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The Impact of Learning Contexts on the Acquisition of Sociopragmatic Variation Patterns on Non-native Speaker Teachers of English

By

Anne Marie Devlin (BA(Hons), PGCE, MA)

For the Qualification of

PhD

To

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Department of French

In

January 2012

Head of Department: Dr Paul Hegarty

Under the Supervision of Dr Martin Howard

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Declaration

I, Anne Marie Devlin, declare this thesis to be entirely my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree either at University College Cork or elsewhere

Signed:

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Needless to say, all shortcomings are entirely my own

Abstract

The study is a cross-linguistic, cross-sectional investigation of the impact of learning contexts on the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns and the subsequent enactment of compound identities. The informants are 20 non-native speaker teachers of English from a range of 10 European countries. They are all primarily mono-contextual foreign language learners/users of English: however, they differ with respect to the length of time accumulated in a target language environment. This allows for three groups to be established – those who have accumulated 60 days or less; those with between 90 days and one year and the final group, all of whom have accumulated in excess of one year. In order to foster the dismantling of the monolith of learning context, both learning contexts under consideration – i.e. the foreign language context and submersion context are broken down into micro-contexts which I refer to as loci of learning. For the purpose of this study, two loci are considered: the institutional and the conversational locus.

In order to make a correlation between the impact of learning contexts and loci of learning on the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns, a two-fold study is conducted. The first stage is the completion of a highly detailed language contact profile (LCP) questionnaire. This provides extensive biographical information regarding language learning history and is a powerful tool in illuminating the intensity of contact with the L2 that learners experience in both contexts as well as shedding light on the loci of learning to which learners are exposed in both contexts. Following the completion of the LCP, the informants take part in two role plays which require the enactment of differential identities when engaged in a speech event of asking for advice. The enactment of identities then undergoes a strategic and linguistic analysis in order to investigate if and how differences in the enactment of compound identities are indexed in language.

Results indicate that learning context has a considerable impact not only on how identity is indexed in language, but also on the nature of identities enacted. Informants with very low levels of cross-contextuality index identity through strategic means – i.e. levels of directness and conventionality; however greater degrees of cross-contextuality give rise to the indexing of differential identities linguistically by means of speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. When it comes to the nature of identity enacted, it seems that more time spent in intense contact with native speakers in a range of loci of learning allows learners to enact their core identity; whereas low levels of contact with over-exposure to the institutional locus of learning fosters the enactment of generic

identities.

Key words: second language acquisition, learning context, identity, sociopragmatics; non-native speaker teachers

Introduction: Second Language Acquisition as a Complex Socio-Cognitive Ecosystem

The aim of the introduction is to provide a brief overview of the development of second language acquisition (SLA) research from a theoretical perspective. The reason for including this overview is to chart how theoretical frameworks have changed from a strong bias towards a cognitive/mentalist (C/M) approach to SLA towards an approach (or multitude of approaches) which fosters a more socio-based framework. This is necessary as it demonstrates the positioning of the current study within the huge, and often disparate, body of research concerning SLA. It shows how social aspects of the language such as sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic variation have come to be considered 'as crucial in enabling learners to communicate with other people as is grammar' (Regan, Howard & Lemee (2009: 2). Along with the recent acceptance of socio-aspects of the language as integral components of overall linguistic competence has also come a realisation that, perhaps, an entirely C/M account for the acquisition of a second language may not be adequate. Social factors regarding learning context and learner identity may play a more critical role than the early C/M studies allowed for especially in respect of acquiring socio-aspects of the language. Despite this, I in no way wish to downplay the C/M role in SLA. After all, it is known that languages are not viral, that learners do not simply pick them up by being in close contact with them. Therefore a framework in which the C/M approach can be complemented by a socio-approach may be necessary. The framework which I believe best achieves this is one which views SLA as a complex, dynamic system. The introductory chapter will help illuminate this transition.

The Socio-Cognitive Debate

Traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has focused on a cognitive/mentalist framework based on the premise that language acquisition will follow a similar path in all learners. This assertion was underpinned by the morpheme studies of the 1970s and 1980s. However, since the 1980s researchers working in a variationist framework have been adopting a more sociolinguistic route by examining the effects of social variables such as learning context on the acquisition of a second language. However, the hegemony of the mentalist/cognitive approach wasn't seriously challenged until 1997 in a seminal paper by Firth and Wagner (F & W, all subsequent references will relate to the republished version, 2007)) entitled, 'On Discourse, Communication and (Some) Fundamental Concepts in SLA Research' in which they argued for the 'reconceptualisation of Second Language Acquisition research that would enlarge the ontological and empirical parameters of the field' (F &W, 2007: 757) to account for 'the contextual and interactive dimensions of language with the aim of opening up the debate into the status of three centrally held concepts of SLA: namely: non-native speaker (NNS), learner, and interlanguage'. (F & W, 2007: 757) .In order to redress this imbalance, they call for an integrated approach allowing

for ‘social and cognitive dimensions’. (F & W, 2007: 757)

Overview of Cognitivist/Mentalist Framework

Traditional approaches to SLA view the acquisition of language as a purely cognitive process defined by an internal device known as a ‘language acquisition device’ or LAD. Learners are ‘hard-wired’ to follow a pre-defined, linear route which is common to all learners. This route or path is known as interlanguage with the ultimate ‘destination’ being the language patterns of an idealised L2 native speaker. The majority of travellers along this path, never reach the destination, fossilising somewhere along the route. Therefore, ultimately, SLA is a process doomed to failure. It was led by Chomsky (1965) and Lenneberg’s (1967) mentalist view on language acquisition with its premise of an innate language acquisition device and a universal grammar. This was further underpinned by Selinker’s (1972) thesis on interlanguage as an independent system of its own which proved a key concept in the revised thinking about the process of learning.

The argument in favour of a mentalist/cognitive framework is particularly convincing especially from a morphosyntactic and developmental sequence perspective. A number of highly influential studies, referred to as the morpheme studies were carried out in the 1970’s which underpin the hypothesis that a natural order of acquisition exists. These consisted of the study of a number of morphosyntactic functors in SLA to show an invariant order of acquisition similar to that of first language acquisition. The use of each item was looked at in obligatory occasions, that is occasions were native speakers are obliged to use them correctly. This produced an accuracy order which could be equated with an acquisition order. The first of these studies was carried out by Dulay and Burt (1973). The accuracy of eight morphemes in child second language learners was investigated. The results seemed to show that the majority of errors were developmental in nature- not due to L1 interference- and that there was a defined order of acquisition. The tests were expanded a year later to eleven morphemes and once again a distinct order of acquisition was indicated. Moreover, as the second study involved children from various L1 backgrounds, it was suggested that the order remained the same regardless of L1. Further studies carried out by Bailey *et al.* (1974) on adult learners produced similar findings as did data collected by Krashen *et al.* from writing tasks. The concurrence of data led to the establishment by Dulay and Burt (1975) of an acquisition hierarchy, where each group of morphemes acquired at approximately the same time represents a clear developmental stage (see Ellis, 1994: 56). The studies, likewise, clearly indicated the existence of a natural order of acquisition.

> This suggests that natural second language learners acquire grammatical morphemes in much the same way that first language learners do and that this natural sequence is not determined only or even mainly by the learner's first language. (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 59)

This was later galvanised by longitudinal studies into the systematic pattern of acquisition of developmental sequences in negations and interrogatives. These are regarded as transition constructions, i.e. language forms used when the L2 grammar is still being learnt. These studies, according to Ellis, 'provide the strongest evidence for a natural route of development.' (1994: 58). One of the main advantages they have over the morpheme studies is that data is provided from different times which allows for a fuller profile of the learner and the learning process. The researcher thus has a reliable profile of the SLA of individual learners and progression is indicated. The studies concluded that there is a very clear, defined path along which all learners pass.

In an attempt to summarize the developmental progression of the longitudinal studies, Ellis has produced four broad stages of development. They can be summarized thus:

1. A standard word order irrespective of the word order of the target language structure
2. Expansion of the propositions to include all or most of the required constituents. A variation in the word order in accordance with the word order of the TL
3. Systematic and meaningful use of grammatical morphemes
4. Acquisition of complex sentence structures

A good example of this is the developmental sequence of negation:

1. Negative element (no or not) placed before the verb or element being negated
2. 'No/not' alternated with 'do not'. 'Do not' unmarked for person/number or tense
3. Placement of negative element after auxiliary – 'do not' still not analysed
4. 'Do' performs its full function as a marker of tense and person (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 60)

The studies clearly showed a natural route in that the sequence of the stages remains fixed; however the order may vary. By that it is meant that stage 3 cannot precede stage 2 for example, but a learner may go directly from stage one to stage three. It is also important to note that the sequence is the same for all learners irrespective of L1, although differences are allowed for. For example, a

Spanish or Italian L1 learner may spend longer at stage one in the development of negation that a German L1 speaker as it reflects the L1 pattern, but it is highly unlikely that any learner will start at stage three for example and proceed to stage one; although a stage may be skipped. This Ellis refers to as 'the process of unpackaging units' (1994: 63). The above framework revolutionised the field of SLA bringing with it a scientific approach much lauded by researchers. As noted by Ellis:

> SLA study is only of interest only if it is possible to identify aspects that are relatively stable and hence generalizable, if not to all learners, then, at least, to large groups of learners. (Ellis, 1994:4)

And although both inter- and intra-learner variation was noted, no convincing explanation was proffered.

From the brief overview above, certain assumptions regarding the cognitivist/mentalist approach can be made:

- Language acquisition is systematic and therefore quantifiable
- Language acquisition is independent of L1
- Language acquisition is independent of learning context
- Language consists solely of morphosyntactic features and developmental sequences
- There is one idealised form of the L2
- The native speaker is the target
- Learner identity is monolithic
- The language learner is deficient
- The language learner is condemned to failure

Whilst many of the aforementioned issues help to illuminate factors aiding SLA, others have ignited the socio-cognitive debate. Before investigating how socio-approaches have been dismantling the above, it is important to examine what is meant by socio-approaches.

Socio-approaches to SLA

As previously mentioned, socio-approaches such as variation theory had been working in tandem with the traditional approach for some time without attracting controversy. With a move away from

a systemic view of language itself as espoused by Chomsky (1965) to a systemic functional (SF) view as seen by Halliday (1975), it is not surprising that SLA should also acknowledge a requirement to focus on something other than a systematic approach. A duality in acquisition along vertical and horizontal continua had already been recognised with the vertical continuum equating to morphosyntactic features and the horizontal to native speaker variation with horizontal variation seeming to be learning context dependent. Thus, it can be observed that the variationist approach had quietly been eroding the monolith of language on the one hand and the non-importance of context on the other.

With research into the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation continuously indicating context-dependability, it can initially appear difficult to comprehend the explosion and ensuing schism caused by the F & W paper. However, variationist theory intends to complement existing SLA research, whereas, the F&W paper set out to question many of its corner stones calling for:

- A significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interaction dimensions of language use
- An increased emic […] sensitivity towards fundamental concepts
- The broadening of the SLA database (F&W, 2007: 758)

To overcome the perceived shortcomings of the traditional framework, especially in the area of native/non-native speaker dichotomy, F&W proposed:

- The status of NS or NNS is not stable, that social and institutional roles can dictate the direction of the encounter
- The NNS is not always a 'deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence, striving to reach the 'target' competence of an idealised NS'. (F&W, 765)
- The necessity to consider SLA in a wider context taking in language discourse and social interaction.

The concept of a multitude of identities for the NNS based on observations made during a number of NS/NNS encounters over a variety of situations was introduced. Reaction to the paper was mixed with respondents falling into three distinct categories as summarised by Larsen-Freeman (2007). Those are:

- Those who wish to radically reconceptualise SLA, calling for the foregrounding of a more social framework.
- Those who see the need for both a social/contextual and cognitive/mentalist framework
- Those who are totally opposed to any change

Of those seeking change, according to Larsen-Freeman, Hall (1997), Liddicoat, (1997) and Rampton, (1997) are the most outspoken. All three challenged the view of L2 user as deficient and advocate a shift from the preoccupation with the acquisition of morphosyntactic units to the study of a learner's ability to use language, focusing on social relationships and what is being achieved. Liddicoat criticised research methodology which he believed strengthened the notion of native speaker (NS) as power holder in that, during much research, the NS adopts the role of interviewer. This, therefore, raises the question of interlocutor roles and purpose of interaction influencing results. Similar criticisms levelled by Rampton likewise challenge the paradigm of interviewer/interviewee, NS/NNS methodologies while foregrounding 'heterogeneous situations that exist outside the classroom'. (1997: 332).

Treading a middle path between a cognitive/mentalist approach and a social/contextual one are Kasper (1997) and Poulisse (1997). While both commentators acknowledge the need to consider social and contextual factors, they both conclude that by denying the need for a 'search for universal and underlying features of language processes', (Poulisse, 2007: .325) that the field would become a study of second language use. It is precisely the above-mentioned criticism, i.e., that the acceptance of F&W's proposals would lead to an erosion of the 'A' in SLA , replacing it with 'use' that have led to vociferous opposition to the proposals by researchers such as Long (1997) and Gass (1997). However, they are not complete rejectionists, but, rather, stress the importance of empirical research into if and how social/contextual features influence language acquisition. Furthermore, Gass strongly makes the point that both frameworks can be compatible and moots the possibility that 'some parts of language are constructed socially'. (Gass, 2007: 88). At the same time, she defends the use of NS baseline data, stating, somewhat controversially, that NSs are no-longer involved in the learning process.

In their 1998 response to the controversy, F&W adhere to their conviction for the need for radical reform in the field of SLA while at the same time foregrounding the centrality of acquisition. However, their predominant concerns seem to be the acquisition/use dichotomy and the notion of interlanguage having a defined and specified end point.

Moreover, issues also arise in the area of data gathering methodology. F&W argue strongly in favour of naturally occurring as opposed to experimental data. They go as far as to state that, 'a 'functionalist' model of language, firmly rooted in contingent, situated, and interactionist experiences of the individual as a social being is better suited to understand language and language acquisition… than a structural model'. (F & W, 1998: 92)

Mind the Gap

However, since the 1997 publication and ensuing debate, attempts have been made to bridge the gap. Revisiting the issue a decade later, Larsen-Freeman (2007) adopts a position similar to that of Gass, (1997), when opining that, 'the two positions […] are simply focusing on different aspects of the same problem.' (2007: 781), thus giving credence to the concept that different elements of language may require different frameworks: the acquisition of morphosyntactic features may be a purely cognitive process, but the acquisition of variation and functions could require social interaction.

Prior to that, Tarone (2000) questioned the nature of both NS and Interlanguage (IL) grammars. Diverging from a mentalist/cognitive view, she describes both as non-homogenous, that is as consisting of a range of styles which can be accessed as required. She poses and subsequently provides answers to two salient questions:

1. If two learners acquire English in two different social settings, will those learners internalise two different IL grammars? (2000: 187)
2. What happens if you change the social setting altogether? Will the way that the learner acquires the L2 change much? (2000: 190)

Contrary to mentalist/cognitivist theory, both questions were answered in the affirmative.
For the former she asserts that target language (TL) input varies according to the social situation: 'Rules to be learnt vary in specific ways form one social situation to the next' (Tarone, 2000:.187) Citing the example of the immersion class academic register of L2 compared to an L2 adolescent vernacular register, she proceeds to elaborate on the differences in input depending on the social situation describing how lack of appropriate input can impact negatively on the result of hitherto unencountered situations. (Gee (2006) and Miller (2006), both working from a sociocultural paradigm, develop this point by foregrounding the necessity to prepare learners for a multitude of

discourse domains.) Tarone compelling concludes that different IL grammars can be acquired depending on the TL input which in turn is determined by the social situation.

In response to the latter question she cites research evidence claiming 'that error detection, developmental sequences, and negotiation of meaning may all be sensitive to social context'. (Tarone, 2000: 90). This argument, with the exception of the developmental sequencing data, seems less convincing as it could be more concerned with language use than acquisition - i.e. that a learner is more accuracy focused in discussions with a teacher than with a peer and thereby exhibits a more monitored use of language. Furthermore, her example of developmental sequences also proves unconvincing as displays of differential patterns could once more be evidence of language use with particular emphasis on speech accommodation rather than acquisition. However, this proposal compares differentially to the assumption of Larsen-Freeman who states:

> Social context is the site in which L2 acquisition takes place; however, if you change the context, the acquisition process remains the same. (2007: 780)

This is one of the most controversial debates currently raging in SLA. However, despite having made such assertions, Larsen-Freeman's position is not one of rejection of socio-approaches. On the contrary, she advocates a 'dynamic coupling' (2007:784) of learning and the use of both psychological and social factors taking into account acquisition and participation. Her view of language and language acquisition envisages both as complex adaptive systems for which a 'wider lens with which to examine issues'. (2007:782) is needed. Additionally, she refers to a 'dynamic process of language usage' (2007:783) and the inseparability and learning and using. She foregrounds the adaptation of language resources to meet specific goals influenced by 'learners' identities, goals and affective states'. (2007:783) resulting in a structured network of dynamic language using patterns, stored in memory […] with specific information about instances retained in the representation.' (2007:783/4).

As can be seen from the above, a multitude of theoretical approaches currently prevails in the field of SLA research. However, there are a seemingly large and disparate number of socio-theories. This can be seen as an indicator of the complexity of language acquisition and the fact that language itself is more than a collection of morphosyntactic features or developmental sequences. While a purely cognitive theory is useful for the analysis of the acquisition of morphosyntactic features and developmental sequences, other frameworks may be more suitable for assessing other areas of language. Lafford (2007) makes a strong case for the complementation of the cognitive model.

This is echoed by Gass, Lee and Roots (2007) who foreground the need for scholars to carry out studies to address the specific ways in which the use the non-primary languages in particular contexts contribute to acquisition.

Second Language Acquisition as a Complex, Dynamic System

One approach which appears to pair a c/m paradigm with a socio-framework successfully is a complex, dynamic view of SLA. The complexity of second language acquisition with an array of multifarious factors influencing its outcome is a position adopted by those working from a perspective of complex dynamic systems. This is presented by De Bot as 'an interesting but basically complementary approach' (2008: 168) to existing cognitive models of SLA. However, this attitude seems somewhat dismissive. It is perhaps more beneficial to perceive a complex, dynamic approach not simply as complementary but as an approach which allows for the complex interplay of a range of cognitive, psychological and social factors. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2010) compellingly advance this perspective when they foreground the opinion that 'there are not only many factors, each on its own contributing a part, but also the factors interact, sometimes overriding each other, sometimes converging as powerful multiple effects' (Larsen–Freeman and Cameron, 2010: 133). The interplay between the cognitive system and environmental factors is further enhanced by Verspoor, Lowie and Van Dijk (2008) who comment that 'an individual's cognitive system develops through interaction with the physical and social environment.' (Verspoor *et al*., 2008: 214).

Adding to the complexity of the model, the factors influencing SLA are themselves portrayed as complex subsystems which have the ability to change and adapt over time 'both synchronically and diachronically' (De Bot, 2008: 171). It is precisely the central role afforded to these complex, interconnected subsystems that allows for a development of the paradigm of second language acquisition which moves away from one which views the learner, language and learning contexts as static, disconnected entities towards a paradigm which acknowledges and respects the dynamic influence of the subsystems leading to a 'more variegated portrayal of language using patterns […] and a more emic, or learner-centred account of their development' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2010: 135).

With the acceptance of a non-monolithic, non-static version of language, learner and learning

context must also come a negation of the interlanguage metaphor of a linear route of acquisition. It is no longer viable to consider SLA as a linear path with a defined (albeit unachievable) end point, rather the metaphor of an intricate and highly sensitive ecosystem as proposed by Van Geert (1994) should be adopted. However, to advance Van Geert's metaphor of cognitive ecosystem, I propose one of socio-cognitive ecosystem - an approach which gives equal status to both cognitive and socio–factors which enable individuals to acquire a subsequent language.

The current project upholds the position put forth by Larsen-Freeman and Verspoors *et al.*, amongst others, which espouses the perspective of a complex, dynamic approach to the acquisition of a second language by considering the process which underlies acquisition as a complex, dynamic, socio-cognitive ecosystem. Of particular interest is the interplay between what I hold to be the three main players within this ecosystem: the learner, language and learning context. In the following chapters I will argue for a more fluid and dynamic interpretation of learner, language and learning context. It is only through the interpretation of the three players as complex subsystems that we can begin to understand the influence each of these players exerts on the other and the effect this has on the acquisition of linguistic features. I will focus on exploring the complex interplay between learning contexts and the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns – or, to put it another way, the role of learning contexts in the acquisition of how identity is indexed in language through sociopragmatic variation patterns.

In the following chapters, I will conduct a detailed investigation of the three subsystems which I have identified as crucial to this study and present them as complex, dynamic systems in their own right before considering the impact of their interaction This involves dismantling long-held beliefs concerning:

1. Language learner identity as monolith
2. The monolithic view of language
3. The non-learning context dependency of SLA

Chapter 1

Identity: Dismantling the Monolith

With a view to exploring the path taken to dismantle a monolithic, essentialist approach to the nature of identity and present a picture of the learner as a multifaceted compound identity capable of 'being' and 'doing' a range of identities, I will start this chapter with an overview of the theoretical background to identity research in general before proceeding to a discussion of the role of identity in language. I will finish by presenting an up-to-date synopsis of the role of identity in SLA research

1.1 Theoretical Considerations

According to Block, there has been 'a veritable explosion in recent years as regards the number of researchers in the social sciences who are putting identity at the centre of their work' (2006: 34). One of the main routes regarding changes in thought about identity concerns the shift from an essentialist view to a post-structural one. An essentialist view has been described by Benwell and Stokoe as 'a taken-for-granted category and a feature of a person that is absolute and knowable.' (2010: 9). Furthermore, the essentialist view rests not on an individual but rather classifies according to 'demographic categories such as race, ethnicity, gender and age.' (Block, 2010: 3). It is generally considered as fixed and true for members of a group at all times, and according to Bucholz, it rests on two assumptions '(1) that groups can be clearly delimited and (2) that

group members are more or less alike.' (2003: 400). As well as being determined by biological features, it has also been mooted that environmental features such as 'social class, religion, education, family and peer groups' (Block, 2010: 12) play a major role in pre-determining and shaping individuals in a relatively fixed manner. The idea that environmental factors can play a role was initially seen as progressive to the extent that such factors can be altered to produce a different outcome, i.e. an individual displaying an identity belonging to that of a different group. However, as pointed out above by Bucholz, it is first of all necessary to clearly define groups and then draw up very distinct borders between such groups in a way that minimises overlap. This should be accomplished so that members of each group display identities that are more or less on a parity. As such, the individual is deprived of any agency over the determining of her identity. It is predetermined by a conflation of biological and environmental features.

However, the search for what could be considered universal band descriptors for humanity has come under considerable criticism in recent years by those working in what could loosely be described as a poststructuralist paradigm. The term poststructuralism is, in itself, amorphous and draws from many different strands of thought. It is used as an umbrella term to encompass all those working in a framework which goes further than structuralism, in a paradigm that is no-longer striving to establish universal laws or set up a list of universal band descriptors into which an individual must fit by dint of biological and environmental predetermination. As Block points out, it is 'about moving […] to more nuanced, multilevel and ultimately, complicated, framings of the world around us.' (2010: 13). What unites those working in a poststructuralist framework is the idea that we can no-longer apply an essentialist view to identity. Identity is therefore viewed as something more fragmentary and fluid, as something which cannot be shoe-horned into a predefined category.

Sociologists such as Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1991) frame identity as bilateral interaction between the individual and the social environment insofar as individual agency on the one hand can carve out an identity; however, that identity and the possibilities available can be constrained by the social environment. A compelling metaphor for this is put forth by Mathews (2000) in what he refers to as a *cultural supermarket*. Within the global supermarket business, there is an almost infinite range of products from which the consumer can choose. They can be chosen at whim, in any composition and our choices need never be identical. In theory, this is similar to identity; there is an almost infinite number of possible identities with any combination being possible. It is possible to pick just one from the shelf or we can help ourselves to as many as we like. However, as in the supermarket, there are external factors curtailing what is in fact available. They range from what the local branch chooses to stock (which can be based on geographical and demographic factors) to what you can afford, to what the individual actually needs at a specific time. The analogy with the social constraints of individual agency is clear. On the one hand, yes, there are a multitude of identities, but on the other hand, availability may be curtailed by social factors such as those imposed on us due to where we live. Just as some goods are available, but out of reach due to financial reasons, some identities will be out of reach due to insufficient *capital* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984), to which I will return later.

Identity is constructed and construed not as a monolith, but rather as multimodal, semiotic system. Multimodality refers to 'the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event together with the particular way in which these modes are combined'. (Kress and van

Leeuwen, 2001: 20) The semiotic modes which combine to create this system are manifold and include: clothes, hairstyles, hair colour, skin colour, religious paraphernalia and of course, language. When the very inconclusive list above is presented, it can be perceived as a challenge to the Kress and van Leeuwen's assumption that multimodality refers to the 'use' of semiotic modes. It implies that the individual has complete agency over which to display in a given situation; and while this may be true for certain modes such as dress (but only in non-circumscribed societies) it is clearly not the case for skin colour and to a lesser extent, hair colour.

The above illustrates that semiotic modes can fall under the direct agency of the individual; however, they are often biological in nature and/or imposed by society. There cannot be distinct lines drawn to embed the semiotic mode as under the agency of an individual or as imposed either biologically or societally. They are, in fact, complex systems which involve the interplay of agency, biology and societal imposition. This is in keeping with a poststructuralist framework which allows for a multitude of identities to arise for an individual. Block (2010) foregrounds the demographic categories of ethnicity and race, nationality, migration, gender, social class and language as relevant identities to explore. He emphasises the interplay between many of the categories insofar as it is often impossible to consider one in isolation. In addition, he makes the point that the categories are in fact often co-constructed and offer a blend of self-positioning and positioning by others which are, at the same time, individual and collective. Thus we can portray identity as a complex system consisting of a multitude of semiotic modes which can be deployed, often actively by the individual; imposed, through society or biology; negotiated, or performed in a way that works with or reacts to a situation.

1.1.1 Identity as a Complex, Dynamic System

From the above discussion, we can see that identity is in fact a complex, dynamic system which at the same time adapts to the context and adapts the context. It can be viewed as an ecosystem containing a subsystem of semiotic modes. The semiotic modes are in themselves a complex web or ecosystem for an individual to position herself or be positioned within a given context. As complex systems, semiotic modes can be considered adaptive in nature. By that we mean that they are not static, but form and reform (or are formed and reformed) according to the contextual demands.

As the introduction presented a detailed overview of complex systems and language, we need only

recap on what is meant by the term complex, dynamic system here. In their seminal publication, 'Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics', Larsen-Freeman and Cameron describe complex systems as being defined by their heterogeneity. They posit that 'the elements, agents and/or processes in a complex system are of many different types' and that '[T]he elements, agents and/or processes in a complex system may themselves be complex systems' (2008: 28). And this, as demonstrated above appears to be the case with regards to semiotic modes and identity. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron proceed to stress the interconnectedness of the components of subsystems and systems with their context. They embrace the adaptive or dynamic position that small changes to one element may lead to a very different outcome in that 'change in one area of the system leads to change to the system as a whole' (2008: 32).

1.1.2 Capital

Although rooted in the structuralist school, the French sociologist/anthropologist, Pierre Bourdieu provides a very compelling framework with which to explore identity through the paradigm of his metaphor of *capital* (1977, 1984, 1991).

Bourdieu defines capital as:

> accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world. It is what makes the games of society [...] something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle. (1986: 46)

He describes the immanent regularities of the social worlds thus: 'the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices.' (1986: 46). Although the above makes no mention of the group or individual constructing the capital offered to them, in fact it seems to imply that groups and

individuals can only chose from what is on offer, it is nevertheless a useful metaphor with which to classify semiotic modes.

Bourdieu draws on four capitals in his work:

- Economic
- Cultural
- Social
- Symbolic

Economic capital refers quite simply to the finances available to an individual through income and assets. This can be an instantaneous form of capital.

Cultural capital, which Bourdieu defines mainly through education, is considered to be hereditary in nature i.e. transmitted from generation to generation on a basis of social class. However, he is also keen to point out that the social structures of the education system themselves are implicit in the transmission of the cultural capital. Cultural capital can take three states: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. The embodied state refers to the physical and mental/psychological dispositions which are long lasting; the objectified state to the paraphernalia and objects which realise the cultural capital and the institutional which is a form of objectification which confers original properties on the cultural capital.

In its embodied state, cultural capital is a blend of the innate and the acquired and also includes features such as language, especially as it relates to the social weighting through accent or grammatical choice, for example. However, Bourdieu is quick to point out that opportunities to acquire cultural capital are not open to all, but can depend on the length of time which can be devoted to it which, in turn, is dependent on what has been inherited and what economic resources can be put into it. In its objectified state, cultural capital can be defined as material objects and media such as paintings, books or statues which are transmissible either literally as in the transfer of a painting to another person, or symbolically as in the transmission of the right to own or access the object or media. In this category, Bourdieu also places academic qualifications. Objectified cultural capital can further be institutionalised insofar as institutions recognise it and can compare the holders of such capital. This is very much the case of academic qualifications.

Social Capital pertains to collective membership of a group, be it a family, a school, a social class. Membership to that group provides 'credentials' which entitle the individual to credits. The bigger

the network to which the individual belongs, the more credits gained. Bourdieu refers to this as 'the multiplier effect' (1986: 51). Social capital, like cultural capital can be hereditary as in a family name and its acquisition can be dependent on the amount of time allocated to it.

Symbolic capital pertains to the manipulation of image to show either collective or group position in society. Under the umbrella of symbolic capital can come institutionalized symbols such as titles as well as items such as prestige, clothes, hairstyles, friends, food and drink or even hobbies. Bourdieu makes the connections between preference to certain kinds of drinks and access to the arts, i.e. champagne drinkers are more likely to view light comedy at the theatre than whiskey drinkers (re: the example of playing golf making the player look old -bourgeoisie (Bourdieu, 1989:20). However, Bourdieu seems to endow individuals with more agency as regards to symbolic capital than he does with other forms. He recognises that:

> agents classify themselves, exposing them selves to classification by choosing, in conformity with their tastes, different attributes [...] that go well with them, or more exactly, suit their position (1989: 19)

However, at the same time, he also recognises the transferability of the capital. Notwithstanding Bourdieu's use of the metaphors to explain social makeup and more precisely social inequalities and his, at times, apparent essentialist approach, i.e. that access to capital is predetermined and fixed, his paradigm is much more wide-ranging than social class and inequalities, it is also a powerful framework for the analysis of identity. It works very well in tandem with Mathews' notion of cultural supermarket, although without allowing for as much individual agency. His capitals also provide an effective schema for the classification of semiotic modes.

1.2 Identity and Language

Fear of affectation made her affect

Inadequacy whenever it came to

Pronouncing words 'beyond her'. *Berthold Brek.*

She'd manage something hampered and askew

Every time, as if she might betray

The hampered and inadequate by too

Well-adjusted a vocabulary.

With more challenge than pride, she'd tell me, 'You

Know all them things.' So I governed my tongue

In front of her, a genuinely well-

Adjusted adequate betrayal

Of what I knew better. I'd *naw* and *aye*

And decently relapse into the wrong

Grammar which kept us allied and at bay

(Seamus Heaney, 1987)

It may seem strange to begin a section on language and identity with a poem. However, the Heaney poem above covers many of the issues regarding identity discussed previously as well as challenging some of the views which have become almost universal truths within language and identity research especially in the field of gendered speech and class. The topics raised in the poem are namely: social class, gender and, to a lesser extent, regional variation and how a subject positions herself and others in relation to these aspects of identity. From the above poem, we see the conflicts that can arise and which we have to contend with while enacting our complex identities through language. On the one hand we see the female subject battling to reconcile her intellectual side with her need to accommodate her speech patterns to those of her working class peers in the form of covert prestige. This conflict then expands when she performs the identity of a mother. She performs the identity of an inadequate mother anxious to see her son elevate his language as he progresses socially upwards and accumulates more cultural capital in the form of a more standard variety of language. We then see the conflict of the son, who, on the one hand 'knows better' than to use the local variety, but on the other negotiates or constructs a form of prestige with his mother in such a way that the common choice of linguistic forms between mother and son proves simultaneously to be solidary and non-solidary.

In many ways this sonnet accurately portrays the conflicts involved in identity and language and it has been many of those ideas which sociolinguists, and latterly, second language acquisition researchers have been battling with. However, this complexity has not always been acknowledged by researchers.

As I have discussed above, language is one of the semiotic modes through which identity can be expressed or indexed. We have also noted that identity is not fixed that it is in fact a fluid and fragmented entity, therefore to portray it correctly, language must also be considered fluid and fragmentary, as an adaptable tool to be used to convey the complexity of the various identities we assume or have imposed on us. In order to explore this, we will take a look firstly at some earlier work on sociolinguistics and identity – namely the work emanating from a variationist Labovian paradigm before taking a look at how contexts of discourse impact on identity.

1.2.1 Variationist Approaches

Major studies were conducted in the 1970s (Labov, 1972, Trudgill, 1974, Milroy and Milroy, 1978, Macauley 1978) the correlation between sociolinguistic variables and social factors such as class, sex and age. It has been described by Benwell and Stokoe as 'a pre-discursive construct that correlates with, or even causes particular behaviours' (2010:26). However, despite the quantitative methods of distribution of variables employed by those working under a variationist umbrella, they have been criticised in recent years for promoting an 'internally located group, or collective identity' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2010: 27). This is true to the extent that Milroy and Milroy even set out to 'find clear binary choice systems' (1978: 21). The collective identity is construed through the linking of a social description to a linguistic description in order to offer an explanation for linguistic behaviour. Within this correlation there is no room for the negotiation of identity insofar as the identity label pinned on the language users is, in some ways finite. Moreover, the social identity as 'man', or 'working class' or 'black American' is somehow causal i.e. that the biological fact of being a man leads to a preference for [n] as opposed to [ŋ] endings in verbs such as 'going' in English.

This view has been rejected in more recent years. For example, the binary notion of being either a man or woman has been seen as too simplistic a distinction to make when analyzing identity and language. As stated by Regan *et al.,* 'no simplistic notion of sex as a discrete factor in variation will suffice in an analysis of language use' (2009: 121). The same of course could be said of any other discrete social or biological factor, i.e. that the simplistic notion of being working class leads to certain speech patterns. However, in defence of the early wave of so-called Labovian research, it is worth pointing out that not all the findings were 'simplistic' correlations between a finite number of socio-biographical factors and linguistic patterns. Milroy and Milroy foregrounded the idea of

social networks, i.e. that language patterns were not just the result of sex or gender for example, but were also heavily influenced by the strength of the ties in the community – the social networks - and at times the social networks exerted a greater influence on language patterns than socio-biographical features.

Another study from that era which planted the seeds for further study into the construction and performance of identity (albeit not couched in such terms) through language use, was Douglas-Cowie's 1978 study on code-switching in a Northern Irish Village. Although, the focus was on changes in linguistic code which occurred due to a change of interlocutor during a Labovian type interview, today, such changes would be considered changes in identity. The interview when conducted by a known, local, female researcher produced a more informal, non-standard form of English; whereas when conducted a second time by an unknown, male speaker of standard English, a more formal, standardised discourse was produced. Whereas Douglas-Cowie highlighted linguistic change in the form of code-switching due to social ambition, today this may be seen as a change in subject-positioning and the enactment of a compound identity insofar as the informants adopted an informal, socially close and equal status identity during their interactions with the known, female researcher in a way that maximised solidarity between the two interlocutors. This may be due to commonalities in their background, i.e. local, rural and protestant (religion constitutes a salient identity marker in the north of Ireland – see Milroy & Milroy, 1978). And these, to quote Heaney, keep them 'allied' and this is indexed in speech patterns. The informants, therefore, were 'being' local, rural Protestants 'doing' having an informal chat with an acquaintance.

On the other hand, the second interview took place with an unknown, male speaker of standard English. The identity conveyed by the informants switched to comply with the situation. A more distant and formal identity was enacted. This was indexed by the choice of standardised speech. The standardised speech patterns simultaneously serve to keep the interviewer 'at bay' through the rejection of language which could be seen as emotional or emotive, while at the same time allowing the informant to maintain face in front of what could feasibly be construed as a higher-status interlocutor. In a way, the preference for more standardised speech patterns in this context shows the informants' refusal to be interpellated into a lower-status role. It is a display of equality and, rather than being a negative sign of a desire for upward mobility, it is a sign of control of subject positioning, of identity as indexed through sociopragmatic changes in speech patterns.

Although not foregrounded, both the Milroy and Milroy and Douglas-Cowie studies indicate the interplay between context and linguistic variation in the enactment of identity. Douglas-Cowie

specifically refers to 'the interlocutor and to the topic of conversation as important factors in determining the linguistic variety to be employed in a given situation' (1978: 51). However, the author does not elaborate on either of these issues and establishes a causal link between variation and social ambition. Milroy and Milroy demonstrated that females adopted more informal speech patterns when they worked in a male-dominated environments and likewise when they had strong social network ties. Douglas-Cowie demonstrated how the informants conveyed a range of identities when 'being' and 'doing' in different contexts.

From the above, it is clear that the often simplistic message relating to social or biographical states taken from those early Labovian-inspired studies, for example, that men opt for covert prestige while women are anxious to progress up the social ladder and therefore show a preference for overt prestige is not borne out by the research, but rather from a need to 'carve the world into a series of finite categories into which their object of study is then moulded and shaped' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2010: 27). However, criticism of those works has probably been too harsh. As demonstrated above, the researchers were aware of more complex issues involved in the correlation between language and identity and made explicit reference to factors relating to context and in particular, the Milroy and Milroy concept of social networks could be seen as a precursor to communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

As the above discussion demonstrates, context of interactions and contact with speech clearly play a major role in the emergence and enactment of complex identities. However, the connection between context and identity is bilateral. Holmes and Meyerhoff describe gender as 'the accomplishment and product of social interaction.' (2003:11). I suggest that this description can be applied to identity as a whole. Therefore identity may be considered as both shaping and being shaped by the context in which it is displayed.

1.3 Identity and Second Language Studies

The role of identity in second language acquisition research is a very recent area of research. Traditionally, it seems to have occupied a minor place – if at all mentioned. Pavlenko and Piller refer to the monolingual bias in gender studies and language and go so far as to state that multilingual and, in particular, SLA research has suffered from 'an almost ubiquitous gender blindness due to the prevalence of psycholinguists and Universal Grammar approaches in the field' (2001:3). I would go one step further and describe the state of affairs as 'identity blindness'.

Gender is just one facet in the complex nature of identity and has been the facet which has attracted the most attention. However, as pointed out by Piller and Pavlenko, (2001), SLA research has been more focused on interlanguage and has taken a mainly etic approach to the research with scant regard for the L2 speaker, attaching only the identity of deficient L1 speaker to her/him. However, since the mid-1990s, there has been an increasing attempt to rectify this omission – or blindness – within the field. One of the first researchers to do so was Norton (Pierce) who noted that 'SLA [second language acquisition] theorists have not developed a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context.' (Norton, 1995:12).

Norton was appealing not only for a consideration of identity, but for the consideration of a subtle, fluid identity, i.e. a non-essentialist view. This call was furthered by Firth and Wagner (1997) when the notion of deficient L2 speaker was rejected and a stable identity rejected with the acknowledgment that 'social and institutional roles can dictate the direction of the encounter.' (1997:758). Firth and Wagner also led the charge for a more emic – or participant-based framework for the study of SLA. This call for a more nuanced, poststructuralist approach to identity in SLA seems not to have fallen onto deaf ears. The 2000s have seen a number of monographs and volumes with identity as a key factor in SLA and multilingualism. We have seen publications by Norton (2000), Pellegrino Aveni (2004), Koven, (2007) and Block, (2010), as well as volumes edited by Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller and Teutsch-Dwyer (2001), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) and Dornyei and Ushioda (2009) to name but a few. However, it is important to highlight that the role of identity, just as we have seen in the previous section, is not completely new, rather it was previously couched in different terms and then abandoned for some years.

1.3.1 Precursors to Current Identity Studies

This is seen most apparently in the oft-cited and now renowned studies carried out into Costa Rican migrants to the USA by Schumann (1974) and that carried out into a Japanese transmigrant by Schmidt (1983). Both were longitudinal studies of a highly qualitative nature. Schumann's study focused mainly on the lack of linguistic progress experienced by 'Alberto', a migrant factory worker from Costa Rica, living and working in the USA. A detailed investigation of social and psychological factors led Schumann to establish the 'Acculturation Model' which assumed that language acquisition would ensue if a number of factors regarding social and psychological distance were met. A brief overview of the factors considered relevant is provided below in table 1.1

Table 1.1

Social distance	Psychological distance
Between individual and members of the target language community Influenced by: domination vs. subordination; assimilation vs. adaption vs. preservation; enclosure, size, congruence and attitude	Language shock Culture shock culture stress Integrative vs instrumental motivation Ego permeability

The less social and psychological distance between the target language group and the learners, the greater the chance of success. In other words, the closer the two cultures and the willingness of the individual to adapt, then the greater the chance of success.

Schumann argues that acculturation is 'a major causal variable in SLA ' (1986:379) especially in comparison with formal instruction when he states that, 'instruction is evidently not powerful enough to overcome the pidginization engendered by social and psychological distance.' (1976: 404). However, although not specifically addressed by Schumann, it is clear that by referring to issues such as the above and by giving the learner complete agency, he is, in fact, addressing identity. More contemporary readings of the data regarding Alberto, point, not to Alberto making 'very little effort to get to know English speaking people' (Schumann, 1978: 97), but rather to the immigrant's positioning in society (see Norton, 2000, for a detailed discussion). In other words, it is not Alberto who has the agency, or the capital or even the legitimacy to become acquainted with English speakers, rather, the identity he has had imposed on him by society somewhat precludes contact. Alberto has very little agency to construct an identity which would be seen as legitimate to native speakers. His identity has been constructed for him by society and, following Bourdieu, his identity has been constructed according to his low levels of capital that precludes contact with native-speakers.

The study of Wes by Schmidt (1983) hinted at identity as a promising area of study. However, like

Schumann's study of Alberto, the main focus was on fossilisation of language. Wes, in all respects was the polar opposite of Alberto. He was a professional from a highly-developed first world country – Japan. As regard to his status, he could be described as what Conradson and Latham (2005) refer to as 'middling transmigrants' - in other words a reasonably well-educated, middle-class person from a middle-class society travelling to another middle-class society to keep company with other middle-class people. He came equipped with high levels of capital and he was socially and psychologically close to the target language community. As such, he had no difficulties making contact with native speakers and accumulated a wide range of friends during his stay. He possessed the agency to position himself as an equal and society coerced with that positioning. Although he adhered to all the factors of Schumann's acculturation model, his language remained fossilised. Block posits that mastery of English was not essential for his acculturation when he says, 'Wes really had little incentive to improve his English as a means of acculturation […]. Indeed, his English worked quite well for the different subject positions adopted and the communities of practice in which he had a membership' (Block, 2010:68).

So, if these two studies are considered as pre-cursors to the present day studies into the role of identity in second language acquisition, what do they tell us? Firstly, that social identity plays a considerable role. The amount of capital you possess reflects your ability to enact an identity. If you possess low levels of capital, society imposes an identity on you; however, if you possess high levels of capital, you have the possibility to position yourself in such a way that society accepts it. This in turn leads to greater social capital and thus access to the target language community. But does this lead to second language gains? At first glance the answer would be no. Both Wes and Alberto display highly-fossilized grammars. If this is taken at face value, the 'blindness' towards identity as a variable in SLA seems understandable. On the one hand, there is an informant with a societally-imposed identity which prevents access to the target language culture and on the other hand an informant with a highly-positioned self-identity which is re-enforced by society through ease of access to the target language culture of which the informant takes full advantage. Yet, the outcome is the same – neither inability to acculturate nor positive subject positioning seems to lead to linguistic gains.

However, Schumann was primarily concerned with morphosyntactic and developmental sequence gains and no gains were found in these areas. Schmidt, on the other hand, worked according to the framework of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and later revised by Canale (1983) which consisted of 4 components:

- grammatical competences: words and rules
- sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness
- strategic competence: appropriate use of communication strategies
- discourse competence: cohesion and coherence

What can be clearly seen from the study of Wes is that his grammatical competence, like that of Alberto's did not improve; however his sociolinguistic and discourse competence clearly seemed to. (As regards strategic competence, Schmidt refers to Wes's over-reliance on one communication strategy, the expectation that interlocutors would learn his interlanguage. This he felt would be 'detrimental in the long run' (1983: 167)). It can therefore be stated that language gains do indeed occur; however the gains seem to be limited to social aspects of the linguistic repertoire.

Both Schumann and Schmidt were working under paradigms which highlighted areas other than identity. Although their findings are contradictory with Schmidt disproving the Acculturation model (as accepted by Schumann), they nevertheless were among the first in modern SLA research to allow for a 'social' approach to the field. Given that Kasper and Rose describe the fundamental assumption of the Acculturation model as 'second language learning is crucially linked to the learner's social position in the target community and interaction with members of the target group' (2002: 20), it seems strange that it was never further developed.

However, recent years have witnessed a return to the notion of a central role for the learner and more emic frameworks have been developed. The learner is being considered from the perspective of a social being with her/his social identity acting as a barrier or conduit to second language acquisition, i.e. as something that can prevent the acquisition process or as a variable which can aid the process. In addition, the learners' identity is being investigated as a variable in what is acquired, i.e. the identity of the learner can influence the variety of language being acquired. When considering a learner from a perspective of a complex identity, one variable in that identity has been considered more than most and that is gender and as such, it is worth spending some time discussing the issue.

1.4 Gender in SLA Acquisition

1.4.1 Gender and Success in Foreign Language Learning

Gender is probably the most widely investigated area of identity in second language acquisition and multilingual studies. It has been researched under a number of various headings in SLA research. If we look first of all at the correlation between gender and attitude to and success in foreign language learning, we will see that studies show disparate findings. For example, Burstall (1975), Ekstrand (1980), Bacon and Finnemann (1992) Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2000) showed that females performed better than males in an FL environment. This seems at odds with a study by Seligman (1990) which indicated that males had much higher levels of motivation and that they had different models for motivation than females in that males were, firstly defined as optimistic learners as opposed to the females who were categorized as pessimistic.

Males accredited internal factors to success and external factors to failure; whereas for females, the opposite was true. In general, Seligman found that females blamed themselves for failure, but credited others or circumstances for success. These findings seemed to correlate with earlier studies indicating differential learning attitudes between genders (Feather, (1969), Simon and Feather (1973), Zuckerman, (1979) and Little and Lopez, (1997)). On the other hand, other studies indicate no causal relationship between gender and attitude (Bell et *al*. (1994), Travis, Phillippi and Henley, (1991)). Differential results were also found by Kang (2000) who noted that for Korean school girls the opposite was true insofar as they appear to possess more motivation and accredit success to internal factors and failure to external. This was in line with the results of Muchnick and Wolfe (1982).

What the above studies demonstrate is that it is impossible to restrict the study of such a complex issue as motivation/attitude to a simple binary distinction. The simplistic notions of gender alone as a predictor for motivation/attitude and linguistic gains may not prove very illuminating or satisfactory. Results are disparate and interpretations compare differentially.

The possible correlation between gender and linguist gains indicated above was concerned with formal or institutional language learning – i.e. learning that takes place in a classroom, and while there may be some indication that females perform better in this context, the opposite was found in a study by Brecht *et al.* (1995) which indicated a causal effect between gender and linguistic gains in a study abroad context. The researchers went as far citing gender as predictor for success stating that males are 'more highly gifted' (1995:57). This highly-controversial statement was rejected by Polanyi as being over-simplistic as she interpreted the results in a manner representing the interplay of gendered identity and learning context when she stated 'that women […] are learning to negotiate treacherous waters based on gender-related behavior' (1995:289). What Polanyi was

hinting at here was sexual harassment, or perceived sexual harassment, which seems to be a recurring feature in ethnographic diary accounts of study abroad across a number of different countries.

1.4.2 Gender and Study Abroad

The theme is later taken up and described in depth in the studies by Pellegrino Aveni (2005) into American students on a study abroad (SA) programme in Russia; Kinginger and Farrell Whitworth (2005) into American students during an SA in France; Talburt and Stewart (1999) into American students in France and Twombly (1995) who recounts the experience of female American students in Costa Rica. In addition to the aforementioned studies, fear of violence against women is cited as a reason not to attend state ESL evening classes by one on the informants in Goldstein's study of language choice in the workplace (2001). What all the studies demonstrate is how sexual harassment or the perceived threat of sexual harassment through unfamiliar gender-based subject positioning hugely undermines female learners and can severely limit their access to non-native speakers. It can make them 'less likely to be exposed to target language input, and may create in women negative attitudes towards the target language and culture' (Erhlich, 1997: 435).

Therefore, the causal correlation between gender and linguistic gains in a study abroad context has to be rejected. The gendered identity imposed on the students by the particular context and the threats or perceived threats greatly diminish motivation by creating negative associations with the target language and culture. This in turn can lead to a failure to facilitate opportunities for contact with native speakers and, in some cases limiting contact to other females (Polanyi, 1995) or reject contact with native speakers completely. (Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth, 2005).

1.4.3 A Variationist Approach to Gender

However, gender as a binary distinction has also been used to investigate differences in what is acquired by each gender. This direction has been taken mainly by those working from a variationist paradigm (Adamson and Regan (1991), Major (2004), Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci and Newman (1991), Regan (1992), Regan (1995), Regan and Adamson (2008), Regan, Howard and Lemee (2009)). What these studies al have in common is the indication that non-native speakers

acquire sociolinguistic features of the language in a way which mirrors the gender patterns of native speakers. For example, Adamson and Regan found that Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrants to the USA acquired phonological patterns of *in* vs. *ing* in a gendered way insofar as males acquired the informal *in* whereas females acquired the more prestige form of *ing*. This was accredited to a desire to accommodate to gender norms. A similar finding was made by Major who likewise investigated phonological variants in L2 English. Interestingly, both studies conclude that gender norms take precedence over stylistic norms. Informants display a preference to adhere to gendered language rather than to vary their repertoire as required by the context of the interaction.

Regan *et al*. expand the area of research to include not only phonological variants but also morphosyntactic and lexical variation, this time in L2 French. Again, their results mirror those of previous studies insofar as gendered speech norms are acquired. However, it is worth noting that Regan *et al*. do not consider gender as the only variable which leads to such findings. Gendered speech patterns are also a product of learning context, or to be more specific, study abroad.

> …we can draw certain conclusions in relation to male/female variation patterns and Year Abroad as a causal variable. It appears, at least for the population we studied […] that, both in relation to stable sociolinguistic variables and also to ongoing changes in French, the L2 speakers after exposure to L1 input in France, have a strong tendency to emulate native speaker variation patterns. It appears that these advanced learners have 'noticed' gender patterns in native speech and, consciously or unconsciously, tend to reproduce them' (Regan *et al*., 2009:132).

However, although Regan *et al.* (2009) stress study abroad as a causal factor in the acquisition of gender specific speech patterns, Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner (2001) report similar gender-form mapping among French immersion students in Toronto insofar as female students opted for the more prestige variant where there was a choice available to them.

While the above studies provide compelling evidence of a link between gender and speech patterns, they open another question. If learning context is a causal factor, then what exactly about learning context leads to such patterning and is a gendered identity the only identity displayed? There is no doubt that gender is important and as stated by Regan *et al.*, 'gender is an important element in the L2 speaker's construction of his/her identity in another community' (2009: 132). However, the statistical data provided by those working from a variationist paradigm alone cannot answer such questions.

1.4.4 An Ethnolinguistic Approach to Gender

Those working from a poststructuralist framework have attempted to illuminate factors which lead to gendered speech patterns. They are, at times, critical of the variationist practice of 'coding aspects of social identity as categorical and invariant across contexts' (Ehrlich, 2001: 110). The approach advocated is one which sees gender as produced or performed differentially in different contexts. As stated by Ehrlich:

> …it is not gender *per se* that interacts with linguistic practices, but rather the complex set of 'gendered' social practices in which individuals participate: individuals produce themselves as 'gendered' by habitually engaging in the social practices of a community, i.e., in different communities of practice, that are practically or symbolically associated with a community's notion of masculinities or femininities. And just as women's or men's involvements in 'gendered' communities of practice will vary, so women's and men's relation to normative constructions to femininity and masculinity will vary. (2001: 111)

That is to say that the link between gender and speech patterns is not a priori. Certain speech patterns do not occur automatically; rather, they are formed and reformed in accordance with the demands of the context/situation. The primary means for data collection for such studies is ethnographic. Diary reports, essays and interviews are frequently employed to gauge how the informants experience 'self' in another language. Pavlenko, in her examination of L2 learner stories based in cross-cultural transitions, talks of the need for 'self-translation' which she describes as: 'the reinterpretation of one's subjectivities in order to position oneself in new communities of practice and to 'mean' in the new environment'. (2001: 133). She emphasizes differences in cross-cultural gender positioning and the possible transformations which occur, in other words, the different gendered subject positions that L2 users adopt in the L2 culture. Pavlenko's examination of the self-reported stories is in some ways unique in the sense that it explores both female and male accounts. Reports on gendered discourse usually show a bias towards the investigation of female identities. As explained by Pavlenko this is not surprising as 'gender is a category that is more visible for its less privileged members' (2001: 140). In other words, the male category is deemed normative and as a result, the female category finds itself in a marked position.

The stories highlight the great diversity of gendered subject positions in the L1 and also responses to the possibility of 'self-translation' either through cultural assimilation or rejection in the L2. Pavlenko posits that: 'many L2 users may successfully appropriate gender discourses of their new culture and find ways of positioning themselves authoritatively as legitimate and authentic members' (2001: 161) to the extent that it leads to 'the loss of one's ability to perform a gendered identity in one's first language' (Pavlenko, 2001: 165). The majority of female informants felt much more empowered or comfortable with their new identities in L2 American English. They were able to throw off the shackles of the childish voice imposed on them by the L1 culture as described by Mori, an L1 Japanese speaker or their eyes were opened to the gendered inequalities of their L1 culture (as reported by Marina, an L1 Russian speaker).

Negative mismatches between the L1 identity and the expected L2 identity are reported by American females in a Japanese L2 context who felt the higher-status attitude of Japanese males precluded any meaningful contact with them. (See Ogulnick, 1998) Similar mismatches produced difficulties in western women adopting the subject positions and the language of Japanese women in studies by Siegal (1995) and Ohara. (2001). Siegal's detailed linguistic study into the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in four western females learning Japanese in a study abroad context portrayed resistance to acquiring certain syntactic features associated with Japanese female speech patterns. The resistance was due to the perceived, and possibly real, dissonance between the status of the women in the L1 culture and that of Japanese women in general. Likewise Ohara makes similar findings in her linguistic and ethnographic study into the acquisition of voice pitch where she demonstrates that a number of English-Japanese bilingual females' refusals to raise the pitch of their voices in Japanese to replicate that of L1 Japanese speakers as they are forced 'to make decisions about the identities they want to project that may not necessarily be the same issues and decisions facing L1 speakers' (Ohara, 2001: 248). This was in contrast with beginner Japanese learners whose lack of pitch raising is accorded to insufficient linguistic awareness rather than refusal to accommodate their speech to L1 normative gender patterns.

1.4.5 The Engendered Male

Interestingly, of the four stories from male informants reported here, three, Dominik from Slovakia, Antoni Slonimski and Jerzy Kosinski, both Polish found the mismatch between their L1 male identity and the expected American L2 identity too great. This led to a curtailment in speech acts

such as joking and flirting regularly employed in L1 and as such resulted in very limited contact with native speakers. In one of the few studies specifically into male subject positioning Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) describes how her Polish informant's L1 male identity was undermined when in contact with American males. Following Bourdieu, he had neither the economic nor social capital to equal his male peers. He was a lowly paid blue collar worker and therefore could not engage in conversation with his American brother in law, who he perceived as being pre-occupied with material goods; nor did he have the linguistic skills to gain promotion at work. Karol was only able to assert his 'right to speak' (Bourdieu, 1977: 649) with his girlfriend and female co-workers. Unlike the experiences noted by Pavlenko, the females noted in Teutsch-Dwyer's study seemed to enjoy Karol's stories and jokes. However, his inability to establish a male subject position with other males did limit his contact with native speakers and thus, his language developmental trajectory. Teutsch-Dwyer notes that:

> learners create their own communicative strategies based on their perceptions of their positions as male or female in the social reality imposed on them in the new cultural, social and linguistic environment. (2001); 179-180)

What differentiates this study from the others is the close linguistic analysis conducted by Teutsch-Dwyer. This is one of very few studies into identity and SLA which indexes language development or 'links identity issues to language development issues in a clear and effective way' (Block, 2010: 96). One of the findings of the in-depth linguistic analysis was an increase in pragmatic strategies for marking time. This increase in pragmatic strategies as opposed to morphosyntactic strategies mirrors the developmental path of Schmidt's Wes and in both cases, their frequent interlocutors seemed to accept and learn their 'interlanguage' and this, in turn, reduced the need for progress and limited the range of linguistic devices available to them.

From the above, we can see that gendered identities and particularly the need to reposition identities in an L2 culture can influence the contact learners have with native speakers and thus the kind of language that is acquired. As Pavlenko demonstrated with Dominik, Slonimski and Kosinski, and Teutsch-Dwyer with Karol, mismatches in male subject positions can lead to a loss of discourse strategies and can impede the acquisition of new, L2 appropriate strategies and subject positions. Conversely, females seem empowered with the new subject positions and thus discourse strategies available to them in America. However, this cannot be viewed as a simple binary distinction. Pavlenko, herself, highlights that gender is not the only issue involved. There is also an interplay of 'race, ethnicity, class and sexuality' (2001: 133).

So, in conclusion, it might be better to say that, of course gender positioning plays an important role in L2 acquisition; however, it would be misleading to consider it a binary opposition. On the contrary, gains are shaped by the context, by the differences and commonalities between L1 subject positioning and L2 subject positioning. Where the L2 position allows for a position equal to or even higher than that of the L1 in terms of social status or power, then 'self-translation' is more likely to happen. On the other hand, where it leads to loss, or perceived loss, of positioning, then 'self-translation' is unlikely to take place. However, the factors which shape subject positioning are far more complex than gender. Gender is only one variable and often other variables such as migration status, nationality, L1, class and ethnicity may play a greater role.

1.5 Beyond Gender

1.5.1 Ethnographic Studies

As previously mentioned, gender is by far the most often studied facet of identity. However, there have been a few other major studies which portray a more nuanced idea of identity, in which gender may or may not play a major role. We will consider six studies here: Norton's investigation of female immigrants in Canada (2000), Koven's exploration of 'self' in two languages as seen in the descendants of Portuguese immigrants to France (2007), Kinginger's description of Alice, an American student learning French in an SA context (2004), Pellegrino Aveni's study into the construction of self among American students of Russian in a study abroad context (2005), Regan's study of Anglophone students in an Irish language immersion school and finally, Block's look at constructing identities in London (2006b).

First of all, I will consider the studies by Norton, Kinginger and Pellegrino Aveni as they share a similar methodology. All three studies rely on self-reported data. They include extremely thorough ethnographic information regarding the informants, and, although in the case of Norton and Kinginger all informants are female, gender is not the only issue.

Norton conducted a longitudinal study into identity issues surrounding five immigrant women in Canada. She sought to 'problematize dichotomous distinctions between the language learner and the language learning context' (2000:5) by asking questions of how 'gender, race, class and ethnicity were central to the analysis' (2000: 22). The women in the study ranged in age from 22 to 45. Two

of the informants are single and three married, three are educated to university level and the other two to high school level and four are already multilingual. They represent four different countries: Vietnam, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Peru with two informants coming from Poland. All of the women possessed very low levels of English at the start of the study.

Norton draws extensively on Bourdieus's concept of capital in her analysis and one aspect which comes through quite clearly and seems to be common to all the informants is loss of social, cultural and symbolic capital. Initially at least, their identity is marked by their migration status. They are positioned, or feel to be positioned as immigrants. This is felt particularly acutely by Felicia, the 45 year-old Peruvian. Felicia came from a very wealthy background in Peru and felt that she had been severely 'declassed' on arrival in Canada. Her husband was unable to get a job in his profession and she had to take up a number of part-time jobs including delivering newspapers and babysitting. She was very disappointed with her experience in Canada which she felt discriminated against immigrants. However, she 'strongly resisted being labelled an immigrant and sought refuge in her Peruvian identity' (2000: 56). Felicia's primary reference group was other wealthy Peruvians living near by. With them she was the was the wife of a wealthy business man who enjoyed all the trappings of the lifestyle including expensive clothes and a beach house and not just another south American immigrant with limited means of communication. She felt that the Canadian experience stripped her of all the capital she had accrued in Peru and as a result allowed only the status of immigrant.

Although this was felt most strongly by Felicia - the drop in her economic status was probably the most noticeable, nevertheless, it was also felt by the other informants. As Norton points out, 'many of the negative experiences the women had in Canada related to economic conditions' (2000: 58).

All the informants, regardless of their L1 professional status, experienced difficulties with employment. Like Felicia and her husband, neither Katarina (Poland) and her husband nor Martina (Czechoslovakia) could find jobs related to their profession. Eva (Poland) experienced difficulties finding a job and Mai (Vietnam) experienced cutbacks in her place of employment. In the case of Eva, she was not validated as a valued member of staff until she proved her usefulness outside the workplace. Initially Eva was marginalized at work due to her immigrant status and lack of English and as such was denied access to 'the workers' social network' (Norton, 2000: 72). Both Katarina and Martina express little hope in being able to find jobs in their professions and this, they feel is due not only to their abilities in the English language but also to their lack of Canadian experience. Both feel disadvantaged in Canada especially by their immigrant status. Mai's position was slightly

different from the others in that she had access to English at home – she initially lived with her brother's family in a multilingual home, where English, as in the outside world, was the language of power. In the home, Mai had to struggle against sexist views held by her brother, but in the workplace, at least initially, she held a favoured position as her skills as a seamstress were desirable in Canada. At the beginning, she worked in a multicultural factory where English was the language of solidarity. However, due to an economic downturn, many workers were made redundant and this had the effect of changing the linguistic make up of the factory. It moved from being multicultural with English as the language of solidarity to Italian as the majority language. This served to marginalize Mai. However, her home situation also changed her access to social networks. She got married and her husband did not want her to work outside the home.

With the exception of Mai, one thing that unites the experience of all the women is the loss of capital when they moved to Canada – 'the symbolic resources that the women had brought with them to Canada were not validated in the places where they did find work'. (Norton, 2000: 58). And, according to Norton, this was instrumental in their inability to gain access to a range of 'anglophone social networks, and hence greater opportunity to speak and practice English'. (Norton, 2000: 58).

From Norton's study, we can see that the positions offered to or imposed on learners can have serious consequences for their access to language. Stripping learners of all manners of capital by refusing to validate their L1 identity and experiences severely curtails the intensity and nature of contact with native speakers and thus opportunities for language development. It can lead to difficulties in constructing a new English-mediated identity. These can include resistance to constructing any kind of English-mediated identity (as in the case of Felicia), or acceptance of an inferior identity (see Martina and Katarina) or overcoming the lower status identity as in the case of Eva. But what can be said is that it results in conflict and struggle for the learners and does not provide an optimal language learning environment. It also highlights the lack of agency that many immigrants experience over the construction of identity and opportunities for 'self-translation' (Pavlenko, 2001) are limited, undesired or hard-won.

The longitudinal study conducted by Kinginger (2004) into identity reconstruction in an at home and a study abroad context has methodological similarities to Norton's study in that it makes use of extensive ethnographical data. However, unlike Norton's informants, Kinginger's informant, Alice, successfully manages to reconstruct a second language identity and, instead of finding herself 'declassed' by the process of living in another culture, is in fact 'enclassed'. In other words, she is

eventually able to shake off the negative features associated with her L1 identity and gain symbolic capital through membership of communities of practice in France. Alice's L1 identity was very much linked to social class. Unlike most other American students, Alice was distinctly working class and had experienced a significant amount of hardship including homelessness and teenage pregnancy. Her dream of cultural upgrading through the mastery of the French language is spurred on by a dream of France which:

> is populated with refined interesting, cultured people who are, in turn interested in her. She sees herself as participating in a variety of communities of practice where access to knowledge of language and culture will be freely given as equal exchange within a context of higher cultural awareness.' (Kinginger, 2004: 228).

This idealized view of France where 'there is of course no misery: no slums, no poverty, no anonymous low-income housing projects. Above all no trailer parks.' (2004: 227) is what she is seeking to help raise her cultural consciousness and thus provide high levels of motivation to succeed. Although Alice's language learning trajectory was far from easy – her idealized version of France was dispelled through experiences in universities in Caen and Lille, she persisted in her quest and was successful through 'investment in social identity' (Kinginger, 2004: 240). She was ultimately able to reconstruct her identity by summoning 'her own strategic use of personal experience, talent and resources to upgrade her access to cultural capital, become a cultured person and share her knowledge with others' (Kinginger, 2004: 240).

Alice's story is unusual in many ways. Firstly, it is an American female student gaining cultural capital and not being a victim of gender-specific behaviour. Secondly, its focus on class as a marker of identity makes it unusual. Alice was successfully able to construct an identity where her working class L1 identity was no longer an issue, and unlike the immigrants in Norton's study, she arrived in the target language community without capital but was able to negotiate a more positive L2 identity.

Pellegrino Aveni (2005) carried out a large scale study into the construction of self among 76 American students learning Russian on a study abroad programme. The programmes ranged in length from one semester to an academic year. As in the case of the previous studies, data collection was ethnographic in nature, relying on questionnaires, narrative journals, notebooks, interviews and classroom observations. The researcher was concerned with the construction of the 'real self' (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005: 56) and factors which aid or prevent its construction. Pellegrino Aveni documents a number of factors affecting self-construction: social-environmental cues and

learner internal cues. I will consider the social-environmental cues first. According to Pellegrino Aveni, these comprise caretaker (or interlocutor) behaviours and attitudes and persona of others. As regards the former, Pellegrino Aveni posits that:

> Interlocutors' behaviors that explicitly or implicitly convey negative attitudes toward learners can impact on learners by lowering their sense of status in relation to their peers and the expectations of others. Such behaviors may also cause learners to feel that their efforts to communicate are invalid, and that they are disregarded as respected, accepted human beings among the members of the L2 society. (2005, 71)

Conversely, Pellegrino Aveni states that 'compliments can greatly support and elevate learners' sense of self' (2005, 62). Through detailed analysis of the ethnographic data, Pellegrino Aveni is able to demonstrate the negative and positive impact of the interlocutor on the construction of self by the learner.

The second social-environmental cue put forth by the author relates to aspects of the interlocutor persona 'such as their physical features, age, gender, and other such characteristics'. (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005: 71). Following Freud, the author posits that when faced with an unfamiliar persona based on age, gender or physical appearance the learner tries to find a previous familiarity and the sense of self is thus constructed around a previous experience with something similar. Thus stereotypes may be formed. Pellegrino Aveni's informants provide examples of how initial reactions to casual encounters and whether or not those encounters would develop and thus opportunities to interact would occur where often based on physical appearance. When approached by a physically attractive stranger, conversation was more likely to be developed than when approached by a not so attractive stranger. Age of interlocutor also played an interesting role as the author states: 'the age of interlocutor may also impact on the learners' sense of security due to the differences in conversational interests and the caretaking behavior of small children as opposed to adults.' (2005: 77). Generally, the informants found that an older or much younger interlocutor posed less threat to self as interlocutor status was already established by way of age differentials. When it comes to gender, 86.5%of all informants reported a preference for speaking Russian to females. Reasons for this were posited as differences in male/female subject positioning and the possibility of uncomfortable gender related incidents.

Moving to learner-internal cues, Pellegrino Aveni lists three factors impacting on the learners' presentation of the self: attitudes toward the self, self-comparison and predictability of

consequences. As regards attitudes toward the self, Pellegrino Aveni is of the view that 'L2 production tends to increase in learners who maintain positive attitudes toward their own ability to use the L2' (2005: 89). She links this very much with risk taking and correlates a negative attitude toward the self with low levels of risk taking when she states, 'learners with a poor sense of self-efficacy may judge the probability of success as low and the probability of failure as high, making the overall value of speaking a bad risk to take'. (2005: 89). The effects of self-comparison on the presentation of the self follow a similar path to those relating to attitudes toward the self. Analysis of the learners' narrative journals indicates that a negative comparison with peers can cause the students' 'sense of status to be lowered and […] L2 use to be curtailed' (2005: 96). The reverse was indicated for positive comparison.

The last factor listed by Pellegrino Aveni as an important learner-internal cue in the preservation of status is predictability of consequences. She views this as being formed either through predictability or commonality. She describes predictability as 'a state of intimacy with and knowledge about another individual' (2005: 99). The questionnaires indicated that learners showed a preference for exchanges with familiar native speakers; however, the journals went further and indicated that familiarity was also an important factor in preserving a sense of security in particular environments and transactions. Finding commonalities with interlocutors was likewise shown to benefit a learner's sense of security and thus enable them to predict the outcome.

However, it is important to note that Pellegrino Aveni does not present her findings in such a clear cut fashion. Her informants' narrative journals in particular shed light on situations where the reverse of the above was shown to be true, for example when familiarity can lead to a lowering of status and thus the predicted outcome will be negative. On another point, the author highlights the interrelationship between social-environmental and learner-internal cues in that they mutually affect each other. 'Learners interpret the behaviors and attitudes of others depending on their own level of self-esteem and learners' attitudes toward themselves are strongly influenced by the behaviors and attitudes of others.' (2005: 107).

If the three studies are considered together, commonalities in results can be found despite drawing on different theoretical frameworks - Norton draws on Bourdieu and his ideas regarding capital and legitimacy to impose and receive speech, Kinginger on more general ideological and sociopolitical processes and Pellegrino Aveni on a psychological framework. Each study demonstrates how a conflation of leaner external and internal factors work together to shape the status of the learner by potentially stripping away the L1 identity, either in a negative sense as seen in the work of Norton

and Pellegrino Aveni, or in a positive sense as seen in Kinginger and positioning the learner in such a way that she is left with the possibilities of 'fight vs. flight' (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005: 114). All studies show examples of learners struggling against undesired identities as well as simply retreating from them. In addition, what the studies also show very clearly is the non-linearity of identity construction insofar as learners can go through many different stages which can be repeated, that at some points the learners will fight, but at others they choose flight. However, there is another option not mentioned by Pellegrino Aveni, but taken by some of Norton's informants and that is acceptance of the negative identity imposed on them.

1.5.2 Identity as Indexed in Language

Although the above studies provide unique and compelling insights into the construction of L2 identities, none provides a detailed analysis of how identity is constructed through language. For a thorough study of the construction of identity and second language acquisition or even use, it is imperative to illustrate how changes in subject positioning are indexed in language. Unfortunately very few studies are concerned with indexing a link between identity construction and language acquisition or use. And this is very important. As Pellegrino Aveni highlights, there is a rather tenuous link between learners' self-perception of language ability and their actual abilities. (2005: 90). A learner may report feeling much more like their 'real self', but unless there is linguistic evidence to support the claim, it remains just that a claim and as such we have no real proof that a change in feeling leads to a linguistic gains or changes.

Those working from a variationist paradigm have come under considerable criticism by those working from an ethnographic framework for relying solely on quantitative linguistic data to draw conclusions regarding language use or acquisition and identity. They have been accused of ignoring the learner as individual and of constructing group identities. This, I feel is unjust. While the sole use of ethnographic data sheds light on the individual and demonstrates the wide range of trajectories that can be taken, nevertheless, criticism may be correctly levelled at that approach for ignoring linguistic data. No hard evidence has been provided to show that trajectory. We may know how the learner constructs an identity, but we do not know what linguistic materials were employed to construct it; whereas from a variationist perspective we know which linguistic materials are used, but we do not know how identity was constructed. Therefore to provide a full picture, one which will satisfy all those working in SLA and identity, we need to follow the advice

of Regan when she suggests that: 'combining qualitative and quantitative data is the best approach to revealing the fullest picture of this (identity) area of second language acquisition' (2010: 21).

As previously mentioned, there are very few studies in which a combination of qualitative and quantitative data is presented. Such studies would include Ohara (2001), Siegal (1996) and Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) as previously discussed under gender. The Ohara and Siegal studies shared considerable commonalities as they depict the struggle experienced by female L2 Japanese learners against a female Japanese identity. Both studies have a strong linguistic basis as well as providing compelling ethnographic data. The Teutsch-Dwyer study, while also providing strong linguistic and ethnographic data explores how both internal and external limitations imposed on the learner can lead to a curtailment of L2 acquisition.

I will now turn to a discussion of three additional studies which successfully link quantitative and ethnographic data: Regan (2010), Koven (2007) and Block (2006). It is worth pointing out that the studies deal with quite different issues. Regan and Block are concerned with identity and second language acquisition whereas Koven investigates 'self' in bilingual speakers. Furthermore, the three studies differ significantly in terms of informant profile (Regan focuses on secondary school pupils, Block on adults and Koven on university students) and learning/user context (Regan – immersion classes, Block and Koven - naturalistic). However, what binds them together is the methodological framework of an in-depth linguistic study underpinned by detailed ethnographic data.

The Regan study (2010) employs interviews, conversations and quantitative analysis of language to examine how young urban students use code-switching to construct an identity in the Irish language which is congruent with their Anglophone identity. The Irish traditionally spoken by native speakers seems to be associated with a rural population and could be viewed as inconsistent with the needs of the young, urban students in this study. Due to this mismatch of needs, the students have chosen to reject the rural identity often associated with the Irish language and construct a new one through domain-related switches to English and the use of English language discourse markers.

The domain-specific code-switching relates mainly to technology, music and leisure activities. As regards the discourse markers, the students seem to be actively creating 'their own patterns of code-switching, different from those of native speakers and different from those proffered and indeed insisted on by the teachers' (Regan, 2010: 31). Although the students experience a considerable amount of disapproval from teachers and native speakers for doing this, they, nevertheless, persist

in ‘proclaiming their right to be young, ‘cool’, urban, East coast, and yet Irish speaking individuals.’ (Regan, 2010: 32).

This study differs from many of the others already considered in that the learners have taken complete agency over their identity construction. Despite efforts from teachers in particular to encourage them to conform with the ‘norms’ of the Irish language and thus construct a more traditional, rural identity, the students actively rejected this and successfully constructed a new collective identity congruent with their status and they did this by rejecting traditional speech patterns.

Now, I will progress to a discussion of the Koven (2007) study as there are interesting parallels and differences. Koven, drawing on the framework of subject-positioning in narratives and Bakhtinian approaches to language, examines the subject positions held by her informants in French and Portuguese. Koven provides a unique and extremely powerful model for the indexing of identity in language. By eliciting and analyzing first person narratives in both languages, she is able to investigate the claim that bilinguals often display different psychological and social identities in their different languages. However, unlike many other studies, Koven seeks to determine if these perceived differences in identity are manifest in language and to investigate if the differences are due to the different social and psychological contexts in which the speakers find themselves. Koven posits that ‘each language projects a range of psychological attributes. An individual, in a sense, inhabits the model of person implied by the given language’ (2007: 20).

The informants in Koven’s study are all Luso-descendants, i.e. the children of Portuguese immigrants to France. They all live in France and have spent the majority, if not all of their life, in an urban French setting. However, Koven highlights the fact that her informants are heteroglossic speakers of both French and Portuguese insofar as they use both languages in a variety of sociocultural contexts and as such ‘various kinds of […] linguistic competences and performances allow LDs (Luso-descendants) to contest a range of sociocultural identities…’. (2007: 40). Nevertheless, the French is marked as an urban working class variety and the Portuguese as a rural peasant variety.

In a gross over-simplification of the results, Koven finds that the informants’ claims to feel different in French and Portuguese are indeed indexed in the language. She states that differences arise from ‘the *kinds of voicing* to which participants have access’ (2007: 244). On the whole, their use of language is determined by the contexts in which they use the language. Therefore their French is

characterized as young and urban and full of slang. It is the language of their sociocultural and sociohistorical settings. On the other hand, many informants reported not being able to express themselves fully in Portuguese as they did not have the linguistic resources to swear for example. Their Portuguese was constructed through interactions with their families and often marked by class, region and interestingly by migration and sociohistorical era. This created difficulties in interactions in Portugal as their language often sounded dated or strange. In fact they often sounded older in Portuguese as they had little contact with people their own age.

From what we can see, the informants in Koven's study lack the agency to resolve the conflicting demands made of them by the 'model of self' implied by each language. According to Koven, 'the language makes them – prevents them from being or allows them to be – a particular way' (78). The above statement may run counter to the findings of Regan (2010) who explored the agency that a certain group of students had in linguistically creating a new identity which rejected the traditional 'model of self' implied by the Irish language. Her informants were able to take agency and impose their own identity markers on the language despite protestations from the gatekeepers of the language. However, we should be careful not to accept the findings of Regan as applicable in all situations, not all bilingual speakers are afforded such agency. This may be a product of the changing status of the Irish language which has experienced a dramatic shift away from geographical areas traditionally associated with it towards a more urban base, and as indicated by Regan the urban population is starting to claim it as their own.

Block's (2006b) study into six Spanish –speaking Latinos in London also provides a detailed linguistic study of subject positioning or identity in an L2 together with convincing ethnographic data. In addition, like the Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) study into Karol, a Polish immigrant to America, Block successfully shows how a conflation of learner agency and externally imposed sociocultural conditions can lead to a curtailment of language development.

Of Block's informants, the most widely cited is Carlos. Carlos is from Colombia and worked as a university lecturer. On coming to London with his English wife, he found that his lack of linguistic competence in English essentially 'declassed' him and as a consequence he took up a lowly-paid blue-collar job as a porter in a university. To that extent, we can see similarities with Norton's Felicia (2002). The capital he had acquired as a reasonably well-off and highly-respected university lecturer has seemingly been stripped from him. This led to a limited number of contexts in which Carlos was able to use his English.

On the whole, his English was confined to exchanges with co-workers or short transactions with members of the public at work. The topics of conversation on offer, apart from soccer, did not provide Carlos with the motivation to improve his English. The only identity that seemed to be available to him was one of white, working class male. Through analysis of recorded conversations, Block was able to show how Carlos rejected such positions through a range of interactional strategies such as opting out of conversations, trying to change the topic or lexical strategies.

Carlos was unable to reconcile his mixed race, middle class intellectual identity with that on offer at work and any attempts to take agency and impose his intellectual identity through a change in topic either went unnoticed by his interlocutors or were ignored and, as a consequence, his primary strategy of asserting identity was opting out in that he often retreated from participation in interactions which were incongruent with his identity. However, as previously mentioned, Carlos's attempts to assert his intellectual identity were also indexed in lexical choice – namely when he refuses to use swear words. This has the effect of differentiating Carlos from his male colleagues. It is an active strategy and according to Koven:

> The forms any speaker uses, recognizes, and does not use are semiotic resources and constraints in speakers' claims to identity, whatever the multiple reasons for their use and non-use. (2007: 72).

Just as use of certain forms can be regarded as a marker of identity, non-use is as equal a powerful tool in identity construction. Carlos's lack of participation in certain conversations and his non-use of colloquial terms are not due to lack of linguistic competence, rather they are the only, following Bourdieu, legitimate means of enacting his intellectual identity as other strategies such as topic change are not successful.

So the primary identity on offer to Carlos in English is one that he is not willing to accept. However, this is not the only identity on offer. In contrast to some of Norton's informants, Carlos felt much more at ease in conversations with 'professionals' As a consequence in interactions he had with lawyers or doctors, people he felt were of the same class or intellect as him he was able to position himself as an equal. He felt that his own background gave him confidence to deal with such situations;

> … my previous experience, let's say academic … gives you the confidence to go to the

> doctor, for example, to kind of do things in your normal life. But it's a little like feeling strengthened by that intellectual situation that allows you to gain confidence. And I have thought about this and I have seen how the people who do not have, let's say this support … are weaker, more vulnerable. (Block, 2010: 98).

However, his situation as migrant afforded few opportunities to position himself in such a way. Yet, when in conversation with younger members of the international community in London with whom he worked, Carlos was able to construct another identity and one which was not incongruent with his social, intellectual identity before he moved from Colombia. In such situations Carlos is able to manipulate the topic of the conversation and in some ways act as a tutor for his younger colleagues. Interestingly, these limited areas for use of English and the subject positions or identities afforded to him did not inspire Carlos to invest in English. 'Because his English language use is confined primarily to the workplace, and because his workplace communication is in no way fulfilling […], Carlos remains stabilized as a more or less competent speaker of English for the kinds of things he needs to do in English for the job.' (2010: 108). Rather he seeks to validate his identity through interaction with Spanish speaking professionals.

Conclusion

The overview of the three studies above serves to underpin the complex and adaptive nature of identity. The combination of ethnographic data and detailed linguistic analysis is a powerful tool with which to assess identity enactment and construction. The analysis of the different trajectories experienced by the informants in the three studies clearly highlights the symbiotic relationship between context and identity.

The Regan (2010) study into the rejection of the traditional identity proffered to L2 Irish learners shows an unusual situation in which the learners were able to take complete agency and construct an L2 identity congruent with their L1 identity and impose that identity on the gatekeepers - i.e. native speakers and teachers. Their strategy was to create new linguistic forms in the guise of code-switching and discourse markers to ensure that the language adapted in such a way as to allow the construction of a youthful, urban identity. On the other hand, the identities enacted by the language users described by Koven (2007) were moulded by the language. The contexts in which they acquired and use both languages shape the identities that they can enact. This is particularly true of Portuguese where their lack of sociolinguistic means limits the degrees of freedom they experience

in self-presentation. The informants did not have the agency to construct a 'new' Portuguese which was adequate for their identity needs; rather, the sociocultural and sociohistorical context surrounding their acquisition and use of the language was stronger.

As for Block's (2006b) study of Carlos, we see an informant who rejects an identity imposed on him, not by the language, but by the sociocultural and sociohistorical context of acquisition and use. However, the social and cultural capital gained by Carlos in his L1 positions him in such a way as to reject the identity being proffered in the L2. Carlos's resistance is marked mainly by the strategy of 'opting out' either through lack of participation or by choosing not to employ certain lexical forms which would index an unacceptable identity.

Summary

This chapter began with an overview of theoretical aspects surrounding the construct of identity. An essentialist view of identity that was fixed either by biological or environmental factors was rejected in favour of a poststructuralist understanding of identity as something which is fluid and can be constructed and reconstructed.

Having established that, I looked at the various identities that a person can hold which can be based on variables such as race, ethnicity, gender, migration, nationality. Mathews' metaphor of the cultural supermarket as a place where we can choose identities was explored and the conflict between individual agency and external imposition was described. I then presented identity as a complex adaptive system which constantly changes to adapt to the needs of the context or situation. This was followed by an exploration of the ideas of capital as put forward by Bourdieu. Capitals have proved a powerful tool in the discussion of identity construction despite Bourdieu's often essentialist viewpoint.

From the theoretical discussion, I moved on to investigate how identity is treated in language studies. The section started with the early L1 variationist studies which have come under considerable criticism in recent years for taking an essentialist view of identity. However, a closer look at the studies presents evidence of an awareness of the importance of context in the construction of identity and as a consequence the enactment of more fluid identities.

The investigation of identity in SLA started with a discussion of identity blindness in many

traditional SLA studies. The predominance of a cognitive/mentalist paradigm precluded an emic approach which looked at learners as individuals. A discussion of well-known cases of Wes and Alberto indicates that identity 'has been lurking in the wings' (Block, 2010: 72) since the early days of SLA research. This is further backed up by an overview of the most researched aspect of identity – gender. However, an examination of the literature points to inconclusive findings and the conclusion that it is the gendered-subject positions that the learners have to negotiate which can severely curtail access to language which have a greater role than simple binary distinctions.

The chapter included a comparison between variationist studies with their emphasis on quantitative linguistic analysis and ethnographic studies which rely on self reports. I concluded that neither approach was adequate on its own as the variationist studies provided information on what was acquired but shed little light on how it was acquired and the ethnographic studies focused entirely on how, but we have no linguistic data to show what was actually acquired. Following Regan (2010), it is necessary to adopt a framework which comprises both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The chapter concluded with an overview of three studies: Regan (2010), Koven (2007) and Block (2006a) which successfully applied an approach comprising of linguistic and ethnographic data to highlight the complexity of identity construction and enactment as witnessed in the various trajectories of the informants.

Chapter 2

Learning Context – a Dynamic View

In this chapter, I will explore the dynamic nature of context and its interplay with identity. In order to accomplish this and go some way towards addressing the problem recognized by Walsh that 'there is as yet no widely available metalanguage that can be used […] to describe the microcontexts in which interaction takes place' (2006: 19), I will posit that learning contexts are operationalised at both a macro- and a micro-level. The macro-level refers to the more traditional categories of learning context – for example study abroad (SA) and the foreign language (FL) classroom. The micro-level, on the other hand is concerned with the individual situations, or, as I will call them, loci of learning which are present in each individual context. In order to explore these issues, I will consider the loci of learning before moving on to explore more traditional learning contexts), namely: the foreign language classroom and study abroad).

2.1 Defining Learning Context

The role of learning context in language acquisition has followed a similar trajectory to that of the study of the role of identity in language acquisition. Just like identity, it is often seen as 'emerging and dynamic and negotiated by the participants through interaction' (Regan *et al*., 2010: 9). However, it still remains a somewhat controversial topic in SLA with publications by Tarone (2000) entitled 'Still wrestling with 'context' in interlanguage theory' and an unpublished paper presented by Housen at the 2009 EUROSLA conference 'Still, still wrestling with context' suggesting that it is an issue that will not go away and requires further examination.

As documented in the previous chapter, the context in which interactional exchanges take place plays a crucial role in the enactment of identity. It will be argued in this chapter that context likewise plays a significant role in the acquisition of a second or subsequent language especially with regards to the more social aspects of the language. As stated by Young, 'all talk happens somewhere and somewhen and is produced by somebody for some purpose' (2009:46). In other words, talk is not context-free. Factors which need to be taken into account include the location of the interaction, the time of the interaction, the identity of the speaker, the reason for the interaction

and the identity of the interlocutor. From that we can get a taste of the complexity of context and of its ever changing dimensions. However, although seemingly overlooked or dismissed by those adhering to a strictly cognitive/mentalist paradigm of second language acquisition, the significance of context or situation or even site in the construction of language is not new.

As far back as 1923, Malinowski, in his study of pre-literate tribes on Pacific islands, noted that language is 'rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of a people' (Malinowski, 1923: 305). In other words, language is moulded by the geography, the history, the social life and the traditions, i.e. by the context, of those who use it. As such, Malinowski goes far beyond the here and now. This is a sentiment echoed by Erickson who argues that talk 'is profoundly influenced by processes that occur beyond the temporal and spatial horizon of the immediate occasion of the interaction' (2004: viii). However, it would be mistaken to overlook the fact that utterances, while having been moulded by factors beyond the here and now, do take place in real time. Thus, the contextual demands of the here and now intermingle with the knowledge and experiences of the there and then to construct something unique.

Malinowski was also among the first to draw attention to the interplay between the broad context relating to historical, political, social and geographical background and the situation of the here and now. He highlights the importance of both aspects when he differentiates between 'context' i.e. the macro considerations of the historical, political, social and geographical background and knowledge surrounding the utterance and the micro aspects of the here and now which he refers to as ''situation'': 'on the one hand the conception of the *context* has to be broadened and on the other […] the *situation* in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression' (Malinowski, 1923: 306).

To reiterate, context has at least two different forces bearing down in such a way as to influence utterances: the socio-historical, political, geographical knowledge that is carried by the participants and the situational demands of the here and now which serve to make each locus of language acquisition unique and momentary. If we take Malinowski's differentiation of 'context' and 'situation' and relate it to learning context (LC) and locus of learning, many similarities can be found. Learning Context (LC), as previously mentioned, refers to macro conditions and constitutes what Block, (2010) calls 'the physical location of language learning as well as the sociohistorical and sociocultural conditions that accompany that physical location' (2010: 4). The locus of learning with its emphasis on speaker and interlocutor status, topic of conversation, degrees of formality and social distance can correspond with 'situation' as defined by Malinowski. And as I will argue, the

range of loci of learning to which learners have access can be predicated on the macro learning context; however, learning context cannot determine precisely which loci will be available to each learner or which will be accepted as legitimate.

2.2 Locus of Language Learning

I will start this section by defining what I envisage as a locus of learning:

> A locus of learning is an individual situation in which acquisition takes place. It is predicated on the role of the speaker, the role of the interlocutor, degrees of formality, social distance, physical location of the interaction, mode and topic.

The range of loci to which a learner has access can be determined by the macro-learning context. However, it is important to highlight that the learner may not have access to all available loci and may not accept the loci on offer. For example, a locus of learning may be a discussion between two friends about a concert they have both been to. In this case the role of the speaker and interlocutor may carry equal status – provided they are both of the same age, language status. The discussion is probably informal and social distance negligible. The topic is also something which is familiar to both. On the other hand, the locus could be yet another discussion, but this time between a student and a teacher regarding a late assignment. A completely different learning situation is then produced. The speaker has a lower-status role, and in turn, the interlocutor a higher status. Formality is likely to be high as is social distance. The topic is one which the teacher is probably very familiar with; though the speaker may be uncomfortable with it.

As is apparent from the above two examples, the speaker has very different exposure to input and is required to respond and engage in a different matter in each locus. To that extent, it seems unreasonable to expect that the varying input and output conditions constructed by each locus do not result in varying linguistic outcomes especially if a learning context is dominated by a particular locus or range of loci.

With the seemingly disparate range of input and output conditions implied by the various loci of language acquisition, it is somewhat bizarre that they have not attracted much attention. In fact, until recently, learning contexts, when considered at all, have been viewed as monoliths insofar as

blanket terms such as FL classroom or Study Abroad have been applied with no discussion of what they entail. There have been very few attempts to break down learning contexts and classify these loci of learning. One exception is Housen, Schoonjans, Janssens, Welcomme, Schoonheere and Pierrard (2011) who provide an analytical framework for studying learning context in instructed SLA. The authors identify three contextual levels: the micro-level which reflects the learner's individual learning context and relates to factors such as ability, personality and social networks in such a way as to place the learner at the centre of the process, thus allowing for a more emic investigation of language acquisition.

This is followed by the meso-level which is predicated on the educational or curricular context. This context is outside the control of the individual and depends on the policies of the school, i.e. monolingual or plurilingual; and the third level, the macro-level is related to the extra-curriculum context. This explores opportunities for exposure to the L2 outside the classroom both at a school level and at a community level. While the study provides powerful insight into the effects of the quantity of L2 exposure an instructed learner receives and engages in, it does not illuminate the exact nature of such exposure or participation. In other words, it does not explicate or classify the loci of learning. The study provides no insight into the range of encounters increased exposure to the L2 gives rise to.

This greatly highlights the necessity for a deeper investigation of the differences in the nature of input and output opportunities experienced by learners within the various contexts and thus identify and classify the loci of learning. In order to identify and classify the loci of learning, it is worth returning briefly to the question of identity. In recent years, there has been a move towards the exploration of how context, i.e. the sites in which identities are constructed and performed, gives rise to identity construction. Various contexts have been discussed. From an L1 perspective, one of the most comprehensive publications is 'Discourse and Identity', Benwell and Stokoe (2007).

The authors set out to explore a range of contexts in which identity construction takes place. They identify six main 'discourse contexts' for the construction of identity. They are: conversational contexts, institutional contexts, narrative contexts, commodified contexts, spatial contexts and virtual contexts. These constitute what the authors refer to as '*context of construction*' (2010:5) (italics in original). They aim, mainly from a gendered view point, to explore how the six identified contexts are pivotal in the construction of identity as indexed through language. They argue that identity is not just '*reflected* in discourse, […] (it) is actively, ongoingly, dynamically *constituted* in discourse' (2010: 4) (italics in original). By discourse, the authors refer to discursive environments

or contexts. This has led to intense micro-level studies of precisely what each context entails and how this gives rise to the construction of identities.

While the importance of micro-contexts in identity construction is gaining credence, from the point of view of SLA, it is not as developed. Following Benwell and Stokoe, I will focus on two contexts as loci of learning: institutional and conversational. By narrowing down the field, it is not my intention to question the legitimacy of the remaining contexts; on the contrary an in depth study into the remaining four contexts as loci of learning could prove extremely beneficial to the understanding of SLA. Of particular interest is the virtual context as a locus of learning. However the current study is concerned with oral production and as such institutional and conversational loci best fit the framework. The majority of exchanges at the centre of this study are either institutional or conversational in nature.

As mentioned these loci have not received much attention in the field of SLA research. However, one area which has been under research since the 1990s is institutional talk and interlanguage pragmatics. The field is led by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford with a wide range of publications in the 1990s (see Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford,1990, 1993, 1996 and Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992 and 1996) as well as an edited volume (2005). Although not necessarily presented as a locus of language acquisition, but more often presented as a site of use, following Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, (2005), I will consider institutional talk as a locus of learning.

2.3 Institutional Talk

To begin with, it is necessary to explore some definitions of institutional talk. Institutional talk has undergone considerable scrutiny. It can be defined according to workplace or professional terms (Sarangi and Roberts, 1999 and Drew and Heritage, 1992) or along the lines of power relationships without a specific reference to a workplace or profession (Agar, 1985). With regards to the former definition, talk can be classified as institutional 'insofar as participants' institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged'. (Drew and Heritage, 1992: 3-4) and can either take place as a 'frontstage' activity, i.e. between institutional representatives and clients, or as 'backstage' – between members of the institution. Examples of this are usually dichotomous in nature and include such binary relationships as teaching assistant/student (Davies and Tyler, 2008) patient/doctor (Tannen and Wallat, 1993), and manager/staff discourse O'Donnell, 1990). The latter, power-based definition implies 'a coercive

and one-sided imposition of power from one dominant party upon an unwilling and subordinate second party'. (Benwell and Stokoe, 2007:89). As an example, Agar (1985) cites governments and the media. However, this definition seems rather extreme and somewhat essentialist in nature. The example presented by Benwell and Stokoe of news interviews highlights the intransigent nature of a power-based definition. The interviewer is a reporter; whereas the interviewee is a high-level politician. They correctly point out that in such cases of institutional discourse, 'both parties *may* be powerful' (2007:91).

While both of the definitions can provide useful insight into the nature of institutional talk, perhaps the most notable feature of institutional talk is its adherence to form. As pointed out by Heritage and Greatbatch, 'The institutional character of the interaction is embodied first and foremost in its form – most notably in turn-taking systems…' (1991:95). Benwell and Stokoe continue this argument when they posit that many instances of institutional talk 'have pre-allocated turn types' (2007:90) where there exists the expectancy that one party will ask questions and another will answer and it is precisely this expected form which gives rise to asymmetry in turn-taking as opposed to any pre-existing power structure. And this seems particularly true of interviews where the right to ask questions may be weighted towards the interviewer. This may not be due to power relations, but rather to the normative form of the exchange. As such, we can say that turn-taking asymmetry reflects 'special and particular constraints on what one or both of the participants will treat as allowable contributions' (Drew and Heritage, 1992).

In addition to asymmetry in turn-taking, other features have been found to be characteristic of institutional talk, namely goal-orientation (Benwell and Stokoe, 2007 and Drew and Heritage, 1992) and frameworks (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Goal-orientation is informed by at least one of the parties' need to accomplish a core task which is normally associated with the institution. This could be a patient's need to get a hospital appointment or a tutor's need to provide feedback to a student. To this extent, it is possible to say that institutional talk is necessarily transactional in nature insofar as the aim of the exchange is to produce a result. It is not talk for talk's sake, quite the reverse – the purpose of the exchange is to accomplish a goal.

The final factor of institutional talk is a structural framework. This framework often has expected norms which are specific to the institutional context. This framework has been referred to by Benwell and Stokoe as 'a generic macrostructure' (2007: 92). This macrostructure or framework lays out the expected/normative sequence of the exchange. For example, Zimmermann (1992) identified the sequence of exchanges of telephone calls to the emergency services as: opening →

request → interrogative series → response → closing. However, it is important to note that deviations can and do occur – what has been presented is normative or expected discourse.

So, to sum up, we can identify the main characteristics of institutional talk as:

- **A display of professional or institutional identity**. This can be either institutional member (expert) to client (novice) or institutional member to institutional member where the exchange pertains to the institution. Fixed, binary roles are often played out.
- **A fixed location**. The physical or cyber site of the exchange is usually fixed.
- **Asymmetry of turn-taking**. This may be caused by an asymmetry of the power relationships between the parties or by the structural format of the exchange
- **Transactional**. The exchanges are goal-orientated in that at least one party should have entered the exchange with the aim of achieving an end result which is often observable.
- **Formulaic**. Most institutional exchanges follow an expected sequence of turns and are thus replicable. They may also include lexical items, grammatical, interactional and pragmatic features particular to specific discourse domains
- **Topic determined by the physical location or by the institutional role/identity of at least one participant**. The topic of the exchange is often linked to the physical location such as court house or doctors surgery. It may also be set by one of the participants. In the case of the classroom, it is most likely that the teacher determines the topic.
- **Fixed degree of formality/informality.** The degree of formality is predicated on the identity/role of the participants as well as the nature of the situation. A business meeting between two CEOs may be formal due to the situation; whereas a teacher/pupil meeting may be formal due to asymmetry in power. Levels of formality are likely to remain fixed.
- **Fixed social distance**. This depends on the identity/role of the participants and the situation and can be socially close or socially distant.

However, it is advisable to end this section on what is institutional talk with a caveat. Just with most other areas of language, the definitions cannot be fixed. The above provides a guideline and of course it is possible to engage in institutional talk in a way that violates all of the above, but which is still institutional.

2.3.1 Institutional Talk as a Locus of Learning

Now, to move specifically on to institutional talk as a locus of learning, it is clear from the above that institutional talk is something which can be learnt. The learning can either be explicit through

specific tuition, for example, call centre staff all go through a training process to teach them the language and structures required for their domains, or implicit through exposure to the situation. For example, by frequent visits to cafes and pubs in Ireland, a 'novice' customer will learn that the correct response to 'Are you ok?' is, 'A coffee and two beers, please'. Unfamiliarity with the framework can lead to a breakdown in communication and thus the goal will not be achieved. In the latter case, a reply of, 'I'm fine, thanks', will result in the customer not being served.

While the previous example of miscommunication could be seen as superficial and possibly easily remedied, a more serious example is presented by Kerekes (2006). Her study explores job interviews with NSs and NNS of English. She highlights competency in interview techniques as a salient area in which candidates are required to be proficient. Lack of awareness of the framework of the interview process was deemed to be a bigger factor than general language abilities in being unsuccessful.

The above provides evidence of institutional talk as a locus of language acquisition. The institutional locus allows for input and output opportunities which can successfully be replicated to ensure that miscommunication does not occur in future exchanges and thus ensuring that goals are accomplished. Frequent exposure to a particular situation or explicit instruction in the framework of the various situations can successfully allow for the acquisition of a formula of lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and interactional features which in turn facilitates future success in such exchanges. However, how a 'novice' learns the rules of this locus of language acquisition remains contentious with Gibbs, in a study into opening sequences in telephone calls concluding that 'providing the novice speaker with an accurate model did in fact result in a successful *call-in'* (2005: 194) and that 'genres do have unique rules […] that can be taught to novices' (2005: 194). On the other hand, Tarone and Kuehn contest that, in a social service interview, 'the only way for a novice to become an expert is by participating in an interview' (2000: 100). An argument between implicit and explicit learning is beyond the scope of this project, and, as such, I will end this section by quoting Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, '…institutional talk has to be learnt by all clients – native and non-native alike…' (2005:26).

2.4 Conversational Context

The above demonstrates that the institutional locus in second language studies is something that has been explored in considerable depth in recent years; however, our next locus, the conversational

locus, has received much less attention. In contrast to the institutional locus, the conversational locus is much more difficult to define. Benwell and Stokoe refer to it simply as ‘mundane, ordinary talk’ (2007:10). Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford allude to ‘casual conversation’ (2005: 32) (and additionally highlight the need for further investigation of interlanguage pragmatics within casual conversation). Heritage likewise refers to ‘mundane conversation’ (1998:3). In addition, Heritage goes one step further by positing that the relationship between conversation and institutional talk is that of ‘'master institution' and its more restricted local variants’ (1998:3) with ordinary conversation occupying the role of ‘master institution’ and institutional talk the role of ‘restricted local variants’. From the above definitions – or non-definitions – it can be gleaned that the conversational context is not confined to a particular setting nor is it used for the execution of a particular task. It is in fact, whatever institutional talk is not. As Heritage notes, ‘Ordinary conversation is often defined negatively: wedding ceremonies are not 'ordinary conversation', legal proceedings in court are not 'ordinary conversation', though both adapt practices of talk and action from ordinary conversation and press them into service in these more specialized and restricted speech settings.’ (1998:3). I will now attempt to identify the main characteristics of the conversational context in positive terms.

Unlike in institutional talk, in the conversational context the identities of the participants and the roles they play in the exchange are fluid and dynamic. Throughout the exchange participants can assume the identity/role of friend, gossipmonger, advisor, expert, novice, speaker, listener, overhearer, to name but a few, at any given time within the exchange. The conversational context often involves multiple parties who can join or leave the exchange at any time. Additionally, the location of the exchange can be anywhere – a park bench, in front of the television, on the bus, in the street, at work, at school to provide a few examples. However, it is important to note that when these exchanges take place within what would normally be described as an institution, the exchange should not require institutional identities/roles to be enacted.

As with identities/roles, opportunities for turn-taking and the sequence of the exchange are likewise fluid. The exchange is often co-constructed between the participants based on what Heritage describes as ‘shared and specific understandings of 'where they are' within a social interaction.’ (1998:3) The process may also be reflexive in nature insofar as the actions taken by the participants to advance the exchange are often a sign of their analysis of the exchange to date. Additionally, the exchange may not have a predefined goal (other than phatic). Any goal is likely to be social in nature. For example deciding what to have for dinner does have a goal and an expected outcome, and as long as predefined institutional roles are not evoked it is probably conversational. As such,

following Brown and Yule, the conversational context is interactional in nature insofar as its main purpose is to 'establish and maintain social relationships' (1983:2-3). In brief, the characteristics of the conversational context may be described thus:

- **Fluid display of identity**. The roles played by participants in a conversational context do not reflect professional/institutional identities. The roles are fluid and can change over the course of the exchange. There may be multiple participants in a conversation with roles constantly changing.
- **A vast range of physical locations**. The physical location of the exchange is not predetermined by the topic of exchange nor by the identity of the participants. The conversational context can be anywhere including workplaces and institutions.
- **Dynamic turn-taking and sequencing features**. The actions of the participants are fluid and individual to each exchange. The rules are often co-constructed by the participants based on shared and/or specific understandings on an ongoing basis.
- **Interactional**. The main aim of these exchanges is not to achieve a goal. They are mainly concerned with establishing and maintaining social contact.
- **Topic co-constructed by participants**. This often has no fixed trajectory and topics change according to the interests of the participants
- **Formal or informal**. Levels of formality can depend on sociobiographical features such as age as well as the situation. A black tie event may require higher degrees of formality; however levels can vary throughout the exchange.
- **Variable social distance** depending on how well the participants know each other. Degrees of social distance may vary throughout the exchange.

As we can see from the above, the conversational context is difficult to pinpoint. Although it is fluid, it is not to say that it does not avoid contracted forms follow rules. In fact, it draws on a vast array of rules and conventions which are easily recognizable to all. As Heritage once more points out ''ordinary conversation' encompasses a vast array of rules and practices, which are deployed in pursuit of every imaginable kind of social goal, and which embody an indefinite array of inferential frameworks.' (1998:4). However, what differentiates it from institutional talk, from the point of view of framework, is the dynamic and changing nature of each exchange. A single conversational exchange has the potential to draw on a multitude of frameworks and the roles of the participants can be constantly changing.

2.4.1 Conversational Context as a Locus of Learning

There is no doubt that the conversation context is an important locus of learning. Brown and Yule point out 'it is clearly the case that a great deal of everyday human interaction is characterised by the primarily interpersonal rather than the primarily transactional use of language' (1982:2-3). From that, we can conclude that our primary use of language is interactional. This foregrounds the significance of the conversational locus of acquisition. If what we mainly do with language is interact, this is what learners must have most exposure to. However, as highlighted above, it is complex. It exposes learners to an almost infinitive range of input and output opportunities which allow, not only for the co-construction of exchanges, but also for the unexpected – as conversation can lead anywhere. It may not always have a predictable outcome or trajectory. Although seemingly providing a unique structure for each exchange, they are governed by rules which, according to Heritage (1998), have been recognizable for a very long time.

Summary

Before moving on to explore the macro-learning contexts of submersion and the FL classroom, I will sum up the above. Based on studies carried out into contexts of identity construction, I have been able to isolate two micro-contexts of language acquisition which I have termed loci of language acquisition. The two loci are institutional and conversational. Both loci are wide ranging, but have very different, almost binary characteristics insofar as one can be defined in terms of what the other is not. (See table 2.1)

Table 2.1

Institutional	Conversational
Identity/role defined by workplace or institution	Fluid identity/roles
Fixed location usually within the workplace/institution	No predefined location
Asymmetry of turn-taking	Dynamic turn-taking
Replicable sequential framework	Co-constructed framework
Orientated towards achieving a goal	Orientated towards establishing or maintaining social relationships
Transactional	Interactional
Predetermined topic	Co-constructed topic
Formal or informal	Variable levels of formality
Fixed social distance	Variable social distance

Both loci represent a wide range of situations; however they differ radically in terms of participant identity, objective and format. The participants in the institutional locus enact a fixed

institutional/workplace identity according to the demands of the situation. They are generally involved in a transaction with a predefined goal and turn-taking and sequencing are determined by the situation. As for conversational locus, the participants enact a fluid identity which can change throughout the course of the exchange. They are generally involved in socially-orientated interaction and the format can be co-constructed by all participants to meet the situational demands. Furthermore, they differ according to use. If we take Brown and Yule's (1983) assumption that the majority of exchanges are interactional in nature, then we can say that there is an imbalance in the necessity for exposure to both loci with the conversational locus carrying more weight.

As has been indicated, both loci include a wide range of situations. Table 2.2 shows a non-exhaustive list of examples for both the institutional and the conversational loci.

Table 2.2

Institutional	Conversational
A consultation with a medical practitioner	Discussing current affairs on the bus
An advisory session with a tutor	Talking about the weather
A parent/teacher meeting	Gossiping
A meeting with the manager	Relating the story of what happened to you earlier
An interview	Talking about holidays
A cold call from a company	Enquiring about someone's health
A courtroom	Enquiring about someone's plans
A confession in church	Asking for a favour
A conference presentation	Greetings
Making an appointment	

What appears very clearly is the connection between institutional locus and physical locations. However, it must be made clear that the distinctions are not always black and white. Elements of conversational locus can often be found in the institutional locus and in many ways have become an integral part of the format. For example, it is not unusual for a medical practitioner to incorporate enquiries about mutual acquaintances into the discourse in order to put the patient at ease. However, movement in the other direction, i.e. the incorporation of institutional talk into the conversational locus is less common.

2.5 Macro-learning contexts

The macro-learning contexts relate to the broad category of where learning takes place. They refer to the physical location of learning such as a classroom or the target language country. However, the physical location does not exist in isolation. It is accompanied by sociohistorical and sociocultural factors. For example school children learning a foreign language at school in the 1950s probably had a very different experience form those learning in the 21st century. As this study is concerned with cross-contextual foreign language learners, I will focus on two contexts – the foreign language and the submersion context. The foreign language context refers not only to the classroom, but also to opportunities for use of the L2 outside of the classroom. Submersion, on the other hand, relates to opportunities to use the language in a target language country. It represents an expansion of the study abroad context to include sojourns for non academic purposes such as work or holiday.

2.5.1 Foreign Language Context

The foreign language context is described by Block as 'the context of millions of primary school, secondary school, university and further education students around the world who rely on their time in classrooms to learn a language which is not the typical language of communication in their surrounding environment' (2003: 48). He also lays out a list of variables which differentiate each foreign language context. These include: the ratio of teachers to students, the experience of the teachers, the number of hours of instruction, the physical condition of the classroom as well as access to materials and local language ideologies (2010: 5-6). Young, on the other hand, considers the foreign language context as a series of practices and describes the classrooms as 'sites of complex interactions among students and teachers' (2009: 184). While these two definitions represent diverging views with Block's definition pertaining to the physical location and Young's to what happens within that physical location, what they do have in common is the synonymous relationship between the foreign language context and the foreign language classroom. In other words, the FL context equals the FL classroom. And this seems to be true in general when looking at the FL context, that what is meant is the FL classroom. This is not surprising as opportunities for contact outside the classroom are limited. However, here I will consider the FL context to include not only the classroom, but opportunities for contact outside the classroom.

My main concern when investigating contexts is to try to establish the loci of learning that they give rise to; therefore I will start with an overview of the literature regarding classroom instruction and interactional exchanges before examining the literature on the effects and nature of such exchanges

outside the classroom and eventually evaluating the findings from the point of view of locus of learning to establish if an imbalance in the distribution of the loci exists.

2.5.2 Foreign Language Classroom

First, it is necessary to highlight that the foreign language context is a highly complex entity with many external and internal forces influencing it. Teacher ↔ student discourse patterns may be influenced by classroom internal issues such as the age of the learners, the level of the class, learner/teacher ratio, the extent of classroom contact time and the purpose of the class (e.g. is it exam preparation or oral fluency) as well as external features such as local policies regarding instructions for use of the L2 as a classroom medium or prescribed methodologies. Another issue worth highlighting at the outset is that classrooms, by their very nature, are essentially institutional insofar as the participants enact institutional identities. Learners enact their identities as novices and teachers as experts. Asymmetry exists in the management of the discourse as 'the prime responsibility for establishing and shaping the interaction lies with the teacher' (Walsh, 2006:56). In addition, classrooms are often goal-orientated and according to Vygotsky (1978) transactional in nature.

In light of this, it would seem feasible to assert or assume that the FL classroom provides solely an institutional locus of learning. However, an overview of the literature relating to classroom discourse will show that the classroom has the potential to provide a conversational locus of learning, especially for the student.

As previously stated, the vast amount of literature available regarding the FL context is concerned with the FL classroom. From the point of view of interactional exchanges, what are of most interest to this study are teacher ↔student discourse and the student ↔ student discourse. We will start with the teacher ↔student exchanges.

2.5.3 Teacher ↔Student Discourse

Teacher ↔ student discourse patterns within language classrooms occupy a more central and unique role than discourse patterns within content-based classrooms. According to Long, the discourse is both 'the vehicle and object of instruction' (1983: 9) insofar as the form and content are inextricably

linked as the message is conveyed in the language and the language is, in fact, the message. Due to this, teacher ↔student discourse patterns have come under immense scrutiny. One of the main findings relates to an imbalance in teacher ↔student discourse patterns with a bias towards teacher talk within the classroom. Chaudron (1988) concludes that approximately two-thirds of classroom discourse is teacher originated. Thus, even in highly decentralized FL classrooms, the teacher is in control of the discourse, the teacher decides on the 'topic of conversation and turn-taking' (Walsh, 2006: 5). This is hardly surprising given the responsibilities of the teacher within the classroom and the responsibilities linked to second language acquisition. Walsh identifies four areas of discourse which he sees are the sole responsibility of the teacher. They are: 'control of patterns of communication; elicitation techniques; repair strategies; and modifying speech to learners.' (2006:3). Table 2.3 provides a brief overview of a number of the exponents of the four areas of discourse as presented by Walsh.

Table 2.3

Control patterns of communication	Elicitation Techniques	Repair Strategies	Modifying speech to learners
• Topic of conversation • Turn-taking • Restricting or allowing learners' interaction • Creating a specific linguistic code	• Display questions • Referential questions	• Covert • Overt • Language centred • Content centred	• Modelling target language • Simplifying speech to aid comprehension • Self-repetition • Confirmation checks • Comprehension checks • Expanding an utterance • Reformulation • Completion of learners' utterances • Scaffolding • Backtracking

As can be seen from the above, teacher discourse is primarily concerned with the control of input

and output and the greatest number of techniques for doing so come under the heading of speech modification. Therefore the teacher uses a vast array of techniques to control the input. However, it must be said that teacher does not always do this alone. The use of confirmation and comprehension checks in particular allow for the teacher to work in collaboration with the learners to control input.

Learner output is mainly controlled through the management of communication patterns and elicitation techniques. If we start with the control of communication patterns, we can see that it is the teacher who determines the topic of conversation, who can contribute and when they can contribute. This is backed up by Young who states, 'Students do so (take a turn) only when selected by the teacher.' (2009: 123). Additionally, the teacher may use language to 'create a speech community into which their […] use of language encourages or prevents identification with that community among students' (Walsh, 2006: 7). Thus we can see that the teachers' own use of professional language, language which allows learners to participate in the 'speech community' of the classroom (Moje, 1995) in a legitimate way, in a manner which is understood and accepted by others is likewise a technique for controlling output.

Output is also controlled by elicitation techniques. As noted by Walsh, 'classroom discourse is dominated by question and answer routines with teachers asking most of the questions' (2006:7). Such questions are generally categorized as display or referential. Display questions are often closed in nature as the teacher knows the answer in advance. In a study into instructed learners of French as a second language, Kida noted that responses to information questions (which can be correlated to display questions) lead to responses that are 'less discourse-rich' (2005: 470).

Referential questions, on the other hand, are open in that the answer is not known in advance. Generally they allow for more learner talk as more interactional space is permitted to the learner and hence they can lead to a more symmetrical exchange and something more akin to 'casual conversation' (Walsh, 2006: 9). Referential questions can be correlated to Kida's category of 'message seeking' which involves a range of indirect and direct questions to which the asker does not know the answer (2005). These, according to Kida, result in a length of utterance that is more than four times that of information questions and is 'favourable to the use of discourse markers and […] many topics in learners' discourse' (2005: 471).

Repair strategies, according to van Lier (1988), constitute the second most frequent feature of classroom discourse after questioning. In many ways they are particular to the classroom insofar as they are expected in a way that they may not be in a more naturalistic setting. Outside the

classroom, error correction may even be seen as a face-threatening act. However, within the classroom, there seems to prevail a sort of 'didactic contract' (Faraco and Kida, 1999) in which error correction or repair, even in its most overt, linguistic form, is expected and, as opposed to raising the affective filter which could in turn lead to a retreat from discourse, in fact 'did not prevent the learners from achieving multi-utterance performance' (Kida, 2005: 483). In other words, overt repair of linguistic features in a classroom context is what the learners want and, as confirmed by Seedhouse, 'making linguistic errors and having them corrected directly and overtly is not an embarrassing matter' (1997: 571).

Correction and repair seem to have no negative effect on communication insofar as it is not impeded by it. Furthermore, many would argue that it is in fact a crucial element of learning (Willis, 1992; Jarvis and Robinson, 1997). Despite the findings that correction/repair within the classroom is not only desired and non-face-threatening, but also essential to the learning process, caveats are raised regarding the frequency and nature of the repair. As regards the frequency, both Walsh and Kida highlight the potentially obstructive nature of persistent and inappropriate (or 'illegal' (Walsh, 2006: 11) teacher repair which can affect the learner's ability to produce an extended turn. Likewise, the failure to relate feedback to specific pedagogic goals, whether content or language centred, can have a similar impact (Kasper 1986, van Lier 1988).

The category of modifying speech (see Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991 for a comprehensive overview) contains the greatest number of strategies and as such, represents the most subtle aspect of teacher talk. It differs from the preceding categories in that it is most closely associated with the control of input. From the non-exhaustive list of strategies presented in table X, it can be clearly seen that teachers modify not only the 'linguistic' elements of their speech such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, but also discourse features of their speech. These include: self-repetition, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, expanding an utterance, reformulation, completion of learners' utterances, scaffolding and backtracking. There exists compelling evidence into the role of discourse modification in particular in the quality of learner output. Swain (1995), for example, foregrounds the value of clarification requests in compelling the learner to elaborate or rephrase the utterance i.e. modify the utterance, and thus produce a more complex and longer turn. Kida (2005) emphasizes the importance of the nature of discourse modification by stating that extremes can prove non-conducive to the production of lengthy complex turns. An interesting observation made by Musumeci (1996), however, while not negating the above-mentioned findings, indicates that teachers rarely engage in the kind of discourse modification such as clarification requests which can lead to the modification of learner talk and by doing so opportunities for longer, more complex turns are denied.

From the brief discussion above, we can see how teacher talk controls the discourse of the classroom. Not only does teacher talk dominate the classroom, it also controls input and output opportunities via a wide range of strategies which fall under the categories of: control of discourse patterns, elicitation, repair and speech modification (see Walsh 2006). This, by its nature entails mainly the institutional locus of language acquisition insofar as the roles of the participants are determined by the institution – teacher/student. The location is fixed within a classroom; there is asymmetry as regards turn-taking with the teacher in most cases controlling the discourse. There is an expected sequential framework which can take the format of teacher → student → teacher. On the whole, teacher ↔ student discourse is goal orientated and transactional in nature as what can happen is a transfer of knowledge and the topic is pre-determined. Levels of formality and social distance are fixed for the duration of the exchanges.

2.5.4 Student ↔ Student Discourse

Very little work has been carried out into the nature of student↔ student discourse. Within the FL context, student ↔ student discourse is often closely orchestrated by the teacher. Interesting findings by Varonis and Gass (1985) into the negotiation of meaning in a dyadic context point to more linguistically elaborate discourse being produced when the exchange happens between NS and NNS and conversely less elaborate discourse when the exchange takes place between NNS and NNS. This in many ways mirrors the discourse patterns found between teacher ↔ student and student ↔ student and is later backed up by Kida (2005). In the latter study, students produced more elaborate discourse patterns when having an exchange with a teacher and student ↔ student exchanges lead to less complex discourse patterns. However, rather than this being considered negative, Kida points out that when the exchange is student ↔ student, that learners 'tend to produce a discourse closer to that of spontaneous conversation' (2005: 482).

In light of those findings, it may be possible to suggest that student ↔ student exchanges have the possibility to incorporate a conversational locus of acquisition into the FL classroom. However, it must be highlighted that the macro-context of Kida's study is the second language classroom where the students use the L2 as a lingua franca. Therefore, it still remains to be seen whether or not this would be true of the FL classroom. Another interesting study into the effects of negotiation of meaning which sheds some into the nature of student ↔ student discourse is Garcia Mayo (2005). The study points to students adopting discourse patterns more frequently associated with teacher

discourse when engaged in student ↔ student discourse. These include repair, completion as well as interactional modification. In addition, collaborative strategies of discourse were also noticed. However, repair and interactional modification in particular, although present, were extremely infrequent. These findings were in line with earlier studies carried out by Pica and Doughty (1985) and Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos and Linnell (1996).

What the above tells us is that student ↔ student discourse is quantitatively different from teacher ↔ student discourse. One of the main areas in which they differ is in asymmetry of turn-taking. It seems that student ↔ student discourse offers a balance in turn-taking in that the students contribute on a more equal basis. However, as regards student ↔ student discourse providing a more conversational locus of acquisition, there is slight evidence that it can in a second language classroom context, but it has never been explored in an FL classroom context. However, if we take a closer look at studies into student ↔ student discourse, (Swain and Lapkin (2000), Storch (1998), Kuiken and Vedder (2007) to name a few) we see very little evidence of a deviation from the institutional locus insofar as most exchanges are initiated by the teacher, they are goal orientated, fixed roles are enacted, and they take place in a fixed location.

2.5.5 Contact with the L2 beyond the Classroom

Contact with the FL outside the classroom is an area which, likewise, is little researched. This is what Housen *et al.* (2011) refer to as a macro-context or extra-curricular contact. Their focus is on how 'socio-structural factors (e.g. the prestige, status and roles of the L1 and L2, the size of the L1 and L2 group) mediate the impact of curricular factors (e.g. type of L2 education) in determining both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes in instructed L2 learning.' (2011: 88). They investigate factors such as the prestige of the L2 in the wider community and its use as a vehicular language across four different learning contexts – traditional EFL in Germany, ESL in a bilingual school in Germany, ESL in an international school in Brussels and ESL in an international school in England. With regard to the FL context, Housen *et al*. found that the L2 was generally not used as a vehicular language either in the school or in the wider community. This is in contrast with the findings of Berns (1990) who posits that in Germany English is used by a large number of people for tourism, cultural or business purposes. In general, in the study by Housen *et al.,* the degree of L2 prominence in the school and in the wider community increased in each context. The results were unsurprising in one aspect and surprising in another insofar as those studying ESL in the international school in Britain scored much higher in all parts of the test; however, the unexpected came with the results of

the traditional FL students who scored much higher than expected. In fact there was very little evidence found for the advantage of increased exposure to the L2 within the school in the German bilingual school context. However, the authors did highlight a factor which may have influenced the outcomes and that was the age of the FL learners – on average they were 2.5 years older than the other students.

What the authors highlight with great clarity is the complexity of context and they provide a powerful analytical tool for language prominence across a wide range of contexts. Although, for their particular FL context, the prominence of the L2 was minimal both within the school context and the wider community, this in no way precludes the possibility that it does not have increased prominence in other FL contexts. FL contexts are subject to 'sociohistorical, geographical, mythological and linguistic factors' (Block, 2006: 49).

To sum up, contact with the FL outside the classroom is possibly minimal and when or if it does happen we know very little about the nature of the language encountered or the locus of acquisition that it may provide. Notable exceptions focus on the acquisition of L2 French. For example Dewaele (2005) foregrounds the positive influence of extra-curricular contact with the FL on the acquisition of informal lexical items and from that it may be possible to infer that extra-curricular contact may provide a conversational locus of acquisition, similar positive results are noted for French immersion learners by Rehner and Mougeon (1999) and Mougeon, Rehner and Nasadi (2002).

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that the focus on the nature of discourse available to learners or teachers in an FL context has tended to concentrate on the classroom. As a result, it is difficult to say if the FL context lends itself to more than one locus of acquisition – i.e. the institutional locus. As we've seen, FL classroom discourse appears to be dominated by teacher talk and an analysis of teacher ↔ student discourse illustrates its highly-institutional nature. This, however, is not meant to be seen as a negative quality or something that has to change – in fact teacher ↔ student discourse leads to more complex discourse strategies being employed by the student insofar as interactional exchanges with teachers often result in longer turns and the use of more complex and correct structures. Additionally, it is an expected locus which facilitates repair and correction without recourse to a face-threatening act.

When it comes to student ↔ student discourse, we know even less about its nature. Kida (2005) provided an indication that student ↔ student discourse can result in the introduction of a conversational locus of learning into the classroom; however, the results emanated from a second language classroom where English was a vehicular language, so whether or not the findings are transferable to an FL context remains unexplored. However, an overview of studies into student ↔ student discourse indicates that a lot of the discourse is 'on task'. By that, I mean that the students are using the language to complete a task set by the teacher. An analysis of 'on task' discourse showed that it gave rise to a mainly institutional locus of learning, differing from teacher ↔ student discourse only to the extent that turn-taking was probably more symmetrical. While the learner may have recourse to a conversational locus of learning within the classroom, there remains no indication that teachers experience any deviation from the institutional locus within the classroom.

An overview of the literature surrounding extra-curricular contact with the L2 points to minimal contact with the L2 outside the classroom; however, it does show that there can be considerable variation even within the FL context and that levels of extra-curricular contact may be determined by local conditions. However, there is an indication that where extra-curricular contact takes place it results in the provision of a conversational locus of acquisition. As such, opportunities for exposure to the conversational locus of acquisition seem to be minimal.

However, it remains a moot point whether or not the classroom can or should try to replicate the 'real' world. The classroom is no less a 'real' situation than the train station or the restaurant and it has been argued (Valdman, 1989) that the classroom is a legitimate community of practice or speech community. However, the problem lies in the transferability of skills gained. Young questions the issue that 'what learners learn is to participate in one practice' (2009: 167). He disagrees with the sentiment that 'the dependence of learning on context is far too great to allow learners to port resources and a participation framework from one context to another' (2009: 167) and as such hypothesizes that contexts are not so different and that what was acquired can be reconfigured to suit a novel context.

However, this issue was explored in depth by Miller (2004) in her study into the experiences of immigrant children attending specialized ESL classes in Australia. The children in the study spent up to six months in a specialized ESL centre before joining a majority language English medium school. Rather than finding that the experience of the ESL classes helped the children integrate, Miller found the opposite. The children had been socialized into an ESL context, or, to use the terminology of discursive practice theory, what the children had done was effectively to learn how

to participate in one practice and, in this case, the skills gained could not be reconfigured to suit the new context. This leaves researchers, practioners and learners alike in a very serious predicament. If we look closely at the two macro-level learning contexts (or discourse domains) described by Miller – the ESL context and the majority language school, we can see that they are both similar insofar as they both rely heavily on the institutional language. Although the ESL school where the research took place aims to provide 'a natural language acquisition context, where meaningful and purposeful social activity negotiated in a range of social languages takes place' (Miller, 2004: 128), the skills gained were not always easily transferable to the majority language school.

This problem was partially identified as the discrepancy between the 'ESL ears' (Miller, 2004: 134) developed by the teachers and the lack of highly-trained listening skills in the public at large which can lead native speakers to reject the 'communicative burden' (Miller, 2004: 135) associated with exchanges with NNSs. However, the context of the Australian ESL classroom and its reliance on a highly specific institutional locus of language acquisition does not equip students with transferable skills which can help them integrate into a majority language school neither from an educational point of view nor from a social perspective.

From these findings, it maybe possible to infer that the skills gained from one institutional locus of language acquisition may not be compatible with another institutional locus nor can they be reconfigured to suit a conversational locus and as highlighted by Freeman, 'the way in which social languages […] work in the world at large are different from what students and teachers are used to.' (2004: 191).

2.6 Submersion Context

As mentioned earlier, I will use the term submersion here to refer to all experiences a learner has in a target language community whether they are for academic purposes, work related, holiday or purely sojourns. This differs radically from the normally investigated study abroad context which is mainly concerned with foreign language learners who spend a proportion of their studies in a target language country for language learning purposes. From the point of view of the current study, I intend to add to the existing literature by broadening the scope of study abroad through the recognition that all time spent in the target language country by learners for whatever purpose is, in fact, a language acquisition opportunity and that an exploration of all of these 'submersion experiences' can help illuminate the language acquisition process. In addition, the scope will also be

broadened through a slight change in the profile of the learner insofar as the specific learners participating in the study to be presented here have finished their formal language learning and are in fact providers of foreign language learning.

One major aim of the current study is to deconstruct the term 'learning context' and to go deeper to explore the loci of learning acquisition that exist within contexts. However, to my knowledge, there is no previous literature exploring loci of language acquisition or the nature of linguistic exchanges experienced by learners in a submersion context. Study Abroad (SA) research has generally focused on two main strands – 'the creation of spaces within which students can develop their intercultural competence' (Block, 2010: 147) and linguistic gains (or lack of) during a study abroad programme. As many of the aspects surrounding SA and intercultural competence have been extensively covered under the guise of identity in chapter 1 and the focus of this study is to uncover loci of learning, a review of the literature will focus on linguistic gains before reconsidering the literature to look for clues regarding the nature of exchanges experienced.

2.6.1 Definition of Study Abroad

The parameters of the current study broaden the SA paradigm to include all stays in a TL country experienced by the learners regardless of the purpose. However, as the majority of the literature to date has been concentrated on SA, we will use SA as our starting point and our first task, therefore is to provide a definition of the term. As noted by Coleman:

> …residence abroad embraces a form of language learning which is defined by its specific context – and the context itself therefore needs definition.' (1997:1).

Attempts to define the context have been difficult and problematic. For example, Block explains the context 'as involving university-level FL students in stays of one month to two years in length in countries where the FL is the primary mediator of day-to-day activity' (2010: 6) and posits that 'study abroad contexts represent a mix of the adult migrant and FL classroom contexts' (2010: 6). Likewise, Regan *et al.* describe it as a time when 'the learner spends a period of residence of varying duration in the TL community' (2010: 20). The aim of this is to allow 'the instructed learner to acquire 'pseudo-naturalistic' status, by engaging in more informal acquisition in the TL community, through naturalistic contact with the L2 in everyday social situations' (Regan *et al.*.

2010: 20).

Those two definitions allow for the isolation of three characteristics of SA:

- The learner is primarily an instructed FL learner
- The context must include instructed learning in an FL context and residence within a Submersion context
- The learner has access to social situations within the Submersion context and thus, informal or non-instructed language learning opportunities

While the first two characteristics may seem unproblematic, they do contain a considerable number of variables. As has been discussed in section 2.5, the FL context is highly dynamic; therefore the experience of the FL learner before submersion can be very individual. Variables to consider include: age of student; number of years of study of the language; language proficiency level and language learning experience. The second aspect is likewise problematic and includes variables such as: duration of stay; accommodation; purpose of stay. While the first two characteristics can be controlled to an extent and compared before and after submersion, it is the third characteristic which poses the most significant problems. The notion that mere physical presence within the Submersion context gives rise to access to social situations with native speakers is one that that been previously discussed in chapter 1 on identity and from that discussion, it is clear that the issue of access to native speakers is a highly-complex one which involves: 1) being accepted as a legitimate speaker and 2) the learner accepting the legitimacy of the native speaker. Therefore, we cannot take access to social situations and opportunities for informal or non-instructed language learning as a given. This is something which may or may not take place depending on local conditions. Additionally, the intensity and nature of contact with NSs cannot be predicted.

The above gives a glimpse of the complexity of the submersion or study abroad context. Not only does the learning profile of the learner have to be taken into account and made comparable, but also the nature of residence should be comparable. These two aspects are relatively easy to quantify and have been held more or less constant in studies involving university students on Erasmus programmes (see Howard, 2005, Barron, 2003 and Regan, Howard and Lemée (2009) for examples). It is much more difficult to control or quantify the intensity and nature of contact with NSs. However, while not much information on the intensity and nature of contact with NSs is available, I will attempt to read between the lines of the existing literature with the aim of providing insight into the loci of learning which submersion experiences (SEs) give rise to.

2.6.2 Submersion Experiences and Loci of Learning

Submersion experiences can have a positive effect on language acquisition especially on the social aspects of language (see Regan (1995), Dewaele (2005), Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1995), Howard (2006) Marriott (1995) Siegal (1995) Takahashi and Beebe (1987) and Bayley (1996) Barron (2003)). Results regarding gains in other aspects of the language are much more varied with some studies suggesting positive gains (see Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1995), Guntermann, (1995), Huebner (1995), Polanyi, (1995), Freed (1995b), Milton and Meara (1994), Ife, Vives Boix and Meara (2000), DeKeyser (1991) and Howard (2000), (2001), (2003) and (2005b) Dewey (2007) for examples); with other studies (see Collentine and Freed (2004), Segalowitz and Freed (2004),and Isabelli-Garcia (2010) for example) showing little improvement. While Isabelli-Garcia (2010) and Lindseth (2010) highlight the possibility learner spending more time in L1 interaction than L2 interaction, we know very little about the quantity or quality of exchanges which give rise to linguistic gains. That is to say that the loci of learning have not been explored. We do not know what kind of exchanges the learners engage in whilst in submersion. However, if we look closer at some of the SA studies, we can glean indications of specific types of exchanges learners are exposed to.

As I am concerned with non-instructed language learning opportunities, I will not be considering the exchanges which occur within the SL classroom but rather those which occur outside it. The data, albeit sparse and to some extent speculative, falls into two distinct categories: host family and non-host family specific contact.

I will turn first of all to contact within the host family. This has been the most widely documented area of contact, although the exact nature of the exchanges between host family and guest student have not been fully analysed. I will now attempt to read between the lines of a number of studies to try to deduce the loci of learning the learners are exposed to in a host family situation.

2.6.3 Loci of Learning and Homestay

Knight and Schmidt-Rhinehart refer to homestay as a 'rich linguistic and cultural haven' (2002: 198); however, as regards the linguistic element research does not always confirm this. Segalowitz and Freed contest this issue when they posit that home stays can hold 'advantages for some learners but not for others' (2004: 174). This ambiguity in the benefits of home stay can be put down to the

quality of conversations with the hosts much of which was described as repetitive and mundane. The exchanges did not lend themselves to extended communicative situations. This study corroborates earlier findings by Rivers (1998) and Wilkinson (1998a, 1998b, 2002). Both researchers foreground lack of access to linguistic input during a homestay as well as the limitations for interaction. This was also true for one participant in a study by Isabelli- Garcia who found she was being treated 'like a tenant' (2006: 46) by her host. This resulted in very limited input/output opportunities which were predicated on the defined roles of the participants. Power structures seem to be asymmetrical with the host/landlord enjoying higher status. The quality and quantity of the exchanges are governed by the host/landlord and as such, the predominant locus of learning would seem to be closer to institutional.

Even where exchanges with the host family are not curtailed, they may not lead to greater exposure to varied loci of learning. Iino (2006) expands the domain of quality of host family input by highlighting the issue of 'foreigner talk' through the use of code-switching. In a study into 'dinner time talk' experienced by learners of Japanese L2 learners in a homestay context, Iino notices the use of code-switching by the host families. This involves an avoidance of the local dialect and a preference for somewhat unnatural standardized Japanese – the variety of Japanese that the hosts believe students will be familiar with from the classroom. The over-accommodation of language to suit what the hosts believed was the needs of the learners, leads to 'modified norms of interaction in contact situations' (2006: 171) and such modifications tend to be 'deviant from that of native situations'. So, far from providing students with a linguistically rich, native like input, the host family is unwittingly re-enforcing the language of textbooks and the classroom.

Iino also tackles the issue of student output within a homestay context. As with host family input, the quantity of opportunities for student output seem high – certainly, they are not noted as low. However, again, it is the quality that is called into question. The author highlights the 'legitimacy' of the learner to use varieties of language which would be considered sociolinguistically appropriate between native speakers. Interestingly, this seemingly appropriate use of social language is not always accepted by the host and may be viewed as 'a crossing of the ethnolinguistic boundary' (2006: 167) and therefore unacceptable from a non-native speaker.

When it comes to locus of learning in Iino's study, the issue is complex. On the one hand the non-institutional nature of the homestay is emphasised. Additionally, the learners' identity as a non-native speaker allows them 'more freedom and control of the conversation' (2006: 160) than would normally be expected. On the other hand, Iino places the participants into clearly defined, inflexible

roles – care-providers and care-givers. This can lead to an asymmetry in power structure with the care-provider in the dominant role. In some cases the learners describe their position similar to that of a plaything or a family 'pet'.

The above description gives rise to a difficult analysis of locus of learning. While the roles are fixed and asymmetrical, the learner's non-native status provides opportunities to break with convention and take control of the conversation. If the difference between institutional and conversational loci is considered a continuum, the locus of learning here can be seen as closer to the institutional, yet with some aspects of conversational. However, apart from this, the study by Iino pointed to a possible 'two-way cultural exchange' (2006: 164).

Not all studies into homestays have reached negative conclusions. Although Jackson (2008) acknowledges inequalities in experiences within homestays, working from a sociocultural/Bakhtinian framework, she points to gains in the attitude towards the significance of the language which can occur when there is dialogic interaction between the learner and the host family. That is to say that where families offer a range of loci of learning that the language changes from a means of just getting things done to a more meaningful means of expression. Therefore, the homestay can be instrumental in providing increased exposure to both the institutional and conversational locus, and as a consequence opportunities to express subjectivities become more salient.

Other studies which foreground the positive nature of homestays do so from a perspective of 'the dinner table'. Studies include DuFon (2006) and Cook (2006). Both studies view the dinner table, not only as a context for language acquisition, but also as context for socialization into the culture. The latter is very much emphasised by DuFon who investigates how SA students are socialized into the domain of East Javan cuisine. By recording the students at the dinner table with their hosts, DuFon was able to show the positive effects of these exchanges on socialization. While the focus is on socialization rather than linguistic gains per se, the language used by DuFon provides useful information on the locus of learning to which the students are exposed. The author refers to 'conversations' (2006: 95), 'dialog' (2006: 103) and the excerpts of the exchanges may lead to the assumption that the dinner table context may give rise to exposure to a conversational locus of learning.

Likewise, the study by Cook (2006) leads to similar conclusions. The study looks at learners of Japanese in a homestay setting and once more focuses on the dinner table as a context for

socialization. In fact Cook describes dinner talk as 'an opportunity space for the participants to co-construct shared perspectives and emotions.' (2006: 147). Rather than seeing it as a unilateral process of becoming socialized into the host culture, Cook views it as a bilateral process with both parties learning something. The author refers to phrases such as 'dinnertime conversation', everyday storytelling' (2006:120), 'problem solving', joint activities' and 'co-telling' (2006: 121) as being indicative of the nature of exchanges encountered at the table. An analysis of the discourse used to describe the dinner table exchanges – conversation, everyday, joint activities, co-telling, and co-construction again point to the predominance of the conversational locus of learning in such situations. Furthermore, the possibility of the learners to challenge the host family at the dinner table is also raised by Cook. This points to a less asymmetric power structure and thus strengthens the argument that dinnertime exchanges give rise to a conversational locus of learning.

However, Cook does raise some interesting points regarding the quality of language input. There is evidence that the hosts may be engaging in 'foreigner talk' by their corrections of the local dialect into standard Japanese. Another potentially negative point, which would concur with previous studies, is the potential for dinner time conversations to become repetitive.

Such negativities were not found by McMeekin (2006) who compares homestay exchanges with SA classroom exchanges. She finds that the homestay provides opportunities for 'a wider variety of topics, fewer opportunities to use English, and symmetric interaction' (2006: 200). The author also posits that learners 'were able to openly exchange ideas and information in the L2 and choose topics that they were interested in.' (2006: 200). With the symmetrical nature of the interaction and lack of prediction in the topics to be discussed, it may be possible to conclude that, in this case, the homestay leads to a more conversational locus of learning.

Homestays, conclusion

If we read between the lines and attempt to understand the nature of the exchanges within the homestay domain which give rise to little or no interaction, we can see an interesting pattern emerging. One reason for the lack of communication could be misunderstandings on the nature of the homestay. The participant from Isabelli-Garcia's study felt like a tenant and this is maybe true of the participants in other studies. The host may see this as a purely business transaction where their role is to provide a bed and possibly board and nothing else. The host is, in fact, a service

provider and therefore all exchanges with the guest are conducted on that basis – they are short transactions based on fixed identities – landlord – tenant. They are strictly formulaic in nature and asymmetrical as the service provider holds the power and decides when exchanges can take place and on what topic. In short, they are institutional in nature. Thus, the homestay has the potential to lead to nothing but an institutional locus of learning; and unlike the institutional nature of the classroom, the landlord has no responsibility to help the learner make linguistic gains.
The same is also true where the hosts see themselves as one-way providers of language and cultural knowledge as in the Iino study.

Therefore for homestay to reach its potential as a site for exposure to a variety of loci of learning, both host and learner must be made aware of their duties and the potential for bidirectional language and cultural exchanges. Where these conditions are met, homestays can indeed become a linguistically rich environment providing interaction in multiple loci of learning.

2.6.5 Loci of Learning outside Homestays

Without doubt, it is much more problematic to access reliable information on the nature of exchanges which take place in an environment with no fixed boundaries or participants. The researcher can not feasibly follow the learner everywhere and monitor and record all exchanges. The alternative of having a learner constantly 'miked up' would prove prohibitively expensive and it is doubtful that any learner would agree. In such circumstances, researchers must rely on self reported data. This can take the form of learning diaries, interviews with learners or learner contact profile (LCP) questionnaires. While issues do arise regarding the validity of such self reports (see Freed, 1990 for insight into the shortcomings of diary reports), there really is no alternative.

I will now turn to a number of different studies which use such methods in order to quantify or qualify learner language contact within an SA environment. Once more I will try to read between the lines where necessary to gauge the loci of learning. I will turn first of all to one of the first studies to utilise a number of the methods mentioned above.

Freed (1990) used a number of the above methods to investigate the correlation between interactional and non-interactional out of class contact and linguistic gains. The study was pioneering in attempting to qualify and quantify the contact with the language as experienced by the

learners. Using an early version of the LCP, Freed was able to quantify the amount of time spent in contact with the language. The study looked at two distinct categories – 1) 'direct social contact with native speakers' (1990: 463) and 2) 'non-interactive contact' (1990: 463). The former is known as interactive contact and entailed the number of hours speaking French with family and friends while the latter included contact with the media – TV, newspapers etc. The study showed, among other things, that the amount of time spent in direct interaction with family and friends was beneficial to the grammatical competence of lower level learners but not to higher level learners and had 'no measurable effect on functional oral proficiency' (1990: 474) on any learner. While the benefits of direct contact may be ambiguous (Freed questions the tools for measuring gains), what is of interest to this study is the amount of direct interactive contact with native speakers.

While the exact nature of the direct social contact is not expanded on, it is feasible to say that it correlates to the conversational locus of learning. From the study, there is no indication of the percentage of exposure to the conversational locus as opposed to the institutional locus, but the data highlights the amount of exposure that different proficiency groups experience to the conversational locus. The higher proficiency groups experience much more exposure than the lower proficiency groups. However, it is worth pointing out that the conversational locus was not the locus to which learners had most exposure. Freed found that all learners tended towards a higher percentage of non-interactive contact with the language and for higher proficiency students, this increased contact proved beneficial to linguistic gains.

Also working under a similar methodological paradigm is Dewey (2007) in his comparative study into the acquisition of Japanese vocabulary in three different macro contexts. Overall, it was found that the SA context results in greater gains in vocabulary acquisition. Of more interest to the current study are the reasons for such gains. Through an analysis of the LCP, Dewey found that gains correlated most highly to 'time spent talking to [Japanese] friends outside of the homestay setting' (2007: 140). The author provides insightful information into social networks when he highlights that 'those who are able to develop friendships and engage in social networks tend to acquire more vocabulary than those who do not' (2007: 143). As already noted, time spent talking to friends may be correlated to the conversational locus of learning and while access to friends and social networks may not be equal to all learners, it clearly indicates that SEs, particularly outside of the homestay situation, provide rich opportunities for exposure to the conversational locus of learning through an increase in access to social networks.

The correlation between increased social networks and increased exposure to the conversational

locus of learning corroborates the findings of an earlier study by Isabelli-Garcia (2006) study into motivation, social networks and attitude in an SA context. The study follows the experiences of 4 L1 English American students during a 5 month SA programme in Argentina. The study provides very interesting data, which although not elaborated on in the study, regarding quality and quantity of exchanges and thus loci of learning. The study shows that where social networks involving native speakers increase, the learners are 'exposed to more varied language models' (2006: 254). While, the study does not shed light on the nature of the linguistic models, it does clearly show that increased contact with NSs leads to a gain in the range of speech functions deployed by learners.

In light of the findings, it is possible to assert that the variation in language models equates with a variation in loci of learning. Therefore the greater the number of social networks the more opportunities to be exposed to both the conversational and the institutional loci. It is also shown that where social networks are small that the range of language models is limited. An example of this is the student Jennifer who had a very narrow range of social networks and as such her interactions 'may have consisted largely of short, formulaic exchanges…' (206: 253). In other words, low levels of contact lead to a predominately institutional locus of learning. This is in line with findings from an earlier study by Bayley into Chinese students in the USA, social networks and sociophonological competence.

> Speakers whose social networks are almost exclusively Chinese-speaking, however, seldom participate in informal English conversations. The limited native-speaker input they receive comes mainly in the relatively formal situation of the classroom. They have, therefore, very few opportunities to acquire the sociolinguistic norms that would result in the target-like variable phonological processes (1996.111)

From this, it is again clear that limited contact with native speakers results in an over exposure to the institutional locus of learning.

Hassall (2006) in a self reported study into the acquisition of pragmatic norms in Indonesia on a holiday-type sojourn reports 'chats', 'long conversations', 'social conversation' as being the norm. He defines 'social conversations' as including 'semi-social conversations that begin as service encounters and then turn into social chat. But it excludes purely transactional service encounters.' (2006: 58). This adds weight to the hypothesis that the predominant locus of learning where there is extensive contact with NSs tends to be the conversational locus. However, it is worth noting that many of the Hassall's 'chats' may be one off phenomenon insofar as they represent incidental

exchanges i.e. exchanges that are not planned and often with an unknown interlocutor, and, as a result, may not lead to an increase in social networks.

The apparent predominance of the conversational locus of learning experienced in an SE context may, on first sight seem positive; however, it is not unproblematic. Barron (2006) following Regan (1995) and Marriott (1995) raises the issue of exposure to only the informal register, or for the purposes of this study, to only the conversational locus (albeit that a conversational locus can be formal or informal) can lead to 'insufficient appropriate input in the L2 context, particularly in formal contexts'. Thus, the overexposure to one locus of learning – which may be found in an SE environment, may lead to asymmetrical linguistic gains. Therefore a balanced exposure to both institutional and conversational loci is optimal.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have deconstructed the often monolithic concept of learning context and shown that learning context can be operationalized on both a micro- and macro- level. The micro-level can exist on a number of levels and to categorise these levels, I have introduced the new terminology of LOCUS OF LEARNING. Due to the constraints of the parameters of the current study, only two interactional loci of learning have been considered – the institutional and the conversational. The institutional locus refers to such sites of learning where there is an asymmetrical balance of power, the roles/identities of the participants are fixed and the language is formulaic and predictable. On the other hand, the conversational locus seems to be defined as everything that the institutional is not. Power structures tend to be balanced, roles/identities fluid and the language less formulaic and predictable. Rather that considering exchanges to fall into either one category or the other; I have posited that the loci of learning form a continuum and that the majority of exchanges fall within the continuum.

I then turned to the macro-contexts. Once more the constraints of the current study have limited the discussion to two macro-contexts – the foreign language classroom and submersion experiences. The purpose of the discussion was not just to review the literature, but to re-view the literature – i.e. to look at it in a new light, to read between the lines in order to illuminate the predominant micro-contexts which exist within the macro-contexts.

A re-view of the literature has shown the predominance of the institutional locus of learning in the

FL context. However, that is not to say that it is they only locus available to FL learners. The conversational locus can be accessed through increased student to student discourse, one to one instructor to learner discourse and out of class exposure to the L2 where available.

The question of loci of learning is further problematicised in the SE context. A re-view the literature on discourse within a homestay context found that the issue of loci of learning was far from clear cut. While the homestay has the potential of offering increased exposure to the conversational locus of learning, depending on the understanding of the host, it may offer a locus which is closer to the institutional. It would be misleading, however, to assume that all homestays allowed access to only the institutional locus of learning. Homestay has the potential to provide a context rich in loci of learning. Exchanges can be co-constructed and cultural exchanges bi-directional and therefore a more symmetrical power structure. Given the correct understanding between host and guest the host family it can give rise to a conversational locus of learning.

A re-view of the literature into more general exposure to the language in an SE context is once more problematic. From that it may be summarised that more advanced learners have increased exposure to the conversational locus of learning and that contact with the conversational locus is more likely to happen outside of the homestay. However, predominance in the exposure to the conversational locus may not produce the desired linguistic gains. It may result in the acquisition of language which is sociolinguistically over-informal. One way of combating this problem could be to increase social networks.

Chapter 3

Language is Not an Abstract

Within this chapter, it is hoped to demonstrate the centrality of linguistic variation to a fuller understanding of language and second language acquisition. In order to accomplish this, I will first explore models or theories of language which have been instrumental in deconstructing a monolithic view of language, i.e. those theories/models which have broadened the concept of language to foreground a more social or context-dependent view and which highlight choice and variation as central to language. Following that, the focus will move to pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics in particular.

3.1 A Theoretical Overview

The view of language as a monolithic structure - i.e. a structure which is unchanging and the same for all users is one which dominated much early SLA research at least, and continues to do so in research in particular by those working within a UG. It supports a view of a deconcontextualised or abstract version of language which is concerned with and relates solely to what Cook (1994) refers to as 'core grammar'. However, the limitations of such an approach have been concisely summed up by Cook who asserts:

> UG only operates within a carefully circumscribed domain of core syntax. Its claims are less and less relevant as idiosyncratic peripheral syntax is involved and as components of language are concerned outside syntax. (1994:46)

Whether or not one agrees with Cook's references to 'idiosyncratic peripheral' syntax', the statement serves to highlight the inadequacies of accepting such a narrow definition of language as central to our understanding of language acquisition. What makes this acceptance of a narrow definition even more surprising is that the very concept of language as a monolith has been compellingly challenged from many quarters.

3.1.1 Heteroglossia

From a theoretical/philosophical view point, Bakhtin (1986) advocates a heterogeneous view of language which affords variation within language a prominent place. Bakhtin refers to this concept as 'heteroglossia'. Heteroglossia involves the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single language code. From a more global view point, this has been well documented in polycentric languages, for example differences between Hiberno-English and British English and likewise Canadian and metropolitan French. However, Bakhtin was referring to a more micro-level distinction of varieties – a stratification of many voices within that language code such as social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons and languages of generations and age groups. Or to put it another way, a single language code is stratified into an infinite number of discourse domains which allow speakers to 'be' and 'do' or to display a range of identities which are suited to the situation. Therefore, a single language code has the possibility to offer speakers a multitude of options from which they can make choices appropriate to the situation or to the identity they wish to enact. From the above, it can be clearly seen that language is not a monolith – rather, it is adaptive and evolves to suit the social situation and identity of the speaker. This concept of language has been adopted by many of those working from a more sociocultural framework.

3.1.2 Communicative Competence

Moving on from Bakhtin's more global outlook on language, I will now consider one of the most comprehensive theories put forth to challenge the hegemony of a monolithic view of language - the model of 'communicative competence' as presented by Dell Hymes (1974) The communicative competence model was a direct challenge to the universal grammar (UG) approach. Hymes compellingly extends our understanding of what may be considered 'core' or central to language. The aim of his work is to provide a taxonomy of sociolinguistic systems. He foregrounds communication as a shared social system, the patterns underlying which are determined by the participants. Thus, competence has moved from the knowledge of grammatical rules to the knowledge of how to engage in linguistic activity within a particular context. The rules of communication are not abstract, but constructed by the community itself.

Hymes aimed to provide a taxonomy or componential model to aid the analysis of speech. The

taxonomy is known by the mnemonic SPEAKING.

Table 3.1 provides an overview:

Table 3.1 – An overview of the SPEAKING model

Setting	Time, place and physical circumstances 'psychological setting or the cultural definition of an occasion' (Hymes, 1974: 55).
Participants	Not just those actively engaged in the communication such as the speaker or sender, but also hearer - i.e. a person to whom the speech is not directed, but nevertheless 'hears' it
End	Purposes/goals and purposes/outcomes, thus allowing for a mismatch between the intentions of the communication and the actual result
Act sequence	A blend of message form and message content
Key	The tone, manner or spirit in which an act is carried out
Instrumentality	The channel or medium of transfer of speech – written, spoken etc
Norms of interaction and interpretation	Different communities operate on different basis and that what is normative in one may not be normative in another
Genre	Style, register or variety of speech used.

The influence of Hymes's taxonomy on the understanding of language and language use cannot be underestimated. What he has done is to move the concept of language and language use away from the idea that language is a composition of morphosyntactic features that must be arranged in a certain way in order to achieve comprehension. Whilst morphosyntactic features retain importance, their influence is over-ridden by the components set out in his SPEAKING taxonomy. This model demonstrates the non-monolithic quality of language insofar as it is impossible to talk about a

single, unified version of a language, but rather an amalgamation of styles or registers or varieties of language which can be deployed according to the multiple demands of the context or identity of the speaker. Following Hymes, the definition of linguistic competence – previously synonymous with morphosyntactic competence broadened to become what is known as communicative competence. The model provides a macro-level overview of 'major groups of components' (Hymes. 1974: 63) which can be operationalised according to the demands of the society and situation. Additionally, Hymes highlights the dynamic nature of the components and their interrelationship.

Hugely indebted to the work carried out by Hymes is the model of communicative competence developed by Canale and Swain (1980, 1983). Their model evolved due to the need to develop a language testing scheme for learners of French. They needed a scheme with could measure knowledge of the language and proficiency in it. The recognition that 'there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar' (Canale and Swain, 1980: 5) led to the compilation of a four-point model for the assessment of knowledge and proficiency. Table 3.2 provides an overview.

Table 3.2

Grammatical competence	Phonology, vocabulary, word and sentence formation
Sociolinguistic competence	Knowledge of sociocultural rules of use Ability to handle settings, topics and communicative functions Appropriateness of grammatical forms in different sociolinguistic contexts
Discourse competence	Cohesion and coherence in different types of texts
Strategic competence	Compensatory strategies

While Canale and Swain are undoubtedly indebted to Hymes, there are of course significant differences. The most obvious is the purpose of the models. Hymes's taxonomy is designed to categorise the major components of communication; whereas the Canale and Swain model was to assess the performance of an individual according to components essential to successful communication. Hymes's model stresses the interplay between components and the ability of communities to prioritize certain components and omit others. On the other hand, the Canale and

Swain model has been criticised for being static (Bachman and Cohen, 1998) in that it overlooks interaction between the components. Finally with the Hymesian model, it is clear that communities and societies determine the normative patterns of communication. The patterns may have emerged organically with the users in a bidirectional manner to suit the needs of the users. However, with Canale and Swain, it is unclear who determines the patterns or how the patterns are determined.

Despite the differences, what both models bring is a view of language that is diverse – they recognise not only that variation exists, but that it is an essential component of a language. Language from both a theoretical and a pedagogical aspect has now become socially situated. The emphasis has changed from 'what is correct' to 'what is appropriate for the situation and speaker'. The concept of communicative competence occupies a prominent place in SLA studies today and has 'tended to underlie work on variation in L2 speech' (Regan *et al.* 2010: 9).

3.1.3 Functional Linguistics

Bakhtin, Hymes and Canale and Swain were not the only ones working on redefining the concept of language with the aim deconstructing the monolith and introducing a socially-situated variegated model. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (See Halliday, 1985) has also been pivotal in the situating of language in a socially sensitive environment. As acknowledged by Hymes, the SPEAKING model provides an overview on a macro-level of the interplay between context or setting and language use/development. The SFL model, on the other hand, provides a micro-level analysis of the relationship between various aspects of a language system and context.

The SFL approach, for example, advocates a social theoretical basis for the description of language. According to its principles, there are four strata of language: phonology, lexicogrammar, semantics and context. The first three are internal to the learner; while the fourth is external. Therefore if we adopt the view that language is a multi-stratal and interlinked system embedded in an external, social stratum, the reduction of language to a monolith, to 'a set of mandatory rules which must be followed mechanically.' (Hasan and Perret, 1994: 190) must surely be rejected.
By opening up the concept of language from one primarily concerned with a set of mandatory rules, the SFL model places the users of language at its core.

> what the field (applied linguistics) needs as its foundation is not a model of language as an autonomous system which is taken to evolve in isolation from

human interaction. (Hasan & Perret 1994:180).

Thus, the social aspect is at once essential and also integral to language. As can be clearly seen, SFL, in including 'peripheral' and 'idiosyncratic' aspects has indeed enlarged the ontological and empirical frameworks for the study of language. The SFL approach is characterised by its focus on choice and in a way not dissimilar to that of Hymes, foregrounds the paradigmatic axis as the organising principle of language thereby highlighting variety and heterogeneity.

From an SFL perspective, language is embedded in context which is in turn operationalised in three different domains: field, tenor and mode. In very basic terms the domains can refer to the 'what', the 'who' and the 'how' insofar as field concerns social processes and domains of subject matter; tenor the social roles and relations of the interactants and mode, the medium (spoken, written …), channel (phone, email, face to face) and its rhetorical contribution. Therefore, within each of the internal stratum, there exists choice on a paradigmatic level and this choice is predicated on context.

From the brief overview of three models of language which have proved particularly influential to more recent studies of SLA, it is clear that the hegemony of a monolithic language, a language consisting of a single set of rules to be activated in a single manner has been compellingly challenged. Language must be determined not only as socially situated but also as being choice driven. Language therefore cannot be comprised of rules which are categorized as constant and compulsory binary units referring to correct or incorrect, but rather as variants which may be deemed appropriate depending on both linguistic and social factors.

3.2 Pragmatics as a Central Component of Language

The previous discussion can lead to the conclusion that the social aspect of language or a link between language and its users is a recent area of research. In fact, it has been under investigation since at least the 1930s under the heading of pragmatics. However, this area has been deemed peripheral to a UG concept of language. The following section will demonstrate the centrality of pragmatics to any definition or understanding of language. The section will start with an overview of the definitions of Pragmatics

To begin with, the work of Morris (1938) will be considered. He understood pragmatics as concerning the relation of signs to their users and interpreters. By distinguishing this relationship

between user and interpreter he created a bilateral bond of responsibility to 1) convey a message and 2) comprehend the message. The onus of conveying is on the user and that of comprehending is on the interpreter. In such a definition, it is clear that the user and interpreter are required to play an active role in the exchange. The importance of interpretation or inference of an utterance was likewise noted much later by Mey when he rather poetically defined pragmatics 'as the art of the analysis of the unsaid' (Mey, 1991: 245), thereby placing the greater part of the burden on the interpreter. An analysis of the above definitions allows for the extractions of two components essential to the study of pragmatics 1) a user must make an utterance and 2) an interpreter must comprehend that utterance.

Later definitions which underpin the bilateral active role of both user and interpreter include that of Katz. He states that 'Pragmatic phenomena [are] those in which knowledge of the setting or context of the utterance plays a role in how utterances are understood'. (Katz, 1977:14) Through the use of the words 'uttered' and 'understood', he acknowledges the bidirectional responsibility between the user and the interpreter; however, Katz foregrounds an additional component - context or setting. Utterances cannot be interpreted if the context or setting is unknown or not apparent. The centrality of context or setting was likewise upheld by Fasold who, while seemingly ignoring the role of the user, maintains that pragmatics is 'the study of the use of context to make inferences about meaning' (Fasold, 1991: 119). Through an analysis of both definitions of pragmatics, an additional essential component to the study of pragmatics has been identified – context.

I will now proceed to yet another definition which identifies the fourth and final component necessary to study pragmatics. Bach introduces an important component when he describes pragmatics as 'the theory of language use' (Bach, 2004: 463). By introducing language use, the concept of language choice and constraints has also been raised. This is underpinned by Crystal who, in a definition of pragmatics makes reference to 'the choices they (users) make, the constraints they encounter' (Crystal, 1997: 301) and Christie who, likewise, alludes to 'the language choices the user makes' (Christie, 2000: 29). Therefore, the fourth component can be identified as language choice and constraints.

Notwithstanding differential definitions of pragmatics, from the point of view of this study, I will adopt a definition which incorporates what may be considered the four central tenets:

- Context/setting
- Speaker utterances

- Hearer interpretation
- Language choice/constraints

This approach has been aptly summed up by Celce-Murcia & Olshtain when they describe pragmatic competence as:

> A set of internalised rules of how to use language in socio-culturally appropriate ways , taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000: 19)

In addition, it is necessary to add that the four components are not 'stand-alone' components; rather together they form an interdependent model with each component influencing the others. The above provides a theoretical overview of the components essential to a study of pragmatics. Next I will demonstrate how this works in practice.

3.2.1 Mental Models

Green (2006) makes reference to the speaker's and addressee's 'mental models of each other' (Green, 2006: 408). This concept of 'mental models' can be equated to speaker utterance and hearer interpretation. That is to say that the user has a 'mental model' of her/his utterance and that the user likewise has a 'mental model' of that utterance. However, as Green shows pictorially, there is often a mismatch in those mental models. The following exchange is an example from naturalistic data in an Irish pub context which aptly illustrates a mismatch in user utterance and hearer interpretation or speaker and addressee 'mental models'.

A: Are you ok?
B: I'm fine thanks (smiling)

A walks away, the B looks puzzled
A few minutes later the A returns to the B

A: Are you ok?
B: YES. I'm fine (frowning slightly)

A walks away, the B looks angry
A few minutes later the A returns

A: ARE YOU OK? (exasperated)
B: YES, BUT CAN I HAVE TWO PINTS? (angrily)
(Data – researcher's own)

In order to understand why the above exchange ended negatively, it is necessary to analyse the exchange according to the four components laid out above i.e. user utterance, hearer interpretation, context/setting and language choice/constraints. In doing so, I will also address the issue of mental models.

First of all, I will turn to context or setting. The exchange takes place in a hotel bar in the south of Ireland. The context or setting is of extreme importance as it is the mitigating factor on the choice of language of 'A'. 'A' is an Irish worker in the bar and 'B' is an Australian tourist. It is important here to highlight the nationalities of the participants in order to illustrate that the mismatch does not occur because of any grammatical or semantic gap in knowledge which may occur between native speakers of different languages. Rather, it is clearly a pragmatic breakdown.

The next aspect to be considered is user utterance and hearer interpretation. They will be conflated as they represent a bidirectional component. The first utterance made by 'A' is interpreted by 'A' as synonymous with 'Can I help you'. However, it is not interpreted by 'B' as such. 'B' interprets it as a polite enquiry into her health and as such the mental modal 'B' has is of 'A' is of a friendly Irish bar worker who is as much interested in the client as s/he is in their custom.

In the next stage 'B' becomes the user. The response 'B' makes to the question is in line both with her mental model of 'A' and the interpretation of the original utterance. Based on the mental model and the interpretation, 'B' replies in what she considers to be an appropriate manner to an enquiry about health. 'A' now adopts the role of interpreter. For 'A', the utterance 'I'm fine, thanks' translates into 'I do not want anything at the bar'. This interpretation is heavily context dependant and relies on the mental model that 'A' holds of her/himself as a service provider. This prompts 'A' to walk away due to the fact that the mental model of 'B' as a potential customer has changed. 'B' is no longer perceived as a customer. From the perspective of 'B', the mental model of a friendly Irish service provider has been diminished and replaced by a mental model of a worker displaying

strange behaviour as the enquiry about health is not followed up with the expected offer to provide a service. The exchange continues thus with neither interpretation nor utterances changing significantly. However, considerable changes in mental models are noted with 'A' becoming a rude and possibly discriminatory service provider and 'B' a mean tourist who does not wish to spend money but expects to avail of the facilities of the bar for free.

At this point, I will consider language choice/constraints. In order to offer service, as a native English speaker, 'A' has a number of choices. Possibilities include, 'Can I help you?', 'Would you like something from the bar?' or perhaps, 'Are you ready to order?' While these choices are available in principle, in reality, the number of choices is constrained by the context/setting. Therefore the language available for use is dependent on two variables in this case – Ireland and the pub. Work on pragmatics within polycentric languages (see Schneider & Barron (2008) for an in depth discussion) clearly indicates differences in pragmatic norms across geographical locations. As a consequence, the full range of variants is not available to all speakers of English. The second contextual/situational variable is the pub. Within that context, it is the primary task of the worker to take and deliver orders and in southern –Hiberno-English the most common way of doing so is the utterance 'Are you ok?' Of course, a caveat must be added. Even within Hiberno-English and the Irish pub context, 'Are you ok?' could have multiple meanings. However, the issue discussed above pertained clearly pertained to an offer of service.

The mismatch in mental models or user utterance/ hearer interpretation remains in place. What is of interest though is that the user does not change utterance. On the other hand, the hearer seems to become exasperated by the constant inquiries into her health and as a consequence requests service. Another way of referring to the above mismatch is in terms of a difference in locution and illocution. And this leads us to a discussion of speech act theory.

3.3 Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory is perhaps the most widely known tool in discourse analysis and pragmatics. It explores the concepts, not of what language is, but of what is done with language during interaction and how it is done. Central to the theory are the concepts of directness, indirectness and literal and intended meaning.

In order to describe what is done with language, Austin (1962), proposed a binary distinction

between ‘performatives’ and ‘constatives’. Performatives describe the type of speech act intended to complete an action – where the ‘saying’ and the ‘doing’ are conflated. The utterances should include the first person pronoun and should be uttered in a valid context and by a valid speaker and be recognised as such by the listeners. Well-cited examples of this include the highly institutionalised ‘I hereby christen this ship …’ and ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’ as well as less institutionalised, ‘I apologise’. In such examples the act of saying also completes the act of doing provided the conditions regarding context, speaker and listeners are met. Therefore by making an utterance you are not just describing an event, but enacting an event.

In contrast to performatives, Austin introduced constatives. Constatives are defined as ‘employed mainly for saying something rather than doing something’ (Sadock, 2006: 54) and are considered to have a truth value insofar as they can be analysed as either true or false. However, the binary nature of the performative/constative distinction proved problematic to Austin, and as argued by Sadock, ‘it is a distinction that Austin argued was **not** ultimately defensible. The point […] was, in fact, that every normal utterance has **both** a descriptive and effective aspect: that saying something is also doing’ (Sadock, 2006: 54). Therefore every speech act performs an act.

In place of the initially flawed distinction between performatives and constatives, Austin proposed a revised theory which provided a three-way distinction between acts used in any utterance. These are:

Table 3.3

Locutionary Act	The actual utterance – i.e. the physical act of constructing the utterance and the meaning as determined by the rules of the language
Illocutionary Act	The intended meaning of the utterance
Perlocutionary Act	The effect of the locution and illocution

As an illustration of how this functions, the example of the bar worker and the tourist will be once again considered.

The locutionary act is the uttering of the words ‘Are you ok?’ In the mind of the bar worker the

utterance has the illocutionary force of offering a service. The perlocutionary act, therefore, is to remind the customer of the need to place an order. The three stages can be seen clearly in table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Locutionary Act	Are you ok?
Illocutionary Act	I'm offering to take your order
Perlocutionary Act	I'm reminding you that it is necessary to buy something

However, as has already been discussed, there was a breakdown in communication due to a mismatch in what the speaker thought he said and in what the hearer understood. The breakdown occurred during the illocutionary act. While both participants are aware of the actual meaning of the individual words employed in the locutionary act, they were interpreted differentially by both participants – i.e. the intent or illocutionary force of the act was not perceived by the hearer which in turn led to a failure in achieving the perlocutionary act. Austin afforded illocutionary acts a pivotal role within speech act theory and as a result they tend to be the focus of analysis. The above example illustrates their centrality. If the illocutionary force of the utterance is not comprehended by the hearer, then the act may fail.

The success (or lack of) an utterance performing a speech act was addressed by Searle (1969). While focusing primarily on propositional acts, Searle contested that each act consisted of a proposition and an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) and in order for the acts to be successful, they must adhere to four conditions which he refers to as 'Felicity Conditions'.

3.3.1 Felicity Conditions

Searle proposed four felicity conditions. They are: propositional, preparatory, sincerity and essential. If we take the speech act of offering to take an order as an example, table 3.5 provides an overview of how the conditions are operationalised.

Table 3.5

Conditions	Offering to take an order

Propositional	The hearer will place an order for drinks
Preparatory	The speaker has the authority to make the offer The hearer is able to place an order The hearer could not place the order without the offer
Sincerity	The speaker wants the hearer to place an order
Essential	The utterance counts as an attempt to offer to take the offer

The propositional condition relates to the future act of placing an order to be enacted by the hearer. It is expected that the hearer will place an order for drinks as s/he is standing at the counter of the bar. The preparatory conditions ensure that the speaker has the right to make the offer and the supposition that the hearer would be able to place the order and would not do so without being asked. The speaker is an employee at the bar and the speaker has adopted the position of a customer. In order to place an order, the customer has to go through the employee. The sincerity condition implies that the speaker is genuine in her offer to take the order and wants the hearer to place the order. It is the employee's job to take orders and it is also in her interest to ensure as much business as possible. The essential condition states that 'an utterance must count as performing a particular speech act'. (O'Keeffe *et al*...: 2011: 86). In other words, the actual words must be uttered according to mutually accepted conventions. As Searle notes, 'speaking a language is performing acts according to rules' (Searle, 1969: 36-7). In this case, the rules or conventions are not mutually accepted. The hearer does not perceive 'Are you ok?' as counting as an attempt to offer to take an order and as a consequence the utterance can not count as performing the act. Although conforming to the first three conditions, the speech act failed to conform to the final condition and therefore the act was unsuccessful.

Based on the patterns of felicity acts, Seale was able to provide a taxonomy of speech acts in which he proposes the following classifications: Table 3.6

Table 3.6

Classification	Definition	Example
Representatives	Truth propositions	I conclude that …

Directives	Attempts to provoke a response from the hearer	Can you pass me the salt?, Did you enjoy your holiday?
Commissives	Commitment to a future course of action	I promise I'll be there If you do that again, I'll tell your mother
Expressives	Expression of a psychological state	I apologise for that Congratulations on the birth of your son
Declarations	Cause of immediate change in institutional affairs	I sentence you to 6 years in prison I baptise you in the name of the father …

3.3.2 Directness and Indirectness

In addition to classifying the speech acts, Searle distinguished between those acts where the effects produced are governed by the rules underlying the IFID (illocutionary force indicating device) and those in which the effects 'are achieved indirectly as by-products of the total speech act' (Sadock, 1984: 68). The former can be referred to as direct speech acts and the latter as indirect. Indirect speech acts are generally those where 'the illocutionary force is in line with the linguistic form' (O'Keeffe *et al.*., 2011: 87). An example of this could be' 'Pass me the salt'. The linguistic form constitutes an imperative and the illocutionary form is a command. Both illocutionary force and linguistic form complement each other and no mismatch occurs. Ambiguity can occur when there is non-alignment between the linguistic form and the illocutionary force as was demonstrated earlier with the example of 'Are you ok?' This happens when the 'essential' condition is not met. Another example could be 'You wouldn't pass the salt'. Both are examples of indirect speech acts. With the latter, the linguistic form could suggest an accusation regarding a refusal by the hearer to carry out the act on a past occasion; however, the illocutionary force is that of a request to pass the salt. Therefore there is a possibility of a mismatch and an onus on the hearer to disambiguate the utterance.

Summary

The above provides a brief overview of Speech Act theory. While it constitutes a powerful and perhaps the most-used analytical tool within pragmatic research, it is not unproblematic. To begin with, many of the terms are unclear and give rise to considerable overlap. (See Sadock, 2006 for a discussion on the difficulties of distinguishing between locution, illocution and perlocution, for example). Also a focus on what may be considered a decontextualised speech act may not be

sufficient. After all, speech acts occur within a discourse or speech event, which in turn occurs within a speech situation. According to Hymes (1974), a speech act is the smallest unit within a speech situation. A speech situation is made up of the speech situation, the speech event and then the speech act. An example provided by Hymes is:

Speech situation	party
Speech event	conversation
Speech Act	joke

(Hymes, 1974: 52)

Therefore to fully understand a speech act, it must be considered as the smallest unit in a larger discourse which comprises not only the discourse but knowledge of the participants and the context.

The above discussion focused on theoretical definitions of pragmatics and tools with which to analysis pragmatic features. I will now turn the discussion towards interlanguage pragmatics (ILP).

3.4 Pragmatic Competence

In order to have pragmatic competence, both Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) have argued for competence in two strands of pragmatics – pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to form-function mapping i.e. the match between the linguistic element and its ability to perform a speech act. For example, 'you wouldn't + VP' can be used as an accusation or a request. For example, 'You wouldn't pass the salt' could equally be an accusation of the failure to 'pass the salt' on an earlier occasion, or, alternatively, a request to pass the salt. Therefore if a learner has pragmalinguistic competence, she has the knowledge of the use of 'you wouldn't' for one or both of the aforementioned speech acts. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is concerned with the mapping of the form/function paradigm to an appropriate social context.

In order to exemplify the differences between pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics, the speech act of requesting will be considered. Two exponents will be looked at:

- I wonder if you would be so kind as to close the window
- Close the window there, would you?

Both examples are pragmalinguistically correct insofar as both 'I wonder if you would be so kind as to + VP' and an imperative + tag question can both be used realise the speech act of request. However, they are not interchangeable. 'I wonder if you would be so kind as to close the window' is used in very formal situations, possibly with an unknown – or socially distant – interlocutor; whereas, 'close the window would you?' is more likely to be used in an informal situation with a socially-close interlocutor. This knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the socially appropriate use of pragmalinguistic forms is known as sociopragmatic competence.

3.5 Pragmatics in Second Language Acquisition

The investigation of pragmatics in SLA research is a relatively new field. It does not have such a long history of research as morphology or syntax for example. However, the field has produced a rich and diverse literature which 'takes more than the average persistence to stay on top of' (Kasper and Rose, 2002: 1). Areas investigated range from the development of pragmatic fluency (House, 1996; Baron and Celaya, 2010), development in the metapragmatic awareness of terms of address (Kinginger & Farrell; 2004,; DuFon 1990; Barron, 2006) to the acquisition of response tokens (Ohta, 2001). Generally the research falls into two distinct categories – developmental pragmatics and pragmatics in use. Pragmatics in use refers to 'how L2 learners comprehend and produce action in a target language' (Kasper and Rose, 2002: 5) and the developmental strand investigates learning or 'how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language' (Kasper and Rose, 2002: 5). This distinction is useful as it allows researchers to differentiate between studies which seem to focus on comparative pragmatics, i.e. the difference in use of primarily pragmalinguistic functions in the L1 and an L2 and those studies which seek to illuminate interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), i.e. the process of acquiring appropriate pragmalinguistic forms and the sociopragmatic use of such forms.

The next section is concerned with those studies which provide evidence of a developmental order in the acquisition of pragmalinguistic functions. This applies to the acquisition of those aspects of language which allow learners to carry out speech acts successfully.

3.5.1 The Acquisition of Pragmalinguistic Features as a Systematic Process

Mitigation/downgrading

Before addressing specific speech acts, I will consider the acquisition of a function common to

many speech acts –mitigation or downgrading. Mitigation or downgrading 'can involve the use of politeness markers […] to reduce the 'force' of an utterance.' (O'Keeffe *et al..,* 2011: 68). Politeness markers can be lexical or syntactic in nature. Lexical markers include such items as terms of address (Mr, Ms or vous/tu), adverbs like 'maybe' or parenthicals, for example, 'I think'. Syntactic downgraders or mitigators often refer to the use of modality. Modality can be employed to 'soften' the illocutionary force of a speech act. For example, a command such as 'Open the window' can be rendered much less face threatening by the addition of an epistemic modal and thus downgraded from a command to a request in the following manner:

Open the window! → Could you open the window?

The addition of 'could' significantly downgrades the command and renders it a face keeping act rather than a face threatening act. Thus modality plays a central role in the downgrading or mitigating of speech acts and it is unsurprising that the focus on the emergence of modality is prominent in ILP studies.

Studies dealing with the acquisition of downgraders and mitigation are varied and cover a range of L1s and L2s. Despite this wide-ranging nature of the research, results have proved remarkably uniform in their findings. One of the first studies conducted was by Kasper (1981). The study looked at the acquisition of mitigation strategies by German learners of English and notes that the preferred method of downgrading, was not by means of syntactic mitigation, i.e. modality, but rather through the use of lexical downgraders. Data analysis shows an over-use of the epistemic parenthicals, 'I think'. When considered in isolation, the results, while interesting, provide no real insight into the development of mitigation/downgrading. The fact that German L1 speakers show a dispreference towards syntactic mitigation/downgrading in English L2 may be a result of cross-linguistic differences; however, the results have proven considerably more relevant to the development of mitigation/downgrading. When taken in conjunction with results from studies involving other L1s, a convincing pattern emerges. Research conducted by LoCastro & Netsu (1997) into the strategies employed by Japanese learners of English again show a strong preference towards lexical downgraders in the form of the epistemic parenthical, 'I think'. Likewise, Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig (2000/2001) in a study of Spanish L1 speakers of English indicate 'even learners with grammaticalized expressions of modality rely on heavily lexical forms to unambiguously mark their pragmatic intent' (Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2000:79). The parity of results for German, Japanese and Spanish learners lends to the conclusion that the results are neither coincidental nor irrelevant. In fact, the relevance was further underpinned by a study conducted by Karkkainen (1997) into Finnish L1 speakers. This study not only confirms the findings, i.e. that learners show a

preference for parenthicals as downgraders but also indicates a development. With increasing proficiency levels, learners display a shift in the form of lexical marker used – i.e. a shift away from parenthicals towards adverbial markers such as 'maybe'. This shift is highly significant and demonstrates the beginning of what may result in an order or developmental sequence in the acquisition of mitigation/downgrading. The process may, in fact be systematic.

Karkkainen's results indicate the beginnings of a developmental sequence in the acquisition of mitigation/downgrading markers. A distinctive pattern is beginning to emerge. This is further developed by considering a study into higher proficiency Japanese EFL learners. Hill (1997) records not only the presence of lexical markers, but also a high level of syntactic markers realised through modality in the discourse of the learners. Hill also evidences the use, albeit extremely limited, of bi-clausals such as 'I wonder if you could …' and much less frequently the use of aspect to mitigate, for example the 'I wonder/was wondering …' dichotomy. These findings indicate proficiency-level-related broadening of the linguistic repertoire for the function of mitigation/downgrading. The findings are in line with the results of studies carried out by Barron (2003) into English L1 speakers' acquisition of German L2 pragmatics and Schauer (2004/2006) into German L1 speakers' acquisition of English pragmatics. Both studies highlight an increase in the linguistic repertoire for mitigation/downgrading across time (and presumably proficiency level) in study abroad contexts. When coupled with the findings of Rost & Roth (1999) into naturalistic acquisition of German, they note an increase in syntactic downgraders in higher proficiency-level speakers which suggests that modality as a mitigator is late acquired. These results represent a further development in the premise that acquisition patterns exist, and that they progress in a systematic way.

Based on the above evidence, the underlying pattern, therefore, seems to be from lexical downgraders to internal syntactic mitigation to complex mitigation. This is underpinned by Takahashi (2001) who likewise noticed the late acquisition of complex modality. An acquisitional pattern could therefore be:

Lexical downgraders (parenthicals, adverbs) → Syntactic mitigation (modality) → complex mitigation (bi-clauses, aspect)

This is a pattern that appears to take place across time and proficiency levels and has partially been explained by Kasper and Rose (2002) in terms of ease of processing costs insofar as the use of adverbs and parentheticals - i.e. lexical downgraders require low levels of processing costs whereas internal, syntactic mitigation (modality, bi-clauses and aspect) requires higher processing costs.

Therefore it may be easier and more efficient for the learner to use lexical downgraders especially at a lower proficiency level.

Since studies into higher proficiency level learners such as those by Hill (1997), Barron (2003), Nguyen (2008a) and Schauer (2006) indicate the presence of multiple forms of mitigation/downgrading in the discourse of learners, it may be stated that the acquisitional pattern of such features is cumulative in nature. That is to say, the acquisition of a new form into the linguistic repertoire in no way serves to expel earlier acquired forms from the repertoire. All forms can be used and in fact are used variably in discourse. The fact that they may be acquired in a systematic pattern does not necessarily mean that a new form will supersede an older form in terms of frequency of use. In addition, the presence of such forms does not imply that they are used in a way that reflects NS like form-function mapping, nor do they necessarily reflect NS-like frequency of use. The acquisitional patterns only attest to the order in which they appear in the discourse, they cannot give a representation of the context or frequency of use.

It is interesting to compare the above with the acquisitional patterns regarding the emergence of modality as proposed by Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig (2000/ 2001). Having documented the appearance of context-free modal forms in the discourse of beginner learners, the researchers were able to propose the following acquisitional pattern for the emergence of modality:

Maybe → think→ can→ will→ would→ could

While not completely in accordance with the acquisitional pattern for downgraders/mitigators (re: 'I think' emerges before 'maybe'), the general premise seems to hold true – lexis precedes syntax in the expression of mitigation/downgrading and modality. As with the acquisitional pattern for mitigation/downgrading, Salisbury and Bardovi-Harlig likewise stress that although the forms are present in discourse, they do not necessarily fulfil the function of mitigation. As a result, it is possible to assert that acquisition of a form precedes acquisition of the full range of functions. Therefore, forms of modality may be present in the discourse long before they emerge as mitigators.

Moving on from the acquisition of downgrading/mitigation, I turn to proposed patterns of acquisition for terms of address, response tokens and pragmatic particles before looking at requests.

Terms of Address, Response Tokens and Pragmatic Particles

When researching the acquisition of Indonesian address terms and negation, DuFon (1990/2000)

proposed a three-stage acquisitional pattern which may be in use when the learner has the choice of two or more forms. It involves starting off with the use of one form in all possible occasions. At this stage, the learner does not differentiate according to linguistic context or illocutionary force. The next stage allows alternate forms to enter the discourse. However, the learner does not seem to be able to distinguish between the functions of each form and, as a consequence, uses the terms interchangeably. This is followed by the appropriate, if approximate, use of all forms. This constitutes the final stage when the learner is aware of the difference in form-function mapping and the use approximates native speaker norms. (See table 3.7)

Table 3.7

Stage 1	Use of one form only
Stage 2	Variable use of available forms
Stage 3	Appropriate use of all forms

Stage 2 is described by Pearson (2006) in a study that looks at the use of pronouns in formal and informal commands and requests in L2 Spanish. The Spanish language expresses formality/informality through the differential use of pronouns. The researcher notes the presence of both formal and informal forms; however, they are found to be used interchangeably in the discourse of learners. That is to say, that the formal was variably used when addressing close friends and the informal to address professors and strangers. Although Pearson uses the findings to come out in favour of the 'pragmatics preceding grammar' paradigm, it sheds some light on acquisitional features. It can be seen that both the formal and the informal forms have been acquired; however, the forms have not yet been successfully mapped to their functions. The performance data from the aforementioned studies is supported by awareness studies such as that by Kinginger & Farrell (2000).

In their study into meta-pragmatic awareness of address terms in L2 French, Kinginger & Farrell explore developments in the awareness of the functions of such forms. Although the study is primarily a Study Abroad paper, it nevertheless illuminates factors such as socialization and implicit and declarative memory which the authors deem necessary for the progress between the stages of development. Of particular interest is moving to stage 3, i.e. the appropriate use of terms.

Kinginger and Farrell add an extra dimension by demonstrating that non-native-like use of terms may not be solely caused by incomplete form-function matching, but rather by 'learners' reluctance to frame themselves as legitimate users of informal variants of second languages' (Kinginger & Farrell, 2000: 37). This study shows that, while the developmental sequence remains the same, the underlying features determining progress from one stage to another are varied and very significantly, it demonstrates the complex interplay between language acquisition, learning context and learner identity.

Address terms are not the only other feature to be investigated from the point of view of developmental patterns. Patterns have also been found in the acquisition of response tokens – minimal lexical responses which indicate a listener's active in engagement in the interaction (Ohta, 2001) and epistemic/affective particles (lexical tokens particular to Japanese which show an emotional response) (Sawyer, 1992) in Japanese L2. Ohta proposed a pattern that ranged from zero marking of response tokens insofar as the learner did not verbally respond to utterances. This progresses to a minimal response when prompted by the teacher. After that, the use of one token was noted; however, the use was unprompted insofar as it appeared in the discourse naturally. The final stage exhibited the spontaneous use of a number of tokens.

Developmental patterns were also discerned by Sawyer (1992) in the acquisition of the honorific particle 'ne' in Japanese L2. The 'ne' particle is multifunctional in that it can display both epistemic and affective properties and is particularly problematic for learners of Japanese. The pattern as discerned by Sawyer went from zero marking, i.e. non-use of the particle to a highly formulaic use of the particle to indicate epistemic modality and finally culminating in the non-formulaic use displaying both functions of the particle. Bardovi-Harlig (2009) similarly concluded that multifunctionality is late acquired.

Requests

Requests have been the focus for a large number of studies (Code and Anderson, 2001, Achiba, 2002, Barron, 2003, Carrell, 1981, Cohen & Shively, 2007, Ellis, 1992, Hill, 1997, Kim, 2000, Owen, 2001, Pearson, 2006, Rodrıguez, 2001, Rose, 2000, Soler, 2008, Trosborg, 1995) and amongst those researchers concerned with developmental patterns, there seems to be an agreement in the progress from direct requests to indirect means of producing the speech act. The progress involved in the shift from highly formulaic uses of pragmatic markers to an 'unpacked' marker has been most comprehensibly explored in studies into the speech act of requests. Based on longitudinal studies conducted by Ellis (1992) and Achiba (2002), Kasper & Rose (2002) were able to produce a highly comprehensive and compelling developmental pattern for the acquisition of

request strategies.

Ellis (1992) investigated the acquisition of requests in two primary school children in an ESL context. The study led to the identification of three phases. They are: 1) the highly context dependent utterance. This is often holophrastic in nature and includes can include utterances such as 'Sir' or 'Pencil'. The next stage represents a move from what may be termed 'pre-basic' stage according to functional linguistic theory in that:

- They are lexical; they mainly consist of bare nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbials, and a few particles
- There is no functional inflection
- They are heavily context dependent

(Kasper & Rose, 2002: 172)

The second stage leads to the acquisition of unanalysed routines or imperatives such as 'Can I have pencil?' or 'Can I have toilet?', for example. The formula 'can I have' has been acquired and the function 'request' mapped to it; however, it has not yet been 'unpacked'. It could be said that it has been acquired as a single lexical item and applied to all cases regardless of linguistic appropriacy. By the third stage, the formula has been 'unpacked' and can now be used in linguistically appropriate contexts. Therefore 'Can' is applied to 'Can I' or 'Can you' for example and this is followed by a range of verb phrases. This 'unpacked' use of request strategies is known as conventional indirectness. A brief overview of Ellis's developmental patterns is displayed in table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Stage	Example
Highly context dependant/often holophrastic	Pencil Toilet
Unanalyzed routines/imperatives	Can I have pencil? Can I have toilet?
Unpacking of routines (conventional indirectness)	Can you give me a pencil? Can I go to the toilet?

The model was expanded by Achiba (2002) in the documentation of the acquisition of request strategies in the researcher's child. Achiba posits four strategies, two of which overlap with those of Ellis. Achiba starts the alternative categorization of stages at Ellis's stage 2, that is with unanalysed routines and her second stage correlates to Ellis's stage 3 – the unpacking of routines. Achiba was able to provide two further stages, presumably because the informant made more progress than the informants of Ellis. The stages added refer to a shift in modality and finally, the fine tuning of the force of requests.

Kasper and Rose (2002) conflated the stages developed by Achiba (2002) and Ellis (1992) and proposed a five-stage process for pragmatic development in L2 requests:

1. Prebasic (dependent on context, without syntax or relational goals)

2. Formulaic (unanalyzed formulas and imperatives)

3. Unpacking (formulas in productive language use and shift to conventional indirectness)

4. Pragmatic expansion (addition of new forms to pragmalinguistic repertoire, increased mitigation, and more complex syntax)

5. Fine-tuning (regulation of requestive force to reflect participants, goals, and contexts)

When this evidence is considered together with the developmental patterns found in the acquisition of downgrading/mitigation, modality, the acquisition of address terms and discrete items such as the 'ne' particle in Japanese, it provides highly-compelling evidence that pragmalinguistic features are acquired in a strongly systematic manner. Learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds display the same patterns. This leads to the conclusion, that cognitive features are operationalised in the acquisition of pragmalinguistic aspects of the linguistic repertoire. However, it must be highlighted that, especially in the case of downgrading/mitigation, modality and requests, that acquisition is cumulative– the appearance of a new form in the discourse in no way serves to displace a more established form. If we take the example of modality, the acquisition of 'could' does not serve to remove 'can' from the linguistic repertoire. Both forms co-exist. The linguistic repertoire is broadened and the choice of forms available to the learner to express modality has expanded. Additionally, the acquisition of syntactic forms as a means of downgrading/mitigation does not lead to the elimination of lexical downgraders in discourse. It is additional to lexical downgraders. The same holds true for requests. Although it may seem desirable to replace the holophrase as a request with something much more fine-tuned reflecting the context and interlocutor, the holophrase, nevertheless, is a useful and used tool in the linguistic repertoire. An example, albeit highly

specialised, would be of the surgeon in the operating theatre making holophrastic requests such as 'Scalpel'. In such cases a finely-tuned request reflecting the status of the interlocutor may give rise to fatal consequences!

Therefore to reiterate, the acquisition of subsequent forms and strategies does not suggest that later acquired forms replace the already established forms. On the contrary, they supplement existing forms and by doing so expand the linguistic repertoire of the learner. However, this comes with a caveat. It would be misleading to correlate the acquisition of new forms with the appropriacy and frequency of use of forms. The above discussion serves solely to explicate the acquisition process and to demonstrate the systematic nature of the acquisition of pragmalinguistic forms. There is compelling evidence that the forms appear in the linguistic repertoire in a predictable manner; however the frequency and appropriacy of use of the forms is significantly more problematic.

3.5.2 Use of Pragmalinguistic Features in Discourse

As mentioned previously, the use of pragmalinguistic features has proven much more problematic than their acquisition. Although there may be evidence of the acquisition of certain pragmalinguistic forms, the frequency and appropriacy of use the forms is seemingly much less predictable. Two main issues have arisen, namely:

1. Over-use of a particular form - (Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, Owen, 2001, LoCastro & Netsu, 1997, Kasper, 1981, Karkkainen 1997, Hill, 1997, Nguyen, 2008a).

2. Non-target like use - (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991, Barron, 2003/2006, Davis, 2007, Hill, 1997, Kondo, 1997, Matsumura, 2001, Owen, 2001, Pearson, 2006, Schauer, 2006, Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, Yu, 2004).

Over-use of a Particular Form

Imbalance in the use of forms in relation to other forms which are minimally used is an issue that has been extensively documented. In particular, the over-use of lexical downgraders as the preferred method of mitigation has been noted as a feature of interlanguage pragmatics. As previously discussed this can be attributed to developmental issues insofar as lexical downgraders are acquired prior to syntactic mitigation. Therefore it does not seem unusual in the discourse of lower-proficiency level learners. In fact it is expected. However, Nguyen (2008a) noted it as a

feature in the discourse of high-proficiency level learners in relation to downgrading criticisms. Nguyen explains this phenomenon in terms of developmental issues, relating the low level of syntactic mitigation to processing costs and states 'adding internal modifiers may increase the structural complexity of the speech act, thus requiring more processing effort on the part of learners.' (2008a: 769). This assertion that high-proficiency learners have difficulties with the processing costs of internal mitigation may be open to debate. The preceding evidential material indicating progress from the acquisition of lexical downgraders to syntactic mitigation would presuppose that high-proficiency level learners have acquired syntactic mitigation and therefore the processing costs should be quite low. If the informants are truly high-proficiency level learners (there is no reason to doubt this), then presumably they are cognizant of the multifunctionality of modal forms – increasing awareness of multifunctionality is a feature of higher-proficiency levels (see Bardovi-Harlig 2009) – then their over-use of seemingly simpler forms may not be developmental in nature, nor due to the high-processing costs involved in the production of such. In fact, Salisbury and Bardovi-Harlig recognize that, 'even learners with grammaticalised expressions of modality rely heavily on lexical forms to unambiguously mark their pragmatic intent' (Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2000: 75). Although Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig were making references to a possible non-mapping of form-function insofar as the informants may have the modality forms but may not have processed the mitigating function of modality, it also foregrounds the non-use of acquired forms and an over-reliance on certain forms.

However, as the over-used form is not confined to early acquired forms and not just manifest in the discourse of low-proficiency level learners, it may be assumed that the reasons for an imbalance in the use of certain forms are multiple. Various researchers suggest a myriad of possible and plausible explanations as table 3.9 demonstrates.

Table 3.9

Reason for imbalance	Explanation
Developmental	Learners are lower-level and have either not yet acquires the necessary for or else have not processed the multifunctionality of previously acquired forms
Transfer	Learners displaying what they can do with language. Found in the discourse of highly-proficient learners
Materials/instruction induced	The input available to learners favours one pragmatic form over

	others and this is reflected in use
Learner preference	Learners may be aware of a multiplicity of forms, but may have an individual preference for just one.

Transfer has been mooted as a possible cause of the over-use of certain forms. Hill (1997) found that the higher-proficiency learners tended toward complex structures such as 'If you don't mind …' when making requests. He posited that the use of such structures could be explained as a display of what learners can do in the L2. The learners are, in essence, showing off their linguistic prowess by directly transferring a sophisticated phrase from their L1 Japanese into L2 English.

In a similar vein, Saito & Beecken (1997) likewise moot transfer as a possible explanation for an imbalance in frequency of use of certain tokens when responding to compliments. However, transfer was found to be not the only possible cause - teaching materials and instruction (or teacher input) were deemed causal factors in the overuse of a single token. The introduction of a more socio-based explanation for the imbalance of use adds another dimension to the discussion. The nature of language contact gains credibility and the role of learning context can also be analysed as a factor. The researchers suggest that the response tokens found in the discourse of the learners was very much a reflection of the teaching materials insofar as the use of tokens is greatly influenced by the frequency in which they appear in the available input. In short, if learners' exposure to speech acts is limited to a single text book or a small range of input materials, then this may result in the overuse of certain tokens.

The final possible cause presented above, i.e. learner preference adds to the multi-dimensional explanation of the phenomenon of imbalance of use. Schauer (2006) and Davis (2007) both bring attention to a more affective or psychological explanation – that is individual preference and by extension identity. Learners may simply show a preference for one form over another and this in turn could lead to an imbalance in the frequency of use of one form.

The above discussion demonstrates the complex nature underlying an imbalance in the frequency of use of pragmalinguistic forms. It would be over-simplistic to suggest that such an imbalance is solely a feature of lower-proficiency level discourse or that the cause is solely cognitive/developmental in nature. While a cognitive/developmental explanation is often relevant, a socio-psychological explanation may also help illuminate the phenomenon. However, it is important to highlight that it is not useful to discuss cognitive/socio-psychological as binary distinctions, but rather to consider them as complementary. The explanation for an imbalance may

be a conflation of cognitive and socio-psychological factors.

Non-target like use of Pragmatic Features in Discourse

When non-target like use is considered, it can be seen that there is often significant overlap in the explanations for overuse and non-target like use of pragmatic forms. There is no doubt that proficiency level, transfer, teaching materials and individual preference can and do lead to non-target like use of pragmatic forms; however, both phenomena are distinct. The overuse of a particular pragmalinguistic feature may not, in fact, deviate from NS norms. Quite the opposite, it may perfectly reflect NS patterns in a certain age, class, geographical, for example, range. Non-target–like use, on the other hand, refers to deviations in the patterns between NSs and NNSs and may include over-use of a single feature as an example.

Non-target like use is not always easy to identify. Hill (1997) compellingly argues that while learners move toward indirectness in the realisation of requests – i.e. while they seem to be moving towards NS norms, when the sub-strategies employed are investigated, it is obvious that the learners are not approximating NS norms. An investigation of the sub-strategies in advanced learners indicates high levels of negative transfer. For example, Hill demonstrated a strong avoidance of lexical downgraders in his informants. This, contrary to what may be expected, deviated from the NS baseline data in Hill's study which actually showed a preference for lexical downgrading as opposed to syntactic mitigation.

This phenomenon of 'complexification' has also been given significant consideration by Takahashi & Beebe (1987). The authors note that superior grammatical knowledge can lead to a distancing from L2 pragmatic norms. In other words, the greater the ability a learner has to express exactly what they wish to say pragmatically, then the greater the deviation from NS pragmatic norms. With increased linguistic means in the form of complex syntax available for use in discourse can arise the realizing of utterances which deviate from NS norms. The learner tends to display a preference for realizing the breadth of the linguistic repertoire regardless of whether it violates pragmatic norms. A similar phenomenon was noted by Edmondson & House (1991) and termed the 'waffling effect'. It refers to the phenomenon when learners say much more than is necessary and seem to use each occasion for speaking as an opportunity to show off their linguistic repertoire. Again, this was found in advanced level students.

However, there is one factor that is often cited as influential in the approximation of native-like

norms and that is learning context and more specifically study abroad (SA) or submersion context. Studies into the role of learning context and the acquisition of native-speaker like pragmatic features have been carried out by Barron 2003/2006, Matsumura, 2001/2003, Owen, 2001, Schauer, 2006, Hoffman-Hicks, 1992, Kinginger and Belz, 2005, Kinginger and Blatter , 2008, Kinginger and Farrell, 2000, Kinginger and Farrell, 2004, Rodriguez, 2001 and Kondo, 1997.

In general, results concur that those learners who have spent time in a Submersion context tend to approximate NS-like norms more so that those who have not had that experience. However, individual studies highlight the issues that arise. For example, Barron (2003) looked at Irish students spending a year abroad in Germany. The study found that while the learners made significant gains in their pragmatic competence insofar as there was a decrease in the direct transfer of Irish pragmatic formulae in making requests such as translations of 'Are you sure?' and 'I was wondering …'. There was also an increase in the use of routinised formulae and an increase in mitigation. However, these apparent gains do not necessarily lead to more native-like use of pragmatic forms. The results from the post-test reveal significant non-target like use of downgraders. However, the increase in students' pragmatic awareness proves commensurate with the length of time spent in the TL country with pragmatic awareness increasing over time. Kondo (1997) likewise reports gains in the use of native-like pragmatic formulae in Japanese learners of English in an SA context, but also highlights divergences from native-like behaviour.

In a comparative study between at home students (AH) and SA students of L2 French, Hoffman-Hicks (1992) notes greater pragmatic gains for SA students with their use of pragmatic forms for greeting and leave taking becoming more native-like than those of AH students. Matsumara (2001/2003) echoed the findings of Hoffman-Hicks insofar as the SA students approximated NS-norms much more so than the AH students. A similar conclusion was reached by Owen (2001) into American students on an SA programme in Russia and Schauer (2006) who investigated German students on an SA programme in England. However, Rodriguez recorded no advantage for SA students during a semester long SA. However, both Barron and Schauer attribute gains to happening over time, i.e. the length of time spent in the TL country can predicate the intensity of gains insofar as the longer a learner spends in an SA, the more native-like the use of pragmatic norms becomes. Therefore the semester experienced by the informants in Rodriguez's study may simply not have been long enough to witness gains.

In conclusion, the non-target like use of pragmatic norms is again a complex issue. It can be, contrary to expectations, a result of increased proficiency level. Learners may engage in inappropriate 'complexification' of the language or unnecessary verbosity in order to confirm their

status as highly proficient language learners. However, the effect of this is often a deviation from NS pragmatic norms. One factor which seems to have an impact in decreasing non-target like use is spending time in a target language community.

3.6 Sociopragmatic Variation

Thus far, my discussion has centred on pragmalinguistic acquisition and use – that is on the acquisition and use of the linguistic items necessary to express pragmatic functions. I have discussed the systematic nature of the acquisition of pragmalinguistic features and issues surrounding their appearance in language in use. Now, I will turn to the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns. O'Keefe *et al.* refer to sociopragmatics as 'the knowledge of how to select an appropriate choice given a particular goal in a particular setting' (2011: 138). That is to say that sociopragmatics is concerned with the appropriate use of language – language which is congruent with the context and which represents variables such as interlocutor identity, social distance, formality and physical location. This differs from pragmalinguistic variation which deals with the variable use pragmatic features in discourse; whereas sociopragmatic variation is concerned with the application of those forms to socially appropriate situations. To date, sociopragmatic variation has attracted much less interest than pragmalinguistic acquisition/use; however, it has much in common with sociolinguistic variation and, according to Barron, 'is essentially included […] under sociolinguistic competence' (2003: 9). Therefore, it makes sense to conflate the two areas in an overview of the literature.

What is sociolinguistic/pragmatic competence?

Sociolinguistic/pragmatic competence is an integral element of Hymes' communicative competence model. Holmes describes it as 'the knowledge which underlies people's ability to use language appropriately' (2001: 266-367). She further goes on to describe it as involving, 'how to use language for different functions […]. Learning to speak appropriately in a range of contexts is important if one wants to avoid giving offence, reducing everyone to hysterical laughter, or embarrassing others by a sociolinguistic *faux pas*' (2001:.370). As in first language development, if an L2 user wishes to communicate competently s/he also needs a variety of styles. As Crystal points out, linguistic variety is essential 'to interact effectively with people from all walks of life' (2006:103).

Examples of sociolinguistic/pragmatic competence include greetings. For example, knowing when to say, 'Hi, Johnny' as opposed to 'Good morning, Mr Smith' or grammatical factors such as 'I'm

gonna run the marathon next week.' or 'I'm going to run the marathon next week.' Additionally, it could also be awareness of the illocutionary force of the following questions. 'What is your name?' and 'So, what's your name again?' In short, it is the ability to vary your use of language in such a way that it is congruent with the situation.

Why is it important in SLA?

Much of the research into SLA has been concentrated on what is obligatory or categorical in the target language. However, Bayley and Regan (2004) argue against a consideration of variation as a peripheral element of the linguistic repertoire. In contrast, they posit that 'knowledge of variation is part of speaker competence. […] in order to become fully proficient in the target language learners need to acquire native speaker patterns of variation' (2004:325). This is borne out by a study into sociolinguistic transfer by Amouzadeh and Tavangar which concludes that covert sociolinguistic transfer in Iranian L1 speakers of English 'could lead to the formation of cultural stereotypes.' (2005: 174). This is a particularly acute problem as sociolinguistic competence is often not perceived as a linguistic error by L1 interlocutors. It can be seen as evidence of a speaker's personality or a national characteristic and can thus lead to misunderstandings.

From the above example it can be clearly seen how negative stereotypes can be upheld and misunderstandings can occur without an awareness of sociolinguistic/pragmatic variation. Therefore, it could be said that an increase in linguistic gains leads to an increase in comprehension between the NNS and interlocutor; but an increase in sociolinguistic competence leads to better relationships.

3.7 The Effects of Learning Context on the Acquisition of Sociolinguistic/pragmatic Variation Patterns

As discussed earlier, learning context plays a significant role in the acquisition of target-like use of pragmalinguistic features. Likewise, I will argue that learning context and particularly the submersion context plays a significant role in the acquisition of sociolinguistic/pragmatic variation patterns.

The past decade has witnessed a wave of interest in the impact of submersion in a TL community on the acquisition of sociolinguistic/pragmatic norms. Many of the studies (Regan *et al.* (2009), Regan (1995), Dewaele (2005), Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1995), Howard (2006) investigate the effects on French interlanguage (IL). Lafford (1995) concentrates on Spanish IL, Marriott (1995)

and Siegal (1995) on Japanese IL; and Takahashi and Beebe (1987) and Bayley (1996) on Japanese and Chinese learners of English respectively. Rehner, Mougeon and Nasadi (2003) focus on French Canadian immersion programmes. Regan, Marriott, Siegal and Howard, carried out their studies to specifically investigate the correlation between submersion and sociolinguistic competence; whereas for Lafford and Lapkin *et al.* sociolinguistic competence was only one of the gains mentioned in more general studies and for Takahashi and Beebe and Bayley, social network affiliations and contact with native speakers are of specific importance. Finally, Dewaele complements the above with the addition of learner personality as a crucial factor.

From the above, we can see that many variables are at play in the studies. Marriott and Lapkin *et al.* focus on teenage students, the others have prospective/third-level students as subjects. The length of time spent in submersion also varies from the typical US SA programme of a semester spent formally studying the language in a TL community as described by Lafford to up to five years submersion in the Bayley study. Two additional, extra-linguistic variables to take into account are extracurricular contact with native speakers and proficiency levels – see Dewaele / Mougeon *et al.* Again these apply differentially to the above mentioned studies and have marked effects on outcome. In the following sections, I will deal firstly with the relationship between learning context and the acquisition of specific sociolinguistic variables before turning to broader features

3.7.1 The Acquisition Sociolinguistic Variants

Before embarking on a review of the acquisition of specific sociolinguistic variants, I will say a few words about general findings. General findings regarding the acquisition of sociolinguistic variants point to a strong influence of learning context. The discourse of primarily foreign language learners, according to Rehner, Mougeon and Nasadi (2003), is marked by three trends. The first of the trends is characterised as an overuse of formal variants when compared to NSs. In addition, mildly marked or semi-formal, non-stigmatised variants are used significantly less frequently by FL learners than by NSs. The final trend relates to negligible use of vernacular or stigmatised variants. Therefore, the question to be asked is if a change in learning context provokes a change in what is acquired. A review of the studies will illuminate to what extent a shift in micro-learning context promotes the acquisition of native-like patterns of sociolinguistic variation

The Acquisition of Vernacular Morphosyntactic Features

One of the most comprehensive studies conducted into the acquisition of a vernacular grammar in

the broadest sense is that of Regan *et al.* (2009). The authors set formally explore the relationship between submersion- in the European sense- and sociolinguistic speech norms from a variationist viewpoint. This is done by means of a longitudinal study into advanced Irish university students of French who participated in a year-long Erasmus programme. The data for the study was collected using controlled sociolinguistic interviews based on modules developed by Labov. One interview was carried out before submersion and the other after. The variables studied are that of deletion of the *ne* particle of negation which is very common among native French speakers, the variable use of on/nous as a first person plural subject pronoun, the acquisition of 'l' deletion and the variable use of future temporal referencing. The study concludes that 'advanced speakers are indeed sensitive to native speaker variation patterns on exposure during year abroad (Regan et *al.,* 2009: 135). However, the authors point out that the subjects do not reach native-speaker-like norms, in fact they tend to err on the side of formality. Nevertheless, the authors do show that increased intensity of contact with native speakers over a longer period of time leads to almost native-like variation patterns

Socio-phonological Gains

Bayley and Howard investigated socio-phonological variables namely consonant cluster reductions in Chinese-English IL, for Bayley; and liaison and /l/ deletion (among other variables) in French IL for Howard respectively. The findings of both studies compliment each other to the extent that they are variationist in scope and highlight the positive role of contact with native-speakers.

> This effect (sociolinguistic development) can be observed among the learners who have resided in the target-language community. (Howard, 2005: 393)

This supports Bayley's observations that:

> Speakers whose social networks are almost exclusively Chinese-speaking, however, seldom participate in informal English conversations. The limited native-speaker input they receive comes mainly in the relatively formal situation of the classroom. They have, therefore, very few opportunities to acquire the sociolinguistic norms that would result in the target-like variable phonological processes (1996: 111)

Non-specific Sociolinguistic/pragmatic Gains

Lafford and Lapkin *et al.* focus primarily on overall linguistic gains; however, in addition they conclude that submersion does have a positive role to play in the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. Lafford's comparative study of Spanish IL subjects, some on a semester in either

Spain or Mexico, the others AH students concludes that 'the study abroad experience broadens the repertoire of communicative strategies of L2 learners and makes them better conversationalists. They are much more likely to develop key elements of […] communicative competence…' (1996: 119). Likewise, Lapkin *et al.*, in a study of teenage subjects on a three-month submersion programme in Quebec found that all students felt more at ease conversing with their francophone peers after the programme and that they 'perceive gains in sociolinguistic skills, reporting increased familiarity with variations in dialect and register.' (1996: 93) However, it must be pointed out that the results were not tested empirically; rather, they were collected from questionnaires and are highlighted by the researchers as perceptions. Nevertheless, the outcome does not compare differentially to the other studies.

The Acquisition of Politeness Patterns

An overview of politeness patterns deals specifically with sociopragmatic acquisition. Both Marriott and Siegal deal with the acquisition of Japanese politeness patterns, but from very different perspectives. Marriott focuses on the extent to which Australian secondary school students acquire Japanese politeness patterns during an exchange programme where they live in host families. Siegal, on the other hand, explores how individual female learners 'confront what it is like to actually use honorific language and polite speech' (Siegal, 1996: 225). There is a particular focus on Japanese 'women's language' and how the subjects view this and view themselves while in Japan. As in the Regan (1996) study, the participants in the above mentioned studies made significant gains in sociolinguistic/pragmatic competence. However, in the Marriott study, the eight secondary school students who participated in the year-long programme – all low proficiency speakers initially – did not attain anything like native-speaker norms. As Marriott points out, 'the data clearly show that most students possessed both styles [plain and honorific], yet they were unable to switch appropriately.' (1996: 217).

In support of both Regan's and Marriott's findings, Siegal points out that,

> 'the data show that, on one hand, the study abroad experience is important for learning what has heretofore remained unexplained or not emphasised in traditional […] language classrooms, and on the other hand, the drive for communication and fluency can lead some learners to 'pick up' forms that carry pragmatic meaning […] and use them in ways that are socio-pragmatically inappropriate.' (1996:226)

Siegal's study took place over an eighteen month period and focused on four white, western, middle-class women. The study describes the progress of two of the women with particular reference to politeness patterns and so-called 'women's language'. Unlike Marriott's study, subjects were already familiar with politeness patterns; although the polysemic nature of honorifics caused some problems. What is of interest here is not the acquisition of the above, rather the struggle between learner identity and language. Both subjects were confronted with pragmatic conflict as they were aware that certain situations required a humble style, yet they felt unwilling to adopt this seemingly lower position in relation to the interlocutor. However, one of the subjects eventually came to respect the honorific system and according to Siegal, this was due to the public contexts encountered. Siegal concludes with the proposition that, 'only by being immersed in the culture will language learners actually confront conflicting pragmatic demands and work towards a reconciliation of their own perceptions, feelings and needs with what is necessary to be sociolinguistically competent in Japanese'

Interestingly, a similar sentiment is echoed in the Beebe and Takahashi study of Japanese EFL (at home) students and ESL (submersion) students who had difficulties attaining native-speaker like politeness norms. One potential problem highlighted was 'the learners' attitudes and beliefs about both speakers of the target language and the nature of the target language itself' (1987: 50). However, as the ESL students showed greater acquisition, it can be surmised that submersion was the key player in the acceptance of sociolinguistic/pragmatic norms.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the majority of studies seem to address the acquisition of certain sociolinguistic/pragmatic variants rather than the acquisition of the ability to vary language output in a way that is congruent with the situation. That is to say, we know a lot about general levels of use of (in)formal variants, but we need to better understand the specificity of the learner's variable use of such variants as a function of the social context in which they are used. Studies which address the issue of the acquisition of the ability to display a variety of sociolinguistic/pragmatic norms indicate differential results. Ellis (1992), Hill (1997), Rose (2000), Scarcella (1979) and Trosberg (1995) indicate little or no evidence of sociolinguistic/pragmatic variation. Regan *et al.* (2009), Regan (1996) and Marriott (1996) point to limited variation. Where the appropriate variation patterns are acquired (Siegal, 1996), it proves a long and arduous battle which is dependant on extralinguistic variables such as learning context, language contact, proficiency level and learner identity. (See chapters 1 and 2 for a full discussion)

Of the studies where no variation was found, the learners were (with the exception of Ellis) FL learners. Their opportunities for input/output may have been limited by the demands of the classroom and the loci of learning to which learners are exposed. As for the studies which indicate limited/inappropriate variation, it may be possible that contact with NSs was limited to a certain demographic profile or that the exposure was dominated by a single locus of learning. It may be concluded, especially with regards to the Regan (1995) study, contact with NSs was limited primarily to other students which resulted in a preference towards informal variants. In addition, learner identity may play a role. This is certainly an issue for Siegal's informants. One learner in particular battled hard with the perceived mismatch in perception between her L1 identity and that in the L2. The acceptance of adhering to L2 social norms was won only after intensive contact with socially-sensitive situations.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, an overview of heteroglossia, communicative competence and systemic functional linguistics was used to demonstrate the non-monolithic quality of language. All three models foreground a variegated view of language – i.e. a language which does not consist of a single unified code. The concept of heteroglossia with its emphasis on distinct linguistic varieties within a language code provides a philosophical backdrop for the taxonomy of communicative competence in the guise of the SPEAKING mnemonic proposed by Hymes. With the SPEAKING mnemonic, Hymes broadened the concept of linguistic competence from being synonymous with grammatical competence to a socially-situated concept based on the idea of appropriateness of use. The SFL approach advances the non-monolithic view of language by proposing context as an essential and integral stratum of language and by offering a micro-level analytical tool which introduces interfaces between phonological, lexicogrammatical and semantic strata and context.

After dismantling the monolithic view of language, the discussion turned to pragmatics which, in a monolithic view of language, may have been considered peripheral or idiosyncratic. An overview of definitions of pragmatics led to the identification of four main tenets for the study of pragmatics: context/setting; speaker utterances; hearer interpretation and language choice/constraints. This was followed by a discussion of theoretical frameworks with which to analyse pragmatics – mental models and speech act theory.

Following that, the discussion progressed to a review of the literature relating to interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). A distinction was made between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics with the

former being defined as the linguistic tools needed to express pragmatic functions and the latter as the appropriate use of such tools.

A review of the literature pertaining to the acquisition of pragmalinguistic features foregrounds the systematic nature of the acquisition of the forms. However, the use of acquired pragmalinguistic forms in discourse proved more problematic. Use does not seem to progress in a linear fashion and can be determined by a range of cognitive and socio-psychological features such as L1 transfer, learning context, language contact, learner identity and learner preference.

The chapter finished with a review of sociolinguistic/pragmatic acquisition. The two areas were conflated due to their similarity and the paucity of research into sociopragmatic development. In accordance with the findings regarding use of pragmalinguistic features, results into sociolinguistic/pragmatic development proved to be heavily influenced by learning context and learner identity insofar as study abroad or submersion together with issues such as gender and (non-) acceptance of the forms seem to be causal factors in the acquisition of sociolinguistic/pragmatic variation patterns.

Chapter 4

The Study

The study was set up to explore the emergence of core identity as indexed in sociopragmatic variation patterns in 'asking for advice' in non-native speaker teachers of English. The factors which lead to the acquisition of such variation are presented as a complex, dynamic, socio-cognitive ecosystem. It adopts the view of language, espoused by Larsen-Freeman amongst others, ''as a complex adaptive system'' (2007:783) for which a ''wider lens with which to examine issues'' (2007:782) is needed. More specifically, it focuses on how language resources are adapted to meet specific goals and how this is influenced by or helps negotiate learner identity.

The study adopts a post-structuralist approach to identity. By that I mean that the study recognises that non-native speakers, like native speakers do not represent a single static identity; rather they are complex, compound identities with the necessity 'to be' and 'do' – i.e. to perform a multitude of identities within a single language code. However, the enactment of various identities is an extremely sensitive area. Identities need to be portrayed in a way that does not cause conflict with the learner's core identity. Following Block (2010) perhaps the most effective means of analysing the enactment of identities is through sociopragmatic variation patterns. An examination of sociopragmatic variation patterns will show how a learner can 'be' a friend 'doing' having a chat, for example, or 'be' a student 'doing' asking for advice on essay writing. Both situations require the learner to adopt a different identity – equal-status, lower-status – and consequently to index those identities differentially in discourse. However, this can be a highly-sensitive area. As highlighted by Thomas:

> Sociopragmatic decisions are social before they are linguistic, and while foreign learners are fairly amenable to corrections that they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social (or even political, religious or moral) judgement called into question. (1983: 104)

This can be the site of significant difficulties and conflict for learners. While grammatical or lexical errors may give rise to miscomprehension, sociopragmatic errors can effect the perception of the learner portraying the learner as rude, bossy or even stupid.

As the study is set up to investigate the interplay between learning context or more specifically, loci of learning and the enactment of identities as indexed through variations in sociopragmatic patterns, the main research questions have been identified as:

1. Does sociopragmatic variation occur in the discourse of primarily foreign language (FL) learners?
2. How is variation indexed in discourse?
3. Do degrees of cross-contextuality have an impact on variation patterns?
4. What, if any, identity is enacted by the informants and how is this influenced by learning contexts?

In order to examine these questions, a two-fold, cross-sectional study was conducted with the aim of 1) collating data regarding the learning contexts of the informants; 2) eliciting real-time verbal interactions across a range of socio-cultural contexts. The stages were thus:

- completion of a language contact profile questionnaire
- performance of role-plays

The study took place over a two-week period while the informants were attending a Comenius-funded teacher training course at a private language centre in Cork, Ireland.
The first stage of the study comprised the completion of the language contact profile questionnaire (LCP) on the first day of the course. This allowed for the creation of individual contact profiles and led to the establishment of three distinct groups of informants:

- Primarily mono-contextual foreign-language (FL) learners (x6)
- Low-intensity cross-contextual FL learners (x6)
- High-intensity cross-contextual learners. (x8)

The elicitation of performance data took place towards the end of the course – on days eight and nine.

Before moving on to the specifics of the data elicitation, I would just like to foreground at this point an important feature of the study. The first point is that the study is cross-linguistic in nature which makes it quite unique. The majority of studies into interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) have dealt with

informants from a single linguistic background (Scarcella (1979) Ellis (1992), Hill, (1997), Trosborg (1995) Rose (2000) and Barron (2003)). Having a wide range of linguistic backgrounds avoids the possible criticism levelled on mono-linguistic groups. Studies into mono-linguistic groups can potentially be viewed as comparative studies into cross-cultural behaviour 'in which the purpose is to examine the similarities and differences between two distinct speech communities, rather than to understand the L2 learner's development of target-like pragmatic competence.' (Davies and Tyler, 2008: 133).

A cross-linguistic study, such as the current study has the potential to produce results which truly give insight into the process of interlanguage pragmatic development. The above quotation from Davies and Tyler highlights another difference between the current study and many others. The final part of the quotation puts 'target-like norms' under the spotlight. As I have already discussed in chapter 3, target-like language is almost impossible to define and this is even more so in the realm of pragmatics. A multitude of contextual and identity issues interact to produce language that is appropriate to the situation and the speaker's need as opposed to what is normative. With this in mind, the study does not seek to compare the discourse of the informants with a putative native speaker norm; rather the study acknowledges NNSs as legitimate speakers of English in their own right rather than somewhat deficient or 'not quite there yet' users of the language. The study, thus allows for a cross-sectional study on the effects of length of time spent in submersion situations and the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation.

4.1 Informants

The study is based on a cross-sectional comparison of 20 NNS teachers of English and is unique to the extent that study abroad or submersion research has never previously been conducted on professionals or gatekeepers of the language. The vast majority of preceding literature has focused on the effect of context on the linguistic gains of students of a foreign language. The teachers all come from European Union member states and represent a range of 10 countries:

Bulgaria	1	Hungary	3
Czech Republic	1	Italy	1
Denmark	2	Norway	1
France	1	Poland	1
Germany	6	Spain	2

The teachers all work in the second level sector and teach a mixture of age levels 12-19 as well as a mixture of proficiency levels A1 – B2 according to the Common European Framework (CEF). All have been teaching for a minimum of four years. This provides a range of 4 – 34 years, thereby averaging at 12.42 years. Likewise, there was a broad range of ages from 32 – 58, with an average of 42.3 years. The difference in age correlates exponentially with length of contact with the language. All informants except #J, #M, #N and #T, who all started in university, have been studying English since secondary school. #C, #H, I#, #K and #Q have been exposed to it since primary level. All informants are graduates of English and have completed specialised training in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). They are very well-versed in what Freeman refers to as 'the technology of subject matter' (2004:170) or to put it another way, the grammar of English. Prior to participating in the study, they underwent a diagnostic assessment of their level of English and all scored at either C1 or C2 level according to the CEFR. This puts them as advanced or proficient users of the language.

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At the time the study was carried out, the informants were on a two-week Comenius course in Ireland. The aim of the course is to provide methodological updates to the participants in the teaching of EFL. The course is conducted entirely in English, by native speakers (NSs) and participants are required to use only English while in the institute. The majority of participants stayed in host families for the duration of the course, thus hoping to maximise their contact with NSs. Of those who chose not to stay in host family accommodation, two stayed in hostels. Generally they stayed in mixed dormitories where there was the opportunity to use English as a lingua-franca and possibly form social networks. Two stayed in bed and breakfast accommodation where contact with NSs was limited to ordering breakfast; and six stayed in rented apartments where incidental contact with English as a lingua franca was possible.

The informants are all foreign language (FL) learners/users in that their primary learning and usage context is the foreign language context. However, the variable which differentiates the informants most significantly is that of the accumulated length of time previously spent in the target language country. This ranges from ten days through to just over 5 years. On average informants have spent – excluding the current course 369.86 days in submersion. This is a cumulative figure i.e. for each informant, each individual trip to a Submersion context was considered and the overall length of time calculated.

However, the overall figure can be somewhat misleading as there exists considerable variation in

the patterns of submersion. A more meaningful way to broach the variable of accumulated submersion can be made by splitting the informants into groups. A closer analysis of submersion patterns allows three distinct groups to be established. I will refer to these groups as:

- Group 1 – primarily mono-contextual foreign language learners
- Group 2 – low intensity cross-contextual learners
- Group 3 – high intensity cross contextual learners

Group one consists of those who have spent up to 60 days in a Submersion context; group two is made up of those who have spent between 120 days and 1 year in an L2 environment and finally group 3 is composed of informants with have spent more than one year in an L2 environment. Group 1 consists of 6 informants, group 2, 6 informants and group 3, the largest, is made up of 8 informants. For group 1, the average number of days is 31.83 (mode: 21.5). Group 2, - 228.5 (mode:235.5) and group 3 - 729.375 (mode: 475)

4.2 Language Contact Profile

The teacher/informants in the present study are all primarily foreign language learners/users. By that it is meant that their principal context of learning/use is the foreign language classroom. However, what differentiates the groups is the degree of cross-contextuality which they have experienced, i.e. the extent to which the classroom has been supplemented or complemented by time spent in a target language environment or, to put it another way, in submersion.

The language contact profile (LCP) questionnaire is the analytical tool employed in the assessment of learning contexts both from a quantitative (establishing the physical location of context and the degree of cross-contextuality) and a qualitative aspect (focusing on the changing nature of loci of learning due to cross-contextuality). It is an adapted version of the 'Language Contact Profile' (LCP) established by Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz and Halter (2004) compiled to 'elicit information that [was] deemed useful for students studying in a variety of contexts' (Freed et al, 2004: 350). It is divided into five sections: biographical data, language learning history, submersion history, language contact in submersion and language contact at home and is an extremely powerful tool. It elicits information of a wide range of language contact issues including purpose of visits to a Submersion context, accommodation, intensity of contact not only with the spoken language, but

also with a range of media and very importantly, it quantifies access to various loci of learning. In this case the focus is on the institutional and the conversational locus. The same data is also elicited for contact with the L2 in the foreign language context. As an analytical tool, it can also help illuminate any correlation between time spent in submersion and intensity and nature of contact with the L2 both at home and in the Submersion context.

The range of sojourns under consideration in the current study is much broader than that usually found in study abroad literature. In this case, all sojourns will be considered regardless of purpose. In addition to study, this includes holidays, work, visiting friends or family or simply just residence. Despite the paucity of such data in the existing literature, all types of sojourns have been included here as it is feasible to consider all sojourns in a Submersion context as possible language acquisition opportunities.

To finish this section, I will say a few words on why accumulated length of stay is being used. It was decided to use accumulated length of time as the variable because it has received very little attention in study abroad literature and when previous sojourns in a Submersion context have been mentioned, they have been dismissed as having little impact on linguistic gains. (See Brecht *et al*., 1996) This seems counter-intuitive. For the purpose of this study, I will posit that accumulated length of stay has a significant impact on the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns and subsequently on the indexing of identity in discourse. The reason for its impact, again I posit, is that unlike a single sojourn, multiple sojourns increase opportunities to engage in a variety of discourse domains and increase exposure to a wider range of loci of learning. Every sojourn is potentially different and this reduces the possibility of repetitive, mono-contextual interaction.

4.3 Role-plays

The objective of the role-plays is to elicit language from the informants which indexes a range of identities in discourse. Within the role plays the informants are required ‘to be’ and ‘do’ two very different identities – a formal, socially distant lower-status identity and an informal, socially-close equal-status identity. Sociopragmatic variation patterns are effective indicators of identity enactment. Interlanguage pragmatics has been held up by Block as a promising area in the study of identity issues as it 'allows a focus not only on the finer aspects of language as grammatical system, but also on sociocultural context' (2010: 113).

With this in mind, the teachers were invited to participate in two role-plays, both of which focus on a speech event surrounding the speech act of asking for advice. They were placed into dyads according to their accumulated submersion experiences. Where possible, the informants were paired according to the principles laid out by Nguyen. That is to say, to allow for 'researcher control of relevant social and contextual variables, such as relative social power, […] and distance, […] between the participants and topic […], thus making the data more comparable.' (2005: 172). This was done in an attempt to avoid non-accomplishment of task or reluctance to do the task due to a possible conflict between interlocutors. As the participants are all second-level teachers there were no perceivable differences in proficiency levels of output and as the participants acted as both 'asker' and 'advisor' during the conversation, relative social power remained equal. Moreover, in order to allow for a more natural conversation, the researcher was not present during the recordings. This decision was based on the findings of Gremmo, Holec and Riley who conclude that:

> …when we analyse classroom discourse, it becomes clear that the very presence and participation of the teacher distorts the interaction to such an extent that it no-longer provides even the basic raw materials from which a learner can construct his competence (1978:63)

The researcher was also a trainer on the course and it was felt that her presence may cause a hindrance.

The informants were then asked to initiate complex role plays in which they had to ask for advice firstly in an institutional situation and then in a conversational situation. Each situation was carefully chosen to represent a real-life situation that the informants have been or could be exposed to. In addition to their 'real-life' nature, the situations were drawn up to ensure that the teachers had to adopt an identity which was outside their normal domain for using English – i.e. not a classroom identity. Within the classroom domain, teachers normally have a high-status identity and it could therefore be argued that the identity they usually enact in English is that of higher-status interlocutor, a highly institutionalised identity in a power-based relationship. As the study sets out to explore how a range of social identities is enacted through sociopragmatic variation patterns, it was deemed important to assess the ability of the teachers 'to be' and 'do' a non-work-related identity. Additionally, the situations were graded in respect of the situational demands of formality, social distance and status.

The formal situation is institutional in nature insofar as it takes place between a representative of an institution and a client and includes "asymmetrical power relationships" (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2008:9). There is a choice of two role plays which were allocated to the informants randomly. One takes place between a head teacher and a parent where the teacher adopts the role of a parent asking for advice about his/her child. In effect, roles have been reversed and the teacher/informant has been interpellated into a lower-status role. In the second the informant is a novice at a health club and must ask an expert for advice. The situations can be classified as formal, socially-distant with a higher-status interlocutor.

In contrast, the informal situations are conversational and refer to what Benwell and Stokoe call an 'everyday interaction' (2010: 48). They take place between two close friends. The informant asks his/her friend either for advice regarding a relationship problem or for advice on setting up a Facebook account. These situations can be classified as informal, socially close and equal-status. The instructions were purposefully left vague so as to allow for the conversation to encourage multiple turns and spontaneous reactions. The performance data were recorded digitally, transcribed according to conventional means and a type/token analysis carried out.

4.3.1 Analytical Framework of the Performance Data

In order to factor for learning context, the data were analysed on a group by group level. Two analyses were performed in each group – one for the institutional role play and the other for the conversational role play. Both sets of data were then compared to check if the enactment of different identities was indexed through sociopragmatic variation. The data from each group were the compared to assess the influence of learning context. The data underwent a dual analysis. The first analysis took place on a strategic and substrategic level. The strategies and substrategies present in the discourse of the informants were assessed for differential use according to role play type and group.

In order to complete the strategic analysis, I devised a blended approach to analyse degrees of conventionality and directness. The blended approach to the analysis of strategies is an amalgamation of the taxonomy of directness proposed by Kasper (1987) and the developmental sequence of requests proposed by Kasper and Rose (2002). Kasper's taxonomy indicates nine directness levels which she categorised as direct or indirect. Examples of the direct levels are:

Table 4.1

Table 4.1

Direct	Indirect
• Mood derivable (move!) • Explicit performative (I'm asking you to) • Hedged performative (the performative verb is softened e.g. I have to ask you to move…) obligation statement (you have to move) • Obligation statement – you have to …	• Want statement – I want you to … • Suggestory formula – illocutionary force indicated by a suggestion – How about moving…? • Prepatory – ability/willingness – can/would you • Strong hint – inferred – your car is in the way • Mild hint – we don't want any crowding

(Adapted from Kasper, 1987: 46)

With degrees of directness established, I blended this measurement with the idea of conventionality presented by Kasper and Rose (2002: 140) in their request development taxonomy. The midway point in the taxonomy witnesses a 'shift to conventional indirectness' (2002: 140). It may therefore be concluded that anything before that point – i.e. context dependant and formulaic tokens may be classified as conventionally direct and that anything progressing from the midpoint – i.e. unpacking, increased mitigation and fine-tuning can be viewed as conventionally indirect eventually moving in the direction of non-conventionalised indirectness. Analysis of conventionality and directness provides considerable insight into pragmatic marking and is of particular benefit when assessing speaker intention and hearer interpretation and therefore a blended approach which simultaneously accounts for both polarities will provide compelling results.

Based on the blended approach, I was able to identify strategies in the discourse of the 'asker' and classify them according to 3 criteria: conventionalised directness, conventionalised indirectness and non-conventionalised indirectness. To clarify the distinctions, conventionalised directness refers to unmitigated strategies and highly context dependant strategies where essentially there is no mismatch between locution and illocution. This could be an imperative for example. Moving further along the scale are conventionalised indirect strategies. These have been mitigated, but are essentially formulae that have been unpacked to indicate a degree of awareness of the situational demands. With regards to these unpacked formulae, there is a certain degree of locution/illocution mismatch insofar as imperatives may be realised as a modal request such as 'can you give me …' At the far end of the scale, there are non-conventionalised indirect strategies. These are generally complex, finely-tuned strategies where, very importantly, there is no obvious match between locution and illocution. An example of that could be an utterance such as 'Don't talk to me!' At a

locutionary level, this is congruent with a negative imperative or a warning; however the illocution could indicate an invitation to continue the conversation and get more details.

Within the discourse of the informants, the categories of conventionalised indirectness and directness caused no problems. The tokens are quite homogeneous and followed distinct patterns. However, non-conventionalised indirectness proved particularly problematic. Two categories were identified: solidary moves and non-solidary moves. Solidary moves refer to tokens with the intention of showing solidarity with the interlocutor or encouragement. This has been further subdivided into 8 sub-substrategies - positive backchanelling, overlap, providing alternatives, concordance, hints, grounders, imposition minimisers and problematicisation. The next category is non-solidary moves and they are the opposite of solidary moves – i.e. the intention is to express discordance with the interlocutor. Six substrategies have been identified: negative backchanelling, interruptions, rejections, questioning, providing alternatives and avoidance

When the data were analysed 363 strategies were identified. They are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Strategy	Substrategies	No. present
Conventionalised Directness		27
Conventionalises Indirectness		61
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		275
I. Solidary moves	i. Positive backchannelling ii. overlap iii. Providing alternatives iv. Problematicisation v. concordance vi. hints vii. grounders viii. imposition minimisers	221
II. Non-solidary moves	i. Negative backchannelling ii. Interruptions iii. rejections iv. questioning v. providing alternatives vi. Avoidance	54

The strategies were then analysed according to appearance in the institutional genre or the

conversational genre and analysed on a group by group basis. The strategies were analysed for each genre in each group according to degrees of conventionality and directness.

However, as researchers such as Hill (1997) foreground the need for a deeper analysis to fully illuminate pragmatic development a second analysis was carried out on a linguistic level. As the aim of the strategic analysis is to assess sociopragmatic variation at a strategic level, the linguistic analysis will assess how these differences are indexed in language and more importantly, following Block (2010) how this relates to identity – that is how the informants' ability to 'be' and 'do' is indexed linguistically.

4.3.2 Linguistic Analysis

The tools for the linguistic analysis likewise required careful consideration as the analysis of pragmatic data has undergone a shift in recent years. The focus is moving away from a speech-act theory approach with its emphasis on decontextualised discrete speech-act to more situated approaches. It is realised that speech acts do not take place in isolation, but rather form part of a larger speech event and are not carried out by an individual, but by at least 2 participants. In order to represent this reality, an analytical framework is necessary which can encompass a speech event consisting of multiple turns.

Speech act theory is a powerful analytical tool, but unfortunately, on its own it can not relate to a speech event where the asking for advice is complicated and conducted over multiple turns. One approach which allows for multiple turns is discursive pragmatics. This approach 'does not just advocate the study of speech acts in discourse or in interaction, but through discourse, employing the approach of CONVERSATION ANALYSIS (CA) to action, meaning and context in studying speech-acts.' (Cohen, 2008: 214). (Capitalisation in original). However, as highlighted by Hutchby and Wooffitt: 'CA is only marginally interested in language as such; its actual object of study is the *interactional organisation of social activities*.' (1998: 14) (Italics in the original). The importance of the interactional organisation of discourse with its emphasis on the syntagmatic principle of ordering cannot be underestimated, but, it could be argued that on its own, it is not sufficient to provide the depth of insight necessary to explore something as complex as the indexing of identity in language. The choice of linguistic elements should also be investigated.

One approach which allows for the study of language and interaction is the framework of discursive practice as put forth by Young. A practice approach, as defined by Young is:

> the construction and reflection of social realities through actions that invoke identity, ideology, belief and power. A practice approach […] thus seeks to examine both how the language, gesture and positioning of specific interactions are determined by the social context of interaction and how that context […] is constructed by participants' verbal and non-verbal actions. (2009:.37)

Discursive practice draws on Systemic Functional Grammar to analyse the paradigmatic principles underlying choices in verbal resources. In addition, the interactional resources are analysed according to the syntagmatic principles of Conversational Analysis. Discursive practice is firmly rooted in situational context and, as such, makes it a powerful framework to explore the complexities of identity construction.

Therefore, discursive practice theory will be employed to identify pragmatically salient features in discourse which can be used to index identity. The features under investigation in the current study are: speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. However, to explain the impact of the pragmatic identity markers, I will also draw on frameworks which deal with congruency, and face – namely ‘Maxims of Congruency (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford: 1992), politeness (Brown & Levinson: 1978) and impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011; Watts: 2003).

Due to the in depth nature of the study, the results will be presented over the following two chapters. Chapter 5 will focus on the results of the language contact profile (LCP) questionnaire; whereas the results of the linguistic analysis will be found in chapter 6.

Chapter 5

Results of the Language Contact Profile

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of the learning contact profile (LCP) questionnaire. I will establish biographical and submersion profiles of the informants before discussing the relationships between length of accumulated submersion experience and intensity of contact with the language and exposure to loci of learning both in the submersion and foreign language contexts.

5.1 *Introduction*

In order to assess the results, I will consider the following four questions:

1. Does duration of accumulated submersion experience (ASE) affect the intensity of contact a learner has in a target language (TL) environment?
2. Is there a relationship between duration of ASE and exposure to loci of learning?
3. Is there a correlation between ASE and intensity of contact with the language in the foreign language context?

To date, there has been extensive research carried out into students and their submersion habits – for example, Coleman (1995) in the UK and Batardiere (1993) in Ireland. In the UK and Ireland, the research has focused primarily on residence abroad in an SE context as part of a degree programme. In the US, the focus has been on study abroad also as part of a degree programme. However, no equivalent research has been carried out into teachers' submersion experiences (SE).

Previous studies have concentrated on the phenomenon of study abroad (SA) – i.e. the time spent by foreign language learners in the SE context as an integral element of their studies. For the purpose of this study, in contrast, the parameters have been expanded to: 1) investigate an additional category of FL learners/users – in this case teachers; and 2) broaden the accepted definition of SA, by including all experiences of time spent in an SE context of more than a week for any purpose. This expansion of the parameters has led to move away from the use of the terminology 'study abroad' towards the more inclusive term of submersion experience (SE). The adoption of the new

terminology allows for the inclusion of a wider spectrum of foreign language learners/users as well as permitting the addition of a more varied array of times spent in the SE context.

Therefore, in order to proceed with the study of the effects of SE on the enactment of identity as indexed through sociopragmatic variation patterns, it is first of all necessary to analyse the Language Contact Profiles and build a submersion profile of teacher-informants as no prior work has been carried out in this area.

5.2 Results of Language Contact Profile

The language contact profile (LCP) is a powerful analytical tool employed in the assessment of learning context both from a quantitative (establishing the physical location of context and the degree of cross-contextuality) and a qualitative aspect (focusing on the changing nature of interaction with the language in correlation with increasing degrees of cross-contextuality). The data gained from the profile is rich and insightful and is used to:

- extrapolate biographical details
- establish an in depth submersion profile of the informants
- detail the intensity of contact with native speakers in an SE and an FL environment
- qualify the diversity of contact in an SE and FL context.
- quantify media-based contact with the language in a SE and an FL environment.

With this in mind, results for the LCP will be presented in three sections: biographical and submersion profile of the informants; language contact during submersion and, finally, language contact in an FL environment.

In the following section, a biographical and submersion profile of the informants will be constructed.

5.3 Biographical and Submersion Profile of the Informants

Table 5.1 presents a summary of results detailing the informants' age, length of time teaching

English and information on submersion experiences in an SE context as they emerge from the Language Contact Profile (LCP). .

Table 5.1 Biographical and Submersion Profile

Informant	Age	No. of years teaching English	Number of Trips to an SE context	Accumulated length of time	Longest single stay	When last stay took place prior to current study
A	35	5	1	21 days	21 days	2 years
B	52	25	1	21 days	21 days	10 years
C	43	5	3	22 days	14 days	1 year
D	42	10	1	10 days	10 days	13 years
E	54	14	4	60 days	30 days	1 year
F	31	5	2	56 days	35 days	1 year
G	38	13	5	120 days	90 days	1 year
H	39	10	4	315 days	270 days	2 years
I	35	5	2	300 days	270 days	5 years
J	41	12	6	300 days	210 days	7 years
K	59	34	6	165 days	45 days	4 years
L	38	12	4	171 days	90 days	12 years
M	41	4.5	5	1851 days	1825 days	7 years
N	38	10	14	485 days	365 days	1 year
O	58	31	9	365 days	210 days	10 years
P	56	27	6	465 days	90 days	15 years
Q	46	10	4	912	365 days	4 years
R	35	4	7	410 days	365 days	2 years
S	33	7	4	435 days	180 days	2 years
T Mean SD	32 42.3 8.9	5 12.425 9.309	8 4.8 3.138	912 days 368.8 438.59	395 days 245.03 396.12	1 year 5.05 4.167

As is evident, considerable variation occurs. Therefore, in order to understand the impact of the findings, it is necessary to analyse them in detail.

5.3.1 Biographical Profile

Age

Considerable variation in age emerges from the table, from 31 years old to 59. Ten (50%) of those surveyed are aged between 30 and 40. Five (25%) from 40 – 50 and likewise five (25%) constitute members of the 50 + age range. Thus, if this cross-sectional study is representative, it is possible to

conclude that the vast majority of participants on Comenius courses is over 30 years old. And of those 50% lie within the 30 – 40 age range group.

No. of years teaching

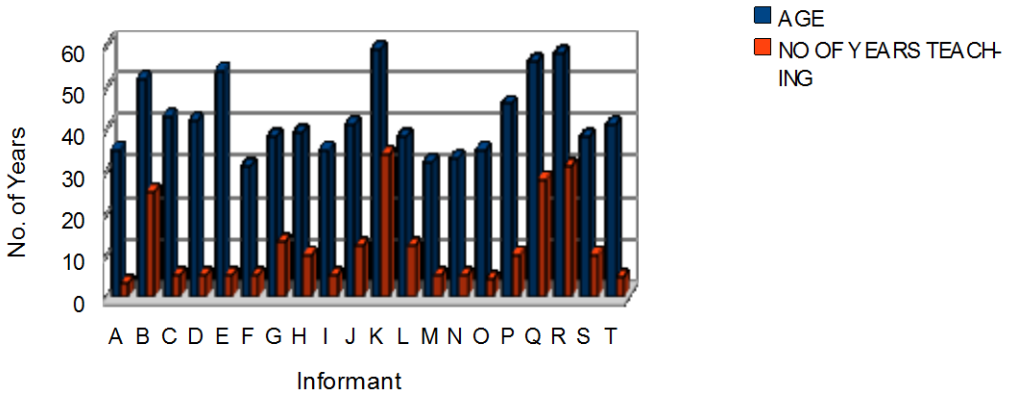
As can also be noted from the above table the smallest percentage, which is 20% (n = 4), of those surveyed, has been teaching for 25 years or more. Of the remainder, 40% (n = 8) has been teaching for between 10 and 20 years. The remaining 40% (n = 8) has been teaching for less than ten years with a minimum of four years' practice. From those figures, therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of teachers in this study have been teaching for between 4 and 20 years, averaging out at 7.95 years.

Age compared to number of years teaching

From figure 5.1 it can be seen that there is no direct correlation between the age of the informant and the length of time teaching, thus leading the conclusion that people often arrive at teaching at various stages of life.

Figure 5.1

Age vs. No. of years Teaching



5.4 Submersion Profile

Number of Submersion Experiences

Similar to other categories, the number of submersions experienced by the informants varies

greatly. One informant records 14 submersion experiences, whereas three have experienced just one prior submersion. Of the remainder, the mean number of submersions is a surprisingly low 4.8.

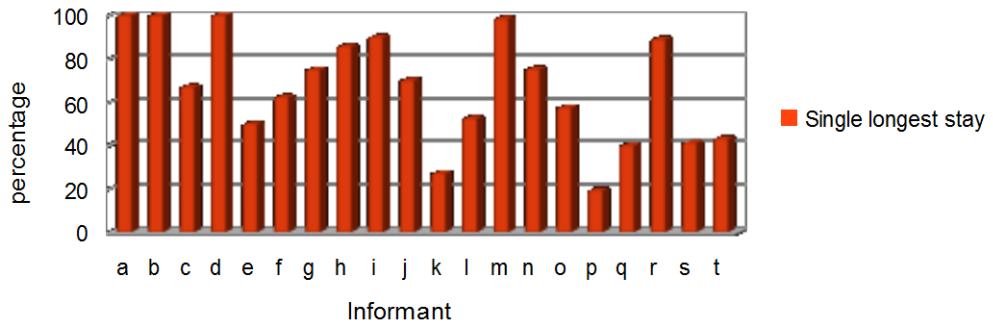
In order to develop this point further it is necessary to examine the length of submersions. When accumulated length of submersion is analysed, three distinct groups emerge. The first group refers to those who have spent 60 days or less in an SE context. This relates to 30% of informants (n = 6). An equal number make up group 2, where it can be seen that 30% (n= 6) record an accumulated stay of between 120 and one year, averaging 228.5 days. The remaining 40% of informants, group 3 (n=8), has spent in excess of 1 year in an SE context. Of group 3, one informant has accumulated more that 5 years in an SE context

Percentage of Accumulated Time devoted to a single longest stay (SLS)

Of those who have participated, 35% (n = 7) have recorded a single trip of an academic year or longer – i.e. 270 days or more with one informant recording a single stay of five years. The remainder (n=13) has reported single stays of between 10 days and 210 days. Of those, just over 46% (n= 6) show a single stay of an academic term - i.e. 90 days or more. Of the remainder, the average longest single stay is just over 25 days. In addition, 50% (n=10) of informants had visited an L2 environment in the past 2 years. For the others, 25% (n=5) had not visited a target language environment in excess of 10 years and of the remaining 25% (n=5), the average figure is 5.4 years. (See figure 5.2)

Figure 5.2

Percentage of Time Devoted to Single Longest Stay



On average, it can be said that 67.2% of the accumulated amount of time is accounted for by a

single longest stay (SLS). This gives rise to the conclusion that the favoured pattern is one long stay preceded and/or followed by several short stays. However, this pattern is not replicated throughout all informants. It rises to 79% in informants who have spent less than 60 days in a target language environment, drops to 39% for those who have spent from 120 days to one year and climbs to 58% for those who have spent more than 1 year. For 50% (n=3) of those who have accumulated less than 60 days, 100% of the accumulated SEs (ASE) is represented by a SLS. In other words, half of the informants who have spent less than three months in a TL country, have experienced just one stay in the TL country. For the remaining 50% (n=3), the single longest stay (SLS) accounts for from between 50% to 67% of their overall accumulated time in the TL country. Interestingly, this does not deviate from the overall average for all informants.

For those who have spent from 120 days to a year, there is considerably more variation in the percentage of accumulated time devoted to a SLS. It ranges from 27.27% to 90%. However, it must be pointed out that for 83.3% (n=5) of informants falling into that category, the SLS accounted for 50% or more of the accumulated submersion experiences (ASEs). Therefore, it can be concluded that for the majority of informants who have accumulated from 120 days to a year in an SE context, more than 50% of the time was devoted to a single stay.

Those who have spent in excess of 1 year, likewise, display a wide range of ratio between SLS and ASEs – from 19.35% to 98.5%. However, maybe not surprisingly given the longer ASEs incurred, only 50% (n=4) of the informants record SLSs totalling 50% or more of ASEs. This compares to 83.3% of those who have accumulated from between 120 days and 1 year and 100% of those who have accumulated less than 60 days

A distinct pattern emerges regarding the percentage of ASEs devoted to SLS emerges. For 100% of those who have accumulated less than 60 days in an SE context, the single longest stay (SLS) equates to 50% or more of the accumulated submersion experience (ASE). For those informants who have accumulated from between 120 days and 1 year, the percentage of SLS which account for 50% or more of the total ASE falls to 83.3%. This figure plummets to 50% for those who have spent in excess of one year. As a result, it can be concluded that the percentage of time spent on a single longest stay (SLS) declines incrementally with the increase in the accumulated submersion experience (ASE)

Submersion compared to no. of years teaching

When the number of years teaching and number of submersion experiences undergone by each informant is analysed, an interesting correlation seems to emerge.

Figure 5.3

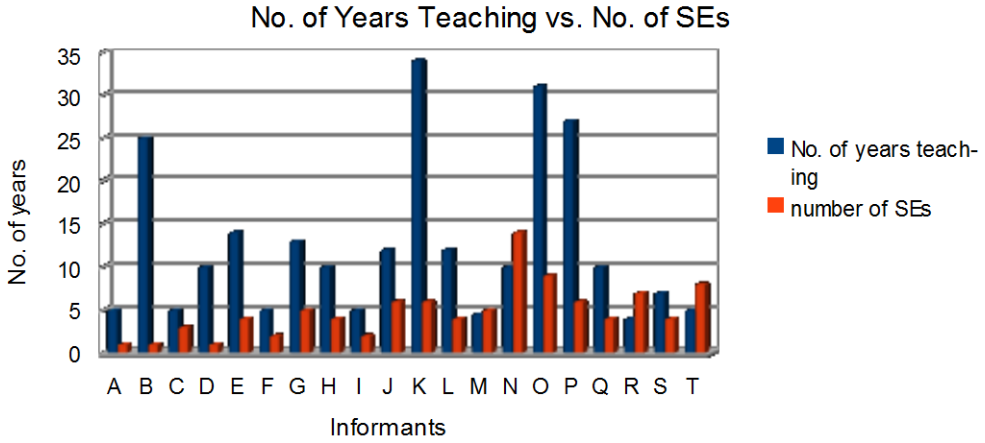

No. of Years Teaching vs. No. of SEs
No. of years
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T
Informants
No. of years teach-ing
number of SEs

Figure 5.3 suggests that on the whole, the majority of those who have been teaching in excess of 10 years have experienced a considerably lower proportion of submersion experiences than those teaching for less than 10 years. This averages at one SE every 5.45 years for those with more than 10 years experiences as opposed to an average of one SE every 1.9 years for teachers with less than 10 years experience. This considerable difference may be explained by many factors such as recent changes in ease of travel, cost of travel and the availability of SOCRATES grants. Of course, other social issues such as family life, loss of interest and perceived absence of need may play a role.

Purpose of Submersion

In addition to the above information, purpose of submersion must also be taken into account. From the entire group 92 experiences of submersion were recorded: 47.8% of SEs was for the purpose of tourism; 29.3% for study; 19.5% for non-teaching related work and 3.2% for residence. (See figure 5.4)

Figure 5.5

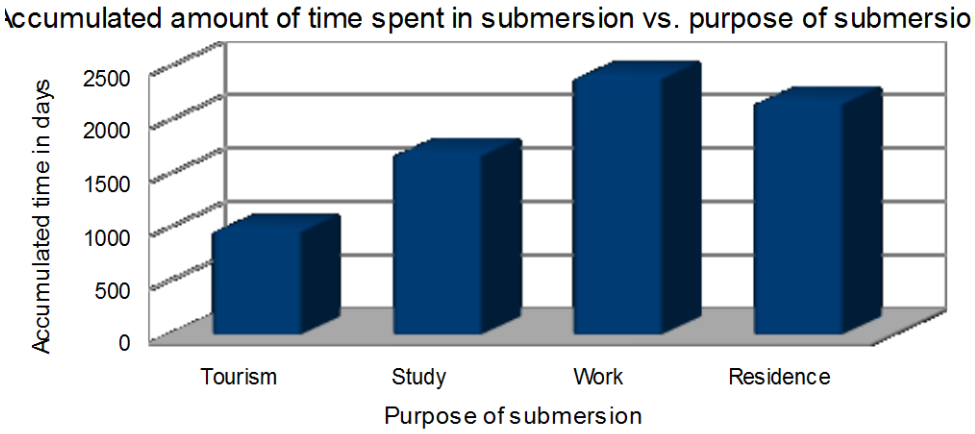
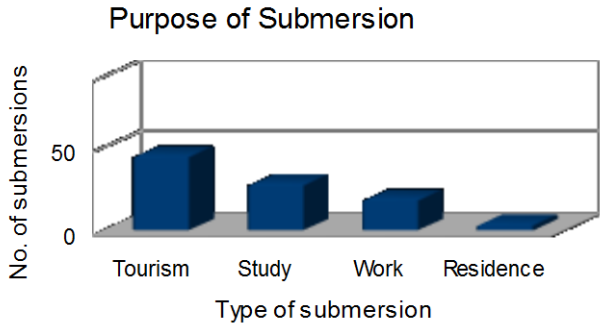


Figure 5.4



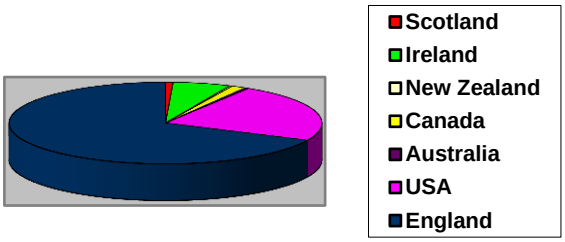
Conversely, as we can see from table 5.5, the accumulated amount of time spent on each purpose is not in concordance.

It emerges that although tourism is the primary reason for submersion in an SE context, the largest amount of time spent is for the purpose of work. Just over 33% of accumulated time in an SE context is for the purpose of work, compared to 23.2% for study, 13.4% for tourism and 30% for residence. That is to say, that even though tourism accounts for the majority of SEs, more than twice as much time is allocated to the purpose of work. However, it must be stated that the figures for residence may not accurately be representative as only three informants reported residence as a reason for submersion and one of those had lived in an SE context for more than five years. Therefore, if residence is excluded, it can still be seen that time spent working in the L2 environment sill outweighs time spent on tourism by 2.5:1.

Countries Visited

Eight countries were recorded as having been the destination for SEs. They were: England, Scotland, Ireland, Bahrain, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and USA. For the purpose of this report, it is necessary to exclude Bahrain from the analysis. This is due to the fact that only one informant had an SE there and the total length of time was 5 years. Therefore, including Bahrain would skew the figures. (See figure 5.6).

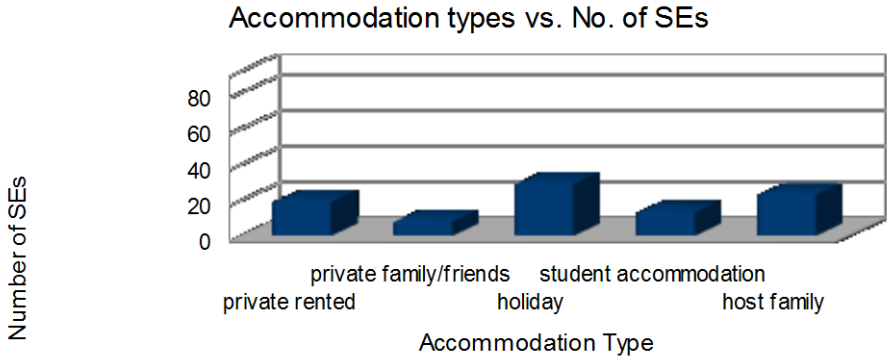
Figure 5.6 - Countries Visited



As can be clearly seen, England is by far the most popular destination for SEs. It represents just over 68% of all time spent on SEs. This is followed by the USA which occupies just over 23% of the market. While Ireland is the third most popular destination, only just under 6% of all SEs happen there. In fact only five prior visits to Ireland were recorded. Two were for the purpose of holidays; a further two were previous Comenius/Grundtvig courses and one was a nine-month Erasmus course.

Accommodation

Figure 5.7



An additional element which must be considered is the nature of accommodation. This can have a significant impact on language acquisition as it has the potential to determine not only the amount of exposure a learner has to L2, but also opportunities for output. Accommodation which is rich in potential exchanges with NSs may lead to increased linguistic gains. (See figure 5.7)

In accordance with the findings regarding reasons for submersions, the most popular type of accommodation is holiday accommodation. This includes hotels, B&Bs, hostels, campsites and apartments. However, less than half of those who stayed in the target language community for the purpose of study chose student accommodation. This reflects the relatively short length of stays in an SE context as student accommodation is often available by the term or even for the entire academic year. The remaining learners opted for either host families or private rented accommodation.

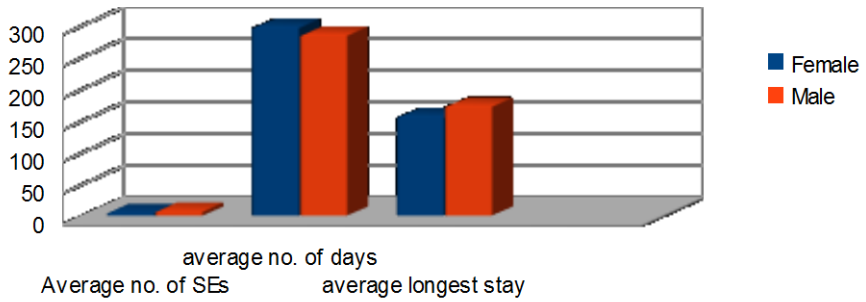
Host families were the second most popular choice for all learners with 23 of the 92 experiences taking place in a home environment. This would suggest that teachers/learners choose host families not only for short study breaks but also for the purpose of tourism. This may be due to the perceived benefits of this type of accommodation for furthering cultural and linguistic gains.
Of the remainder, 20.6% of submersions took place in private rented accommodation. This corresponded favourably with the percentage of experiences dedicated to work. In contrast, staying with family and/or friends accounted for just 8.7%.

Gender

It does not fall within the parameters of this project to study the role of gender in SLA, but as it has been mooted as a predictor for success in SLA by Brecht *et al.* (1996), it is worth spending a few minutes discussing the gender (im) balance of the group.
Out of 20 informants, 6 are male. This possibly reflects the gender balance in secondary school language teachers. It is also interesting to look at the submersion patterns of the female and male informants. (See figure 5.8)

Figure 5.8

Gender vs. No. and Length of SE



The results prove contradictory with males experiencing a third more SEs than females and having an average longest stay of 10 % more; however, females have spent approximately 4% more time in the target language environment. So, it can be concluded that the females, in this study, tend to have fewer, but longer SEs than the males. Male submersion patterns seem to be one longer stay followed/preceded by more short stays. However, it must be noted that numbers here are very small

and this area of male/female submersion patterns requires further, quantitative investigation.

In Summary

As can be clearly seen, the group of informants is heterogeneous in nature. Nevertheless, a profile of the 'average' informant can be established. Table 5.2 provides details on the average teacher/informant.

Table 5.2: A Profile of the Average Informant

Gender	Female
Age	42.3
Gender	Female
Number of years teaching	12.425
Number of submersion experiences	4.8
Accumulated length of stay	369.8 days
Single longest stay	245.05 days
Preferred Country of SE	England
Purpose of stay	Tourism
Preferred accommodation	Holiday

In brief, an overview of the average informant in this study is a 43 year old female who has been teaching for just over 12 years. She has been to an SE context almost five times and has spent more than one year there in total. The longest single stay in the SE context has been 245 days. When opportunities for SEs arise, she prefers to visit England for the purpose of holidays. However, as previously mentioned, the group was defined by its heterogeneity and as such, it may be of more interest to consider individual differences as opposed to group figures.

5.5 Contact with English in the Target Language Community

In addition to establishing a profile of the informants and their SEs, it is also of the utmost importance to investigate the kind of contact experienced in an SE context. As is known, not all

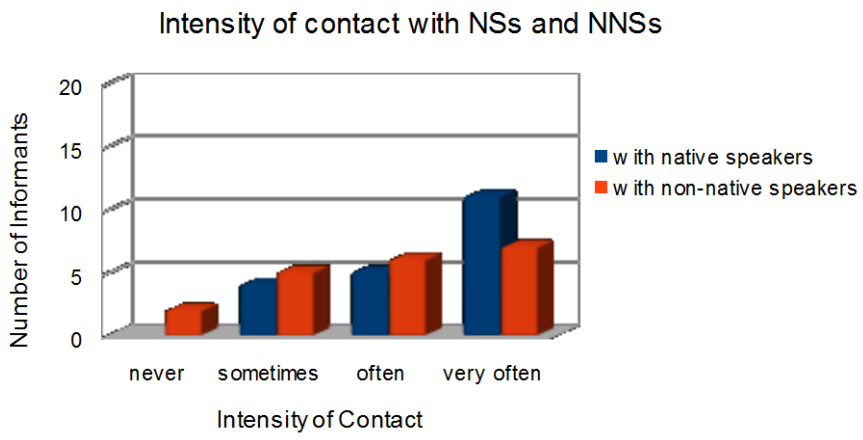
SEs are equal insofar as they differ according to length, purpose of stay and accommodation, to name but a few factors. However, they can also differ according to the intensity of contact with NSs experienced. After all, mere physical presence in an SE context does not guarantee contact with the language. As discussed in chapter 2, access to native speakers can be limited by a number of factors including issues surrounding identity such as acceptance by native speakers and reluctance of learners to accommodate to local norms. Furthermore, another factor which must be explored in connection with contact with the language is micro-level learning context or loci of learning.

Therefore, in the following section, I will consider duration of SEs as a factor influencing the intensity of contact with NSs and exposure to various loci of learning. Firstly, an overall picture relating to the group as a whole will be presented. This will be followed by a more detailed analysis on a group by group level. The first issue to consider is the intensity of contact with both NSs and NNSs during submersion experiences.

5.5.1 Intensity of Contact with Native Speakers

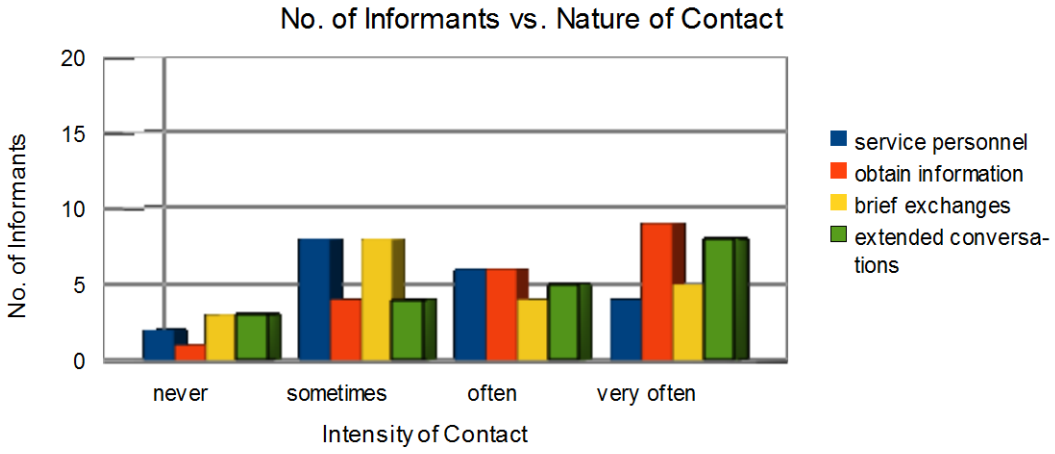
Figure 5.9 provides information on intensity of contact experienced by the informants with native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers NNSs)

Figure 5.9



When considering the group as a homogenous unit, it can be seen that the intensity of contact during SEs is weighted towards exchanges with NSs. Just over 50% (n=11) of all informants report 'very often' contact with NSs and 0% have had no contact with NSs. By contrast, exchanges with other NNSs are dominant in the 'never', 'sometimes' and 'often' categories with 10% (n=2) 'never' experiencing interaction with NNSs.

Figure 5.10



To further clarify the findings, it is necessary to consider the type of interaction afforded by the opportunities of contact with native speakers. In order to accomplish this, four categories of exchanges were examined: encounters with service personnel, obtaining information, brief exchanges and finally extended conversations.

As presented in figure 5.10, the nature and intensity of contact with NSs varies greatly. However, several patterns can be identified. The first category to consider is 'obtaining information'. This is particularly interesting insofar as it constitutes extremes. It is the most cited reason for communication in the 'very often' category and the least cited in the category of 'never' with 45% (n=9) of informants 'obtaining information' very often and 5% (n=1) never 'obtaining information'. In other words, 45% (n=9) of informants used English to obtain information 'very often'; whilst only 5% (n=1) 'never' had to use English for the purpose of obtaining information. Therefore, obtaining information may be seen as the most frequent use of English in an SE context.

The figures for linguistic encounters with service personnel prove even more intriguing with 10% (n=2) of informants claiming never to have had an exchange with service personnel. This may be accounted for by the fact that they stayed for short period with host families and possibly had no

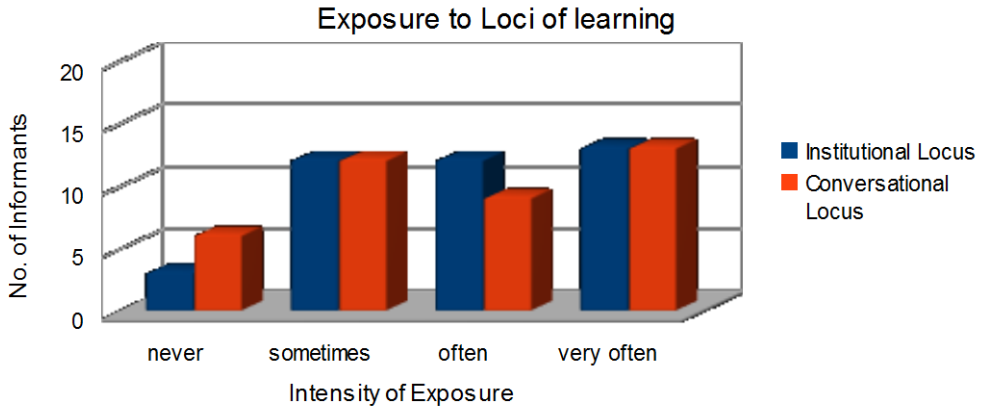
need to go to shops/restaurants. Alternatively, those informants who ‘never’ engaged with service personnel may simply have left that duty to others in their party. Less surprisingly, 20% (n=4) cited exchanges with service personnel as happening ‘very often’.

When the remaining two categories of ‘brief exchanges’ and ‘extended conversations’ are analysed, a pattern emerges. Both ‘brief exchanges’ and ‘extended conversations’ have the highest percentage of all exchanges in the ‘never’ category. 15% (n=3) of informants report no opportunities for extended conversations or brief exchanges. This may be explained by the fact that the main purpose for submersion is tourism. Holidays may not be conducive to conversations or even phatic exchanges with native speakers. In further support of this hypothesis, ‘brief exchanges’ occur most commonly 'sometimes'. This again highlights lack of opportunity or maybe even reluctance to engage in small talk for example. However, on the other side of the scale, 40% (n= 8) of informants reported ‘very often’ opportunities for ‘extended conversations.

Although, the above analysis offers compelling insight into the nature and intensity of exchanges experienced by the group as a whole, a, perhaps even more insightful way to consider the data is in light of locus of learning. As discussed in chapter 2, a locus of learning relates to an individual situation in which learning takes place. The locus is defined by factors such as interlocutor status, formality, social distance and topic. When the categories representing the nature of exchanges are analysed, it is evident that they can be conflated into binary distinctions representing two loci of learning - that is the institutional and conversational loci of learning. The institutional locus equates to interactions with service personnel and obtaining information; whereas brief exchanges and extended conversations can be viewed as representative of the conversational locus.

The conflated results are presented in figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11



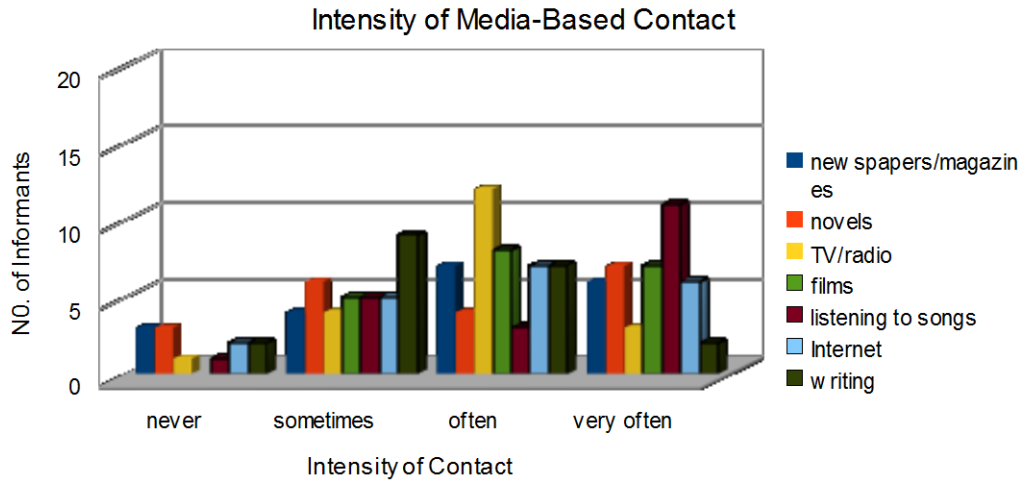
The data is a very balanced image. Out of all the 'very often' responses, 50% are for the institutional locus and 50% for conversational. That leads to the conclusion, that the group as a whole experiences equal exposure to both the institutional and the conversational loci of learning. But, when we look at the 'never', the rate of those who never participate in a conversational locus is double that of those who do not participate in an institutional locus. Thus, we can conclude that,

while opportunities to engage in institutional and conversational loci of learning are equal in the 'very often' category, there is a much greater possibility to avoid or not to be presented with opportunities for exposure to the conversational locus.

5.5.2 Media-Based Exposure during Submersion

The remaining language skills, namely: reading listening and writing have also been investigated as reflected by media-based contact. (See figure 5.12)

Figure 5.12



Perhaps surprisingly, the data indicates that learners are more likely never to read during SEs; whereas opportunities to write always seem to occur albeit to a much lesser degree in the 'very often' category. However, what stands out is listening to songs. This activity dominates the 'very often' category and appears to be what the informants engage in most often.

In Summary

To summarise the findings as relating to the group as a single unit, it can be said that submersion experiences are defined by 'very often' contact with native speakers (NSs). Learners have equal

access to both institutional and conversational loci of learning and the preferred media-based contact with the language is listening to songs.

While the figures are insightful, they may paint a somewhat skewed picture, a picture which is too optimistic regarding benefits of all SEs regardless of duration. As mentioned above, not all SEs are equal. They do not all provide equal opportunities for intense contact with NSs or balanced access to a range of loci of learning. In the following section, I will demonstrate that, despite assertions that 'duration of stay is an uninteresting variable […] (and) too crude a measure' (Klein, Dietrich and Noyau, 1995: 277) duration of stay, and especially accumulated duration is a pivotal variable when assessing the intensity of language contact and the loci of learning to which learners are exposed.

5.6 Does Duration Matter?

To further clarify the results, the findings require breaking down into more detail. When the submersion profiles of the informants are considered, they allow for a division of the group into 3 distinct subgroups according to degrees of cross-contextuality. The first group is comprised of mainly mono-contextual FL learners/users insofar as they have accumulated 60 days or less submersion experiences. The second group has a higher degree of cross-contextuality, with an ASE of between 120 days and 1 year. However, group 3 may truly be described as cross-contextual learners having accumulated 1 year or more of SE. Table 5.3 provides an overview of the groups

Table 5.3: Breakdown of Groups

	Number	Accumulated Submersion Experience (ASE)
Group 1	6	Less than 60days
Group 2	6	From 120 days to 1 year
Group 3	8	1 year or more

5.6.1 Intensity of Contact with Native and Non-native Speakers in an SE Context in Correlation to Accumulated Length of Stay

Moving on to the impact of duration on the intensity of contact with NSs and NNSs, I will first of all consider the effect of duration of ASE on oral contact with native and non-native speakers in an SE context. Figure 5.12 and 5.13 demonstrate the intensity of language contact with NNSs and NSs experienced by the mainly mono-contextual FL learners representing group 1.

Group 1 – 60 days or less

As the figures 5.12 and 5.13 illustrate, 50 % (n=3) of all informants reported very often contact with NNSs as opposed to only 16.7% (n=1) who reported very often contact with NSs. In fact, 50% (n=3) of informants had contact with NSs only sometimes. On a positive note, it is important to highlight that although exchanges with NSs were not frequent, all informants had the opportunity to engage in exchanges with them at least 'sometimes'.

Figure 5.12 - Intensity of Contact with NNSs

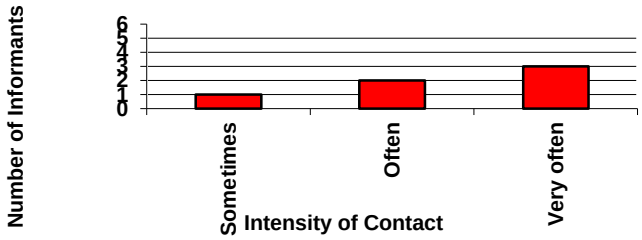
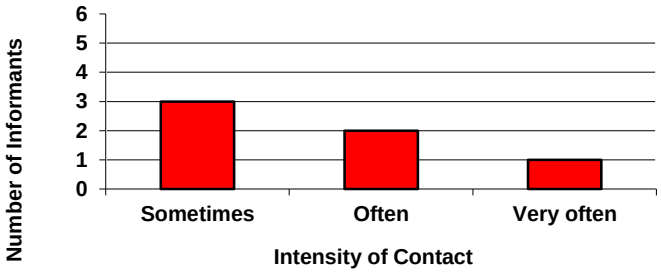


Figure 5.13 - Intensity of Contact with NSs



Group 2 - 120 days to one year

Now, I will proceed to consider the intensity of contact experienced by those who have accumulated a greater degree of cross-contextuality. When compared with the results for group 1, an interesting

picture emerges as can be seen in figure 5.14 and 5.15.

Figure 5.14 - Intensity of Contact with NNSs

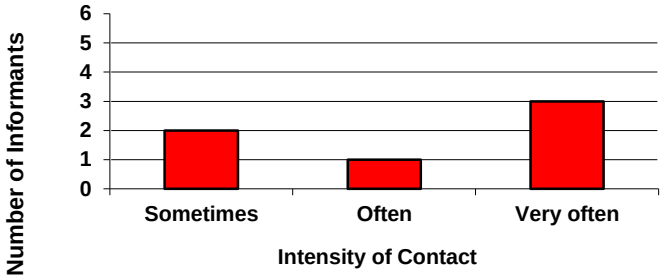
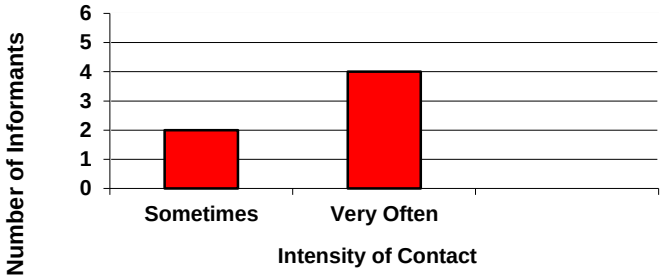


Figure 5.15 - Intensity of Contact with NSs



While the pattern for 'very often' contact with NNSs remains the same at 50% (n=3), a change has taken place regarding the pattern for 'very often' exchanges with NSs. The percentage reporting 'very often' exchanges with NSs has jumped from 16.67% (n=1) for Group 1, to 66.7% (n=4) for those who have accumulated between 120 days and one year.

Group 3 – in excess of 1 year

Turning now to the data relating to the group with the largest degree of cross-contextuality, an even more extreme change can be noted. Figures 5.16 and 5.17 display the findings.

Figure 5.16 - Intensity of Contact with NNSs

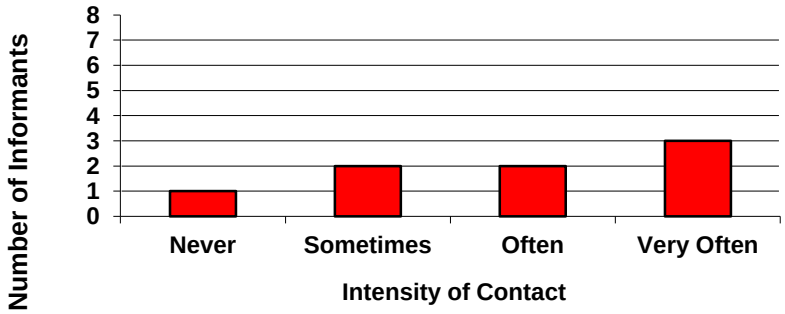
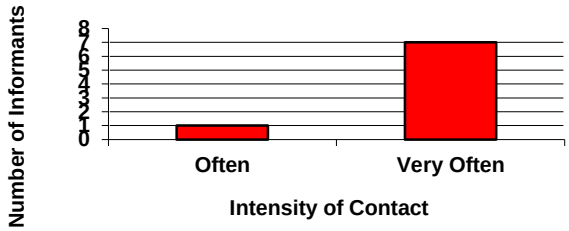


Figure 5.17 - Intensity of Contact with NSs



With regards to exchanges with NNSs, it can be seen that the percentage of those reporting 'very often' contact has halved, falling from 50% for groups 1 and 2, to 25% (n=2). It is also worth noting that 12.5% (n=1) reported 'never' having contact with NNSs. Overall, the biggest category relating to contact with NNSs has down shifted from 'very often' to 'often'. Contact with NSs undergoes an even greater shift. The percentage of those who have experienced 'often' or 'very often' contact with NSs has doubled in comparison with group 1 from 50% to 100%. In total, 87.5% (n=7) of group 3 informants experienced 'very often' contact with NSs.

Intergroup Comparison

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the effect of accumulated submersion experiences (ASE) on intensity of contact firstly with NNSs and then with NSs in an ASE of 60 days or less (group 1), an ASE from 120 days to one year (group 2) and finally an ASE of one year or more (group 3) conditions. When results for 'very often' contact with NNSs are considered, the effect of ASEs on intensity of contact is not significant at the $p < .05$ level [$F = .1$, $p = .88$]. On the other hand, the effects of ASEs on 'very often' contact with NSs proved statistically significant with $F = 4.61$, $p = .025$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were conducted with regard to intensity of contact with NSs. Results indicated significant differences between groups 1 and 3 ($p =$

.02). However, results from group 2 did not significantly differ from group 1 (p= .4) or group 3 (p= .27).

Taken together, these results suggest that increased duration of ASEs does not have an impact on intensity of contact with NNSs – i.e. that intensity of contact with NNSs neither increases nor decreases over time. Conversely, an increase in ASEs has been shown to have a significant effect on intensity of contact with NSs. Specifically, the results suggest that when learners accumulate one year or more in a Submersion context they have a significantly greater intensity of contact with NSs.

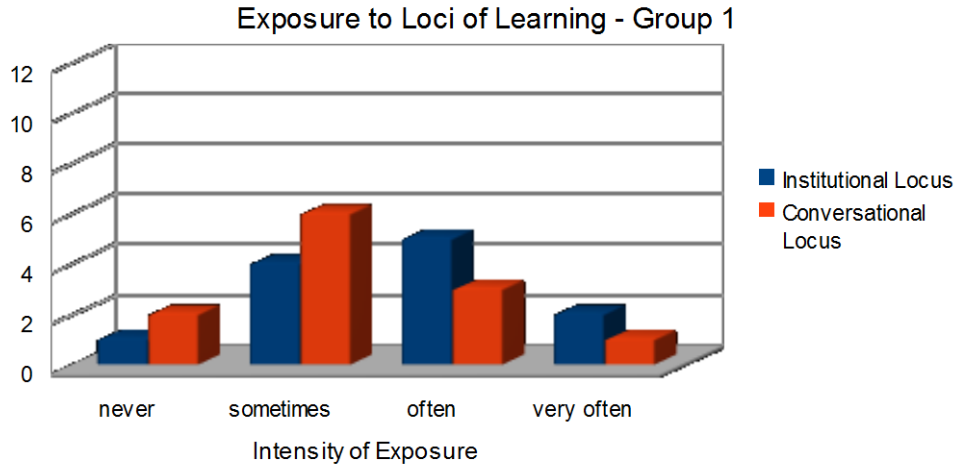
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5.7 The Impact of Intensity of Contact on Exposure to Loci of Learning

So far, it has been demonstrated that accumulated submersion experiences (ASEs) in excess of one year greatly affect the intensity of contact with native speakers (NSs). Now the impact of the intensity of contact with native speakers on the nature of language that learners are exposed to will be explored. This will be discussed with reference to the concept of locus of learning. The two loci to be considered are the institutional and the conversational. As will be seen in the following section, duration and intensity of contact play a significant role in determining the amount of exposure a learner has to the conversational locus of learning.

For the following analyses, linguistic interactions pertaining to ‘exchanges with service personnel’ and ‘obtaining information’ have been conflated to form the institutional locus and those pertaining to ‘brief exchanges’ and ‘extended conversations' refer to the conversational locus. Therefore each informant gives 2 answers for each category of intensity.

Figure 5.18



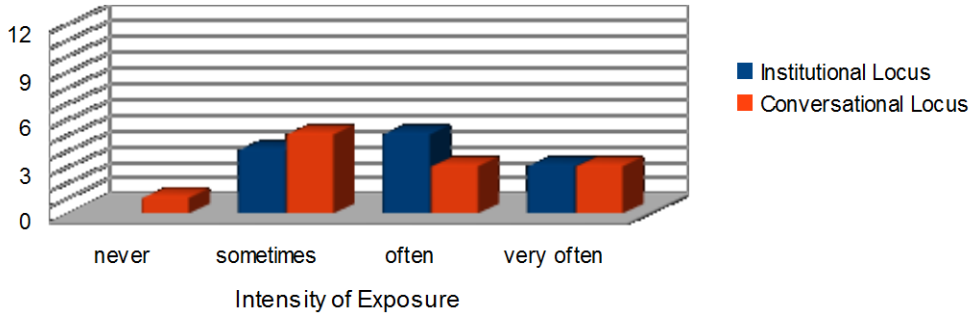
An overview of the results of group 1 as seen in figure 5.18 provides an indication of the impact. If the two extremes are considered, a rather bleak picture emerges for the conversational locus. 16.7% (n= 2) of responses indicate 'never' experiencing the conversational locus and only 8.3% (n=1) cite conversational locus in the 'very often' category. This figure is reversed for the institutional locus. Thus, it may be stated that for those with less than 60 days SE, that the possibility for exposure to the institutional locus of learning far outweighs that for conversational.

This disparity of exposure potentially limits opportunities for the learner to 'be' or 'do' a multitude of roles or display elements of a compound identity in the L2. The loci of learning to which they have access are determined by the type of exposure which is, in turn, determined by the length of SE. The institutional locus is, for the purpose of this study, categorised as 'exchanges with service personnel' or 'obtaining information'; therefore, it could be argued that the learner is more likely to 'be' a lower-status interlocutor in a socially-distant situation where the other participant/s in the exchange have the relative power to disseminate or withhold the service or information required. The informants are in effect in gatekeeping situations. Additionally, the nature of the institutional locus requires that they are short in duration and often isolated events insofar as they usually have no follow up once the service/information is provided. This, in turn, curtails opportunities for the development of relationships which subsequently may not allow for increased exposure to the conversational locus.

In short, learners with an SE of sixty days or less experience an imbalance in exposure to loci of learning and this leads to a curtailment of opportunities to 'be' and 'do' in the target language environment. This has the potential to limit the range of linguistic devices employed during SEs.

Figure 5.19

Exposure to Loci of Learning - Group 2

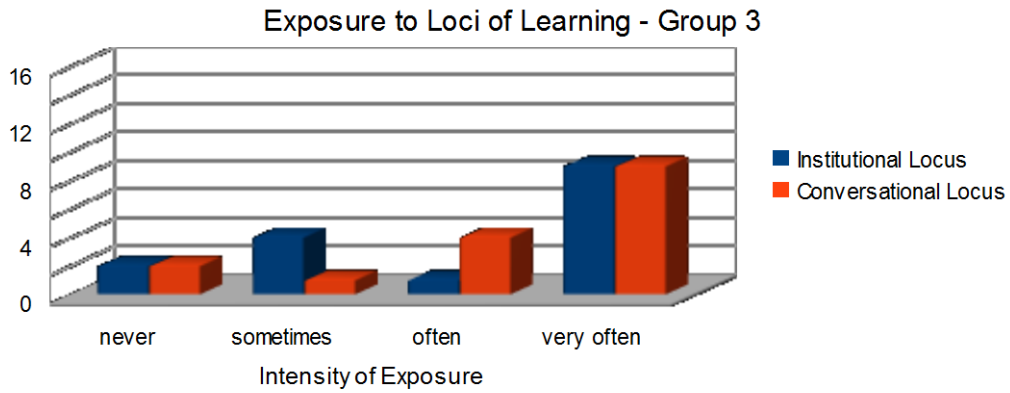


Group 2

For the second group, we see a much different picture (see figure 5.19). 8.3% (n=1) of responses indicate 'never' for conversational language. In addition all informants experience institutional exchanges. A much higher percentage of responses referring to both institutional and conversational exchanges fall into the category of 'very often'. This now stands at 25% (n= 3). More significantly, it is equal for institutional and conversational exchanges. Thus, we can see increasing symmetry in the nature of locus of learning informants are exposed to.

Despite the equalizing of exposure to the institutional and conversational loci in the 'very often' category, there still remains a certain bias towards exposure to the institutional locus. The most noteworthy figures relate to the 'sometimes' and 'often' categories with the conversational locus dominating the 'sometimes' category and the institutional locus far outstripping the conversational locus in the 'often' category. As with group 1, this asymmetry in exposure can lead to a curtailment of opportunities to 'be' and 'do' as informants find themselves mainly exposed to a locus which is normally transactional in nature. However, the imbalance is not as extreme as in group 1 and those

Figure 5.20



who have accumulated between 120 days and 1 year do have an increased, albeit limited, exposure to the conversational locus.

Group 3

This balancing out in exposure to both loci of learning is continued for group 3 (see figure 5.20). The 'very often' category has soared to 56.25% (n= 9) and the findings are symmetrical for both the institutional and conversational loci of learning. Interestingly, 12.5% (n= 2) of responses for both the institutional and conversational loci indicated 'never' having recourse to that locus. This, to a certain extent, confirms the claim that length of stay is not always a reliable indicator of contact with the language.

As the data indicate, instead of a dominance of the institutional locus of learning, a bias towards the

conversational locus of learning occurs. 75% of all exposure to the conversational locus of learning happens 'often' or 'very often' compared with 62.25% of exposure to the institutional locus. However, the most interesting feature is the parity of results in the 'very often' category. This accounts for in excess of 56.25% of both the institutional and the conversational locus of learning.

Therefore, from the point of view of opportunities to 'be' and 'do' across a range of discourse domains we see a more symmetrical picture. The informants report equal 'very often' exposure to both institutional and conversational loci of learning and this allows for greater opportunities to adopt various roles and display a more dynamic identity in both socially distant and close situations. The learner has equal 'very often' opportunity to 'be', for example, a customer 'doing' ordering lunch and 'be' a friend 'doing' discussing the events of the day and this therefore increases the range of linguistic devices required to display these identities. In addition, the bias towards the conversational locus in general for this group can lead to more prolonged exchanges. Lengthy contact potentially leads to the development of relationships with native speakers and the possibility to negotiate and construct identities which are not incongruous with the learner's core identity.

Intergroup Comparisons

In order to account for the impact of increased accumulated submersion experiences on the above findings between group one-way ANOVA tests were conducted with regard to ‘very often’ exposure to the institutional locus and the conversational locus. When results for ‘very often’ exposure to the institutional locus of learning are considered, the effect of ASEs on intensity of exposure is not significant at the $p < .05$ level [$F = 2.0$, $p = .15$]. On the other hand, the effects of ASEs on ‘very often’ exposure to the conversational locus of learning proved statistically significant with $F = 4.4$, $p = .020$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were conducted with regard to intensity of exposure to the conversational analysis. Results indicated significant differences between groups 1 and 3 ($p = .018$). However, results from group 2 did not significantly differ from group 1 ($p = .624$) or group 3 ($p = .162$).

Taken together, these results suggest that increased duration of ASEs does not have an impact on intensity of exposure to the institutional locus of learning – i.e. that intensity of exposure to the institutional locus does not depend on the length of time spent in a Submersion context. It does, in fact remain constant. Conversely, an increase in ASEs has been shown to have a significant effect

on intensity of exposure to the conversational locus. Specifically, the results suggest that when learners accumulate one year or more in a Submersion context they have a significantly greater intensity of exposure to the conversational locus. However, it should be noted that an ASE of between 120 days and one year does not seem to have an impact on intensity of exposure to the conversational locus.

Conclusion

In light of the above findings, it is problematic to concur with the assessment of Klein, Dietrich and Noyau, that 'ordering learners according to their duration of stay is usually pointless' (1995: 277). The results clearly indicate a strong correlation between the accumulated length of time a learner spends in an SE context and the intensity of contact she has with NSs. This is significantly true for ASEs of one year or more insofar as those informants have considerably higher levels of contact than those who have an ASE of 60 days or less. Interestingly results for an ASE of between 120 days and one year appear to suggest that intensity of contact with NSs during that length of ASE is variable and to some extent unpredictable. The results showed no significant differences from either those from group 1 or group 3. Therefore in order to ensure an intense contact with NSs, an ASE of more than one year is required.

In addition, accumulated duration and increased contact with NSs result in a changing pattern in exposure to loci of learning. In general, exposure to the institutional locus of learning remains relatively high and stable across all three groups. However, with regards the conversational locus the impact of duration of ASE is felt insofar as increased duration of more than one year leads to significantly more exposure to the conversational locus of learning when compared to group 1. This in turn provides a more symmetrical exposure to both institutional and conversational loci. This increase is commensurate with the intensity of contact a learner has with NSs. As with the results for increased intensity of contact with NSs, intensity of exposure to the conversational locus for informants with an ASE of between 120 days and one year is variable and often individual as the results differ significantly neither from group 1 nor from group 2.

The impact of a balanced exposure to both loci of learning cannot be underestimated. As discussed above, this has considerable implications for input and output opportunities. Learners who experience an imbalance in exposure to loci of learning experience a curtailment in opportunities to

'be' and 'do'. In other words, they have limited opportunities to express a compound identity. As this imbalance seems to favour an overexposure to the institutional locus of learning, learners may spend most of their time engaged in short, transactional exchanges where they fulfil the role of lower-status interlocutor.

However, the above conclusions do come with a small caveat. Although a distinct pattern has emerged detailing the strong relationship between accumulated duration of stay, intensity of contact and exposure to loci of learning, it is important to note that this is a pattern and individual differences will and do exist. While patterns may strike true for the majority of learners, there are still 'outliers', those who do not conform. This was witnessed in group 3 when a small percentage cited 'never' for exposure to the institutional locus and similarly, a small percentage reported 'never' for exposure to the conversational locus.

I will now turn to an area which has not received much interest within a study abroad paradigm – media-based contact with the language. I have already discussed the overall group findings and in the following section, there will be an exploration of the relationship between duration of submersion experiences (SEs) and contact with various media.

5.8 Media-based Contact

Contact with the L2 is not only limited to oral contact with NSs or NNSs, but the submersion context can likewise be a rich source of media-based contact. By media-based, I am referring to newspapers/magazines, novels, TV/radio, films, songs, the internet and finally writing. Once more, the findings will be analysed on a group-by-group basis.

Group 1

Figure 5.21

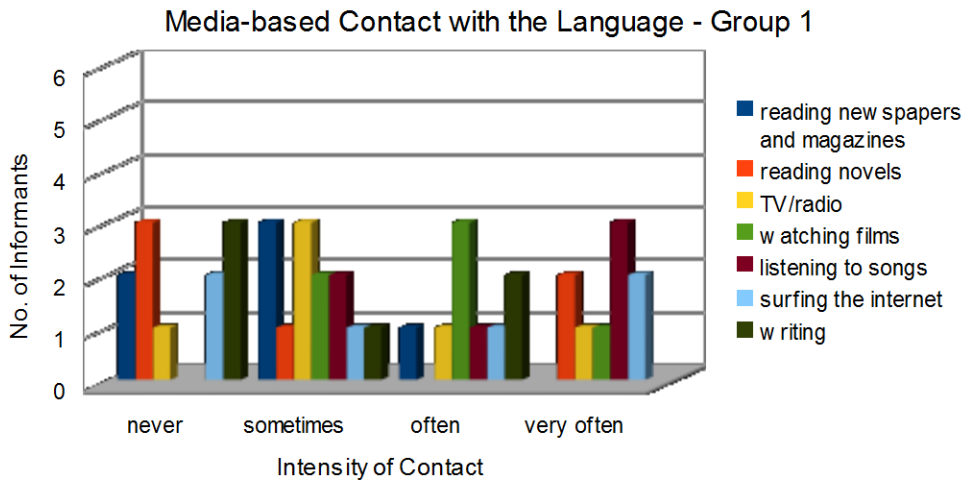


Figure 5.21 shows the results relating to group 1.

As the chart demonstrates, 5 out of the 7 activities are 'never' engaged in by learners who have accumulated 60 days or less of SEs. They are: reading magazines/newspapers, reading novels, watching TV/listening to radio, surfing the internet and writing. The most noteworthy categories for 'never' are equally reading novels and writing with 50% (n= 3) of informants never reading a novel or writing during their stay. The findings are somewhat perplexing especially in light of the fact that learners seem to always find time to engage in film watching even during a short SE. In fact film watching peaked in the 'often' category. One possible explanation for the large number of activities 'never' engaged in could be due to the dominance of tourism as a purpose of submersion. Whilst access to certain media (TV and radio) may prove problematic or undesirable during a holiday, the cognitive burden of reading a novel may seem too much on a holiday for some learners

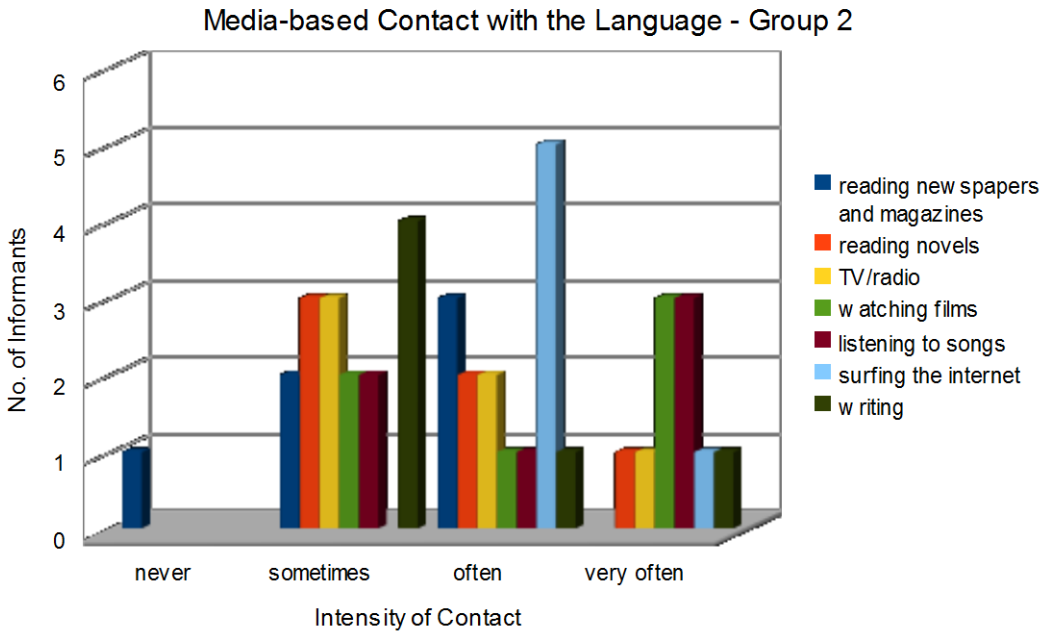
who never do it, but alternatively, for other learners even a short stay may prove a perfect occasion for reading novels in English as a third (n= 3) of learners engaged in it ‘very often’. However, learners appear to consider watching films or a trip to the cinema as part of the process of SEs.

As for the category of ‘very often’, 5 activities emerge in this category – reading novels, watching TV, films, listening to songs and surfing the internet. The most popular activity remains listening to songs. This is in concordance with the findings for the group as a whole.

Group 2

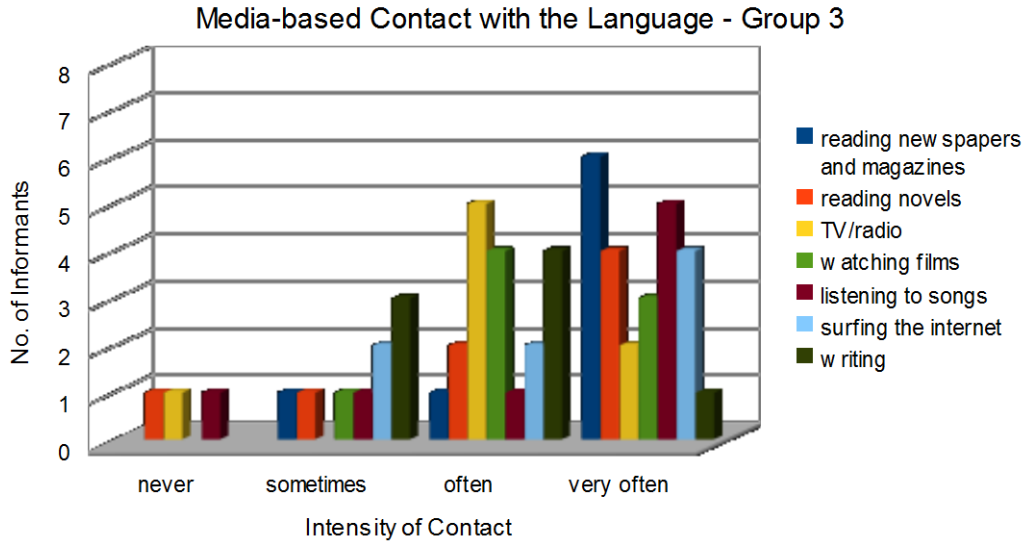
When group 2 is considered a slightly different picture emerges (see figure 5.22).

Figure 5.22



The most noticeable difference between group 1 and group 2 is that the number of activities 'never' engaged in falls dramatically from 5 to a single activity – reading newspapers/magazines. Increased duration may give rise to increased access to certain media such as TV and radio. An increase in the number of informants using the internet 'often' is also noted. Listening to songs still occupies the most popular position in the 'very often' category. However, in this occasion it shares the position with watching films. Interestingly, the number of activities in the 'very often' category has risen from 5 to 6 to include writing.

Figure 5.23



Group 3

When the findings for group 3 are analysed, yet another picture emerges. (Figure 5.23) The number of activities 'never' engaged in experiences a growth from 1 to 3. Reading novels and watching TV/listening to the radio re-enter the category and surprisingly listening to music appears for the first time

However, one of the most considerable changes relates to the importance of reading newspapers and magazines. It has shifted from being a minority activity to the most popular activity in the 'very often' category. And all activities now experience 'very often' contact'.

Conclusion

A number of between group one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to explore the impact of duration of ASE on intensity of contact with the media. With the exception of exposure to newspapers and magazines, the tests analyses point strongly to the fact that duration of ASE has no

effect on the intensity of media-based contact ($p > .05$). This points to the relevance of individual differences, preferences and local conditions as predictors of engagement with media-based contact with the language rather than time spent in a subermersion environment.

However, when 'very often' engagement with magazines/newspapers underwent a between group one-way ANOVA, a significant difference was found ($F = 15.3$, $p = .000$). A post hoc Tukey HSD further reveals that significant differences lie between groups 1 and 3 ($p = .001$) and groups 2 and 3 ($p = .001$). No significant differences were found for the results pertaining to groups 1 and 2 ($p = 1.00$). This is a strong indication that an ASE of less than one year is an insufficient period to increase intense exposure to newspapers and magazines. The fact that contact with the aforementioned media is the most popular activity for group 3 informants is of great interest. Unlike novels, newspapers and magazines are often culture specific. This is an issue discussed by Kramsch (1996) when she explores the use of authentic texts in the classroom. In general, writers of articles in a newspaper or magazine belong to the culture of the SE community and their writings are intended for members of that community. This often has the effect of alienating those not already embedded in the local culture and makes it impossible for them to 'authenticate the piece without help' (Kramsch, 1996: 186). An awareness of the cultural connotations is necessary for a complete understanding of the text. As pointed out specifically in relation to newspaper and magazine texts, 'culture is a reality that is social, political, and ideological and that the difficulty of understanding cultural codes stems from the difficulty of viewing the world from another perspective, not the grasping of another lexical or grammatical code' (Kramsch, 1996: 188).

In light of this discussion, the dramatic rise in contact with newspapers and magazines may suggest that an ASE of more than one year can result in a form of enculturation insofar as the learners seem to acquire the necessary cultural knowledge to become authentic readers of the texts. They are no longer 'forced to be readers they are not' (Kramsch, 1996: 185 – 186). However, for enculturation to be successful, it requires that learners accumulate more than one year's experience in a Submersion context.

To sum up, it can be stated that, on the whole, media-based contact in an SE environment is highly individualised and may be dependent on local factors such as availability, purpose of SE and time which can be devoted to the activities. The sole activity which has proven to be impacted by duration of ASE is contact with newspapers and magazines and this effect is not felt until a learner has accumulated more than one year in a Submersion context.

As the aim of this study is to examine the role of learning contexts on the enactment of identity, in the following section, I will carry out a similar analysis of the intensity and nature of language contact as well as the loci of learning in an FL environment. Subsequently, the results of contact in both contexts will be compared.

5.9 Contact with the L2 in the Foreign Language Context

I will start with the intensity of contact with NSs and NNSs. As discussed in chapter 2, the FL context has traditionally been considered coterminous with the FL classroom. However, studies such as those conducted by Dewaele (2005) and Housen *et al*. (2011) have expanded this notion and explored opportunities for contact in an FL context beyond the parameters of the classroom. This is exactly the approach adopted in the current study and the data presented in the following section, through an investigation of non-classroom based interaction, will demonstrate that contact with the language in an FL context does indeed transcend the boundaries of the classroom. In the following section, I will not explore the factors on a whole group level, but solely on a group by group basis.

5.9.1 Intensity of Contact with Native and Non-native Speakers

Group 1

With regards group 1, that is those who have experienced 60 days or less in a submersion context, contact with NSs in the FL context is equally divided between the categories of 'never' and 'sometimes' with 50% (n= 3) reporting never experiencing contact with NSs in the and 50% (n= 3) experiencing contact only 'sometimes'. (Figures 5.24 and 5.25). This figure in isolation may not seem particularly interesting as contact with NSs of English in an FL context is inevitably limited and often determined by local issues concerning the availability of NSs, number of tourists and the size and integration of the expatriate community, for example. In addition to the issues concerning local access, individual preferences must not be forgotten. Informants may simply prefer to use their L1 in interactions with native English speakers within their home environment.

Figure 5.24 Contact with NSs

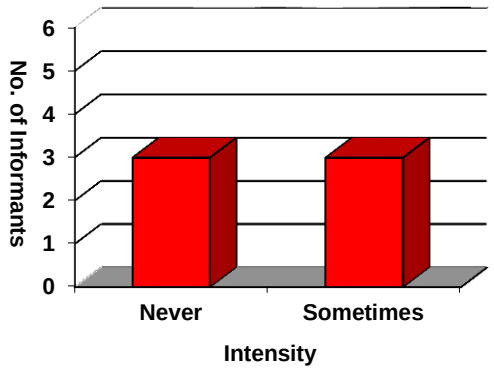
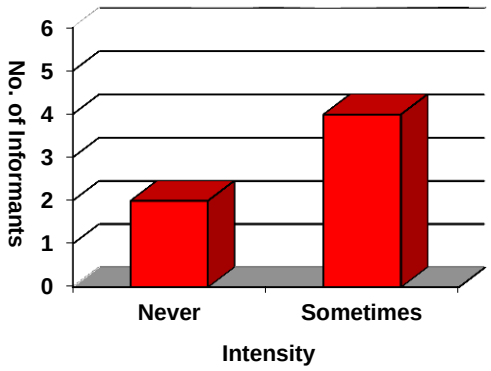


Figure 5.25 Contact with NNSs



With regards contact with NNSs, once more all contact takes place either 'never' or 'sometimes'. However, there is an increase in contact 'sometimes'. This increase is possibly accounted for; by contact with colleagues, and of course, any incidental contact where English is used as a lingua franca.

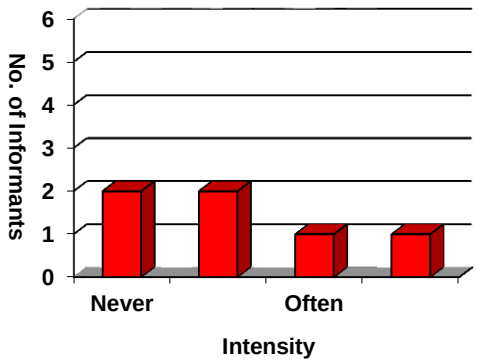
Group 2

The findings for group 2 produce a very different pattern (Figures 5.26 and 5.27). Contact with NSs takes place 'sometimes' and 'often' with 'sometimes' forming the bigger category. Once more, local conditions regarding ease of access to NSs and individual preferences must be considered. However, a tentative link between duration of submersion experiences (SEs) and intensity of contact in the FL context may be established.

Figure 5.26 Contact with NSs



Figure 5.27 Contact with NNSs



Group 3

As can be seen in figure 5.28, contact with NSs produces a very different pattern for those with an ASE of one year or more. Contact is equally split between a conflation of the 'never' and 'sometimes' categories and the 'often' and 'very often' categories. Together they account for 50% of all contact. This increase in the percentage coming under the 'often' and 'very often' represents an increase in the degrees of intensity of contact. However, it would be misleading to suggest that only gains occur. With group 3, the pattern is much more complex with 50% (n= 4) experiencing contact 'sometimes' or 'never' The data strengthen the role played by local conditions or individual preferences insofar as they indicate that opportunities for contact can be limited due to lack of access to NSs or, possibly, individual preferences not to make contact.

Figure 5.28 Contact with NSs

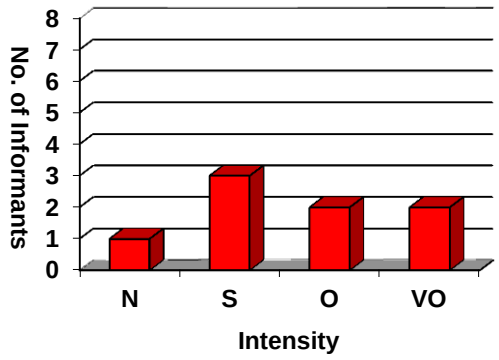
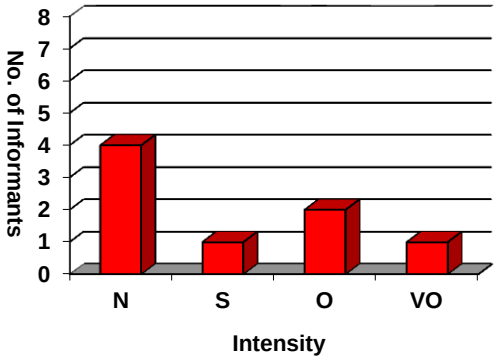


Figure 5.29 Contact with NNSs



Contact with NNSs proves equally complex for group 3 (Figure 5.29). In general, a decrease in intensity of contact is noted. The 'never' category increases from 33.3% (n= 2) for both group 1 and 2 to 50% (n= 4) for group 3. On the other hand, however, the informants experience a slight increase in 'often' and 'very often' contact - from 33.3 % (n= 2) in group 2 to 37.5% (n= 3) for group 3. Once more, this indicates a complex interplay between local conditions and individual preferences.

Conclusion

Although differential intergroup patterns appear in the intensity of contact with NSs and NNSs within an FL context, between group one-way ANOVA tests indicate the random nature of such contact ($p > .05$ in all cases). This strongly suggests that, maybe unsurprisingly, opportunities to engage with English orally in the FL context are predicated by local conditions and/or personal preferences. Any gains in intensity of contact which have been made during lengthier ASEs may

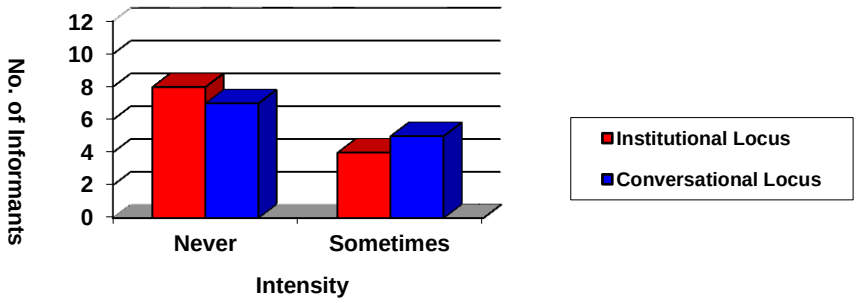
not be maintained in the FL context. Nor, indeed is there any indication that intensity of contact with the oral language in the FL context encourages learners to spend more time in a Submersion context. The results of this study show no correlation between time intensity of contact with the oral language in an FL context and the amount of time a learners spends in a submersion context. I will now explore any possible relationship between exposure to loci of learning in the FL context and accumulated length of time spent in submersion.

5.9.2 Exposure to Loci of Learning in the Foreign Language Context

Group 1

I will turn first of all to group 1. As can be seen from figure 5.30, exposure to both the institutional and the conversational loci happens 'never' and 'sometimes. However, it takes place more commonly 'never'. When 'sometimes' exposure is evident, there is a slight bias towards the conversational locus – i.e. brief exchanges and extended conversations. Opportunities for exchanges with service personnel or possibilities to ask for information are, understandably curtailed.

Figure 5.30 Exposure to Loci of Learning - Group 1

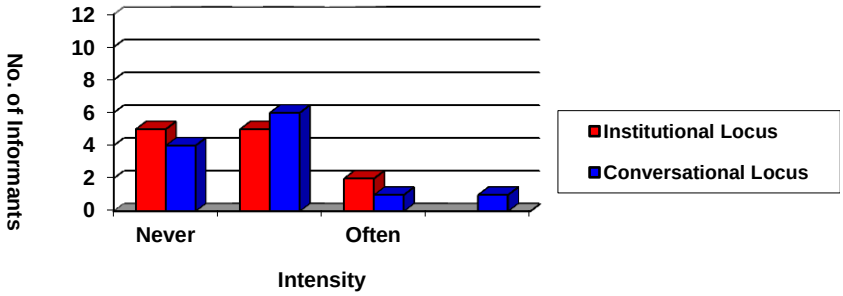


It can be imagined that the vast majority of service encounters and opportunities to ask for advice are conducted in the L2 in the FL context. Where transactional encounters may occur is by telephone or internet or perhaps in locally-based businesses where staff has not acquired the local language. However, opportunities for exposure to the conversational locus appear to be slightly more frequent. This reflects the hypothesis that exchanges may be possible between colleagues or even with native-English speaking friends, colleagues or acquaintances.

Group 2

The picture emerging from group 2 is similar insofar as exposure to both loci is dominant in the 'never' and 'sometimes categories. (Figure 5.31) However, differences arise in the appearance of 'often' and 'very 'often' exposure to the loci of learning. Interestingly, exposure to the institutional locus is more prevalent in the 'sometimes' category. This unusual finding may be explained by local or individual issues. They can include, as already mentioned, the presence in the locality of service providers who do not speak the local language or personal preferences such as conducting business or ordering items from an English–speaking country/service provider by phone or internet. An increase in exposure to the conversational locus is also noted. It appears both 'often' and 'very often'. This could be indicative of a link between duration of ASE and opportunities to enter into social conversations in the L2.

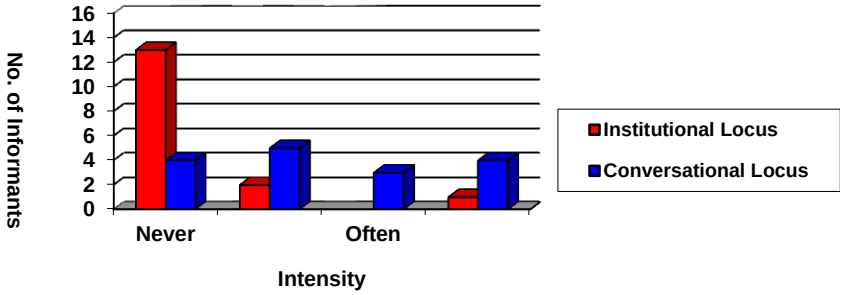
Figure 5.31 Exposure to Loci of Learning - Group 2



Group 3

Turning to group 3, a decrease in exposure to the institutional locus of learning is noted. The percentage of responses indicating 'never' stands at 81.25% (n= 13). Again this may be explained by local or individual issues insofar as access to service encounters and opportunities for obtaining information are severely curtailed in the FL contexts explored. Likewise, the individuals involved may simply show a preference for carrying out such activities in their own language.

Figure 5.32 Exposure to Loci of Learning - Group 3



However, when the data for exposure to the conversational locus of learning is analysed, a very different pattern emerges. Exposure is more evenly balanced over all four degrees of intensity which would indicate a high degree of individual differences. Additionally, responses for 'very often' exposure increase from 0% for group 1 and 8.3% (n= 1) for group 2 to 25% (n= 4) for group 3 which may be indicative of an increase in exposure to the conversational locus commensurate with accumulated submersion experiences (ASEs).

Intergroup Comparisons

On the whole, the data point to highly individualised and variegated exposure to both loci of learning. Exposure is generally low with a bias towards 'never' and 'sometimes'. However, as discussed above, there seems to be a tentative link between intense exposure to the conversational locus and ASEs insofar as responses indicating 'very often' exposure rose group by group. This difference appears greater when the categories of 'often' and 'very often' are conflated to form a single high intensity category. This results in 0% high intensity contact for group 1, 16.67% (n= 2) for group 2 and 43.75% (n= 7) for group 3. A between group one-way ANOVA was conducted with the results indicating that the difference in exposure to the conversational locus in the conflated 'often/very often category is statistically significant (F= 4.525, p= .017). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were carried out. Results indicated significant differences between groups 1 and 3 (p= .015). However, group 2 did not differ significantly from either group 1 (p= .551) or group 3 (p= .176)

To summarise, it appears that exposure to the institutional locus of learning outside the parameters of the classroom in an FL classroom is determined by issues concerning local access and personal preferences. Opportunities for service encounters and obtaining information are inevitably less frequent in an FL context. However, they may be increased if there are local companies, for example, who conduct business in English. Personal preferences could involve conducting service encounters or obtaining information on an international level either by telephone or via the internet.

On the other hand, there is a significant link between exposure to the conversational locus of learning and accumulated length of time spent in a submersion context. Informants who have experienced a longer accumulated submersion experience have significantly greater exposure to the

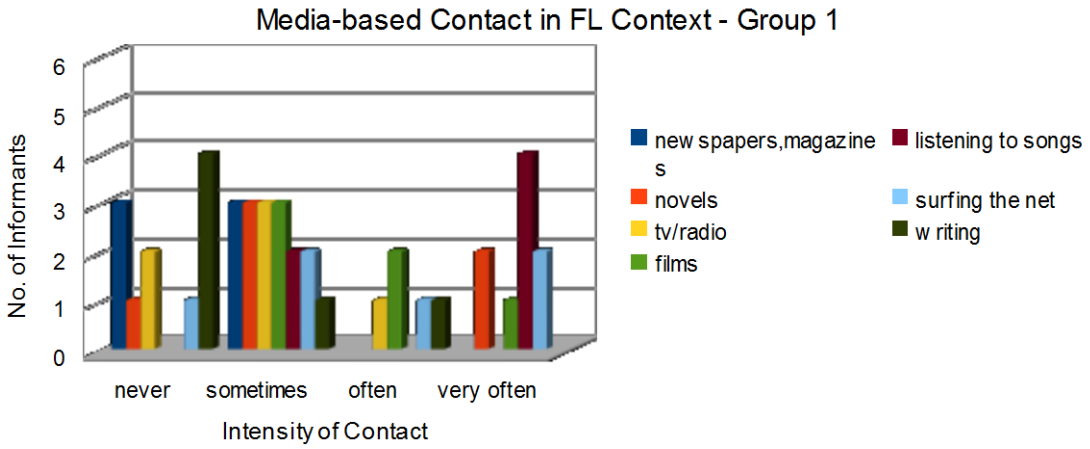
conversational locus – although this doesn't appear to be linked to greater intensity of contact with NSs. The connection is particularly salient between groups 1 and 3. These findings support the hypothesis that the FL context is much richer than has generally been allowed for. Contact with the oral language does take place outside of the perimeters of the classroom and the contact that happens mainly does so within the conversational locus of learning. In the following section, access to media-based contact with the language in an FL context will be analysed.

5.10 Access to Media-Based Contact in an FL Context

Group 1

When considering the data for group 1 (Figure 5.33), I will first of all look at the range of activities available in each category. 5 activities are engaged in 'never'. These are, in decreasing order of size, writing, reading newspapers and magazines, exposure to TV/radio and reading novels and surfing the net are both equally represented. The 'sometimes' category is the only category where all 7 activities are reported as happening. In this case, writing is the least popular activity. Both the 'often' and 'very often' categories are composed of 4 activities. However, the range of activities included in each category differs.

Figure 5.33

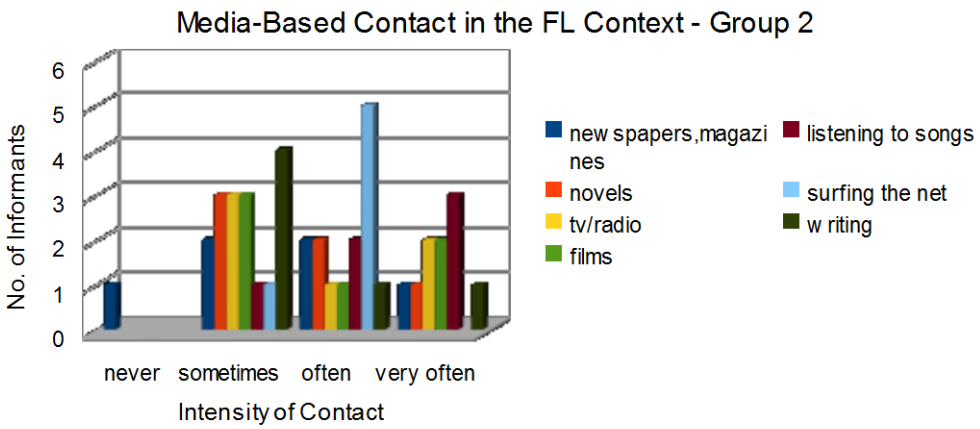


On the whole, it can be observed that for group 1, the informants are most likely to engage in listening to songs in the FL environment and least likely to write.

Group 2

Group 2 differs from group 1 mainly on the level of distribution patterns of the activities throughout the categories (see figure 5.34). Only the activity of reading newspaper/magazines remains in the never category. However, the percentage of those who never engage in this activity has fallen from 50% (n= 3) to 16.67% (n= 1). All activities enter the 'sometimes' and 'often' categories and 6 are included in the 'very often' category. This compares to 4 activities in group 1. The activity which fails to make it into the 'very often' category is surfing the net. This may seem surprising due to the ease of access of the internet and the predominance of English language items. However, once more, personal preferences may play a role.

Figure 5.34

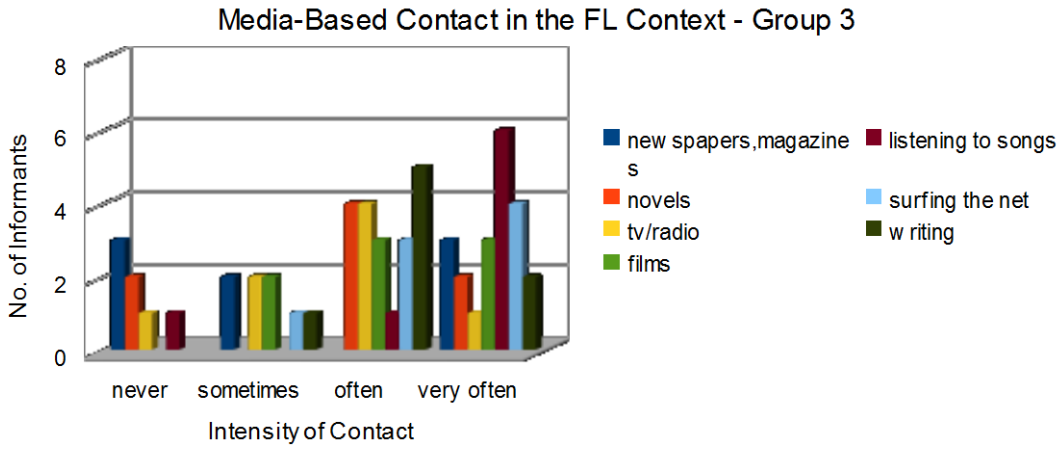


However, what remains the same for groups 1 and 2 are the most and least popular activities. Listening to songs retains its position as most frequently accessed medium and writing occupies the place of activity least likely to be engaged in. It should be pointed out that despite its unpopularity as an activity; the percentage of those engaging in writing has increased from 33.33% (n= 2) to 100% (n= 6).

Group 3

Group 3 presents a different pattern (figure 5.35). The number of activities in the 'never' category rises from a single activity in group 2 to four activities in group 3. In descending order of popularity, they are: reading newspapers/magazines, reading novels, followed by TV/radio and listening to songs both of which are equally represented. The 'sometimes' category experiences a downgrading compared to groups 1 and 2. Only five activities are engaged in 'sometimes' by group 3 in comparison with all activities being represented in the 'sometimes' category in groups 1 and 2 In fact, the only category to include all activities in group 3 is the 'very often' category. However, in accordance with the findings of the other groups, listening to songs maintains its position as the most popular activity.

Figure 5.35



In Summary

Although differential patterns in use are apparent for each group, between group one-way ANOVA tests confirm that the differences are not in fact statistically significant ($p > .05$ in all cases). This gives rise to the hypothesis that contact with the media in an FL context happens according to personal preferences or local conditions, i.e.that it is a very individualized matter. Notwithstanding the highly individualized nature of the contact, a pattern concerning engagement with newspapers/magazines can be highlighted.

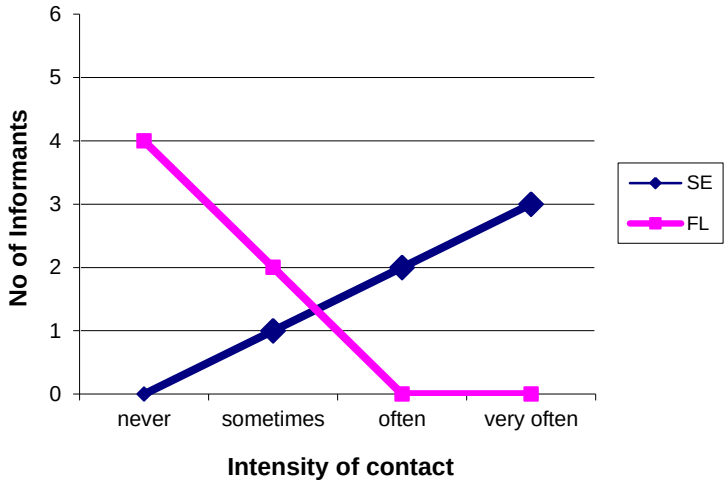
Contact with newspapers/magazines is the only activity to consistently appear in the 'never' category. All three groups report some degree of 'never' contact with that media with the highest degree cited by group 1 - 50% (n= 3) and the lowest by group 2 – 16.67% (n= 1). Although reasons for this could be manifold, it is worth considering two possibilities. They are lack of access and lack of interest. Lack of access is evident in an FL context as English language magazines and newspapers are not always easy to find or readily on sale. However, lack of interest may be more complex. It may simply be the case that the individual informants have no interest in the current affairs of a TL country and therefore this is reflected in their reluctance to read newspapers/magazines. Alternatively, lack of interest may be linked to a loss of enculturation. As discussed in section 5.8, newspapers and magazines are highly culture specific which can, by their nature, exclude foreign readers as legitimate readers. Therefore the FL context could distance learners from the culture of the TL and thus render engagement with newspapers/magazines less attractive options.

5.11 Comparison of Contact with NNSs and NSs in an FL Context and an SE Context

In order to discuss the changes that have taken place regarding intensity of contact with the language in an SE context and FL context, each group will be examined individually. I will start with group 1.

Group 1 - 60 days or less

Figure 5.36 Comparison of Contact with NNSs in FL and SE Context - Group 1



Unsurprisingly, when the data for both contexts are compared, considerable differences in the intensity of contact with other NNSs have been found (figure 5.36). In the FL context, only one third (n= 2) of informants have the opportunity to engage with NNSs. This is in contrast with the SE context where 100% (n= 6) of informant have contact with NNSs at least 'sometimes'. The figures are equally as dramatic for the 'often' and 'very often' categories. In the FL context, intensity of contact falls to 0% in both categories. Therefore, those who experience contact, do so 'sometimes'. This signifies a difference from the SE context where 'often' accounts for 33.33% (n= 2) of contact and 50% (n= 3) of all contact is cited as happening 'very often'. A paired sample *t*-test indicated that the differences are marginally significant (p= .056)

The next category to be explored for group 1 is intensity of contact with NSs (figure 5.37).

Figure 5.37 Comparison of Intensity of Contact with NSs in FL and SE Contexts - Group 1

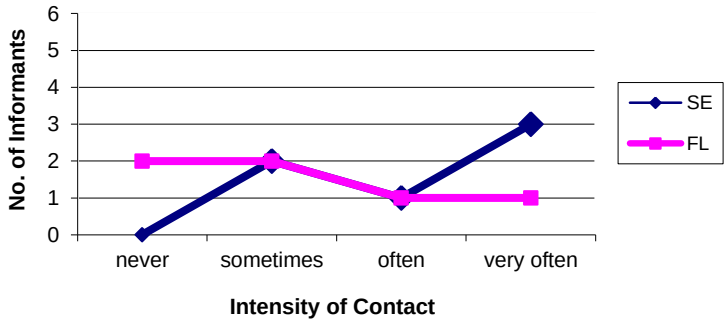


Once again, we see a change from 100% (n= 6) of all informants having opportunities for exchanges with NSs in an SE context to 50% (n= 3) having no opportunities for exchanges at all in the FL context. The 50% (n= 3) who engage with NSs in the FL context do so only 'sometimes'. This is an interesting, but not unsurprising, phenomenon as the informants do seem to seek out opportunities for exchanges in the L2, but prefer to do so with NSs as there may be little point in speaking English to someone with the same L1 or alternatively, more opportunities to engage with native speakers of English in the FL context that there are to engage with NNSs in English. However, a paired *t*-test indicated that there are no significant differences between intensity of contact in both contexts (*p*= 1.00)

Group 2 – 120 days to one year

Next, I will move on to group 2 and compare the differences in intensity of contact. With NNSs

Figure 5.38 Comparison of Intensity of Contact with NNSs in FL and SE Context - Group 2

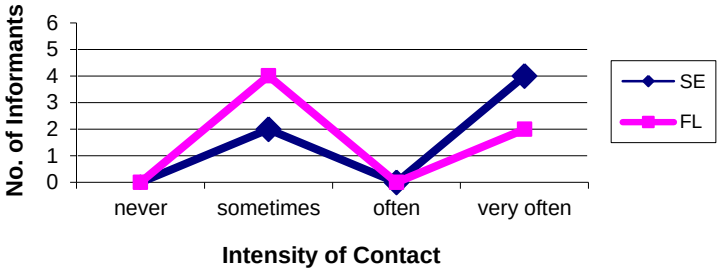


We see a very different pattern emerging in the comparison of data for intensity of contact with NNSs in an SE and an FL context (figure 5.38). In the FL context, only 66.67% (n= 4) of

informants have any contact with NNSs. This compares differentially to contact within an SE context which witnessed 100% (n= 6) of informants having at least ‘sometimes’ engagement with NNSs. While the figures for contact in an SE context overlap with those for FL context in the categories 'sometimes' and 'often', the informants were 3 times more likely to have 'very often' exchanges in an SE context. Thus, we can surmise that spending more than 120 days in the target language country is linked to increased contact with NNSs even in an FL context. A paired *t*-test indicated no statistical difference between intensity of contact in both contexts (*p*= .553)

When differences in the intensity of contact with NSs are explored (figure 5.39), once more a noteworthy picture emerges. Not only does 100% (n= 6) of all informants have the opportunity to engage with NSs in both contexts, but the patterns of intensity of contact are not dissimilar. For both sets of figures all exchanges take place either 'sometimes' or 'very often'. However, they compare differentially, in that 66.67% (n= 4) of exchanges take place 'sometimes' in FL context and only 33.33% (n= 2) experience 'very often' exchanges. The pattern is reversed in an SE context. However a paired *t*-test indicated no significant differences between the two contexts (*p*= .37)

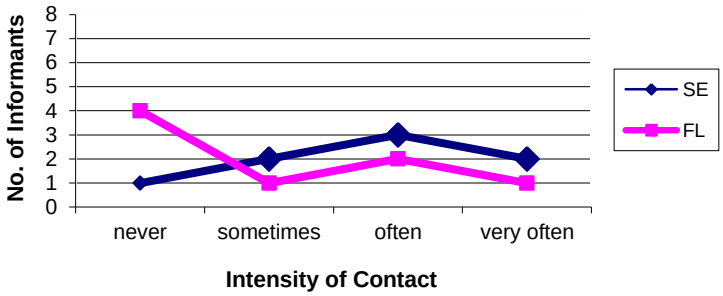
Figure 5.39 Comparison of Intensity of Contact with NSs in FL and SE Contexts - Group 2



Group 3 – 1 year or more

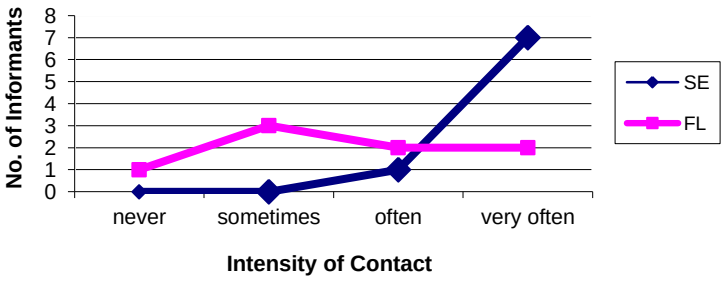
Again we see a slightly different pattern emerging (figure 5.40). 50% (n= 4) of all informants report contact with NNSs in the FL context. However, this does not compare similarly with the SE context patterns where 87.5% (n= 7) of informants experienced contact with NNSs. While differences are manifest in the ‘never’ category, in the remaining three categories intensity of contact in the FL context follows the pattern exactly of that of an SE context peaking in the 'often' category. In addition, contact in the FL context lags behind that of the SE context. However a paired *t*-test indicated no significant differences between the two contexts (*p*= .42)

Figure 5.40 Comarison of Intensity of Contact with NNSs in FL and SE Contexts - Group 3



Finally, comparisons will be made between the intensity of contact with NSs in an SE and an FL context (figure 5.41)

Figure 5.41 Comparison of Intensity of Contact with NSs in FL and SE Contexts - Group 3



For this set of figures, the patterns of intensity differ in the two contexts. A differential is noted in the category of 'never' with no informants citing 'never' for contact in the SE context and 1 recording 'never' in the FL context. In an SE context, contact was intense with all contact falling into the 'often' and 'very often' categories, peaking at 87.5% (n= 7) in the 'very often' category. Unsurprisingly, contact in the FL context didn't mirror that pattern. It peaks at 37.5% (n= 3) for 'sometimes' and levels out at 25% (n=2) for both 'often' and 'very often'. However a paired *t*-test indicated no significant differences between the two contexts (p= 1.00)

Summary

To summarise the findings regarding a comparison of intensity of contact with NNSs and NSs, I am going to explore the relationship between highly intensive contact – i.e. contact which takes place either 'often' or 'very often'. In group 1, 83.33% (n=5) of all contact with NNSs is deemed highly intensive in the SE context. This compares to 50% (n= 3) of contact with NSs also in the SE

context. However, the figures representing highly intensive contact with both NNSs and NSs in the FL context falls to 0%. When this is considered in light of length of time spent in the target language country, it may be possible to propose a bidirectional relationship between intensity of contact with the oral language in an FL context and length of ASE. That is to say that those who have experienced an ASE of 60 days or less are more likely not to have highly intensive contact with the spoken language in the FL environment.. Alternatively, it could be that lack of intensive contact with the spoken language in the FL context results in shorter and fewer submersion experiences.

I will consider the results for groups 2 and 3 together as they are remarkably similar. Results for the submersion experience context indicate 66.67% (n= 4) and 62.5% (n= 5) highly intensive contact with NNSs for groups 2 and 3 respectively. Those figures fall to 33.33% (n= 2) and 37.5% (n= 3) in the FL context. In other words, those with between 120 days and 1 year's submersion encounter a decrease in intensity of contact with NNSs of approximately 50% in an FL context and those with 1 year or more witness a drop of 40% in intensity. When the data for contact with NSs are investigated, a 50% differential is experienced by both groups in intensity of contact with NSs. That is to say that the informants in both group 2 and group 3 undergo 50% less highly intensive contact with NSs in the FL context.

When the findings for group1 and groups 2 and 3 are looked at together, the emerging patterns indicates that those who spend more than 120 days in a target language environment are much more likely to experience highly intensive contact with the spoken language in the FL context. They experience declines in the levels of intensity between the SE context and FL context of just 50%. In contrast, those with an ASE of 60 days or less experience a fall of 100% and therefore no highly intensive contact in the FL context.

5.12 Comparison of Exposure to the Institutional and Conversational Loci of Learning in an FL context and an SE Context

5.12.1 The Institutional Locus

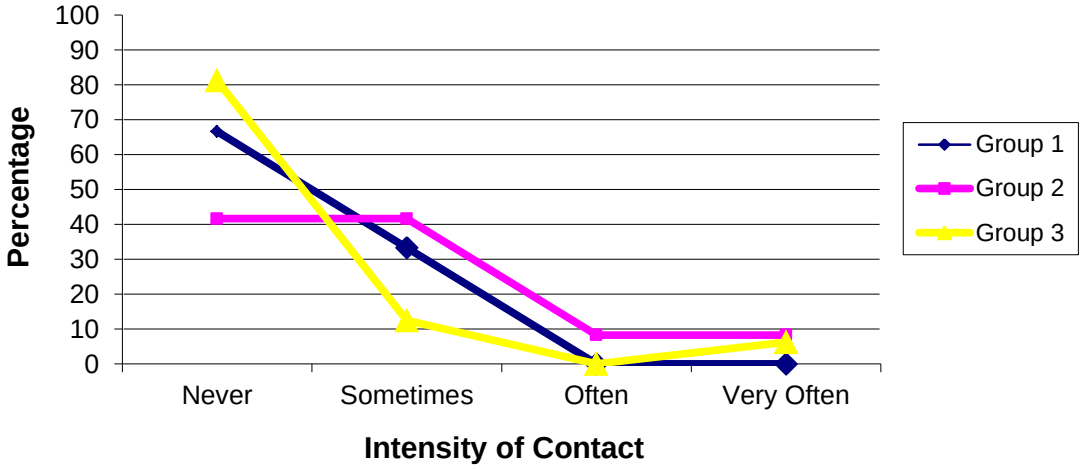
Data collected for the exposure to the institutional locus of learning in an SE context are presented in figure 5.42, and those for exposure to the same locus in the FL context are presented in figure 5.43

Figure 5.42 Intergroup Comparison of Exposure to the Institutional Locus in an SE Context



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Figure 5.43 Intergroup Comparison to Intensity of Contact with Institutional Locus in FL Context



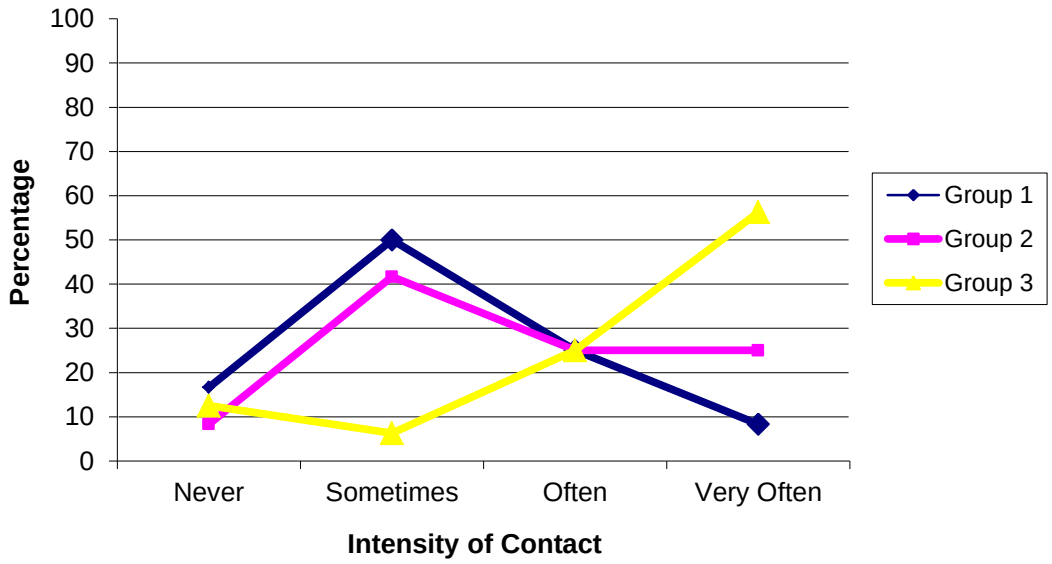
Unsurprisingly, rates of attrition in the FL context were high and followed a pattern different to that of an SE context. Group 3 recorded the highest figures in the 'never' category in both an FL and an SE context – almost twice that of group 2; whereas group 2 recorded a slightly higher percentage in the 'very often' category. Thus, it maybe possible to conclude that spending more than 120 months in an SE context leads to a higher degree of institutional language carried out in the L2 in FL context. The fact that those who have spent more than one year showed a decrease would suggest the importance of local issues such as need and access.

5.12. 2 The Conversational Locus

The SE Context

The figures for attrition in access to Conversational language are more interesting. For all groups the percentage in the 'never' category rises. For group 3 it doubles. For groups 1 and 2 it increases by 350% and 400% respectively. This could lead to the conclusion that spending in excess of one year in a target language environment leads to less attrition of contact with NSs in the FL context and thus more opportunities for interaction. (See figure 5.44)

Figure 5.44 Intergroup Comparison of Intensity of Contact with the Conversational Locus in an FL Context



This conclusion is further underpinned by the figures in the 'very often' category which reflect a similar pattern. For group 1 the figure drops to zero, for group 2, it is 3 times lower and group 3, it is 2.5 times lower.

Figure 5.45 Intergroup Comparison of Intensity of Contact with Conversational Locus in an SE Context

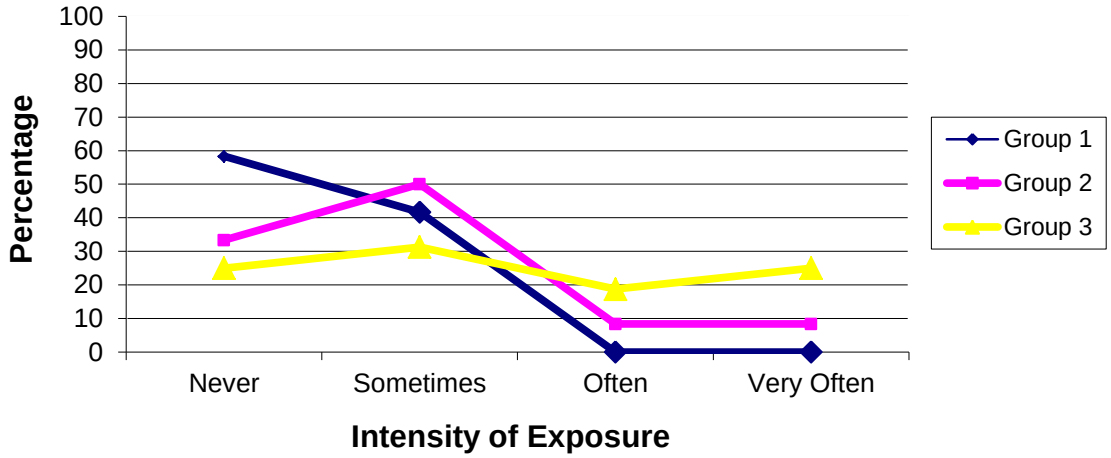


Figure 5.45 likewise illustrates a lower rate of attrition amongst those who have spent in excess of one year in the target language country. It can be quite clearly seen that the level of attrition decreases incrementally according to length of time spent in an SE context and may be deduced that those who experience longer submersions either maintain contacts they have met in submersion or seek out native speakers in the FL context.

5.13 A Comparison of Media-Based Contact in an SE Context and FL Context

Group 1

Table 5.4

	Never SE	Never FL	Sometimes SE	Sometimes FL	Often SE	Often FL	Very often SE	Very often FL
Newspapers/ magazines	33.3%	50%	50%	50%	16.7%	0%	0%	0%
Novels	50%	16.7%	16.7%	50%	0%	0%	33.3%	33.3%
TV/ radio	16.7%	33.3%	50%	50%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0%

Films	0%	0%	33.3%	50%	50%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%
Listening to songs	0%	0%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	0%	50%	66.7%
Internet	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%
Writing	50%	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%	0%	0%

The results between media-based contact in SE and FL context seem rather disparate. This is probably caused by the short bursts of time spent in an SE context and the purpose of visits which are mainly for tourist reasons. Differences do occur, however, in the amount of time spent on reading newspapers with less informants 'never' reading newspapers and magazines in an SE context more 'often' contact with them in an SE context. This may be explained by the ease of access to such media in an SE context and the short time needed to read/flick through them. On the other hand, novels are read less 'never' and more 'often' in FL context. Once more this may be explained by the short nature of the SEs in that there is considerably less time available to peruse bookshops and devote time to prolonged reading. However, it is worth remembering that reading novels may be essential for the syllabus being taught. TV and radio exposure seems to benefit from even short SEs and may be put down to ease of exposure. Even on holidays, TV is available in most accommodation types and is available at no extra cost or effort. Despite greater ease of access, contact with TV and radio is still minimal. Perhaps most surprisingly, writing activity is more common during SEs with fewer people engaging in it 'never' and more 'often'. This seems to go against reason as it requires a great deal of effort. However, we must not forget that many short SEs were also for the purpose of study and much of that requires writing.

Group 2

Table 5.5

	Never SE	Never FL	Sometimes SE	Sometimes FL	Often SE	Often FL	Very often SE	Very often FL
Newspapers/ magazines	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	50%	33.3%	0%	16.7%
Novels	0%	0%	50%	50%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%

TV/ radio	0%	0%	50%	50%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%
Films	0%	0%	33.3%	50%	16.7%	16.7%	50%	33.3%
Listening to songs	0%	0%	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	50%	66.7%
Internet	0%	0%	0%	16.7%	83.3%	83.3%	16.7%	0%
Writing	0%	0%	66.7%	66.7%	16.6%	16.6%	16.6%	16.6%

What emerges here is a more balanced contact with 'other' aspects of the language. Those who spend from 3 months to a year appear to have similar contact with media-based aspects of the language both in SE and FL contexts with patterns of engagement in reading novels and writing being exactly the same. Internet use and watching films happens more 'very often' in an SE context which may be expected due to ease of access.

Group 3

Table 5.6

	Never SE	Never FL	Sometimes SE	Sometimes FL	Often SE	Often FL	Very often SE	Very often FL
Newspapers/ magazines	0%	37.5%	12.5%	25%	12.5%	0%	75%	37.5%
Novels	12.5%	25%	12.5%	0%	25%	50%	50%	25%
TV/ radio	12.5%	12.5%	0%	25%	62.5%	50%	25%	12.5%
Films	0%	0%	12.5%	25%	50%	37.5%	37.5%	37.5%
Listening to songs	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0%	12.5%	12.5%	62.5%	75%
Internet	0%	0%	25%	12.5%	25%	37.5%	50%	50%

Writing	0%	0%	37.5%	12.5%	50%	62.5%	12.5%	25%

For group 3 a very different pattern emerges. It is characterised by drops in rates of 'very often' contact with newspapers and magazines; novels and TV/radio in the FL context. Once more, this is not surprising due to ease of access. In all three categories rates dropped by 50 percent. Increases occurred in the rates of 'never' for exposure to reading material – from 0 – 37.5% in the case of newspapers/magazines and by 12.5% to 25% in the case of novels. The former can easily be explained through ease of access to the print media; whereas the latter defies the patterns established in the previous two groups of rates either declining (group 1) or staying the same (group2). Reasons for this may be accounted for by individual differences and experiences. Reading novels may have been a leisure activity in an SE context – or maybe an enforced activity – either self-enforced or because of a course of study being followed – in FL context it may no-longer be a necessity or a luxury. Interestingly, rates for 'often' and 'very often' increased for writing. This could be due to work demands or keeping in contact with NS friends

Chapter Summary

In the current chapter, I analysed the findings for the language contact profile (LCP). The data extracted were analysed to produce findings under 3 headings: biographical and submersion profiles of the informants; language contact in a submersion experience (SE) context and finally language contact in a foreign language (FL) context. The data highlights the heterogeneous nature of the group but nevertheless establishes a profile of the average informant in the study – i.e. a 42.3 year old female who had been teaching for just over 12 years. The informant prefers to go the England for the purpose of holidays. She has been to a target language country almost 5 times.

The heterogeneous nature of the group led to the breaking down of the group into 3 subgroups according to accumulated submersion experience – group 1 representing those with 60 days or less in accumulated submersion experiences, group 2 from 120 days to 1 year and finally group 3 who had all accumulated 1 year or more in submersion experiences.

Contact with the language as reported by each group was then analysed. Three categories of language contact were considered: intensity of contact with the spoken language, loci of learning to which the informants were exposed and lastly intensity of media-based contact. The analyses were conducted for both the SE context and the FL context.

From the point of view of the SE context, a strong link was demonstrated between the duration of submersion experiences and the intensity of contact with NSs. Therefore, it can be stated that increased duration of ASEs results in a greater intensity of contact with NSs during submersion. Duration of stay can have a direct influence on intensity of contact with NSs

A causal relationship was also established between duration of stays, intensity of contact with NSs and loci of learning. The analyses demonstrate that short stays with limited contact with NSs result in a much higher degree of exposure to the institutional locus of learning. This imbalance is redressed over time with lengthier stays incurring increased exposure to the conversational locus. This leads to a much more balanced exposure to both the institutional and the conversational loci of learning thus increasing the learners opportunities to 'be' and 'do' in the submersion context.

Media-based contact with the language was composed of engagement with newspapers/magazines, novels, TV, films, songs, the internet and writing. Individual preferences were highlighted the major factor influencing media-based contact. Whilst the number of activities engaged in increased over time, the configuration of the activities showed no distinct patterns – with the exception of contact with newspapers/magazines. Reading newspapers/magazines proved particularly noteworthy as engagement with this medium increased significantly over time. It was the least popular activity for group 1 and the most popular for group 3. Its popularity (or lack of) seems to be closely connected with increases in culture-specific knowledge of the target language country. This led to the conclusion that submersion experiences of longer than one year result not only in a more intense engagement with the language as a whole but also to deeper levels of cultural insight. As far as contact in the FL contest is concerned, that data indicate that the FL context goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Whilst some patterns relating time spent in the target language country and contact with the TL in the FL context were established – i.e. exposure to the conversational locus of learning is commensurate with time spent in a submersion context, issues such as local access to speakers of the SE and individual preferences seemed to play a more substantial role than in the SE context. Additionally, it was impossible to establish a causal link between ASEs and contact with NSs or NNSs in the FL context. In fact the data indicate that there

is no link between time spent in a submersion context and contact with NNSs or NSs in an FL context.

Chapter 6

Results of Performance Data

This is the second chapter of results. This represents an analysis on a strategic and a linguistic level

This chapter presents the results of an analysis of sociopragmatic variation patterns in the discourse of the informants. The aim of the analysis is to answer four main questions:

5. Does sociopragmatic variation occur in the discourse of primarily foreign language (FL) learners?
6. How is variation indexed in discourse?
7. What, if any, identity is enacted by the informants and what is the effect of learning context?
8. Do degrees of cross-contextuality have an impact on variation patterns?

As previously mentioned the data were gathered by means of naturalistic role plays in which the informants were placed into dyads and required to play themselves in two speech events pertaining to dialogues which focus on the speech act of asking for advice.
The situations were carefully graded to allow two distinct identities to be enacted by the 'asker' for advice, i.e. a lower-status interlocutor in a formal, socially-distant situation and an equal status interlocutor in an informal situation with no level of social distance.
The situations were the following:

1. you are having trouble with your partner – ask your close friend for advice
2. ask your friend for advice on opening a Facebook account
3. your child is having problems at school – ask the head for advice
4. ask the assistant at the gym for advice on staying fit

The intended relationship between interlocutors can be described thus:

4. vertically and horizontally neutral
5. vertically and horizontally neutral
6. vertically lower, horizontally distant
7. vertically lower, horizontally distant

Additionally, situations 1 and 2 represent a conversational locus; whereas 3 and 4 invoke an institutional locus. Each informant initiated one interaction in the conversational locus and one in the institutional locus.

A complex analysis of the results was conducted on two levels –a strategic level and a linguistic level. The aim of the strategic-level analysis is to ascertain degrees of sociopragmatic variation between the institutional and the conversational genres at levels of conventionality and directness on an intra-group level and then to explore the relationship between sociopragmatic variation patterns and the variable of learning context as measured by submersion experiences (SEs) or cross contextuality. This stage is primarily quantitative in nature. The second stage of the analysis is linguistic. A micro-analysis of the language was carried out. The analysis is unique insofar as it represents a blended methodology which amalgamates features of speech act theory, politeness theory and discursive practice theory to perform an in depth analysis of how the various identities are indexed in discourse. The areas under investigation are speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. The results from the linguistic analysis provide compelling qualitative support for the quantitative strategic analysis.

6.1 Strategic Analysis

6.1.1 Group 1

Analysis of Institutional Genre

The first section of the analysis is concerned with the investigation of the strategies employed by the informants of group 1 in their enactment of the identity of lower-status interlocutor in a socially-distant formal situation. Table 6.1 shows that 33 tokens were employed over the three strategies of conventionalised indirectness, conventionalised directness and non-conventionalised indirectness.

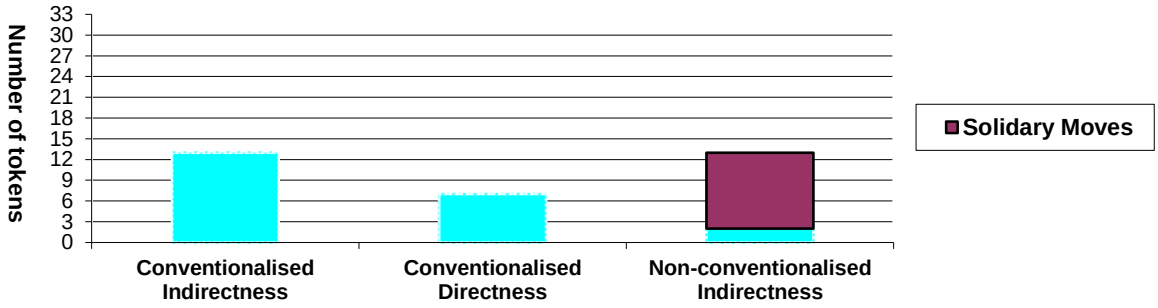
Non-conventionalised indirectness is further subdivided into solidary moves and non-solidary moves.

Table 6.1

Strategy	**Sample Exponents**	**Number**
Conventionalised Indirectness		13
	Can you help me? Can I do anything else? What can you recommend me? The pros and cons? Maybe I'm doing something wrong?	
Conventionalised directness		7
	In which order? Is there any...? How do I stay healthy? I don't understand I don't know	
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		13
1.Non-solidary moves	But why?	(2)
11.Solidary Moves	I can't choose. What can you recommend? I wanted to come here and ask you...? So, I don't know how..., can you tell me …., please? I don't know how to get fit. Can you tell me what to do?	(11)
Total number of tokens		33

The three categories identified are presented in order of use in figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Breakdown of Use of Strategies in Institutional Genre



As is evident from figure 6.1, conventionalized strategies dominate the institutional situation. This in itself is an interesting and significant phenomenon as it conforms to the Brown & Levinson (1978) list of strategies for avoiding negative face; however, it is not the only measure by which the results can be measured. They can also be analysed according to the degrees of directness involved. This gives rise to two polarity measures: conventionality and directness.

Degrees of Conventionality and Directness

As previously noted, asking for advice in an institutional situation is characterised by conventionalised routines. These account for 60.6% (n= 20) of all tokens. However, it is clear that not all the conventionalised routines are the same. In fact, when these figures are further analysed, it arises that 65% (n= 13) of conventionalised routines are categorized as indirect and 35% (n= 7) as direct. This is in accordance with the taxonomy provided by Kasper (1987) where routines that have been mitigated or softened by means of modality or lexical downgraders for example are considered indirect and those utterances where there is clearly no mismatch between locution and illocution are termed direct. Examples from the data are: 'What can you recommend me?' (#F) and 'How do I stay healthy?' (#A). The first question has been mitigated by the use of the epistemic modal 'can' and therefore comes under the category of indirect; whereas in the second utterance there is no use of mitigators or downgraders and this, therefore can be viewed as direct.

The remaining 39.4% (n= 13) of tokens, although solidary and non-solidary moves, nevertheless have certain commonalities. The strategies can all be categorized as non-conventionalised insofar as they all constitute particularly individualised strategies which follow no particular rules. In addition, the remaining strategies all come under the category of indirectness. They are the types of strategies which require a certain amount of disambiguation from the part of the listener as the match between the locution and illocution of the utterance is not always clear. An example of this is the statement question as found in solidary moves: 'Maybe I'm doing something wrong?' (#B)

From a locutionary perspective, it functions as a statement. Therefore the first task of the listener is to re-interpret it as a question. The second task is then to re-interpret what could be a yes/no question as a request for advice. It is therefore clear that while enacting a lower-status identity in a formal, institutional situation with a socially distant interlocutor, informants with a very low degree of cross-contextuality show a preference for conventionally indirect strategies

This dependence on conventionalised routines seems to run counter to the language patterns of highly advanced users. According to the taxonomy of Kasper and Rose (2002: 140), this is an intermediate level in the acquisition of request strategies and as such may not reflect the degrees of subtlety and nuanced fine-tuning expected from a highly-advanced speaker. However, when the demands of the situation are taken into consideration, it can be seen that conventionalised routines are an integral part of the institutional locus. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) propose a 'Maxim of Congruence' which focuses on making contributions congruent with status within the speech act of advising. I will argue that by opting for a strongly-conventionalised, indirect strategy the informants are adhering to the 'Maxim of Congruency'. They have chosen to employ routinised structures which are expected in an institutional interaction. Therefore by opting for this strategy, the informants are rendering the discourse sociopragmatically appropriate.

Congruency with the sociopragmatic demands is further supported by patterns of directness. Firstly, the preferred pattern is indirectness. This more obviously represents the discourse of highly-proficient users/learners. Additionally it provides a congruent match with the sociopragmatic demands as indirectness can be used to reduce the illocutionary force of the speech event. More precisely, Brown and Levinson (1978) highlight the need to be conventionally indirect in order to save the face of the interlocutor. Therefore indirectness can be employed to prevent a face-threatening act both from the perspective of the 'asker' and the advisor as it affords the opportunity for the advisor to refuse and the 'asker' to accept the refusal while still preserving face. .

In brief, 78.78% (n= 26) of tokens can be characterised as indirect and 60.6% (n= 20) as conventionalised. This pattern, although not always indicative of the discourse of highly-proficient users/learners, nevertheless seems to fit the demands of the situation and can therefore be deemed sociopragmatically appropriate.

Conversational Genre

As shown in table 6.2, 24 tokens are present in the discourse of the informants for 'asking for advice' in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-lower interlocutor of equal status. These are unequally distributed among the 3 strategies and 2 substrategies.

Table 6.2: Strategic Analysis for group 1, Conversational situation

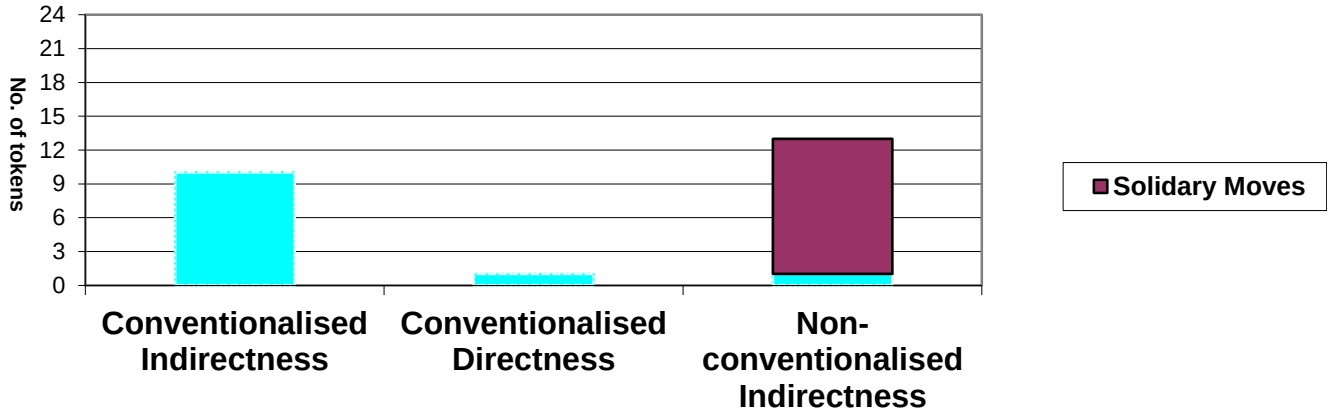
Strategy	**Sample Tokens**	**Number**
Conventionalised Indirectness		
	Can you help me, please? Would you back him? Could you tell me, please? What would you do...? What shall we do? Do you think …?	10
Conventionalised directness		1
	And what do I need?	
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		13
I. Solidary Moves	I was just wondering … But I can't do nothing with... Do you know, X, I've been …. You see… You think I have to...? The problem is that I'm so tired ... I was thinking about... On the other hand, I thought	(12)
II. Non-solidary Moves		(1)
Total number of tokens		24

In order of preference the strategies are:

- Non-conventionalised Indirectness (13)
- Conventionalised Indirectness (10)
- Conventionalised Directness (1)

This pattern is visualized in figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Breakdown of Use of Strategies in the Conversational Genre



In comparison with the figures for the 'institutional' genre, we can see a fewer number of tokens distributed over a different range of (sub) strategies. One of the most noticeable changes is the increase in non-conventionalised indirectness. It has now become the biggest strategy for asking for advice in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status. It is also worth noting that in concordance with the results from the institutional genre that non-conventionalised indirectness is dominated by solidary moves. Once more it is useful to conduct an analysis of the data in terms of two polarities: conventionality and directness.

From the point of view of conventionality, it is clear that the majority of strategies fall into the category of 'non-conventionality'. This accounts for 54.1% (n= 13) of all tokens. With regards to conventionality, as discussed in connection to the institutional situation, it can be both direct and indirect. In fact, 10 out of 11 of the tokens recorded as conventionalised are indirect. This high degree of indirectness found within conventionalised strategies is mirrored in the overall pattern for directness. On the whole, for the polarity of directness, the majority of tokens – 95.83% (n= 23) come under the heading of indirectness. Thus, it can be said that, with the informants from group 1, in an informal conversational situation with a socially-close, equal-status interlocutor, the enactment of the speech event of 'asking for advice' can be categorized as non-conventionally indirect.

This is noteworthy on two accounts. Firstly, it marks the informants' identity as highly-proficient L2 users/learners. Both sets of figures correlate with the later stages of the taxonomy of request strategy development presented by Kasper and Rose (2002); such high degrees of non-

conventionality and indirectness point towards level 4 (pragmatic expansion) and level 5 (fine tuning) of the developmental sequence. The employment of those strategies suggests increased mitigation and an individualised approached to realizing the speech act – an approach which has been subtly adapted to suit the sociopragmatic demands of informality, equality of status and social closeness. It indicates the informants' ability to mould the language in a manner which provides a fit to the situational needs.

In addition, the strategies appear to map the needs of the conversational genre. As discussed in chapter 2, the conversational locus of learning is defined by a fluid and dynamic structure. Unlike the institutional locus, the conversational locus is not routine dependant. It does not exist of pre-determined strategies realised in a fixed structure; rather it is co-constructed by the participants in an individualised manner. Thus, the tendency towards non-conventionalised strategies and high levels of indirectness provide a legitimate match between the strategies used and demands of the conversational situation.

This is particularly evident when the co-constructive nature of the conversational situation is considered. Non-conventionalised, indirect utterances give rise to a higher level of mismatch between locution and illocution. This potentially places a burden on the advisor as the need to disambiguate the utterance is generally greater. However, within the conversational situation, especially with an equal status interlocutor, the burden of constructing the interaction lies equally with all participants. Therefore, creating ambiguities and their subsequent interpretation may not be considered a burden, but rather a legitimate strategy for furthering the interaction.

In brief, an analysis of the strategies employed indicates the informants' abilities to engage in successful strategic mitigation insofar as, from all available strategies, they have been able to select those which are congruent with the situation and are thus sociopragmatically appropriate. However, care must be taken when analyzing the data. Although the overall trend is for non-conventionality, it is a small trend standing at 54.1%. The remaining strategies are still highly conventionalised. As discussed, a conversational situation, especially and informal one with a socially-close, equal-status interlocutor demands finely-tuned, individualised strategies which allow for co-construction of the interaction. However, the data point to variable use of (non-) conventionality. On the one hand, the results highlight the acquisition of higher-level request strategies; but on the other hand, the use of strategies to map the functions is variable.

6.1.2 Comparison of Strategies employed by Group 1 in the Institutional and the Conversational Genres

To recap, both situations differ with respect to degrees of formality, social distance and interlocutor status. The conversational situation is characterised as informal and socially close with an equal-status interlocutor. On the other hand, the institutional genre is defined as formal and socially distant with a higher-status interlocutor. In addition to the aforementioned disparities, the situations compare differentially regarding the nature of the exchanges. The institutional genre tends to adhere to routinised language; whereas the conversational genre prefers fluid co-construction.

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the strategic commonalities and differences between the two speech events.

Table 6.3

Institutional	Conversational
• 33 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (39.4%) • Conventionalised Directness (21.2%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (39.4%) • Conventionalised (60.6%) • Indirectness (78.8%)	• 24 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (54.1%) • Conventionalised Directness (4.2%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (41.7%) • Conventionalised (45.9%) • Indirectness (95.8%)

Two-tailed paired samples *t*-tests were carried out on the above differences. Results for conventionalised directness proved to be statistically significant with $p = .01$. This is important insofar as it indicates that sociopragmatic variation does indeed take place even in the discourse of primarily mono-contextual learner/users: even primarily mono-contextual FL learners are capable of varying the strategies used in a manner which is congruent to the situation. This is evident as degrees of conventionalised directness are significantly higher in the institutional locus than in the

conversational locus. Although the remaining results indicated a lack of statistical significance, it is nonetheless worth discussing them as patterns do emerge.

I will consider the number of tokens. A greater number of tokens is used in the institutional genre. This may indicate an interaction more conducive to short, focused exchanges, i.e. a non-discursive question/answer type exchange. This hypothesis is underpinned by the greater percentage of direct and conventionalised exponents found in the discourse. On the other hand, there is a lesser number of tokens used in the conversational genre. From this it may be inferred that each token provoked a longer, more discursive response. In support of this hypothesis are the higher levels of non-conventionalised and indirect strategies which require greater disambiguation. Disambiguation may therefore result in more complex and involved advice which, in this case seems to reduce the need for subsequent appeals for advice.

However, the strategic analysis carried out above just scratches the surface when it comes to foregrounding the differences in sociopragmatic variation patterns. Following Hill (1997), I will also now demonstrate the complexity of the issue from a more qualitative perspective by highlighting differences in substrategies. Although no statistically significant differences were found, nevertheless a breakdown of the substrategies and the distribution patterns of the tokens reveal a much more variegated picture (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4

Institutional (33)	Conversational (24)
Conventionalised Indirectness (13)	Conventionalised Indirectness (10)
i. Bare Modal questions (x7) ii. Wh questions (6)	i. Bare modal questions (6) ii. 'Wh' modal questions (2) iii. Epistemic parenthetical questions (2)
Conventionalised Directness (7)	Conventionalised Directness (1)
i. Unmitigated questions (5) ii. Non-context dependent routines (2)	i. Unmitigated questions (1)
Non-conventionalised Indirectness (13)	Non-conventionalised Indirectness (13)
Solidary moves (11) i. Grounders (5) ii. Hints (6) Non-solidary moves (2)	Solidary Moves (12) i. Grounders (3) ii. Hints (7) iii. Providing alternatives (2)

i. Questioning (1) ii. Avoidance (1)	Non-solidary moves (1) i. Avoidance (1)

Noteworthy in the analysis of substrategies is the increased variation in conventionalised indirect strategies for the conversational genre. Despite fewer tokens for this strategy in the discourse, their use illustrates a much more variegated realisation of the tokens indicating a freer, more individualised use of language which is more sociopragmatically congruent to the demands of the conversational genre.

Equally of interest is the distribution of tokens within the subsection of solidary moves. Solidary moves are further subdivided into 'grounders' and 'hints'. Grounders are used to pave the way towards 'asking for advice'; to prepare the interlocutor for what may be viewed as an imposition. They are generally statements that are followed by a head act. On the other hand, hints are more problematic. They operate as legitimate exponents for the speech act of 'asking for advice' only on the premise that both hearer and speaker accept them as such. A considerable mismatch between locution and illocution often exists. For hints to be accepted there must be a mutual recognition that the mismatch between locution and illocution can be disambiguated collaboratively. That is to say, for example, that an utterance such as 'Is it just me, or is anyone else cold?' is intended as a request to close the window by the speaker and is interpreted as such by the hearer. When hints are successful, they promote a collaborative co-construction of the problem and the solution.

As table 6.4 illustrates, the distribution of tokens between grounders and hints compares differentially in each genre. In the institutional genre, there is a slight bias towards hints. This may not be congruent with the demands of the situation, however, as hints promote collaboration, and as a consequence equality of status. This particular institutional genre requires the enactment of a lower-status interlocutor and therefore a high number of hints as opposed to grounders may not be sociopragmatically appropriate.

However, there is a stronger bias towards hints in the conversational genre. Their subtle and heavily mitigated nature fosters a co-constructive approach to identifying a problem and working on a solution. As a result the high degree of disambiguation required by the advisor is not a burden, but rather a means of encouraging and prolonging interaction. Due to this, hints in the conversational genre can be considered an appropriate sociopragmatic use of the strategy.

To sum up, contrary to studies carried out by Scarcella (1979) Ellis (1992), Hill, (1997), Trosborg (1995) and Rose (2000), sociopragmatic variation at a strategic level does take place even among primarily mono-contextual FL students. As a group, these informants display considerable knowledge of sociopragmatic awareness. This is evidenced statistically in degrees of conventionalized directness which are significantly higher in the institutional locus. This is a noteworthy finding as the differences in directness and conventionality seem to match the demands of each situation. However, a closer analysis of substrategies sees an over-use of 'hints' as a solidary move in the institutional genre. The over-use of such a collaborative strategy suggests a sociopragmatic mismatch. Therefore, in accordance with the findings of Hill (1997), it can be concluded that while strategies may show compatibility, a deeper investigation of substrategies reveals non-congruency.

6.1.3 Group 2

Institutional Genre

As table 6.5 illustrates 76 exponents for the speech event of asking for advice are present in the discourse and these are distributed among 6 strategies: hints, imposition minimisers, conventional indirectness, solidary moves and non-solidary moves.

Table 6.5

Strategy	Sample Tokens	Number of Tokens
Conventional Indirectness		6
	Can she…? Can you …? Would that …? Could you …? What … how can, could I help him?	
Conventional Directness		1
	What is your mobile number?	
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		69
i. Solidary Moves	Aha, yeah, ok She could … No, I don't, I don't Do you have a minute? I'm not really very happy, er, about this There are courses like that for children?	(51)

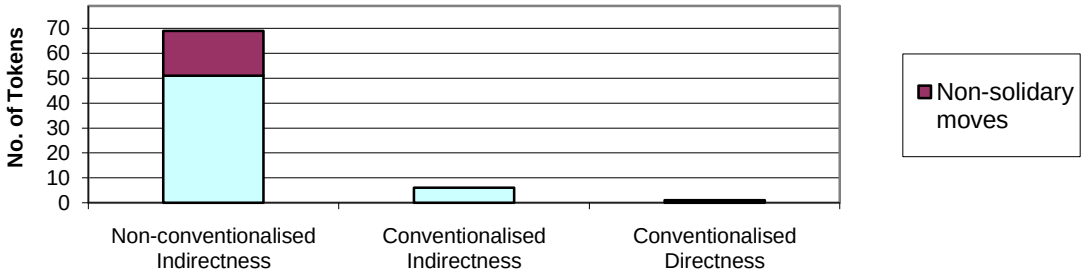
ii. Non-solidary Moves	Yeah, ok, erm It's very time-consuming What do you mean by new ideas? Well, firstly I'd like to say … And would you suggest less …?	(18)
Total Number of Tokens		76

In order of preference, the strategies are:

Non-conventionalised Indirectness: 69
Conventionalised Indirectness: 6
Conventionalised Directness: 1

Figure 6.3 indicates that the institutional genre is dominated by non-conventionalised indirectness. It accounts for 90.78% (n= 69) of all accounts. And of those 74% (n= 51) are accounted for by solidary moves.

Figure 6.3 Breakdown of Use of Strategies in the Institutional Genre



The figures will now be further analysed according to polarities of conventionality and directness.

A strong pattern emerges for both polarities. From the perspective of conventionality, 90.8% (n= 69) of all tokens have been categorised as non-conventionalised; whereas only 9.2% (n= 7) are deemed conventionalised. The figures for directness are even more extreme with 98.7% (n= 75) of all strategies classified as indirect. In fact, only one token of directness was found in the discourse of the group.

With regards degrees of conventionality, according to the 'Maxims of Congruence' (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993) and the principles of negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978), this contravenes expectations. Both taxonomies highlight the importance of conventionalised strategies when

engaging in a formal interaction with a higher status interlocutor. Conventionalised strategies are likewise congruent with the institutional genre which tends to have a routinised formula of expected strategies. The high level of non-conventionalised strategies suggests a highly individualised discourse without discernible patterns. Therefore the extremely high degree of non-conventionalised strategies presents a considerable sociopragmatic mismatch with the demands of the situation.

The figures for directness highlight a strong bias towards indirectness. Conversely, this seems to be congruent with the demands of a formal, institutional exchange with a socially-distant, higher status interlocutor. The strategies point towards high levels of mitigation which are to be expected from a lower-status interlocutor. Indirectness indicates the minimising of imposition on the advisor and this would constitute an appropriate sociopragmatic match.

Also of interest in the strategic analysis of group 2 and the institutional genre is the number of non-solidary moves. These represent a strategy not normally associated with the discourse of lower-status interlocutors in a formal, institutional situation. The effect of non-solidary moves is to create discord between the participants. They are used to challenge, negate, criticise or provoke a change in status - what is referred to as 'inherent or genuine impoliteness' (Culpeper, 1996: 352). Impoliteness certainly contravenes the expected norms of an institutional interaction with a socially-distant higher-status interlocutor. What makes the presence of such strategies even more surprising is the percentage of the tokens in the discourse. Non-solidary moves account for 26.08% (n= 18) of all non-conventionalised indirect tokens. This may give an indication that their inclusion is not accidental or random. However, a deeper analysis will illuminate this.

In summary, the strategic analysis of group 2, institutional genre presents results which, unlike the results for group 1, are problematic. On the one hand, high levels of non-conventionality indicate a highly individualised approach to the completion of the task. This is non-congruous with the institutional genre which expects a routinised formula. On the other hand, such intra-group or individual variation marks the informants as highly-proficient L2 learner/users insofar as non-conventionality is evidence of finely-tuned discourse. Indirectness runs at 98.7% (n= 75) which is congruent with the situation. However, a closer look reveals that 26.08% (n= 18) of indirect strategies are classified as non-solidary moves which are incongruent with the situation. Overall, a somewhat unstable use of strategies in the institutional genre is presented by those who have accumulated between 120 days and 1 year's SE.

Conversational Genre

Table 6.6 below provides a breakdown of the strategies employed in the speech event of 'asking for advice' in the discourse of group 2 informants in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status. In total 102 tokens are unequally distributed over the 3 strategies.

Table 6.6

Strategy	Exponent	Number
Conventional Indirectness		9
	Can you help me? Would you allow him back? So can I send pictures? What would you do if you were me? Do you think he's …? Do you think I should …?	
Conventionalised Directness		4
	So how do I add …? Do you have to pay? Isn't that too private?	
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		89
i. Solidary Moves	Yeah, ok, aha Oh, that would be fine I think likewise Password ok I don't like erm saying I don't really understand the advantage of … and we could So you know how to do it Well, it's for video chatting and you know …	
Overall number of Tokens		102

In order of preference the strategies are:

Non-conventionalised Indirectness (89)

Conventionalised Indirectness (9)

Conventionalised Directness (4)

This is represented below in figure 6.4

Figure 6.4: Breakdown of Strategies Used in Conversational Genre

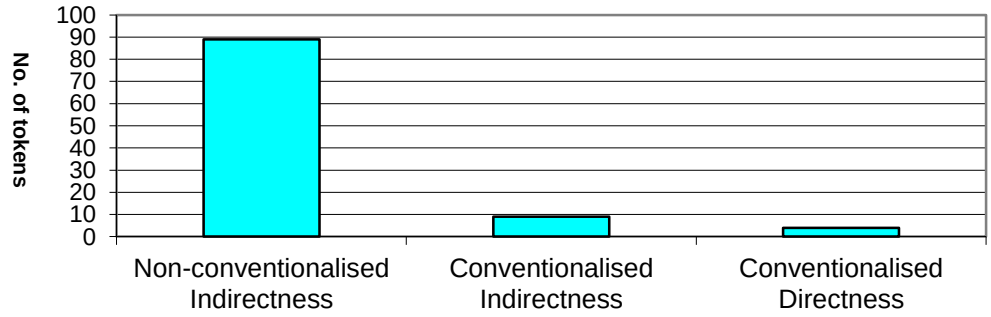


Figure 6.4 demonstrates the strong bias towards non-conventionalised indirectness within the discourse of group 2. In fact non-conventionalised indirect strategies account for 78.4% (n= 89) of all tokens.

When patterns for degrees of conventionality and directness are assessed, a strong picture emerges. The discourse therefore can be described as non-conventionalised indirectness. The degrees of non-conventionality and indirectness are high at 87.25% (n= 9) and 96% (n= 98) respectively. The figures are congruent with the demands of the situation. An informal conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status demands a fluid, non-routinised discourse and this is representative of non-conventionalisation. The conversational genre allows for a collaborative, co-constructive approach to discourse; therefore in the speech event of 'asking for advice', neither the presentation of the problem nor its resolution belongs exclusively to the 'asker' or the advisor. Problems are identified and solutions presented on a collaborative basis. This is congruent with a non-conventionalised approach where lack of a routinised formula promotes co-construction.

This is further underpinned by the high degrees of indirectness. High degrees of indirectness paired with a non-conventionalised approach allow for the process of disambiguation – which is inevitable in indirect strategies where there is a mismatch between locution and illocution – to be conducted mutually between the 'asker' and the advisor thus producing a discourse which is congruent with the demands of informality, social closeness and equality of status in addition to mapping the conversational genre. Interestingly, and in contrast to the institutional genre, all examples of non-conventionalised indirectness come under the heading of solidary moves.

In brief, the strategic analysis for the conversational genre for those who have accumulated from between 120 days and 1 year in a Submersion context illustrates the high level of congruency between the need to portray an equal-status identity in an informal, socially-close conversational

situation and the strategies employed. The informants seem to have acquired the ability to map strategies to their appropriate sociopragmatic functions.

6.1.4 Comparison of Strategies Employed by Group 2 in the Institutional and Conversational Genres

The main question is to assess if the informants from group 2 exhibit sociopragmatic variation in the choice of strategies used to realise 'asking for advice' in a formal, socially-distant institutional situation with a higher-status interlocutor and in an informal, socially distant conversational situation with an equal-status interlocutor. Table 6.7 shows a comparison of the strategies and tokens with respect to conventionality and directness

Table 6.7

Institutional	Conversational
• 76 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (90.8%) • Conventionalised Directness (1.3%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (7.9%) • Conventionalised (9.2%) • Indirectness (98.7%)	• 102 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (87.3%) • Conventionalised Directness (3.9%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (8.8%) • Conventionalised (12.7%) • Indirectness (96.1%)

Two-tailed paired samples *t*-tests reveal that the differences are not statistically significant. This would seem to indicate a lack of strategic variation in the sociopragmatic patterns of learners/users who have accumulated between 120 days and one year in submersion experiences. This is a surprising result especially in light of the results for group 1. An overview of the figures relating to conventionality and directness show little variation between the two sets of data. Both situations command language which is highly non-conventionalised and indirect. The figures for non-

conventionality are most surprising especially from the perspective of the institutional genre. It produces more non-conventionalised tokens than the conversational genre. This indicates a sociopragmatic mismatch as an institutional genre generally requires language that is formulaic and routinised.

However, the above figures don't paint the full picture and it would be very misleading to suggest that the informants don't show sociopragmatic variation. A comparison of the substrategies will show that the informants are indeed aware of the differing demands of each situation and do index those difference in discourse thus showing that sociopragmatic variation does take place from a more qualitative perspective.

Table 6.8 provides an at-a-glance overview of the commonalities and differences in strategic uses between the institutional and the conversational genre.

Table 6.8

Institutional (76)	Conversational (102)
Conventionalised Indirectness (5)	Conventionalised Indirectness (9)
i. Bare Modal Questions 4 ii. 'Wh' modal questions 1	i. Bare Modal Questions 4 ii. 'Wh' Modal Questions 2 iii. Epistemic Parenthetical Questions 3
Conventionalised directness (1)	Conventionalised Directness (4)
i. Context-specific 1	i. Context specific 4
Non-conventionalised Indirectness (69)	Non-conventionalised Indirectness (89)
Solidary moves (51) i. Backchannelling 34 ii. Providing alternatives 2 iii. Validation 1 iv. Overlap 2 v. Imposition Minimisers 2 vi. Hints 10 Non-solidary moves (18) i. Negative backchannelling 6 ii. Problematicisation 4 iii. Questioning 2 iv. Correction 1 v. Providing alternatives 2 vi. Interruptions 3	Solidary Moves (89) i. Backchannelling 72 ii. Concordance 2 iii. Repetition 1 iv. Overlap 1 v. Problematicisation 2 vi. Providing Alternatives 2 vii. Hints 9

The comparison of substrategies indicates that the informants vary their language according to situational demands. Sociopragmatic differences in the substrategies are present in each situation. Interesting differences relate to the number and distribution of tokens extracted from the data. A

greater number of tokens is generated by the conversational genre with 102 tokens as opposed to 76. The greater number of tokens is distributed over a narrower range of substrategies – 11 as opposed to 15 in the institutional genre.

However, this difference occurs due to the inclusion of non-solidary moves in the institutional genre. (A two tailed paired samples *t* test revealed that the figures for the use of non-solidary moves are highly significant at $p = .00$.) If non-solidary moves are excluded, for every strategy the genres have in common, the conversational genre produces more substrategies. This can infer that the conversational genre gives rise to a more variegated and finely-tuned use of language and, I will argue a greater degree of sociopragmatic variation. It should be noted, especially in the case of solidary moves, that in the conversational genre, it is not a case of simply augmenting the number of substrategies, but of providing different strategies and once more this illustrates the degree of sociopragmatic variation between the two genres

Also of interest is the informants' awareness of the multifunctionality of substrategies. For example backchannelling constitutes the biggest substrategy for both solidary and non-solidary moves. Similarly, providing alternatives and problematicisation are shown to be multifunctional strategies as they appear, in a congruent manner, as both solidary and non-solidary moves. This matching of a single substrategy to a multiplicity of functions is significant insofar as it is an indication of a highly proficient learner/user.

While there is sociopragmatic variation at a substrategic level, the commonalities should also be pointed out. It is interesting to note that the strategies appear, in descending order, as non-conventionalised indirectness (with an emphasis on solidary moves), conventionalised indirectness with conventionalised directness being the least favoured strategy in both genres.

6.1.5 Group 3

Institutional Genre

In accordance with previous analyses, I will begin with a breakdown of the strategies employed by group 3 in realising 'asking for advice' in a formal, institutional situation with a socially distant interlocutor of higher status. The results are presented below in table 6.9.

Table 6.9

Strategy	Exponent	Number
Conventional Indirectness		14
	Can I come back? Could we just...? What can we do? What would you advise? Do you think we could...? And that's.... do you think	
Conventionalised Directness		0
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		42
i. Solidary Moves	Mmm, yeah, ok	(12)
ii. Non-solidary Moves	Mmm, yeah, right Maybe you should... I don't want him to … You think I should …? What kind of methods are you using? Right, maybe with ...	(30)
Overall number of Tokens		56

In order of preference, the strategies are:

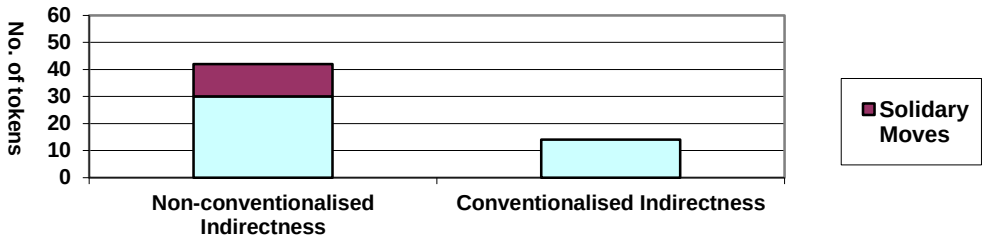
Non-conventionalised indirectness (42)

Conventionalised indirectness (14)

Conventionalised directness (0)

They are presented in figure 6.13

Figure 6.5: Breakdown of Strategies Used in Institutional Genre



An analysis of the results regarding degrees of conventionality and directness will now be carried out. A strategic analysis of the institutional mode seems represent a lack of adherence to the sociopragmatic demands. This is most apparent when the figures for conventionality are considered. Surprisingly, 75% (n= 42) of tokens are categorized as non-conventionalised. This is extremely

unusual for the institutional mode. The situation can be seen as 'frontstage' institutional discourse (Sarangi and Roberts, 1999: 20) to the extent that it is an example of an interaction between an institutional representative and client and low levels of conventionality run counter to expectations of a formal, socially distant institutional encounter. As Drew and Heritage (1992:22) highlight, 'institutional talk is normally informed by […] restricted conventional form'. It likewise flouts the advice given by Brown and Levinson (1978) on avoiding threat to negative face. This lack of adherence to norms may indicate that the informants are novices in this type of discourse and therefore unaware of the sociopragmatic demands with regards to expected norms of interaction. However, this interpretation seems unlikely as results from their submersion profiles indicate a balanced exposure to both the institutional and the conversational loci learning.

Even more surprising is the degree of non-solidary moves. Although present in the discourse of both group 1 and group 2 in the institutional genre, in group 3, the percentage of non-solidary moves rises to 71.4% (n= 30) of all non-conventionalised tokens which amounts to 53.6% of all tokens. This seems to be a blatant display of impoliteness on behalf of group 3 informants and strengthens the lack of congruity with the situation.

The figures for levels of directness are equally as perplexing. 100% of strategies are defined as indirect. On the one hand, the complete lack of directness would seem to confirm the lower-status nature of the 'asker' due to the possibility of strongly mitigated tokens; on the other hand, high levels of indirectness in strategies may result in the need for a considerable degree of interpretation thus placing a burden of disambiguation on the advisor and this over-burdening has the potential to be incongruous with the demands of a formal, institutional situation with a socially-distant interlocutor.

In summary, contrary to expectations, the strategies employed by the informants from group 3 to realise ‘asking for advice’ in a formal, institutional situation with a socially-distant interlocutor of higher status contravene all the social requirements of the situation and the genre. Apart from overly high levels of conventionality and indirectness, the discourse of the group is defined by non-solidary moves, or impoliteness.

Conversational Genre

An analysis of the strategies used in the conversational genre identifies a total of 63 tokens

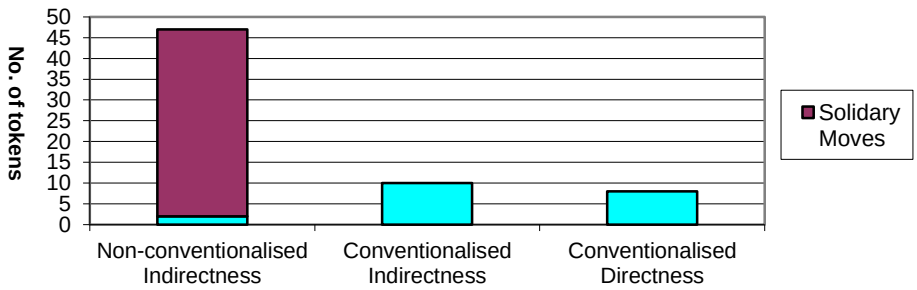
distributed over all three strategies as represented in table 6.10

Table 6.10

Strategy	Exponent	Number
Conventional Indirectness		10
	Can I stay in your place? Could you explain it...? What would you do? So what do you think I should do? Do you think you could...?	
Conventionalised Directness		8
	Do you know a safe one? And is this what …? Is it easy to use? I don't know what to do I need some advice	
Non-conventionalised Indirectness		45
I. Solidary Moves	Mmm, yeah, ok Maybe I should just … I'm thinking about... Maybe he has … ...right, go to the café I'm very sorry to disturb you... You know what, we're sort of having problems... Oh, I have a big problem ...	(43)
II. Non-solidary Moves	Well, I tried several times, but he just … Yes, but ...	(2)
Overall number of Tokens		63

In order of preference, the categories are: non-conventionalised indirectness; conventionalised indirectness and conventionalised directness. (See figure 6.6)

Figure 6.6: Breakdown of Strategies Used in Conventionalised Genre



The figure shows that the discourse is dominated by solidary moves which account for 55.55% (n=

45) of all tokens. This is noteworthy as it indicates a high degree of accord between the choice of strategies and an informal conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status.

Conventionality vs Directness

An analysis of the polarities of conventionality and directness illuminates the breakdown of strategies further. 'Asking for advice' in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status is characterized by non-conventional indirectness with 71.43% (n= 47) of all tokens coming under the heading of non-conventionality and 87.3% (n= 57) classified as indirect.

Such high degrees of non-conventionality and indirectness may be expected in a conversational genre as it is defined by its fluidity. The conversational genre does not depend on routinised formulae; rather it can be co-constructed in an innovative way by the participants to form a match with the changing demands integral to the genre. Therefore the pattern indicates that the informants from group 3 demonstrate an individualised approach to performing an equal-status identity in a conversational interaction with a socially-close interlocutor. This approach potentially leads to collaborative disambiguation and a co-constructive approach to identifying and solving the problem and thus renders the strategies congruent with the situation.

6.1.6 Comparison of Strategies Employed by Group 3 in the Institutional and Conversational Genres

Group 3 are primarily cross-contextual learners who have accumulated a minimum of one year of SEs and as such, experienced a balanced exposure to both the institutional and conversational loci of learning during the time spent in the Submersion context. Due to the increased exposure to NSs and discourse domains, their identity in the Submersion context remained fluid.

Although, the analysis for both genres regarding group 3 indicates that the informants do indeed vary their strategies, it is necessary to examine how that variation occurs. At first glance, there seems to be very little variation in the strategies used in the two genres. The strategies of both can be characterised as non-conventionalised and indirect. Conventionalised language and unanalysed formulae are dispreferred strategies by group 3. (See table 6.11)

Table 6.11

Institutional	Conversational
• 56 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (75%) • Conventionalised Directness (0%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (25%) • Conventionalised (25%) • Indirectness (100%)	• 63 tokens • Non-conventionalised Indirectness (71.4%) • Conventionalised Directness (12.7%) • Conventionalised Indirectness (15.9%) • Conventionalised (28.6%) • Indirectness (87.3%)

However, two-tailed paired samples *t* tests indicate that significant differences are evident in the strategies deployed by learner/users who have accumulated in excess of one year of submersion experiences. The differences are relevant for conventionalised indirectness (p= .044) and conventionalised directness (p= .04). However, no significant differences were found for non-conventionalised indirectness (p= .08).

Although, no significant difference were found in the number of non-conventionalised indirect strategies employed in each genre, a deeper analysis shows that differences do occur. The institutional genre is characterised by a high proportion of non-solidary moves. In fact, this constitutes the single biggest strategy accounting for 47.5% (n= 30) of all tokens distributed across 5 substrategies. In contrast, 3.17% (n= 2) of tokens can be categorised as non-solidary in the conversational genre. Solidary moves, on the other hand, form the single biggest strategy in the conversational genre with 55.5% (n= 45) of all tokens distributed across 3 substrategies. A two-tailed paired samples *t* test reveals that the figures are highly significant (p= .00). Therefore levels of sociopragmatic variation are evident in the discourse of the informants from group 3. The institutional genre is non-solidary in nature; whereas the conversational genre is representative of a

solidary exchange.

When interpreted, this indicates that learner/users with high degrees of cross-contextuality vary their strategies to a greater extent than informants from the other groups. However, significant degrees of variation, unlike the results for group 1, do not correlate with congruency with the situation.

When figures relating to the conversational genre are considered, it can be seen that they confirm expectations. Very high levels of non-conventionality and indirectness are noted. This indicates complete online processing of the situational demands – i.e. informality, social closeness and equal status. This is represented by high levels of individualised discourse where formulaic strategies are dismissed in favour of strategies adapted to the circumstances and relationships between the participants. High levels of indirectness point towards the need for the negotiation of advice, the feeling that this is a mutual process undertaken by equal-status participants and can, therefore be deemed congruent with the sociopragmatic demands.

The discourse of the institutional genre, on the other hand, seems to represent a lack of adherence to sociopragmatic demands due to the high use of non-conventionalised strategies. Within the institutional genre there is an expectation that the strategies will be heavily routinised and predictable. This would indicate a lack of sociopragmatic awareness from the informants. However, this interpretation seems unlikely when the submersion profile of the informants is considered.

An overview of the substrategies provides additional qualitative insight into the level of variation between the genres. The overview is provided in table 6.12.

Table 6.12

Institutional (56)	Conversational (63)
Conventionalised Indirectness (14)	Conventionalised Indirectness (10)
i. Bare Modal Questions 8 ii. 'Wh' modal questions 2 iii. Epistemic Parenthetical Questions 4	i. Bare Modal Questions 4 ii. 'Wh' Modal Questions 2 iii. Epistemic Parenthetical Questions 4
Conventionalised directness (0)	Conventionalised Directness (8)
	i. Context specific 5 ii. Non-context specific 3
Non-conventionalised Indirectness (42)	Non-conventionalised Indirectness (45)

Solidary moves (12) i. Hints 1 ii. Grounders 5 iii. Backchannels 6	Solidary Moves (43) i. Positive backchannels 25 ii. Providing alternatives 8 iii. Overlap 2 iv. Hints 6 v. Grounders 1 vi. Problematicisation 2
Non-solidary moves (30) i. Negative backchanelling 8 ii. Providing alternatives 5 iii. Interruptions 3 iv. Rejections 13 v. Questioning 1	Non-solidary moves (2)

An analysis of the substrategies helps to illuminate variation patterns further. All shared categories witness a differential pattern either in the range of substrategies or in the distribution of tokens within those strategies. Within the strategy of conventionalised indirectness, despite the range of substrategies being the same, the distribution of tokens displays considerable variation. The institutional genre is dominated by bare modal questions; whereas the conversational genre shows parity of distribution between bare modal questions and epistemic parenthetical questions. Variation was also noted in the distribution of hints and grounders. In congruence with the demands of the situation, the institutional genre displays a preference towards the more succinct grounders. On the other hand the informants show a bias towards the more indirect expositions in the conversational genre. This pattern is indicative of an awareness of sociopragmatic norms. However, the results remain problematic with regards congruency with the situation and the problems lie with the deployment of (non-) solidary moves.

6.2 Inter-group Comparison of Strategies

This section of the results chapter will concentrate on exploring the inter-group differences in sociopragmatic differences vis-à-vis the employment of strategies to mark sociopragmatic variation. However, as a brief overview, it is worth stating that differential patterns of use were found at all levels of investigation – on an individual basis, a group basis and on an inter-group basis. This indicates, despite the findings by Scarcella (1979) and Trosberg (1995), for example, that sociopragmatic variation can and does take place in primarily foreign language learners/users. However, the major difference between the aforementioned studies and the current project lies in the profile of the informants. The informants in the current study are all secondary-school teachers of English. This ensures intense contact with the language on a daily basis. This high degree of contact coupled with extensive training in the language ensures near native-like use of English. In

fact a pre-study lexico-grammatical assessment of language level put all the informants as either advanced level or proficiency level (C1 and C2 as per CEFR). In addition, all informants have enjoyed some degree of cross-contextuality and it is precisely the effect of the varying degrees of cross-contextuality which will be explored in this section.

6.2.1 Comparison of Strategies Deployed by Each Group

In the data, three main strategies are found: conventionalised indirectness, conventionalised directness and non-conventionalised indirectness. Table 6.13 below provides an at-a-glance summary of the inter-group differences for the institutional genre according to categories.

Table 6.13

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Conventionalised Indirectness	39.4%	5.3%	25%
Conventionalised Directness	21.2%	1.3%	0%
Non-conventionalised Indirectness	39.4%	93.4%	75%

One-way, between group ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effect of accumulated submersion experiences (ASE) on the use of strategic mitigation in an ASE of 60 days or less (group 1), an ASE from 120 days to one year (group 2) and finally an ASE of one year or more (group 3) conditions. When results for conventionalised indirectness are considered, the effect of ASEs on the degrees of conventionalised indirectness highly significant at the $p < .05$ level [$F = 8.66$, $p = .00$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were conducted. Results indicated significant differences between groups 1 and 2 ($p = .00$) and groups 2 and 3 ($p = .017$). However, results from group 1 did not significantly differ from group 3 ($p = .3$).

Taken together, these results suggest that duration of ASEs does have an impact on the use of conventionally indirect (CI) strategies. It is interesting to note that the impact is not commensurate with increasing time. Use of CI strategies remains similar for those who have an ASE of 60 days or less and for group 3 who have an ASE of more than one year. However, its use is significantly less for learner/users who have an ASE of between 120 days and one year.

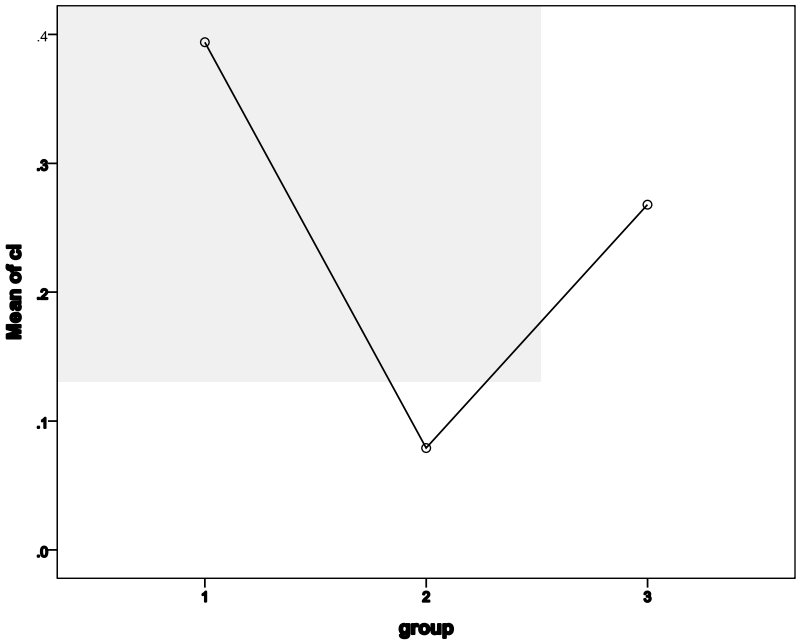
When conventionalised direct strategies (CD) underwent a between group one way ANOVA, the results prove highly significant (F= 13.83 and *p*= .00). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD were likewise conducted. Results indicated significant differences between groups 1 and 2 (*p*= .00) and 1 and 3 (*p*= .00). No significant differences were found between groups 2 and 3 (*p*= .93). Together the results indicate a significant decrease in the deployment of CD strategies over time. However, the decrease is significant up to an ASE of one year. After a year, there is no significant difference.

Finally, I will consider the use of non-conventionalised indirect (NI) strategies in the institutional genre. Results from the between group one-way ANOVA proved highly significant (F= 19.9, *p*= .00). Post hoc Tukey HSD revealed that significant differences were found between groups 1 and 2 and 1 and 3 (*p*= .00). However, only a marginally significant difference was found between groups 2 and 3 (*p*= .059). The overall results indicate an upward trend in the use of NI strategies commensurate with ASE – i.e. the longer a learner/user spends in a Submersion context then the greater the use of NI strategies in the institutional genre. There is a significant peak in the deployment of such strategies in an ASE of between 120 days and one year. ASEs of longer than one year experience a marginally significant decrease.

Summary of Intergroup Comparison of Strategies in the Institutional Genre

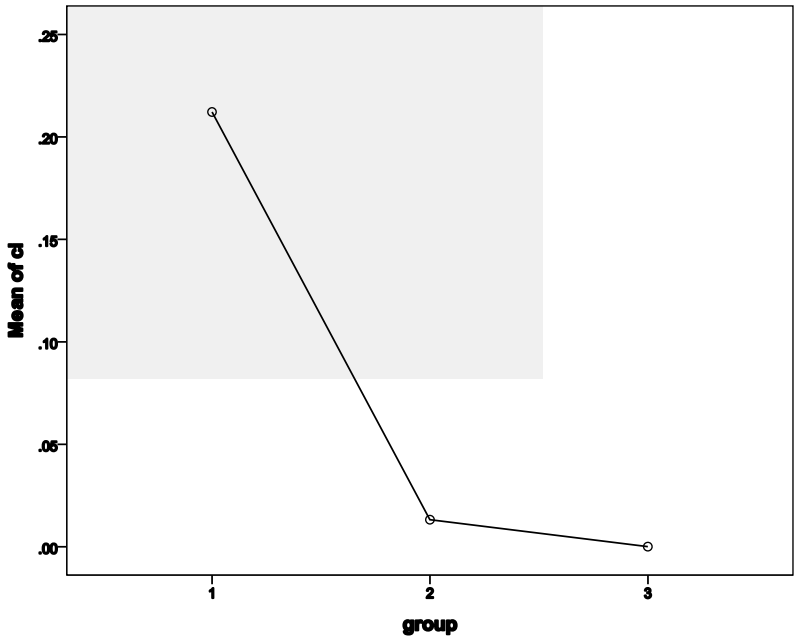
The findings regarding an intergroup comparison of strategies used in the institutional genre are both significant and unexpected. From the point of view of conventionalised indirectness (CI), the overall trend was stable –i.e. that the degree of use of such strategies remained statistically unchanged. However, use of CI strategies by those with an ASE of 120 days to one year did not conform to that trend. Those informants demonstrated a significantly lower degree of CI use than the other two groups as exemplified in the means plot (figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7



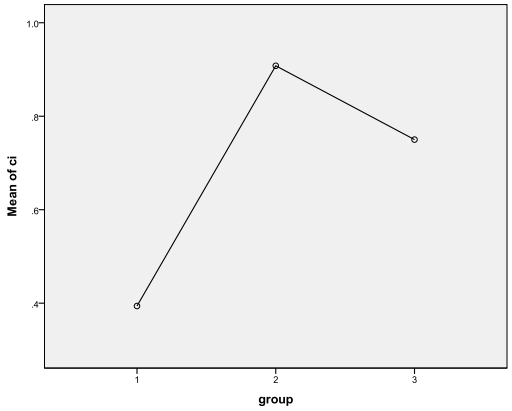
Therefore, it may be hypothesized that an ASE of 120 days to one year results in problematic use of CI strategies insofar as they seem to be greatly underused. With regards the use of conventionally direct (CD) strategies, the picture is much clearer. Over time, the deployment of such strategies decreases in tandem with time spent in a Submersion context (figure 6.8)

Figure 6.8



However, the critical period for this decrease is between 120 days and one year. After an accumulated one year in a Submersion context, the decrease becomes insignificant. Finally, the use of non-conventionalised indirect (NI) strategies experiences an upward trend over time (figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9



The trend peaks for those who have spent between 120 days and one year in a Submersion context and although the subsequent decrease in the use of NI is only marginally significant, it nevertheless provides compelling insight into the acquisition and use of strategic mitigation and time spent in a Submersion context. This is especially salient when the results are compared with those relating to CI strategies. It has been shown that an ASE of between 120 days and one year results in a significantly lower use of CI strategies. Simultaneously, the same informants use NI strategies significantly more than the other two groups. It could be hypothesized that this is a period of instability or experimentation in language use. A period of more than 120 days ASE alerts the learner to the presence of non-conventionalised strategies in the discourse of native speakers. Learners appear to undergo a process of replacing conventionalised discourse with non-conventionalised discourse in the institutional genre. The process has not yet become stabilised and there is evidence of an under-use of conventionalised strategies and an overuse of non-conventionalised strategies.

Intergroup Comparison of Strategies Deployed in the Conversational Genre

A similar statistical analysis is carried out for the results of the conversational genre. A brief overview of the differences is found in table 6.14

Table 6.14

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Conventionalised Indirectness	41.6%	8.9%	15.9%
Conventionalised	4.2%	3.9%	12.7%

Directness			
Non-conventionalised Indirectness	54.2%	87.2%	71.4%

The results underwent a series of between group one-way ANOVAs to compare differential use of strategies according to ASE. With regards the use of conventionalised indirect (CI) strategies, intergroup differences were shown to be highly significant (F= 8.69, *p*= .00). However a Tukey post hoc test revealed that significant differences were found between groups 1 and 2 (*p*= .00) and between groups 1 and 3 (*p*= .006). There were no significant differences found in the findings between groups 2 and 3 (*p*= .42).

In light of the above analysis, it may be stated that the level of CI strategies deployed in the conversational locus decreases with time spent in a Submersion context. The decrease is significant for ASEs of 120 days to one year; however ASEs of more than one year do not incur a significant difference in the use of CI strategies.

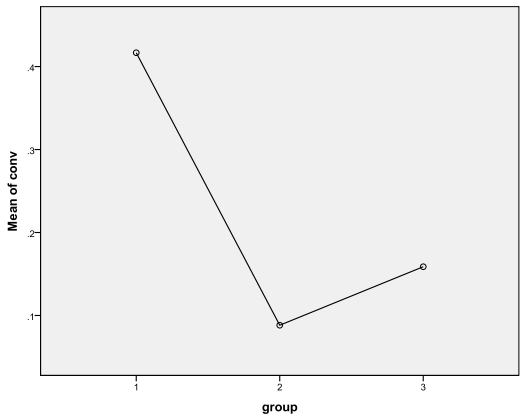
I will now proceed to a between group analysis of conventionalised direct (CD) strategies. A between group one-way ANOVA indicates no significant differences between the levels of CD strategies used by all three groups (F= 2.53, *p*= .083). This suggests that time spent in a Submersion context does not impact on the degree of CD strategies used by learners in a conversational genre. The levels remain low for all groups which would seem congruent to the genre.

An analysis of levels of non-conventionalised (NI) strategies points to a different pattern. Firstly, the between group one-way ANOVA reveals that the differences are significant (F= 8.27, *p*= .00). However, the post hoc Tukey HSD test adds further insight. The findings are significantly different between groups 1 and 2 (*p*= .001) and groups 2 and 3 (*p*= .045) but no impact was found for the differences between groups 1 and 3 (*p*= .117).

Summary of Intergroup Comparison of Strategies in the Conversational Genre

In summary, it can be said that time spent in a Submersion context has a significant impact on levels of conventionally indirect strategies found in the conversational genre. The levels of such strategies generally experience a downwards trend with the difference being greatest between groups 1 and 2. Although lengths of time greater than 1 year seem to result in a rise in the number of CI strategies than a time of between 120 days and one year, the increase is not significant (see figure 6.10).

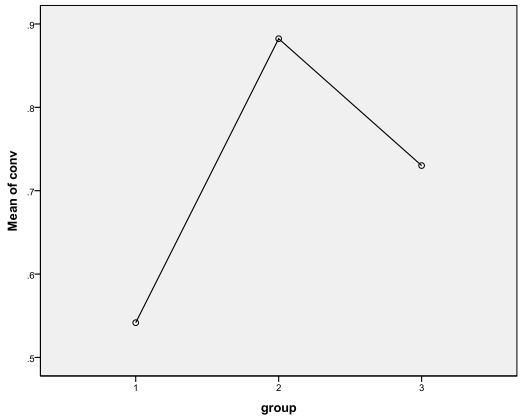
Figure 6.10



Therefore those who have accumulated 60 days or less in a Submersion context employ significantly more conventionalised indirect strategies in their discourse than those who have accumulated more than 120 days. However, accumulating in excess of one year does not have an impact on the level of indirect strategies used in the conversational genre.

On the other hand, time spent in a Submersion context does not seem to have an impact on the use of conventionally direct strategies in the conversational genre. Levels remain low for all informants and this would seem to be congruent with the situation. Similarly, the overall trend for the use of non-conventionalised indirectness is one of stability as no significant differences were found between groups 1 and 3. That is to say that those who have experienced an ASE of 60 days or less employ similar levels of non-conventionalised indirect strategies to those who have an ASE of more than one year. It would therefore seem that submersion experiences have no impact on the use of NI strategies. However, that cannot be the case when the results for group 2 – those with an ASE of between 120 days and one year. Their use of such strategies is significantly higher than both group 1 and group 2 (see figure 6.11).

Figure 6.11



As with the findings for the institutional genre, it may be hypothesised that an accumulated period of time of between 120 days and one year in a Submersion context can lead to experimentation with language. Such a period allows learners to notice high degrees of NI strategies in the discourse of NSs and as a result, the learners tend to prefer to use what may be perceived as native like strategies regardless of appropriacy of use. It seems to reflect an unstable use of language.

Summary

The analysis of strategies gives rise to interesting and often contradictory results. From a strategic perspective, 3 main strategies have been identified: conventionalised indirectness, conventionalised directness and non-conventionalised indirectness. A between-group one way ANOVA was carried out on the results for both genres. On both occasions the *p* value = .00 which indicates the results for the variable of increasing degrees of cross-contextuality are statistically significant.

With regards to a comparison of the use of conventionalised indirectness (CI), differential patterns are discerned across both genres. Within the institutional genre, the overall trend was stable insofar as the pattern of use between group 1 and group 3 did not significantly differ. However, the pattern of use for group 2 proved significantly different to that of both groups 1 and 3. It represented a much lower use of such strategies. With regards the conversational genre, a much clearer effect for increasing time spent in a Submersion context emerges. The highest use of CI is indicative of an accumulated SE of 60 days or less. As SE increases to between 120 days and one year, the percentage of CI in discourse declines significantly. One year appears to be the critical point for changes in use of CI in the conversational genre as although an increase in use occurs after one year, it is not significant. Patterns of conventionalised directness (CD) likewise compare

differentially according to genre. For the institutional genre, the trend is downwards. This trend is significant up to one year ASE. After one year the decrease continues although it proves insignificant. Within the conversational genre, patterns of use of CD remain unchanged throughout the three groups. Levels of use are universally low. Finally, non-conventionalised indirectness (NI) presents a differential pattern across both genres. In the institutional genre, the overall trend is upwards. This increase is significant up to one year in a Submersion context. After one year, it experiences a marginal decrease although the figure for group 3 remains significantly higher than that of group 1. With regards the conversational genre, the overall trend may be one of stability. However, significant differences do occur between groups 1 and 2 and groups 2 and 3. In fact the findings from group 2 contravene the overall trend. Group 2 use NI strategies significantly more than the other groups.

The above discussion indicates that sociopragmatic variation does exist in the discourse of mainly FL learners. Whilst the variable of increased degrees of cross-contextuality does play a role, the role it plays differs according to (sub) strategy or genre. Therefore, it cannot be stated that increased ASEs lead to greater levels of sociopragmatic variation; rather that they give rise to a different degree of variation according to (sub) strategy or genre. Whilst these findings are compelling, they do not provide information on changes (if any) that increased ASEs make in the linguistic realisation of variation. Of particular interest is how identity is indexed in discourse during the enactment of both genres. The following section is comprised of a qualitative linguistic analysis.

6.3 Linguistic Analysis – Indexing Identity

The linguistic analysis is conducted to shed light on how variation is indexed in discourse by considering informant identity as essential to variation. The identity enacted in both genres compares differentially. Within the institutional genre, the informant is required to enact the identity of a lower-status interlocutor in a socially-distant situation. By contrast, within the conversational genre, an equal-status interlocutor in a socially-close situation is required. It is also worth re-iterating at this point that the informants are not being compared to native speakers of English. Rather the analysis is inter-learner and although the discourse may show similarities to NS discourse, this issue very deliberately does not fall within the parameters of the current study (see chapter 4 for a full discussion). The areas under investigation are speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. This section of the analysis is qualitative in nature.

For the purpose of this project, speaker/hearer orientation refers to pronominal variation as a means of subject positioning in discourse – more specifically to the choice between the speaker-orientated 'I', the hearer-orientated 'You' or the conflated term 'We'. The concept of subject positioning is most often associated with the positioning theory (PT). Benwell and Stokoe refer to PT as positing 'an intimate connection between subject positioning (that is, identity) and social power relations' (2010: 43). They further go on to claim that 'people may resist, negotiate, modify or refuse positions, thus preserving individual agency in identity construction.' (2010:43). It is precisely the social power relations and the possibility to preserve individual agency through refusal of positioning that will be explored here. It is also of importance to note that, although most often associated with PT, subject positioning lends itself very well to analysis through discursive practice at a micro-level as it is indexed in language through paradigmatic variation in pronominal choice and also at a macro-level as it includes a 'network of physical, spatial, temporal, social, interactional, institutional, political, and historical circumstances in which participants do a practice' (Young, 2009:2).

Issues surrounding speaker/hearer orientation will be continuously invoked during the analyses, but I would like to spend some time at the beginning of this section looking at the issue in some depth in relation to modal questions as a relationship between speaker/hearer orientation and modality exists. In particular, there is evidence that the relationship can be symbiotic with the choice of

modality mitigating speaker/hearer orientation and vice-a-versa.

6.3.1 Speaker/Hearer Orientation

6.3.2 Group 1

Institutional Genre

Bare Modal Questions

Speaker/hearer orientation refers to the paradigmatic choice a speaker makes with regards to pronominal orientation. In this instance, the choice is between the speaker-orientated 'I' and the hearer- orientated 'you'. The data show that shifts in orientation do take place, albeit minimally. Overall, there was a strong preference towards hearer orientation. Thus, the strategy is realised most frequently by 'Can **you** …?' - with 5 out of the 7 tokens recorded reflecting this use. In fact, a shift in orientation from the hearer to the speaker-orientated 'Can **I**…?' is witnessed in the discourse of just one informant (#A). Informant #A uses bare modal questions on 3 occasions and displays a shift in orientation with a 2:1 bias in favour of hearer-orientation.

Therefore it can be stated that within the substrategy of bare modal questions minimal inter and intra-informant variation takes place. The informants are quite uniform in their choice of modality and speaker-hearer orientation. The minimal level of 'unpacking' may seem incongruent with the informants' status as highly-proficient L2 learners/users as a more complex choice may be expected. However, it may be put forward that the informants are in fact capable of greater degrees of 'unpacking', but their uniformity in choice of speaker-hearer orientation and modality was a deliberate act conducted to map the illocutionary force of 'asking for advice' a formal, institutional situation. The choice of exponents is, in fact finely-tuned to meet some of the sociopragmatic demands. The preference towards 'can' as a mitigator points towards the prioritization of the formal and socially-distant demands made of the informants by the situation.

However, while fine-tuning their language to fit the aforementioned sociopragmatic demands, the informants have to an extent overlooked the demand of lower-status interlocutor. This apparent oversight regarding the identity of lower-status interlocutor is further highlighted by the strong bias

towards hearer orientation. By opting for 'you' the asker is making an imposition on the advisor and using it as a distancing device (Yates, 2008:79). The burden of responding to the speech act of 'asking for advice' has been placed on the advisor in a manner that potentially could be face-threatening. By selecting 'you' the informants have, on the one hand, reinforced the demands of social distance and formality in congruence with the choice of 'can', but on the other hand, have not been successful in enacting a lower-status identity as witnessed through the preference for hearer-orientation.

Wh' Modal Questions

Although this strategy is employed by just three informants, it is nonetheless relevant to perform a descriptive analysis of the variation. When 'can' is chosen as a means of mitigation, the preferred orientation pattern, in contrast to bare modal question, is 'I'. This is the option of both #B and #A. For example:

#A: What else **can *I*** do?

Informant #C, on the other hand chose hearer-orientated:

#C: What **can *you*** recommend me?

This is in line with the results for modality and speaker/hearer orientation in the use of bare modal questions. This shift towards 'I' possibly represents an acceptance of the role of lower status interlocutor. If 'you' performs the role of a distancing device, then 'I' could have the opposite effect – that is the effect of reducing distance. Therefore, on the one hand the sociopragmatic demand of formality are met through the use of 'can' as a mitigator, and on the other, the demand of social distance is overlooked by personalising the request for advice through the use of the speaker-orientated 'I'.

However, in comparison with the situation regarding bare modal questions, 'wh' questions provoke a shift in modality use. Three alternative means of expressing modality were noted – 'shall', 'should' and 'would'. For example, informant #C switches between deontic modality (shall and should) and the epistemic 'can'. However, #A stays with epistemic modality but switches between 'can' to 'would'. Therefore, it can be stated that modality markers other than 'can' produce a more flexible approach to speaker/hearer orientation.

The Conversational Genre

Bare Modal Questions

Bare modal questions make up the biggest substrategy within conventionalised indirectness and account for 6 out of 10 of all tokens. However, a more in depth investigation reveals very different patterns in use. They are found in the repertoire of only 3 informants - #A, #C and #E with the distribution equal among the informants. While this on the surface may indicate uniformity of use, a shift in modality choice and speaker/hearer orientation is recorded.

When it comes to modality choice 'can' is the preferred option with a bias of 2:1 in its favour. It is found in the repertoire of all three informants - #E (x2), #A (x1) and #C (x1). For example:

#A	Can **you** help me, please?
#C	Can **I** ask **you** something?
#E	Can **you** give **me** some advice, please?

The syntagmatic relationship between 'can' and 'you' has been extensively discussed with the conclusion that 'can' is a less mitigating modal insofar as it doesn't 'soften' the speech act to the same degree as other variants such as 'would' or 'could'. Therefore, 'can' is best employed to fulfil the sociopragmatic demands of social distance and formality. Following Yates (2008), 'you' has been considered a distancing device and as such the coupling of 'can' and 'you' serves to strengthen congruency between linguistic features and the informants' ability to meet the demands of a formal, socially-distant situation.

However, in the present situation, this is highly problematic insofar as it results in considerable non-congruency between form and function mapping. The situation demands social closeness and informality which is the polar opposite of what it potentially achieves. As the data shows that the later acquired modal markers of 'could' and 'would' (Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig (2000) are present in the discourse, it is possible that the informants have not acquired the necessary form-function mapping to meet the demands successfully as 'can you' has been acquired as an unanalysed chunk, as a formula for making any kind of request. However, the example shown above from #C and #E present a pairing of both speaker and hearer orientation within the question. This serves to provide

a collaborative approach to solving the problem and thus allows for a co-constructed solution which allows the ‘asker’ to adopt the identity of a socially-close interlocutor of equally status.

The remaining two examples of bare modal questions show a shift in modality with the incorporation of ‘would’ and ‘could’

#C Would **you** back him?
#A Could **you** tell me?

The appearance of later acquired or higher-level forms of modality in the substrategy of ‘bare modal’ questions can represent an enactment of a highly-proficient learner/user identity. Additionally, it may also be accounted for by adherence to the demands of the conversational mode. It represents a degree of fluidity in language use which is congruent with the dynamic nature of the mode. Furthermore, it fulfils the demand of informality. The more heavily-mitigated modal forms indicate a lack of obligation or ability on the part of the advisor to provide advice. The advisor has the option to refuse either through lack of knowledge/experience or will. The advisor is not expected to be an expert and in such cases advice can be negotiated between 'asker' and 'advisor'. Therefore, softer, more emotive choices in modality can be made to influence or persuade the advisor.

However, significantly, once more the speaker/hearer orientation is completely dominated by the hearer orientated ‘you’. The mismatch between the effect of distancing produced by the use of ‘you’ and the situational demand of social closeness persists. Therefore, it may be inferred, as the lack of congruency is evident throughout a range of modalities, that the informants experience difficulties in the online processing of all three sociopragmatic demands – informality, social closeness and equality of interlocutor status. In this case, social closeness seems to produce most problems as witnessed by a preference for ‘can’ over more emotive or ‘softer’ forms of modality. This is further underpinned by an overwhelming orientation towards the speaker. In 5 out of the 6 instances of bare modal questions, informants opted for the hearer-orientated ‘you’.

Despite being problematic, there is evidence of awareness of this lack of congruence and linguistic steps have been taken to rectify it. Attempts to minimize the possible imposition placed on the advisor by the coupling of ‘can’ and ‘you’ have been taken by informants #A and #E. This comes in the form of lexical downgrading. The politeness marker ‘please’ was found in the repertoire of the aforementioned informants. This need to further mitigate the speech act lends to a conclusion of

uncertainty or dissatisfaction with the realization of the speech act. It indicates the informants' awareness of a form-function mismatch – i.e. that 'can you' is not congruent with a socially close, equal status interlocutor in an informal, conversational situation. This therefore results in the deployment of an additional modifier in the form of a lexical downgrader

A summary of the linguistic analysis of speaker/hearer orientation indicates the syntagmatic relationship between 'can' and 'you' leads to the performance of a speech act which may not be congruent with the demand of social closeness, and in an attempt to minimize this lack of congruency, several methods are employed. Some informants include a further mitigating device in the form of the politeness marker 'please'. In addition, two other methods are evidenced. There is one example of speaker-orientation. In this case the paradigmatic shift from the hearer-orientated 'you' to the speaker orientated 'I' produces a change in the syntagmatic relationship between modality and subject with the socially close 'I' diminishing the socially distant, non-emotive 'can'. Another method employed by the informants is syntactic mitigation – i.e. a shift in modality. Once more there is an example of a paradigmatic shift (change in modality) affecting the syntagmatic relationship between modal and subject. The use of softer more emotive modalities such as 'could' and 'would' succeeds in softening the distancing aspect of 'you' and fulfils the demands of informality and equal status insofar as the 'asker' can appeal to the advisor on an emotional level. Although the distancing nature of the speaker-orientated 'you' has been somewhat mitigated by the choice of modality, the 'asker' may not have fully succeeded in the conveying of social closeness

'Wh' Modal Questions

As a substrategy for 'asking for advice' in an informal, conversational situation with a socially close interlocutor of equal status, 'wh' modal questions are very much subordinate to bare modal questions. They form part of the repertoire of just two informants: #E and #F. In addition each informant realises this substrategy just once.

#E	What would **you** do if **you** were **me**?
#F	What shall **we** do?

Although impossible to discern any sort of pattern from two disparate linguistic exponents, their presence is nevertheless significant in providing evidence of the breadth of the group-wide linguistic repertoire thus strengthening their identity as highly-proficient L2 learners/users. This is most apparent in the discourse of #E who opts for a syntactically complex bi-clausal token and

although #F operationalises the speech act in a less complex manner, it has been fine-tuned and is not a display of the apparently formulaic ‘can you?’

Very significantly, when the syntagmatic relationship between the modal forms and speaker/hearer orientation is analysed, evidence is provided that the situational demand of equal status is met. Both speakers conflate speaker/hearer orientation; #E by appealing to both hearer (you) and speaker (me) within the speech act and #F through the use of ‘we’. I will argue that this represents a call for solidarity from the point of view of the ‘asker’. In contrast to potentially creating a face-threatening act by placing the onus of giving advice solely onto the advisor; or alternatively to completely avoiding a face-threatening situation by the ‘asker’ accepting the burden of both ‘asking’ and ‘providing the advice’, the informants are simultaneously incorporating the advisor into the problem and the solution and thus making the problem and solution a communal one. The syntagmatic relationship between modal and speaker/hearer orientation is congruent. And no mismatch between the linguistic elements and function mapping has occurred.

The success of ‘wh’ modal questions in fulfilling all the demands of the situation is apparent. When compared to bare modal questions they appear to be more flexible in choice of modality and speaker/hearer orientation. In this case, the choice of more emotive modality is coupled with a conflated speaker/hearer orientation in such a way as to be congruent with the demands of informality, social closeness and equality of status in a conversational situation.

Epistemic Parenthetical Questions

Epistemic parenthetical (EP) questions refer to those questions which have been externally modified by means of an epistemic phrase such as, ‘do you think …?’ The act which follows the parenthetical could function independently as an exponent of ‘asking for advice’; however, the use of the parenthetical phrase serves to mitigate or further mitigate the head act. Kasper and Rose refer to the epistemic parenthical, 'I think' as being the 'learners' all-time favourite epistemic marker' (2002: 181). It may be supposed that this also refers to the interrogative form. The current data-base of those who have spent less than 60 days in a target language situation runs contrary to their findings as its presence in the discourse is outweighed by the internal, syntactic epistemic ‘can’. However, the introduction of epistemic parenthetical questions into the repertoire of the mainly mono-contextual informants once more exhibits the scope of the group’s linguistic repertoire and by doing so re-confirms their identity as highly-proficient L2 learners/users.

The use of the parentheticals shares commonalities with the use of ‘wh’ modal questions. They are found in the repertoire of just two informants - #B and # E.

#B **Do you think *it*** will work?

#E **Do you think *she***'s having an affair?

Although conventionalised insofar as ‘do you think …?’ tends to be acquired as a chunk, such parenthicals do allow for high levels of fine-tuning. First to note is the shift in modality after the parenthetical. #B continues with the epistemic ‘will’; whereas #E avoids modal marking and follows up with an unmitigated verb phrase. Therefore, the choice of the epistemic parenthetic ‘do you think…?’ allows for a wide range of fine-tuning, it is less restrictive in its possibilities and encourages fluidity in interaction. This is congruent with the dynamic nature of the conversational situation and proves congruent with the demand of informality.

Within the substrategy of EP questions, speaker/hearer orientation in the following verb phrase has been ignored in favour of anaphoric and exophoric referencing. In the first case 'it' refers to the piece of advice already given. In the second example 'she' refers to something external to the conversation – i.e. to the person who has caused the need to ask for advice. This use of anaphoric and exophoric referencing is further evidence of negotiation and co-construction which promote solidarity amongst speakers and subsequently social closeness and an equal-status identity.

To sum up, both genres are dominated by bare modal questions. The most widely-used exponent for realising bare modal questions is ‘can you’. Despite the dominance of ‘can you …?’ variation in indexing identity does exist. In the institutional genre, the informants, on the whole, successfully enact the identity of a formal, socially-distant interlocutor. This is indexed as ‘can you …?’ The speaker-orientated ‘you’ serves as a distancing device and the non-emotive ‘can’ adds formality. However, as a mitigator ‘can’ may not have a sufficient ‘softening’ effect to portray a lower-status interlocutor. Following politeness theory, the imposition may not be adequately minimised and as a consequence, the informants have not been successful in enacting a lower-status identity.

From the perspective of the conversational genre, a more varied use of modality and speaker/hearer orientation. The more fluid approach to identity marking allows the interlocutor to take a collaborative position in the interaction and thus enact an informal, socially-close and status-equal identity. Despite some problematic areas, the informants are successful in ‘being’ a friend ‘doing’

asking for advice.

6.3.3 Group 2

The Institutional Genre

Bare Modal Questions

Within the discourse of group 2, choice of speaker/hearer orientation (and modality) in modal questions is problematic insofar as no distinct patterns can be discerned.
Bare modal questions are realised in the following manner;

#G: Can **she**…?
#G: Can **you** …?
#L: Would **that** …?
#H Could **you** …?
#L: Could **I** …?

From the perspective of discernible patterns of use, the only pattern that could be putatively referred to is a preference for epistemic modality. Despite #G showing a preference for the use of 'can', modality is mixed. As for speaker/hearer orientation, if a tendency can be discerned, it can be seen that 2 out of the 5 questions opt for distancing speaker-orientated 'you' which indexes a socially-distant, formal identity, but as discussed with reference to group 1, 'can' may not be the appropriate choice of modality when enacting a lower-status identity. However, when more heavily mitigated modality is employed, - i.e. modality which is more congruent with a lower-status identity it is followed by a mixture of speaker, hearer orientation and anaphoric referencing. As previously discussed speaker-orientation personalises the request for advice and thus reduces social distance. Social distance is likewise reduced by the use of anaphoric referencing as in the examples from #G and #L. The use of anaphora shows high levels of engagement in the interaction and can, furthermore, index an equal-status identity. This is problematic as the current situation demands a formal, socially-distant and lower-status identity and the highly individualised approach adopted by the informants of group 2 (with the exception of #H) appears to be non-congruous with at least one of the identity demands.

‘Wh’ Modal Questions

Only one token for a ‘wh’ modal question is identified and that is in the discourse of #L.

#L: What … how can, could **I** help him?

Interestingly from the perspective of modality, the ‘asker’ initially opts for ‘can’ but then rejects in favour of the more mitigated ‘could’ which creates less of an imposition when making a request to a higher-status interlocutor and therefore, a deliberate decision can be seen to be made in an attempt to make a sociopragmatically congruent request for advice. However, the impact of this is offset by the use of the more personalised ‘I’ which reduces social distance. This adds to the impression that the informants of group 2 are not successful in enacting the identity demanded of them by the situation.

Conversational Genre

Bare Modal Questions

This is the largest category with 4 out of the 9 tokens. They are not evenly distributed among the informants as they are found in the discourse of just 3 informants - #H (x2), #I (x 1) and #J (x 1).

They are expressed thus:

#H: Can **you** help me?
#H: Would **you** allow him back?
#I: So can **I** send pictures?
#J: Can **you** use it also for …?

Although the number of tokens is small, it may still be possible to discern a pattern with regard to speaker/hearer orientation. There is a bias towards the use of the hearer-orientated ‘you’. This is a preference that was previously seen in the discourse of group 1. As previously argued, ‘you’ is a more distancing pronoun and maybe more congruent with the institutional genre as opposed to the current conversational genre where social-closeness is required. In addition, ‘can’ is the preferred modality in 3 out of the 4 examples. This could potentially serve to index a more formal identity

which is incongruent with the situation. However, in the example from #L, the informant seems aware of the discrepancy and reduces the imposition of 'can' by prefixing the question with the modifier 'so'. The force of 'can' is likewise mitigated by coupling it with the personalising 'I'.

'Wh' Modal Questions

These are modal questions that have been prefixed with a question word such as 'what', 'where' or 'how'. An even smaller number of informants included this substrategy in their repertoire. Only 2 examples are noted in the repertoire of 2 informants - #G and #H. Both are realised by the hypothetical 'would'. #G uses a bi-clausal and #I a mono-clausal; however, it is possible that the mono-clausal is an elided bi-clausal.

#G: What would **you** do if you were **me**?
#H: What would **you** do?

The former example is interesting insofar as the collocation of 'you' and 'me' can indicate the desire for a collaborative approach to the solution of the problem thus reducing social distance and allowing for an equal-status identity to be enacted which is congruent with the demands of the conversational situation as it requires the indexing of a socially –close and equal-status identity.

Epistemic Parenthetical Questions

These are apparent in the discourse of 3 of the informants - #L, #G and #K and represent a range of modalities.

#K: Do you think **he**'s …?
#G: Do you think **I** should …?
#L: Do you think **you** could …?

The EP questions display considerable degrees of 'unpacking' insofar as they, more than the other substrategies of conventionalised indirectness, seem to have been finely-tuned to provide a fit with the demands of the situation. This is apparent through the range of modality and pronominal choice. For example, #K opted for the anaphoric 'he' paired with the non-modal 'to be'; whereas #G chose speaker orientation with the deontic 'should' and finally in the example of #L gives rise to a pairing between hearer orientation and the epistemic 'could'. The use of anaphora and the speaker-orientated 'I' allow for personalisation and a collaborative engagement. They reduce social

distance and index an equal-status identity

In summary, as a whole, with regards speaker/hearer orientation and modality, the discourse of group 2 is highly variable and unlike that of group 1, patterns for the indexing of identities are difficult to discern especially in the institutional genre. The institutional genre requires the enactment of a socially distant, lower-status identity. However, this was not always indexed in discourse. In fact, 4 out of the 6 examples index a socially close identity and 2 out of 6 show high levels of engagement which can result in a co-constructed interaction. This indexes an equal-status identity which is non-congruous with the demands of the situation. In short, as a group, group 2 has not been successful in enacting the identity of a lower-status interlocutor in a socially distant situation.

The enactment of a congruent identity in the conversational genre is more successful despite a stronger preference for 'you' which suggests a non-alignment with the required identity of socially-close interlocutor. This, however, is counterbalanced by the conflation of speaker/hearer orientation, more heavily-mitigated modality, lexical downgrading and the use of anaphora especially in EP questions. This allows the interlocutor to adopt the position of a collaborative interlocutor and co-constructor of the speech event thus portraying a socially-close, equal status identity.

6.3.4 Group 3

Institutional Genre

Bare Modal Questions

This is the most frequent strategy with 8 exponents distributed over 3 informants: #N (x4), #P (x2) and #Q (x2). In accordance with data from group 1, bare modal questions are most frequently realised by the epistemic modal 'can' with 6 out of the 8 tokens. The remaining 2 tokens represented 'would' and 'could'. A sample of the tokens is presented below.

#N: Would **that** mean …?

#N: Can **we** come back …?

#N: Maybe can **we** recommend…?

#P: Can **you** help me?

#Q: Could **we** just discuss?

#Q: Can't **we** just take…?

As previously noted, 'can' fulfils the sociopragmatic demands of social distance and formality; however, is problematic with the demand of lower-status interlocutor as it is the least mitigated modal. Variation within the use of 'can' is present in the discourse of #Q. The informant negates the modal and renders it more mitigated and seemingly providing a more congruent match to the demand of lower-status interlocutor as can be seen in the case of the heavily mitigated 'could' and 'would'. Furthermore, lexical downgrading is evident in the discourse of #N and #Q. #N prefixes the request with 'maybe'. This demonstrates an awareness of the non-congruity of 'can' with an identity of lower-status identity and indicates an attempt to modify the request in such a way as to retain social distance and formality while simultaneously enacting a lower-status identity. #Q, on the other hand collocates the more emotive 'could' with the internal aggravator 'just'. This fulfils the opposite role of 'maybe' insofar as it reduces the mitigation of could and brings it more into line with the illocutionary force of 'can'. This is a complex relationship. When viewed from the perspective of the modal verb, an attempt to align the core identity with that of the identity demanded is played out. However, the use of the internal aggravator 'just' negates any gains made by the use of 'could'. This indicates an internal struggle taking place between the core identity of the informant and the identity demanded by the situation.

Significantly, this is not the only apparent struggle taking place. Paradigmatic choice in speaker/hearer orientation is relevant to the enactment of the demanded identity. The rejection of the role of status-lower interlocutor is underpinned by pronominal choice in speaker/hearer-orientation. Group1 demonstrated the preference for the hearer-orientated 'you' in the formal situation. This was explained by the prioritising of the sociopragmatic demands of formality and social distance. It is also congruent with the institutional nature of the interaction where it is expected that the advisor is willing and in a position to give advice. However, the preferred choice of pronouns for group 3 in the institutional situation is 'we'. It is found in 50% of bare modal questions. This is an interesting and complex difference. 'We' is multi-functional insofar as it can serve to reduce social distance by appealing to in-group membership. It can project a 'solidary persona' (Yates, 2008: 80) and thus soften relationships. However, this is normally from the stance of a higher-status interlocutor such as a teacher (Poole, 1992, Yates, 2008) or a business executive (CANBEC corpus of business English). Therefore, I will argue that the use of 'we' is not to show

solidarity or soften relationships when it comes from what should be a lower-status interlocutor, but rather it is a potentially face-threatening act. It serves to alert the advisor to the refusal of the status imposed on the 'asker'.

'Wh' Modal Questions

These are very much subordinate to bare modal questions in that only 2 tokens are found in the data. They are present in the discourse of #N and #Q.

#N: What can **we** do?
#Q: What would **you** advise?

#N once more invokes 'we' therefore enacting an equal or higher-status identity which provides congruency between the demands of social distance and formality yet negates the lower-status identity thus creating a face threatening act.

Epistemic Parenthetical Questions

Four tokens for epistemic parenthetical (EP) questions are present in the data distributed over 3 informants: #O, #S (x2) and # T. The examples are as below.

#T: Do you think **we** could...?
#S: Do you think **I** would...?
#S: Do you think **she** need …?
#O: And that's.... do you think?

EP questions are examples of pre-fixed questions which according to O'Keeffe *et al.* (2011) are more heavily mitigated than non-prefixed questions. The first three examples from the data follow this pattern. Such strong mitigation is evidence not only of a highly-proficient user but also of congruency with negative politeness with a higher-status interlocutor. In accordance with data from other groups, epistemic parenthetical (EP) questions give rise to fluidity in the use of modality and speaker/hearer orientation. However, it is the example from #O diverges from the majority pattern.

#O deploys an equally indirect or mitigated form, but in this occasion, the EP is placed in tag question position, therefore using a conventionalised formula – 'do you think …?' in a non-conventionalised manner. This manipulation of conventionalised formulae displays the identity of

highly-proficient L2 learner/user in addition to the identity of lower-status interlocutor in a formal, institutional situation with a higher-status interlocutor. However, this apparent match may be challenged in the following part of the utterance as witnessed in the use of speaker/hearer orientation in the data pertaining to #T and #S. #S follows the parenthetical 'do you think …?' with the conflated speaker/hearer token 'we' thus counterbalancing the extreme mitigation by positioning herself as a higher-status interlocutor. On the other hand, #S deploys the speaker-orientated 'I'. I can be considered personal and results in the reducing of social distance.

Conversational Genre

Bare Modal Questions

Bare modal questions are realised in the following manner:

#Q: Can **I** stay in your place?
#R: Could **you** explain it to me, please?
#M: Should **I** go after him?
#M: … but, could **I** ask you a favour?

The data represent a considerable deviation from previous patterns. Firstly, bare modals are not dominated by the employment of the minimally mitigated 'can'. In fact 'can' accounts for just one token and significantly within that token, a decoupling of the 'can you' paradigm takes place. The use of the socially distancing 'you' is restricted to just one exponent in the discourse of #R. The remaining exponents show a preference for the personal implicature of the speaker-orientated 'I' in congruence with the sociopragmatic demand of social closeness. In addition, the lack of pattern conforms to the definition of the conversational genre insofar as it disfavours routines.

The one example that seems at odds with the remainder is the exponent from #R.

#R: Could you explain it to me, please?

It is comprised of internal syntactic mitigation in the form of 'could', followed by the distancing hearer-orientated 'you'. Finally an external lexical downgrader in the form of the politeness token 'please' is added. This is somewhat incongruent with the sociopragmatic demands of the situation.

When analysed, this utterance forms a match with the requirements laid out by Brown and Levinson with regards to the concept of negative face. Negative face, in brief, correlates with the upholding of a higher-status interlocutor's face in a situation demanding respect. Therefore, in this instance there is a mismatch between the language used and the sociopragmatic demands of the situation.

'Wh' Modal Questions

The low number of 'wh' questions reflects the pattern found in the institutional genre. Only 2 examples have been extracted form the data and they are found in the discourse of #S and #O:

#S: What can **I** do?
#O: What would **you** do?

The data confirms the findings from the analyses of other groups and genres in that no discernible pattern comes to light. In fact 'wh' modal questions seem to lend themselves to a flexible use of modality and speaker/hearer orientation. Due to this, their paucity in the data regarding the conversational genre may seem at odds with the fact that the informants have a high degree of intensity of contact with NSs and a balanced exposure to both institutional and conversational loci of learning. However, this dispreference may be explained by the 'de-routinisation' of bare modal questions coupled with the increase in the proportion of EP questions.

Epistemic Parenthetical Questions

EP questions are now on a par with bare modal questions with 4 examples relating to the discourse of 3 informants: #M, #Q and #T. They are rendered as below:

#M: So what do you think **I** should do?
#M: … do you think **you** could...?
#Q/T: Do you think **I** should...?

Whilst EP questions have previously lent themselves to a flexible approach regarding choice of modality and speaker/hearer orientation, in this case a pattern is discernible. From the point of view of modality choice, 3 out of the 4 examples prefer the deontic 'should' which is most closely aligned with asking for advice and therefore reduces the need for disambiguation. In the same examples, 'should' is coupled with the personal speaker-orientated 'I'. 'I' reduces social distance, therefore indexing a socially-close identity. When it is collocated with the hearer-orientated 'you'

from the epistemic parenthetical, it results in a feeling of collaboration between the 'asker' and the advisor and renders them both part of the problem and the solution. Further to reducing social distance, this highlights equality of status as both participants have become legitimized in their roles as problem solvers. However, the second example provided by #M defies this pattern.

#M… do you think you could...?

The deontic 'should' is replaced by an epistemic 'could' and this is coupled with the hearer-orientated 'you'. The effect of the doubling of 'you' has the potential of posing an imposition on the advisor and thus creating an asymmetric power relationship where the focus in not on co-constructing a solution to the problem but on placing the burden of solving the problem onto the advisor. This does not meet the requirements of a socially-close, equal-status identity. I would also argue that the high degree of mitigation – use of epistemic parenthetical and 'could' are more congruent with a more formal situation.

I will conclude the analysis with a few words on speaker/hearer orientation. The analysis of speaker/hearer orientation illuminates a very clear pattern with regard to speaker/hearer orientation. In 70% of cases the informants opted for the speaker-orientated 'I'. 'I' serves to personalize the exchange and therefore render the utterance more congruent with the sociopragmatic demands of informality and social closeness. In 4 out of the 7 cases of speaker-orientation, 'I' was collocated with 'you'. This collocation indexes the equality of status enacted by the informants. In addition, it re-enforces the co-constructive nature of the conversational genre.

To summarise, it is clear that the informants from group 3 enact different identities in different situations; however, the identity is not always aligned with the demands of the situation. Within the institutional genre, the formal and socially-distant identity was successfully indexed in the discourse. However, the identity of lower-status interlocutor seems to be rejected by the informants. This rejection is indexed through the choice of 'we'. By opting for 'we', I have argued, the informants are actively enacting a higher-status identity. This, I have argued arises due to a conflict between what may be termed 'core identity' (Bendle, 2002) and the identity demanded by the situation. The conversational genre, however, does not give rise to such conflict. The informants show a strong preference for the speaker-orientated 'I' which indexes a socially-close identity. The EP questions in particular index a co-constructive approach to the problem/solution and thus allow for the enactment of an equal-status interlocutor.

6.4 Inter-Group Comparison of Speaker/Hearer Orientation

I will end this section with a comparison of the findings from all three groups. Within the comparison, the impact of the variable of duration of accumulated submersion experience will be explored.

Group 1 consists of primarily mono-contextual FL learners. Although each informant has experienced a degree of submersion, levels are low with an accumulated submersion experience of 60 days or less. Despite such low levels of cross-contextuality, the discourse of group 1 indexes identity through speaker/hearer orientation and choice of modality differentially according to genre and strong patterns emerge. Identity in the institutional genre is mainly indexed through the employment of 'can you …?' While the preference for 'you' successfully maps the formal and socially-distant demands on identity, I argue that 'can' is an inappropriate mitigator to index a lower-status identity. The informants overlook the enactment of a lower-status identity and this could be due to difficulties in the on line processing of all three demands on the enactment of identity.

The indexing of identity in the conversational genre is much more varied especially with regards modality switches. However, there is once more a bias towards 'you' which leads to the conclusion, that with primarily mono-contextual FL learners, difficulties arise in the enactment of a socially-close identity. There is strong evidence of 'can you' being acquired as a chunk which has not yet been 'unpacked'. However, attempts are made to resolve the problem and they are indexed through the collocation of 'you' and 'I/me' within a modal question and the deployment of lexical downgraders.

Moving on to group 2, with regards cross-contextuality, the informants are defined by low-levels of cross-contextuality insofar as each informant has accumulated between 120 days and one year in submersion experience. As with group 1, identity is indexed differentially according to genre; but more significantly, it is indexed differently from group 1. Within the institutional genre, group 1 tend to follow a strong pattern in the enactment of identity; however, group 2 indexes identity in a highly-individualised manner, which ensures that group findings are marked by instability. There is a wide range of modality and speaker/hearer orientation and when this is considered along with the use of anaphoric references, it can be concluded that group 2 experience difficulties enacting a

socially-distant, lower-status identity. In contrast, the evidence points towards the enactment of an equal-status identity.

On the other hand, the indexing of identity in the conversational genre is much more stable. There is a slight bias towards 'you' which appears incongruent with the enactment of a socially-close identity. However, the informants seem to be aware of the problem and attempt to counter-balance by using distance minimising devices such as anaphora and lexical downgraders. In fact, the indexing is very similar to that of group 1.

Finally, the informants of group 3 can be defined as experiencing high degrees of cross-contextuality. Each informant has accumulated one year or more submersion experiences. Significantly, this results in a very different use of speaker/hearer orientation especially in the institutional genre. With group 3, there is a return to a strong pattern. However, it compares differentially to that of group 1. The strong preference for informants with high degrees of cross-contextuality is to index identity through 'we'. I have argued that when emanating from what should be a lower-status interlocutor 'we' is not an enactment of a solidarity identity; rather it is the strong rejection of the lower-status identity demanded by the situation and a repositioning in a higher-status identity. This, I argue, is due to a conflict between the 'core identity' of the informants who are all teachers and the identity demanded by the situation.

By contrast, the conversational genre does not present such a struggle. The informants seem content to adopt a socially-close, equal-status identity. This is indexed through a variable approach to marking modality and, unlike groups 1 and 2, a strong bias towards the speaker-orientated 'I'. Additionally, the informants couple 'you' and 'I' in a manner which fosters a collaborative, co-constructive enactment of a socially-close identity.

Table 6.15 below provides an overview of the differing enactment of identity as indexed in speaker/hearer orientation.

Table 6.15

	60 days or less	120 days to one year	More than one year
Institutional Genre	• Discernible pattern • Can you …? • Attempts to process formal, socially-distant	• No discernible pattern • Highly unstable use • Display of equal-	• Discernible pattern • Dominance of 'we'

	and lower-status identity	status identity	• Rejection of lower-status identity • Assertion of core identity
Conversational Genre	• Mixed modality • Use of lexical downgraders • Use of anaphora • Bias towards 'you' • Difficulty in processing socially-close identity	• Mixed modality • Use of anaphora • Use of lexical downgraders • Bias towards 'you' • Difficulty processing socially-close identity	• Mixed modality • Use of anaphora • Bias towards socially-close 'I'

Thus two distinct patterns can be discerned for the impact of increasing degrees of cross-contextuality on the enactment of social identities. These patterns refer to the enactment of identities which are compatible with the demands of two very different situations. Firstly, I will explore the patterns for enacting a lower-status identity. As mentioned in chapter 4, the interpellating of informants into a lower-status identity is deliberate. All informants are second level teachers of English and as such, the dominant use of English is to enact a higher-status identity – i.e. the institutionalised identity of teacher. Therefore, interpellating teachers into a lower-status identity requires the shedding of the normal identity for the use of English. As discussed, the primarily mono-contextual FL learners seem to accept the given identity and attempt to enact it. However, that changes with an increased degree of cross-contextuality. Those with an ASE of between 120 days and one year index the identity in a very unstable manner. Their enactment of a lower-status identity is in a state of flux. There appears to be a degree of conflict between core identity and the identity demanded of the situation; however, in the end, they opt for an enactment of an equal-status identity. However, I will hypothesise that a high degree of cross-contextuality – i.e. one year or more allows the informants to actively reject an identity and to enact an identity which they believe is compatible with their core identity.

From the point of view of the conversational genre, it can be posited that a socially-close, equal-status identity is compatible with the informants' core identity and therefore no conflicts should take place. This is indeed borne out by the results as the identities are not rejected. However, what are noticeable are the difficulties faced by primarily mono-contextual and low-level cross-contextual informants in indexing a socially-close identity. It appears that a socially-close identity can be successfully indexed only after an ASE of one year or more.

However, this is just a hypothesis based on a small data-set. In the following section I will test this hypothesis by analysing the enactment of identity through the use of solidary and non-solidary moves.

6.5 Indexing Identity in Solidary and Non-Solidary Moves

6.5.1 Group 1

Institutional Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves in the institutional genre are represented by two substrategies: grounders (5) and hints (6). Hints differ from 'grounders' in that, while both are prepatory moves towards a speech-act, hints are not necessarily followed up by the head act. 'Grounders' in this case are always followed by the head act of 'asking for advice'.

Hints

Hints operate as legitimate exponents for the speech act of ‘asking for advice’ only on the premise that both the hearer and speaker accept them as such. They are problematic insofar as a considerable mismatch between locution and illocution often exists. For hints to be accepted there must be a mutual recognition that the mismatch between locution and illocution can be readily disambiguated. That is to say that, for example, an utterance such as ‘Is it just me, or is anyone else cold?’ is intended as a request to close the window by the speaker and is interpreted as such by the hearer. When hints are successful, they perform the role of downgrading the primary speech act, thereby minimising imposition on the listener in a face-saving act.

The number of tokens extracted from the data for ‘hints’ this was equally divided among substrategies: exposition of problem (x3) and use of statement questions (x3). I will turn firstly to a discussion of the substrategy of ‘exposition of problem’

Exposition

This is evident in the discourse of 3 informants – #E, #C and #B. In all cases the exposition was complex providing detailed schematic information to the situation. Examples include:

C: I have, let's say a disease – not a disease – a problem in my back. It's a small ...my muscles are all in a …

This exposition is not in response to an inquiry regarding the health of the speaker; rather it is an extremely indirect request for advice. It is a finely-tuned, almost tentative way of diminishing the imposition placed on the hearer, of allowing the hearer the opportunity of supplying advice or not in a non-face-threatening manner. As such, the substrategy is congruent with the identity of 'lower-status interlocutor'. However, as expositions are not succeeded by a more easily recognized appeal for advice, the burden on the 'hearer' to disambiguate the speaker's intention may seem substantial and in some ways incongruent with the lower-status interlocutor identity as it opens up opportunities for collaborative disambiguation which may be more congruent with an equal-status interlocutor. Additionally, as mentioned, expositions tend to include considerable schematic information. At times this information could potentially be overly personal or superfluous to the situation in such a way as to reduce social distance and formality. Therefore the use of exposition as a hint enacts an informal, socially-close identity.

Statement Questions

'Statement questions' are likewise employed by the informants to allow advice to be given without imposing on the interlocutor. I will argue that the burden placed on the advisor to disambiguate the illocutionary force of the utterance is less than that of exposition on two accounts:

- Statement questions don't tend to appear at the beginning of the speech event but are integrated into it.
- They are generally much shorter with little or no schematic information.

This is a substrategy used by only 2 informants – #B (x1) and #A (x2). However, the differences between how these types are used by the different informants cannot be underestimated. In the case of #A, the statement questions are in the form of a restatement of advice given. For example:

Advisor: You should always walk up the stairs and don't take the elevator

#A: And the elevator is forbidden?

Advisor: Running can sometimes be beneficial
#A: And the pros and cons?

By repeating the proffered advice in the form of a statement question, the informant is simultaneously reconfirming the advice and requesting further information without making an additional imposition on the 'Advisor. While a mismatch between locution and illocution exists, the need for disambiguation from the part of the advisor is minimal as the statement question is embedded in context. Furthermore, while strategic mitigation is successfully employed in a way that seems to be congruent with a lower-status identity, there is also evidence of linguistic mitigation in the statement question of informant #A in the form of the lexical downgrader 'and'. 'And' is employed to soften or downgrade the force of the statement question and thus further strengthen the congruency between linguistic and strategic choices and the indexing of a lower-status identity.

#B deploys a very different method. Her choice is to adopt responsibility for the situation.

#B 'Maybe I'm doing something wrong?'

Although 'I' can be used to personalize, it also has a function of minimising imposition insofar as the 'asker' accepts the responsibility for the problem and thus gives deference to the advisor by acknowledging the 'advisor's role as an expert. This adheres to the demand of lower-status identity which is further strengthened by the inclusion of 'maybe' as a lexical downgrader. However, the personalization negates the indexing of a socially-distant identity.

In brief, it is evident that the use of hints as solidary moves in the discourse of primarily mono-contextual FL learners can prove problematic when the situation demands the enactment of a formal, socially-distant and lower-status identity. In particular, expositions tend to index a socially-close, informal and equal – status identity due to the inclusion of schematic and shared information and the collaborative disambiguation invoked by the locutionary/illocutionary mismatch. Statement questions, on the other hand, allow for the enactment of a socially-distant, formal and lower-status identity; however, expositions are the preferred strategy.

Grounders

Unlike hints, grounders are used to pave the way towards 'asking for advice'; to prepare the interlocutor for what may be viewed as an imposition. They are generally statements that are followed by the speech act of 'asking for advice' and are found in the discourse of four informants - #A, #C, #E and #F. Two distinct patterns are apparent and are represented below in examples from #A and #F.

#A: **So I don't know how to get fit.** + head act

#F: **I wanted to come here today.** + head act

The grounders chosen by all informants using this strategy adhere to a pattern of brevity which fits an identity which requires social distance and formality as no superfluous information is proffered. Whereas both patterns successfully alert the advisor to the proximity of a request with minimal need for disambiguation, there are commonalities and differences.

With regards commonalities, both examples are speaker orientated, i.e. the orientation is towards reducing social distance as witnessed through the use of 'I'. However, the token for appealing for advice is very different. #A opts for conventionalised routine in the form of the statement of a problem 'So I don't know how to …' It is also worth noting that the statement does benefit from external modification through the use the lexical downgrader 'so'. This functions in the same way as 'and' as discussed in the previous section and reduces the illocutionary force of the grounder.

#F, on the other hand, chooses a very different route and one that would seem analogous to his situation as lower-status interlocutor. As a grounder, the use of a strong volition strategy '**I want…'** is not usual. It runs counter to the identity of lower status interlocutor. The use of the direct, unmitigated 'want' as opposed, for example, to the mitigated ' would like…' is highly impositional and could be considered a face-threatening act especially when directed towards a higher-status interlocutor. It contravenes the 'maxim of congruence' (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993), mainly due to the fact that the lack of mitigation means that it has not been 'marked linguistically' (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993: 281).

The discussion on the use of grounders supports the hypothesis put forth by Hill (1997) that an analysis of strategic mitigation on its own is insufficient. On the surface, the use of grounders suggests that the informants are enacting an identity congruent with the demands of the situation; however, a deeper linguistic analysis highlights the conflicts that can arise within the discourse of

the informants where the need to enact an identity is not matched by appropriate linguistic features.

Non-solidary Moves

Non-solidary moves are used to openly show lack of common ground with the interlocutor and are therefore unusual when enacting a socially-distant, lower-status identity. However, in the discourse of the informants of group 1, only tokens are found and they represent the substrategies of avoidance and questioning.

Avoidance

Avoidance is chosen as a substrategy of non-solidary moves by only one informer – #D. While enacting a lower status interlocutor in a formal, socially distant, institutional situation, she decided to forgo the opportunity to ask for advice and place the burden on the advisor to discover the reason for the encounter. She provided information regarding the reasons for the interaction and eventually engaged in the speech event and performed exponents congruent with the speech event only after the advisor had initiated the conversation and specifically asked in what way he could help.

#D:	Silence
Advisor:	You want to have advice on your son's essay?
#D:	Yes, yes. Ah hmm
Advisor:	So you have come to visit me to talk about your son's essay?
#D:	hmm
Advisor:	You see I have many parents who come to speak to me about essays about sports er usually connected with what can sports do to increase to improve the reading abilities of students

As the exchange continued #D proffered more information and requested specific advice only after being prompted by the interlocutor.

The strategy of 'avoidance' is complex and appears incongruent with the identity of highly-proficient user/learner. Likewise, it places a heavy burden on the advisor to disambiguate the informant's reason for being there. However, I will argue that it is possibly an enactment of a lower-status interlocutor as the informant has put all power completely in the hands of the advisor and thus the asymmetry of status is reflected in the asymmetry of the interaction.

Questioning

In this case it takes the form of questioning the validity of the advice proffered and is found in the discourse of just one informant - #F. The linguistic form is the unmitigated question:

#F: But why?

This constitutes perhaps the most blatant act of non-congruence employed by any of the informants in group 1. It openly challenges the higher-status interlocutor's advice thus subverting the status roles. From the perspective of sociopragmatic demands, obviously that of lower-status identity has not been met. This is a face-threatening act which may have been performed in a deliberate attempt to reject the lower-status identity and reposition as an equal-, or higher-status identity.

In summary, identity as indexed in solidary and non-solidary moves in the discourse of informants with submersion experiences (SEs) of 60 days or less is problematic. There is discordance between the identity required to be enacted and the indexing of such and the substrategies employed. This is most obvious in the choice of exposition as the favoured substrategy of hints. The schematic information provided in expositions presupposes social closeness and an equal-status identity which is incongruent with the identity demanded of the situation.

Conversational Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves in the conversational genre are also composed of 11 tokens and 2 substrategies: hints (7), providing an alternative (2) and grounders (2).

Hints

Hints make up the most significant sub-category with 9 tokens divided into three subsections: 'exposition', 'statement questions' and 'ellipsis'. ‘Exposition’ is the favoured substrategy within hints. It accounts for 5 out of 7 tokens for hints. It is also chosen by 5 out of 6 informants - #D refrained from exposition. Two examples are noted for providing alternatives and only one example for both statement questions and ellipsis.

Exposition

As mentioned above, exposition is the favoured method of performing 'hints' when asking for advice in an informal, conversational situation between socially close, equal status interlocutors. Exposition provides much schematic information and shared knowledge. Examples include:

#B **Do you know**, X, I've been having problems with Tom lately. **You see** he's been working late every night and sometimes when he comes home …

The expositions tend to be quite lengthy with frequent references to shared knowledge. The use of exophoric references – i.e. references to elements outside the conversation - without explanation is frequent in these expositions. This is evident in the above example; the reference to 'Tom' goes unexplained. Similarly, 'working late' comes with the implicature that this is an unusual event; however, it is unnecessary to provide an explanation as the information is presumed to be common. This is congruent with a socially-close identity as it shows the interlocutors' common history. In further support that 'expositions' match the sociopragmatic demands is the fact that all 5 informants address their interlocutor directly by first name. This is evidence of an equal status identity as all examples are present at the beginning of the exposition and therefore considered something that has been pre-agreed. Furthermore all 5 informants make frequent hearer-orientated interjections, such as 'you know...' and 'you see …', thus making the advisor a collaborator/co-constructor of the speech act and ensuring that a socially-close, equal status identity is indexed in discourse.

As previously discussed 'expositions' – and hints in general – by their nature can impose the burden of disambiguation on the advisor as there is a considerable mismatch between the locution and illocution. However, in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-close equal status interlocutor, disambiguation allows for collaboration and co-construction thus expanding the conversation and indexing the enactment of an informal, socially-close, equal status identity.

Statement Questions and Ellipsis

As 'statement questions' and 'ellipsis' have only one token each, I will analysis them together. The statement question is found in the discourse of informant #F. Statement questions are normally short in length and contain little schematic information; however, in this case the statement question can be classed as anaphoric inasmuch as it refers back to a previous utterance made by the advisor and is therefore indicative of high participation in the interaction. Of equal interest, is the structure

employed in forming this 'statement question'. #F uses a hearer-orientated epistemic parenthetical:

#F You think I have to …?

As previously mentioned, epistemic parenthetical questions are extremely flexible and allow for a high degree of fine tuning. In this case, the hearer-orientated parenthetical is succeeded by a hearer-orientated VP. The collocation of 'you' and 'I' shows the 'asker's' intent to include both the 'asker' and the 'advisor' in the problem and the solution in a manner relating to solidarity instead of creating an imposition on the 'advisor' by inviting them to find a solution. This appeals to the co-constructive nature of the conversational situation while simultaneously strengthening social closeness and fostering the enactment of a socially-close, equal-status identity.

Ellipsis is a new pattern which was not found in the institutional data. According to Spenader, and Hendriks it can be described as 'the non-expression of sentence elements whose meaning can be retrieved by the reader' (2005: 1). It is multi-functional and very pervasive in language use. In this instance, it has the form of leaving the sentence unfinished. As in:

B The problem is that I'm so tired after working that I...

This represents a finely-tuned exponent, clearly identifying the speaker as a highly proficient user. It is recognised as a politeness structure, as a way of establishing a relationship with the interlocutor and minimising any possible imposition or face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1978, Morand & Ocker, 2003).

In this instance, #B is clearly using it to strengthen relationships by appealing to shared knowledge or experience. To exemplify this, it is worth considering the reference to 'working'. This presupposes shared knowledge that the 'asker' has a demanding job and thus requires no further explanation. Once more, this is evidence of social closeness. Additionally, the fact that the utterance is left elided presupposes that the interlocutor understands the message and is able to encode it as a request for advice. This is indeed the case as the follow up to the exchange will show.

#B: The problem is that I'm so tired after working that I...

#Advisor: I know...I know.... But no matter you have to try...you have to change.

The ability to use and manipulate subtle 'hints' without the occurrence of misunderstandings

highlights the successful enactment of an informal, socially-close and equal-status identity. This is a significant finding as many non-conventional, indirect (sub) strategies (see epistemic parenthetical questions, expositions and statement questions for further examples) require the advisor to disambiguate the utterance. As shown above, a considerable mismatch often occurs between the locution and the illocution. The example of ellipsis provides an excellent example of such a mismatch. The locutionary meaning of 'The problem is …' could be a statement. This places a burden on the advisor to disambiguate and encode it as a request for advice which has the potential to result in a face-threatening act if incorrectly interpreted. However, in an informal, conversational situation with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status, disambiguation becomes an essential strategy to allow the interaction to continue. It fosters collaboration amongst the participants and allows the interaction to be co-constructed thus indexing the enactment of a congruent social identity.

Grounders

Grounders, as in the formal situation, are only used on two occasions. Both are found in the repertoire of #E. But, unlike the example in the institutional genre, informally, they are not used as substitutes for 'exposition'; they are in addition to it. #F uses very different types of 'grounders' to pave the way for 'asking for advice'.

#F **I was just wondering** if you can help me

#F **But I can't do almost nothing with a computer**. Can you help me?

While both serve the function of preparing the interlocutor for the 'asking for advice' and of softening its impact, they are very different. The former can be seen as a non-context dependent routine that can be easily transferred to any situation; however it represents a syntactically complex structure which immediately marks the informant out as a highly-proficient L2 learner/user. Chapter 3 discussed the developmental stages in the acquisition of mitigating devices and concluded that mitigation through verbal aspect was late acquired and therefore a higher-order mitigating device. As noted by Hill (1997) and Takahashi (1996, 2001), this form of syntactic mitigation is extremely common in the repertoire of NSs, but a dispreferred structure in the repertoire in advanced Japanese EFL learners. This led Takahashi to the conclusion that advanced EFL learners, i.e., mono-contextual classroom learners can lack the necessary pragmatic knowledge to manipulate the multi-functionality of certain structures. However, the presence of this form in

the discourse of #F allows the informant to present an identity of highly-proficient L2 learner/user.

As has been shown above, methods of successfully 'asking for advice' in the current situation are operationalised on a collaborative, co-constructed basis insofar as the need to 'ambiguate' and disambiguate seem to be an integral part of maintaining an identity of social closeness and equality of status in particular. The use of the grounder 'I was wondering …' serves to alert the 'asker' in a very direct way that a request for advice is forthcoming and thus reduce the advisors' role of co-constructor in the interaction. This could lead to an increase in social distance and thus result in non-congruency with the sociopragmatic demands.

The second grounder present in the discourse of informant #E again serves to alert the advisor to a forthcoming request. However, it does so in an indirect manner. The locution of 'But I can't do almost nothing with a computer' indicates a statement of fact and therefore requires the advisor to disambiguate. This allows the advisor to become a co-constructor in the interaction which increases congruency with the identity of social closeness.

Providing Alternatives

Two informants use this strategy - #E(x1) and #F(x1). It may seem an incongruous category when 'asking for advice' as providing alternatives or making suggestions may be face-threatening acts in an institutional situation. However, in a conversational situation, I will argue that they are the opposite. They have a function similar to that of ellipsis, i.e. to establish a rapport with the interlocutor and to foster collaboration and co-construction of the speech event.

Exponents of this such as:

#E	I was thinking about...
#F	On the other hand, I thought

simultaneously respond to a piece of advice given by the advisor in a finely-tuned, individualised manner and prolong the conversation by allowing more advice to be given. This is conducted by non-impositional means which require a certain degree of disambiguation. Together with the foregrounding of the speaker-orientated 'I' which personalizes the interaction, an identity which encompasses informality (as highlighted by non-routinised response), social closeness (re: use of 'I') and equality of status (co-construction) has been indexed.

Non-solidary Moves

Avoidance

Similarly to the formal situation, avoidance is used in only one instance by the same informant - #D. As in the formal situation, it was the interlocutor who had to initiate the exchange, for example:

#D:	Silence
#Advisor:	Do you know Facebook at all?
#D:	Facebook?
#Advisor:	No? […] Facebook is something where you tell people what you are doing at the moment

In the institutional genre, the strategy of avoidance may be explained as an enactment of a lower-status identity. However, when looked at in conjunction with the conversational interactional exchange, another explanation is possible. What appears to be happening is not only a lack of variation in the discourse of informant #D, but also a display of an institutional identity – i.e. a typical classroom learner identity. The informant has adopted the role of an 'answerer' by waiting for a question to be supplied before participating.

This not only evidences a considerable mismatch with the informant's core institutional identity – i.e. teacher, but is also non-congruent with the equal-status identity demanded of the current situation.

To briefly summarise the results of the indexing of identity in solidary and non-solidary moves for informants with an ASE of 60 days or less, it can be seen that the indexing and therefore enactment of a socially-distant, lower-status interlocutor is problematic. There is an over-reliance on collaborative strategies which encourage a con-constructive approach to interaction. The consequence of such an approach is the enactment of a socially-close an equal-status identity. Additionally, 2 informants employ non-solidary moves. The substrategy of questioning indexes a deliberate rejection of the lower-status identity and the informant's attempt at repositioning as an equal-, or higher status identity.

On the other hand, the indexing of a socially-close, equal-status identity is more successful. Collaborative substrategies such as expositions, ellipsis and providing alternatives encourage the enactment of a situationally-congruent identity. However, some inconsistencies are found at an individual level – mainly in the discourse of #F and #D. #F at times veered towards a socially-distant identity; however, the identity enacted by #D deviates consistently across both genres. Through the use of avoidance, a traditional classroom learner identity is indexed. The informant adopts the identity of subordinate and defers the right to ask to the advisor.

6.5.2 Group 2

Institutional Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves are intended to show solidarity with the interlocutor by expressing enthusiasm and agreement with their ideas. Such a high level of solidary moves may seem incongruent with the identity demanded by the current situation which relates to a formal institutional interaction with a socially distant interlocutor of higher status.

51 tokens of solidary moves are distributed over 6 substrategies: positive backchannels (x34), providing alternatives (x 2), validation (x1), overlap (x2), hints (x10) and imposition minimisers (x2). In total solidary moves account for 67.1% of all tokens.

Positive backchannels

This is by far the largest substrategy of solidary moves. It is found in the repertoire of 5 informants - #H (13), #I (x10), #J (7), # K (x2) and #L (x2). Their abundance can be easily explained by their linguistic realisation. They take the form of brief response tokens such as 'yeah', 'ok', 'aha' and 'right'. However, their use is not evenly distributed among the informants with one informant #G not using any. They are most common in the discourse of #H, #I and #J with #K and #L displaying minimal use.

Their form seems to suggest a certain degree of informality with the tokens realised as 'yeah' and 'ok' as opposed to the more formal 'yes'. In addition to the non-congruency with a formal identity, their match to the identity of social distance and equal status remains questionable. The presence of

a large number of positive response tokens indicates a high level of participation in the interaction by the 'asker'. Such a high level of interaction may give the impression that the informant is taking an equal role in the interaction. Furthermore, equality of participation in the interaction as indexed through the large number of positive backchannels could serve to unilaterally reduce social distance. In other words, the 'asker' could be using positive backchanelling as a means of reducing social distance without the consent or invitation of the interlocutor thus re-enforcing the lack of congruity with the demands of the situation. In brief, the large number of positive backchannels in the discourse may index the 'asker's' enactment of an equal-status and socially-close identity which illuminates a mismatch between linguistic features and the demands of the situation in such a way as to be sociopragmatically inappropriate.

Providing Alternatives

Equally as problematic is the substrategy of providing alternatives. However, it is part of the repertoire of just 2 informants and the exponents share a number of commonalities.

#J: Ok, and then we could …
#K: And she could …

Both exponents are anaphoric insofar as they constitute direct responses to advice proffered and both acknowledge the advisors' contribution of advice. This is indexed by the use of 'ok' and 'and' at the start of the utterances. The informants continue the utterances by expanding the advice given by offering an additional suggestion. By permitting themselves to make a suggestion, the informants are adopting the identity of equal-status interlocutors. Furthermore, the use of this strategy suggests that the informants have positioned themselves as co-constructors of the solution. They have instigated a collaborative act with a shared goal. By doing so, social distance has been reduced. This is further evidenced by the pronominal choice in the example of #J. The informant has chosen the collaborative form of 'we' and in doing so has further challenged the lower-status identity by unilaterally reducing social distance and positioning herself as an equal.

Validation of Advice

Only one exponent of 'validation of advice' was noted in the data. It was extracted from the discourse of #H and takes the form:

Advisor: You don't do jogging often

#H: **No, I don't, I don't**

Advisor: Maybe you should try two times a week

This is a subtle non-impositional way of asking for further advice. It validates the advisor's assessment of the problem by agreeing with it and thus leaving the door open for further advice without the need to ask directly and thus save mutual face. However, there is a considerable mismatch between the locution and the illocution. The locution implies a negative response to a yes/no question; however, on an illocutionary level it fulfils a dual function - the validation of the advisor's opinion and a request for further advice. Despite the locutionary/illocutionary mismatch and the need for the advisor to disambiguate the utterance, this particular substrategy of solidary moves appears to index a lower-status identity. It gives deference to a higher-status interlocutor and is very indirect and therefore does not challenge face.

Overlap

With overlap, the discussion moves away from an analysis of linguistic features towards an analysis of the interactional or organisational features of the exchange. Interactional/organisational features such as turn-taking, which Young defines as 'how participants select the next speaker and how participants know when to end one turn and when to begin the next' (2009: 216), are an important constituent of the repertoire which also carries a pragmatic function. Young posits that turn taking can influence how 'participants construct identities for themselves and for others'. Therefore within the framework of analysing a speech event, it represents a valid area of analysis.

Two examples are found in the data for group 2: one in the discourse of #J and the other in the discourse of #L. Both examples display many commonalities; therefore I will examine just one example

Advisor: Yes, well, er maybe if he joins an after school circle where there is no pressure to⌈…

#L: … so you think that'll help him get over his shyness⌋

Unlike, its counterpart interruption, 'overlap is indicative of a high level of involvement in the interaction. Routines are broken and the interaction becomes fluid and co-constructed. It shows enthusiasm and allows the participants to co-create identities of equal-status. It can help frame both

participants as co-constructors of the solution. However, this dynamic construction of identities runs counter to the demands of an instructional exchange as the 'asker' seems to be unilaterally reconstructing the roles in a way which encourages – again unilaterally – the enactment of a socially-close identity.

Hints

I will move on now to an analysis of the use of hints in the speech genre of asking for advice. As the name suggests, hints are highly indirect strategies in which the illocutionary force compares differentially with the locutionary force. In total, ten exponents of hints are present in the discourse of all informants. Three substrategies are covered: expositions (x 2), explanations (x 6) and statement questions (x 2).

Expositions

Expositions are employed to provide a background to the exchange. The expose of the problem, it is hoped, would encourage the advisor to provide advice without any imposition thus saving mutual face if no advice is given. However, they are problematic in the current situation on two accounts – they often include personalised schematic information superfluous to the immediate needs of the situation. As this material can be personal, it may function as an attempt to reduce social distance and thus enact a socially-close identity. The second reason related to the degree of disambiguation required from the part of the advisor. As I have already argued, this places an undue burden on the advisor and as such could be considered face-threatening especially if the advisor is unable to interpret the exposition as a request for advice. This is exemplified in the following example from #I

#I: Hello, **I**'m here for the first time. **I** have a problem. **I'**m always sick very quickly, erh get the flu *and something like that* and eh **I** don't know what to do. **I** erh often have my fruits – *an apple a day keeps the doctor away*. *You know*, but **I** still get the flu in a week and it really *annoys me*.

This is problematic as a request for advice while enacting a lower-status identity in a formal institutional situation with a socially distant interlocutor on several accounts. To begin with the length of time the 'asker' has the floor may not seem appropriate. A turn-relevance place could be located after the statement of the reason for being there (I have a problem); however, the informant continues to hold the floor and thus prevents the advisor from asking a question. As it is normally

the higher-status interlocutor who controls turn-taking in the institutional genre, this may be perceived as an attempt to position oneself as an equal-status identity.

The information which follows, although connected to the problem, may seem excessive for a first time encounter especially as the higher-status interlocutor has not asked for further information. It is also highly personalised as witnessed through the dominance of the speaker-orientated 'I'. In this case, the impact of 'I' is to index the reduction of social distance between the interlocutors. The personalisation is further enhanced by the evaluative judgement presented in the form of 'it really annoys me'. This serves as an attempt to unilaterally create a bond with the higher-status interlocutor by making the advisor privy to the 'asker's' emotions. Creating a bond and thus reducing social distance is further indexed in the extract by the use of the idiom, 'an apple a day ….' This is an appeal to establish common ground, to show a shared knowledge between the interlocutors which is later strengthened by the use of the informal interjection 'you know'. Neither holding the floor nor high degrees of personalisation nor establishing common ground are congruent with the identity demanded by the situation. They present a particular challenge to the enactment of a lower-status and socially-distant identity.

Explanations

Explanations are usually shorter than expositions and therefore lessen opportunities to oversupply information. Because of this, they may be more compatible with the enactment of a situation – appropriate identity. However, as the data will show that is not always the case. In the current data set, explanations are noted 6 times in the data of four informants: #J (x3), #L (x1), #H (x1) and #K (x1). The following extracts from the data highlight the potential for congruency and non-congruency for the enactment of a socially-distant, lower-status identity.

#K: I'm not really very happy, er, about this situation with my health
#J: Well there's one in the class who er is tries to give orders to everybody and especially to her
#H: Hello, I'm sweating ha, ha, ha. You see I would like to stay healthy by eating healthy

The first two examples can be viewed as congruent with the identity demanded by the situation in so far as they are brief explanations for the reason for the interaction. Neither provides excess information and there are no attempts to reduce social distance by appealing to shared knowledge. The example from the discourse of #H is more problematic as it seems to violate at least two of the demands – social distance and formality. The opening is unusual to say the least. The reference to

a physical state followed by laughter is certainly unexpected from a formal, socially-distant, lower-status identity. The invocation of the physical state is intended to share personal information and secondly to introduce humour into the situation which belies its formal requirement. Both social distance and formality are further challenged in the succeeding utterance through the use of 'you see'. The attempt to reduce social distance is further indexed by the collocation of 'you' and 'I' which appeals to a shared cause and is indexes an identity which is non-congruent with the demands of the situation.

Statement questions

The above discussion has demonstrated the decreasing degrees of verbosity present in each substrategy of hints. Expositions contain significant amounts of schematic information, explanation, less and statement questions share the least amount of information with the interlocutor. Statement questions function as hints due to the mismatch between locution and illocution. The locutionary form is a declarative; however, the illocution is a request for advice. Both exponents are from the discourse of #L and as that are very similar I will discuss just one example.

#L: There are courses like that for children?

Similar to the exponents of explanations, statement questions are congruent with the enactment of a formal, socially-distant and lower-status identity as demanded by the situation insofar as they do not present an imposition on the advisor. The request has been mitigated – albeit by strategic means as opposed to lexical or syntactic. Mitigation is congruent with a lower-status identity. The question defers to the expert knowledge of the advisor thus recognising the higher-status identity and therefore saving face.

Imposition Minimisers

Imposition minimisers are strategies employed to alert the interlocutor to a forthcoming imposition such as a request. In that respect, it could be imagined that they would be common in indexing a lower-status identity in a socially-distant, formal situation. However, this is not reflected in the data. Only 2 exponents are present and they are in the discourse of #G and #J.

#G: Do you have a minute?

#J: Can I talk to you for a minute?

From the examples, it can be seen that they are indexed differentially and as a consequence reduce the imposition by varying degrees. The example from #G has not been mitigated. The strategy is operationalised as a direct question. This is an unusual choice of imposition minimiser to index a lower-status identity. It indicates that the 'asker' wishes to speak with the advisor and attempts to save negative face by deferring the decision to engage in interaction to the advisor; however, the deference is somewhat cancelled out by the lack of mitigation. Therefore, while the realisation of the imposition minimiser adheres to a formal and socially-distant identity, the requirement to enact a lower-status identity is challenged as indexed through a lack of mitigation. The contribution by #J compares differentially. It is syntactically mitigated by the use of 'can' and therefore more congruent with the enactment of a lower-status identity; however, social distance may have been compromised by the collocation of 'I' and 'you'.

To sum up, solidary moves appear to be somewhat problematic when indexing a formal, socially-distant, lower-status identity. Such moves tend to reduce social distance by promoting collaboration between interlocutors on an equal basis. They also promote a certain degree of fluidity in organisational structures. All the aforementioned features are incongruent with the identity demanded by the situation. In particular they indicate an incomplete awareness of form-function mapping resulting in sociopragmatically inappropriate use. However, it would be misleading to assume that all forms of solidary moves are non-congruous with a formal, socially-distant, lower-status identity. The example of 'validation' of advice seems to uphold the pre-defined status of the participants and doesn't encourage a reduction in social distance. Therefore, solidary moves have to be exercised with caution in the current situation as they can result in a mismatch between language and the enactment of an appropriate identity.

Non-solidary Moves

Non-solidary moves are the second biggest strategy with 18 tokens distributed over a range of 6 substrategies: negative backchanelling (x 6), problematicisation (x 4), questioning (x 2), correction (x 1), providing alternatives (x 2) and interruptions (x 3). Non-solidary moves constitute 23.6% of all tokens. However, they represent a strategy not normally associated with the discourse of a lower-status identity in a formal, institutional situation. The effect of non-solidary moves is to create discord between the participants. They are used to challenge, negate, criticise or provoke a

change in status - what Culpeper refers to as 'inherent or genuine impoliteness' (Culpeper, 1996: 352).

Negative backchannels

Like their positive counterparts, negative backchannels take the form of response tokens and are realised as: 'yeah', 'ok', 'erh' for example. They are the most common form of non-solidary moves and are found in equal quantities in the discourse of just 2 informants - #J and #I. In contrast to positive backchannels, negative backchannels serve to disassociate the 'asker' from the advisor. This is exemplified in the extract below.

Advisor: You, er, only see, er, bet…, improvement if you stay, er, for 2 hours
#I: Yeah … (falling intonation)
Advisor: Well, er …

Using negative backchannels increases social distance; however, the adherence to just one demand in no way makes it compatible with the identity required by the situation. Over-riding the adherence to social distance is the lack of congruency with the identity of lower-status interlocutor. The informant is making an aggressive rejection of that identity and positioning herself, I would argue, in a higher-status position. The informant negates the advice of an expert thus performing a strong negative face-threatening act.

Problematicisation

This substrategy is likewise deployed to challenge the authority of the advisor. Although just four exponents are identified, it has a broader distribution than negative backchannels as it is used by 3 informants: #G (x 2), #I (x1) and L (x1). This example from #L shows how the problematicisation functions as a means of rejecting advice.

Advisor: She could try to talk more with native speaker
#L: Oh, we don't really have any nati…, native speakers in our area, yeah

Rejection of advice through problematicisation is a more subtle and less direct method of creating discord than negative backchannels. It is extremely non-conventionalised as it doesn't follow a predictable routine and requires a certain degree of disambiguation on the part of the advisor. Despite the use of the lexical downgrader 'really', the above example does present a face-

threatening act by challenging the legitimacy of the advice provided and therefore can be seen as an attempt to downgrade the status of the advisor and simultaneously position the 'asker' in a higher-status identity.

Questioning

Questioning is another means of challenging the legitimacy of the advisor. It's a stronger means than problematicisation and likewise is non-congruous with the identity of lower-status interlocutor. It can be considered a direct criticism of the advice with the implicature that the 'asker' is more of an expert. It is not a frequent substrategy and just one example is noted in the discourse of 2 informants - #G and #I.

Advisor: She should check the internet for new ideas
#G: What do you mean by new ideas?

The extract presented above from the discourse of '#G foregrounds the direct and aggressive threat to the advisor's face. Although the locution is a conventionalised direct interrogative, the illocutionary force is quite different. It comes with the implicature that the advisor is in some ways deficient and the advice given very unclear. This example, like the other examples of non-solidary moves demonstrates the attempts to erode the higher status of the advisor and a refusal of the 'asker' to accept a lower-status identity. It also indexes the enactment of a socially-distant identity.

Correction

Correcting the higher-status interlocutor is not something often associated with the enactment of the identity of a lower-status interlocutor in a formal, institutional interaction with a socially-distant higher-status interlocutor. Similarly to the previous substrategies, the informant is criticising by correcting the advisor's interpretation of the situation. Even though this strategy forms part of the repertoire of just one informant - #H – in is nevertheless worth analysing. In response to advice regarding the necessity to eat healthily, the informant responds with a lengthy correction of what she feels are wrong assumptions.

#H: I… ehrm … Firstly **I** would like to say that **I** would have only 3 meals a day and that was … would be breakfast, lunch and then a dinner at say 8 o' clock or something and then **I** would er for breakfast **I** would have toast and cheese, coffee, soothing like that. As a snack, an apple or, I don't know ….

The above does not show the full response, but suffice to say that it continues in a similar vein detailing the informant's eating habits. One of the most striking features of the response is its length. The informant essentially takes the floor to explain to the advisor in an extremely detailed manner how the advice is inappropriate. By making such a lengthy response, the informant has taken control of turn-taking and blocked the advisor from making a contribution. The response shows contempt towards the advisor and indexes the rejection of a lower-status identity. Of interest is the repetition of the speaker-orientated 'I'. From a pragmatic perspective, subject pronouns can be multifunctional. In many cases, I have previously argued, 'I' is used as a personalising device which has the effect of reducing social distance. It can also be used to show deference to a higher-status interlocutor. However, in this context, I will argue that it is used as a distancing device, a means of belittling the interlocutor and of asserting or reclaiming status. Note also that neither the advisor nor the advice is mentioned in the turn. Not only is the enactment a higher-status identity indexed, but also the identity of a socially-distant interlocutor. However, it is the 'asker' who assumes the right to increase social distance thus strengthening the assumed higher-status identity.

The example of what I have termed 'correction' is an extreme example of the substrategy; however, it illustrates the sociopragmatic mismatch between it and the demands of the situation. The informant forcefully rejects the lower-status identity and by deliberately invoking a face-threatening act on the advisor displaces the advisor from the higher-status position which the informant then assumes.

Provision of Alternatives

Provision of alternatives is a multifunctional strategy which is also found under solidary moves. However as a non-solidary move it is not intended to show a collaborative approach to problem solving; rather it constitutes a rejection of advice offered in favour of the informants' own opinion and thus the rejection of a lower-status identity. Only 2 examples are noted and both are found in the discourse of #H.

Advisor: You could go running
#H: Maybe a mix of all –walking and running

In contrast to their solidary counterparts, no acknowledgement of the advice is given. The

informant seems to ignore it and then presents an alternative suggestion which over-rides that of the advisor. Face is once more threatened and the identity of legitimate, higher-status advisor has been usurped by the 'asker'. Thus, when a suggestion comes from a lower-status interlocutor what is being rejected is not only the advice but also the lower-status identity

Interruptions

The final substrategy to be analysed as a non-solidary move is 'interruption'. Interruption differs from overlap with respect to the intentions of the speaker. In the case of overlap, the intentions are to display engagement with the interlocutor in a manner which is conducive to co-constructing an outcome. On the other hand, the intention of interrupting is to prevent a turn form continuing. Three examples of interrupting are noted in the discourse of 2 informants: #G (x1) and L (x 2). From the perspective of lower-status interlocutors in a formal, institutional situation with a socially distant interlocutor, interruptions would seem an incongruent act. They not only violate the often canonical order of discourse found within the institutional genre, but they can give rise to a negative face-threatening act when it comes for the part of a lower-status identity as indexed in the example below.

Advisor: She can read books, search the internet also ⌈…
#G… yeah I know, but how can she decide about, you know, the topic?⌋

By rejecting the turn-relevance place, the 'asker' is suspending the turn of the advisor and also rejecting the advice as irrelevant. This is apparent by the dismissive nature of the response token 'yeah I know'. The rejection is further strengthened by the use of 'but' which serves to highlight the perceived mismatch between the advice being given and the needs of the 'asker'. The 'asker' has taken control of assigning turns and by adopting this self-appointed role, the 'asker' has rejected the identity of lower-status interlocutor and removed the advisor from the higher-status position thus assuming it herself.

To summarise non-solidary moves, it firstly has to be acknowledged that they contravene the sociopragmatic norms of communication for a lower-status interlocutor in a formal institutional interaction with a socially distant interlocutor of higher status. This contravention of the norms is indexed in language through a range of linguistic and interactional means. The means by which non-solidary moves are indexed are congruent with taxonomies of genuine or inherent impoliteness

as proposed by Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008) insofar as they seem to be carried out deliberately to inflict face damage on the advisor, but simultaneously to exert positive or self face. In fact, face is the biggest issue surrounding the use of non-solidary moves. Face is closely connected to identity, and, it is obvious from the data that the informants are unhappy with the identity foisted on them and they intentionally engage in repositioning themselves as the higher-status identity.

Conversational Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves are by far the dominant strategy employed by the informants of group 2 within the conversational genre with 89 out of the 102 tokens coming into this strategy. The tokens are unequally distributed over 7 substrategies: positive backchannels (x 72); agreement (x 2), repetition (x 1), overlap (x 1), problematicisation (x 2), proposing alternatives (x 2) and hints (9).

Positive backchannels

Positive backchannelling is the largest substrategy. The number of tokens within this one substrategy is 9 times more than the combined numbers from the other 5 strategies. However, whilst present in the discourse of all informants, an imbalance in distribution patterns is identified with 38.9% of all positive backchannels found in the discourse of just one informant - #J. The ubiquitous nature of the positive backchannels is readily explicable by their linguistic form. They are realised as minimal response tokens such as 'yeah', 'ok', and 'right'. They are multifunctional and can be used to show enthusiasm, encouragement, interest and acceptance amongst other things. Their presence in the discourse indicates a high level of engagement with the advisor. According to O'Keeffe *et al.,* one of the reasons for an over-reliance on response tokens is 'to keep the channel of communication open' (2011: 121). This is an important aspect of the conversational mode where the purpose of the speech event is not only to get advice, but also to fulfil a social or phatic role. In such circumstances, high levels of positive backchannels meet this requirement and thus reduce social distance. Likewise, high levels of engagement can result in a collaborative approach to the providing advice, where the 'asker' and the 'advisor' have interchangeable roles. This meets the requirements of the conversational genre where identities can be fluid and it also meets the situational demand of informality. Thus the use of positive backchannels is indexes a socially-

close, equal-status and informal enactment of identity which is congruent the situation.

Concordance

Concordance refers to the substrategy of showing an alignment of opinions of beliefs with the interlocutor. Expressing concordance with the advisor' opinion or suggestion is indexed in a more verbose manner than backchannels as can be seen in the following extracts:

Advisor: And if you want you can then share this information with everyone you know
#L: Oh, that would be fine

Advisor: You should maybe sit down and talk with him about this, er, er situation
#H: I think likewise

Both extracts illustrate the expression of concordance with advice given and thus index solidarity with the advisor. However, the expressions are realised differentially. #L expresses concordance with the advisor through a mitigated impersonal utterance. Furthermore, the 'oh' provides a link with the utterance of the advisor and thus renders the token socially close. On the other hand, #H does not mitigate and expresses concordance in a very direct manner without providing a link with the advisor's comment. The lack of linking, coupled with the unmitigated opinion verb 'think' index a socially-distant and formal identity. This is further underpinned by the use of the formal 'likewise'

The above is an example, not only of inter-informant variation, but also highlights the need to explore strategies at a deeper-level. Although both tokens come under the heading of 'concordance' and are thus solidary moves, a micro-analysis of the linguistic resources deployed can be used to index identities differentially.

Repetition

Repetition as a solidary move is found in the discourse of just one informant: Just one token is present and it is realised:

Advisor: Then you should set a password
#L: Password. OK

The repetition of password marks an acknowledgement of the advisor's utterance. This shows engagement with the interlocutor and also presupposes a desire to keep the conversation going. A socially-close identity is therefore enacted and as the 'asker' is actively engaging in the interaction, so is the equal-status identity.

Overlap

In accordance with the previous 3 substrategies, overlap indicates a high degree of involvement in the interaction and highlights its collaborative nature with the 'asker' assuming the identity of co-problem solver thus indexing a socially-close and equal-status identity. However, just one example of this substrategy is found. It is present in the discourse of #J.

#Advisor: So you can also make chatting to your friends and ⌈…
#J: … chatting, oh I must get that⌋

As in previous examples a link is established with the previous utterance to maintain continuity. This link is made in two places – with the repetition of 'chatting' and the conversion of 'you' to 'I'. This is a high-involvement strategy and therefore indexes a socially-close, equal-status identity

Problematicisation

Problematicisation of a piece of advice can be used as a non-solidary move as a means of rejecting advice; however, as a solidary move, its main objective is to provide a problem that can be jointly solved. It can be seen, when positive as a conversation maximise. This is exemplified in the 2 examples below.

#J I don't like ehm eu ehm saying too much about my private life on the internet … it might be a bit dangerous.

#J: Ah, but I don't really understand the advantage of Facebook

These are the only two examples that are found in the data, and significantly, they are part of the repertoire of just one informant. The informant personalises the utterance by opting for speaker-orientation and thus enacts a socially-close identity. Although the form chosen to preface the introduction of the problem is highly formulaic (see O'Keeffe *et al*., 2011: 134), the informant has

mitigated any possible imposition by the hedges ‘ehm, eu, erm’ in the first example and by the pre-question softener in the second. This helps lessen the possibility of a mismatch between the intention and the interpretation, thus ensuring that a continuation of interaction. It is therefore possible to say, that the examples of problematicisation fulfil the function of maximiser and do so in a linguistic manner which indexes an identity appropriate to the demands of the situation.

Proposing Alternatives

In a similar vein to ‘problematicisation’, the proposal of alternative advice is at least bi-functional as it can be deployed as a conversation minimiser or a conversation maximiser. As a conversation minimiser, it acts to curtail the interaction; whereas as a maximiser it encourages a continuation of the exchange. As a substrategy of solidary moves, it is therefore a conversation maximiser. Despite being a substrategy which is congruent with the demands of the situation by indexing a collaborative, equal-status and socially close identity, it is found in the discourse of 2 interlocutors - #IG and #K. The informants both deploy different linguistic means to achieve the substrategy.

#G: and we could …
#K: what about …?

The example of #G displays a number of linguistic features which indicate a successful mapping between form and the function of achieving an informal, socially-close and equal-status identity. This is indexed linguistically in a number of ways. Firstly, the use of ‘and’ indicates a high level of involvement by the ‘asker’ in the interaction. ‘And’ serves not only as a connector between the advice provided but also shows acceptance of the advice and an intention to co-construct a solution. The next area of interest is speaker/hearer orientation. The informant opts for the conflated form of ‘we’ and when ‘we’ is used by an equal status interlocutor, it is an indication of solidarity. As before this actively promotes social closeness and equality of status.

On the other hand, #K uses a more conventionalised form to realise the substrategy. However, introducing an alternative suggestion by means of a question helps mitigate the illocutionary force. It is further mitigated by its impersonal nature which allows for a rejection of the suggestion without losing face. Although it could be viewed as a way of preserving face, it may not index a socially-close identity.

Hints

To recap: Hints are indirect means of asking for advice which require significant levels of disambiguation from the interlocutor. From the current data set, 4 substrategies are extracted – exposition, explanation, statement questions and ellipsis.

Exposition

Expositions are particularly congruent with the enactment of an identity appropriate to the demands of the current situation. They are personalised exposes of the problem often containing exophoric references to shared information which can be left unexplained as the participants have a common background. Social distance is therefore precluded from this substrategy. This is further underpinned by the locutionary and illocutionary mismatch which provides opportunities for disambiguation to occur co-operatively between the participants. This helps promote the enactment of a socially-close and equal-status identity. An example of this is provided below from the discourse of #G.

#G: But, *you know*, **I**'m just ... that **I**'m having a few problems at home at the moment. You remember Damian was in a, in a business, business trip last month? Yeah, but *you know*, since he come back, he's been sort of different. You know how he is normally – chatty – always he tells to me everything. But since he's come back, he's changed. He stays in the room alone, his phone rings at er strange time. Oh, **I** don't know, **I**'m worried.

Firstly, the exposition is personalised though the use of 'I'. This personalisation can reduce social distance. Social distance is further reduced on two accounts: invocation of a common past and appeals to the advisor. The invocation of a shared past and thus a socially-close identity is indexed by recalling the advisor's schematic knowledge through phrases such as 'you remember' and 'you know how he …' in addition to the unexplained exophoric reference to Damian, the 'asker's' partner. Appeals to the advisor are made twice (in italics). Given the strong congruity between expositions and the enactment of an informal, socially-close, equal status identity, it is surprising that only one example is noted in the discourse of group 2. The remaining 5 informants showed a preference for explanations.

Explanation

An explanation is an outline of the problem. In comparison to expositions, it may be shorter (though not always), it does not presuppose common schematic knowledge and it is usually less

personal. I will examine the extract from the discourse of informant #H in order to assess compatibility between explanations and the enactment of a congruent identity.

#H *I*'m having this er little problem with **my er partner**. He seems to be to be far away. While we are chatting he's not paying attention when we are talking to each other and *I* also have noticed that he doesn't come home er early. He's er always late. So *I* may be suspicious about *him*, **my partner**.

The first thing to note is the lack of personalisation. Although 'I' is used three times, it does not appear to be used as a device to reduce social distance. Rather it is used to present the problem and to conclude. In addition, no appeals have been made to the advisor and there is no indication of a shared background. The partner is not referred to by name which implies that the information is too personal for the exchange; in fact the anaphoric reference 'him' is followed up with a clarification further highlighting the lack of shared knowledge.

The above discussion provides compelling evidence that explanations may not allow for the indexing of an identity appropriate to the demands of the current situation. If the example for #H is indicative, it may be concluded that they have a greater tendency towards the enactment of a formal, socially-distant identity. The lack of appeals to the interlocutor dissuades a collaborative effort to identify and solve the problem. While the informants are employing an indirect and non-conventionalised means of asking for advice, a sociopragmatic mismatch is evident between the choice of explanation and the enactment of an informal, socially-close, equal-status identity.

Statement Questions

Of the three substrategies of hints, statement questions place the least burden of disambiguation on the advisor. Statement questions are found in the repertoire of one informant only. #I uses two statement questions to ask for advice.

#I So you know how to do it?

#I So I don't know if it's safe?

Both statements are prefixed 'so' which acknowledges a previous comment by the advisor and thus a willingness to prolong the exchange. By acknowledging the contribution of the advisor the

'asker' is engaging in a collaborative act and thus enacting a socially-close identity.

Ellipsis

The primary function of ellipsis is to show involvement in the interaction. Not finishing sentences leaves the door open for the interlocutor to take a turn in what may not be a recognised turn-relevance place. Leaving the sentence unfinished indexes a socially-close identity as well as encouraging co-construction of the problem/solution and solidarity of opinion. The reduction of social distance and the indexing of an equal-status identity make this congruent with the demands of the situation. However it is noted only once and that is in the discourse of #J.

#J: Well, it's for video chatting and you know …

#J has permitted the interlocutor to anticipate the end of the contribution and in doing so has shown a common ground thus enacting a socially-close, equal-status identity

Significantly, no non-solidary moves are present in the discourse of group 2 informants while enacting a socially-close, equal status identity.

To summarise the indexing and enactment of identity in solidary and non-solidary moves in the discourse of informants with an ASE of between 120 days and one year, it is clear that the enactment of a socially-distant, lower-status identity as demanded by the institutional genre remains problematic. On the one hand, the informants employ a large number of solidary moves which primarily encourage co-construction and thus index a socially-close identity. However, on the other hand, the large number of non-solidary moves indexes a rejection of a lower-status identity and the rejection of the higher-status identity if the advisor. This rejection may be deliberate as the informants reposition themselves as equal-, or higher status identities. Therefore the indexing of identity in the institutional genre by group 2 informants is highly unstable and incongruent with the demands of the situation. Solidary moves index an enthusiastic identity which encourages collaboration and thus social closeness and equality of status, but simultaneously, non-solidary moves index a rejection of the higher-status identity of the advisor and an aggressive repositioning in an equal-, or higher-status position.

However, the enactment of identity in the conversational genre is less problematic. A socially-close, equal-status and informal identity is, on the whole, successfully indexed in the discourse of

group 2 informants. There appears to be little conflict between core identity and the identity demanded of the situation for the group as a whole. Despite this, individual difficulties do appear, most noticeably in the discourse of #H.

6.5.3 Group 3

Institutional Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves are represented by three substrategies: backchannels, hints and grounders.

Positive backchannelling

Only 6 tokens for positive backchannelling are present in the data for informants who have an ASE of one year or more. All tokens take the form of response tokens such as 'mmm' , 'yeah', 'ok' and uhmm'. They are present equally in the discourse of 3 informants: #O, #N and #S. Although sharing the same locution as negative backchannels, they are realised as face saving acts as they serve to uphold the opinions of the advisor. The difference in illocution is realised through differing intonation patterns and are more in line with the enactment of a lower-status identity. However, in their capacity of expressing solidarity with the advisor, they may serve to reduce the demand of social distance and thus index a socially close identity. However, there presence in the discourse is quite minimal.

Hints

In this genre, only one substrategy for hints is noted and that is exposition. However, it is found in the discourse of just one informant - #S. The paucity of hints and expositions in particular is congruent with the enactment of a formal, socially-distant identity. Expositions are a highly mitigated (sub) strategy which should reduce imposition on the advisor; however, they require a high degree of disambiguation by the advisor to encode them as requests for advice as opposed to an introduction to a story. This can place a burden on the advisor and potentially lead to a face-threatening act if incorrectly interpreted. The degree of disambiguation required depends on the nature and length of the exposition. The exposition employed by informant #S will help illuminate

this paradox.

#S You know **I want** that my daughter er should be er more excellent because er *we are very concerned about the education* and my daughter is er …**I think** she is …intelligent but eh she, she, she need some help and she's very, she's very lazy and **I think** she need support and **I think**, well **I trust** *in education* because **I think** in *this high school are working very good* and **I know** that *she has a good teacher* and I er er **I like** that teachers help her and get the best from her.

This exposition is the first utterance made by informant #S within the exchange. Firstly, the utterance is quite long which, in the enactment of a formal, socially-distant, lower-status identity is inappropriate and burdensome. Likewise, it includes personal and schematic information which may be superfluous to the immediate situation such as inclusion of 'we are very concerned about the education' and 'I trust in education'. This lets the advisor know that the 'asker' and family take a great interest in education and can index a reduction of social distance. This enactment of a socially-close identity is furthered by the frequent use of 'representatives' as seen in bold. The normal interpretation of representative is to provide information or recount personal experiences for example. This is congruent with 'expositions' in general; however, this substrategy is more common in the enactment of a socially-close, equal-status identity.

Non-solidary Moves

This is a highly unusual and unexpected strategy to be noted in the discourse of lower-status participants in institutional discourse where formality and social distance are demanded. In particular the strategy violates the demand of lower-status interlocutor. Even more astounding is the level – it constitutes 47.5% of all tokens and has 5 substrategies: negative backchanelling; interruptions; rejections; questioning and providing alternatives.

Rejection of advice is the single biggest substrategy. This is what Kasper and Rose (2002:183) refer to as 'an unfavoured way of performing a disfavoured act, especially […] with a status-higher interlocutor. Thirteen tokens are found in the discourse of 5 informants - #M (x4), #O (1), #Q (5), #R (1) and #S (2). The linguistic means of expressing rejection of advice come in a variety of forms encompassing questions (x4), negation of advice given (x2), problematicisation (x4), reiteration of the advice given (x2) and providing alternatives (x1). While the linguistic means are disparate, they

all require varying amounts of disambiguation from the advisor as none encompasses a direct 'No'.

Questions as a means of rejecting advice

I will turn firstly to questions as a means of rejecting advice. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991) identified this as a salient, but sociopragmatically incongruent means of rejecting advice in an institutional setting with a higher-status interlocutor. However, it is a method of rejecting advice present in the performance data.

#R Do you think she would be good at that? I'm not sure.
#O Ok? Using exercise…?
#Q Can't you just take a pill?

The above examples show how seemingly conventionalised indirect tokens (epistemic and bare modal questions) can be re-deployed to index an attack on the identity of the advisor. It is subtle method which on the surface can appear to be an appeal for additional advice; however as a response to advice given and emanating from what should be a lower-status interlocutor, it serves to reject the legitimacy of the expert and higher-status identity of the advisor and repositions the 'asker' out of a lower-status identity. The net effect of the utterances is to reject the advice given – i.e. to actively perform a face-threatening act and by doing so reject the identity of lower-status interlocutor and assume a superior identity.

Negation

I will move on to negation as a means of rejecting advice. Two exponents of this are found in the discourse and both come from the same interlocutor - #M – and follow the same pattern.

#M I don't want him to …(x2)

As a statement, it is quite direct and involves no softening or mitigation of the negative volition exponent. The rejection is heavily context-dependant. Further evidence of the lack of congruency with the sociopragmatic demands of the situation is witnessed through the use of the speaker-orientated 'I'. This personalizes the interaction and simultaneously reduces social distances and invalidates the identity of lower-status interlocutor in direct contravention of the rules laid out by Brown and Levinson (1978).

Problematicisation

The reaction to advice given by making it problematic is a device used by 3 informants - #M, #Q (x2) and #S. It takes two distinct forms: direct and indirect. I will begin with the direct guise. Both examples of a direct problematicisation of the advice come from informant #Q and are presented in a common linguistic form:

#Q The problem is I …

The foregrounding of the word 'problem' along with contextual and prosodic clues index the rejection of advice and therefore the legitimacy of the advisor to hold a higher-status identity. By introducing problems in such a way, the 'asker' is enacting the identity of 'expert' and thus assuming a higher status identity. The indirect problematicisation is found in the discourse of #M and #S and is realised in the following manner:

#M If that's not going to help, I'll …
#S She's a bit young. Yeah

In the case of #M, a bi-clausal conditional sentence is chosen. While exemplifying the breadth of the informant's linguistic repertoire, the choice of a first conditional form suggests a high degree of possibility that the advice won't help. The suggestion that the advice will not help is further indexed by the choice of the speaker-orientated 'I'. The implicature is that the advisor is incapable of providing suitable advice and that the burden of action has to fall back on the 'asker'. Although the initial 'if' implies a degree of uncertainty and thus would require the advisor to disambiguate the utterance, the follow up with 'I' in the second clause removes ambiguity and renders the utterance a face-threatening act by challenging the identity of the advisor and subsequently assuming the expert/higher-status identity. The example provided by #S, although not as complex, likewise dismisses the advice given and therefore indexes a rejection of the higher-status identity of the advisor with the implicature that that identity will have to be assumed by the 'asker' if a solution to the problem is to be found.

Reiteration of Advice and Provision of Advice

Reiteration of advice given and provision of advice to the advisor both happen on one occasion each. Providing the advisor with advice as a response to advice is found in the discourse of #M and

comes in the form:

#M Maybe you should use more modern methods in your class

It must be noted that this response comes directly after the advisor has given advice. Linguistically it's of interest due to the employment of the deontic modal 'should'. This is strongly connected with advice and as the utterance is a declarative, it is being employed to give advice rather that to ask for it. This clearly comes with the implicature that the advice given is unacceptable and therefore the advisor is not a legitimate holder of a higher-status identity. This is made stronger by the hearer-orientated 'you'. The 'asker' leaves the advisor in no doubt who is responsible for the unsuitability of the advice and therefore, as previously represents a highly face-threatening act which violates the sociopragmatic demand of lower-status identity.

Finally, the re-iteration of advice given is seen in the discourse of #Q (x2)

#Q You think I should …

On the surface, this is a declarative restatement of advice, which in other circumstances could be interpreted as a call for clarification of further details. However, in this situation it is used as a means of rejecting advice. Once more, the issue is personalized. The advisor's opinion is called into doubt by the use of a declarative instead of an interrogative which would have mitigated the utterance. The difference between 'You think I should …' and 'Do you think I should …?' cannot be underestimated. The foregrounding of 'you' creates an imposition on the advisor by highlighting the centrality of her role in making unsuitable advice. The collocation of 'you' and 'I' indexes the imposition the 'asker' feels has been placed on her by this advice and thus alerts the advisor to its rejection. Again this in contravention of the enactment of a lower-status identity.

I will now move on to a discussion of the second biggest substrategy in non-solidary moves – negative backchanelling.

Negative Backchannelling

Eight examples of negative backchanelling are noted in the discourse of 4 informants - #M, #O, #Q and #R. They generally take the form of response tokens and are realised:

#M mmm, yeah

#O Ok

#Q Right, yeah, mmm

#R Mmm, right

The purpose of the tokens is to express dissatisfaction with the advice given and clearly to display impoliteness and face-threatening acts. Although the forms share the same locution as positive backchannels, the illocution is clearly understood through the prosodic feature of intonation.

Providing Alternatives

Five examples of providing an alternative are present in the discourse of 2 informants - #Q (x2) and #R (x3). The provision of alternatives is not as negative a strategy as rejection of advice; rather it is a means of allowing the 'asker' to modify the advice proffered and/or provide their own advice thus rendering the advice of the advisor superfluous. An example of self provision of advice can be seen in the following example from the discourse #Q

#Q What could I …should I do? Just get down to more exercise? **Yes, just get down to more exercise.**

The above example is extremely interesting as it provides many examples of inappropriate linguist features and interactional or organisational features. Firstly, from the level of language use, the first part of the utterance functions as a 'wh' modal question and in line with previous 'wh' modal questions it is suitably conventional and mitigated to be congruent with a lower-status identity. However, as previously discussed, the choice of speaker-orientated 'I' can cause a problem in indexing a socially-distant identity as it can result in the personalization of the problem and thus index a socially-close identity. However, two of the demands – formality and lower-status have been fulfilled. Of greater interest, is the provision of an answer without permitting the advisor to take a turn. This violates the expectations as it usually falls to the higher-status interlocutor to determine when turns are taken and by whom. Here the 'asker' has adopted this role and has gone a step further by disallowing turn-taking. Therefore the 'asked' has not only provided advice, but refused the advisor the right to take a turn in a way that subverts the identities of both 'asker' and advisor by allowing the 'asker' to enact the higher-status identity..

The remaining examples indicate the informants' refusal to acknowledge the turn of the advisor by

ignoring their advice or showing it as inadequate by refining or changing it. As exemplified in the following exchanges.

Advisor: It‘s a good idea to have a exercise programme
#Q: **So you think I should go to the gym**?
Advisor: Well …
#Q **Maybe I should go three times a week**

The first turn from #Q is in response to an introduction of advice given by the advisor. However, by taking a turn at this point, #Q has not provided the advisor with the opportunity to make the advice specific to the asked; rather, the informant has used a pause to interject with her own advice. This advice takes the form of a statement question. The question is not a request for more information or further clarification but a means of providing advice which is congruent with the needs of the ‘asker’ without permitting the advisor the opportunity to contribute. #Q is essentially providing the advisor with advice although it is expressed as the opinion of the advisor. This is achieved through the use of the parenthetical ‘you think…?’ The second turn by #Q is essentially an acceptance of her own advice. Once more the advisor has been prevented from taking a turn and thus the advisor’s identity as an expert has been eroded. This refusal to allow the advisor to offer advice violates the demand of lower-status interlocutor. #R fails to acknowledge the advice offered in the following examples:

Advisor: If possible your daughter could watch DVDs in English
#R: **Maybe songs, yeah**

The advisor makes a suggestion, however in the following turn, #R makes no reference to the advice offered and instead offers a contradictory suggestion with the implicature that the advice offered is unacceptable. This is underpinned by the acceptance of the self-offered advice as indexed through the use of ‘yeah’. Again, the identity of lower-status interlocutor has actively been rejected thus allowing the ‘asker’ to enact the identity of higher-status interlocutor.

Interruptions

Three examples of interruptions are noted in the discourse of 3 informants - #M, #Q and #R. Interruptions are significant insofar as they refer to how the informants interact with each other. This is also referred to as an organizational feature (Schneider & Barron, 2008). Turn-taking is

perhaps more widely studied by those working from a conversational analysis paradigm; however, O'Keeffe *et al.* highlight its relevance to the study of pragmatics insofar as the establishment of canonical turn-taking sequences can provide 'a baseline for comparison […] in conjunction with pragmatics' (2011: 120). Canonical orders have been long established for institutional situations (see chapter x for a discussion); however, interruptions from a lower-status interlocutor significantly diverge form the normative pattern of interaction or organization. However, they are often found in the discourse of higher-status interlocutors in institutional contexts, for example, teachers (Young, 2009: pp121-126). From this it can be inferred that the informants are not only violating the canonical organization of the interaction by ignoring transition-relevance places and cut off turns, but they are likewise enacting an identity which is incongruent to the demands of the situation. This is exemplified in the following extract from the data.

Advisor: Well maybe your child could⌈…
#M …**I know my child**⌋

The failure to acknowledge a transition-relevance place is evident in the above example. The advisor is in the process of providing the advice; however #M does not permit the advisor to complete the speech act and in fact cuts it off by asserting superior knowledge of the object of the advice – i.e. the child - at a stage in the discourse where there is no obvious pause. The utterance 'well maybe your child could' does not constitute a complete turn-constructional unit. Potentially, the aforementioned utterance is s pragmatic unit for giving advice; however, #M did not permit its completion and cut it off mid unit thus causing a hostile interruption.

I will complete the section on non-solidary moves with an analysis of the final strategy – questioning.

Questioning

Questioning is the least favoured means of realising non-solidary moves. Only one token is found and that is in the discourse of #M.

#M: What kind of methods are you using?

As previously discussed, the use of a questioning strategy in an institutional advisory situation with a higher-status interlocutor may indicate a lack of sociopragmatic knowledge when it refers to

rejection of that advice. However, the current example does not refer to a rejection of advice; instead it constitutes a direct attack on the identity and competency of the advisor.

A brief overview of the indexing of identity in the institutional mode demonstrates a refusal to accept a lower-status identity. Unexpectedly, the institutional genre is dominated by non-solidary moves. They index a significant contravention of the demand for the enactment of a lower-status identity. In fact they are representative of a hostile attempt made by the informants to reposition themselves as higher-status interlocutors.

I will now proceed to explore the indexing of identity in solidary and non-solidary moves in the conversational genre

Conversational Genre

Solidary Moves

Solidary moves are the only moves found in the discourse of group 3 informants while enacting a socially-close, equal-status identity in a conversational genre. No non-solidary moves are present. The solidary moves encompass 7 substrategies: positive backchannels, providing alternatives, overlap, hints, grounders and problematicisation.

Positive Backchanelling

In this instance all tokens for positive backchanelling take the form of response tokens. They are realised in a variety of ways including: ‘mmm’, ‘yeah’, ‘ok’, ‘right’, and ‘I see’ and are noted in the discourse of 6 informants - #P, #Q, #M, #N, #R and #S. The abundance of positive backchanelling is neither unexpected nor difficult to explain. The informants use these brief and frequent interjections to show solidarity with their interlocutor – i.e. to show that they are both involved in the process of solving the problem. In addition to this, the tokens represent an enthusiastic response to the comments of the interlocutors and provide a strong indication that even when in the role of listener to advice, the informants are playing an active part in the interaction. They are making contributions in a way that encourages the interlocutor to proceed and maintain the conversation. This is evidence of the interaction being co-constructed insofar as the ‘asker’ while fulfilling the role of a listener works in tandem with the advisor/speaker to determine how long the particular

exchange will last and in which direction it should go. In addition, the use of such tokens illustrates the legitimacy of the 'asker' to adopt an equal-status identity

Providing Alternatives

This is the second biggest substrategy for operationalising solidary move. 8 examples are found in the discourse of 5 informants: #M, #N, #Q, #R, and #S. Providing alternatives in the context of an informal conversational situation while enacting an equal-status, socially-close identity adopts a different function from doing so in a formal, institutional situation with a socially-distant interlocutor of higher status. In the current genre, providing alternatives works on the principal of collaboration. It supports the opinions of the advisor and elaborates on them through extension of ideas. This lends credence to the co-constructive nature of the conversational genre, while simultaneously providing a legitimate identity for the 'asker' to participate as an equal in both the problem and the solution. Examples of providing alternative present in the data include:

#Q: Maybe I should just …
#M: Maybe he just …
#N…right, go to the café
#S: I think we have to …
#Q: I'm thinking about …

I will turn firstly to an example from the discourse of #Q and #\\\\\\M as they are similar in format.

#Q: **Maybe** I should **just** ….
##M: **Maybe** he **just** …

Both methods of providing alternatives are mitigated through the use of the external lexical downgrader 'maybe'. This functions as a 'hedge'. 'Hedging' is 'frequently used to soften face threatening acts such as disagreement, suggestion, advice or criticism' (O'Keeffe *et al*., 2011: 69). And in case there is any doubt that the 'asker' is presenting the alternative suggestion in a manner of solidarity, a further internal, lexical 'hedge' in the form of 'just' is inserted to ensure that the imposition is minimal and that mutual face is saved. It's important to remember that an alternative suggestion emanating from the 'asker' could also be rejected. The example extracted for the discourse of #N illustrates an equally effective manner of providing an alternative.

#N…right, go to the café.

It is interesting form the perspective that #N is, at the same time agreeing with the advice given and providing an alternative. Agreement is indicated through the use of the affirmation marker 'right'. This acknowledges and appears to accept the advice. The fragment 'go to the pub' is realised as an extension of the advice proffered by the advisor but is essentially an alternative. This again has the effect of mutual face saving by implying that the advisor's advice has been accepted and that the suggestion of going to the pub was made collaboratively. Finally I will take the examples regarding the use of the epistemic parenthetical 'I think/I'm thinking' together.

#S: I think we have to spend more time …
#Q: I'm thinking about …

Their employment as external, lexical downgraders results in an extension of the advice given by the advisor rather than a rejection of it and functions in a similar manner to 'maybe'. However, the example from #Q has been further mitigated through means of verbal aspect. Aspectual marking as a form of mitigation has been highlighted as a late acquired method of mitigation and as such marks the informant out as a highly-proficient L2 learner/user.

While the example of #S shows no further mitigation, it uses 'we' as an anaphoric reference. In this instance 'we' does not refer to the 'asker' and the advisor, nor is it a substitute for 'I'. It is an anaphoric reference to the 'asker' and the cause of the problem. The other party has been mentioned previously in the interaction and the reference back points to continuity in the interaction, to equal participation as it is not explained, the advisor can be assumed to remember to whom it refers.

Therefore, the employment of providing alternatives as a solidary move fosters the enactment of an equal-status, socially-close identity and s indexed linguistically through the use of hedges, anaphora, verbal aspect and lexical mitigation.

The final and least favoured means of indexing solidary moves in the discourse of the informants form group 3 is overlap.

Overlap

The phenomenon of overlap is integral to the interactional or organizational features of discourse. The analysis of how interaction is managed is a powerful tool in the understanding of pragmatics. I will argue that features such as overlap and interruption are as much pragmatic features as 'hedges' and 'downgraders'. Conversational analysis has foregrounded the existence of canonical patterns of interaction as regards turn–taking for example. Therefore adherence to or violation of such structures may lead to a breach in sociopragmatic norms.

Overlap shares many of the same features as interruption insofar as it does not acknowledge normative turn construction units leading to a rejection of turn-relevance places. However, it differs with regards to the purpose of the feature. While interruptions are shown to have a negative impact on the interaction often with the purpose of cutting off the exchange and thus invoking a face threatening situation; overlap on the other hand functions to show solidarity and enthusiasm. It represents what Tannen refers to as a 'high involvement style' (1994: 63) which makes no imposition on face.

Only one example of significant overlap is present in the data (I have discounted brief interjections involving back-channels) and that was in the discourse of #P as represented below'

#P: You know X, I just feel like I'm his house assistant or mother
Advisor: Yeah, that's not good for the relationship. Have you tried ⌈…
#P talking to him about it?⌋

The above example of overlap foregrounds the informants' ability to complete turns for each in a way that indexes an informal, socially-close and equal-status identity and it thus congruent with the demands of the situation.

Hints

Expositions are highly non-conventionalised exponents for 'asking for advice'. They contain significant amounts of schematic or personal information which may be superfluous to the direct requirements of the situation. In addition, there is often a mismatch between the locution and the illocution with the potential to impose the burden of disambiguation on the advisor. However, in the case of in informal conversational interaction with a socially-close interlocutor of equal status, disambiguation may be an integral aspect of the genre as it fosters collaboration and extension of

the interaction.

Expositions therefore are particularly congruent with the current situation. However, they are not an element of the repertoire of all informants. They are not found in the discourse of #O and #R.

In order to illustrate some of the linguistic elements present in expositions, I will look at just one example as it is possibly displays the widest range of features.

#Q: Oh, X, **I'm in a** real trouble. **I'm having** problems with *John*. Alright, **I think** he's seeing someone else. Yeah. Just er, you know, he does strange things. **I think**. I found some really weird texts on his mobile phone. And, er, he's a bit secretive about what he does *at work*. **I think** he's having a relationship with, er, you know, what's her name again – *Mary, Mary something*, yeah.

What makes 'expositions' problematic is the considerable mismatch between locution and illocution. This is apparent in the linguistic choices which what Searle (1976) refers to as 'representatives' (or 'informatives following Tsui, 1994). The locutionary force of representatives is to assert a truth proposition as witnessed by phrases such as 'I'm in …', I'm having …' and 'I think …' (see the phrases in bold in the extract). A considerable mismatch between locution and illocution occurs, therefore, in the above examples as they are employed to function as 'directives' in order to elicit advice. However, as I have argued earlier, disambiguation is an essential element in establishing rapport and subsequently social closeness in a conversational genre. It promotes collaboration between the interlocutors and, as all parties have a role in co-constructing the interaction, an equal-status identity is indexed.

A socially-close identity is indexed through a number of exophoric references (see phrases in italics). 'John' and 'Mary' and 'work' are introduced into the discourse without explanation. This indicates shared knowledge as it is presumed that the advisor requires no explanation. The sociopragmatic demand of informality has not yet been broached. If the phrases underlined in the extract are considered, it can be seen terms of address help fulfil that demand. The 'asker' addresses the advisor by first name and when this is collocated with interjections such as 'yeah', 'you know' and 'what's her name again' an informal identity is indexed.

Grounders

The data throw up only a single exponent for the strategy. A grounder comes from the discourse of #R and is realised:

#R: **I really don't know how to do anything with computers**, could you help me?

The imposition minimiser is identified in the discourse of #M.

#M: I'm very sorry to disturb you....

Both strategies serve to alert the advisor that a potentially face threatening act is imminent and thus reduce imposition. From the point of view of grounders, this is accomplished by providing a brief explanation of the issue before realising the speech act. From the above example, the grounder outlines the reason for the need for advice (in bold). It is personalized and a reduction of social distance is indexed through the use of 'I'. However, its succinctness may not be in line with the conversational nature of the exchange. It requires very little disambiguation from the advisor and does not allow the advisor to take a collaborative role in the interaction. On the contrary, it sets out clearly defined roles insofar as it conveys the message that the 'asker' is the participant with the problem and it is the role of the advisor to solve that problem and therefore does not allow for the enactment of an equal-status, socially-close identity.

In this instance, the grounder fixes set identities and hinders the co-constructive nature of the conversational genre and can thus be viewed as incongruous to the sociopragmatic demands of the situation. The imposition minimiser employed by #M is also problematic, but for different reasons. Following Brown and Levinson (1978) it represents a formulaic utterance intended to save negative face – i.e. the face of the advisor. It is conventionally indirect and therefore more indicative of a formal, institutional situation enacting a socially-distant, lower-status identity. In an informal, conversational situation with a socially close interlocutor of equal status, presupposing an imposition as in:

#M: I'm very sorry to disturb you....

may in fact be used as a distancing device, as a means of disassociating from the other (as per Culpeper, 1996). Both the grounder and the imposition minimiser both function on the presupposition that engaging with the advisor is in fact an imposition. However, as discussed

above, this presupposition can be considered a means of disassociation with the advisor and in such circumstances neither the grounder not the imposition minimiser is sociopragmatically congruent with the demands of an informal, conversational situation as they both index a socially-distant, lower-status identity. However, it remains to state that their presence in the discourse is rare with only one example of each.

Problematicisation of Advice

Only 2 examples of this have been found – one in the discourse of #Q and the other form #N. The exponents are as follows:

#Q: Well, I tried several times, but he just …
#N: Yes, but...

On the surface, following theories on impoliteness, the above examples would appear to come under the category of 'challenge' (Bousfield, 2008) where the advisor's stance is questioned. However, under the current sociopragmatic demands, I will demonstrate through a linguist analysis that this is not the case. The extract from #Q firstly acknowledges the contribution of the advisor by the use of 'well'. It continues to support the legitimacy and appropriateness of the advice when the 'asker' admits to having already tried it. The problematic phrase – i.e. the phrase 'but he just …' does serve to highlight difficulties, but the use of 'just' mitigates the rejection and avoids a face-threatening act. Furthermore, I will argue, that instead of intending to bring the interaction to a close, the intention of the 'asker' is to tease out, to elaborate the problems in a collaborative way and thus prolong the exchange. The same interpretation can be made of the second extract. 'Yes' acknowledges and accepts the legitimacy of the advice proffered. The use of 'but' warns the advisor of a forthcoming problem. However, again I will argue, in the current situation, that the collocation of 'yes' and 'but…' not only avoids a face threatening act, but serves to extend the conversation in a way that encourages co-construction and thus indexes a socially-close and equal-status identity.

The above discussion has demonstrated that strategies and linguistic features are not intrinsically polite or impolite or incongruent or congruent with a situation. Rather, following Watts (2003) they are evaluative. Watts defines politic behaviour as 'that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the on-going social interaction' (2003: 20). This is certainly the case of the above extracts as, contrary to a static definition of congruency or

non-congruency with sociopragmatic demands, a fluid and dynamic interpretation allows the participants to co-construct the interpretation of congruency throughout the duration of the exchange in such a way that it provides a match with the online demands of the interaction. Therefore, seemingly non-solidary moves such as the rejection of advice can represent finely-tuned strategies which index an identity congruent with the demands of the situation.

To summarise the indexing and enactment of identity in solidary and non-solidary moves in the discourse of informants with an ASE of one year or more, it is clear that the enactment of a socially-distant, lower-status identity as demanded by the institutional genre remains problematic. The discourse is dominated by non-solidary moves which appear to index a rejection of the demand of lower-status interlocutor in a deliberate and aggressive manner. Not only is the lower-status identity rejected, but the higher-status identity of the advisor comes under attack. In fact the discourse indexes a usurping of the higher-status identity by the informants. This is enacted primarily through the rejection of advice given. This has the effect of undermining the legitimacy of the advisors' expertise in a manner which allows the informants to position themselves as higher-status identities.

On the other hand, the conversational genre contains only solidary moves. These index a high degree of collaboration and co-construction in the discourse which allows for the enactment of an equal-status, socially-close identity. Therefore in the institutional genre a strong conflict is noted between 'core identity' and the lower-status identity demanded of the situation; however, within the conversational genre, the discourse indexed a concordance between core identity and the socially-close, equal-status identity demanded of the situation.

6.5 Inter-group Comparison of Solidary and Non-solidary Moves

In this section a comparison of the indexing of identity in solidary and non-solidary moves will be explored to assess the impact of increasing degrees of cross-contextuality. As already demonstrated in section, increasing degrees of cross-contextuality have a considerable impact on the indexing of identity in speaker/hearer orientation and choice of modality insofar as a progress from the acceptance of the identity demanded of the informants was the norm for the primarily mono-contextual informants through to a rejection of an identity deemed incongruent with the informants' core identity and the subsequent enactment of the core identity as indexed in the discourse of

informants with an accumulated submersion experience (ASE) of one year or more. The results also show that informants with an ASE of less than one year had difficulties enacting a socially-close identity. The aim of the current section is to investigate if the findings hold true for the indexing of identity in (non-) solidary moves.

I will turn firstly to the primarily mono-contextual informants of group 1. The number and range of (non-) solidary moves in the discourse of group 1 for both genres is low at 13 and 12 respectively. Additionally, both genres demonstrate a strong preference towards solidary moves. Within the institutional genre, the indexing of a socially-distant and lower-status identity in particular is somewhat mixed. Half of the informants choose expositions to enact the required identity. Expositions are defined by the indexing of shared schematic information which in turn presupposes a socially-close identity and the requirement to disambiguate expositions and reinterpret them as requests for advice may allow for co-construction of the interaction and thus an equal-status identity. However, this was not a problem with the remaining informants. Likewise the low level of non-solidary moves points towards a lack of conflict between core identity and the identity required by the situation.

The conversational genre indexes identity through a dominance of solidary moves, and in particular expositions with 5 out of 6 informants choosing expositions. This significantly highlights congruence with the enactment of a socially-close and equal-status identity. The conversational genre also sees a widening of the range of substrategies which indexes greater flexibility in the discourse and thus a more informal identity.

The indexing of identity in the discourse of informants with an ASE of between 120 days and one year compares differentially to that of group 1. I will consider the institutional genre first. Between group 1 and group 2, there is a huge growth in the number of (non-) solidary moves present in the discourse – 76 in the institutional genre and 102 in the conversational. Identity is indexed in the institutional genre primarily through the use of solidary moves which is dominated by positive backchannels. Such a high degree of solidary moves indexes a very interactional and collaborative exchange which promotes the enactment of a socially-close and equal-status identity. This identity is incongruent with the demands of the situation. Despite the high levels of solidary moves, the enactment of identity is unstable. In addition to the solidary moves, there is also a significant amount of non-solidary moves again dominated by backchannels. This is a development from the discourse of group 1. As non-solidary moves index discord with the interlocutor, the identity enacted is one of social distance, and as I have argued a rejection of the lower-status identity. In

summary, the enactment of identity as indexed through (non-) solidary moves by the informants of group 2 is not only non-congruous with the demands of the situation, but highly unstable and evidence of considerable conflict.

The conversational genre, on the other hand indexes identity only through solidary moves which are also dominated by backchannels; however, this indexes high levels of engagement and thus a socially-close, equal-status identity as demanded by the situation.

An increased degree of cross-contextuality – i.e. an ASE of one year or more - results in a much more stable enactment of identity than indexed by group 2. Numbers of tokens indexing (non-) solidary moves in both the institutional and the conversational genres have fallen considerably to 42 and 46 respectively. With regards the institutional genre, solidary moves are in the minority with only 12 tokens - half of which are backchannels. This indexes a degree of positive engagement in the interaction; however, the institutional genre is dominated by a wide range of non-solidary moves. Unlike the discourse of group 2, non-solidary moves are not dominated by backchannels, but by rejection of advice. This clearly indexes the rejection of the lower-status identity. In contrast to group 2, there is no internal conflict in the enactment of a non-congruous identity; the informants have clearly repositioned themselves in the identity of higher-status interlocutor.

Turning to the indexing of identity in the conversational genre, it is clear that no struggle exists between the demands of the situation and the indexing of a socially-close, equal-status identity. The discourse contains only solidary moves. Solidary moves are indexed mainly as backchannels – however, not to the same extent as group 2. This ensures that a compatible identity is indexed in a more individualised manner than for the informants of group 2.

To sum up, a number of interesting patterns emerge from the comparison both from a purely linguistic perspective and from an identity perspective. I will start with the purely linguistic perspective. Backchannels are absent from the discourse of the primarily mono-contextual FL informants. This indexes a more static, routinised approach to interaction in general in which utterances are responded to in full. However, when backchannels become a feature of the discourse they are over-used as seen in the discourse of group 2 where the informants rely on them as their primary means of indexing (non-) solidary. In contrast, an ASE of one year or more produces a more selective use of backchannels which may index a more sociopragmatically appropriate use of backchannels. Also noteworthy is the mapping of a single linguistic feature or strategy to a number of different functions. This does not appear in the discourse of primarily mono-contextual FL

learners. It appears in the discourse of those with an ASE of 120 days or more and is noticeable in the use of backchannels, providing alternatives and problematicisation as both solidary and non-solidary moves.

Returning to the indexing of identity, the institutional genre provides more interesting results. To recap, this is the genre where the informants are required to enact an identity which may be incompatible with their core identity. An ASE of 60 days or less presents mixed results for the indexing of a socially-distant and lower-status identity with half the informants variably enacting a socially-close, equal-status identity. The remainder successfully enacted the required identity. The very low levels of non-solidary moves index a lack of conflict with the identity from which may be concluded that those informants who enacted a socially-close, equal-status identity did so due to a mismatch between form and function rather than as a rejection of the identity.

A degree of cross-contextuality of an ASE of between 120 days and one year produces a highly unstable indexing of identity. Large numbers of solidary and non-solidary moves produce conflict in the enactment of identity which attempts simultaneously to index a socially-close, equal-status identity and a socially-distant, higher-status identity. Significantly, both identities are non-congruous with the demands of the situation. By contrast, informants with an ASE of one year or more enact a stable identity. However, that identity is not congruent with the demands of the situation. The identity is marked by non-solidary moves. This indexes a complete rejection of the lower-status identity demanded by the situation. This, I posit, is not a failure to process the demands of the situation, nor is it due to lack of sociopragmatic awareness, but rather it is a very conscious display of core identity. Therefore, increased duration of submersion experiences allows learners to reject an identity they feel is incompatible and enact an identity which truly mirrors their core identity

Turning to the conversational genre, it is clear that no group experiences difficulties indexing a socially-close, equal-status identity. However, there are differences connected to increased duration of ASE. High levels of backchannels and a wider range of strategies in the discourse of groups 2 and 3 index a greater degree of collaboration. This allows the informants to enact a more socially-close identity than the informants with the least degree of cross-contextuality. Table 6.16 provides an overview of the comparison.

Table 6.16

	60 days or less	120 days to one year	One year or more
Institutional Genre	• No backchannels • No multifunctional form/function mapping • Acceptance of required identity	• Over-reliance on backchannels • Multifunctional form/function mapping • Unstable indexing of identity	• Balanced use of backchannels • Multifunctional form/function mapping • Stable indexing of identity • Rejection of required identity
Conversational Genre	• Mainly solidary moves • Problem with social closeness	• Solidary moves only • Over-reliance on backchannels	• Solidary moves only • Large number of backchannels

The above discussion indicates results that are in-line with those from the indexing of identity by speaker/hearer orientation. Thus, it can be concluded that learning context has a huge impact on the indexing of identity in discourse. The emerging pattern indicates that primarily mono-contextual FL learners will enact an identity offered to them regardless of how compatible it may or may not be with their core identity. However, after a year of accumulated submersion experiences learners acquire the ability to reject any identity which may not truly represent their core identity. Essentially, increased ASE allows learners a degree of agency over the identities they enact in a way that the FL classroom and levels of ASEs of less that 120 days does not. However, to get to the stage where a learner has the agency to reject an identity, the learner must go through a highly volatile and unstable period where the indexing of identity is in flux. This is a stage where the necessary linguistic features have been acquired and forms have been mapped to multiple functions; however, the matching of functions to sociopragmatic appropriate situations is still in progress and has not yet stabilised. This period is learning context specific and relates to an ASE of between 120 days and one year.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was concerned with the analysis of the performance data elicited from each group. The analysis was conducted on two levels: a strategic level and a linguistic level. The strategic level focused on three strategies – conventionalised indirectness, conventionalised directness and non-conventionalised indirectness. A comparison of the use of strategies across both genres indicated that sociopragmatic variation is present in the discourse of even primarily mono-contextual FL learners. However, contrary to expectations, degrees of sociopragmatic variation were greater among the primarily mono-contextual FL learners of group 1 across two strategies: conventionalised directness and non-conventionalised indirectness.

Sociopragmatic variation is strongly linked to the indexing of identity in discourse, therefore once variation patterns had been established a deeper linguistic analysis was conducted to establish the impact of learning context, or more specifically degrees of cross-contextuality on the indexing of a range of social identities. The results concluded that indexing of identity is strongly dependant on the length of time spent in a Submersion context. Submersion experiences of 60 days or less give rise to an enactment of identity which is compatible with the situation. To further clarify, a learner who is primarily a mono-contextual FL learner/user will enact an identity regardless of the compatibility between that identity and the learner's core identity. Essentially, the learner is play acting. However, an accumulated submersion experience of one year or more furnishes learners with the agency to enact themselves - that is they acquire the agency to reject an identity they view as incompatible with their core identity and reposition their identity within the situation in a manner which represents them and not in a way that has been pushed upon them. However, in order to arrive at that point, learners experience fluctuations in the indexing of identity. Such instability is evident in the discourse of informants who have accumulated between 120 days and one year in a Submersion context.

Chapter 7

Discussion: Towards an Understanding of the Complex Interplay of Learning Context, Enactment of Identity and Language

In this final chapter, I will bring together the results of the language contact profile (LCP) questionnaire and the performance data with the aim of shedding light on the complex interplay which takes place between learning contexts, the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation and the enactment of a range of social identities. I will discuss the centrality of learning contexts and their subsequent access to loci of learning to the acquisition of sociopragmatic variation patterns and will illustrate the effect of this on how the informants vary the realisation of their linguistic repertoire in order to 'be' a socially-distant, lower-status identity and a socially-close, equal-status identity 'doing' asking for advice. To achieve this, I will return to the research questions.

7.1 Does sociopragmatic variation occur in the discourse of primarily foreign language (FL) learners?

The short answer to the above question is undoubtedly 'yes'. The analysis of the performance data indicates that even primarily FL learner/users whose main locus of learning is the institutional locus can and do vary their linguistic repertoire in different situations. This is a significant finding insofar as it runs counter to previous findings for FL learners. Studies carried out by Scarcella (1979), Hill (1997) and Rose (2000) for example found no evidence of situational variation in the discourse of their informants. However, to explain the differential findings, it is necessary to examine the socio-biographical profiles of the informants.

The informants in the above-mentioned studies are all formal students of language at different institutional levels (primary school, secondary school and university) whereas the informants in the present study are language professionals – i.e. language teachers. They have reached the pinnacle of foreign language learning and are in fact the epitome of what most learners are aiming for. They

are not only highly-proficient users of the language, but also linguistically-sophisticated learners insofar as they have developed a high degree of expertise both linguistically and meta-linguistically. The high-proficiency level is clearly indicated by the breadth of their linguistic repertoire. The level of complexity of downgrading in this study is extremely high. Not only is the head act of asking for advice internally and syntactically modified, but there is also considerable evidence of additional external modification through the use of strategies such as exposition, explanation and grounders. Such high levels of internal mitigation in particular require 'more processing effort on the part of learners' (Nguyen, 2008: 769). The fact that the repertoire of the informants is so complex and cognitively demanding marks the informants out as expert users. This highlights their status as teachers, as guardians and disseminators of language at the highest level.

In addition to the variable of proficiency level, intensity of language contact appears to be a positive factor in the enactment of sociopragmatic variation. The teacher/informants in the present study have intense daily contact with the language in their professional capacity. Moreover, the results of the LCP indicate that contact in an FL context is not confined to the classroom. All informants experience opportunities to have contact with the language outside the classroom. Their professional contact with the language is conducted within the institutional locus of learning; however, the results from the LCP indicate that the majority of out-of-class contact in the FL context takes place in a conversational locus of learning. As discussed in chapter 5, it is not surprising that the conversational locus is the principal locus outside the classroom as opportunities for obtaining information and/or service encounters are naturally minimal or undesirable within an FL context. Though, it must be remembered that overall contact with the L2 outside the classroom is infrequent. The final factor that may have an impact on the realisation of sociopragmatic variation in primarily FL learners/users is submersion experiences. All informants have spent some time in a Submersion context. Although the accumulated time spent by each informant ranges from 10 days to in excess of five years, even a short period in submersion in conjunction with high levels of linguistic and meta-linguistic awareness may be beneficial to the ability to vary the linguistic repertoire.

In brief, sociopragmatic variation can be found in the discourse of primarily mono-contextual FL user; however this ability to vary language is predicated on an extremely high proficiency level, intense, frequent contact with the language, exposure to both the institutional and conversational loci of learning and some degree of submersion experience. The amalgamation of the above factors helps explicate the discrepancies between the results of the current study and those of previous studies

7.2 How is variation indexed in discourse?

Results from the analysis of the performance data indicate that variation is complex. It is indexed both quantitatively at a (sub) strategic level and qualitatively at a linguistic level. The strategic level foregrounds differences in degrees of conventionality and directness when enacting a socially-distant, lower-status identity and a socially-close, equal-status identity. The strategies involved are based on a blended version of the taxonomy of directness provided by Kasper (1987) and the developmental taxonomy of requests presented by Kasper and Rose (2002). A breakdown of the polarities of conventionality and directness result in illuminating differential patterns in the strategies of conventionalised directness, conventionalised indirectness and non-conventionalised indirectness as employed in both situations. Conventionalised directness is normally context-dependent and occurs when there is no difference between locution and illocution. This can refer to the use of utterances such as 'How do I stay healthy?' when asking for advice. This utterance has not been mitigated in any way and as such, there is no need for the hearer to engage in disambiguation. Conventionalised indirectness refers to utterances which have been downgraded or mitigated but which nevertheless do not produce a significant mismatch between locution and illocution. Examples include 'Could you help me?' The use of 'could' mitigates and simultaneously alerts the hearer to the requestative nature of the locution. Utterances which come under the category of conventionalised indirectness are formulae which have been unpacked to show some awareness of the situational demands re: formality, social distance and status. When it comes to non-conventionalised indirectness, these are utterances which may require considerable disambiguation from the part of the hearer. They are finely-tuned, complex strategies which could include a request for help such as 'Maybe I'm doing something wrong?' which unlike the previous two categories requires the hearer to be actively involved in disambiguation.

However, it was found that simply looking at the surface strategies was insufficient in providing a full picture; therefore a deeper look at the substrategies was necessary not only to show the extent of variation, but more importantly to investigate congruency with the situation. Substrategies fell into the category of non-conventionalised indirectness and refer to ways of indexing solidarity with the interlocutor (solidary moves) and non-solidarity with the interlocutor (non-solidary moves). As a single group, significant variation was found in the deployment of (sub) strategies between the

two situations – i.e. informants are capable of indexing situations differentially at a strategic level. The informants showed a statistically significant preference for non-conventionalised indirectness with 75.75% (275 out of 363) of all tokens thus categorised. Of those a significant majority (80.3%) are classified as solidary moves. However, the degree and type variation was not equally distributed on an inter-group basis. Nor was the variation necessarily congruent with the situation. The differential will be discussed in section 7.3.

From a linguistic perspective, variation is indexed through a number of measures. These include speaker/hearer orientation. This is realised through pronominal choice which, in this study, refers to the speaker-orientated 'I', hearer-orientated 'you' and the conflated form 'we'. Use of pronouns provides a fruitful site in the analysis of subject positioning and thus identity. It has implications for interpersonal relationships insofar as personal pronouns can index how the speaker positions herself and the way hearers are positioned by the speaker. In addition, degrees of mitigation are likewise beneficial in the indexing of identity. In the current study, this relates primarily to choice of modality, for example shifts between 'could' and 'can'. According to the taxonomy presented by Kasper (1987), 'could' is a stronger mitigator than 'can' and as such could be more emotive and therefore less formal. Finally, from a linguistic perspective, identity is indexed through solidary and non-solidary moves in the discourse. Solidary moves are aspects of language and interaction such as positive backchannels or overlap which highlight enthusiasm and support for the interlocutor; on the other hand, non-solidary moves such as negative backchannels and interruption indicate high levels of discordance and hostility towards the interlocutor.

As a whole, the group displays evidence of the use of all the aforementioned linguistic measures to index identity. Furthermore, the measures, for the group as a whole, are used variably across each situation; however, as with (sub) strategic variation, degree and type of linguistic variation compares differentially across the groups.

As is apparent, the informants in the current study display a wide range of means – (sub) strategic, linguistic and interactional features to index sociopragmatic variation in discourse. From the point of view of (sub) strategic variation, it is clear that there is a strong preference for non-conventionalised directness and solidary moves which is indicative of highly-proficient learner/users. It shows that these informants have a complex and expansive linguistic repertoire which can be deployed variably in different situations. This is in line with their professional capacity as teachers as it foregrounds their identity as highly-proficient second language learners/users; however, informants employ the means differentially to enact the same identities.

The differential is strongly influenced by degrees of cross-contextuality. This will be discussed in the following section.

7.3 Do degrees of cross-contextuality have an impact on variation patterns?

The informants in the current study are to varying degrees cross-contextual learners insofar as the FL context has been complemented by time spent in a Submersion context. By splitting the informants into three groups according to time spent in a Submersion context – 60 days or less, from 120 days to one year and one year or more, the study has been able to shed light on the effect of learning contexts on the realisation of sociopragmatic variation patterns. When it comes to the acquisition of socio-aspects of language 'context of acquisition […] is crucial' (Regan *et al.*, 2009: 135); however, it is necessary to explicate why this is so.

With regards the submersion context, I have shown (see chapter 5) that duration of accumulated submersion experiences (ASEs) is a crucial factor in maximizing intensity of contact with native speakers (NSs) and increasing exposure to the conversational locus of learning. An ASE of one year or more results in significantly greater intensity of contact with NSs than an ASE of 60 days or less. It is interesting to note that an ASE of between 120 days and one year does not give rise to an intensity of contact with NSs that differs either from group 1 or group 3. From this, it can be surmised that an ASE of between 120 days and one year results in highly variable contact with NSs with some informants experiencing intense contact and others not. Therefore if intense contact with NSs is to be probable, a learner needs to accumulate more than one year in a submersion context.

Further to this, intensity of contact with NSs is strongly related to exposure to the conversational locus of learning. Informants with an ASE of more than one year experience a significantly higher level of exposure to the conversational locus of learning than group 1. This increases exposure to the same level as the institutional locus and thus provides a balanced and intense exposure to both loci which theoretically affords learners access to a variety of discourse domains and thus possibilities to 'be' and 'do' a range of identities. As with intensity of contact with NSs, group 2 displays a level of intensity of exposure to the conversational locus which does not differ from either group 1 or group 3. This unpredictability in the level of exposure to the conversational locus is directly connected with intensity of contact with NSs. In brief, intense contact with NSs gives rise to increased exposure to the conversational locus of learning. This is more likely to happen in

an ASE of more than one year. Additionally, a correlation between longer ASEs and engagement with newspapers and magazines is noted. Group 3 (more than one year ASE) recorded significantly more engagement with magazines and newspapers than either group 1 or group 2. This may be an indication of greater levels of enculturation. Therefore, it can be stated that an ASE of more than one year results in significantly higher intensity of contact with NSs, increased exposure to the conversational locus of learning and greater enculturation. ASEs of 60 days or less give rise to low levels of the above; however, ASEs of between 120 days and one year produce variable and unpredictable results for intensity of contact with NSs and exposure to the conversational locus of learning (engagement with newspapers and magazines is similar to that of group 1). Interestingly, group 3 also experience significantly greater exposure to the conversational locus in an FL context despite having similar levels of intensity of contact with NSs as groups 1 and 2. Whilst this is significant, it does not shed light on the nature of variation found in the discourse of learners. I will now proceed to discuss the impact of learning context and contact on the realisation of variation.

I will consider firstly, variation patterns in the discourse of group 1. With regards strategic variation, results indicate that strategic variation took place only on the level of conventionalised directness. The result of this is significantly higher levels of conventionalised direct strategies in the institutional situation (it must be noted that the overall level of conventionalised directness remained low). Although there was a trend towards conventionalised indirectness in the institutional situation and non-conventionalised indirectness in the conversational situation, the differences did not prove statistically significant. However, what they did indicate was a cautious attempt to adapt the linguistic repertoire to the demands of the situation. Therefore what has been seen from a strategic point of view from primarily mono-contextual learners is significant variation in only one strategy and a tentative move to align strategies with the demands of the situation.

Turning now to linguistic/interactional variation within the discourse of group 1, a lack of variation is noted in pronominal choice. The informants opt almost exclusively for the speaker-orientated 'you' in both situations. The informants did not, in fact, use pronouns to position themselves differentially in both situations and, as has been extensively argued (see chapter 6), opted instead for the socially-distancing speaker-orientated 'you'. Whilst this may be congruent with the demands of the institutional situation, it did not meet the socially-close demands of the conversational situation. The next level of linguistic variation refers to variation in modality. Here the variation patterns were greater. A shift from the sole use of 'can' as a mitigator in the institutional situation to a wide range of modality within the conversational situation was noted. This is in line with the demands of the conversational genre where a less routinised discourse is

expected. Finally, I will turn to solidary and non-solidary moves. The informants displayed a range of (non-) solidary moves for both situations, however there was no difference in the variation patterns.

To sum up, it can be stated that even primarily mono-contextual learners vary their linguistic repertoire. However, the level of variation is not high. Variation happens, strategically, from the perspective of conventionalised directness – i.e. only one of the three identified strategies underwent significant variation. From a language perspective, variation was limited to the use of modality where a single modal variant 'can' was employed in the institutional situation compared to a mixed range of modality variants in the conversational genre. This limited range of variation is not unexpected. During submersion experiences, the informants experienced low levels of contact with NSs which led to low levels of exposure, in particular, to the conversational locus of learning resulting in minimal opportunities for prolonged opportunities for engagement with the language and this could account for the minimal levels of variation in the discourse. Despite this, however, the results clearly indicate that an attempt by the informants to align their discourse to the demands of the situation was made.

Progressing to group 2, an initial analysis of strategic variation indicates that those who have an ASE of between 120 days and one year surprisingly did not vary their linguistic repertoire at a strategic level. Degrees of conventionalised directness, conventionalised indirectness and non-conventionalised directness remain the same in both situations. This finding was unanticipated as the longer ASE could be expected to produce a higher degree of variation than an ASE of 60 days or less. But as has already been discussed, contact with NSs and exposure to the conversational locus of learning were deemed highly variable and unpredictable for informants with an ASE of between 120 days and one year. Consequently, this unpredictability seems to be transferred into the linguistic repertoire. However, an analysis of strategic variation does not provide the full picture. To find variation it is necessary to dig deeper. When substrategies are analysed, significant variation is found between the use of solidary and non-solidary moves insofar as the conversational situation is characterised by solidary moves. Such a high level of solidary moves was deemed congruent with the demands of the situation. On the other hand, the institutional situation witnessed high levels of non-solidary moves. This, in contrast, is incongruous with the situation. Therefore, it can be said that informants with an ASE of between 120 days and one year do not vary their linguistic repertoire at the strategic level. Instead, they opt for a more subtle type of variation which takes place at a substrategic level. Similarly to group 1, levels of variation are minimal; however, unlike group 1 there is no attempt to align this variation with the demands of the institutional

situation.

The linguistic/interactional analysis of variation for group 2 informants reveals a different picture. From the point of view of speaker/hearer orientation, considerable variation is evident in the choice of pronouns in both situations. Within the conversational situation, the informants display a strong bias towards the socially-distant 'you'. As discussed above, this is incongruent with the situation which demands a socially-close interlocutor. On the other hand, an analysis of speaker/hearer orientation in the institutional genre reveals no discernible pattern insofar as use is very mixed between 'you' and 'I'. However, when it comes to modality, no variation is found as both situations produce a range of modality. As previously mentioned, significant variation is seen in the use of (non-) solidary moves with the institutional genre characterised by a mix of solidary and non-solidary moves; whereas the conversational situation comprises only solidary moves. In addition, a greater and different range of solidary moves were present in the conversational genre compared to the conversational genre. It is interesting to note that while variation is present, it does not appear to be congruent with the institutional situation. The institutional situation was host to an unstable mix of solidary and non-solidary moves. The high level of non-solidary moves in particular does not appear to meet the situational demands of a lower-status interlocutor.

To sum up, it appears that variation patterns displayed by group 2 differ from those of group 1. Firstly variation takes place over a wider range of factors. This is especially true of linguistic/interactional features. Group 2 varied language from the perspective of speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. The variation took place not only in the number of tokens used, but also in the breadth of the linguistic repertoire. When compared with group 1, a more diverse range of tokens was found in the discourse of group 2. Although variation did not take place at a strategic level, it did take place at a substrategic level in the use of (non-) solidary moves. This was subsequently supported by the linguistic/interactional analysis. Significantly, where variation is noted, the pattern of language use in the institutional situation is very mixed. The pattern shifts from stable in the conversational situation to a lack of a discernible pattern in the institutional genre. This lack of stability of language use in the institutional situation is interesting and difficult to explain. It has already been shown that an ASE of between 120 days and one year results in unpredictable levels of contact with NSs and unpredictable exposure to the conversational locus of learning. From that perspective, it is indeed strange that unpredictability of language use should be a feature of the institutional situation and not the conversational situation. However, I will return to that point in the following section. Also of note, and again in contrast to the discourse of group 1, when variation does occur, it does not always appear to be aligned with the demands of

the institutional situation.

As far as group 3 is concerned, an increase in the number of strategies where variation is present has been noted. Variation occurs at two strategic levels – conventionalised directness and conventionalised indirectness. With regards conventionalised directness, the conversational situation, surprisingly, is significantly more direct than the institutional situation. This finding is in contrast to group 1. However, it should be noted that levels of conventionalised directness are low in the conversational situation. Turning to conventionalised indirectness, it is significantly higher in the institutional situation which is congruent with the situation. It must be pointed out that non-conventionalised indirectness is the largest strategy in both situations and levels of non-conventionalised indirect strategies remain the same across both situations. However, when the substrategies associated with non-conventionalised indirectness are analysed, it is apparent that informants with an ASE of in excess of one year display significant variation in the deployment of solidary and non-solidary moves. The conversational situation is marked as solidary, whereas the institutional is overwhelmingly non-solidary. This is an unexpected finding as results for the institutional situation are non-congruous. Not only do high levels of non-conventionalised indirectness run counter to the demands of the situation, but even more astoundingly, the non-conventionalised indirect tokens are strongly non-solidary in nature and this is in complete conflict with the situational demands.

The linguistic/interactional analysis further highlights this pattern. Variation is found in the indexing of speaker/hearer orientation. The conversational genre, by contrast with groups 1 and 2 displays a strong bias towards speaker orientated 'I'. As argued in chapter 6, 'I' is personal and can be used to minimalise social distance. This, in contrast to groups 1 and 2, shows alignment with the demands of the situation. When the institutional situation is considered, unlike group 2, a distinct pattern is re-introduced. The informants show a strong preference for the conflated option of 'we'. As argued in chapter 6, 'we' is normally found in the discourse of higher-status interlocutors and is therefore incongruous with the situational demands. Once more, the variation patterns are not aligned with the demands of the institutional situation. This is difficult to explain as the informants experienced very intense contact with NSs during their submersion experiences and balanced exposure to both the institutional and conversational loci of learning. On a final note, no variation was found relating to modality as a wide range of modal variants was found in both situations.

In summary, the effect of an ASE of one year or more results in more variation both strategically and linguistically/interactionally than ASEs of a lesser duration. Variation is present in two out of

three strategies, in the substrategy of (non-) solidary moves and two out of three linguistic/interactional features investigated. In contrast to the results from group 2, where variation does occur, distinct patterns emerge for both situations. The distinct patterns infer stability in language use which was missing from the discourse of group 2 in the institutional situation. However, as language use in the institutional situation stabilises, it does not appear to align itself to the demands of the situation. In fact, compared with the other 2 groups, it distances itself further from the demands of the situation. By contrast, within the conversational situation, group 3 see their discourse converging more closely with the demands of the situation with regards social distance. Groups 1 and 2 opted for the socially-distant 'you', whereas informants from group 3 showed a strong preference for the socially-close 'I' which could be a result of high intensity contact with native speakers and much greater exposure to the conversational locus of learning even in an FL context.

Returning to the question of the impact of duration of ASEs on variation patterns, it can be seen that although sociopragmatic variation is present in the discourse of all informants, increased duration of ASE results in the differential realisation of such patterns. It appears that those with very low levels of submersion experiences index the differences through conventionalised direct strategies and use of modality. However, those who have accumulated between 120 days and one year increase the range of variation and express it through speaker/hearer orientation and (non-) solidary moves. For informants with an ASE of more than one year, variation is indexed through conventionalised indirect and conventionalised direct strategies as well as though (non-) solidary moves and speaker/hearer orientation. Therefore, increased ASEs result in a wider range of variation.

While the range of variation increases commensurate with time, congruency with the situational demands follows a different route. Regarding the conversational situation the findings indicate that the patterns of language use tend to be congruent with the situation. The only problematic area is speaker/hearer orientation. Changes in the deployment of speaker/hearer orientation suggest that after an ASE of one year or more learners are able to align their linguistic repertoire more succinctly to the demands of the situation. To recap the conversational situation demands social closeness, informality and equal status. The demand which proved problematic for learners with an ASE of less than one year – i.e. informants from groups 1 and 2 – was that of social closeness as indexed through a strong preference for the socially-distant hearer-orientated 'you'. This pattern underwent a change for informants with an ASE of more than one year who demonstrated a bias towards the socially-close 'I'. This would suggest that a period of more than one year ASE is necessary for learners to acquire the ability to successfully process the demand of social closeness. This can be

explained by the intensity of contact with NSs during SEs and high levels of exposure to the conversational locus of learning that learners with an ASE of more than one year enjoy both in the submersion and FL context.

The pattern regarding alignment to the demands of the institutional situation is considerably more complex. On the whole, the pattern of language use appears to diverge from the demands of the situation with increased ASE. Group 1 informants employ the socially-distant 'you'. Within the discourse of group 1, there is also a tentative move towards conventionally indirect strategies which are likewise congruent with the situation. However, the pattern of use for those with an ASE of more than 120 days compares differentially. The discourse of group 2 is characterised by instability. The pattern of language use sways between adherence to the demands of the situation and divergence from the demands as evidenced, for example, by the variable use of both solidary and non-solidary moves. Language use seems to be undergoing a transition. This transitionary period appears to come to an end with an ASE of more than one year. Language use settles down and facilitates the re-establishment of distinct patterns. However, the distinct pattern indicates a divergence from or a rejection of the demands of the situation. This is problematic as it would be expected that a longer ASE coupled with high intensity contact with NSs and high exposure to both loci of learning would result in greater alignment to the demands of the situation. However, this is obviously not the case. The next section will help illuminate this seeming disparity.

7.4 What, if any, identity is enacted by the informants and how is this influenced by learning contexts?

This study adopts a poststructuralist approach to identity – i.e. an approach which does not consider a learner (or native speaker) to have a single, static identity. Rather, it looks at speakers, whether learner or native as compound identities with the ability and necessity to 'be' and 'do' within a language code. As Block points out, identity has become a 'buzz' concept in applied linguistic research with a huge number of publications on the subject (2008: 42). However, he expresses unease at the emphasis placed on the poststructural view of identity as something 'constructed, fluid, multiple, impermanent and fragmentary' (2008: 46) which has been, seemingly uncritically, espoused by linguists. He agrees with Bendle's (2002) critique of the surface nature of such views and calls for an examination of 'depth' models and the need to emphasise core identity. The present

study also adopts this approach. Although it may seem inconsistent with the notions of 'being' and 'doing', I will argue that the opposite is indeed the case. Most poststructuralist works on identity refer to a multiplicity of identities (something that psychoanalysts see as needing to be treated (Block, 2008: 41)). However, I refer here to compound identities, strands that emanate and converge to form a whole, or core identity. It is not sufficient to 'be' or 'do' a certain role, but it is important to 'be' or 'do' in a way that does not compromise core identity. This approach is in line with a question that the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) recommends language teachers ask themselves before deciding what to teach. That is: how can they (learners) still be themselves without being misinterpreted? (2010: 44). This question transcends the boundaries of simply making an utterance, the illocution of which is readily understandable by the hearer. It is not just a case of the learner employing the correct tense when narrating a story or having recourse to appropriate pragmalinguistic functors while making a request. It goes much further. It is concerned with the learner firstly having a range of linguistic choices and subsequently the ability to select from the repertoire in a way that truly reflects what she wants to say and how she wishes to say it. It implies that the learner should be able to enact the multifaceted aspects of her identity in a second or subsequent language in a way which is appropriate linguistically in the second language. This is much more than acquiring the ability to 'be' and 'do'. As stated 'the person can only be a meaningful entity , both to himself or herself and to others, by being 'read' in terms of the discourses available in that society' (Burr, 1995: 142). In this section, I will try to shed some light on this very difficult question.

Before attempting to answer the research question, I will spend some time discussing what might be considered the common identity of the informants. Firstly, it must be acknowledged that the informants are all individuals and will therefore have a personalised manner of 'being' and 'doing'. However, they all share the identity of teacher. This is significant from a number of perspectives. It is an institutionalised identity and within the institution it carries a high status. The teacher is normally the decision maker, the controller, the advisor and the gatekeeper. Unusually for second language learners/users, the higher-status, institutional identity is one that is maintained within the domains of everyday L2 use. Following Bourdieu (1977), the social capital accrued by the informants in their institutional L1 identity is carried over into their L2 identity as enacted in the FL context. Additionally, their identity as teachers and the high status it entails is an identity which is recognisable in many cultures. However, the identity of teacher is not the only identity enacted by the informants in the L1. The informants are variably friends, parents, children, customers, spouses, counsellors and an inexhaustible array of other identities. With this in mind I will now examine how the informants enact their non-institutionalised identities within the L2.

With regards the research question, it can be stated firstly that all informants enact an identity of highly-proficient L2 learners/users. This is mostly evidenced through their extensive linguistic repertoire and also through their preference for internal syntactic mitigation as opposed to lexical downgrading (Salisbury and Bardovi-Harlig: 2000). This identity is an identity common to all the informants regardless of the degrees of cross-contextuality they have accrued. However, I will argue, when it comes to enacting the social identities of a lower-status, socially-distant interlocutor and an equal-status, socially-close interlocutor, duration of ASE plays a crucial role.

The discourse of group 1 – i.e. those informants with an ASE of 60 days or less, indicates that the informants, however tentatively are attempting to enact the required identities in a manner congruent with the demands of the situation. They strive to fulfil the demands of 'being' a lower-status interlocutor 'doing' asking for advice in a socially-distant institutional situation and an equal-status interlocutor in a socially close, informal situation. In the former situation, the discourse tends towards conventional indirectness. The 'asker' is expected to use routinised linguistic formulae and preserve the face of the advisor by showing deference in language choices and this is indeed what happens. The informants are, in effect following the rules and adapting their linguistic repertoire to comply with the demands of the situation.

Moving on to the enactment of an equal-status interlocutor in a socially-close conversational situation, once again the endeavour to realize the demands is evident. Language choice is less dependent on routines; it is fluid and demonstrates elements of a co-constructed discourse with higher levels of solidary moves than in the former situation. This once more is as expected. However, it is slightly problematic. The informants seem to experience difficulties in processing the demand of social closeness as evidenced by the over-use of the socially-distancing 'you'. This is not totally unexpected when the effects of the ASE are considered. It must be remembered that this cohort of informants has experienced low levels of intensity of contact with NSs and consequently minimal exposure to the conversational locus of learning. The result of this is the problematic indexing of social closeness. Nevertheless, it may be inferred that the FL context can prove helpful in allowing learners to enact differential identities required by the situation albeit in a limited capacity. Therefore to answer the question of what, if any identities are enacted by the informants from group 1, it can be stated that those informants endeavour to enact the identity which is required of them by the demands of the situation.

Group 2 – i.e. those with an ASE of between 120 days and one year enact an equal-status identity in

an informal, socially-close situation in much in the same manner as those from group 1. That is to say that they strive to fulfil the requirements of the situation. The discourse has significant numbers of solidary moves which emphasise co-construction. The language is not routine dependent and therefore very flexible. However, just as with group 1, difficulties are noted in the enactment of a socially-close identity. The informants likewise tend towards the use of the socially-distancing 'you'. This again may be explained by the intensity of contact with NSs and the conversational locus of learning which does differ significantly from that of group 1.

When it comes to enacting a lower-status identity in a formal, socially-distant situation, there is an unexpected shift in identity enactment. Rather than striving to adhere to the demands of the situation, the identity portrayed by group 2 informants is highly unstable. The discourse of the group witnesses both inter- and intra –informant convergence and simultaneous divergence from the situational demands. In short, language use, and therefore identity enactment, is in a state of flux. Firstly, as a whole, the discourse is non-routine dependent. It displays very high levels of non-conventionalised indirect routines. This is at odds with the demands of formality. Furthermore, and perplexingly, the discourse – and I stress from both an inter- and intra- informant perspective – contains high levels of solidary and non-solidary moves. The informants are variably employing linguistic means which are encouraging and supportive of the interlocutor and simultaneously hostile towards the interlocutor. It could be argued that unstable language use is an effect of unpredictable contact with NSs and the conversational locus of learning during an ASE of between 120 days and one year. If this were the case, however, highly variable language use, surely, would be more apparent in the conversational situation. After all, levels of contact with the institutional locus remain stable regardless of duration of ASE. By contrast, I will argue that the issue here is not a linguistic problem but rather a struggle with identity enactment. As discussed above, the informants are teachers and therefore are not accustomed either in the Ll or L2 to enacting a lower-status identity. It may not constitute a strand of their core identity. By positioning the informants as lower-status interlocutors, I was asking them to perform an identity which is possibly in conflict with their core identity. I was requiring them to 'be' an identity which they may normally reject in their L1. With the informants from group 2, I will argue, this discrepancy between the L1 identity and the required L2 identity is acutely felt and the informants struggle to enact it. However, they have not accumulated sufficient time in a submersion context to fully enact their core identity in the L2 – i.e. they cannot yet be themselves without being misunderstood. In brief, identity enactment from those with an ASE of between 120 days and one year proves problematic. On the one hand, the informants have few issues when enacting an equal-status identity in an informal socially distant situation; however, the enactment of a lower-status identity proved challenging. The informants

seemed aware of the mismatch between their core identity and the identity performance required. This led to a highly unstable enactment of identity which strongly suggests that an ASE of between 120 days and one year is insufficient for learners to fully reject an identity in conflict with their core identity.

The discourse of group 3 differs significantly from that of the previous two groups and this has an impact on identity enactment particularly from the perspective of the lower-status identity. I will firstly discuss the enactment of an equal-status identity in a socially-close informal identity. Once more this proved successful. In contrast to the previous groups, the informants with an ASE of more than one year had no difficulties enacting a socially-close identity. They opted for the 'I' as the preferred pronominal choice as opposed to the socially-distancing 'you'. This more complete enactment of identity can be accounted for by the significantly more intense contact with NSs and exposure to the conversational locus of learning experienced in a longer ASE.

The enactment of the lower-status identity compares differentially to that of the previous groups. With group 1, there was an attempt to comply with the situational demands, group 2 displayed a struggle with identity enactment, but group 3 rejected the identity completely. The discourse was consistently non-solidary – i.e. actively hostile towards the interlocutor and the dominant pronominal choice was 'we'. 'We' was employed not in an inclusive manner but rather as a means of repositioning the identity of the informant. Not only did the informants seemingly reject the identity required by the L2 situation, but they actively repositioned their identity so that their status proved either equal to, or in cases, higher that that of the interlocutor. Unlike group 2 who struggled with the enactment of an identity they felt was maybe not compatible with their core identity both in the L1 and the L2, informants who have an ASE of more than one year were in the position to reject the identity and reposition themselves either as equal or higher status interlocutors – i.e. an identity which portrays a legitimate strand of their core identity.

In light of these findings, it can be said that the role of learning context is significant in the enactment of identities. The learners with extremely low levels of cross-contextuality, who are primarily mono-contextual FL learners, seem to have no agency over the enactment of identities. They appear to accept whatever identity is imposed on them without interference from their core identity. I will argue that this is the effect of the classroom. The nature of input and output opportunities in the classroom, although primarily representing the institutional locus of learning, encourages role playing. Whilst this experimentation with language is beneficial, it does not seem to be able to provide the necessary conditions to allow the learners to acquire the ability to play the

roles in a manner which represents their core identity. In fact, they appear to enact a generic identity. Therefore the FL context could be a context where essentialist identities are promoted, where learners are exposed to generic speech patterns for formality, social distance and status which don't take into account the core identity of the speaker. In brief, FL learners with low levels of cross-contextuality may have acquired the ability to 'be' and 'do' a number of different identities, but the primacy of the FL context does not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to 'be' and 'do' themselves. Learners don't have the possibility to negotiate their own core, social identities and this is particularly salient where there is a mismatch between the learner's core identity and the demands of the situation.

The struggle identified in the discourse of group 2 indicates an awareness of the incompatibility between core identity and imposed identity; however, an accumulated SE of between 120 days and one year does not equip learners with the sociopragmatic competence necessary to reject the identity. The learners have the pragmalinguistic tools but the mapping to sociopragmatic functions is still unstable. This results in an unpredictable enactment of identity. Learners appear to vacillate between identities which may or may not adhere to the demands of the situation. It seems to be a period of transition moving from a stabilized acceptance of any identity imposed on the learners regardless of its congruence with the learner's core identity towards the situation experienced by those with an ASE of more than one year where stability once more returns albeit in a very different form from that of group 1. It is in fact the emergence of the core identity. However, it remains to be stated that when there is no mismatch between core identity and the identity demanded of the L2 situation, that learners with an ASE of between 120 days and one year endeavour to reach those demands.

As previously mentioned, stability in identity enactment returns to the discourse of learners with an ASE of more than one year. The stability, however, differs from that of group one. While an ASE of 60 days or less results in the acceptance of the mismatched identity, an ASE of more than one year affords learners the opportunity of choice, the possibility to reject an incongruent identity imposed on them by the situation. They have acquired the necessary pragmalinguistic features and have been able to successfully match them to appropriate sociopragmatic functions in such a manner as to unambiguously reject the identity. Furthermore, learners with an ASE of more than one year are able to reposition themselves vis-à-vis the interlocutor and therefore display strands of their core identity (in this case the identity of teacher) in an L2 appropriate manner. This is particularly salient when they feel their identity is under threat. They have therefore acquired the ability to be themselves without being misinterpreted.

In brief, cross-contextuality which equates to an ASE of more than one year allows for the enactment of core identity. It equips learners with the agency to reject an identity which they find threatening, where they feel their social capital is being diminished and to assert an identity compatible with their core identity. On the other hand, a primarily mono-contextual FL context can equip learners with a range of sophisticated pragmalinguistic features and the ability to enact a range of social identities – i.e. the ability to 'be' and 'do'; however, in its current form, it does not seem to allow learners the agency to 'still be themselves without being misinterpreted'. However, it must be noted that the transition from 'being' and 'doing' on demand to enacting an identity compatible with a learner's core identity in an L2 appropriate manner is not straightforward. Learners must undergo a period of transition when identity enactment is highly variable, when learners, even within a single utterance, often enact a multitude of identities. This period appears to be associated with an ASE of between 120 days and one year.

I will now conclude this discussion by returning to the title of the chapter. So how does the above lead to an understanding of the complex interplay between learning context, identity and language? I will argue that it foregrounds the central role of learning context in the acquisition of certain aspects of the language and in the enactment of core identity.

The Complex Interplay between Learning Context, Identity and Language

It can be clearly seen from the above that no one variable can be used as a predictor of gains in sociopragmatic variation (and thus in the enactment of core identity) and that no one variable plays an isolated role. As noted by Leather and van Dam 'the individual's cognitive processes [are] inextricably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and social world' (2003: 13). From the perspective of the current study, the variables of learning context, identity and language have proven so intertwined as to be almost indistinguishable in places. We have seen how proficiency level can equip learners with the necessary pragmalinguistic tools to be able to adapt their discourse to suit the varying demands of a situation be they formality, social distance or status. This in itself allows the learners to enact an identity of highly-proficient user of the L2. However, increased exposure to intensity of contact with native speakers and exposure to the conversational locus of learning and thus opportunities for 'being' and 'doing' through submersion experiences of more than one year affords the learner the possibility to express core, self identity. It allows the learner to

reject identities imposed on them which are non-congruent with their core identity and reposition themselves. Thus we can say that the discourse and identity of learners are very much dependent on learning context.

As I have demonstrated, a shift in the learning context gives rise to considerable changes in the discourse of learners which in turn considerably affects the identity they enact. This, however, is not where it ends. Larsen-Freeman and Cameroon emphasise the necessity to investigate 'the simultaneous changes that are taking place throughout the total system' (2012: 157). It is here that the role of proficiency level comes back into play. In order to complete the ecosystem, learners need to communicate their identity in an L2 appropriate manner and do this without being misunderstood. Learners with an ASE of more than one year are able to verbalise their core identity unambiguously. They can utilize the pragmalinguistic features acquired to enact their core identities effectively. This is very much in contrast with Block's example of Carlos, the Colombian university professor working as a cleaner in London. As extensively discussed in chapter 1, the new identity imposed on Carlos through the loss of cultural capital is considerably at odds with his Colombian identity as an intelligent and respected member of society. A lower level of linguistic ability results in Carlos expressing his core identity by opting out, by refusing to take part in conversation he feels are incompatible with his core identity. Therefore, the effect of changing one element of the complex system can clearly be seen to have a profound impact on linguistic behaviour. Carlos has a high-status L1 identity but not the linguistic means to portray this.

Conclusion

The study serves to provide further evidence of the benefits of intense contact with the L2 in a submersion experience. The study abroad literature provides robust evidence of the centrality of that particular context to the acquisition of native speaker like norms of sociolinguistic competence. Likewise, study abroad has been seen as a crucial factor in the development of near-native like norms in sociopragmatic competence (Barron (2003)). Although the present study, quite deliberately does not seek to compare non-native speaker discourse with native-speaker discourse, it nevertheless has continued in the tradition of highlighting the positive correlation between study abroad and (socio) pragmatic development. By comparing learners with varying degrees of cross-contextuality, the study has demonstrated the centrality of learning context to the emergence of core identity as expressed by sociopragmatic variation patterns. However, it also takes the view that learning context does not work in isolation; rather it is just one element in a complex system which comprises (amongst others) learner proficiency level and learner identity. Additionally, the study provides compelling evidence of the development of the emergence of core identity in discourse insofar as an accumulated submersion experience of up to 60 days may not have much impact on the emergence of identity, an ASE of between 120 days and one year appears to be a transitionary period where a struggle between linguistic means and the enactment of core identity occurs. It is, however, only after an ASE of one year or more that learners are able to enact their core identity in a manner that is not open to misinterpretation.

Finally, it is the intention of the study to shed light not only on the emergence of identity, but also on the interplay of language, identity and learning context. This has been achieved by exploring the relationship between language and context; context and identity, and identity and language. It has been demonstrated that the aspects of language acquired are very much dependent on learning context. For example, the mapping of a single linguistic form to multiple functions seems to occur in a submersion context. Additionally, how learners vary their language is predicated on learning context. Learning context and identity interact in a very definite manner insofar as the FL context seems to promote the acceptance of any identity imposed on learners with the result that FL learners appear to be playing roles. However, accumulated submersion experiences of more than one year allow learners to enact their core identity. This is only true if the learner accepts the legitimacy of the context and is accepted as a legitimate participant in the context. As for the relationship between identity and language, this is a truly symbiotic relationship where the language used

portrays identity and identity influences the choice of language.

Such findings have considerable implications for SLA research. It demonstrates the need to consider language, learning contexts and identity as complex, dynamic systems that interact in a very sensitive manner to produce an acquisitional outcome. A change to one of the systems can lead to a very different outcome.

Future Research

Before considering directions for future research, it is worth spending some time expanding on the strengths and weaknesses of the present study. Firstly, it is necessary to foreground how this study has broadened the traditional focus of study abroad research by introducing the more inclusive term of submersion experience (SE) which views all sojourns in a target language environment as potential learning experiences. In light of this, the study focuses on the accumulated submersion experiences regardless of their purpose. Additionally, the study distinguishes itself from others by the range of L1s included. It is a truly cross-linguistic study drawing from ten L1s. This allows the results to be seen as relevant to the sociopragmatic and identity development of all learners without the criticism that the findings could be due to differences between the L1 and L2 had the study focused on informants from a single linguistic background. The uniqueness of the study was also underpinned by the choice of informants. Unlike previous work into study abroad and learning context, the informants were not second or third level students, but language professionals – i.e. teachers.

Adding to the singularity of the study is the range of issues not previously addressed in SA literature. These relate primarily to the impact of SEs on the indexing of identity in discourse and input/output opportunities during such sojourns. With regards identity and study abroad, recently there has been a considerable interest in identity and the SA context. However, these studies are, on the whole, ethnographic studies concerning attitudes towards the submersion context and culture. They do not, in general, show the development of identity as indexed in discourse. As for input/output opportunities experienced, the analytical framework allowed, for the first time, an in depth investigation into what I have termed loci of learning. This refers to the types of exchanges that learners actually encounter during SEs. The framework demonstrates how increased duration of SEs can have an impact on the loci of learning to which learners are exposed.

On the other hand, the study relied on a relatively small number of informants – 20. This was a deliberate choice as it facilitated both a quantitative and qualitative analysis permitting group results as well as the micro-analysis of language necessary for the investigation into the indexing of identity in discourse. It would, of course, be beneficial to replicate the study with a larger number of informants. Additionally, especially with further research in mind, the analytical framework could be applied to a different cohort of informants. It would be especially interesting to examine the loci of learning and intensity of contact with NSs experienced by third level students in a study abroad context. There is likewise considerable scope to exploit the analytical framework to explore the correlation between exposure to loci of learning, intensity of contact with NSs and other aspects of the linguistic repertoire such as fluency or grammatical development. It must be remembered that the parameters of this study permitted an examination of just one speech genre therefore its application to a greater range of linguistic functions would be fruitful.

Another area which will prove profitable to further research is the development of the concept of 'locus of learning'. The parameters of this study allowed for a consideration of just two possible loci of learning – the institutional and the conversational. The range of loci of learning could be expanded in future research. Of particular benefit would be an exploration of the virtual locus of learning. The Internet and social networking sites provide not only opportunities for language learning in general, but also allow users access to a wide range of on-line communities which can include interaction with native speakers in the written and spoken modes. This has far-ranging implications for the enactment of compound identities especially for primarily FL learners. Modes such as chatrooms, forums, Skype and on-line gaming have the possibility to incorporate the submersion context into the foreign language context and thus widen the range of domains in which learners can 'be' and 'do' in the L2.

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Appendix

Language Contact Profile

- Name:
- Gender:
- Year of birth:
- Country of birth:
- What is your native language?
- What language(s) do you speak at home?
- In what language(s) did you receive the majority of your pre-university education?
- Have you ever been to an English speaking country? If yes,

	When	Purpose – *study, holiday, work etc.*	How long
Time 1			
Time 2			
Time 3			
Time 4			

- Have you ever spent time in a multi-lingual community where the lingua franca was English? When? Where? For how long?
- Did you study English in school? If yes, for how long?
- What was your main subject at university?

For those who have spent time in an English-speaking environment

- Which situation best describes your living arrangements in an English-speaking environment?

	Type of accommodation – *host family, flat, student accommodation, hotel, camp-site etc?*	Who did you share with - *native English speakers, non-native speakers or L1 speakers?*	How long did you spend there?
Time 1			
Time 2			
Time 3			
Time 4			

- In which situations did you typically use English? ✓ sometimes, ✓✓ often, ✓✓✓ very often

	With native-speakers	With non-native speakers	With service personnel	To obtain information	Superficial/brief exchanges	Extended conversations with native speakers
Time 1						
Time 2						
Time 3						
Time 4						

- How much time did you spend doing the following? ✓ sometimes, ✓✓ often, ✓✓✓ very often

	Reading newspapers/magazines in English	Reading novels in English	Listening to TV/radio in English	Watching films in English	Listening to songs in English	Surfing the net in English	Writing in English
Time 1							
Time 2							
Time 3							

Time 4							

In your home country

- How long have you been teaching English?
- What levels do you teach?
- How many hours a week do you teach English?
- In which situations do you typically use English outside the classroom? ✓ sometimes, ✓✓ often, ✓✓✓ very often

With native-speaker friends	Non-native speakers	Service personnel	To obtain information	Superficial/brief exchanges	Extended conversation with native speakers

- How much time did you spend doing the following? ✓ sometimes, ✓✓ often, ✓✓✓ very often

Reading newspapers/magazines in English	Reading novels in English	Listening to TV/radio in English	Watching films in English	Listening to songs in English	Surfing the net in English	Writing in English

What areas of English do you feel most un/comfortable teaching?

What areas of English do you think you need to improve?

Do you think it is important to spend time in an English-speaking country?

By completing this form I agree to take part in the project

Thank you