*

(2) *Sue: Oh, hi, Jill. It must be ages since we've seen each other. What a surprise! How are you?*

(3) *Jill: Yes, well ...I'm fine...just got back from two years' teaching in Hong Kong, actually.*

(4) *Sue: I thought you'd gone into computing or nursing.*

- (5) *Jill: No, I ended up being a teacher after all...And how about you?*
- (6) *Sue: Oh, fine. Things are going quite well in fact.*
- (7) *Jill: So what have you been up to over the last three years?*
- (8) *Sue: Working, studying, you know the usual things...Oh, and I got married last year.*
- (9) *Jill: Congratulations! Anyone I know?*
- (10) *Sue: Yeah, you might remember him from our college days. Do you remember Gerry?
Gerry Fox?*
- Sue: ...*
- Jill: ...*
- (11) *Sue: Look, why don't we have dinner together and catch up on a few things? Would you like to come over one evening?*
- (12) *Jill: That'd be lovely.*
- (13) *Sue: What about next Friday evening?*
- (14) *Jill: Fine. What time? Shall I come over about 8 o'clock?*
- (15) *Sue: Oh, come about half past seven. I'm usually home around 6.30 so that'd give me plenty of time to get dinner ready.*
- (16) *Jill: Fine, and one last thing...where do you live? What's the address?*
- (17) *Sue: Oh, good thinking...here's my card, the address is on the back. We've got a flat in an old house. We live on the third floor of a large house. The house has been converted into flats. You know, it's a typical London flat. So when you arrive you'll need to press the bell second from the top.*
- (18) *Jill: The bell second from the top. OK.*
- (19) *Sue: There's a little intercom arrangement so I can let you in.*
- (20) *Jill: Right. OK, see you on Friday then.*
- (21) *Sue: See you.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: two old school friends who haven't met each other for a long time.

The first part of the extract exemplifies **talk as interaction**, namely **small talk**. The speakers use **opening conventions (adjacency pairs)** such as “Hello, Sue” and “Oh, hi, Jill” to greet each other, lines (1) and (2). They also express happiness and surprise by using **formulaic language** such as “fancy meeting you here!” and “It must be ages since we've seen each other. What a surprise!”. From lines (3) to (10), the speakers exchange personal information about their recent achievements. In line (4), the speaker attempts to correct information by

saying “*I thought you’d ...*”. In line (5), the speaker is aware of **turn taking conventions (TRP)** and invites the interlocutor to speak “*And how about you?*”. The utterances “*So what have you been up to over the last three years?*” line (7) and “*Congratulations!*” line (9) are also examples of **conversational routines**. The former is used to keep to conversation going whereas the latter is used to respond to the information by congratulating the interlocutor on her marriage.

The second part of the extract illustrates **talk as transaction**. From lines (11) to (22), the speakers engage in setting up a future meeting. The speakers rely on a number of **functional exponents** to convey the following **illocutionary force**:

1. Making a suggestion: “*Why don’t we...?*” line (11), “*What about ...?*” line (13); “*Shall I...?*” line (14)

2. Accepting a suggestion: “*That’d be lovely*” line (12); “*Fine*” lines (14) and (16); “*Right*” line (20)

3. Inviting: “*Would you like to...?*” line (11)

The suggestion in (11) serves as a **pre-sequence** for the invitation. In line (15), the speaker uses the **backchannel** “*Oh*” to respond to the suggestion. Lines (16) to (19) portray exchanges of **factual information**. Line (17) consists of an individual **long turn**. In order to hold the floor, the speaker uses **floor holding devices** such as “*You know*” and “*So*” and consequently, also avoids **overlap**. The last two exchanges, lines (20) and (21), contain **closing conventions (adjacency pairs)** via the use of the **conversational routines** “*OK, see you on Friday then*” and “*See you*”.

Extract 2 - monologue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.161)

Speaker: Dr. Boyd’s surgery here. I’m afraid we’ll have to cancel Ms Taylor’s appointment tomorrow, as unfortunately Dr Boyd has the flu. Could she come on Monday at 3.30 pm instead and ring back to confirm she can make that time?

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a secretary leaving a message on an answering machine.

The speaker uses a **neutral** style, which is appropriate to phone messages. Although this extract is **monologic**, it also illustrates **talk as transaction**. The secretary introduces herself by saying “*Dr. Boyd’s surgery here*” and addresses Ms Taylor indirectly. The speaker

wishes to transfer the previous doctor's appointment and makes use of different resources to create the following effects:

Breaking bad news: **functional exponent** "*I'm afraid...*"

Implying the reason for the cancellation is beyond their control: **generalized conversational implicature** via syntax "*we'll have to...*"

Lessening the impact of the cancellation: **lexis** "*unfortunately*"

The functional exponent "*Could...?*" is used to introduce two requests: to ask Ms Taylor to come on Monday at 3.30 and ask her to phone back to confirm if she can make it.

Extract 3 - monologue:

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/activities/referencing_words_work2.htm

>

Good evening, and welcome to the British Council. My name is John Parker and I've been asked to talk to you briefly about certain aspects of life in the UK before you actually go there. So I'm going to talk first about the best ways of making social contacts there. Now you might be wondering why it should be necessary. After all, we meet people all the time. But when you're living in a foreign country it can be more difficult, not just because of the language, but because customs may be different.

If you're going to work in the UK you will probably be living in private accommodation, so it won't be quite so easy to meet people. But there are still things that you can do to help yourself. First of all, you can get involved in activities in your local community; join a group of some kind. For example, you'll probably find that there are theatre groups who might be looking for actors, set designers and so on, or if you play an instrument you could join music groups in your area. Or if you like the idea of finding out about local history there'll be a group for that too. These are just examples. And the best places to get information about things like this are either the town hall or the public library. Libraries in the UK perform quite a broad range of functions nowadays – they're not just confined to lending books, although that's their main role of course...

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a talk given to a group who are going to stay in the UK.

This extract illustrates **talk as performance**. The speaker uses a **neutral** style as he is addressing students, and presents information in an appropriate sequence. He introduces his talk by welcoming students and stating his name and the aim of the talk. His ideas are

coherently organised, probably keeping the audience engaged and he uses **signpost words** to facilitate understanding and convey the following directions:

Suggesting cause and effect or result: “*So*” and “*Now*”

Providing additional information: “After all”

Leading towards a contrast or opposite: “But”

Setting out the stages of a talk: “First of all”

Introducing an example of what was said earlier: “For example”

Leading towards a comparison: “Or”

Overall, his **turns** are extended and show an appropriate range of grammar and vocabulary for a talk.

To sum up, the above analyses illustrate the functions of speaking: **talk as interaction**, **talk as transaction** and **talk as performance**. The nature of **talk as interaction** is mainly dialogic as it serves a primarily social function whereas **talk as performance** is usually monologic as it involves individual long turns. Conversely, extracts one and two show that **talk as transaction** can be performed in both modes. Extract one demonstrates how **conversational routines** and **functional exponents** are used to perform different **illocutionary acts** and also highlights the importance of respecting **turn taking conventions** for successful communication. Extract three exemplifies the importance of using **signpost words** to structure long turns and facilitate comprehension.

Furthermore, these pragmatic analyses also indicate how speakers use functional exponents in order to convey different illocutionary force. However, language learners may select functional exponents not necessarily adequate to the communicative situation they are in, or conveying an unintended degree of politeness or degree of imposition. Therefore, learners’ ability to produce speech acts benefits from the interaction with sociolinguistic knowledge, to be detailed in the next sub-section.

2.5.3 Sociolinguistic Competence

Both Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale’s (1983) and Bachman’s (1990) frameworks of **communicative competence** include **sociolinguistic competence** as a sub-component. In the

first model, **sociolinguistic competence** encompasses both appropriateness of meaning and form and represents the notion of **pragmatic competence** (NIEZGODA & RÖVER, 2001). In the second framework, it relates to the appropriateness of language functions according to socio-cultural and discoursal features and it is placed as a sub-competency of **pragmatic competence**. In this alternative framework of **pragmatic competence**, **sociolinguistic competence** is the third and final component which acts as a filter for successful communication. While speakers need to select appropriate forms and be aware of polite linguistic behavior in L2 in order to convey their intended meanings successfully, listeners also need to be aware of socio and cultural references and polite routines in L2 in order to be able to interpret **pragmatic meaning**. Thus, **sociolinguistic knowledge** affects both **conversational-interactive** and **inferential** sub-competencies and relates to the notion of **appropriateness**.

Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) indicate that when learners make **pragmatic errors**, these are often interpreted on a **social** or **personal** level rather than as a consequence of faulty or incomplete learning. Therefore, **pragmatic errors** tend to have more serious consequences than language errors since they may be regarded as **face threatening acts**. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003, p. 2) list some potential pitfalls of making **pragmatic errors**:

1. A pragmatic error may hinder good communication between speakers;
2. It may make the speaker appear abrupt or brusque in social interactions;
3. It may make the speaker appear rude or uncaring;
4. It may cause unintentional insult to interlocutors;
5. It may cause denial of requests.

In other words, in cross-cultural communication contexts, if learners are verbally interacting in L2 and their interlocutors, for instance, make jokes based on cultural references that the former are not able to understand, such lack of response may imply indifference. Conversely, if learners wish to make a request and choose functional exponents that are too informal or too direct for the situation they are in, interlocutors may deny the request because of speakers' inappropriate choice of language. Thus, **sociolinguistic knowledge** may prevent learners from suffering the above consequences.

Strictly speaking, **sociolinguistic competence** facilitates the comprehension of **pragmatic inferences** such as **speech acts**, **presuppositions** and **implicatures** as the interpretation of these phenomena sometimes presupposes social and cultural knowledge. It also fosters the successful execution of **speech acts** and of the functions involved in **talk as interaction**, **talk as transaction** and **talk as performance** since speakers have a better chance of achieving their communicative aims if they are able to select **appropriate** forms to the **communicative situation** they are in.

In addition, the perception of **politeness** in cross-cultural communication is deeply affected by the **degree of imposition** and **level of directness of speech acts** and also by **socio roles**. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 243) point out that societies or sub-cultures within societies differ significantly in **ethos**, which refers to the “affective quality of interaction characteristic of members of a society”. The following patterns of qualities are reported to belong to different societies: generally warm, easy-going and friendly; stiff, formal and deferential; displays of self-importance, bragging and showing off; distant, hostile and suspicious. However, in order to justify the existence of **politeness universal strategies** (described in chapter one), B & L (1987) make a two-fold distinction between **positive-politeness cultures** and **negative-politeness cultures**.

Generally speaking, in **positive- politeness cultures** such as in the Western USA and in some New Guinea cultures, **impositions** are thought of as small, **social distance** as no insuperable boundary to easy-going interaction, and **relative power** as never very great whereas in **negative-politeness cultures**, members of that society tend to have a **stand-offish** attitude such as the British and the Japanese. Nonetheless, the authors clarify that these are mainly generalisations and need to be more thoroughly refined. Instinctively, B&L (1987) notice that all over the world, in complex societies, **dominated groups**, and sometimes **majority groups**, have **positive-politeness cultures** while **dominating groups** have **negative-politeness cultures**. In other words, “the world of the upper and middle groups is constructed in a stern and cold architecture of social distance, asymmetry and resentment of impositions, while the world of the lower groups is built on social-closeness, symmetrical solidarity, and reciprocity” (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987, p. 245).

In addition, the degree to which interactional acts may or may not be considered **face-threatening acts** varies cross- culturally. For instance, offers in England and in the USA are

not perceived as highly **FTAs** whereas in Japan, an offer as small as a glass of water can occasion a tremendous debt (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987). Therefore, learners need to be aware of socio-cultural differences in order to employ suitable **politeness strategies** when verbally interacting in L2 with members from different cultures. The description of **positive** and **negative-politeness strategies** and **FTAs** were addressed in chapter one, section 1.4.1.

Taking into consideration socio-cultural aspects, this alternative model of **pragmatic competence** acknowledges that **sociolinguistic competence** encompasses the following features:

1. Ability to interpret **cultural references** and **figures of speech** (BACHMAN, 1990);
2. Sensitivity to **differences in dialect** or **variety**, **differences in register** and **naturalness** (BACHMAN, 1990);
3. Social and cultural knowledge required to use language appropriately with reference to **formality**, **politeness** and other **contextually defined choices** (CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983).

The above features will be illustrated via the analyses of four short extracts taken from different sources: “Insight into IELTS” (extracts 1 and 2) and “New Headway Advanced” (extracts 3 and 4) by Liz and John Soars (2003). I will be only focusing on the aspects comprising the notion of **sociolinguistic competence** highlighted by Bachman (1990), Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) as the other pragmatic phenomena were highlighted in the previous pragmatic analyses.

Extract 1 -dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.167)

(1) *Woman: I've just seen the new Bond movie.*

(2) *Man: Have you? I saw it on Saturday.*

(3) *Woman: Wasn't it fabulous? Didn't you just love the special effects?*

(4) *Men: Yeah, they weren't bad. It was okay.*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a couple talking about a movie.

(1) The linguistic expression “*the new Bond movie*” illustrates a **cultural reference**. James Bond is a famous British spy who is the main character of the film series “007”. Instead of stating the name of the film, the woman uses a **definite description** “*the new Bond movie*”,

whose **sense** aids the attribution of **reference**²⁶. “*The new Bond movie*” refers the new James Bond film which is on at the cinema at the time the utterance is uttered. It is worth mentioning that this **definitive description** can refer to a number of James Bond’s films depending on the occasion of the **locutionary act**.

(2) The man interprets the cultural reference successfully and adds that he is familiar with it as he has seen the film himself.

(3) The woman uses **positive politeness strategies** by exaggerating approval “*Wasn’t it fabulous*” and including (H) in the activity “*Didn’t you just love...*”. Her utterances are aimed at conveying common ground.

Overall, this extract shows a **colloquial register** as both speakers are probably friends.

Extract 2- dialogue: (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.169)

...

(1) *Mark: Is that the little robot that functions as a geologist?*

(2) *Ben: Yes, that’s right. It’s called a rover- like a land rover, I suppose! – and it can detect the geological composition of the ground it’s standing on so, yes, it’s a sort of geologist. It’s actually quite amazing.*

(3) *Tutor: I heard it described as being like a microwave oven on wheels.*

(4) *Ben: Yeah. Well from an appearance point of view, that’s a fair description...*

...

Pragmatic Analysis:

Context: students and their tutor talking about an invention called “rover robot”

Due to the difficulty to describe a scientific invention such as a robot, the speakers rely on a **simile**, which is a **figure of speech**.

(1) “*...functions as a geologist*” describes its function.

(2) “*Like a land rover*” describes its nature.

(3) “*...described as being like a microwave oven on wheels*” describes its appearance.

(4) Ben indicates the successful interpretation of the previous **simile** by re-phrasing its purpose “*from an appearance point of view, that’s a fair description*”.

The extract illustrates a **neutral style**, neither too formal nor too informal, as the speakers are probably discussing a class-related issue during class time.

²⁶ For Frege’s dichotomy of **sense** and **reference**, see chapter one, the semantic-pragmatic interface.

Extract 3- dialogue: (SOARS, L. & SOARS, J, 2003, p.141)

(1) *Man: Hi Jenny. You all right?*

(2) *Woman: Uh huh. You?*

(3) *Man: ER...yeah. OK. Listen, Jenny. Are you doing anything tonight?*

(4) *Woman: Gosh! Er...I don't know. Why?*

(5) *Man: Well, I was wondering if you'd maybe...you know...if we could go out somewhere...if you...if you'd like to.*

(6) *Woman: Well, er... What did you have in mind?*

(7) *Man: Oh, I don't know. We could have a bite to eat, or we could take in a film. What do you fancy?*

(8) *Woman: Well, that would be really nice. We could meet at the new bar on the High Street and take it from there. What do you think?*

(9) *Man: Ok. Nice idea. What time...?*

Pragmatic analysis:

Context: a man inviting a woman out

(1) + (2) The phrases “*You all right*” and “*You*” signal a very colloquial style and imply that the speakers may be close friends.

(3) The man produces a **directive speech act** “*Are you doing anything tonight?*” (**Illocutionary force:** questioning) as a pre-invitation, which is culturally specific.

(5) The man employs **negative politeness strategies** in order not to sound too imposing. He uses the **hedges** “*I was wondering*” and “*maybe*” and produces an **indirect speech act** “*if we could go out somewhere*” (i.e. a statement to make an invitation) in order to invite her out.

(7) The idiomatic expressions “*have a bite to eat*” and “*take in a film*” used by the man indicate a possible **British English variety**.

(8) The woman also employs **negative politeness strategies** by using **indirect forms** “*We could...*” in order not to sound too imposing either.

Despite speakers’ apparent closeness, both employ **negative politeness strategies** showing respect for each other’s freedom of choice, which seems to fit the British stereotype suggested by B&L (1987).

Extract 4-dialogue: (SOARS, L. & SOARS, J, 2003, p.141)

(1) *A: Hello*

(2) *B: Hi. Can I speak to Amanda, please?*

(3) A: *She's out at the moment. Sorry.*

(4) B: *Ah, OK. Would you have any idea when she might be back?*

(5) A: *I'd have thought she'd be back by 8.00. She usually is on Tuesdays.*

(6) B: *Would you mind giving her a message?*

....

Pragmatic Analysis:

Context: speaker (B) rings to speak to (A)'s flatmate

(1) + (2) Both speakers use **conversational routines** for telephoning.

(4) Although the situation is quite informal, speaker (B) uses the modal verb “*would*” as a strategy to minimise a possible **FTA** since his question may sound too inquisitive.

(5) Speaker (A) also uses **hypothetical tenses hedging** “*I'd have thought she'd ...*” to avoid direct responsibility for the accuracy of information.

(6) Speaker (B) uses a more formal functional exponent “*Would you mind...*” to lessen the **degree of imposition** of the request.

Overall, speaker (B) uses **tactful politeness strategies** so as to soften the **degree of imposition** of his questions and requests.

To sum up, the analyses of the four extracts attempted to demonstrate how **sociolinguistic** knowledge affects both **inferential** and **conversational-interactional** sub-competencies and how **politeness strategies** may be used to create different effects on interlocutors. In extract one, the woman makes a **cultural reference** which is understood by the interlocutor. She also employs **positive politeness strategies** to convey common ground. Extract two illustrates the use of **figures of speech**. Extract three includes **negative politeness strategies** used by two British speakers who seem to be concerned about respecting each other's freedom of choice. The analysis of the last extract aims at showing how **linguistic items** may be used to minimise **FTAs** and to help speakers achieve their communicative aims.

All in all, this alternative model of **pragmatic competence** in verbal communication comprises three sub-competencies. **Inferential competence** represents the notion of pragmatic comprehension and refers to the successful interpretation of pragmatic inferences such as conversational implicatures and speech acts, and is aided by linguistic and paralinguistic features. It also includes the assignment of the illocutionary force of utterances. **Conversational-interactional competence** represents the notion of pragmatic production and

refers to the ability to produce illocutionary acts according to speakers' intention. It also encompasses the ability to manage dialogic and monologic discourse in order to perform the following functions of speaking: talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance. Finally, **sociolinguistic competence** represents the notion of appropriateness and describes the ability to use language to perform speech acts appropriately according to the communicative situation, including an awareness of degrees of formality and politeness. It also comprises the ability to interpret cultural references, figures of speech and to recognise differences in dialect, variety, register and naturalness. It affects both comprehension and production dimensions.

A final question to be addressed refers to how to develop the above sub-competencies. In section 2.4, we discussed the importance of providing pragmatic input for learners and a few ways to develop pragmatic instruction were proposed, covering the previous characterisations of pragmatic competence. In the next chapter, the nature of listening comprehension processes will be presented and an alternative methodological approach to pragmatic development will be suggested, based on listening comprehension activities.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In chapter one, pragmatics was referred to as the study of aspects affecting utterance meaning. It was suggested that the full interpretation of utterances depends on both sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning aspects. Pragmatic theories addressing the theme "inferences and verbal communication" were described and it was concluded that pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication. Pragmatic phenomena derived from these theories, namely speech acts, generalized and particularized conversational implicatures and politeness strategies were characterised and exemplified.

In this chapter, we saw that interlanguage pragmatics investigates what gets in the way of learners' comprehending and producing pragmatic meaning such as the processing of conventional and conversational implicatures, the attribution of illocutionary force of speech acts and the perception of politeness, indirectness, social status and degree of imposition of face-threatening acts. In order to relate pragmatics to second language acquisition, Leech

(1983) and Thomas's (1983) dichotomy of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics was addressed.

In addition, two communicative competence frameworks were presented. In Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale's (1983) model, communicative competence was said to consist of four components: linguistic or grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. It was suggested that sociolinguistic competence represents the notion of pragmatic competence as it encompasses both appropriateness of meaning and form. It was also highlighted that some researchers favour the term conversational competence to refer to discourse competence related to conversations.

Bachman's (1990) dynamic framework of communicative competence was said to include three components: language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. It was claimed that language competence comprises organizational competence, which includes grammatical and textual competence, and pragmatic competence, which encompasses illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence. Textual competence was acknowledged to include conversational language use and conventions involved in establishing, maintaining and terminating conversations. It was advocated that illocutionary competence aids the interpretation of the relationships between utterances or sentences and texts and the intention of language users. Sociolinguistic competence was defined as the sensibility to, or control of the conventions of language use determined by the features of the specific language use context.

It was concluded that the notion of pragmatic competence encompasses a number of abilities second language learners need to master in order to comprehend and produce pragmatic meaning and respond linguistically appropriately to communicative situations. However, it was highlighted that most research on the acquisition of communicative abilities by non-native speakers tends to focus on pragmatic production rather than on pragmatic comprehension.

Three different views on pragmatic development were addressed. It was suggested that teachers should raise students' awareness of what they already know in terms of pragmatic knowledge, encourage them to transfer this knowledge to L2 contexts, and use awareness-raising activities and activities for communicative practice (KASPER, 1997). Similarly, it was

indicated that pragmatic instruction should be integrated into courses syllabi at early levels (BARDOVI-HARLIG & MAHAM-TAYLOR, 2003). It was argued that it was important for teachers to provide learners with positive learning experiences (SCARCELLA, 1990).

The aims of pragmatic instruction were defined with a view to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic phenomena and to offer them a range of options for interaction. It was suggested that learners are not expected to comply with a particular target-language norm but be familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language. The importance of providing appropriate, adequate and rich input to foster learners' pragmatic development was highlighted and different sources of pragmatic instruction were described.

The final part of chapter two was devoted to the characterisation of an alternative model of pragmatic competence in verbal communication, which acknowledges the importance of pragmatic comprehension and includes three sub-competencies: inferential competence, conversational- interactional competence and sociolinguistic competence. Inferential competence was defined as the ability to interpret pragmatic inferences such as the comprehension of speech acts and implicatures. The inferential sub-competency was characterised by the following theoretical constructs discussed in chapter one: taxonomy of illocutionary acts, the assignment of illocutionary force, conventional implicatures and generalized and particularized conversational implicatures.

The conversational-interactional sub-competency was introduced by the comparison between oral and written discourse features in order to justify a separate conversational component from the previous models of discourse and textual competence. Talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance functions of speaking (RICHARDS, 2006) were described as well as conversational routines. Conversational-interactional competence was defined as the ability to produce illocutionary acts conveying the intended illocutionary force as well as the ability to manage dialogic and monologic discourse.

Sociolinguistic competence was indicated to affect both conversational-interactional and inferential sub-competencies. It was highlighted that pragmatic errors tend to have more serious consequences than language errors. Its characterisation accepted the previous descriptions of sociolinguistic competence (CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983, BACHMAN, 1990) and included the ability to use language to perform speech acts

appropriately according to the communicative situation, including an awareness of degrees of formality and politeness.

The illustration of the above sub-competencies included the pragmatic analyses of transcripts from “IELTS” listening activities. These analyses demonstrated how pragmatic phenomena which had been addressed in chapter one affect utterance meaning and how inferences are embedded in verbal communication. In the next chapter, I will describe possible ways to approach listening comprehension activities in order to activate pragmatic aspects and consequently, promote pragmatic development. Chapter three will focus on the role of the listening skill as a methodological approach to the development of pragmatic sub-competencies.

3 THE ENHANCEMENT OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCIES VIA LISTENING ACTIVITIES

In chapter two, we discussed the importance of providing learners with pragmatic input. Different forms to promote pragmatic development were detailed based on previous characterisations of pragmatic competence: Leech's (1983) and Thomas's (1983), Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale's (1983) and Bachman's (1990) models. In addition, an alternative framework of pragmatic competence in verbal communication was proposed, which includes three components characterised by pragmatic phenomena addressed in chapter one. The main aim of this chapter is to investigate the role of listening comprehension activities in the enhancement of the pragmatic sub-competencies proposed in chapter two. It attempts to justify the choice of listening comprehension activities as a methodological approach to pragmatic development.

The descriptions of the nature of listening comprehension processes and of taxonomies of listening comprehension micro-skills aim at demonstrating how pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral discourse may be highlighted via a strategy-based approach to listening. Another aim of this chapter is to describe an empirical project carried out in the first semester of 2009, whose theoretical aims were to corroborate, refute or reject the following assumptions: in order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication; semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills; following a strategy-based approach, listening activities can directly and indirectly enhance the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies proposed in chapter two.

Chapter 3 is divided into five parts. In section 3.1, I will describe Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) and his current theoretical framework on language acquisition (2003) in order to highlight the role of the listening skill as a source of comprehensible input which resembles real-life communication and also present the assumption that comprehension precedes production. Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis (1985) will be briefly referred to. In section 3.2, I will comment on the status of the listening skill according to different EFL

methodological approaches and also discuss the difficulties second language listening poses to learners.

In section 3.2.1, I will present bottom-up and top-down processes involved in listening comprehension as well as Mendelsohn's framework (1995, 1998) for the teaching of strategy-based listening. Lynch's (1998) distinction between non-reciprocal and reciprocal listening events will be described. In section 3.2.2, the following taxonomies of listening micro-skills will be detailed (RICHARDS, 1985): conversational listening, academic listening and bottom-up and top-down processing micro-skills. In section 3.2.3, I will address taxonomies of listening activity-types which activate both bottom-up and top-down processes and Richards's (2005) constructs of noticing and restructuring activities.

In section 3.3, I will suggest ways in which listening activities can be used to enhance the pragmatic sub-competencies proposed in chapter two. I will also describe nine IELTS listening activities used as part of a classroom project. The description of the activities aims at demonstrating how top-down and bottom –up strategies can be combined in order to enhance pragmatic understanding.

In section 3.4, I will state the aims of the classroom project carried out with a group of eight Brazilian learners preparing for the IELTS examination in the first semester of 2009, which was embedded in the empirical project. In section 3.4.1, I will detail subjects' profile, needs, previous learning experience and the nature of the IELTS examination. In section 3.4.2, I will describe the procedures followed during the project. In section 3.4.3, I will present the instruments used to assess subjects' linguistic and pragmatic competence. In section 3.4.4, I will present and compare the data obtained from these instruments. Lastly, I will comment on the effectiveness of the listening activities to raise learners' overall level of listening proficiency and at the same time enhance their inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies.

3.1 THE INPUT/COMPREHENSION HYPOTHESIS

The Input Hypothesis (KRASHEN, 1985) is embedded in a framework comprising of five theories which are the core of Krashen's current theory on **language acquisition: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis** and **the affective filter hypothesis**. Krashen e Terrell (2000) state that since **acquisition** is more important than **learning** for developing communicative abilities, their main focus of investigation is on how people **acquire** a second language. In their view, **acquisition** takes place when people understand messages in the target language. Listening to an unknown language on the radio does not seem to aid **acquisition** as input is incomprehensible. In other words, people only acquire when the focus is on what is being said rather than how it is said and when language is used for real life communicative purposes.

In **language acquisition**, learners develop language skills by using language in real-life communicative situations. The authors argue that **acquisition** is the natural way to develop linguistic ability as it is a sub-conscious process. It can be compared to the way children acquire their first language as infants are not aware that they are acquiring a language but rather using it for communication. Considering that children acquire their first language, it may be possible for them to acquire a second language as well. Conversely, **learning** refers to a formal learning environment. **Learning** a language encompasses developing formal knowledge about it. Learners are explicitly exposed to grammar rules and develop the ability to talk about the structure of the language. Consequently, **learning** is a conscious and explicit process.

The **acquisition-learning hypothesis** claims that individuals are still capable of acquiring a second a language even at adulthood as this capacity does not disappear at puberty. However, the **acquisition-learning hypothesis** does not imply that adults are able to acquire a second language with perfection, or are always able to reach a level of language proficiency similar to that of native speakers'. According to Krashen e Terrell (2000), this hypothesis also fails to detail which language aspects are acquired and which are learnt, or how adults use **acquisition** and **learning** in performance. It merely indicates that both processes differ and are present in adults.

The second hypothesis, **the natural order hypothesis**, claims that “we **acquire** the parts of a language in a predictable order” (KRASHEN, 2003, p. 2). While some grammatical items are acquired early, others come at a later stage. Although the order of acquisition for first and second language is similar, it is not identical. For instance, the “**-ing**” morpheme in English, (the progressive), is acquired at an early stage in first language acquisition while the third person singular morpheme “**-s**” is acquired later. Conversely, in second language acquisition, the “**-ing**” also comes at early stages whereas the third person singular “**-s**” may never be acquired. According to Krashen (2003), there are some amazing facts about the **natural order** phenomenon: it is not based on any obvious features of simplicity and complexity, it cannot be changed and it is not possible to teach along the natural order as it is not the teaching order.

Thirdly, **the monitor hypothesis** aims at explaining how **acquisition** and **learning** are used. Language is normally produced using our acquired linguistic competence while learning has the function of an editor, of a **monitor** (KRASHEN, 2003). In other words, when we are about to say something in another language, the form of our sentence pops into our mind because of our subconsciously acquired competence. Then, just before producing the sentence, just before saying it, “we scan it internally, inspect it, and use our consciously learned system to correct errors” (KRASHEN, 2003, p.2). Furthermore, the conscious **monitor** can also be used as **self-correction** after we produce sentences. Krashen points out that it is rather difficult to use **the Monitor** successfully as the acquirer must know the rule, must be thinking about correctness and must have the time for using it.

Fourthly, **the input hypothesis**, which is the core of this section, attempts to explain how **language acquisition** takes place. According to Krashen (2003), we can only acquire language when we understand messages, when we receive **comprehensible input**. In other words, we acquire language when we understand what we hear or what we read. In recent years, Krashen (2003) has used the term **comprehension hypothesis** to refer to the **input hypothesis** as the latest version acknowledges the importance of understanding. The **input/comprehension hypothesis** can be restated in terms of the **natural order hypothesis**.

Krashen (1985) advocates that we progress along the **natural order** by understanding **input** which contains structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence. In short, we move from “**i**”, our current level, to “**i +1**”, the next level along the natural order, by understanding **input** containing “**i +1**”. Krashen (1985) adds that we are able to understand

language containing unacquired grammar with the help of the **context**, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence. In first language acquisition, the caretaker provides **extra-linguistic context** by limiting his or her speech to “here” and “now” whereas in second language acquisition, the beginning-language teacher provides context via visual aids and the discussion of familiar topics.

Formalising the **input hypothesis**, an acquirer can move from a stage “**i**”, which is the acquirer’s current level of competence, to a stage “**i + 1**”, which refers to the stage immediately following “**i**” along the natural order. Krashen (1981) illustrates this movement via a framework based on empirical studies, which describes the average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language. Children and adults usually acquire firstly the morphemes “**-ing**” (**progressive**), “**plural**” and “**copula**” (**to be**). Secondly, they acquire the morphemes “**auxiliary**” (**progressive**) and “**article**” (**a, the**). The next stage encompasses the acquisition of “**irregular past**” and lastly, the morphemes “**regular past**”, “**third person singular**” (-s) and “**possessive**” (-s).

Krashen e Terrell (2000, p.33) highlight that **input** does not necessarily need to be targeted only at “**i + 1**”, the next stage in the natural order. In reality, teachers’ main role is to ensure learners understand what they hear or read. If learners are exposed to enough comprehensible input, “**i + 1**” will usually be covered automatically. Although input will contain other structures, there will be plenty of exposure to “**i + 1**” as well as a revision of previously acquired structures. Krashen e Terrell (2000) refer to this process as the **net**. When adults and children are verbally addressed in a language they have not acquired completely (both in L2 and L1 respectively), speakers “cast a net” of structures around listeners’ current level (“**i**”) so that the latter understand what is said. This **net** includes examples of “**i + 1**” and it is defined as **roughly tuned input**, which is the result of speakers using language so that acquirers understand what is said, as opposed to **finely tuned input**, which aims specifically at one structure at a time.

Summarising, if the **input hypothesis** is correct, the following corollaries are correct (KRASHEN, 2003, p. 5):

1. Speaking does not directly result in language acquisition: talking is not practising. Speaking is a result of acquisition rather than its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly but emerges on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input.
2. If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. Teachers do not need to attempt to teach the next structure along the natural order as it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if students receive a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

The **input/comprehension hypothesis** and its corollaries clearly highlight the role **listening** and **reading comprehension** play in the language programme as “we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence” (KRASHEN & TERRELL, 2000, p.32). The authors point out that **the input hypothesis** is based on the principle that **comprehension** precedes **production**. In other words, **receptive skills** precede **productive skills**. Consequently, the ability to speak or write fluently in a second language will come on its own with time.

All things considered, **input** seems to be the essential environmental ingredient interacting with our cognitive system. According to Krashen (1985, p.2-3), “the acquirer does simply acquire what he hears- there is a significant contribution of the internal language processor (Chomsky’s Language Acquisition Device: **LAD**)”, i.e. the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition. The **LAD** itself generates possible rules according to innate procedures which filter the processing of input for acquisition. Nonetheless, not all **comprehended input** reaches the **LAD** as barriers may get in the way.

The **affective filter hypothesis** claims that affective variables do not impact language acquisition directly but prevent input from reaching the **LAD** as acquirers need to be open to the input. Thus, “the affective filter is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the **comprehensible input** they receive for language acquisition (KRASHEN, 1985, p.3). When the affective filter is “up”, acquirers may understand what they hear and read, but the **input** will not reach the **LAD**. For instance, in situations when learners are anxious, unmotivated, have low self-esteem or are afraid of revealing their weaknesses in the language classroom. Conversely, acquirers are open to receive input when the filter is “down”. For example, in situations when acquirers are not concerned with the possibility of failure in

language acquisition and consider themselves to be potential members of the group that speaks the language.

In a more recent view of his theory, Krashen revisits the role **learning** plays in second language acquisition. Krashen (2003) highlights that beginners are likely to encounter a great deal of **incomprehensible input** when travelling abroad to the target language country. Therefore, the main aim of language classes is to bring beginner learners to the point where they can go to the target language community and obtain **comprehensible input**. To Krashen's mind, an intermediate level of proficiency suffices to enable learners to get by in a foreign country and to continue to improve their linguistic competence on their own. At this level, learners are able to get some **comprehensible input** from the environment and from the mainstream in school. However, Krashen adds that this is not a humble goal for those who expect perfection as true mastery comes only after years of experience.

In addition, Krashen (2003) also suggests that learners benefit tremendously from **free voluntary reading** as it may be regarded as the most powerful tool in language education. **Free voluntary reading** combines language work and fun as it enhances reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and writing and it is pleasant and enjoyable at the same time. Krashen (2003) adds that it also solves two related problems: it marks the transition from the elementary level to authentic language use and from conversational language ability to academic language ability.

As the main aim of this chapter is the enhancement of pragmatic sub-competencies in verbal communication, I base my choice on the **listening skill** instead, as it is also a great source of **comprehensible input** and resembles real-life communication, bearing **construct-validity**²⁷. However, I do not suggest that only listening activities are enough to enhance all aspects of the pragmatic sub-competencies presented in chapter two. Listening activities definitely play a role in the development of the **inferential sub-competency**. Exposure to authentic samples of the target language via listening or video activities may also help learners to raise their awareness of **sociolinguistic aspects** in L2. Similarly, at beginner levels, listening activities may be used to present **functional exponents** in situational contexts.

²⁷ Construct validity refers the degree to which the items in a test reflect the essential aspects of the theory on which the test is based (RICHARDS, PLATT & WEBER, 1985, p. 61).

On the other hand, students also need to be given **practice activities** in order to develop their **conversational skills** with confidence, precision and appropriateness. By **practice activities** I mean class activities in which learners practise communicative skills via role-plays, discussions, debates, oral presentations and problem solving activities. I dare say that only **comprehensible input** is not enough to develop learners' **conversational-interactional sub-competency** in L2.

Krashen's rival hypothesis, the **comprehensible output hypothesis** (SWAIN, 1985), claims that the act of producing oral and written language, under certain circumstances, is part of the process of **second language learning**. The notion of **output** refers to a process, an action, a verb rather than a finished product. In Swain's model, **output** has three functions in **language learning**: the **noticing-triggering** function, the **hypothesis-testing** function and the **metalinguistic** function. Learners need to **be pushed** to communicate their intended meanings with precision, coherence and appropriateness. "Being pushed in output...is a concept parallel to that of $i+1$ of comprehensible input. Indeed, one might call this the comprehensible output hypothesis" (SWAIN, 1985, p.248-249).

To sum up, Krashen's **input/comprehension hypothesis** is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. Many current theories were originally developed in order to review its underlying principles. **The input/comprehension hypothesis** highlights the importance of receptive skills in second language acquisition and in the development of communicative skills for two main reasons. Firstly, acquirers need to understand messages in order to acquire language. Secondly, it claims that **comprehension** precedes **production**. It also relates the notion of **comprehensible input** to **cognition** and shows the impact **affective barriers** have on cognitive process. In the next section, the nature of the **listening skill** will be detailed so as to support my view that listening activities can be used to promote **pragmatic development**.

3.2 THE LISTENING SKILL

A large number of learners who take English classes at language institutes in Brazil usually regard verbal communication as their main learning objective. However, depending on the

methodological principles adopted by institutions, the speaking skill is likely to be prioritised. Nunan (2002) compares listening to the “Cinderella skill” in second language learning as it is too often overlooked by its elder sister, the speaking skill. To his mind, most people believe that being proficient in a second language consists of being able to speak and write well. Therefore, receptive skills tend to be considered secondary skills, bearing the status of means to other ends, rather than ends in themselves.

From a historical perspective, the status of the listening skill has varied across time depending on the methodological approach in vogue. According to Nunan (2002), listening every so often becomes popular. In the early **grammar translation method**, for instance, the reading skill was the focus as translation and grammar studies were the main teaching and learning activities. However, with the shift of focus to oral language skills via the **audio-lingual method**, listening became fashionable in the early 1960s. This method was partially based on **behaviourism**²⁸ and used dialogues and drills. Rost (1990) adds that as the **audio-lingual method** emphasised learner identification of language products, the role of listening was merely to reinforce the recognition of those products in the syllabus.

Listening gained prominence again in the 1980s with Krashen’s notion of **comprehensible input** as described in the previous section. Its importance was further reinforced by James Asher’s (1988) **Total Physical Response**, a fringe method deriving from Krashen’s theory and based on the belief that students learn more effectively if the pressure for production is taken off them at early stages. Similarly, first language acquisition theorists such as Brown (1990) also helped to strengthen the role of the listening skill by demonstrating the importance of developing **oracy**, which is the ability to listen and speak, as well as literacy in school.

Nunan (2002) believes that listening is assuming greater and greater importance in the second language classroom. In his opinion, second language acquisition has given listening a major boost by emphasising the importance of **comprehensible input** and the assumption that listening is fundamental to speaking since it provides input for the learner. In addition, listening extracts can be used for language work as learners are able to notice linguistic items (grammar, functions and vocabulary) in a context. Swain (1985) indicates that learners need

²⁸ Behaviourism refers to “a theory of psychology which states that human and animal behaviour can and should be studied in terms of physical processes only” (RICHARDS, J.; PLATT, J.; WEBBER, H., 1985, p.27).

to process meaning before they internalise form. Likewise, **task-based learning** activities may also be centred on reading or listening texts.

Task-based learning is a holistic approach where meaning is central as opposed to the traditional **PPP** (presentation, practice and production) **approach**, which focuses mainly on language items. When learners carry out a **task**, the main focus is on exchanging and understanding meanings rather than on the practice of pre-specified forms or patterns. Learners receive feedback from their teacher on task achievement rather than on language performance. Willis's framework for task-based learning (1996) shows that the tasks learners engage in may be based on reading or listening texts. At a later stage (**language focus**), learners carry out **consciousness-raising activities**²⁹ in order to identify and process specific language features present in the previous task text and/or transcript. Therefore, in **task-based learning**, listening activities also play a role in both **task** and **language focus stages**.

Celce- Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 102) highlight that "listening is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life". Research indicates that, on average, we use the listening skill twice as much as we speak, four times as much as we read and five times as much as we write. Therefore, bearing learners' communicative aims in mind, listening is a vital component in the language classroom, regardless of the methodological approach adopted by institutions.

Ur (1984, p.2) lists a number of **real-life activities** which involve some aural comprehension as an essential component of the communicative situation: listening to the news, weather forecast, sports report, announcements etc. on the radio; discussing work, current problems with family or colleagues; making arrangements, exchanging news etc. with acquaintances; making arrangements, exchanging news etc. over the phone; chatting at a party, other social gathering; hearing announcements over the loud speaker (at a railway station or at the airport); receiving instructions on how to do something or to get somewhere; hearing a speech, lecture; listening to recorded, broadcast songs; attending a formal occasion (wedding,

²⁹ Consciousness-raising activities are opposed to practice activities and have the following features (ELLIS, 2002, p. 168):

1. There is an attempt to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention;
2. Learners are provided with data which illustrate the targeted feature;
3. Learners are expected to utilise intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature;
4. Misunderstanding of the grammatical structure by learners leads to clarification in the form of further data and description or explanation;
5. Learners may be required to articulate the rule describing the grammatical structure.

prize-giving or other ceremony); getting professional advice (e.g. from a doctor); and being tested orally in a subject of study.

According to Ur (1984, p. 9), most (but not all) of these **real-life listening activities** are characterised by the following features: we listen for a purpose and with certain expectations; we make an immediate response to what we hear; we see the person we are listening to; there are some visual or environmental clues as to the meaning of what is heard; stretches of heard discourse come in short chunks; most heard discourse is spontaneous and therefore differs from formal spoken prose in the amount of redundancy, noise and colloquialisms, and in its auditory character. Although particular situations may lack one or more of these characteristics, it is rather rare for none of them to be present.

Nevertheless, global understanding may be hindered by **referential problems** in both L1 and L2 listening situations. According to Rost (1990), listeners may encounter the following **referential problems**: unfamiliarity with specialised jargon, lexical fuzziness, multiple co-reference possibilities and unlikely reference. In order to overcome such problems, Rost (1990) suggests a number of strategies listeners can make use of: ignore specialised terms, tolerate ambiguity, guess meaning, ask for the speaker to paraphrase; assume most common sense, estimate meaning from other speaker clues; select the most salient gloss; and assume speaker error and ask for clarification.

In addition, **second language listening** poses a number of further difficulties for students. Firstly, learners might not be able to recognise **phonemes** which do not exist in L1 and, therefore, miss important information or misunderstand messages. For instance, as the phoneme /θ/ does not exist in Portuguese, learners might assimilate it to the nearest sound familiar to them such as /s/ or /f/. As a result, Brazilian learners could mistake “*thin*” for the **minimal pairs**³⁰ “*sin*” or “*fin*”. Secondly, **homophones** and **homonyms**³¹ may also generate misunderstandings such as “*waist*” and “*waste*” /weɪst/ and “*bear*” used a verb (to tolerate) as opposed to the noun (an animal), respectively. Ur (1984) advocates that if students learn to

³⁰ Minimal pairs are two words in a language which differ from each other by only one phoneme, having different meanings.

³¹ Homophones are words which sound alike but are written differently and have different meanings. Homonyms are written in the same way and sound alike but have different meanings.

produce sounds accurately³², it will be much easier for them to distinguish phonemes when said by someone.

Another problem area for learners are the English systems of **stress**, **intonation** and **rhythm** as these features can interfere with proper understanding of spoken English. Ur (1984) suggests that teachers can draw students' attention to general patterns such as **tone groups**, **sentence stress** and **intonation directions** in order to raise learners' awareness of how **prosody** can affect utterance meaning. For instance, **lexical words** such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs carry more meaning and are usually stressed within an utterance whereas **grammatical words** such as articles, prepositions, auxiliary, pronouns and conjunctions are usually unstressed (ROST, 1990). Fourthly, coping with **redundancy** and **noise** can also be problematic for second language learners. While we are used to tolerating a certain amount of noise and redundancy in L1, these factors may act as a barrier to **global understanding**. For instance, learners may have the mistaken assumption that they should understand every single word in order to understand communicative messages and, therefore, panic when unable to.

Furthermore, a number of listening activities learners are exposed to portray **colloquial language**. Ur (1984) points out that although learners may have already studied a number of colloquial expressions, they may not be able to recognise them in connected speech due to the fast speed of speaker delivery. In other words, listeners may not have the time to search their memory for the meaning of something they are not thoroughly familiar with. As an example, a waitress at a snack bar may ask customers whether they wish to order "*soup or salad*", which may be understood as "*super salad*" by non-native speakers. Another aspect which may prevent learners from understanding communicative messages is **fatigue**. Learners report that listening to and interpreting unfamiliar sounds, lexis and for long stretches of time can be very tiring and they might simply "*switch off*" after some time. Lastly, considering the diversity of **English varieties**, if learners are familiar with only one variety such as British English, for instance, they may find it very hard to understand samples of American or Australian English due to pronunciation and lexical differences. Listening to non-native speakers of English may also be challenging because of speakers' L1 phonological interference.

³² Although the phoneme /θ/ is considered a non-core feature of English, see the Lingua Franca Core (JENKINS, 2000).

With regard to the nature of listening comprehension processes, Richards (1985) revisits the **semantic-pragmatic interface** (chapter one, section 1.2) by comparing two views. From a **semantic perspective**, the following processes appear to be involved in comprehension and demonstrate how listeners decide what a sentence means (CLARK & CLARK, 1977, p. 49):

1. [Hearers] take in the raw speech and retain a phonological representation of it in working memory;
2. They immediately attempt to organise the phonological representation into constituents, identifying their content and function;
3. As they identify each constituent, they use it to construct underlying propositions, building continually onto a hierarchical representation of propositions;
4. Once they have identified the propositions for a constituent, they retain them in working memory and at some point purge memory of the phonological representation. In doing this, they forget the exact wording and retain the meaning.

Conversely, a **pragmatic view** focuses on what an utterance means to a person in a particular speech situation. In other words, while the **semantic structure** of a sentence specifies what a sentence means as a structure in a given language, in abstraction from speaker and addressee, “**pragmatics** deals with that meaning as it is interpreted interactionally in a given situation” (LEECH, 1977, p.1). According to Richards (1985), theories which describe how listeners arrive at pragmatic meanings derive from **speech act theory** (see chapter one, section 1.3.1), **conversational analysis** (see chapter one, section 1.4.1.1) and **discourse analysis**. In the next sub-section, a **discourse analysis perspective** will be addressed.

3.2.1 The nature of listening comprehension processes

Listening comprehension, discourse analysis and pragmatics are closely linked. According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), when we listen to a communicative message via a lecture or a news broadcast or engage in a conversation, we are listening to a stretch of discourse. The authors state that both L1 and L2 models of the listening process acknowledge that listening has both **bottom-up** and **top-down** aspects. The **bottom-up** level of the listening process involves prior knowledge of the language system in terms of **phonology, grammar**

and **vocabulary**. **Phonological knowledge** enables listeners “to segment the acoustic signals as sounds that form words, words and or phrases that form clauses or utterances unified by intonation contours having some key prominent element”(CELCE-MURCIA & OLSHTAIN, 2000, p. 103). **Lexical knowledge** enables listeners to distinguish words within phrases while **grammatical knowledge** allows listeners to recognise inflections on words as well as phrases or clauses which function as parts of cohesive and coherent instances of text.

Nunan (2002, p. 239) states that “the **bottom-up processing model** assumes that listening is a process of decoding the sounds that one hears in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units (phonemes) to complex texts”. Thus, the sequence of the comprehension process unfolds as follows: phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, and words are linked together to form phrases, which are also linked together to form utterances, whose final output is complete and meaningful texts. This model has been referred to as “listener as tape recorder view” (ANDERSON & LYNCH, 1988) since it assumes that listeners take in and store messages sequentially, similarly to the way tape recorders do: one sound, one word, one phrase and one utterance at a time.

The top-down interpretation model, on the other hand, claims that listeners reconstruct the original meaning of speakers using incoming sounds as clues (NUNAN, 2002). Listeners rely on prior knowledge of the context and of the situation within which the listening takes place to make sense of what they hear. Likewise, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) point out that **top-down listening processes** involve the activation of **schematic knowledge** and **contextual knowledge**. **Schematic knowledge** comprises two types of prior knowledge: **content schemata**, which describe background information on the topic, and **formal schemata**, which consist of knowledge about different genres, different topics, or different purposes such as **talk as interaction** versus **talk as transaction** (see chapter two, section 2.5.2), including relevant **socio-cultural knowledge** (see chapter two, section 2.5.3). **Contextual knowledge** relates to an understanding of the specific listening situation at hand as listeners assess who the participants are, what the setting is and what the topic and purpose are.

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) advocate that **top-down features** get filtered through **pragmatic knowledge** to assist in the processing of oral discourse. In short, **top-down listening processes** encompass the activation of **pragmatic knowledge**. The authors also add

that good listeners make use of their understanding of the ongoing discourse or co-text by taking into consideration what has already been said and by predicting what is likely to be said next (recalling the processes of **contextualisation** and **contextual effects** from **Relevance Theory** , see chapter one, section 1.4.2).

With regard to the effectiveness and independence of both models, Nunan (2002) suggests that second language learners should develop both **bottom-up** and **top-down** strategies. Listening activities such as discriminating between minimal pairs and identifying word or sentence stress assist **bottom-up aspects** whereas tasks which activate schematic and contextual knowledge give learners the opportunity to use what they know in order to understand what they hear.

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) argue that the **bottom-up model** is generally acknowledged not to be able to operate with any accuracy or efficiency on its own and to require the benefit of and the interaction with **top-down information** to make discourse comprehensible to listeners. While for native speakers and skilled L2 speakers, **bottom-up processing** is assumed to be automatic, beginners and less than expert L2 learners are likely to face problems, especially when decoding phonological segments. In order to compensate for less than automatic **bottom-up** processing, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) suggest teaching L2 listening via a **strategy-based approach** as well as **metacognition**.

A **strategy-based approach** teaches learners how to tackle a listening task when not everything is comprehensible and thus requiring the use of special mental processes or learning strategies (MENDELSON, 1995). Its main aim is to teach students how to listen. Mendelsohn (1995) indicates that a good listening course should have two main aims. Firstly, to help learners develop strategies to recognise and use the signals that are provided in the spoken target language. Secondly, to teach students how to use these signals to predict, guess and infer. Therefore, learners need practice in the following strategies: determining setting, interpersonal relations, mood, topic, the essence of the meaning of an utterance; forming hypotheses, predictions and inferences; and determining the main idea of a passage.

Mendelsohn's framework (1995, 1998) for the teaching of **strategy-based listening** to second language learners can be summarised as follows (CELCE-MURCIA & OLSHTAIN, 2000, p.103):

1. Raise learners' awareness of the power and value of using strategies;
2. Use pre-listening activities to activate learners' background knowledge;
3. Make clear to learners what they are going to listen to and why;
4. Provide guided listening activities designed to provide a lot of practice in using a particular strategy using simplified data initially if needed;
5. Practise the strategy using real data with focus on content and meaning;
6. Use what has been comprehended: take notes on a lecture to prepare a summary, fill in a form to gather data, etc;
7. Allow for self-evaluation so that learners can assess how accurate and complete their listening has been.

Moreover, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) suggest that learners can make use of **metacognition** in order to enhance their listening skill. **Metacognition** involves the planning, regulation, monitoring and management of listening and it is particularly related to the listening strategies 1, 2, 3 and 7 presented above. **Metacognitive strategies** allow learners to have an overview of the listening process by predicting, monitoring errors or breakdowns in understanding and evaluating the success of comprehension.

Grounded on Mendelsohn's **strategy-based framework** (1995, 1998), Nunan (2002, p. 241) argues that an effective listening course should be characterised by the following features:

1. The materials should be based on a wide range of authentic texts, including both monologues and dialogues;
2. Schema-building tasks should precede the listening;
3. Strategies for effective listening should be incorporated into the materials;
4. Learners should be given opportunities to progressively structure their listening by listening to a text several times and by working through increasingly challenging listening tasks;
5. Learners should know what they are listening for and why;
6. The task should include opportunities for learners to play an active role in their own learning;
7. Content should be personalised.

In addition to **bottom-up** and **top-down processing models**, the nature of listening can also be characterised in terms of whether listeners are required to participate in the interaction.

Lynch (1998) indicates that listening activities can be placed in a continuum from **non-reciprocal** to **reciprocal** conversation. **Reciprocal listening** refers to those listening situations in which listeners are given the opportunity to interact with speakers and to negotiate the content of the interaction. It involves a multiplicity of tasks which are done simultaneously (ANDERSON & LYNCH, 1988, p. 4): listeners must identify spoken signals from midst of surrounding sounds, segment the continuous stream of speech into units and recognise them as known words, grasp the syntax of the utterance, understand speaker's intended meaning and formulate a correct and appropriate response to what has been said. At this end, learners' L2 oral communication strategies play a role in the success of the communicative event, specially the **pragmatic sub-competencies** described in chapter two.

By contrast, **non-reciprocal listening** includes activities like 'listening to the radio' or 'listening to a formal lecture' and presupposes learners' activation of **top-down** and **bottom-up processing skills** without the benefit of any interaction with speakers (CELCE-MURCIA & OLSHTAIN, 2000). Nunan (2002) highlights that listening to any **monologue**, either live or through the media, is, by definition **nonreciprocal**. In his opinion, while in the real world, it is rare for listeners to be cast in the role of **non-reciprocal** eavesdropper on a conversation, this is the normal role in the listening classroom.

All things considered, Anderson and Lynch (1988) advocate the **active nature** of listening comprehension. In their view, effective listeners actively engage in the process of comprehension by constructing their own coherent **interpretation** of spoken discourse (mental model). "The **mental model** that we build as a representation of a spoken message is the result of our combining the new information in what we have just heard with our previous knowledge and experience" (ANDERSON & LYNCH, 1988, p. 11). **Previous knowledge** includes general and factual knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge and knowledge of context (all of which play a decisive role in the triggering of inferential chains licensed by the **Principle of Relevance**, see chapter one, section 1.4.2).

To sum up, both Anderson and Lynch (1988) and Nunan (2002) stress the inadequacy of the "**listener as tape-recorder**" view as listeners do not simply take language in as a tape-recorder but rather interpret what they hear according to the listening purpose and to their background knowledge. In order to interpret spoken discourse effectively either in **reciprocal** or **non-reciprocal listening** situations, listeners must deploy both **bottom-up** and **top-down**

processes. In the next section, taxonomies of micro-skills required for effective listening comprehension will be presented.

3.2.2 Taxonomy of listening micro-skills

According to Richards (1985), the characterisation of listening purposes depends on the nature of the listening event. Students may be exposed to listening as a component of social interaction (e.g. conversational listening), listening for information, academic listening (e.g. lectures), listening for pleasure (e.g. radio, movies, television), or for some other reason. Based on the analyses of listening processes and on the features of spoken discourse, Richards proposes taxonomies of listening micro-skills. As far as **conversational listening** is concerned, Richards (1985, p.198-199) provides the following **taxonomy of micro-skills**:

Ability to:

1. retain chunks of language of different lengths for short periods;
2. discriminate among the distinctive sounds of the target language;
3. recognise the stress patterns of words;
4. recognise the rhythmic structure of English;
5. recognise the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances;
6. identify words in stressed and unstressed positions;
7. recognise reduced forms of words;
8. distinguish word boundaries;
9. recognise typical word-order patterns in the target language;
10. ability to recognise vocabulary in core conversational topics;
11. ability to detect key words (i.e. those that identify topics and propositions);
12. guess the meaning of words from the contexts in which they occur;
13. recognise grammatical word class (parts of speech);
14. recognise major syntactic patterns and devices;
15. recognise cohesive devices in spoken discourse;
16. recognise elliptical forms of grammatical units and sentences;
17. detect sentence constituents;

18. distinguish between major and minor constituents;
19. detect meanings expressed in different grammatical forms/ sentence types (a particular meaning being expressed in different ways);
20. recognise the communicative functions of utterances, according to the situations, participants, goals;
21. reconstruct or infer situations, participants, goals;
22. use real-world knowledge and experience to work out purposes, goals, settings;
23. predict outcomes from events described;
24. infer links and connections between events;
25. deduce causes and effects from events;
26. distinguish between literal and implied meanings;
27. identify and reconstruct topics and coherent structure from ongoing discourse involving two or more speakers;
28. recognise markers of coherence in discourse;
29. process speech at different rates;
30. process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections;
31. make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings;
32. adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listener purposes or goals;
33. signal comprehension or lack of comprehension, verbally and non-verbally.

With regard to **academic listening**, Richards (1985, p.199) indicates the following **taxonomy of micro-skills**:

Ability to:

1. identify purpose and scope of lecture;
2. identify topic of lecture and follow topic development;
3. identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g. major ideas, generalisations, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples);
4. identify role of discourse markers in signalling structure of a lecture (e.g. conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines);
5. infer relationships (e.g. cause, effect, conclusion);
6. recognise key lexical items related to subject/ topic;
7. deduce meanings of words from context;
8. recognise markers of cohesion;

9. recognise function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g. pitch, volume, pace, key)
10. detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter;
11. follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual;
12. follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed;
13. recognise irrelevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings;
14. recognise function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude;
15. recognise instructional/learner tasks (e.g. warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions)

And

16. familiarity with different styles of lecturing: formal, conversational, read, unplanned;
17. familiarity with different registers: written versus colloquial;
18. knowledge of classroom conventions (e.g. turn taking, clarification requests).

From a different perspective, Richards also provides a taxonomy of **bottom-up** and **top-down processing micro-skills** (IN: NUNAN, 1989, p.25-26). In short, **bottom-up processing** includes scanning the input to identify lexical items; segmenting the stream of speech into constituents; using phonological clues to identify the information focus in an utterance; and using grammatical clues to organise the input into constituents. Conversely, **top-down processing** comprises the following skills: assigning an interaction to part of a particular event such as story telling, joking and complaining; assigning places, persons or things to categories; inferring cause and effect relationships; anticipating outcomes; inferring the topic of a discourse; inferring the sequence between events; and inferring missing details.

In order to provide our learners with practice in the above listening sub-skills, we can rely on published coursebooks and supplementary listening materials. However, not all activity-types and extracts available from these sources are adequate to our students' listening needs. In the next section, a brief discussion on the criteria for the selection of listening materials and of activities will be presented as well as taxonomies of listening activity-types.

3.2.3 Taxonomy of listening activities

According to Richards (1985), our main aim in teaching listening skills is two-fold: to provide comprehensible, focused input and purposeful listening tasks which develop specific listening skills. Therefore, before selecting listening activities, Richards (1985) suggests that teachers should consider a few factors. Firstly, does the activity bear content validity? In other words, does the activity provide practice in listening comprehension or in something else? Secondly, does the activity reflect a purpose for listening which resembles authentic real-life listening or is it an activity merely aimed at performing classroom exercises?

Thirdly, does the activity “test” or “teach” listening skills? In other words, does the activity assume that learners already possess the skills necessary to perform the listening tasks and does the activity gradually prepare learners for the listening event? Richards (1985) indicates that a large number of listening activities “test” rather than “teach”. Activities which “teach” learners usually encompass both **pre-listening** and **post-listening tasks**. **Pre-listening activities** give learners the chance to activate **content** and **formal schemata** on the listening topic and set a purpose for listening. **Post-listening activities** may integrate the information derived from the listening activity into the **development of another language skill** or may include the isolation of linguistic items as data for **consciousness-raising activities**.

Richards (2005) revisits the listening skill and indicates that listening comprehension activities may be followed by activities whose main aim is to promote second language acquisition. This second phase has been referred to as **listening as acquisition** (RICHARDS, 2005) and comprises two cycles: **noticing activities** and **restructuring activities**. **Noticing activities** include returning to listening texts previously used for comprehension objectives in order to raise learners’ awareness of language aspects. In **noticing activities**, learners listen to an extract for a second time in order to identify differences between what they hear and a printed version of the transcript, complete a cloze version of the text or tick expressions off from a list that occur in the text. **Restructuring activities** encompass oral and written tasks which involve the production of selected linguistic items from a listening text. In **restructuring activities**, learners read aloud dialogues in pairs, practise dialogues that incorporate items from the text or role-play situations in which they are required to use key language from texts.

As far as **listening comprehension task-types** are concerned, Richards (1985, p. 204) lists the following general activities:

1. **Matching or distinguishing:** choosing a response in written or pictorial form which corresponds to what was heard, for instance, choosing a picture to match a situation;
2. **Transferring:** receiving information in one form and transferring it or part of it into another form, such as listening to a discussion about a house and then sketching the house;
3. **Transcribing:** listening, and then writing down what was heard, for instance, dictations;
4. **Scanning:** extracting selected items by scanning the input in order to find a specific piece of information, for instance, listening to a news broadcast and identifying the name of the winning party in an election;
5. **Extending:** going beyond what is provided, such as reconstructing a dialogue when alternate lines are missing or providing a conclusion to a story;
6. **Condensing:** reducing what is heard to an outline of main points, such as note-taking;
7. **Answering:** answering questions from the input focusing on different levels of listening. For example, questions which require recall of details, inferences, deductions, evaluations or reactions;
8. **Predicting:** guessing or predicting outcomes, causes, relationships, and so forth, based on information presented in conversations or narratives.

In addition, Ur (1984) presents a number of activities at **word-level** and **sentence-level** aimed at helping learners to develop **bottom-up processing aspects**. **Word-level activities** focus on different sounds and sound combinations which occur within single words. Ur suggests a variety of techniques aimed at sound **perception** such as repeating words after the teacher or a recording, discriminating between minimal pairs and identifying how often a word is uttered. **Sentence level activities** attempt to remedy problems which occur when words are put together to make utterances: the distortion of sounds within common collocations, unclear word-division, and intonation. **Sentence level activities** include repeating full utterances, counting the number of words, identifying word stress and intonation patterns and dictation.

To conclude, while **bottom-up activity-types** assist learners to discriminate between sounds and segment them into meaningful units, **top-down activity-types** give learners the opportunity to activate schematic and contextual knowledge in order to interpret discourse. The next sections of this chapter will be devoted to the description of an empirical project I

carried out in the first semester of 2009, whose main objective was to investigate the effectiveness of listening comprehension activities in the development of learners' pragmatic sub-competencies. These activities will be fully described and activate mainly **top-down processes** which assist the interpretation of oral discourse.

3.3 DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC SUB-COMPETENCIES VIA LISTENING ACTIVITIES

The goals of teaching L2 pragmatics were highlighted in chapter two. Firstly, we as teachers should raise learners' awareness of pragmatic phenomena affecting utterance meaning and, secondly, offer them a range of options for interaction. Learners are not expected to imitate L2 native-like models but rather be familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and social practices in the target language community. After all, the ultimate goal is to enable learners to successfully communicate in L2, either with native-speakers or with non-native speakers. In addition, as previously mentioned, there seems to be a direct relationship between a positive level of motivation for learning a second language and the willingness to develop pragmatic ability.

Different ways to promote pragmatic development were described in chapter 2.4, based on previous characterisations of pragmatic competence (LEECH, 1983, THOMAS, 1983, CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983, BACHMAN, 1990). With regard to the alternative pragmatic competence construct for verbal communication proposed in chapter 2.5, listening activities will be suggested in order to develop the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies. However, I am aware that the degree of importance of the listening skill and the range of activity types vary according to the nature of the sub-competency and that, in some cases, some further pedagogical intervention is needed.

Listening comprehension exercises seem to foster the inferential sub-competency as the latter encompasses the comprehension dimension. Top-down strategies give learners the opportunity to infer hidden meanings conveyed by conversational implicatures and to interpret the illocutionary force of speech acts while bottom-up strategies enable learners to decode oral speech. In addition, the taxonomies of listening comprehension sub-skills

previously presented give learners practice in noticing aspects which affect utterance meaning.

Conversely, as the conversational-interactional sub-competency comprises the pragmatic production dimension and includes the ability to produce illocutionary acts (conveying the intended illocutionary force) and the ability to manage dialogic and monologic discourse, it seems that listening plays an intermediary role. Considering the notion of listening as acquisition (RICHARDS, 2005), learners may listen for a second time to a listening text originally used for comprehension purposes in order to notice discursial features such as functional exponents (used to perform speech acts), conversational routines, hedges and hesitation devices. However, learners will probably need the restructuring stage in order to gain confidence to produce such features. In addition, learners may also need further speaking opportunities to practise these features in activities which resemble real life.

Finally, the sociolinguistic sub-competency may be fostered by both listening as comprehension and listening as acquisition perspectives as it affects both comprehension and production dimensions. On one hand, learners may do listening comprehension exercises in order to interpret cultural references and figures of speech or to raise their awareness of differences of dialect, variety, register and naturalness. On the other hand, learners may perform noticing and restructuring activities which focus on the degree of formality of speech acts or on how linguistic choices and politeness strategies affect the degree of imposition of face threatening acts. Nonetheless, as one of the aims of pragmatic instruction is to offer learners a range of options for interaction, more explicit teaching of linguistic forms seems to be needed as well as fluency practice activities enabling the expression of sociolinguistic subtleties.

The following listening comprehension activities were used as part of a classroom project which will be detailed in the next sub-section, and whose main objectives were to raise learners' overall level of listening proficiency and to promote pragmatic development. They integrate the listening module from the coursebook "Insight into IELTS"³³ (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999) and are structured within a **strategy-based approach**. Every listening unit starts with a brief introduction on the importance of the listening sub-skill being

³³ The coursebook "Insight into IELTS" was chosen due to its modular nature, which focuses on language sub-skills rather than on grammatical items.

developed, which is followed by **pre-listening** and **listening activities**. **Pragmatic phenomena** embedded in the extracts of these activities were analysed in chapter two, sections 2.5.1, 2.5.2 and 2.5.3, within the characterisation of the **inferential, conversational-interactive** and **sociolinguistic pragmatic-sub competencies**, respectively. Activities which “test” rather than “teach” were also used but will not be described.

Material: “Insight into IELTS” (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999) – The Listening Module

1. Unit 1 (p.8-9): Orientating yourself to the text

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual input: four pictures with blank two-turn speech balloons illustrating communicative situations.

Task: Students (sts henceforth) were asked to look at the pictures and imagine who the people were, where they were and what their relationship was. Sts were also asked to write down in the speech balloons what the people were probably saying to each other.

Aim: to use real-world knowledge and experience to work out purposes, settings and relationships (**contextual knowledge**).

b) Listening activity

Visual input: a three-column table with missing information.

Auditory input: ten short extracts featuring different communicative situations. Eight out of the ten extracts involve dialogic discourse and talk as transaction features whereas two extracts are monologues, including talk as performance aspects. Pragmatic features comprising the **inferential competence** present in the sixth conversation were highlighted in section 2.5.1, see **extract 3**.

Task: Sts listened to the extracts twice and completed the table indicating who the speakers were and why they were speaking.

Aims: to recognise vocabulary in core conversational topics and to infer situations, participants and purposes.

2. Unit 2 – Extract 1 (p.10): Listening for specific information

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual Input: a telephone message pad with missing information (thirteen gaps) regarding seven messages. The pad came from a house where a number of students live together.

Task: Sts were asked to look at the thirteen gaps in the pad and discuss the type of information that was required for their completion, e.g. dates, time, places.

Aim: to predict the nature of missing information.

b) Listening activity

Auditory input: seven phone messages portraying monologic discourse and talk as transaction features. Pragmatic features comprising the **conversational-interactional competence** present in the fifth message were highlighted in section 2.5.2, see **extract 2**.

Task: Sts listened to the messages twice and filled in the gaps from the message pad.

Aim: to scan the input for missing information.

3. Unit 3 – (p.14-15): Identifying detail

a) Pre-listening activity 1

Visual input: a short text highlighting the importance of “listening for detail” and eight pictures of different umbrellas.

Task: Sts read the short introduction. Sts then looked at the eight pictures in order to notice their distinctive features. Sts played a game in pairs: one student would describe an umbrella orally and his or her partner had to identify it among the eight possibilities.

Aims: to raise learners’ awareness of the importance of detail in listening comprehension activities and to give them practice in describing detail.

b) Pre-listening activity 2

Visual input: Six questions and six three-option multiple-choice pictures.

Task: Sts were asked to look at each set of pictures and compare and contrast them orally.

Aims: to give learners the opportunity to highlight detail and to anticipate content for the listening activity.

c) Listening activity

Auditory Input: a conversation between two friends who had not seen each other for a long time, portraying talk as interaction and talk as transaction functions. Pragmatic features encompassing the **conversational-interactional competence** present in this conversation were highlighted in **section 2.5.2**, see **extract 1**.

Task: Sts listened to the conversation twice and answered each question by choosing a picture which illustrated the right answer.

Aim: to scan the input to identify lexical items previously highlighted.

4. Unit 4 – (p.16): Identifying main ideas

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual input: a four-column chart with eight situational descriptions and missing information.

Task: Sts were asked to read the descriptions and predict the type of situational language which might be produced by speakers in each of them.

Aim: to give learners the opportunity to predict formulaic language and conversational routines (**formal schemata**).

b) Listening activity

Auditory Input: Eight short extracts of communicative situations illustrating the functions of talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance. A number of **functional exponents** producing **illocutionary acts** were selected from these extracts and used as pragmatic input for the **pragmatic competence quiz phase one, part two** (to be described in **section 3.4.3**), see **appendix A**.

Task: Sts listened to the extracts twice for different purposes. Firstly, sts listened to the situations once in order to note down the introductory phrase of each extract. After correction, sts were asked whether they remembered what each topic was about and how it developed. Sts discussed their ideas in pairs. Thirdly, sts were asked to listen to the extracts again and complete the missing information regarding the topic and how it developed.

Aims: to adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listener purposes, to identify and reconstruct topics from ongoing discourse involving one or two speakers, to recognise the communicative functions of utterances, according to the situations and participants and to infer links and connections.

5. Unit 5– (p.19) – Extract 1: Seeing beyond the surface meaning

a) Pre-listening activity

Task (adapted from the coursebook): Sts were asked the following question: “Did you like my new *glasses?*” (*shoes, bag, etc.*). Sts were supposed to think of different ways to say “yes” and to consider what each different way meant. This introductory activity was followed by a short class discussion on how intonation can convey meaning.

Aim: to raise learners’ awareness of the function of intonation to convey meaning.

b) Listening activity

Visual input: a three-column chart with nine yes-or-no questions and missing information.

Auditory Input: nine short dialogues followed by nine recorded yes-or-no questions. Dialogues included a number of pragmatic inferences. Pragmatic features comprising the **inferential competence** present in the example and in the conversations three and eight were highlighted in section 2.5.1, see **extracts 1, 2 and 4**, respectively. Conversation seven was used to highlight **sociolinguistic competence** aspects, see **section 2.5.3, extract 1**.

Task: firstly, sts listened to the example, which demonstrated how the activity worked: sts were supposed to listen to the conversations and answer the yes-or-no questions based on the way speakers used intonation to convey meaning. Sts were also asked to write down which indicators of language features helped them to interpret the real meaning of the speakers. Sts listened to the extracts twice.

Aims: to recognise the function of intonation to signal the information structure of utterances, to distinguish between literal and implied meanings and to make use of paralinguistic clues to work out meanings.

6. Unit 5– (p.20-21) – Extract 2: Seeing beyond the surface meaning

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual input: three posters containing two arguments (“*people*” before “*profits*”, “*hospitals*” before “*hotels*” and “*social services*” before “*space research*”) used to advertise a student debate.

Task: sts were asked to read the posters and discuss the two possible sides to each argument in pairs.

Aims: to give learners the opportunity to activate their **content schemata** and to predict information for the listening activity.

b) Listening activity

Visual input: a grid with the names of the speakers and empty boxes next to them and eight four-option multiple-choice questions.

Auditory Input: a conversation between three friends who live in a student house together, giving their opinion on how the government should spend public money. This conversation illustrates turn-taking conventions and presents functional exponents used in discussions as well as speaker attitudes and opinions.

Task: Sts listened to the conversation twice for different purposes. Firstly, sts were asked to complete the grid by ticking the box next to the name of the speakers each time they spoke. Secondly, sts were asked to look at the multiple-choice questions and choose an option based

on what they were able to remember from the first listening and also on their ideas from the pre-listening activity. Sts then listened to the conversation again to confirm their guesses.

Aims: to adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listener purposes, to identify speakers via turn-taking conventions, to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter and to recognise the communicative functions of utterances, according to the situations and participants.

7. Unit 6 – Extract 1 (p.22-23): Following signpost words

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual Input: an introduction about the importance of using signpost words to introduce ideas and to provide a framework for monologic discourse. A list of possible directions signpost words may guide our listening to (see **chapter two, section 2.5.2**). Ten unfinished sentences including signpost words.

Task: sts were asked to read the sentences and identify the signpost words and their direction. After correction, sts were asked to complete the unfinished sentences with their own ideas. Sts were then asked to read their sentences aloud to a partner, stressing the signpost words and using appropriate intonation patterns to convey meaning.

Aims: to raise learners' awareness of the functions of signpost words in monologic discourse and to give learners practice in using them (**formal schemata**).

b) Listening activity

Auditory input: ten short monologues including the full version of the ten sentences from the pre-listening exercise. Pragmatic features comprising the **inferential competence** present in the seventh monologue were highlighted in section **2.5.1**, see **extract 5**.

Task: Sts listened to the monologues and checked the intonation patterns of the signpost words.

Aims: to recognise the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances, to recognise cohesive devices in spoken discourse and to identify relationships among units within discourse.

8. Unit 6 – Extract 2 (p.24): Following signpost words

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual Input: a picture of a rover robot followed by incomplete notes and a diagram with missing information.

Task: sts were asked to look at the picture of the rover robot and try to describe it. Sts were expected to produce similes. Sts then were asked to look at the gaps and predict the missing information.

Aims: to raise learners' awareness of the use of figures of speech for descriptions and to give learners the opportunity to activate **content schemata** and predict information for the listening activity.

b) Listening activity

Auditory input: an extract from a university tutorial with four speakers taking part. Pragmatic features comprising the **sociolinguistic competence** were highlighted in **section 2.5.3**, see **extract 2**.

Task: Sts listened to the conversation twice and filled in the gaps.

Aims: to scan the input for missing information and to recognise key lexical items related to subject and topic.

9. Unit 7 – Extract 1 (p.25): Being aware of stress, rhythm and intonation

a) Pre-listening activity

Visual Input: a short text on the importance of using prosodic features to divide information into chunks of meaning. Six telephone numbers.

Task: after reading the introduction, sts were asked to say the telephone numbers aloud using **rising** and **falling** patterns of intonation.

Aims: to raise learners' awareness of the functions of **rising** and **falling intonation** in English, used for signalling more information to come and for ending chunks of information, respectively.

b) Pre-listening activity 2

Visual Input: five short extracts taken from different lectures.

Task: sts were asked to read the extracts and mark in pencil the words they thought should be stressed and also the intonation patterns. Sts checked their ideas in pairs and read the extracts aloud to each other.

Aims: to raise learners' awareness of sentence stress and intonation patterns and give them practice in reading aloud using prosodic features to convey meaning.

c) Listening activity

Auditory input: recorded version of the five extracts.

Task: Sts listened to the extracts once and compared their notes on the patterns of prosodic features. After correction, sts were asked to read the extracts aloud again following the intonation patterns highlighted from the recordings.

Aims: to recognise the stress patterns of words, to recognise the rhythmic structure of English and to recognise the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances.

The description of the above activities attempted to illustrate how **top-down** and **bottom-up strategies** may be combined in order to enhance **pragmatic understanding**, following a **strategy-based approach**. While **pre-listening** activities give learners the opportunity to activate their **schematic** and **contextual knowledge** and thus, predict information to come, the **listening activities** enable students to practise both **top-down** and **bottom-up micro-skills** affecting **utterance meaning**. Depending on the aims of the listening activity, **pragmatic phenomena** may be directly and indirectly highlighted. However, are these activities used for comprehension purposes potentially capable of affecting pragmatic production? The next sub-section will report on the findings of an empirical project addressing this question.

3.4 EMPIRICAL PROJECT

The tasks from “Insight into IELTS” described in the previous section illustrate how listening comprehension activities may be used to promote pragmatic development via a strategy-based approach to listening. These activities were implemented in a classroom project developed in the first semester of 2009, which is part of a broader empirical project whose main aim was to corroborate, refute or reject the following assumptions:

1. In order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication;
2. Semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills;

3. Following a strategy-based approach, listening activities can directly and indirectly enhance the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies proposed in chapter two.

The classroom project main aims can be stated as follows:

1. By the end of the project, learners will have improved their overall level of listening proficiency by practising specific listening sub-skills via a strategy-based approach;
2. By the end of the project, learners will have enhanced their inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies by following a strategy-based approach to listening.

3.4.1 Subjects

The classroom project included the participation of eight Brazilian learners of English as a second language, who were taking a preparatory course for the IELTS examination at a language institute in the south of Brazil in the first semester of 2009. Their age range varied from mid-twenties to late-forties. Students attended 1 hour and 15 minute- lessons twice a week amounting to an overall exposure of 48 hours in the semester. Overall, motivation was a key factor in their development. Students were highly motivated and committed as their main course aim was to achieve satisfactory grades in the IELTS examination in order to be eligible to work or study in English speaking countries.

Learners' previous learning experience can be summarised as follows: subject 1 had been studying English for eight years and had taken a short course in Canada; subject 2 had had English lessons as a regular school student and then attended a six-month English course in the USA during adulthood; subject 3 had studied English at language courses for four years and had visited Canada for tourism; subject 4 had been studying English for seven years, including a short trip to the USA ; subject 5 had been studying English for six years including a one and a half-year period in the USA, subject 6 had been studying English for 16 years including a one-year period in Australia , subjects 7 and 8 had been studying English for over ten years, including short English courses abroad.

Broadly speaking, learners' overall linguistic competence ranged from intermediate to advanced levels due to the nature of the IELTS examination. "IELTS" stands for "International English Testing System" and it is aimed at assessing the language ability of candidates over the age of 16 who need to work or study where English is the language of communication. It is jointly managed by Cambridge ESOL, British Council and IELTS Australia. It is recognised by many universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities and government agencies, in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK and the USA. It tests candidates' ability in the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Candidates are awarded a score on a band scale from (1) to (9) for each test component. The scores are averaged and rounded to produce an overall Band Score reported as a whole band or a half band. An IELTS average Band Score of (6.5) is usually required by most universities and colleges in the above countries. However, some institutions may request higher scores.

The description of IELTS band scores, the initial characterisation of learners' level of competence in the four language skills and their progress will be detailed in the subsequent sections.

3.4.2 Methodology

The classroom project was developed considering learners' needs and how events unfolded during the semester. It did not follow any rigorous scientific methodology but rather attempted to improve learners' overall listening proficiency. Despite its experimental nature, at the end of the semester learners' listening band scores had risen at least one and a half bands. The instruments used to assess learners' level of linguistic and pragmatic competencies will be described in section 3.4.3.

The empirical project consisted of the following stages:

1. Assessment of learners' linguistic competence via mock test 1: in order to establish the overall level of learners' linguistic competence, I selected an IELTS mock test from the

coursebook “Insight into IELTS” (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.127-159) comprising the four skills. Students took the mock test in the second week of the semester;

2. Analysis of learners’ listening needs vis-à-vis listening scores: based on the IELTS band scores, learners’ weaknesses and strengths were highlighted. Listening band scores varied from (4) to (7). Most students were below the passing band score (6);

3. Personal information questionnaire: Students completed a questionnaire in which they were asked to describe their main expectations towards the course, their linguistic weaknesses and strengths and previous learning experience;

4. Indication of supplementary listening materials at different levels of listening proficiency for individual learners: as the listening skill was indicated as a priority, students were offered sets of general English coursebooks (student’s book, teacher’s book and CDs) in order to do extra class work on listening comprehension sub-skills during two months. The books were selected from the resources available at the institution and according to individual needs (levels ranging from intermediate to advanced);

5. Production of a pragmatic competence quiz (phase one): The pragmatic competence quiz included recognition and production activities. The samples of language were taken from IELTS coursebook materials and IELTS official online resources. Once the design of the quiz had been finalised, four peer teachers were asked to analyse it and a few elements were changed. Then four volunteer students at different linguistic competence levels took the new version of the quiz so that its level of difficulty could be verified. A few elements were changed again and the final version was finalised;

6. Letter of agreement: students were questioned whether they wanted to be pragmatically assessed via the quizzes and whether their results (both from quizzes and mock tests) could be used as data for the empirical project. Students signed a letter of agreement;

7. Assessment of learners’ pragmatic competence via the pragmatic quiz: students were sent the quiz electronically in the third week of the semester and were given a week to complete it;

8. Analysis of learners’ pragmatic needs vis-à-vis the inferential pragmatic sub-competency: students’ weaknesses and strengths were highlighted. Students’ main difficulties were related to pragmatic inferences, recognition of the illocutionary force of utterances and anaphoric reference;

9. Selection of listening exercises to be used throughout the semester: listening exercises from three different IELTS coursebooks were selected considering learners’ needs in terms of listening sub-skills and pragmatic quiz results. Both “teach” and “test” listening activities

were incorporated considering the nature of the course. The activities were spread over a three-month period;

10. Monthly re-assessment of learners' linguistic competence via IELTS mock tests 2, 3 and 4: students took three IELTS full mock tests covering the four skills on a monthly basis. The tests were available on the students' coursebook: "IELTS Testbuilder: Tests that Teach" (MCCARTER & ASH, 2003, p.8-100);

11. Final assessment of learners' linguistic competence via IELTS mock test 5: two weeks before the end of the semester, students took a final mock test from "IELTS Testbuilder: Tests that Teach" (MCCARTER & ASH, 2003, p.101-124);

12. Production of pragmatic competence quiz (phase two): pragmatic competence quiz phase 2 followed the same format of phase one. However, the section assessing the production of speech acts was omitted as it had not posed any difficulties for learners in phase one. More examples of conversational implicatures were added. Due to time constraints, phase two quiz was not previously tested on volunteers.

13. Re-assessment of learners' pragmatic competence via the pragmatic quiz (phase two): Students were sent the quiz electronically on the last day of class and were given a week to complete it. This was a methodological mistake. Only five out of eight students returned the completed pragmatic competence quiz phase two.

14. Analyses of students' results and of the effectiveness of listening activities to promote pragmatic development: to be detailed in section 3.4.4.

Overall, lessons consisted of exam techniques, strategies and the development of language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking). Receptive skills were developed via a strategy-based approach whereas productive skills included the analysis and practice of discursal features. On average, every lesson would cover two language skills and include some linguistic input (grammatical, functional or lexical). Students were expected to do a considerable load of homework but not all did.

3.4.3 Instruments

The assessment of students' linguistic and pragmatic abilities relied on the following instruments: IELTS mock tests, IELTS band scores and pragmatic competence quizzes.

1. Mock tests: The IELTS examination was the instrument chosen to measure students' language competence due to its international recognition and also because it tests candidates' abilities in language skills rather than their knowledge of grammatical or lexical aspects. IELTS comprises four tests: Listening (approximately thirty minutes), Reading (60 minutes), Writing (60 minutes) and Speaking (11-14 minutes). During the first semester of 2009, students took the following full mock tests: Practice Test (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.127-159) and Tests One to Four (MCCARTER & ASH, 2003, p.8-124). The IELTS examination components can be summarised as follows (IELTS HANDBOOK 2007, p. 6-12):

a) Listening: There are 40 questions and 4 sections. It is recorded on a CD and it is played **once** only. Candidates are given time to read the questions before each section starts. The two first sections are concerned with social needs. There is a conversation between two speakers and then a monologue. Examples include a conversation about travel arrangements and a speech about students' services on a university campus. The final two sections are concerned with situations related more closely to educational and training contexts. There is a conversation of up to four people and then a further monologue. Examples include a conversation between a tutor and a student and a lecture of general academic interest.

The IELTS listening test is designed to reflect real work and study listening situations. Its level of difficulty increases through the paper. A range of native-speaker like accents is used reflecting the international usage of IELTS. Tasks vary from multiple choice, short-answer questions, sentence completion, note, summary, flow chart and table completion, labelling a diagram, classification and matching. Listening sub-skills include listening for gist, listening for specific information, understanding speaker attitude and opinion and inferring.

b) Reading: there are 40 questions based on three reading passages with a total of 2,000 to 2,750 words. Academic reading passages are taken from magazines, newspapers, journals and books whereas general training texts are taken from advertisements, official documents and so forth. Tasks include the same ones described in the listening test with the addition of matching headings for identified paragraphs, identification of writer's views (*yes, no, not given*) and identification of information in the text (*true, false, not given*), among others.

c) Writing: Candidates complete two tasks in an hour. Candidates are advised to spend 20 minutes on task one, which requires a text of 150 words, and 40 minutes on task two, which

requires a text of 250 words. Candidates taking the academic writing version have to describe some information from a graph, a pie chart, etc., in their own words and also write an argumentative essay. The general training version includes a letter and an argumentative essay as well.

d) Speaking: it consists of a face-to-face interview with an examiner and includes three parts. All speaking tests are recorded for further assessment purposes. In part one, candidates answer general questions about themselves, their homes, families, jobs and studies, and a range of familiar topics. It lasts between 4 and 5 minutes. In part two, candidates are given a verbal prompt on a card and are asked to talk on a particular topic. Candidates are given one minute to prepare their notes before they start their long turn, which may take from 1 to 2 minutes. Part two lasts between 3 and 4 minutes. In part three, candidates further discuss more abstract issues and concepts thematically linked to the topic prompt in part two. Part three lasts between 4 and 5 minutes.

Research indicates that IELTS candidates usually perform the following speech functions during the test: providing personal and non-personal information, expressing and justifying opinions, explaining, suggesting, speculating, narrating and paraphrasing, comparing, contrasting, summarising, repairing a conversation, expressing a preference and analysing. Candidates are assessed in four analytical criteria: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation.

2. IELTS band scores: IELTS band descriptors enable us to see how features like the understanding of meaning, the notion of appropriateness and the notion of fluency (managing oral discourse), which are present in the alternative model of pragmatic competence construct proposed in chapter two, relate to the different levels of linguistic competence. The IELTS bands can be summarised as follows (IELTS HANDBOOK 2007, p. 4):

1. Band 9 (expert user): has fully operational command of the language including appropriacy, accuracy, fluency and complete understanding.

2. Band 8 (very good user): has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

- 3. Band 7 (good user):** has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
- 4. Band 6 (competent user):** has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Is able to use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
- 5. Band 5 (modest user):** has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
- 6. Band 4 (limited user):** basic competence is limited to familiar situations and has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Unable to use complex language.
- 7. Band 3 (extremely limited user):** conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
- 8. Band 2 (intermittent user):** no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulaic language in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty in understanding spoken and written English.
- 9. Band 1 (non user):** essentially unable to use language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

3. Pragmatic competence quizzes: Röver (2005) analyses the effectiveness of two instruments used to measure pragmatic ability: discourse completion tests (DCTs) and multiple choice questionnaires. DCTs consist of situational prompts and spaces for respondents to write down what they would say in those situations. Although DCTs are the most popular instrument to collect pragmatic data, they have limitations as they inform researchers of what subjects think they would say in a given situation but not necessarily what respondents say if immersed in the situation. However, Röver (2005) highlights that DCTs are a highly practical way to gather information on subjects' knowledge of specific pragmatic features, such as the production of speech acts (see pragmatic competence quiz-phase one, part three).

Multiple choice questionnaires, on the other hand, are less popular than DCTs or role-plays as pragmatic instruments but are by far the most popular language testing instrument. The analysis of multiple-choice questionnaires is generally less complicated and time-consuming than that of DCTs. Their design, however, is more complex. If used for assessment purposes,

all options except the correct one should be distractors. The pragmatic competence quizzes designed are a combination of DCTs, multiple choice and matching exercises. Both quizzes as well as their correction keys are reproduced in **appendices A, B, C and D**.

a) Pragmatic competence quiz (phase one): it consisted of 5 parts and amounted to 30 marks.

Part One

Input: transcript of an informal conversation between friends discussing about studying with the Open University, taken from:

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/activities/attitudes_opinions_tapescript.htm>

Task: students read the transcript and answered 6 three-option multiple-choice questions and an open question whose testing aims were as follows:

Question 1: interpretation of one semantic inference

Question 2: recognition of register via lexis

Question 3: recognition of speaker purpose

Question 4: gist and ability to paraphrase

Questions 5 and 6: interpretation of pragmatic inferences

Marking: one mark each= total 6 marks

Part Two

Input: 14 utterances taken from “Insight into IELTS” listening exercises (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999, p.160-175) and 14 descriptions of illocutionary force.

Task: students were asked to match the utterances to their corresponding communicative function. The main aim of the exercise was to test students’ ability to recognise the illocutionary force of different functional exponents.

Marking: 0.5 mark each= total 7 marks

Part Three

Input: 8 descriptions of communicative situations adapted from “English File - Upper Intermediate teacher’s book” (OXENDEN&LATHAM-KOENIG, 2001, p.123).

Task: students were supposed to read the situations and write down what they would say. The main aim was to test students' ability to produce speech acts according to the situation, the degree of formality and the degree of imposition of face threatening acts.

Marking: 1 mark each: 0.5 appropriacy/ 0.5 content = total 8 marks (Students were not penalised for grammatical mistakes)

Part Four

Input: transcript of a talk given to a group of students taken from:

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/activities/referencing_words_work2.htm>

Task: students were supposed to read the transcript and write down what four referencing words referred to. Students were given an example. The main aim was to test students' ability in reference assignment, namely anaphoric reference.

Marking: 1 mark each= total 4 marks

Part Five

Input: verbal prompts on a card taken from "Instant IELTS" (BROOK-HART, 2004, p.121).

Topic: describing a newspaper or magazine they enjoyed reading.

Task: students were asked to imagine they were talking the IELTS speaking test, part two, and write down what they would say to the examiner, considering the one to two-minute time frame. The aim of this section was to assess students' ability to reproduce monologic discourse. Sts were supposed to use signpost words to structure their discourse and use accurate and appropriate samples of language in order to address all elements indicated in the verbal prompts.

Marking: 1 mark for signpost words

1 mark for accuracy (a more formal talk is expected to include accurate language)

1 mark for appropriacy

2 marks for content

Total 5 marks

b) Pragmatic competence quiz (phase two): it consisted of 5 parts and amounted to 30 marks.

Part One

Input: six situational contexts adapted from “Testing Pragmatics” (RÖVER, 2005, p. 122-125).

Task: students read the situations and answered 6 four-option multiple-choice questions. The aim of the exercise was to test students’ understanding of conversational implicatures.

Marking: one mark each= total 6 marks

Part Two

Input: transcript of a conversation among three students in a study group working on a class assignment for their economics class taken from:

<<http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/learners/ielts-preparation/mock-papers/listening/econ-group#tabs-102480-3>>

Task: students read the transcript and answered 7 three-option multiple-choice questions whose testing objectives were as follows:

Question 1: recognition of speaker opinion

Question 2: deducing cause and effect

Question 3: interpreting one semantic inference

Questions 4 to 7: deducing reasons

Marking: one mark each= total 7 marks

Part Three

Input: 14 utterances and 14 descriptions of illocutionary force.

Task: students were asked to match the utterances to their corresponding communicative function. The main aim of the exercise was to test students’ ability to recognise the illocutionary force of different functional exponents.

Marking: 0.5 mark each= total 7 marks

Part Four

Input: transcript of a dialogue between two students discussing the pros and cons of working from home taken from: “Instant IELTS” (BROOK-HART, 2004, p.128).

Task: students were supposed to read the transcript and write down what five referencing words referred to. Students were given an example. The main aim was to test students’ ability in reference assignment, namely anaphoric reference.

Marking: 1 mark each=total 5 marks

Part Five

Input: verbal prompts on a card taken from “Instant IELTS” (BROOK-HART, 2004, p.120).

Topic: describing their favourite shop.

Task: Students were asked to imagine they were talking the IELTS speaking test, part two, and write down what they would say to the examiner, considering the one to two-minute time frame. The aim of this part was to assess students’ ability to reproduce monologic discourse. Sts were supposed to use signpost words to structure their discourse and use accurate and appropriate samples of language in order to address all elements indicated in the verbal prompts.

Marking: 1 mark for signpost words

1 mark for accuracy (a more formal talk is expected to include accurate language)

1 mark for appropriacy

2 marks for content

Total 5 marks

In the next section, the results of the above assessment instruments will be described and compared.

3.4.4 Results

This section presents five tables summarising the data obtained from the previously described assessment instruments. **Table 1** shows the performance of individual students in each language skill in the IELTS examination at two distinctive moments, at the beginning of the semester (mock 1) and at the end (mock 5). **Table 2** presents a comparison between mock 1 and mock 5 average scores. **Tables 3** and **4** detail the test part results and average scores from the pragmatic competence quizzes phases one and two, respectively. **Table 5** shows a comparison between listening and speaking IELTS results and pragmatic competence results.

Subject	Mock 1				Mock 5			
	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
1	4	5.5	6.5	5.5	5	6	6	6
2	4	6	5	6.5	6	6	5.5	7
3	4	6	6	6.5	5.5	6	6	7
4	4.5	6	6	6.5	5.5	6.5	6.5	7
5	5.5	6.5	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.5
6	6	6.5	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	7	7
7	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	7	7.5	6.5	7
8	6	6.5	6	7	7.5	7.5	5.5	7

Table 1: IELTS mock test results 2009

Mock 1 results evidenced the heterogeneity of the group in different language skills. **Listening** results had the largest spread of all skills, two and a half bands. Reading scores, on the other hand, had the lowest spread of all skills, only one band. Writing and **speaking results** had a spread of one and a half bands. In the **listening paper**, only three out of eight subjects achieved the minimum passing band (6) whereas in the other papers, seven out of eight subjects were within a passing band. Based on mock test 1 results, **listening** was indicated as a priority.

Mock 5 results followed a similar pattern of spread as mock 1, with the exception of reading: **listening** had a spread of two and a half bands whereas reading, writing and **speaking** had a spread of one and a half bands. **Listening results** varied significantly from **mock 1 results**: five out of eight subjects managed to achieve a satisfactory passing band. All subjects had successful results in reading and **speaking**. Curiously, one subject who had previously achieved a satisfactory result in the writing paper worsened her performance. This may be accounted for by the hypothesis that the course tutor may have been slightly more lenient in her marking of mock test 1 compositions.

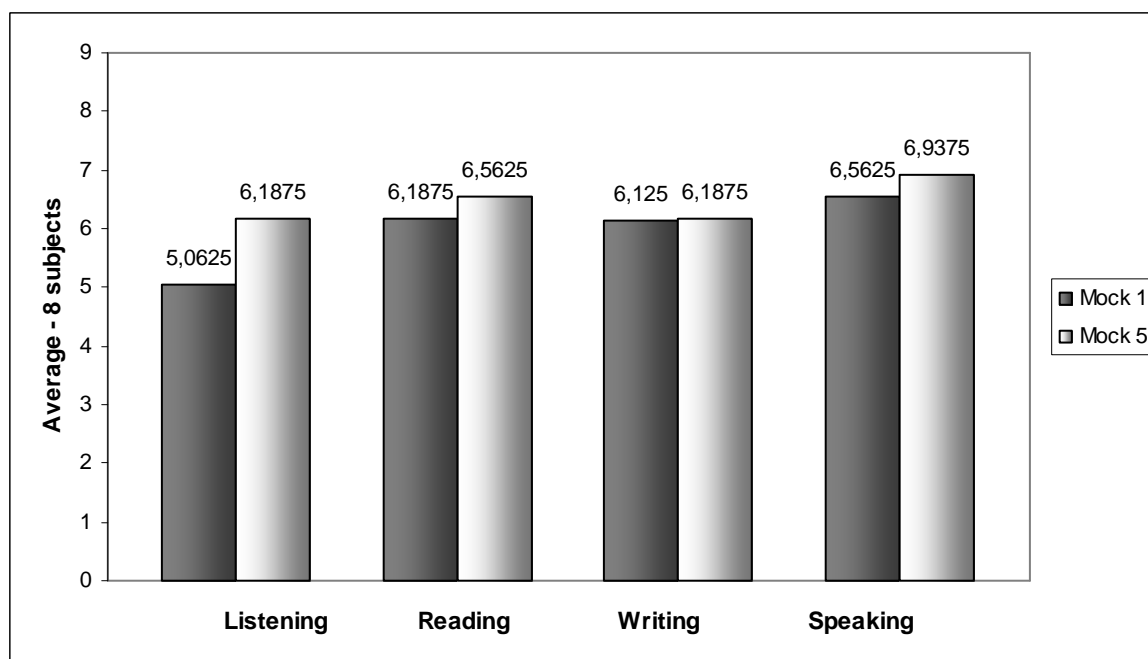


Table 2: Comparison between mock 1 and mock 5 average score

Overall, subjects' performance improved in all language skills. As we can see from the average scores, **listening** results rose substantially, 1.1250 band points. Both reading and **speaking results** presented a similar growth of 0, 3750 band points. However, **speaking results** were at a higher band. Conversely, writing results remained stable, presenting a minor growth of 0, 0625 band points.

Subject	Part 1: 6 marks	Part 2: 7 marks	Part 3: 8 marks	Part 4 : 4 marks	Part 5: 5 marks	Average: 30 marks
1	4	1.5	6.5	2.75	4.5	64.16%
2	2.5	2	7.25	1.5	3	54.16%
3	4	3	7.25	2	3	64.16%
4	4	1.5	6.75	2.75	3.75	62.50%
5	2	4.5	6.25	3	3.75	65%
6	4.5	6	7.25	3	4.25	83.33%
7	5	6	6.75	1.5	3.25	75%
8	3.5	5	5.5	2.5	3	65%

Table 3: Pragmatic competence quiz phase one results 2009

Pragmatic competence quiz phase one results highlighted students' weaknesses and strengths in terms of **pragmatic phenomena**. In **part one**, subjects' major difficulties were related to the **interpretation of pragmatic inferences**. All subjects were able to interpret the **semantic inference** in question 1 and to recognise **register** in question 2. While five out of eight subjects were able to identify **speaker purpose** in question 3, only two and three subjects were able to interpret the **pragmatic inferences** from questions 5 and 6, respectively. Four out of eight subjects managed to fully **paraphrase information based on gist** in question 4.

Part two results had the largest spread of marks, ranging from 1.5 to 6 marks and indicating subjects' major difficulty in **recognising the illocutionary force of utterances**. Four out of eight subjects were able to identify less than 43% of the illocutionary force of the 14 utterances whereas two subjects successfully recognised 67% of the illocutionary acts on average, and two subjects succeeded in identifying 85% of the illocutionary acts. Conversely, **part 3 results** highlighted subjects' ability to **produce illocutionary acts** according to the situation, to the degree of formality and to the degree of imposition of FTAs. Subjects' appropriate language usage ranged from 68% to 90%. Overall, the comparison between **part 2** and **part 3** results indicated that the **interpretation of the illocutionary force of utterances** posed a problem to 50% of the subjects whereas the **production of illocutionary acts** was successfully and appropriately carried out by 100% of the subjects.

Part four results indicated subjects' difficulty in **reference assignment**, namely **anaphoric reference**. Two out of eight subjects successfully identified 37.5% of the reference words, one subject identified 50%, three subjects identified 65% on average and two subjects identified 75%. **Part five results** demonstrated subjects' ability to **manage monologic discourse**. Three subjects achieved a minimum of 60% of appropriate language usage; three subjects obtained an average score of 70% and two subjects obtained an average score of 87.5%. Generally speaking, subjects were able to cover all items expressed in the rubrics. Major problems in weaker performances were related to **inappropriate register** and lack of **signpost words**.

Overall, **pragmatic competence phase one results** showed that subjects' performance was considerably more satisfactory in tasks which aimed at **pragmatic production** while tasks

involving **pragmatic comprehension** were particularly more challenging for, at least, half the subjects.

Subject	Part 1: 6 marks	Part 2: 7 marks	Part 3: 7 marks	Part 4: 5 marks	Part 5: 5 marks	Average: 30 marks
1	5	6	3.5	4	3.5	73%
2	6	4	5	3.5	3.25	72.50%
3	3	6	4.5	4	3.5	70%
4	6	5	3.5	5	4.25	76.16%
5						
6						
7						
8	5	6	4	4	2.5	71.66%

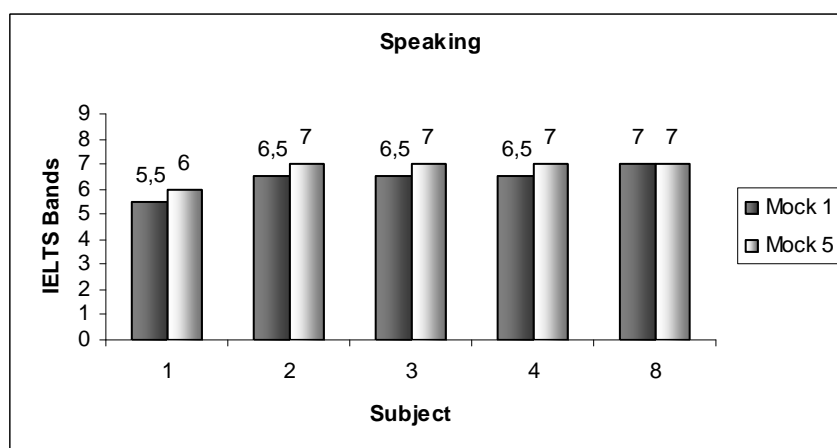
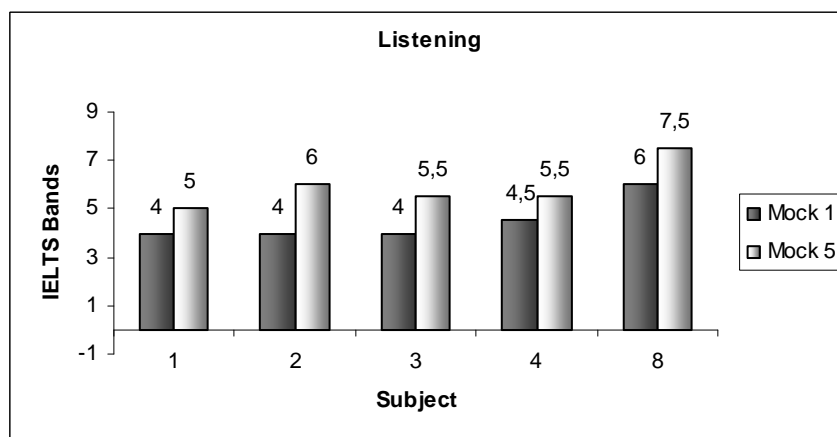
Table 4: Pragmatic competence quiz phase two results 2009

Pragmatic competence quiz phase two results indicated an overall improvement in subjects' interpretation of **pragmatic meaning**. In **part 1**, two out of five subjects correctly interpreted five out of the six **conversational implicatures** while two subjects were able to interpret the full range of implicatures. Only subject 3 faced major problems with conversational implicatures. In **part 2**, subjects' interpretation of **pragmatic meaning** varied from 57% to 85% of success rate. Question 1 proved to be the most challenging **inferential task**: only two out of five subjects were able to **recognise speaker opinion**. In question 2, four out of five subjects were able to **deduce cause and effect**. In question three, three out of five subjects were able to **interpret one semantic inference**. **Deducing reasons** (questions 4 to 7) proved to be the least challenging inferential task: all subjects had a successful rate of 100% in questions 4 and 7.

Part 3 followed exactly the same format as **pragmatic competence quiz phase one, part 2**. With the exception of subject 8, students' **ability to recognise the illocutionary force of utterances** improved considerably. Out of the seven marks, subjects' scores rose by 1.5 marks (subject 3), by 2 full marks (subjects 1 and 4) and by three full marks (subject 2). Subject 8 score fell by 1 mark. **Part 4** carried a further point than the similar exercise in the pragmatic competence quiz phase one, part 4. Subjects' ability to **identify anaphoric**

reference rose substantially: subject 1 from 68.75% to 80%, subject 2 from 37.5% to 70%, subject 3 from 50% to 80%, subject 4 from 68.75% to 100% and subject 8 from 62.5% to 80%. **Part 5 results** showed an unexpected fluctuation of performance. While subjects 2, 3 and 4 slightly improved their ability to **manage monologic discourse**, subjects 1 and 8 presented weaker performances. However, four out of five subjects included more **signpost words** in their monologues.

Overall, subjects' pragmatic competence results increased as follows: subject 1 by 8.84 percentage points, subject 2 by 18.34 percentage points, subject 3 by 5.84 percentage points, subject 4 by 13.66 percentage points and subject 8 by 6.66 percentage points.



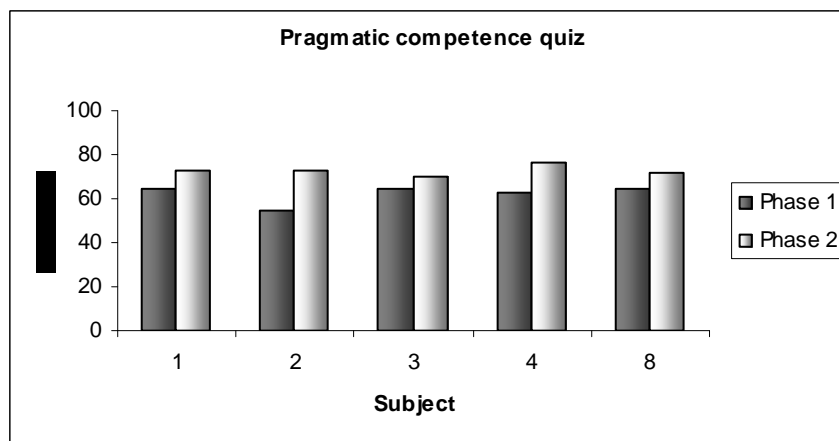


Table 5: Comparison between IELTS listening and speaking results and pragmatic competence results

As we can observe from the above data, all five subjects improved their performance in the listening comprehension tests and in the pragmatic competence quizzes. While listening results rose substantially, pragmatic competence results presented a growth of between 5.84 to 18.34 percentage points. Four out of five subjects improved their speaking performance by a half band whereas subject 8 speaking results remained stable, which may be accounted for by the fact that his mock 1 result was already at a higher band (7).

To sum up, the results of the assessment instruments indicate that the classroom project main aims were met. At the end of the project, learners had improved their overall level of listening proficiency by practising specific listening sub-skills via a strategy-based approach and had also improved their overall pragmatic knowledge. However, the degree to which the listening activities enhanced learners' linguistic and pragmatic sub-competencies varied according to learners' initial weaknesses and strengths with regard to oral skills and pragmatic knowledge.

Subject 2, whose initial IELTS and pragmatic competence quiz phase one results evidenced a weaker linguistic and pragmatic performance compared to the other group members, presented the most significant improvement in both listening and pragmatic competence results. Subject 8, whose initial IELTS results indicated stronger linguistic abilities compared to the group members but whose pragmatic results demonstrated an average level of

pragmatic knowledge, also improved her listening results by 1.5 bands but presented a minor growth in her pragmatic results.

All things considered, it is possible to conclude that the **listening activities** subjects were exposed to directly enhanced their **inferential pragmatic sub-competency**. All subjects considerably improved their listening scores and their pragmatic comprehension abilities in areas such as the **interpretation of pragmatic inferences** and **conversational implicatures**, the **recognition of the illocutionary force of utterances** and **reference assignment**. With regard to the **conversational-interactional** and **sociolinguistic sub-competencies**, results were inconclusive. Subjects' initial pragmatic results indicated that learners were already capable of **producing speech acts** according to the communicative situation and to the degree of formality and the degree of imposition of FTAs. Thus, the production of speech acts was not tested in the subsequent pragmatic quiz. As far as **managing monologic discourse** is concerned, subjects improved their ability to use **signpost words** but their overall performance varied. Due to the nature of the IELTS speaking test, the ability to manage **dialogic discourse** was not developed during the project.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In chapter one, an overview of pragmatic theories addressing the theme “inferences and verbal communication” was presented and pragmatic phenomena affecting utterance meaning were highlighted. It was concluded that pragmatic inferences such as speech acts and conversational implicatures are embedded in verbal communication and pose a challenge to second language learners who wish to communicate in L2 contexts. In chapter two, two frameworks of communicative competence constructs were described as well as their characterisation of pragmatic competence. The importance of pragmatic instruction was highlighted and ways to promote pragmatic development were indicated. In addition, an alternative framework for pragmatic competence in verbal communication was proposed, acknowledging the importance of pragmatic comprehension and consisting of three sub-competencies: inferential, conversational-interactional and sociolinguistic.

In chapter three, listening comprehension activities were proposed as an alternative methodological approach to pragmatic development. Krashen's input/comprehension hypothesis (1985) was detailed and strengthened the assumptions that listening is fundamental to speaking since it provides input for the learner and that comprehension precedes production. However, it was acknowledged that other pedagogical interventions were also necessary to enhance all the aspects comprising the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies presented in chapter two.

The nature of listening comprehension processes was discussed via a discourse analysis perspective (CELCE-MURCIA & OLSHTAIN, 2000). Bottom-up comprehension processes were said to involve prior knowledge of the language system in terms of phonology, grammar and vocabulary and to encompass the decoding of sounds in a linear fashion, which was also referred to as "listener as tape recorder view" (ANDERSON & LYNCH, 1988). Top-down processes were reported to involve the activation of schematic knowledge and contextual knowledge. It was suggested that top-down features get filtered through pragmatic knowledge to assist in the processing of oral discourse. It was concluded that the bottom-up model does not suffice to make discourse comprehensible to listeners and requires the benefit of and the interaction with top-down information.

Strategy-based listening (MENDELSON, 1995, 1998) was proposed as a methodological approach to listening, which integrates both bottom-up and top-down processes and allows learners to compensate for bottom-up processing difficulties such as the decoding of phonological segments. It was stated that in strategy-based listening, learners are exposed to both pre-listening activities, which enable them to activate their background knowledge, and to listening activities, which give them the opportunity to practise specific strategies or micro-skills. Taxonomies of conversational and academic listening micro-skills were detailed (RICHARDS, 1985) and highlighted pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral discourse. Taxonomies of general listening activity-types were also presented (RICHARDS, 1985, UR, 1984).

Ways to promote pragmatic development via listening activities were discussed and exemplified via the description of listening activities from an IELTS coursebook (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999). The activities integrated an empirical project carried out with a group of eight learners preparing for the IELTS examination in the south of Brazil in the first

semester of 2009. The description of these activities included a pre-listening stage and attempted to demonstrate how top-down and bottom –up strategies may be combined in order to foster pragmatic understanding.

The empirical project aims, subjects, procedures, corpus, assessment instruments and results were described and its findings led to the following conclusions:

1. Subjects' initial assessment of language abilities via mock test 1 indicated that listening was the language skill which posed the most difficulty to learners.
2. The IELTS listening activities described in section 3.3 provided learners with pragmatic input, previously highlighted in the characterisation of the pragmatic sub-competencies in chapter two, sections 2.5.1, 2.5.2 and 2.5.3;
3. Pragmatic input embedded in the extracts was activated following a strategy-based approach to listening, which encompassed both pre-listening activities and listening activities targeting at specific listening micro-skills;
4. By doing these activities, all subjects raised their overall level of listening proficiency substantially, as suggested by the comparison between mock 1 and mock 5 results;
5. By doing these activities, all subjects improved their pragmatic comprehension in areas such as the interpretation of pragmatic inferences and conversational implicatures, the recognition of the illocutionary force of utterances and reference assignment, as suggested by the comparison between pragmatic competence quizzes results (phase one and phase two);
6. The listening activities subjects were exposed to directly enhanced their inferential competence, as suggested by the comparison between mock 1 and mock 5 results and pragmatic competence quizzes results (phases one and two);
7. The listening activities subjects were exposed to did not seem to have significant impact on their conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic sub-competencies.

Based on these findings, we can say that the empirical project corroborated the following assumptions: in order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication; semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills. The listening comprehension activities learners were exposed to included the activation of pragmatic knowledge embedded in the dialogue exchanges, as we can observe from the description of

the listening activities and the pragmatic analyses presented in chapter two. In addition, subjects' overall level of listening proficiency improved considerably during the project, which may be accounted for by the fact that learners were given a number of opportunities to infer pragmatic meanings, among other listening micro-skills.

All things considered, we can conclude that listening comprehension activities are potentially capable of directly enhancing the inferential pragmatic sub-competency via a strategy-based approach to listening. While pre-listening activities can activate learners' content and formal schemata, listening activities focusing on specific conversational and academic listening micro-skills can draw learners' attention to pragmatic phenomena embedded in verbal communication. However, the results of the empirical project were inconclusive as to the extent to which listening comprehension activities are potentially capable of enhancing the conversational-interactional and sociolinguistic sub-competencies. Therefore, further investigation on the effect of listening comprehension activities on these sub-competencies seems to be required as well as more specific assessment instruments.

CONCLUSION

The subject of this thesis was the enhancement of pragmatic competencies via listening activities. This study investigated pragmatic phenomena embedded in verbal communication which may pose a problem to learners when communicating in L2 contexts. It also addressed how inferences are embedded in verbal communication, the abilities and the pragmatic phenomena which constitute pragmatic competence constructs, the importance of pragmatic comprehension considering learners' communicative needs, how teachers can promote pragmatic development in L2 learning situations and the role of listening comprehension activities in the enhancement of pragmatic sub-competencies.

Chapter one indicated that verbal communication involves both coding and inferential processes and stressed the role inferences play in verbal communication. Semantic inferences were defined as the decoding of utterances conveying propositions via the application of phonological, syntactic, morphological and lexical rules whereas pragmatic inferences were said to relate to the Gricean notion of implicatures (1975). The overview of pragmatic theories addressing the theme "inferences and verbal communication" highlighted pragmatic phenomena which affect utterance meaning. Speech acts were defined as acts performed via utterances and whose illocutionary force conveys speakers' intended meanings (AUSTIN, 1962, SEARLE, 1969). Conventional implicatures were reported to be determined by the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered while conversational implicatures were said to relate to what speakers implicate beyond saying and to be associated with the existence of a co-operative principle and conversational maxims (GRICE, 1975). Face threatening acts were defined as acts produced by speakers which intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and or of the speaker (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987). Four politeness strategies were claimed to be used by speakers in order to produce FTAs and minimise their effect or degree of imposition. Contextualisation was referred to as a deduction based on the union of new information and old information and as an essential ingredient for the characterisation of relevance (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995). Generalized conversational implicatures were revisited as default inferences or presumptive meanings which capture our intuitions about a preferred or normal interpretation whereas particularized conversational implicatures were acknowledged to be context-dependent (LEVINSON 2000).

Chapter two exemplified the above phenomena via the description of communicative competence constructs and the characterisation of an alternative framework of pragmatic competence. Communicative competence frameworks detailed the abilities second language learners need to develop in order to successfully communicate in L2 contexts and included different notions of pragmatic competence. In Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) model, sociolinguistic competence was suggested to represent the notion of pragmatic competence as it includes both appropriateness of meaning and form (NIEZGODA & RÖVER, 2001). In Bachman's framework (1990), pragmatic competence specifically encompassed two components: the illocutionary and the sociolinguistic sub-competencies. Both models accounted for written and oral modes of discourse. Different methodological approaches to pragmatic development stressed the importance of providing learners with pragmatic input (KASPER, 1997, BARDOVI-HARLIG & MAHAM-TAYLOR, 2003). It was acknowledged that most research on interlanguage pragmatics focuses on pragmatic production. The importance of pragmatic comprehension in the second language programme was also highlighted: pragmatic comprehension enables learners to understand speakers' intentions, to interpret speakers' feelings and attitudes, to differentiate speech acts and assign illocutionary force, to recognise sarcasm, jokes, and other facetious behaviour and to be able to respond appropriately (GARCIA, 2004).

In order to characterise what gets in the way of learners comprehending and producing pragmatic meaning, an alternative pragmatic competence framework was proposed, specifically addressing verbal communication and consisting of three sub-competencies: inferential competence (representing the notion of pragmatic comprehension), conversational-interactive competence (representing the notion of pragmatic production) and sociolinguistic competence (representing the notion of appropriateness and interacting with both dimensions). Inferential competence was defined as the ability to successfully interpret pragmatic inferences such as conversational implicatures and speech acts, including the assignment of the illocutionary force of speech acts, and being aided by linguistic and paralinguistic features. Conversational-interactive competence was detailed as the ability to produce illocutionary acts according to speakers' intention. It also included the ability to manage dialogic and monologic discourse in order to perform "talk as interaction", "talk as transaction" and "talk as performance" functions of speaking (RICHARDS, 2006). Sociolinguistic competence was described as the ability to use language to perform speech acts appropriately according to the communicative situation, including an awareness of

degrees of formality and of politeness (CANALE & SWAIN, 1980, CANALE, 1983). It also encompassed the ability to interpret cultural references, figures of speech and to recognise differences in dialect, variety, register and naturalness (BACHMAN, 1990). The illustration of these sub-competencies included the pragmatic analyses of listening transcripts taken from IELTS coursebooks and online resources.

In chapter three, the role of listening comprehension activities as an alternative methodological approach to pragmatic development was investigated. Two second language acquisition principles highlighted that listening is fundamental to speaking since it provides input for the learner and that comprehension precedes production (KRASHEN, 1985). The status of the listening skill in different methodological EFL approaches was detailed and it was acknowledged that listening is assuming greater and greater importance in the language programme (NUNAN, 2002). The investigation of the nature of listening comprehension processes indicated that listening has both bottom-up and top-down processing-skills (CELCE-MURCIA & OLSHTAIN, 2000, NUNAN, 2002). Bottom-up processing skills involve prior knowledge of the language system in terms of phonology, syntax and lexis whereas top-down processing skills include the activation of schematic and contextual knowledge. A strategy-based approach to listening (MENDELSON, 1995, 1998) demonstrated how to integrate both bottom-up and top-down processes in order to make discourse comprehensible to listeners. Taxonomies of conversational and academic listening micro-skills (RICHARDS, 1985) included strategies aimed at highlighting pragmatic phenomena embedded in oral discourse.

The final part of chapter three illustrated ways to approach listening activities in order to promote pragmatic development. The description of listening comprehension activities taken from “Insight into IELTS” (JAKEMAN & MCDOWELL, 1999) included pre-listening and while-listening stages. It demonstrated how top-down and bottom-up strategies can be combined in order to foster pragmatic understanding via a strategy-based approach, focusing on specific listening micro-skills. In addition, the empirical project included a classroom project with a group of eight learners preparing for the IELTS examination at a language institute in the south of Brazil in the first semester of 2009. Its results corroborated the following assumptions:

1. In order to achieve listening proficiency, learners need practice in making inferences as semantic and pragmatic inferences are embedded in verbal communication. The listening extracts subjects were exposed to included a number of pragmatic phenomena (highlighted in chapter two under the characterisation of pragmatic sub-competencies); subjects' overall listening proficiency improved considerably during the project (evidenced by mock test 1 and mock test 5 results), which may be accounted for by the fact that learners were given a number of opportunities to infer pragmatic meanings.

2. Semantic and pragmatic aspects affecting the meaning of utterances can be highlighted via comprehension activities focusing on specific listening sub-skills. The listening activities developed aimed at the following micro-skills (RICHARDS, 1985): to recognise vocabulary in core conversational topics and to infer situations, participants and purposes; to identify and reconstruct topics from ongoing discourse involving one or two speakers; to recognise the communicative functions of utterances, according to the situations and participants; to infer links and connections; to recognise the function of intonation to signal the information structure of utterances; to distinguish between literal and implied meanings; to make use of paralinguistic clues to work out meanings; to identify speakers via turn-taking conventions; to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter; to recognise the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances; to recognise cohesive devices in spoken discourse and to identify relationships among units within discourse.

The final hypothesis from the empirical project was partially corroborated: following a strategy-based approach, listening activities can directly and indirectly enhance the inferential, conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic pragmatic sub-competencies proposed in chapter two. The listening activities subjects were exposed to directly enhanced their inferential sub-competency, evidenced by the comparison between mock 1 and mock 5 test results and the data obtained from the pragmatic competence quizzes, phases one and two. Subjects improved their pragmatic comprehension in areas such as the interpretation of inferences and conversational implicatures, the recognition of the illocutionary force of utterances and reference assignment. However, the empirical project results were inconclusive with regard to the conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic sub-competencies due to insufficient data. Further investigation on the role of listening comprehension activities as a methodological approach to develop the conversational-interactive and sociolinguistic

abilities seems to be required as well as on other alternative ways to promote pragmatic development.

To sum up, we can say that listening comprehension activities are potentially capable of enhancing learners' inferential competence. Second language teachers who are aware of the importance of pragmatic development and who wish to improve their learners' pragmatic comprehension skills in L2 may adopt listening comprehension activities as a methodological approach. However, in order to highlight pragmatic phenomena embedded in verbal communication, teachers face the challenge of selecting suitable listening activities which provide comprehensible, focused input, purposeful listening tasks, "teach" rather than "test" listening skills and feature authentic samples of oral discourse. In addition, listening activities should include both pre-listening and while-listening stages as the former enable learners to activate content and formal schemata on the listening topic and set a purpose for the listening event whereas the latter give learners practice in bottom-up and top-down processing micro-skills.

Finally, this thesis also offers second language teachers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with pragmatic theories addressing "beyond saying" and their theoretical constructs. Although speech acts are usually developed in the EFL classrooms under the notion of functional language, not all teachers are aware of the impact of the illocutionary force on pragmatic comprehension. In addition, this study presents some different views on the abilities learners need to develop in order to achieve their communicative purposes. The communicative competence constructs and the notions of pragmatic competence presented offer instructors a range of interesting and challenging teaching objectives to choose from in order to help learners achieve their communicative objectives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Pragmatic Competence Quiz – Phase 1

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE QUIZ – PHASE 1

Name:

Date:

I- Read the dialogue exchanges below and choose the most appropriate answer for each question considering the context given.

Context: two people discussing about studying with the Open University

(A): Hello, Paul.

(B): Oh Rachel, I'm glad I've bumped into you. I was going to give you a ring.

(A): Anything special, or just for a chat?

1. Where are Paul and Rachel?

- a) over the phone
- b) at university
- c) somewhere face to face

2. Their conversation has a/an..... style.

- a) formal
- b) informal
- c) neutral

(B): Actually I'm thinking about doing a degree at the Open University, the way you did, 'cause I like the fact that you can study at home and fit it round a job. But I could do with some advice. The thing is, though, that I've never learnt how to organise my work or do research, so I really ought to do something about it. Have you got any ideas?

(A): Well I found some of the books that the Open University produces are good, particularly "The Good Study Guide". That's a very practical introduction.

3. Paul ...

- a) wants some advice on how to join the Open University.
- b) is studying and working at the same time.
- c) wants to improve his self-study skills.

4. What do you think the Open University is?

(B): And what does it cover?

(A): Well the obvious things, like writing, note-taking ... There's a section on working with numbers, which I learnt a lot from, but you should be all right with that. Then there's reading [slightly dismissively]. But actually I got an awful lot out of the section on how to use video cassettes, far more than I expected. And of course the bit on preparing for exams, which I read over and over again.

(B): Yeah I could certainly do with that: I always used to go to pieces under the pressure, and I'm sure it's because I hadn't learnt the right techniques. I just used to stay up all night trying to memorise facts.

(A): Not the best thing to do!

(B): And reading, well I think I can cope with that. But I'd probably benefit from the note-taking part: mine always end up being longer than the original! I've done a course on using video, so that probably wouldn't be so interesting. I need to learn a lot about writing though, because I haven't had to do any essays for ages.

5. What sections of the book did Rachel find most useful?

- a) Working with numbers, videos and exam preparation.
- b) Working with numbers, reading and exam preparation.
- c) Working with numbers, reading and videos.

6. What study skills does Paul think he needs to work on?

- a) Reading, note-taking and writing.
- b) Note-taking, writing and preparing for exams.
- c) Note-taking, video and writing.

Tapescript taken from:

http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/activities/attitudes_opinions_tapescript.htm

Questions 5 and 6 have been adapted from:

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/data/Attitudes%20and%20Opinions%20worksheet.pdf>

II- Match the exponents to their communicative function:

1. Did you know you were exceeding the speed limit when you came over the hill right now?*
2. Have you got any money on you?
3. I'm afraid I haven't been able to finish the history essay, and I was hoping that you could give me an extension.*
4. I'd rather **you** told him the news.
5. Do you think this was the right thing to say, given the circumstances?
6. Would you like something to drink with our meal?*
7. Firstly, there's the Highlight Cruise, then we do the Noon cruise and we also have our Coffee Cruise.*
8. If I were you I'd speak to him immediately.
9. I thought **you**'d gone into computing.
10. Guess who I saw today?*
11. Certainly madam, provided it hasn't been worn and that you have a receipt.*
12. Let me have a look. It may be waiting to be put back on the shelves.*
13. Fine, look, I was wondering if you were free on Saturday evening.*
14. Anyway, I still think that the government should pay for this kind of thing.*

- () avoiding responsibility
- () taking an order
- () expressing disapproval
- () subtle criticism
- () expressing a possibility
- () expressing a condition
- () expressing an opinion
- () making a direct request
- () making an indirect request
- () giving information
- () correcting information
- () giving advice
- () telling news
- () inviting

* Utterances taken from "Insight into IELTS"

III- Read the situations below and write down what you would say:

1. You are at a restaurant. The waitress has brought you steak but you ordered chicken.
2. You are in a friend's house and need to use the phone.
3. A colleague of yours has just been promoted. You want to congratulate him/her.
4. You are staying with a family in England. You break one of their glasses and you want to apologise.
5. You are with your boss at work and you need to ask for the day off.
6. A friend of yours asks to borrow a book from you. You need it for a school project.
7. You are on holiday and you're trying to find the bus station but you've got lost. You stop someone at the street.
8. A friend of yours asks for your opinion on her new hairstyle. You didn't particularly like it.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

IV- Read an extract from a talk given to a group who are going to stay in the UK. Referencing words have been highlighted. Write down what they refer to.

Good evening, and welcome to the British Council. My name is John Parker and I've been asked to talk to you briefly about certain aspects of life in the UK before you actually go **1) there**. So I'm going to talk first about the best ways of making social contacts there. Now you might be wondering why it should be necessary. After all, we meet people all the time. But when you're living in a foreign country **2) it** can be more difficult, not just because of the language, but because customs may be different.

If you're going to work in the UK you will probably be living in private accommodation, so it won't be quite so easy to meet people. But there are still things that you can do to help yourself. First of all, you can get involved in activities in your local community, join a group of some kind. For example, you'll probably find that there are theatre groups who might be looking for actors, set designers and so on, or if you play an instrument you could join music groups in your area. Or if you like the idea of finding out about local history there'll be a group for **3) that** too. **4) These** are just examples. And the best places to get information about things like this are either the town hall or the public library. Libraries in the UK perform quite a broad range of functions nowadays – they're not just confined to lending books, although **5) that** 's their main role of course.

Example:

1) to the UK.

2) _____

–

3) _____

–

4) _____

–

5) _____

–

Adapted _____ from _____ :

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/listening/activities/referencing_words_work2.htm

>

APPENDIX B - Pragmatic Competence Quiz – phase 1 - key

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE QUIZ – PHASE 1**KEY****I- 1 mark each: total 6 marks**

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. Students should mention two aspects: studying from home + online studies
5. A
6. B

II- 0.5 mark each= total 7 marks

- (4) avoiding responsibility
- (6) taking an order
- (1) expressing disapproval
- (5) subtle criticism
- (12) expressing a possibility
- (11) expressing a condition
- (14) expressing an opinion
- (3) making a direct request
- (2) making an indirect request
- (7) giving information
- (9) correcting information
- (8) giving advice
- (10) telling news
- (13) inviting

III- 1 mark each: 0.5 appropriacy/ 0.5 content = total 8 marks. Use your discretion.**IV- 1 each= total 4 marks**

- 2) Making social contacts
- 3) Local history

- 4) Theatre groups, music groups, local history group
- 5) Lending books

V – Total 5 marks:

- 1 mark for signpost words
- 1 mark for accuracy
- 1 mark for appropriacy
- 2 marks for content

Grand total= 30 marks

APPENDIX C - Pragmatic Competence Quiz – Phase 2

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE QUIZ – PHASE 2

Name:

Date:

Section A- Implicatures and Inferences

I- Read the situations below and choose what speakers probably mean. Consider the contexts given.

Context: Peter and Janet are trying a new buffet restaurant in town. Peter is eating something but Janet can't decide what to have next.

Janet: "How do you like what you're having?"

Peter: "Well, let's just say it's colourful."

1. What does Peter probably mean?

- a) He thinks it is important for food to look appetizing.
- b) He thinks food should not contain artificial colours.
- c) He wants Janet to try something colourful.
- d) He does not like his food much.

Context: Sue notices that her co-worker Paul is dirty all over, has holes in his pants, and has scratches on his face and hands.

Sue: "What has happened to you?"

Paul: "I've ridden my bike to work."

2. What does Paul probably mean?

- a) Today he has finally got some exercise biking.
- b) He has hurt himself biking.
- c) It's hard to get to work without a car.
- d) He enjoys biking.

Context: Jane is talking to her co-worker Andrew during a coffee break.

Jane: "So, life must be good for you. I hear you got a nice rise".

Andrew: "This coffee is awfully thin. You'd think they'd at least give us a decent coffee."

3. What does Andrew probably mean?

- a) He likes his coffee strong.
- b) He does not want to talk about how much money he makes.
- c) He's planning to complain about the coffee.
- d) He does not care very much about money.

Context: Maria is a cashier in a grocer's. After work, she's talking to her friend Darren.

Maria: "I guess I'm getting old and ugly."

Darren: "What makes you say that?"

Maria: Men are beginning to count their change."

4. What does Maria probably mean?

- a) She has given wrong change a number of times, so people count their change now.
- b) The store might lose business if she doesn't look good.
- c) Male customers aren't admiring her anymore as they used to.
- d) It gets harder to give correct change as you get older.

Context: Carrie and Simon are jogging together.

Simon: "Can we slow down a bit? I'm all out of breath."

Carrie: "I'm sure glad I don't smoke."

5. What does Carrie probably mean?

- a) She doesn't want to slow down.
- b) She doesn't like the way Max's breath smells.
- c) She's happy she's stopped smoking.
- d) She thinks Max is out of breath because he's a smoker.

Context: Sam is talking to his housemate Tanya about another housemate, Jose.

Sam: "Do you know where Jose is, Tanya?"

Tanya: "Well, I heard music from his room earlier."

6. What does Tanya probably mean?
- a) Jose forgot to turn off the music.
 - b) Jose's loud music bothers Tanya.
 - c) Jose is probably in his room.
 - d) Tanya does not know where Jose is.

Adapted from "Testing Pragmatics" (RÖVER, 2005, p. 122-125)

II- Read the dialogue exchanges below and choose the most appropriate answer for each question considering the context given.

Context: Three students in a study group working on a class assignment for their economics class.

Joe: So, what do you think – do either of you have any ideas on what topic we should present?

Henry: Well, I had a look at the list of ideas the professor gave us last time. There are some interesting things. For example, the topic of the business cycle is interesting – we did a lot of work on that this semester.

Magda: I agree, but I think this is going to be a popular choice. I don't really want to choose a topic that many other groups will choose as well.

1. How does Magda feel about the topic of the business cycle?
- a) She wants to choose it.
 - b) She finds it interesting.
 - c) She wants to choose a more popular topic.

Henry: Let's have a look at the list. How about international trade?

Magda: Again, I think that's something everyone is thinking about. At least I think so...

Henry: Ok, fair point. Well, what do you suggest, Magda?

Magda: I was thinking of employment actually. I mean, it's topical – there's so much talk about it going on in the news recently.

Joe: And it's something that we covered only briefly in the first few lectures. I think we could narrow the focus a bit and really give a presentation which looks at it from an angle we didn't see in previous lectures.

Henry: Sounds good to me, but what kind of angle do you have in mind?

Joe: Well, let's think about what's been in the news recently.

Magda: If you're talking about local news, just a few months ago there was that one company which had to lay off over 1000 people... what was that called...

Joe: Oh yes, 'Stone's Throw'

2. They decide on employment because...

- a) They have done a lot of work on it in class.
- b) They think it will be popular with other students.
- c) They can relate this topic to local events.

Henry: What's 'Stone's Throw' – what happened to them? I'm not from this area....

Joe: They are a clothing company which makes clothes from local sources, you know, cotton and wool from local farmers. They use all natural dyes and all the clothes are made in the area.

Magda: Their clothing is more expensive because of that, of course. And, well, their clothes weren't necessarily of a better quality than other clothes...

Henry: So the selling point was....

Magda: Well, I suppose it's linked to the environment for one – they could advertise that they didn't need to ship materials and stock from all over the earth ... but I think it's mostly economical and political actually.

Joe: Yes, I agree. I think we talked about this briefly a few weeks ago – the idea that if people think that they are losing their jobs because companies can get the job done for less money in other areas or other countries, they start thinking that they should only buy products made locally. I think this company Stone's Throw marketed itself in this way – if you buy our clothes you are supporting the industry and economy of the local area. So people were willing to pay higher prices because they thought this is the best thing to do for the local economy.

Henry: So what happened to them?

Magda: Well, I think what happened is that there have been some problems with the local economy lately and people feel they have less and less spending money these days. When things get like that, people are going to buy cheaper stuff – cheaper food, cheaper clothes.....They don't think about political or environmental things anymore.

Joe: So they started losing money and had to reduce their size to try to deal with it all. They cut about 1/3 of the jobs they had in their retail and manufacturing operations.....

3. Stone's Throw clothes are...

- a) worth the price they cost.
- b) as good as other clothes.

c) not as good as other clothes.

4. Why did people buy the clothes from Stone's Throw?

- a) They wanted to protect the environment.
- b) They wanted to cut back on shipping costs.
- c) They wanted to develop the local economy.

5. Why did Stone's Throw start losing money?

- a) They laid off 1/3 of their workforce.
- b) Customers couldn't afford their clothes anymore.
- c) Customers didn't like the quality of their clothes.

Henry: Interesting.. I think this could be a great topic because it will be relevant to the lives of the people in the class. I feel that economic issues can be so ... abstract, you know, all theory and not about actual people, but this could be a nice balance to that. We could do a case study on this particular company, you know, research similar cases, find out exactly what happened in this case....

Magda: That's a good idea. Maybe we can even get interviews with some of the people who lost their jobs. Find out if they found new jobs, where they are working now.

Henry: We could find out if the people who lost their jobs buy local products themselves....

Joe: I think we need to be careful, we're supposed to be focused on economic issues, but I think that if we start doing all these interviews, it's more like sociology rather than economics....

6. Why does Henry like the idea of a case study?

- a) He thinks that using a local example will complement what has been studied so far.
- b) He thinks that local issues are more important than abstract theories.
- c) He thinks using a local example will revive the local economy.

7. Why does Joe oppose doing interviews of staff at Stone's Throw?

- a) It would not be ethical to do.
- b) It would not be relevant for the assignment.
- c) It would be too difficult to do.

Tapescript taken from:

<http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/learners/ielts-preparation/mock-papers/listening/econ-group#tabs-102480-3>

Questions adapted from:

<http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/learners/ielts-preparation/mock-papers/listening/econ-group#tabs-102480-3>

Section B – Speech Acts

III. Match the following exponents to their communicative function:

1. Whatever you do, don't move!
2. What's your reaction to the news?
3. She's really getting on my nerves!
4. Do you get what I'm talking about?
5. Hi, Mary! I'd like you to meet Paul Smith.
6. I beg your pardon, I didn't mean to interrupt.
7. Go straight ahead as far as the traffic lights.
8. Do you think that was the right thing to do, considering the circumstances?
9. I think I can hear the kettle boiling...
10. I really can't bear people who talk on their mobile while driving.
11. Don't do that again or I'll have to talk to your mum.
12. I'm awfully sorry but do you think you could lend me the book again?
13. They might go to the beach at the weekend.
14. I'll help you as long as you help me with my English homework

- () checking understanding
- () expressing dislikes
- () giving directions
- () asking for opinions
- () giving a warning
- () expressing a threat
- () expressing a possibility
- () showing annoyance
- () direct request
- () indirect request

- () subtle criticism
- () introducing people
- () apologising
- () expressing a condition

Section 3 - Reference

Read the dialogue between two students discussing the pros and cons of **working from home**.

Referencing words have been highlighted. Write down what these words refer to.

Peter: Well, let's brainstorm arguments in favour first. What do you think?

Mary: Fine. Um, I think an obvious argument is that workers can do their work when it suits them – they don't have to fit **1) it** into fixed hours, you know.

P: In other words, **2) it** gives them greater flexibility. Good. What else?

M: Well, obviously they don't have all that travelling time which causes so much stress to commuters.

P: Sure. And how about family life? Working from home allows you to do your job and have a family life – being with your husband or wife and children more.

M: I'm not sure if **3) that's** an argument for or against – some people go to work to have a break from their families.

P: Well, it helps workers when their children are sick.

M: Not just when their children are sick. When **4) they** are sick as well, they are more likely to be able to continue working.

P: Right. And another point: working from home means companies can reduce their costs because **5) they** don't need so much office space, which is very expensive.

M: That's true. But on the other hand workers need to have some office equipment at home. You know, um, a computer, a fax and so on – which obviously the employer must supply.

P: Right, **6) that** could be an argument against then...

Example: 1) their work

2)

3)

APPENDIX D - Pragmatic Competence Quiz – Phase 2 - key

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE QUIZ – PHASE 2**KEY****I- 1 mark each: total 6 marks**

1. D
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. D
6. C

II- 1 mark each= total 7 marks

1. B
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. A
7. B

III- 0.5 mark each = total 7 marks

- (4) checking understanding
- (10) expressing dislikes
- (7) giving directions
- (2) asking for opinions
- (1) giving a warning
- (11) expressing a threat
- (13) expressing a possibility
- (3) showing annoyance
- (12) direct request
- (9) indirect request
- (8) subtle criticism

- (5) introducing people
- (6) apologising
- (14) expressing a condition

IV- 1 each= total 5 marks

- 2) working from home
- 3) being with your family more/ have a family life
- 4) workers
- 5) companies
- 6) Equipment at home

V – Total 5 marks:

- 1 mark for signpost words
- 1 mark for accuracy
- 1 mark for appropriacy
- 2 marks for content

Grand total= 30 marks

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A – Listening activities

Listening

UNIT 1 Orientating yourself to the text

- Who are the speakers?
- Where are they?
- Why are they speaking?

In order to understand what people are saying, it helps to know what their relationship is to each other and to you as the listener. The language we choose to use will depend on our relationship to the other speakers, e.g. we use different language to talk to a family member as opposed to a teacher or a salesperson. Knowing the context of a conversation also helps us to understand the language because it helps us to anticipate what the speakers are going to talk about.



Pre-listening

- Look at the following pictures. Try to work out who the people are, where they are and why they are speaking to each other.
- Can you imagine what they are saying? Write some words in the speech balloons.



- How did you decide what the people were saying?
- Compare what you have written with your partner.



EXTRACT 1

- Listen to Unit 1, Extract 1. There are ten short conversations and one example. As you listen, complete the table to show *who* the speakers are and *why* they are speaking. The first one has been done as an example.

Conversation Number	Who are the speakers? (Relationship)	Why are they speaking? (Purpose)
<i>Example</i>	Customer/Sales assistant	Customer is asking where men's department is
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



Follow-up: Spoken and written language

- Make a list of the types of language you hear spoken every day both in your own language and in English. Divide the list into two columns showing language which is spontaneous or unprepared and language which was probably written to be read out loud. Then discuss the questions below with a partner.

Unprepared spoken language
 e.g. talking to family & friends
 asking directions

Read out loud
 radio news

- 11 What are the main differences between spoken language and language which was written to be read out loud? Is it harder to understand one than the other?
- 12 Why is it more difficult to understand people when they speak on the telephone? How is this similar to listening to a recorded conversation?



For further practice, do the Supplementary activity on page 109.

Listening

UNIT 2 Listening for specific information

- What are the key words?
- What type of words are they?

Sometimes when we listen, we are only interested in finding out very specific information such as dates and times, names or key words. It helps us to understand, if we can work out what kind of words we are listening for.



EXTRACT 1

- Look at the telephone message pad below. It comes from a house where a number of students live together.
- Discuss what information you need to listen out for in each message. If possible, write what type of word that is in the right-hand column.
- Listen to Unit 2, Extract 1 and complete the task.



Telephone messages

		Type of word
A	Julia confirming dinner on (1) at (2)	day/date time/place
B	(3) ready. Cost of repairs (4)	
C	(5) called. Textbook is (6)	
D	Nick needs his (7) (8)	Take them to college before
E	Dr Boyd is ill with (9) New appointment on (10)	
F	Supermarket has found (11) Collect them at (12)	
G	Sam rang. (13) for Prof. Hall on Saturday. Please call this number: (14)	

Listening

UNIT 3 Identifying detail

- When do we need to listen for detail?
- Why is detail important?

If someone is describing an object like an umbrella, it is the detail in the description, such as the colour or a reference to the shape, which allows us to differentiate it from another umbrella. So we need to listen carefully for the words which describe the detail.



Pre-listening

- Look at the pictures of the umbrellas, which are similar but not the same, and describe one to your partner. Is it clear which umbrella you are describing? These words may help you: *spots, stripes, handle, curved, straight, point, pointed.*



EXTRACT 1

IELTS Listening Section 1 **Multiple-choice pictures**

How to approach the task

- ▶ Look at the task on the following page. In each case there is a question followed by three pictures. Try to work out the possible context of the language from the words in the questions and the pictures.
- ▶ Decide what information you should listen out for.
- ▶ Answer the questions as you listen.

Questions 1–6

Circle the appropriate letter.

Example What was Jill's job in Hong Kong?



TEST TIP

In Section 1 of the test only, you will hear the example played twice.

1 Which picture shows Gerry?



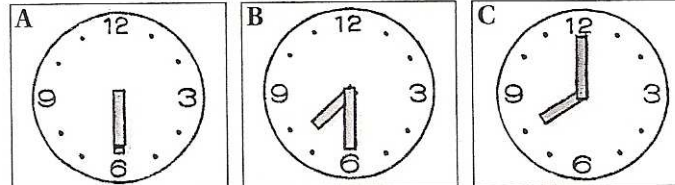
2 Where were Gerry and Sue married?



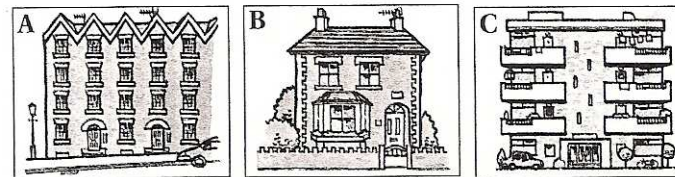
3 Which picture shows Sue's sister's children?



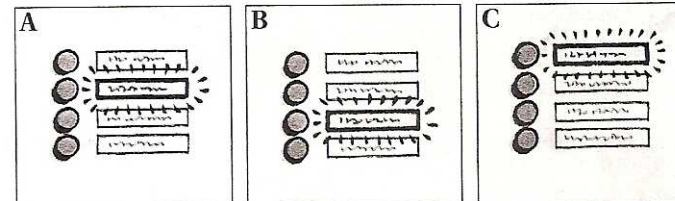
4 What time should Jill arrive for dinner?



5 What type of accommodation does Sue live in?



6 Which bell must you press?



For further practice, do the Supplementary activity on page 109.

Listening

UNIT 4 Identifying main ideas

- What are the speakers talking about?
- What are the main ideas and how are they developed?

When we take part in a conversation or listen to other people, we subconsciously separate the information that we need or that interests us from the rest of what we hear. In other words, we separate the main ideas from the supporting detail. Sometimes people use an introductory phrase to attract our attention and to give some clue to the topic.



EXTRACT 1

- Look at the chart below. You will see that the situation and speakers have already been identified. Try to guess what the speakers *might say* from this information. This is not always possible. Why?
- Listen to Unit 4, Extract 1 and make a note of the words used by the first speaker to attract attention. Write this in the *Introductory phrase* column.
- Listen to the extract a second time and fill in the rest of the grid, briefly noting the *topic* and showing how the speakers *develop this topic*. The first one has been done for you as an example.

	Situation	Introductory phrase	Topic?	How does the topic develop?
<i>Example</i>	Two old school friends chatting	Guess who I saw today?	Meeting an old teacher	Talk about teacher's appearance
1	Department store: customer and sales assistant			
2	Husband and wife talking about the children			
3	Radio news item			
4	Two friends making plans for an outing			
5	Two students chatting in university canteen			
6	University librarian and student			
7	Sports equipment shop: assistant and two teenagers			
8	Vice Chancellor of a university speaking at a ceremony			

Listening

UNIT 5 Seeing beyond the surface meaning

- What does the speaker mean exactly?
- How can we interpret intonation?

People do not always say exactly what they mean. As listeners we must learn to interpret the words people use as well as their intonation patterns. In this unit, we will investigate some ways of seeing beyond the surface meaning of spoken language while following a conversation.



Pre-listening

- Look at the following sentence: *I thought the assignment was due in on Thursday.*
- Try saying it in three different ways, to produce three different meanings. What are the three meanings? Discuss these with your partner.
- Try creating a similar short statement. See if you can vary the meaning by changing the word stress.
- Read your statements to your partner. Can you hear the differences in meaning?



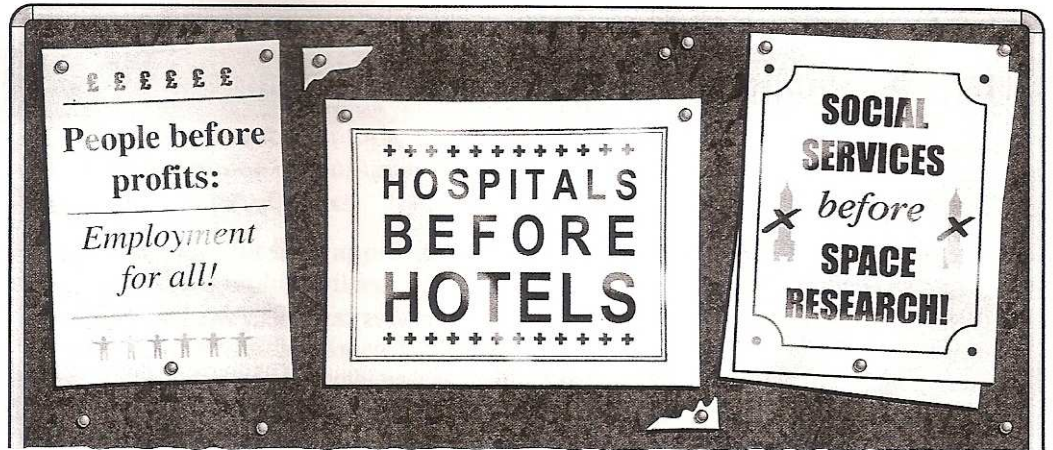
EXTRACT 1

- Look at the chart below and note the headings of the different columns.
- Listen to Unit 5, Extract 1, which consists of an example and eight short, independent dialogues. As you listen, answer the focus question *Yes* or *No*.
- Discuss what indicators or language features helped you to interpret the real meaning of the speakers.

	Focus question	Yes/No	Indicators
Example	Did the woman like the shirt?	No	Her hesitation Rising intonation - uncertainty
1	Is the weather fine?		
2	Is the girl trying to avoid the date?		
3	Was the man satisfied with the phone?		
4	Are university fees going to rise?		
5	Does the woman want to see the computer?		
6	Is the boy very sick?		
7	Did the woman like the movie?		
8	Is the teacher pleased with the boy's work?		

Listening UNIT 5

Pre-listening



- Look at the three posters advertising a student debate.
- Discuss what each of the posters means. Ask your teacher to explain their possible meaning if this is not clear. In these three cases, there are two possible sides to each argument.
- Make a list of things which could be said on either side of the argument for each poster. This will help you to understand Extract 2.
- Report back to the class.



EXTRACT 2

In Section 3 of the IELTS Listening test you will have to follow a conversation with more than two speakers. In this extract you will hear a conversation between three friends who live in a student house together, Richard, Sue and Frank. They are having a conversation about how the government should spend public money. There are two tasks to accompany this listening extract.

Task 1

- Listen to the conversation. As you listen, complete the grid below by placing a ✓ in the box next to the name of the speakers each time they speak. Which of them speaks most often?

Richard	✓																		
Sue	✓																		
Frank	✓																		

Task 2

- Now look at the questions below. Read them through carefully and underline any words that you think will help to focus your listening.
- Listen to the extract a second time and circle the correct answer for each question.

- The person at the door is
 - looking for work.
 - asking for money.
 - looking for the hospital.
 - visiting her friends.
- Frank thinks the hospital should be financed by
 - local residents.
 - a special health tax.
 - the state.
 - private companies.
- Richard thinks Sue's view on hospital funding is
 - acceptable.
 - predictable.
 - uninteresting.
 - unreasonable.
- Sue's attitude towards the government's spending is
 - disapproving.
 - indifferent.
 - understanding.
 - impartial.
- Frank thinks that space research
 - is only for scientists.
 - is moving too slowly.
 - has practical benefits.
 - has improved recently.
- In talking about space travel, Frank
 - displays his pessimism.
 - reveals an ambition.
 - makes a prediction.
 - refers to a book.
- Sue thinks work is important because it
 - reduces the levels of crime.
 - gives individuals pride in themselves.
 - helps people find homes.
 - reduces the need for charity.
- Richard's overall attitude is
 - helpful.
 - bitter.
 - disinterested.
 - sarcastic.

TEST TIP

In this type of task there are three speakers interacting and in the test you will only hear the conversation once. It is important that you are able to distinguish between the different speakers as well as understand what they are saying.



For further practice based on this extract, do the Supplementary activity on page 110.

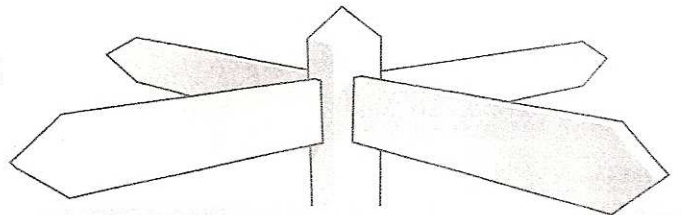
Listening

UNIT 6 Following signpost words

- What are 'signpost words'?
- How do they help us to understand?

Good public speakers and lecturers illustrate the stages of their talk through the use of 'signpost words'. Being able to identify and follow the signpost words will help you to understand formal spoken English.

Pre-listening



As with writing, speakers make use of special words to help introduce ideas and to provide a framework for what they are saying, especially in formal speech such as a lecture or a talk. We can think of these words as 'signpost words' because they direct our listening; in other words, they warn us that more information is coming and suggest what kind of information this may be: e.g. additional, positive, negative, similar, different. They may also introduce examples of a main point made earlier.

- Look at the sample of unfinished 'spoken' text below. It starts with the signpost word *while*, which suggests that there is a contrast or opposite to follow.

While a great deal has been achieved in the area of cancer research, there ...

This sentence could be completed with the words: ... *is still a lot we do not understand about cancer.*

Here are some possible 'directions' that the signpost words can take you in.

- a Leading towards a comparison
 - b Leading towards a contrast or opposite
 - c Introducing an example of what was said earlier
 - d Suggesting cause and effect or result
 - e Providing additional information
 - f Setting out the stages of a talk
- First, read the sentences **1–10** on the next page and identify the signpost words and the direction (**a–f** above) that the words are taking you in. Then go on to the activity that follows.

- 1 Incoming governments often make promises which they cannot keep. For instance ...
- 2 Every Roman town had at its centre a forum, where people came together to conduct their official and religious affairs. In addition, the forum ...
- 3 The meteorological office predicted rain for the two weeks of the Olympic Games. In consequence, ...
- 4 Learning a foreign language can be difficult and at times frustrating. However, ...
- 5 Not only did the Second World War result in the displacement of millions of innocent civilians, it ...
- 6 Despite the efforts of the government to reduce the incidence of smoking among teenagers and young adults, I regret to say that smoking ...
- 7 This is how to approach writing an essay. First, you should read the question carefully. Then ...
- 8 No matter how hard you try to justify the sport of fox hunting, the fact remains that ...
- 9 Firstly I would like to talk about the early life of J. F. Kennedy. Secondly ... and thirdly ...
- 10 On the one hand, it may be advisable to study hard the night before an exam; on the other hand, ...



- Try to complete the unfinished statements above by creating an ending which makes sense in each case, using the signpost words in the text to guide you.
- Read the finished texts out loud to your partner so that you can practise the intonation patterns which go with the signpost words. Make sure your voice rises and falls in the right places to reflect your intended meaning.



EXTRACT 1

You can check the intonation patterns by listening to Unit 6, Extract 1, which gives some possible ways of completing the sentences.



EXTRACT 2

IELTS Listening Section 3 **Note completion and labelling a diagram**

IELTS Section 3 Listening takes the form of a conversation between two or more people discussing an academic topic. Unlike the dialogues in Section 1, where the speakers are discussing everyday topics, Section 3 will require more careful attention to the conversation or argument being expressed. In the following example, you will hear an extract from a university tutorial with four speakers taking part. First look at the questions below and make sure you understand exactly what you have to label on the diagram.

Questions 1-3

Complete the notes. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

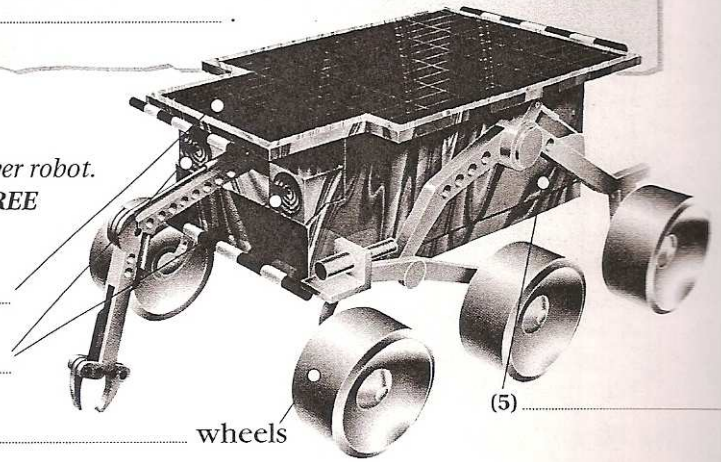
ROVER ROBOT

The robot does the work of a (1)..... It looks like a (2)..... on wheels. It weighs 16.5 kg and travels quite (3).....

Questions 4-7

Label the diagram of the rover robot. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

- (4)
- (6)
- (7)



Questions 8-10

Complete the notes. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

The rover cannot be steered in real time because of the (8).....
Scientists decide on a (9)..... for the rover.
Mars is similar to Earth because it may have (10).....



For further practice, do the Supplementary activity on page 110.

Listening

UNIT 7 Being aware of stress, rhythm and intonation

- How do intonation and word stress help us to understand?
 - Public speakers and lecturers make use of stress, rhythm and intonation patterns, along with signpost words, to divide their information into 'chunks' of meaning. Learning to recognise these speech patterns will help you to understand formal spoken English whether you are listening to a live or a recorded talk.

Pre-listening

- Try saying the following telephone numbers. Notice how your voice goes up after each group and then drops as you come to the end of the whole number.



5849 3714 *612 9983 4721 *01223 460278 *33 76 49 52 98 *0412 613612

Speakers normally use an upward intonation if they have more to add and let their voice drop when they come to the end of that piece of information.

EXTRACT 1



- Look at the five extracts below, taken from different lectures and mark in pencil the words which you think should be stressed and where your voice should rise and fall.
- Read the extracts out loud to your partner, as if you were giving a talk or a lecture, paying particular attention to the intonation patterns needed to keep the listener interested and to ensure that the meaning is clear. After you have both read each extract, listen to the recording and compare it with your versions.
- Try recording your own voice and then listen to yourself.

A Urban society began when hunter-gatherers learnt (a) how to farm land, (b) how to domesticate animals and (c) how to build permanent structures to act as shelter.

B There are three levels of government in Australia: firstly, there is Federal Government; then there is State Government and thirdly we have Local Government.

C There are three levels of government in Australia: firstly, there is Federal Government, which looks after issues of national importance such as immigration and defence. Then there is State Government located in each capital city, and which has responsibility for such things as education, the police and urban and regional planning, and thirdly we find Local Government, which controls services such as waste collection, public libraries and childcare centres.

D Was Napoleon poisoned or did he die of natural causes? The Napoleonic Society of America, an association of historians and collectors, has given a modern twist to this debate. They have done this by revealing the results of chemical analyses of hair said to have come from the head of the French emperor.

E The many forms and styles of handwriting which exist have attracted a wide range of aesthetic, psychological and scientific studies, each with its own aims and procedures. Moreover, each of the main families of writing systems (European, Semitic, East Asian) has its own complex history of handwriting styles.

ATTACHMENT B – Listening activities transcripts

Recording Script

Words *in italics* indicate the location of answers to the listening exercises.

UNIT 1, EXTRACT 1

Example

ASSISTANT Can I help you?
 WOMAN Yes, *I'm looking for a tie for my husband*. Where would I find the men's department?
 ASSISTANT On the first floor. You can take the lift or the escalator.
 WOMAN Thank you very much.
 ASSISTANT You're welcome.

1

WAITER Can I take your coat?
 WOMAN Thank you.
 WAITER And *would you like something to drink before you order your meal?*
 WOMAN Yes, please. Can we see the wine list?
 WAITER Certainly.

2

POLICE OFFICER Can I see your licence please, sir?
 DRIVER Yes, uh ... certainly.
 POLICE OFFICER Did you know you were *exceeding the speed limit* when you came over the hill just now? *Our radar registered* that you were travelling at 157 km an hour.
 DRIVER Oh, really? I hadn't realised.
 POLICE OFFICER There's an on the *spot fine of \$280.00* for that, I'm afraid, sir.

3

HUSBAND I'm afraid I got stopped by the police for speeding today, dear.
 WIFE Oh no, *David*. You didn't, did you!
 HUSBAND Yes, *I got a fine of \$280.00* – on the spot.
 WIFE That's dreadful. We can't afford that. You really should drive more slowly!

4

LECTURER Now I'd just like to recap on what we were talking about last week *before going ahead with this week's lecture*. We were, if I remember rightly, looking at the main causes of the Second World War and *I'd just like to go back to some of the points I made*. But first, does anyone have any questions?

5

STUDENT How do I go about *joining the Table Tennis Club?*
 ADMIN You need to *fill in this form and show me your student card*.
 STUDENT Is there a fee?
 ADMIN Yes, there's a joining fee of \$15.00 and an annual subscription of \$10.

6

STUDENT I'm afraid *I haven't been able to finish the history essay*, and I was hoping that *you would give me an extension*.
 LECTURER When do you think you could let me have it?
 STUDENT Well ... I should be able to finish it by next Monday.
 LECTURER Well ..., OK. As long as I can have it by then. That'll be fine.

7

STUDENT A Did you manage to *finish the history essay?*
 STUDENT B *No. Did you?*
 STUDENT A No. I couldn't find the books in the library.
 STUDENT B No, neither could I. But fortunately the lecturer has given me an extension. You should go and see her. She's very helpful.

- 8
- FLIGHT ATTENDANT *Would you like something to drink with your meal? Drinks are complementary on this flight.*
- PASSENGER I'll just have a soft drink thanks. Can I have a Coke?
- FLIGHT ATTENDANT Oh, I'm sorry. I'll have to go and get you one when I've finished serving this row.
- PASSENGER Oh, OK.
- 9
- DOCTOR Morning, *Mr White*. Come in. And what can I do for you today?
- PATIENT Well *doctor*, I'm having difficulty sleeping. I often wake up at 3.00 in the morning and I just can't get back to sleep.
- DOCTOR I see ... and how long has this been going on?
- PATIENT Oh, about a month now. I wonder if you could prescribe something.
- 10
- PRINCIPAL *Good morning, everybody*. Now, first of all I'd like to start by *welcoming you all to the college*. We're delighted to have you here and we hope you are going to enjoy your stay with us. My name is Mary Smithers and *I'm the college principal*.

UNIT 2, EXTRACT 1

- A Oh hi, everybody. It's Julia here. It's Thursday afternoon. I'm just ringing to confirm dinner *on Friday night*. I'll be there *about 7.30*. Can't wait to see you all!
- B Johnson's Repairs here. Your *video recorder* is now ready for collection. There is a *charge of £50.00* to be paid when you come and pick it up.
- C Message for Mary Brooks. This is the *University Bookshop* here. The book you ordered on Asian Economies is not

available. I'm afraid it's *out of print*. Sorry about that. Let me know what you want us to do.

- D Hi. This is Nick. I've left my *football boots* at home today and I desperately need them for the match this afternoon. If someone gets this message, could you please bring them into the college *before 12 o'clock*. The new boots, not the old boots. Thanks a lot, see you ...
- E Dr Boyd's surgery here. I'm afraid we'll have to cancel Ms Taylor's appointment tomorrow, as unfortunately *Dr Boyd has the flu*. Could she come on *Monday at 3.30 pm* instead and ring back to confirm she can make that time?
- F Oh, hello – message for Mr Lee. Newport supermarkets here. I believe you lost a *pair of glasses* yesterday. We've found a pair at the checkout. We're keeping them at *the customer service desk*. Would you like to come in and see if they're yours?
- G Hello – this is Sam. Message for Nick. We're having a *farewell party for Prof. Hall* on Saturday. You know he's going to China for two years. Give us a ring on *9818 4078*.

UNIT 2, EXTRACT 2

- CLERK Good Morning, Blue Harbour Cruises. How can I help you?
- TOURIST Oh, uh, good morning. Um ... can you tell me something about the different cruises you run?
- CLERK Well ... we run three cruises every day, each offering something slightly different.
- TOURIST Let me just get a pencil so I can make a note of this. Right.
- CLERK Firstly, there's the Highlight Cruise, ... then we do the Noon Cruise and we also have our *Coffee Cruise*.
- TOURIST Um ... could you tell me a bit about them? When they leave, how often, that sort of thing?
- CLERK Well, the Highlight Cruise is \$16 per person, and that *leaves at 9.30 every morning* and takes two hours to go round the harbour.

CLERK Yes, sir, that's correct, and would you like to collect it from our city branch or at the airport or your hotel?
 MAN I can pick it up *in the city*.
 CLERK And how will you be paying for that? Cash, cheque or credit card?
 MAN Do you take traveller's cheques?
 CLERK No, sorry.
 MAN I'll pay *by credit card* then.
 CLERK Right, thank you very much. We'll see you in the morning, sir.

UNIT 3, EXTRACT 1

JILL Hello, Sue ... fancy meeting you here! It is Sue Johnson, isn't it?
 SUE Oh, hi, Jill. It must be ages since we've seen each other. What a surprise! How *are* you?
 JILL Yes, well, ... I'm fine ... just got back from two years' teaching in Hong Kong, actually.
 SUE I thought you'd gone into computing or nursing.
 JILL No, *I ended up being a teacher after all ...* And how about you?
 SUE Oh, fine. Things are going quite well in fact.
 JILL So what've you been up to over the last three years?
 SUE Working, studying, you know the usual things ... Oh, and I got married last year.
 JILL Congratulations! Anyone I know?
 SUE Yeah, you might remember him from our college days. Do you remember Gerry? Gerry Fox?
 JILL Gerry ... Was he the one with the dark hair and beard?
 SUE No, that was Sam. No, *Gerry's got blond hair and glasses*. He's pretty tall. Well, we got married ... finally ...
 JILL Great, and where did the wedding take place? Was it here in London?
 SUE No, in the end we decided to get married in Scotland. Gerry's parents live there, so we were married in the *small village church, with the mountains in the background*.
 JILL Fabulous. Have you got any pictures?

SUE Well, funny you should ask ... I have actually got a couple here. They're a bit battered because I've been carrying them around in my bag.
 JILL Oh, never mind. Let's have a look. Oh, don't you look wonderful! Who are those people behind you?
 SUE That's my older sister Clara.
 JILL Oh, she looks like you.
 SUE Do you think so? Everyone says that, but *we* can't see it.
 JILL Is she married now?
 SUE Yes, and she's got three children: *a girl and twin boys* as well.
 JILL Wow – imagine having twins!
 SUE Look, why don't we have dinner together and catch up on a few things? Would you like to come over one evening?
 JILL That'd be lovely.
 SUE What about next Friday evening?
 JILL Fine. What time? Shall I come over about 8 o'clock?
 SUE Oh, *come about half past seven*. I'm usually home around 6.30 so that'd give me plenty of time to get dinner ready.
 JILL Fine, and one last thing ... where do you live? What's the address?
 SUE Oh, good thinking ... here's my card, the address is on the back. We've got *a flat in an old house*. We live on *the third floor of a large old house*. The house has been converted into flats. You know, it's a typical London flat. So when you arrive you'll need to *press the bell second from the top*.
 JILL The bell second from the top. OK.
 SUE There's a little intercom arrangement so I can let you in.
 JILL Right. OK, see you on Friday then.

UNIT 4, EXTRACT 1

WOMAN A Guess who I saw today?
 WOMAN B Who?
 WOMAN A I ran into our old English teacher, Mr Britton, in the supermarket.
 WOMAN B Really?

Recording Script

- WOMAN A Funny thing is – I didn't recognise him. He tapped me on the shoulder and I wondered who on earth it was! He's grown a beard and he looks quite different.
-
- 1**
- ASSISTANT Can I help you?
STUDENT Yes, well, I bought this tie last week for my boyfriend's birthday and um, well, he doesn't like it. Could I change it for something else?
ASSISTANT Certainly, madam, provided that it hasn't been worn and that you have the receipt.
STUDENT Yes, here it is.
ASSISTANT OK ... um ... this tie looks as if it's been worn, I'm afraid. I can't put that back on the rack.
STUDENT Oh ... that's a pity.
- 2**
- WIFE You know, John, I'm getting quite worried about Maria.
HUSBAND Why – what's happened?
WIFE Well, I was speaking to her teacher today after school. She tells me that Maria often doesn't finish her homework and when she does ... well ... the standard is often pretty poor.
HUSBAND Maybe I'd better have a word with her then.
- 3**
- NEWSREADER And now, closer to home and the health service ... The prime minister announced today that the Government would be looking at ways of reducing hospital waiting lists in Australian hospitals. At present
- patients can wait up to two years for a hospital bed for operations not considered to be life-threatening. A spokesperson for St Michael's Hospital said some patients wait for over two years for operations such as hip replacements and other so-called minor surgery.
- 4**
- STUDENT A Now, ... about this picnic. Where are we going to go?
STUDENT B Well, I thought we might all meet up at the Opera House at two o'clock and walk through the Botanical Gardens and find a nice spot down near the water. What do you think?
STUDENT B Great!
- 5**
- STUDENT A You know the computing assignment we've got?
STUDENT B Yeah!
STUDENT A Have you finished yours yet?
STUDENT B No ... have you?
STUDENT A No, that's why I asked. I'm having a lot of difficulty understanding the topic.
STUDENT B Why don't we go and see the lecturer about it and ask him? He's a pretty friendly sort of guy. I'm sure he won't mind.
STUDENT A Good idea.
- 6**
- STUDENT Excuse me ... I'm trying to find a copy of *A Guide to English Grammar* – I can't find it on the shelf.
LIBRARIAN Let me have a look. It may be waiting to be put back on the shelves. Hold on a minute. ...Yes, it came back in this morning, but a couple of people have

- reserved it already. Would you like to reserve it after that?
- STUDENT No, thanks – I think I'll go and buy a copy for myself!
- 7 ASSISTANT Hey! You guys! Could you two stop playing on the walking machine? It's not a toy, you know.
- TEENAGER Oh sorry. We were just trying it out. Isn't that what it's for?
- ASSISTANT If you're not going to buy it, you shouldn't use it!
- TEENAGER Well, we don't know whether we're going to buy it if we don't try it, do we?
- 8 VICE CHANCELLOR Good afternoon, distinguished guests, family and friends and students of this university. I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to you all and say how pleasing it is to see such a good turnout of parents and friends at today's graduation ceremony which is, in my opinion, a most important day in the university calendar.

UNIT 4, EXTRACT 2

PRESENTER
Hello and welcome to this week's edition of *Tell me more* – the programme where you ask the questions and we provide the answers. And we've had a wide variety of questions from you this week.

And the subject we've picked for you this week in response to your many letters is the production of postage stamps. And as usual, we've been doing our homework on the subject.

So who designs the postage stamps that we stick on our letters? Well in Australia the design of

postage stamps is in the hands of Australia Post. In Britain, it's the Royal Mail that looks after stamps and it seems that both countries have a similar approach to the production process.

We discovered to our surprise that *it can take up to two years to produce a new postage stamp*. Why's that I hear you ask! Surely it can't be all that difficult to design a stamp? In fact, it isn't. But it seems it's *a lengthy business*. Firstly they have to choose the subjects and this is done with the help of market research. Members of the general public, including families, are surveyed to find out what sort of things they would like to see on their stamps. *They are given a list of possible topics and asked to rank them.*

A list is then presented to the Advisory Committee which meets about once a month. The committee is made up of outside designers, graphic artists and stamp collectors. If the committee likes the list, it sends it up to *the Board of Directors which makes the final decision*. Then they commission an artist. In Australia artists *are paid \$1,500 for a stamp design and a further \$800 if the committee actually decides to use the design*. So there's a possibility that a stamp might be designed, but still never actually go into circulation.

So what kind of topics are acceptable? Well, the most important thing is that *they must be of national interest*. And because a stamp needs to represent the country in some way, characters from books are popular, or you often find national animals and birds. So of course, the kangaroo is a favourite in Australia. With the notable exception of members of the British royal family, *no living people ever appear* on Australian or British stamps. This policy is under review, but many stamp enthusiasts see good reason for keeping it that way to avoid the possibility of people in power using their influence to get onto the stamps.

Every year the Royal Mail in Britain receives about 2000 ideas for stamps but very few of them are ever used. *One favourite topic is kings and queens*; for instance King Henry VIII, famous for his six wives, has recently appeared on a British stamp together with a stamp featuring each of his wives.

Recording Script

But despite the extensive research which is done before a stamp is produced, it seems *it's hard to please everybody*, and apparently all sorts of people write to the post office to say that they loved or hated a particular series. The stamp to cause the most concern ever in Australia was a picture of Father Christmas surfing at the beach. And when you consider that the practical function of a stamp is only as a receipt for postage, *I think perhaps the importance accorded to stamps has got out of all proportion!*

Well, that's all for today. If there's a subject you want us to tell you more about, drop us a line at ...

UNIT 5, EXTRACT 1

GIRL Mum! What do you think of my new shirt? Do you like it?
 WOMAN Oh, it's ... uh ... lovely, darling.
 Girl Oh Mum.
 NARRATOR *Did the woman like the shirt?*
 The answer is No.

1

MAN Fantastic! This is the first day I've had off for months and look at the weather. Would you believe it?
 WOMAN Oh well. At least you've got the day to yourself. Never mind the weather.
 NARRATOR Is the weather fine?

2

STUDENT A Hi, Sue. It's Mario here.
 STUDENT B Oh, hi. How are you?
 STUDENT A Fine – look I was wondering if you were free on Saturday evening. I've got some tickets for a concert. Would you like to come?
 STUDENT B Oh, look, I'm sorry ... I'd really like to, but ... like ... I'm studying for my exams at the moment, and well ... I'm sorry ... I can't.
 STUDENT A OK – not to worry. Some other time then, I suppose.
 STUDENT B Right ... sure ...
 NARRATOR Is the girl trying to avoid the date?

3

CUSTOMER I bought this mobile phone on Friday ...
 ASSISTANT Is there a problem with it, sir?
 CUSTOMER Well, primarily, it does not appear to function outside the metropolitan area, which means it fails to function as a mobile phone as far as I can see.
 ASSISTANT Right, I'll just have a word with the manager and see what we can do.
 NARRATOR Was the man satisfied with the phone?

4

REPORTER Excuse me, Minister. Can you tell us whether your government intends to increase student university fees in the next budget?
 POLITICIAN The government has every intention of ensuring that students will not be disadvantaged by any increase in fees which it may be necessary to introduce, by offering grants and scholarships to students where possible.
 NARRATOR Are university fees going to rise?

5

MAN I've just ordered a new MMX computer with 32-speed CD ROM; I'm getting it tomorrow.
 WOMAN That's great.
 MAN It's twice the speed of the one we've got now and much better games.
 WOMAN Can't wait to see it.
 NARRATOR Does the woman want to see the computer?

6

MOTHER What did the doctor have to say?
 SON Well, she said if I want to get rid of this flu I should stay in bed for the next three days, drink plenty of orange juice and stay nice and warm.
 MOTHER That means you'll miss your football on Saturday.
 SON No, I should be OK by Saturday

- MOTHER Oh, OK? Too sick for school, but OK for football, eh?
 SON Mum, that's not fair.
 NARRATOR Is the boy very sick?
- 7
 WOMAN I've just seen the new Bond movie.
 MAN Have you? I saw it on Saturday.
 WOMAN Wasn't it fabulous? Didn't you just love the special effects?
 MAN Yeah, they weren't bad. It was OK.
 NARRATOR Did the woman like the movie?
- 8
 TEACHER Michael, did you do this work yourself?
 STUDENT Yes, sir. Of course I did.
 TEACHER It seems to have been remarkably well done, for you!
 STUDENT Guess I had a good day, sir.
 TEACHER Michael, I wasn't born yesterday.
 STUDENT No, sir.
 NARRATOR Is the teacher pleased with the boy's work?
- FRANK Well ... I tend to agree with Sue. *I don't see why we should have to pay for the new hospital out of our pockets.* We already pay our taxes – income tax, purchase tax, you name it tax. *The government should pay for the hospital out of general revenue – not the local residents.*
- SUE Yes, that's right. I mean – perhaps we don't need a hospital in this area anyway. Why can't people go to the General Hospital in town? They've got all the facilities there.
- FRANK Ah, but Sue. The day you need a hospital, you'll want it there ready and waiting for you, close to home, not miles away. And besides, other people may not be able to travel into town like you. Old people, people without cars ...
- SUE Oh Frank, you know what I mean. Anyway, I still think that the government should pay for this kind of thing.
- RICHARD *That's because you've grown up in a system where the state does everything for you from the cradle to the grave. But, it doesn't work like that any more; the party's over, I'm afraid,* because there simply isn't enough money left in the bank to pay for all this stuff. You see, we're an ...
- SUE Yes, but *most of the time they waste it.* I mean, look at how much government money is spent on roads, on airports, on huge hotels, on space research, for instance, instead of on local social issues. If they ...
- FRANK Well, I'm sorry but I can't agree with you there. Firstly, hotels are built privately, with private money, not government money, and as for space research ... well, I think it's incredibly important.
- SUE Why, Frank? Tell me ... *why* is space research so important?
- FRANK Because it's pushing back the frontiers of science ... quite literally ... and also because you get some fantastic discoveries made as a result of this kind of research *and they have an immediate effect on our day to day lives.*
- UNIT 5, EXTRACT 2**
- RICHARD Sue, who was that at the door?
 SUE Oh, someone *collecting money for the local hospital* again.
 FRANK Did you give them anything?
 SUE No, Frank, I did *not*. I refuse to give money at the door to people – it annoys me the way they come round here on Sunday morning, expecting us to donate money all the time.
 RICHARD Well, they're hardly likely to come round during the week, are they? 'Cos anybody who can afford to donate money will be out at work! Anyway, Sue, I think they just make you feel guilty.
 SUE Richard, I beg your pardon!
 RICHARD You don't want to give any money, so you turn the situation round and blame them for knocking on your door.
 SUE Richard, that's not true! I'm happy to give money but through the official channels. I just don't like people coming to my door.

Recording Script

RICHARD Such as non-stick teflon frying pans.

FRANK Well yes, but there are other much more relevant examples – high speed aircraft, for instance, navigational equipment, thermal clothing, all sorts of things.

RICHARD Nice to think that your up to date skiing clothes were originally designed for astronauts.

SUE Oh Richard, you are such a cynic.

FRANK Well, you guys can laugh, but *I bet you by the year 2050, people will actually be shooting off to Mars on their holidays*, to get away from it all!

SUE No thanks. Not me!

FRANK You think I'm joking, don't you? The next great explorers of this world will be the astronauts. People with vision and courage to try and find new territories. You think it's just science fiction, but it isn't. It's real.

SUE Well I still think the government would be better advised to target some of the problems on this earth before they go shooting off to Mars. How can we possibly talk about space travel when there is youth unemployment, crime, poverty...? That's where our energy should be going ... into making sure that people have a roof over their heads and employment *because work gives people a sense of self*. No one wants to be on the receiving end of charity all the time.

RICHARD Here we go again. *Lots of fine ideals, but ...*

SUE Richard, you have to have ideals. Otherwise what's the point?

FRANK Yeah, I agree with Sue. I think she's right.

RICHARD I don't know.

UNIT 6, EXTRACT 1

1

Incoming governments often make promises which they cannot keep. For instance they say they will reduce unemployment, but the number of people out of work remains static.

2

Every Roman town had at its centre a forum, where people came together to conduct their official and religious affairs. In addition, the forum was used as a meeting place.

3

The meteorological office predicted rain for two weeks of the Olympic Games. In consequence there were fewer spectators than we had anticipated.

4

Learning a foreign language can be difficult and at times frustrating. However the rewards usually outweigh the difficulties involved.

5

Not only did the Second World War result in the displacement of millions of innocent civilians, it also caused tremendous political change.

6

Despite the efforts of the government to reduce the incidence of smoking among teenagers and young adults, I regret to say that smoking is not in decline.

7

This is how to approach writing an essay. Firstly you should read the question carefully. Then you should make some notes covering your main ideas. After that you can start writing.

8

No matter how hard you try to justify the sport of fox hunting, the fact remains that animals are slaughtered simply to provide entertainment for humans.

9

Firstly I would like to talk about the early life of J.F. Kennedy. Secondly, we will look at the period of his presidency, and thirdly we will review the effects of his assassination.

10

On the one hand, it may be advisable to study hard the night before an exam; on the other hand, it is wise to get a good night's sleep before sitting a test.

UNIT 6, EXTRACT 2

- TUTOR OK, come on in. Hi Ben, hello Mark, Sally. Let's get going shall we, because we've got a lot of ground to cover this afternoon. It's Ben's turn to give his tutorial paper today but, remember, we do encourage questions from the rest of you, so do try to join in and ask questions.
- BEN OK.
- TUTOR Now, I believe Ben's going to talk to us today about the exploration of the Red Planet.
- BEN That's right. I'm going to be looking at the recent landing by the Americans of a spacecraft on the planet Mars and in particular focusing on the small rover robot.
- MARK Is that the little robot that *functions as a geologist*?
- BEN Yes, that's right. It's called a rover – like a land rover, I suppose! – and it can detect the geological composition of the ground it's standing on so, yes, *it's a sort of geologist*. It's actually quite amazing.
- TUTOR I heard it described as being *like a microwave oven on wheels*.
- BEN Yeah, well from an appearance point of view, that's a fair description. I've photocopied a picture of it for you, so that you can keep this for reference and make some notes and I'll just hand that out now.
- VOICES Thanks.
- MARK Wow, you'd actually expect it to look more space age than this, wouldn't you? Like more sophisticated.
- BEN OK, well as you can see it's quite small. It actually only weighs 16.5 kg.
- TUTOR Right, and what kind of speed is it capable of, Ben?
- BEN Um, well I suppose that depends on the terrain, but I understand that it has a top speed of 2.4 km an hour *which isn't very fast*, really.
- TUTOR And can you tell us how it works, explain some of these things we can see here?
- BEN Well first of all *on the top it's fitted with solar panels*. It runs on solar energy, of course.
- SALLY Does that mean it can't work at night?
- BEN Yes, indeed it does. I guess it sleeps at night! So you have the solar panels on the top, and *underneath this is the part known as the 'warm box'*.
- MARK What's the purpose of that?
- BEN Well, at night the temperatures on Mars can go below 100 degrees, so the warm box is designed to protect the electronics from the extreme cold. *It's also fitted with two cameras on the front*.
- TUTOR OK. And what about its wheels?
- BEN It's got *six aluminium wheels*, each 13 cm in diameter. Each one has its own motor, so it's individually powered, which allows the vehicle to turn on the spot if necessary. And as you know aluminium is very light.
-
- MARK And how is it steered?
- BEN Good question! It's steered using virtual reality goggles worn by someone back on earth, believe it or not, though because the robot can't be manipulated in real time it can't be steered in real time either.
- SALLY What do you mean exactly?
- BEN Well you see it takes more than 11 minutes for a radio signal to travel from command headquarters in California to Mars and another 11 minutes for the answer to come back.
- SALLY You mean *there's a time delay*.
- BEN Yes, exactly. And the time delay or time lag means it can't be steered directly from Earth. So what they do is this. They photograph the area around the rover and the scientists will decide where they want the rover to go.
- TUTOR In other words, *they'll plot a course for the rover*.
- BEN Exactly.
- TUTOR OK, Ben, that's very interesting. Now can you tell us anything about this space mission itself? Why Mars?

Recording Script

- BEN Well, people have been fascinated by Mars for a long time and it is generally believed that *Mars is the only other planet* in the solar system *to have abundant water*.
- TUTOR Is it possible that people might one day be able to live on Mars?
- BEN Well of course there's a lot of work to be done yet, but theoretically I can't see why not.
- TUTOR Thanks, Ben, that was very interesting.

UNIT 7, EXTRACT 2

LECTURER

Today, in our series of lectures on human language, **we are going to be looking** at the way in which children acquire language. The study of how people learn to speak has proved to be one of the most *fascinating, important and complex* branches of language study. **So let's look at these three features in turn.** **Firstly** – why is it fascinating? This stems from the *natural interest* people take in the developing abilities of young children. People are *fascinated* by the way in which children learn, particularly their own children!

Secondly, it is *important* to study how we acquire our first language, because the study of child language can lead us to a greater understanding of language as a whole. **The third** point is that it's a *complex* study and this is because of the enormous difficulties that are encountered by researchers as soon as they attempt to explain language development, especially in the very young child.

In today's lecture we will cover a number of topics. **We will start by** talking about *research methods*. There are a number of ways that researchers have investigated children's language and these include the use of diaries, recordings and tests, and we'll be looking at how researchers make use of these various *methods*. **We will then go on** to examine *the language learning process*, starting with the development of speech in young infants during the first year of life. This is the time associated with the emergence of the skills of speech perception, **in other words**, an emergence of

the child's awareness of his or her own ability to speak. **We will continue** with our examination of *the language learning process*, **this time by** looking at language learning in the older child that is in children under five. As they mature, it is possible to begin *analysis* in conventional linguistic terms, and **so** in our *analysis we will look at* phonological, grammatical and semantic development in pre-school children.

In the second part of the talk I would like to review some *educational approaches* to the question of how linguistic skills can be developed. **In other words**, how can we assist the young child to learn language skills at school? **Initially** we will look at issues that arise in relation to *spoken* language; we will **then** look at *reading* and review a number of approaches that have been proposed in relation to *the teaching of reading*. **Finally we will conclude** today's talk with an account of current thinking about the most neglected area of all, the child's developing *awareness of written language*.

UNIT 7, EXTRACT 3

LECTURER

In today's lecture I want to look at one of Australia's least loved animals, but one that has an interesting history from which, I think, we can learn a fundamental lesson about problem solving.

While Australia is famous for its many wonderful native animals, in particular the kangaroo and the koala, it also has some less attractive animals, many of which were actually brought to Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Perhaps the most well known introduced animal is *the rabbit*, brought originally by the early settlers as a source of food. Another animal introduced by the settlers was the fox, for the purpose of *sport* in the form of *fox hunting*.

But perhaps the most unusual animal ever brought here was the cane toad. Here is a picture of one. (Picture at top of page) It is a large, and some people would say, very ugly