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## Interlanguage Pragmatics in Greek as a Foreign Language by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals: An Analysis of Requests

Javier Cañas Villarreal

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UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

FACULTAT DE FILOLOGIA I COMUNICACIÓ

Departament de Llengües i Literatures Modernes i d'Estudis Anglesos

**INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS  
IN GREEK AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BY  
SPANISH/CATALAN BILINGUALS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF REQUESTS**

**Tesi doctoral presentada per**

**JAVIER CAÑAS VILLARREAL**

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**Directores: Dra. Maria Luz Celaya Villanueva i Dra. Maria Andria**

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“Such is the power of the Greek language  
that to know even a little of it is to know that  
there is nothing more beautiful in the world.”

Virginia Woolf

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To all these people I dedicate my thesis.

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*To my beloved mother and brother,  
whose love and strength continue to guide me.*

*In loving memory.*

## Abstract

The speech act of requests has been widely investigated in the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) throughout the years (i.e., Alcón Soler et al., 2005, Barón, 2015; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Martínez-Flor, 2003; Taguchi, 2006), due to its highly face-threatening nature (Vilar & Martínez-Flor, 2008) and strong connection with politeness and cross-cultural differences (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Ishihara & Cohen, 2021). Despite the growing body of research on L2 English requests by native speakers of Greek in recent years (i.e., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; 2018; 2022), little attention has been given to the acquisition of requests in Greek as a Foreign Language (FL), with only a few studies existing to date (Bella 2012a, 2012b, 2014a). In order to fill this gap in the field, the present dissertation intends to analyze the acquisition of requests in L2 Greek by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. First, it aims to analyze the role of proficiency in their use of requests across a variety of contexts. Second, it examines the use of requests by L2 Greek learners in informal and formal communicative situations, characterized by different social parameters (-/+social power and -/+social distance). Lastly, it explores pragmatic transfer from a learner's L1 to their L2 in requesting behavior regarding the use of address forms in Greek (informal versus formal form of 'you'). Thus, the theoretical foundations of this dissertation revolve around ILP, the speech act of requests, requests in Greek, and pragmatic transfer.

The participants of this study were 54 ( $n = 54$ ) adult learners of Greek (NNS), enrolled in language courses at two schools in Barcelona, Spain, with proficiency levels ranging from A2 to C1, as per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Additionally, a group of native speakers of Greek (NS) ( $n = 53$ ) was included to provide a baseline for comparison. Data was gathered through role plays with varying degrees of social



parameters (-/+social power and -/+social distance). A background questionnaire was administered to the NNS to obtain information about their language profile, time learning Greek, previous experience with the language, and motivations for learning Greek. Moreover, retrospective verbal reports were conducted to provide insights into their perceptions of familiarity, prior experience, and level of difficulty of each scenario presented in the role plays. The data were then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, adapting Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorizations of Greek requests and modifications.

Results have revealed no statistically significant differences between the NS and NNS in the types of requests, although several differences were observed in the qualitative analysis in some scenarios. Conversely, statistically significant differences were obtained regarding the use of modifications across various scenarios. The aforementioned divergences appeared to stem from the varying social parameters inherent to each context, which seemed to influence the NNS's choice of requests and mitigation devices. Proficiency appeared to affect the type and amount of modifiers, both external and internal, revealing notable differences among groups based on the specific context, with advanced learners performing more in line with native-speaker norms. Findings revealed that the NNS struggled more when using requests and mitigation devices in formal contexts, showing a lack of sociopragmatic competence. Additionally, statistically significant differences were also found between the NS and NNS in the use of address forms when making requests in three particular scenarios. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of the pedagogical implications of these findings for teaching L2 learners to use requests in Greek appropriately across communicative situations, while adhering to Greek politeness standards. This study lays the groundwork for future research on cross-linguistic pragmatics within this

underexplored combination of languages and promotes further investigation into request strategies across various linguistic contexts.

**Keywords:** Greek as a Foreign Language, Interlanguage Pragmatics, Pragmatic Competence, Pragmatic Transfer, Proficiency, Requests.

## Resum

L'acte de parla de les peticions ha estat àmpliament investigat en l'àmbit de la Pragmàtica de la Interllengua (ILP) al llarg dels anys (p. ex., Alcón Soler et al., 2005, Barón, 2015; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Martínez-Flor, 2003; Taguchi, 2006) a causa de la seva naturalesa altament amenaçadora per la cara (Vilar & Martínez-Flor, 2008) i la seva estreta relació amb la cortesia i les diferències interculturals (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Ishihara & Cohen, 2021). Malgrat el creixent nombre d'estudis sobre les peticions en anglès com a segona llengua per part de parlants nadius de grec (L1) en els darrers anys (p. ex., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; 2018; 2022), s'ha prestat poca atenció en aquest àmbit a l'adquisició de les peticions en grec com a llengua estrangera, amb només uns pocs estudis existents fins ara (Bella 2012a, 2012b, 2014a). Per tal d'omplir aquest buit en la recerca, la present tesi té com a objectiu analitzar l'adquisició de les peticions en grec com a llengua estrangera per part de bilingües espanyol/català. En primer lloc, s'examinarà el nivell de domini en la L2 pel que fa a l'ús de les peticions en grec per part dels aprenents. En segon lloc, analitza l'ús que fan els aprenents de les peticions en situacions comunicatives informals i formals, caracteritzades per diferents paràmetres socials (-/+poder social i -/+distància social). Finalment, explora possibles casos de transferència pragmàtica en el comportament dels aprenents pel que fa a l'ús de les formes de tractament en grec a les peticions (informal “tu” versus formal “vostè”). Així, els fonaments teòrics d'aquesta tesi giren al voltant de la Pragmàtica de la Interllengua, l'acte de parla de les peticions, les peticions en grec i la transferència pragmàtica.

Els participants d'aquest estudi van ser 54 ( $n = 54$ ) aprenents adults de grec, matriculats en cursos de llengua en dues escoles de Barcelona, Espanya, amb nivells de competència que anaven de l'A2 al C1, segons el Marc Comú Europeu de Referència per a les Llengües (Council of Europe,

2001). A més, es va incloure un grup de parlants nadius de grec ( $n = 53$ ) per establir una línia base de comparació. Les dades es van recollir mitjançant jocs de rols amb diferents graus de paràmetres socials (-/+poder social i -/+distància social). Es va administrar un qüestionari per obtenir informació sobre el perfil lingüístic dels aprenents, així com el temps que porten aprenent grec, experiència prèvia amb la llengua i la seva motivació per aprendre-la. A més, es van dur a terme informes verbals retrospectius per oferir informació sobre les percepcions dels aprenents de grec sobre la familiaritat, l'experiència prèvia, i el grau de dificultat de cada situació als jocs de rol. Les dades es van analitzar de manera qualitativa i quantitativa, adaptant la categorització de les peticions en grec de Bella (2012a, 2012b).

Els resultats no han revelat diferències estadístiques significatives entre els parlants nadius de grec i els aprenents pel que fa als tipus de peticions, tot i que s'han observat diferències en l'anàlisi quantitativa a alguns escenaris. D'altra banda, s'han obtingut diferències estadístiques significatives pel que fa a l'ús de modificacions en diferents situacions. Les divergències esmentades semblen provenir dels diferents paràmetres socials inherents a cada context, els quals semblaven influir en l'elecció de les peticions i estratègies de mitigació. El nivell de competència lingüística sembla afectar el tipus i quantitat de modificacions, revelant diferències notables entre els grups segons el context específic, amb els aprenents avançats mostrant un comportament més alineat amb les normes dels parlants nadius. Els resultats també van revelar que els aprenents de grec tenien més dificultats a l'hora d'utilitzar peticions i estratègies de mitigació en situacions formals, mostrant una manca de competència sociopragmàtica. A més, es van trobar diferències estadístiques significatives també entre els parlants nadius i els aprenents en l'ús de les formes de tractament en fer peticions en tres situacions concretes. Aquesta tesi conclou amb una discussió sobre les implicacions pedagògiques d'aquests resultats per ensenyar als aprenents a utilitzar les

peticions en grec de manera adequada en diverses situacions comunicatives, tot seguint els estàndards de cortesia del grec. Finalment, aquest estudi estableix les bases per a futures recerques sobre la Pragmàtica de la Interllengua dins d'aquesta combinació de llengües poc explorada i fomenta una investigació més profunda sobre les estratègies de petició en diferents contextos lingüístics.

**Paraules clau:** Grec com a llengua estrangera, Pragmàtica de la Interllengua, Competència pragmàtica, Transferència pragmàtica, Nivell de domini en la L2, Peticions.

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**List of Abbreviations**

DCT	Discourse Completion Task
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FTA	Face-Threatening Act
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NNS	Non-native Speakers
NS	Native Speakers
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Pragmatics has long received considerable attention from experts in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (Ariel, 2008, 2010; Crystal, 1985, 1997; Félix-Brasdefer, 2021; Green, 1989; Grice, 1975; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper, & Rose, 1999, 2002; Kecskes, 2013; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001; Rasgado-Toledo et al., 2021; Stalnaker, 1972; Taguchi & Kádár, 2025; Thomas, 1983, 1995; Yule, 1996). Within the field of pragmatics, experts have recently focused their research on what is known as Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2013; Cai & Wang, 2013; Jung, 2004; Kasper, 1996; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Matsumura, 2003; Norouzian & Eslami, 2016; Taguchi, 2017; Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Trosborg, 1995; Schauer, 2009). In Kasper's words (1996), ILP can be defined as "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge" (p.145). That is, ILP aims at investigating how individuals learning a second language acquire pragmatic norms of the target language community, including speech acts, politeness strategies, and cultural norms in communication. In this sense, the main interest of ILP experts is to explore pragmatic competence in individuals learning a second (L2) or foreign language (FL). Therefore, studies in the field of ILP have aimed to explore L2 pragmatic development either from a comparative or acquisitional perspective by using different data collection methods and instruments (see Peng & Gao, 2018). However, studies in ILP are mostly comparative, since they typically examine contrasts between non-native and native speakers' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, or across learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). As a result, ILP research has mainly been concerned with language use rather than language learning (Kasper & Rose, 1999; Safont Jordà, 2005; Taguchi, 2010). In this sense, different researchers have highlighted the need for further

research in ILP from an acquisitional (or developmental) perspective (Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Despite a great body of ILP research being focused on speech acts (see Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juán, 2010), acquisitional studies have been neglected in this field for a long time (Barron, 2003; Bella, 2012a; Cheng, 2005; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996) with most studies adopting a comparative perspective (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007).

Nevertheless, developing pragmatic competence regarding the appropriate use of speech acts in a FL context can be challenging for learners. As Kasper and Roever (2005) point out, FL learners primarily receive input within a classroom setting, unlike learners in an L2 setting, where they can engage with the TL more frequently. According to Thoms (2012), the process of acquiring a FL is, from a sociocultural standpoint, inherently connected to the social and linguistic opportunities that exist within the FL classroom. However, Taguchi (2008) states that FL learners are not always at a disadvantage in understanding how language is used in different contexts, and they can still develop pragmatic comprehension even when the opportunities for practice are scarce, provided that their learning environment promotes this kind of development. In light of these claims, the present thesis will explore whether pragmatic competence regarding the speech act of requests in Greek improves in the FL context.

Due to their frequent use and well-known face-threatening nature, requests are among the most frequently studied speech acts in ILP literature (Gilabert & Barón, 2018), as they provide an ideal focus for examining sociopragmatic competence and politeness (Bella, 2012a). According to Barron (2003), the main goal of research in acquisitional studies is to focus on the learning of FLs other than English. Considering this, the present study aims to contribute to the field through the analysis of the use and acquisition of the speech act of requests in Greek by Spanish/Catalan

bilinguals across different proficiency levels. The main motivations for carrying out this research are as follows: Firstly, although a substantial number of studies on the use of requests in different languages have already been published in the field of ILP (e.g., Achiba 2003; Al Masaeed, 2022; Barron, 2003; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Cenoz & Valencia, 1996; Chen & Chen, 2007; Chen, 2017; Cook & Liddicoat, 2002; Han, 2005; Krulatz, 2014; Lazarescu, 2021; Li, 2000; Owen, 2001; Trosborg, 1995), there remains a scarcity in the number of studies concerning the acquisition of requests in an under-explored language such as Greek (Bella, 2012a, 2012b). Secondly, Greek culture values politeness and formality, especially when making requests to elders, superiors, or strangers (see Florou, 2021), and this requires a high level of consideration for other people's feelings. Given that reinforcing involvement and immediacy is important when making requests in Greek (Sifianou & Antonopoulou, 2005), the study of this speech act is essential for understanding how language reflects and maintains social norms and relationships in Greek society. Thirdly, the existing studies on the acquisition of requests in Greek have implemented the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as the main instrument for data collection, which, as other authors point out (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Cohen, 1996a; Demeter, 2007; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Hinkel, 2005), presents certain limitations for measuring L2 pragmatic competence. In response, the present study relies on open role plays based on a variety of scenarios with differing contexts (+/- formality, +/- politeness, +/- power, +/- social distance, and +/- imposition) to analyze request performance in Greek by L1 Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. Open role plays have proved to be a very effective instrument to measure L2 pragmatic competence as demonstrated by previous research (see Demeter, 2007) since they provide authentic spoken data, can be replicated and allow experts to evaluate the differences in speech act



performance between native and non-native speakers of the target language (Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents the literature review that forms the foundation of the present dissertation. First, it explores ILP in Section 2.2, offering an overview of the main theories in the field, such as the Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory (Section 2.2.1), and covering L2 pragmatic competence and development (Section 2.2.2), with special emphasis on the dichotomy between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Second, it delves into the speech act of requests in Section 2.3, including its definition and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) classification of request strategies and modification devices (Section 2.3.1), previous studies on requests conducted in the field (Section 2.3.2), as well as the social parameters (distance, power, and imposition) affecting their use as described by Brown and Levinson (1987) (Section 2.3.3). Third, Greek requests are further explored in Section 2.4, providing an overview of Greek politeness and the use of this speech act (Section 2.4.1), previous research on requests in Greek (Section 2.4.2), followed by a thorough description of Bella's (2012a) categorization for Greek request types (Section 2.4.3) and external and internal modifications (Sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5, respectively). Finally, Section 2.5 addresses the concept of pragmatic transfer. More specifically, it defines the concept as described by several researchers (Section 2.5.1), reviews previous studies done on pragmatic transfer and requests (Section 2.5.2), and includes a contrastive analysis of requests as well as address forms in L1 Spanish, L1 Catalan, and L1 Greek based on their use in these three languages (Section 2.5.3). Section 2.6 includes a chapter summary and Section 2.7 introduces the research questions of the study and their justification.

In Chapter 3, the methodology employed for this research is presented. First, in Section 3.1, it describes the LETEGR2 project from which the data was obtained and its research

objectives. Second, the context is outlined in Section 3.2 following Andria's (2024) description of the two language schools involved in the study. Third, in Section 3.3, the native and non-native speaker participants (henceforth NS and NNS, respectively) of the study are described along with their demographic data. Fourth, Section 3.4 includes a thorough explanation of the instruments taken from the LETEGR2 project and employed in this study: questionnaires (Section 3.4.1), role plays (Section 3.4.2), and retrospective verbal reports (Section 3.4.3). Lastly, the procedure of the study is explained in Section 3.5. Specifically, it details the main data collection carried out as part of the LETEGR2 project (Section 3.5.1). Additionally, it details the data coding used and analysis conducted in the present study (Section 3.5.2), including the coding scheme utilized to analyze the request types and modifications in the data, as well as the statistical treatment applied, both descriptive and inferential.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study organized around the three research questions. To start, the results for the first research question regarding the effect of proficiency in the acquisition of requests (head acts and modifiers) by the NNS are addressed in Section 4.1, per role play (Sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.7). It includes the frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and statistical analyses per group to investigate whether the NNS's performance resembles that of the NS with increased proficiency. Then, the chapter goes on to provide the results for the second research question, entailing the use of requests in informal and formal contexts in Section 4.2. It compares the results of the use of requests and modifications by the NS and NNS to observe similarities and differences across role plays that share the same levels of distance and power (Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.3) while also considering the degree of imposition of the request. Next, Section 4.3 introduces the results for the third research question on pragmatic transfer of address forms from the L1 to the L2 in requests produced by the NNS in Greek to observe whether they

used the formal form when requesting across three different role plays (Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.3). Lastly, the results of the retrospective verbal reports are presented in Section 4.4, followed by a chapter summary provided in Section 4.5.

In Chapter 5, the findings of the present study are discussed per research question in light of previous research. It begins by addressing the findings for the first research question about proficiency in Section 5.1, providing several interpretations for the results obtained. Section 5.2 discusses the findings for the second research question, highlighting similarities and differences between contexts of different degrees of formality. Finally, Section 5.3 expands on the results found on pragmatic transfer in the use of address forms by the NNS as observed in the data. A chapter summary is then presented in Section 5.4.

Chapter 6 presents several conclusions based on the findings of the study. Specifically, it addresses the effect of proficiency on the NNS's use of requests in Greek, as well as how they employed them in different communicative situations. The chapter also concludes by shedding light on the use of address forms by L2 learners of Greek when making requests.

Chapter 7 suggests various pedagogical implications for teaching requests in Greek to L2 learners in light of the results. To that end, it emphasizes the importance of adopting innovative techniques in the classroom, including awareness-raising activities, role plays, metapragmatic discussions, feedback, and several types of assessment methods, as a means to improve L2 learners' pragmatic competence in the use of requests in Greek.

Finally, Chapter 8 addresses the limitations of the study and outlines some ideas for future lines of research to consider. The references and the appendices are included after this chapter.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The present chapter constitutes a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundations that support the present research on the acquisition of the speech act of requests by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. Various relevant concepts and theories are addressed to provide the conceptual framework necessary for understanding and analyzing the phenomenon under study and interpreting the findings of the present research. Thus, the present chapter is structured as follows: First, Section 2.2 will provide an overview of pragmatics and ILP, stretching from Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1968, 1969, 1975) speech act theory to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory and face-threatening acts (FTAs), and then followed by the current trends in pragmatics and SLA (e.g., Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Taguchi, 2017). Additionally, it will explore the diverse definitions of L2 pragmatic competence according to several researchers in the field, discussing aspects such as pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. It will also review previous research, including comparative and acquisitional studies conducted to date. Then, Section 2.3 will delve into the speech act of requests, with a particular focus on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) categorization of request strategies and modification devices, and the social parameters affecting their use in light of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. Studies to date involving the acquisition of requests in SLA will also be explored in this section. Subsequently, in Section 2.4, the speech act of requests in Greek, which is the focus of the present dissertation, will be examined in-depth to understand their usage in Greek society and its categorization as evidenced by Bella's (2012a, 2012b) studies involving learners of Greek as an L2 and FL respectively. Following this categorization, the section will also delve into the level of directness of the requests and explore external and internal

strategies used in Greek requests. Finally, Section 2.5 will tackle the concept of pragmatic transfer, reviewing previous studies and conducting a contrastive analysis of requests in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek.

## **2.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics**

### **2.2.1. Pragmatics and Interlanguage Pragmatics**

To best understand the study of ILP, it is essential to provide a concise overview of the pragmatic theories of speech acts and politeness. These two theories will serve as the basis for a foundational understanding necessary for contextualizing and analyzing ILP phenomena within the broader framework of pragmatics.

Speech Act theory, developed by Austin (1962) and further expanded by Searle (1968, 1969, 1975), is one of the most influential theories of pragmatics and has been widely employed in the field (Bobrova, 2012; Marinescu, 2006; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, to name but a few). Schmidt and Richards (1980) define speech acts as actions performed during speech, with interpretation and negotiation reliant on discourse or context. Speech act theory examines how language use relates to the behavior of both the speaker and the listener in social interactions. According to speech act theory, utterances are not merely a sequence of words that convey information, but they also serve different purposes such as making promises, issuing commands, asking questions, expressing emotions, and so on.

Austin (1962) classified utterances into two main categories: constatives (which describe a specific situation) and performatives (which represent the realization of an action). Performatives are executed through speech acts, which Austin divided into three categories: locutionary act (the utterance per se), illocutionary act (the intended effect or function of an utterance), and the

perlocutionary act (the actual effect of the utterance on the listener). For Austin, performative utterances can express speech acts explicitly and implicitly. The degree of explicitness will be determined by the presence of what Austin calls the ‘illocutionary force indicative device’, which refers to the linguistic components that show or restrict the illocutionary force of a particular utterance. For Searle (1969), however, a speech act is similar to Austin’s idea of the illocutionary force. Searle (1975) defines the categories of speech acts based on their illocutionary force as follows: assertives (which state something about reality through actions such as affirming, explaining, suggesting, etc.), directives (which aim at influencing the listener’s behavior through actions such as ordering, requesting, recommending, begging, etc.), commissives (which condition the speaker’s subsequent behavior through actions such as promising, offering, ensuring, pledging, etc.), expressives (which represent the speaker’s feelings or attitudes through actions such as forgiving, thanking, offending, complimenting, etc.), and declaratives (which change the status of reality through actions such as hiring, passing a sentence, opening, marrying, etc.).

Another key concept of pragmatics is politeness. Most research in the field of pragmatics has addressed the importance of politeness in interaction (see Allan & Jaszczolt, 2012; Brown, 2015; Kádár, 2017; Leech, 1983) with different theories attempting to explain how politeness works as well as how it can be applied in communication. Lakoff (1973) defined politeness as “forms of behavior that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction” (p. 45). For Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) politeness means showing awareness and consideration of another person’s face. Considering Goffman’s definition of *face*, Brown and Levinson (1987) defined the term as “the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain respects” (p. 58). Using politeness strategies can make communication friendlier for both parties, reduce the likelihood of conflict, and help to avoid an FTA (see Brown & Levinson, 1987

and Sifianou & Tzanne, 2021). FTA, as defined by Yule (1996), is “the communication act that causes a threat to the individual's expectations regarding self-image” (p. 61). These acts can do harm to either positive or negative face and are used to challenge another person or group’s faces, threatening their sense of self-esteem and respect. In this sense, Brown and Levinson (1987) developed four politeness strategies for protecting one’s positive and negative face: bald on-record (the explicit mention of the actual act. e.g., “*I need your car ASAP!*”); positive politeness (a person’s need to be liked is respected to make the hearer feel close and secure in the interaction. e.g., “*I would be eternally grateful if you could please let me use your car.*”); negative politeness (used to reduce the imposition of the speaker’s message and to maintain the hearer’s autonomy and compensate for the possible harm to the interlocutor’s negative face. e.g., “*Any chance I could use your car for a couple of hours?*”), and off-record (no explicit mention of the act, which is hinted instead and inferred by the interlocutor. E.g., “*Our car just broke down! I have so many errands to run!*”).

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also emphasize that politeness is affected by the social parameters of distance, power, and imposition (see Section 2.3.3 for a thorough explanation of these contextual variables). Since politeness “is bounded by culture and language” (Pavan, 2019, p. 50), these social factors are, therefore, culture-dependent. That is, each culture has its own standards by which to assess power, distance, and imposition. For instance, negative politeness is customary in Britain (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Culpeper et al., 2019; Stewart, 2005), whereas positive politeness is preferred in Greece (e.g., Ogiermann & Saloustrou, 2020; Sifianou, 1992a; Sifianou & Antonopoulou, 2005). Therefore, the concept of politeness should be adjusted according to cultural norms (Cook, 2011; Yule, 1996). However, according to Kádár (2017), researchers who speak languages other than English or Western

languages have pointed out that Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech's (1983) politeness theories may not accurately reflect how politeness operates in diverse cultural contexts. Thus, they heavily depend on the Western notion of individualistic rationality, which assumes that a person chooses a specific behavior to achieve a desired social effect in a particular situation. However, Eelen (2001, as cited in Sifianou, 2023) affirms that “(im)politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behaviour but rather when the hearer evaluates that behaviour” (p. 253). Based on this criticism, the theory of politeness has had a significant impact on the analysis of language usage across diverse cultural contexts (Sifianou, 1999; Bayraktaroğlu & Sifianou, 2001; Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Bargiela-Chiappini & Kádár, 2010; Zhu & Bao, 2010; Wierzbicka, 2003).

In light of this, ILP has raised scholars' interest in the last decades, reflecting an acknowledgment of its critical role in achieving successful communication in an L2 (see Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2010, 2013; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Cai & Wang, 2013; Cenoz, 2007; Cenoz & Valencia, 1996; Félix-Brasdefer, 2016; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Kasper, 1996; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Schauer, 2009; Schmidt, 1992; Sykes, 2018; Taguchi, 2017; Takimoto, 2012). ILP was first defined by Kasper and Dahl (1991) as “nonnative speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired” (p. 216). Gradually, the concept expanded, and other researchers contributed with new definitions to showcase what it really involves. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) highlighted that ILP explores the development and use of strategies by L2 learners when performing linguistic actions or, as Bardovi-Harlig (2010) states, the acquisition of the combination of the linguistic system and linguistic use in an L2. In other words, ILP examines how NNS comprehend and execute linguistic action in a TL, as well as how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge. Taguchi and Roever (2017)



go further by providing a definition of ILP from a social perspective, describing this phenomenon as the knowledge and use of language by L2 learners during social interaction. Taguchi (2017) expands on this by stating that ILP refers to “second language (L2) learners' knowledge, use, and development in performing sociocultural functions” (p. 153), and suggests that the primary foci of ILP are to explore learners' individual differences (see Kasper & Rose, 2002, Kung & Kung, 2011, and LoCastro, 2001) and the factors influencing the learning process (see Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001, and Mirzaei, 2021). As Mey (2006) demonstrates, interactions among individuals from diverse backgrounds often lead to potential misunderstandings. It is therefore critical to emphasize the importance of ILP, as it recognizes that L2 learners show pragmatic norms and conventions that are different from those seen in native users of the TL (see Section 2.5 on Pragmatic Transfer).

In sum, ILP explores how individuals who are not NS of a language comprehend and apply linguistic conventions and expressions in the TL, while also seeking to understand how they develop pragmatic awareness within the L2 context (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Kasper, 1992). This includes not only the assimilation of grammatical norms and language conventions unique to the target language (TL) but also a nuanced comprehension of the social and cultural context in which the language is used. Moreover, the many linguistic and paralinguistic cues by which speakers and listeners encode and interpret one another's utterances need to be considered for a complete pragmatic analysis (Blum-Kulka, 1997). Today, the term “pragmatics” is widely used in the context of SLA, particularly concerning “pragmatic competence,” which is a part of the broader framework of communicative competence (Taghizadeh, 2017). The concept of pragmatic competence will be addressed in the following section in order to understand the focus of ILP.

### 2.2.2. L2 Pragmatic Competence and Development

The Council of Europe (2020) in its Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Companion Volume establishes that the main objective in language teaching is the improvement of individuals' communicative competence through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities at the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic levels. The concept of communicative competence has been at the center of attention in the field of SLA in recent years (Celce-Murcia, 2008; Isakova, 2017; Lillis, 2006; Littlewood, 2011; Mart, 2018; Pillar, 2011; Richards, 2006; Saleh, 2013; Tarvin, 2015) and has taken different forms and directions. For Hymes (1972) communicative competence involves knowing “when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner” (p. 277). Communicative competence is dynamic and evolves during interaction based on awareness of linguistic forms, functions, and context (Félix-Brasdefer, 2021; Taguchi, 2017), while pragmatic phenomena are collaboratively constructed in conversation (Taguchi, 2018a) which emphasizes the role of specificity in social interaction and language user. For someone to develop communicative competence, knowing the words and grammar of a language is insufficient, as Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2014) state. That is, linguistic or grammatical competence is not the only requirement. According to Leech (1983), we can understand the nature of language only if we understand pragmatics, i.e., how language is used in communication, as meaning varies in different contexts. Therefore, a speaker is communicatively competent when they become aware of the linguistic and pragmatic norms in a given context, community, social group, or culture, and uses that knowledge to communicate accordingly. In other words, a speaker needs to develop pragmatic competence.

Several researchers have aimed to provide diverse definitions of pragmatic competence (Barron, 2003; Bialystok, 1993; Fraser, 1983; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kecskes, 2013; Timpe-Laughlin et al., 2015), with some focusing on the importance of meaning in communication in order to define the concept. According to Fraser (1983), pragmatic competence is the understanding of how an addressee interprets a speaker's meaning and the ability to perceive the speaker's intended illocutionary force through the use of subtle “attitudes” in their speech. To complement this definition, Bialystok (1990) added that pragmatic competence enables speakers to use language for various communicative purposes and to discern the true intentions of interlocutors, even when they are not explicitly stated (e.g., presuppositions, implicatures, or irony). In their definition of pragmatic competence, Timpe-Laughlin et al. (2015) stressed the significance of meaning in interaction and described it as “the dynamic and interactive negotiation of intended meaning between two or more individuals in a particular situation” (p.3). Other researchers, however, emphasized the importance of context in their definition of pragmatic competence. In this vein, Kasper and Rose (2002) argued that pragmatic competence involves the capacity to generate and understand spoken or written expressions within social and cultural interactions. Similarly, for Barron (2003), understanding the appropriate contextual application of linguistic resources to convey particular illocutions and speech acts in a specific language is related to the development of pragmatic competence. Such ability to use language appropriately in different situations was also discussed by Kecskes (2013), who described pragmatic competence as “the ability to produce and comprehend utterances (discourse) that is adequate to the L2 socio-cultural context in which interaction takes place” (p. 61).

Different facets of the pragmatic competence of L2 learners are explored within the ILP field, encompassing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge (see Kasper & Rose, 2002;

Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistic knowledge involves understanding how to use language to convey intended meanings and the linguistic components used to do so (e.g., how to make and interpret requests, offers, invitations, etc.). In contrast, sociopragmatic knowledge refers to the understanding of the social norms and context that dictate appropriate language use (e.g., knowledge of the varieties of language used in different social settings, the different norms of language use, the effects of language on social relationships, etc.) (see Marmaridou, 2011 for an in-depth exploration of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics). However, according to Haugh et al. (2021), Leech's (1983) and Thomas' (1983) views on sociopragmatics were somewhat limited since they do not address the cultural nuances affecting the production and interpretation of meaning.

As far as the development of L2 pragmatic competence is concerned, according to Bardovi-Harlig (2001), L2 pragmatic competence tends to develop as proficiency level increases. In the early stages of SLA, learners use one form for one purpose (the one-to-one principle) before moving on to multifunctionality (see Andersen, 1990 for a thorough explanation of both principles). That is, learners start using a single form to convey a particular action and, as their proficiency level increases, they expand their repertoire of forms and employ more complex structures (pragmalinguistic knowledge), with advanced learners using them more effectively in discourse (Zhang & Aubrey, 2024). However, the choice of one form over another is subject to the level of formality in a given context and the relationship with the interlocutor (sociopragmatic knowledge). For Bardovi-Harlig (2010), the L2 learner needs to develop interactional skills, i.e. the learner's capacity to speak and comprehend language during conversations, understand both the main message and hidden meanings, use, and understand words that point to things and cultural customs while being polite in language, and know how to interact effectively when communicating

with people who speak the TL. Once the learner is able to discern between contextual differences, they carry out a remapping of the forms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012), showing discourse-oriented macropragmatic competence (Schneider, 2017). In other words, as learners develop the capacity to frame linguistic forms in the appropriate context(s), they show an “increasing ability to understand and produce sociopragmatic meanings with pragmalinguistic conventions” (Kasper & Roeever, 2005, p. 318). They require knowledge of linguistic mechanisms to perform everyday communicative functions and an understanding of the social conventions and norms governing the TL to express themselves appropriately in different contexts.

Although some studies have indicated that certain aspects of pragmatics such as requests seem to develop in parallel with proficiency (Celaya & Barón, 2015; Rose, 2000), the relationship between grammar and pragmatic competence is not clear and does not always align, as claimed by some researchers (Barron, 2003; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). Other experts have reported that high-level grammatical proficiency does not automatically guarantee equivalency with pragmatic ability (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1992). According to Kasper and Rose (2002), L2 learners’ pragmatic ability remains stagnant or develops very slowly after a certain point. Even advanced learners may not know certain functions of linguistic mechanisms or may not use them appropriately depending on communicative contexts since they “lack native-like sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge, and lag behind in processing efficiency and fluency in pragmatic performance” (Taguchi, 2011, p. 909). Furthermore, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) argue that L2 learners’ pragmatic skills do not seem to match those of NS<sup>1</sup>, even proficient learners might face obstacles in interaction, both in

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<sup>1</sup>It is important to point out that the concept of “nativeness” has been the subject of increasing criticism in the field of SLA (see Dewaele et al., 2022; Ishihara, 2021; Murahata et al., 2016; Ortega, 2019, to name but a few). These scholars argue that contemporary linguistic realities are fluid, and individuals may identify as proficient users of multiple languages without necessarily being native speakers. They advocate for more inclusive terminology that

comprehension and production of intentions and politeness. According to Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), this deficiency can originate from a lack of sufficient socio-cultural understanding. In Luo and Gao's words (2011), "though our grammar may be OK, we cannot speak it tactfully and appropriately just because of cultural difference" (p. 284). This is because the interlanguage (IL) exhibits distinctions from the learners' native language and TL in various domains, including phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, culture, and communicative function. Furthermore, IL presents distinctive pragmatic approaches, where learners could use diverse linguistic patterns and strategies from both their native language and the TL (see Cohen 2005). This might be seen in terms of idioms and metaphors that might not be used appropriately in the culture of the TL.

These differences in pragmatic norms between languages reveal the difficulties that NNS confront when navigating complicated social interactions in their L2s. According to Thomas (1983) and Padilla (2013), if there is a lack of pragmatic knowledge, communication breakdowns and misunderstandings will occur. Besides, as Rianita (2017) states, it may even lead to uncooperative behavior and, in more severe cases, rudeness or insults. For example, someone who lacks pragmatic competence may not understand the difference between a polite request and a direct command, which could lead to conflict or offense in certain social or professional situations (see Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, 2018, 2023). Consequently, pragmatic failures (see Thomas 1983), viewed as instances where the learner's pragmatic choices deviate from native-speaker norms, can occur during interactions with NS of the TL (see Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Padilla, 2013; and Umale, 2011). According to Thomas (1983), since pragmatic competence is not governed by strict categorical rules like grammar, but rather, by cultural and social-specific

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reflects evolving linguistic and cultural paradigms. Consequently, the goal for L2 learners is not to become a "replica" of native speakers, but rather to develop an awareness of what is considered polite or impolite within the society whose language they are learning (see Gkouma, 2024 for further insights into the distinction between native speaker and non-native speaker).

expectations, it is not a matter of making an error but of failure of the speaker to achieve their communicative goal. Pragmatic failures or realizations that deviate from those of NS are not often perceived as errors of insufficient language proficiency but rather lead to negative attitudes toward the speaker, communication avoidance, and even discrimination against them (Cheng, 2005; Yates, 2010). Thus, NNS may cause a poor impression, especially when they are linguistically proficient (see Enomoto & Marriott, 1994 and Cheng, 2005). Such pragmatic failure can be avoided if the learner gains proper L2 cultural codes, which help them to not fall into potential stereotypes (Jung, 2002). According to Luo and Gao (2011), pragmatic failure can be addressed by the enhancement of individuals' language ability, communication competence, and cultural quality. However, not all instances of pragmatic failures are readily remediable as previous research has highlighted. As stated by Stukan (2018), pragmalinguistic failure is seemingly easier for the learner to amend since it can be as simple as a grammar mistake. Sociopragmatic failure, on the other hand, is more challenging to correct than pragmalinguistic failure, since it originates from varying cultural perspectives on what is considered acceptable language use. This is because the sociocultural variations across groups, each of which has its own conventions, are not always apparent (Taguchi, 2010). In this sense, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) argue that, for learners to achieve pragmatic competence, they must be aware of the discourse variations that exist between their L1 and L2. According to Thomas (1983), learners should be given the freedom to violate L2 pragmatic rules just like NS do in order to acknowledge the difference between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

Thanks to many researchers' emphasis on the need for further research on L2 pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2000; Barron & Wurga, 2007; Jung, 2002; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, Rose 2000; Taguchi, 2018b; Timpe-Laughlin, 2017; Li & Jiang;

2019 to name but a few), the field of ILP has witnessed considerable growth in the number of studies exploring the development of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Alkawaz et al., 2023; Barron, 2003; Chang, 2011; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007a; Harlow, 1990; Sperlich et al., 2021; Taguchi, 2009). However, the relationship between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics has been a controversial matter in the field as Rose (2000) emphasizes. Such debate has led researchers to pose the question as to which of these competencies is developed first. In this sense, two different stances have emerged regarding this dichotomy based on research findings. First, some studies support the idea that pragmalinguistics is acquired before sociopragmatics (Hill, 1997; Rose 2009; Scarcella, 1979; Trosborg, 1995). That is, the learner first acquires the necessary linguistic resources for communicating specific meanings and then develops the capacity to vary those forms according to the context. Other studies favor the idea that sociopragmatics is developed before pragmalinguistics (Achiba, 2003; Barron, 2003, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993, Chang, 2011). According to this body of research, learners first develop the ability to adapt their linguistic resources to the given context, considering social and situational factors, and then learn the forms appropriate to each context.

Alcón Soler and Martínez-Flor (2008) and Taguchi (2010) point out, however, that much research is disproportionately focused on the pragmalinguistic rather than sociopragmatic abilities of L2 learners, often overlooking contextual elements, the type of interaction, and interpersonal relationships among interlocutors. Neglecting these factors results in the learner's inability to use language effectively in different situations, and for this reason, as Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor (2008) state, both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects need examination, as communication outcomes are not solely determined by linguistic forms but also by how they interact with the context of usage. L2 learners should therefore be able to apply their



sociopragmatic understanding to pragmalinguistic forms and techniques and effectively apply this knowledge within the context of a given communication scenario (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Roever, 2004).

While studies on both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of communication skills have primarily centered on how learners use different speech acts to achieve social goals in diverse settings and languages (see Mirzaei et al. 2012 for an example), House and Kádár (2023) have pointed out that further research, particularly on speech acts in the L2 from an interactional perspective, is still “essential for detecting genuine problems faced by L2 learners” (p. 9). As such, the present dissertation centers on the speech act of requests in the L2, and this will be explored in depth in the following section.

## **2.3. The Speech Act of Requests**

### **2.3.1. Defining Requests**

According to Searle (1979), requests are directive speech acts that represent “attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (p. 13) and are “one of the most face-threatening acts, since it intrinsically threatens the hearer’s face” (Vilar & Martínez-Flor, 2008, p. 199). A request has thus been defined as a directive speech act in which the speaker asks the hearer to perform an action that is frequently for the speaker's exclusive benefit (Trosborg, 1995). Hence, when the speaker initiates a request, they are assuming that the hearer can carry out a specific action. Ellis (1992) argues that requests have often been investigated in the field of pragmatics because of their easily identifiable formulas, their widespread use in everyday conversations by speakers, and how they differ from one language to another. Furthermore, requests fall under the category of illocutionary acts, conveying meaning beyond literal language, and aiming to persuade

listeners to act in a certain way. As a result, requests may impact the hearer's positive or negative face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive face refers to a person's desire to be liked, appreciated, and valued by others, while negative face relates to a person's desire for autonomy, independence, and freedom from imposition.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) pointed out that requests are challenging for L2 learners, as they demand a significant degree of cultural and linguistic proficiency, as well as a high level of appropriateness. Individuals need to be aware of the appropriate level of politeness, formality, and directness that is expected in different social contexts and adjust their language use accordingly (Ishihara & Cohen, 2021). In specific cultures, requests may be viewed as actions that threaten one's self-image or dignity, particularly if they are seen as excessively straightforward or impolite (Mills & Grainger, 2016). By contrast, requests can also threaten the hearer's positive face in other cultures when the speaker does not show any concern for the hearer's feelings and needs (see Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008). When NNS use the speech act of making requests in the TL, it becomes even riskier. According to Halupka-Rešetar (2014), the inappropriate use of the request act by NNS can make them appear rude or impolite and can even cause a breakdown in communication. Therefore, context and culture play a significant role in the way speakers use requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), and learners must understand how “to perform requests successfully and to avoid the effect of being perceived as rude, offensive or demanding” (Usó-Juan, 2010, p. 237 as cited in Bella, 2012a).

Requests can be used from four different perspectives: speaker-oriented (e.g., “*Can I get the check, please?*”), hearer-oriented (e.g., “*Can you give me the check, please?*”), inclusive (e.g., “*Could we clean the room now?*”), and impersonal (e.g., “*It would be a good idea to get the car washed.*”) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The social parameters of distance, power, and imposition

(which will be further addressed in Section 2.3.3) will determine the appropriate degree of directness of the request in each situation. In this sense, the literature recognizes three types of request head act realization (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989): Direct (a statement that clearly and explicitly asks for something, e.g., “*Close the door!*”), Conventionally Indirect (a subtle way of asking for something without directly asking for it, e.g., “*Could you close the door?*”), and Non-Conventionally Indirect (an indirect request that does not use conventional language, e.g., “*The door is open.*”). Table 1 displays Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) classification of request strategies from their Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), which has served as a basis for subsequent studies (Schauer, 2008; Memarian, 2012; Su & Ren, 2017, among others), including those investigating Greek requests as will be discussed in depth in Section 2.4.

**Table 1**

*Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984, p. 202) Classification of Request Strategies*

Directness	Strategy Types	Tokens
Direct	Mood Derivable	<i>Leave me alone.</i>
	Explicit	<i>I am asking you not to park the car here.</i>
	Performative	
	Hedged Performative	<i>I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier.</i>
	Locution Derivable	<i>Madam, you’ll have to move your car.</i>
	Scope Stating	<i>I really wish you’d stop bothering me.</i>
Conventionally Indirect	Suggestory Formula	<i>How about cleaning up?</i>
	Query Preparatory	<i>Could you clear up the kitchen, please?</i>
Non-Conventionally Indirect	Strong Hint	<i>You’ve left this kitchen in a right mess.</i>
Indirect	Mild Hint	<i>I’m a nun</i> (in response to the persistent boy).

The head act is the main request category employed. Based on the degree of directness, head acts are categorized as Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect. Each category includes several strategies except for the non-conventional type of requests. The

choice of strategy depends on the specific context, the nature of the request, and the desired level of politeness or assertiveness. Direct requests are typically used in informal contexts like when asking for a favor, for information, or for someone to do something. Indirect requests, on the other hand, are used to ask for something in a more formal manner. In some languages, like English, indirect requests are more dominant than direct requests, while in other languages such as Spanish, direct requests are preferred (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The choice between direct and indirect requests also depends on the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Direct requests are more likely to be used between people who know each other well, while indirect requests are often used between strangers or when the speaker wants to be more polite.

Speakers can also draw on modification devices or downgraders, which have the function of “softening the threatening nature of the request on the hearer” (Martínez-Flor, 2003, p. 168), to reduce the illocutionary force of their requests. Thus, these modifiers aim at mitigating the possible negative impact of the request on the listener. As Alcón Soler et al. (2005) point out, knowing these devices would greatly improve the speaker's use of suitable requests in diverse contexts, enhancing his/her pragmatic competence in the TL. However, studies have found variations in the extent and type of modifications used by NS and NNS when making requests, and these variations may differ based on the specific situational factors at play (Achiba 2003; Altasan, 2016; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009; Hendriks, 2010; Krulatz, 2014; Schauer, 2004; Trosborg, 1995; Tytar, 2015; Woodfield & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). To produce effective and appropriate requests, learners can use both internal and external modifications to the main request (see Faerch & Kasper, 1989).

On the one hand, internal modifications involve changing the form of the request itself, such as using a different verb, pronoun, or tense. These modifications can be syntactic or

lexical/phrasal. Syntactic modifiers include structures like the Interrogative or Conditional, Negation (e.g., “*can't you do the laundry?*”), and using the Past Tense in a non-obligatory way (e.g., “*I wanted to ask you to do the laundry.*”). Lexical/phrasal modifiers can include techniques such as using Polite Markers (e.g., “*please*”) or Understaters (e.g., “*Could you do the laundry a bit?*”) and Cajolers (e.g., “*well...*” or “*you know*”). External modifications, on the other hand, involve adjusting the request based on the context of the situation, such as using more formal or polite language. These modifications can come before or after the main request and can include Grounders (i.e., explanations prior to the request), Preparators (e.g., “*Can I ask you something?*”), Disarmers (e.g., “*I know you dislike doing the laundry, but can you do it a bit now?*”), among others. Table 2 displays Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) classification of both internal and external downgraders.

**Table 2**

*Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984, p. 203-205) Classification of Request Modification Devices*

	Strategy Types	Tokens
Internal Modification Devices		
Syntactic	Interrogative	<i>Could you do the cleaning up?</i>
	Negation	<i>Look, excuse me. I wonder if you <u>wouldn't mind</u> dropping me home?</i>
	Past Tense	<i>I <u>wanted</u> to ask for a postponement.</i>
	Embedded 'if	<i>I would appreciate it <u>if</u> you left me alone.</i>
	Clause	
Other Downgraders (Lexical/Phrasal)	Consultative	<i><u>Do you think</u> I could borrow your lecture notes from yesterday?</i>
	Devices	
	Understaters	<i>Could you tidy up <u>a bit</u> before I start?</i>
	Hedges	<i>It would really help <u>if you did something</u> about the kitchen.</i>
	Downtoners	<i>Will you be able <u>perhaps</u> to drive me?</i>
Upgraders	Intensifiers	<i>Clean up this mess, <u>it's disgusting</u></i>
	Expletives	<i>You still haven't cleaned up that <u>bloody</u> mess!</i>

	Strategy Types	Tokens
External Modification Devices		
Adjuncts to the Head Act	Checking on	<i>Are you going in the direction of the town? And if so, is</i>
	Availability	<i>it possible to join you?</i>
	Getting a	<i>Will you do me a favor? Could you perhaps lend me your</i>
	Precommitment	<i>notes for a few days?</i>
	Grounder	<i><u>I missed class yesterday</u>, could I borrow your notes?</i>
	Sweetener	<i><u>You have beautiful handwriting</u>; would it be possible to borrow your notes for a few days?</i>
	Disarmer	<i>Excuse me, <u>I hope you don't think I'm being forward</u>, but is there any chance of a lift home?</i>
	Cost Minimizer	<i>Pardon me, but could you give me a lift, <u>if you're going my way</u>, as I just missed the bus and there isn't another one for an hour?</i>

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) classification of request strategies and modification devices has been employed and adapted by previous researchers to analyze requesting behavior shown by learners of different FLs. These studies will be explored in depth in the following section with an exception being for the categorization of Greek requests by Bella (2012a), which will be explained further in depth in Section 2.4 for a full understanding of the coding scheme adopted in the present study.

### 2.3.2. Previous Research on the Speech Act of Requests

The directive speech act of requests, which is the focus of the present dissertation, has received considerable attention from experts in the field because of its relationship with different levels of politeness as well as its cross-cultural variation (e.g., Barón 2015; Bayat, 2013; Bella, 2012a, 2012b, Bella & Sifianou, 2012; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Cohen & Shively, 2007;

Daskalovska et al., 2016; De Kadt, 1992; Ellis, 1992; Khazdouzian et al., 2021; Lazarescu, 2021; Martínez-Flor, 2003; Nugroho & Rekha, 2020; Tabar, 2012; Taguchi, 2006). In light of Bardovi-Harlig (1999, 2002) and Kasper and Rose's (2002) call for further research on the acquisition of different speech acts, several existing studies have focused on request performance in the L2 to shed more light on the interplay between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence (e.g., Alcón Soler et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2017; Lam, 2016; Napoli & Tantucci, 2022). These studies, while revealing contrasting results, are aligned with the two aforementioned stances described by Rose (2000) (pragmalinguistics preceding sociopragmatics vs sociopragmatics preceding pragmalinguistics). The coding schemes for the analysis of requests provided originally by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), and Trosborg (1995) facilitate the researchers' task of exploring the pragmalinguistic aspect of requests, and for this reason, they have been used by others in the field to analyze requests in different languages. However, due to these coding schemes requiring adaptation to the TL and culture, it has been concluded that the same coding scheme cannot be used to analyze how requests are produced in different languages. Moreover, analyzing how requests are operationalized at the sociopragmatic level can be even more challenging to measure due to its implicit nature and deep entrenchment in social and cultural contexts (Sperlich et al., 2021). Thus, understanding the relationship between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics remains a controversial issue in the field.

Studies exploring request strategies can be either comparative or acquisitional. However, comparative studies still outnumber acquisitional ones as pointed out by several researchers (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Chang, 2011; Kasper, 2022; Taguchi, 2010; Takahashi, 1996). Given that NS and NNS seem to produce speech acts and strategies differently (see Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986), comparative studies have focused on how NNS learn and use request strategies in the L2,

often when compared to native-speaker norms (e.g., Al-Momani, 2009; Boudaghi, 2015; Cenoz, 1995; Cenoz & Valencia, 1996; Economidou-Koetsidis, 2009; Fahmy, 2006; González-Cruz, 2014; Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2017; Kim, 2007; Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2019; Linde, 2009; Loutfi, 2015; Matos & Cohen, 2021; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020; Wang, 2011; Woodfield, 2008). One of the first studies conducted on the use of the speech act of requests across different languages was Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP, which used DCTs to analyze the realization of requests and apologies in seven different languages. In comparative studies such as that done by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), researchers have mainly explored pragmatic use rather than pragmatic development (Kasper, 2001). In other words, ILP studies have mainly been concerned with learner's pragmatic use instead of exploring the developmental patterns occurring in the L2 (Taguchi, 2010).

In light of this lack of focus on pragmatic development, some studies have explored the impact of the L2 in terms of context and different lengths of time abroad on requesting performance from an acquisitional perspective (e.g., Cohen & Shively, 2007; Czerwionka & Cuza, 2017; Halenko et al., 2019; Hernández, 2016; Ren, 2019; Schauer, 2008; Shively & Cohen, 2008; Vilar, 2013 to name but a few). Other researchers have delved into the development of request strategies in FL contexts, given that the opportunities for using genuine language are more limited (or even non-existent) than in the L2 context and, when there are such opportunities, they are consigned to the classroom as noted above (Usó-Juan, 2007; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). To date, acquisitional studies have drawn on various methods for gathering data on request strategies in FL contexts, particularly DCTs (e.g., Bella, 2012a; De Guzmán, 2018; Szczepaniak-Kozak, 2016) and role plays (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007a, 2007b; Savić, 2015; Taguchi, 2006) (see Methodology chapter for further information about role plays), to explore the degree of



directness and mitigation devices used, as well as pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic development.

One of the first acquisitional studies on FL requests was carried out by Trosborg (1995), who found that L1 Danish EFL learners used more Conventionally Indirect Requests and modification devices as their proficiency increased although their performance still lagged behind English NS, especially with regard to external modifiers. These findings are consistent with Hill's (1997) study in which L1 Japanese EFL learners used more Conventionally Indirect Requests in the DCTs, similar to those used by native English speakers, but they did not achieve native-like performance regarding the use of Hints and modification devices. Also, in line with Trosborg (1995) and Hill (1997), Rose (2000, 2009) carried out acquisitional studies on the pragmatic development of EFL primary and secondary school students in Hong Kong and found an increase in the use of indirect request strategies with proficiency. However, there was limited development in the use of internal and external modifiers, with advanced learners showing little sociopragmatic development. Contrary to Hill (1997), L1 Japanese EFL learners observed by Taguchi (2006) showed increased use of Hints in difficult scenarios, indicating a sociocultural sensitivity to situational factors as opposed to the participants in Rose's (2000, 2009) studies. Although the learners in Taguchi's (2006) study displayed little variation in the kinds of linguistic phrases for requests, the forms became more appropriate with proficiency. Contradictory findings to Taguchi's (2006) research were obtained by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011), whose study observed 11 Cypriot EFL learners' request performance. The participants in this study displayed grammatical accuracy in their requests but misused them in the setting where they were produced.

Developmental trends were also observed in Göy et al.'s (2012) study in which upper intermediate L1 Turkish EFL learners' use of syntactic modifiers for requests was higher compared

to those used by their peers at the beginner level. In a longitudinal study, Szczepaniak-Kozak (2016) explored L1 Polish EFL requesting behavior over three years. Her findings revealed that although students in the study could correctly judge sociopragmatic factors, they struggled to choose appropriate pragmalinguistic forms, possibly due to L1 transfer or lack of corrective instruction. This lack of pragmalinguistic competence was also observed in the L1 Croatian EFL learners from Šegedin's (2017) study as evidenced by the minimal presence of request modification and frequency of use across levels. Developmental patterns were also found in Savić et al.'s (2021) study in which L1 Norwegian and L1 Cypriot EFL learners' requesting performance improved as their proficiency increased with both groups improving their use of head-act substrategies, and the L1 Norwegian EFL learners increasing the number of downgraders and supportive devices used. Some aspects, like syntactic downgraders, however, remained consistent across both groups. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2022) obtained similar results when exploring L1 Greek EFL learners' requesting performance. They showed that request directness decreased with proficiency but with advanced learners still performing far behind NS. These findings are in line with Flores Salgado's (2011) study in which L1 Mexican Spanish EFL learners' direct request strategies declined with proficiency, but their supportive moves became more varied as their level increased. However, participants at all levels showed a lack of certain pragmalinguistic forms.

As can be deduced from the results obtained in most of the above studies, learners show a lack of either sociopragmatic development as in Rose (2000, 2009) or pragmalinguistic development as in Flores Salgado (2011), Szczepaniak-Kozak (2016), and Šegedin (2017). This evidence, in line with Rose's (2000) two opposing stances on the acquisition of L2 pragmatics, is consistent with the claim that pragmatic competence is not fully developed in FL settings (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Cohen, 2008; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Koike, 2006;

Ren, 2013). Generally speaking, most studies show certain pragmatic development in terms of the degree of directness in the requests. However, this does not seem to be the case for mitigation devices since learners usually present more difficulties in acquiring them.

Although English is still the dominant language in the field of ILP, experts have focused their attention on the acquisition of requests in other FLs in the last decades such as Spanish (Bataller, 2010; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Collentine, 2020; Czerwionka & Cuza, 2017; Hernández, 2016; Pinto, 2005; Shively & Cohen, 2008), Japanese (Iwasaki, 2008), Chinese (Li & Jiang, 2019), Vietnamese (Nguyen & Basturkmen, 2013), and Greek (Bella, 2012a, 2012b, 2014a). Considering this, another conclusion that can be drawn from the studies reviewed in this section is that while research on pragmatic development, particularly in request strategies, has yielded valuable insights, the range of TLs and native linguistic backgrounds studied is still limited. Greek, however, has recently garnered attention in the field of SLA (see, for example, Andria, 2014, and Andria & Serrano, 2017, with the same language combination as in this dissertation), and specifically in ILP (see studies in Section 2.4.2). The present dissertation aims at contributing to the field of ILP by exploring the acquisition of requests in Greek on the basis of the social parameters of power, distance, and imposition. These social parameters will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3.3. Social Parameters Affecting the Use of Requests: Power, Distance, and Imposition**

Brown and Levinson (1987) described requests as FTAs since they involve the speaker's imposition on the hearer for the aim of accomplishing a specific goal with the hearer's support. Considering that such imposition can be either accepted or refused, speakers can employ face-saving strategies to make requests sound less imposing and direct to alleviate the illocutionary


force and protect the hearer's face. In this sense, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that the speaker judges the extent of the FTA when choosing the appropriate face-saving strategy. For Kádár (2017), however, it is not a matter of strategy but of what he defines as 'fringing', which refers to a speaker's decorative type of behavior within interactions aimed at eliciting (im)politeness inferences during emotively charged ritual actions. These inferences stem from the hearer's evaluations based on moral orders (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Therefore, Kádár's (2017) idea of politeness is not a clear and rule-governed phenomenon but a dynamic and context-dependent process. That is, fringing allows interlocutors to adapt their behavior to the contextual specificities within each interaction, considering the nuances not explicitly stated in the established politeness standards. Such nuances can be related to power, cultural background, and personal relationships. As Ellis (2008) states, for the speakers to maintain positive relationships, they must consider their relationship with the addressee, the level of imposition of the illocution, and its propositional content.

Brown and Levinson (1987) identified three sociopragmatic parameters that determine the severity of FTAs: social power (P), social distance (D), and degree of imposition (I) (see Table 3 below). First, social power refers to the interlocutors' age and social status such as lower, equal, or higher status (e.g., the relationship between a boss and an employee at work). According to Scollon et al. (2011), social status influences face image in interactions and power is shown by the established roles that participants adopt in interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) also make a distinction between symmetrical relationships, where power is equally distributed among interlocutors, and asymmetrical relationships, where there is a power imbalance. Second, social distance involves familiarity and closeness between the participants and consists of three different levels: strangers, acquaintances, and close relationships. That is, it refers to the differences in

interlocutors' relationships, such as close and distant ties. Finally, the level of imposition determines the degree of risk that the act or message conveys, which can be low or high depending on the speech act used or the participants' culture. Additionally, factors such as “time, effort and psychological burden on the addressee” (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2018, p. 508) or “benefit, action type, or urgency” (Ackermann, 2023, p. 358) further determine the degree of imposition. Brown and Levinson (1987) also point out that imposition is an important factor in politeness to maintain a balance in protecting one's positive and negative face and acting appropriately in social interactions. When interacting in a particular culture, these social parameters can provide contextual cues for using the appropriate degree of politeness. However, speakers' directness of requests is not always necessarily determined by power, distance, or imposition alone. Other contextual and cultural factors, including individual differences like self-esteem (see Mirzaei, 2019) and agency (see LoCastro, 2003; Taguchi, 2019, and Taguchi & Roever, 2017) need to be considered to understand the linguistic choices they make (see Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010).

**Table 3**

*Social Parameters Involved in Politeness and FTAs and Levels*

Social Parameters		Levels	
			
Power (P)	Lower status	Equal status	Higher status
Distance (D)	Close relationship	Acquaintance	Stranger
Imposition (I)	Low		High

*Note.* Adapted from *Brown and Levinson (1987)*.

Despite the criticism that Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory has received in the field for their simplistic view of politeness<sup>2</sup> (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Kasper, 2009; Kádár, 2017; LoCastro,

<sup>2</sup>In fact, some experts in intercultural communication have recently favored the concepts of low-context and high-context culture defined by the American sociologist Hall (1976) over Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive-negative

2003; O'Keeffe et al., 2019; Trosborg, 1995) and for being oriented towards Western culture and Anglo-Saxon behavior standards (Wierzbicka, 2003), among other reasons, previous research has revealed that there is a high correlation between these social parameters and the usage of face-saving strategies when performing the speech act of request (Blum-Kulka & House et al., 1989; Kasper, 2004; Trosborg, 1995). Fraser (1978) and Schauer (2009) concurred that L2 learners must recognize the power and imposition of a given context before using the appropriate request for that social status level (e.g., boss/employee). However, they might overlook differences between participants in communication and, as a result, they do not mitigate their requests accordingly (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). This lack of knowledge, as Kasper (1990) argues, might lead to “the risk of inadvertently violating politeness norms, and thereby forfeiting their claims to being treated as social equals” (p. 193). In this vein, researchers in the field of ILP have centered on exploring how these social parameters affect the use of requests in the L2 and how politeness is affected in different contexts (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1985; 1989; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Lee, 2011; Mirzaei 2019; Seniarika et al., 2017, to name but a few).

The comparative studies on the aforementioned parameters and the use of requests have yielded different results. Some of these have emphasized the major effect that power and distance seem to have on the use of requests. Jalilifar (2009) and Jalilifar et al.'s (2011) studies showed that power plays a role in the choice of request strategies used by L1 Persian learners of EFL being closer to the performance of NS of Australian English. However, in neither of those studies did the L1 Persian EFL learners demonstrate native-like performance in their use of requests in terms

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politeness dichotomy to explore how politeness and communication styles work across cultures (see Broeder, 2021; Wu, et al., 2023; Zhang, 2019; Zou, 2019). According to Zhang (2019), in low-context cultures, communication is typically more explicit and direct. That is, the message is conveyed directly through words without depending as much on the context and non-verbal communication. By contrast, in high-context cultures, most of the meaning is conveyed implicitly through contextual factors and non-verbal cues, rather than explicitly through words. For the present dissertation, however, Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory is being considered for the analysis of Greek request as it centers on pragmatics.

of social distance. This lack of sociopragmatic knowledge in relation to social distance was also evident in the Tunisian L1 Arabic EFL learners from Aribi's (2012) study who showed sensitivity to social power but not to social distance in their request performance. The learners from this study tended to use more direct strategies with socially lower-ranked individuals and indirect strategies to show respect towards superiors, which is in line with Tunisian social norms. However, their use of polite strategies was not always successful, particularly in situations requiring higher levels of politeness. In Abdolrezapour and Eslami-Rasekh's (2012) study, power also seems to play a role along with imposition in the use of mitigation devices for requests by L1 Persian students compared to NS of American English. They also emphasized that social distance plays a significant role, arguing that Persians tend to use direct request strategies when social distance is smaller, potentially signaling camaraderie and friendship. On a similar note, in the case of Saudi Arabian L1 Arabic learners and teachers' requesting performance in EFL from Alqurashi's (2022) study, both social power and distance influenced most of the request strategies. The findings indicate that indirect request strategies are more commonly used than direct strategies, with the choice of strategy being influenced by the social dynamics between the speakers.

Conversely, other studies have shown differing results revealing that the social parameters do not always influence the choice of request strategies (Codina-Espurz, 2022; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Yassin & Razak, 2018). In Economidou-Kogetsidis' (2008) study, L1 Greek EFL learners showed underuse of modification devices in three power-asymmetrical scenarios when compared to British English native speakers' requesting behavior, and it was concluded that they lacked both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Similarly, social power and social distance did not seem to affect the choice of request strategies by Yemeni L1 Arabic EFL and L1 Malay ESL learners from Yassin and Razak's (2018) study. These findings seem to be

consistent with those of Codina-Espurz (2022) in which L1 Spanish EFL learners, albeit aware of contextual variables, did not adjust their mitigation strategies appropriately. These previous studies aimed at observing learners' pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms, however, have primarily analyzed the effect of these parameters from a comparative perspective with English being the most explored TL. Consequently, several researchers have recently highlighted the need for further studies to understand the interplay between different social variables and the acquisition of different speech acts across varied L2s (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011; Almathkuri, 2021; Codina-Espurz, 2022; Wang & Ren, 2022).

It is worth mentioning that apart from comparative studies, there have been very few studies carried out from an acquisitional perspective regarding how factors of power, distance, and imposition affect the acquisition of requests. Schauer (2007) examined whether L1 German EFL learners varied the use of external modifiers according to the status of their interlocutors and/or the imposition of the request. Findings revealed that when participants are engaged in situations that require the use of high-imposition requests, they employ a far greater range of external modifiers. In Seniorika et al.'s (2017) study on the effect of social power on English requests by L1 Indonesian EFL learners, both parameters seemed to play a role. Participants were more likely to use conventionally indirect language when addressing someone of higher social power, such as a teacher. In contrast, with interlocutors of equal social power, students opted for more direct and nonconventional utterances. Savić (2015), however, found that young L1 Norwegian EFL learners at different stages of development did not show sensitivity to social power. These findings are consistent with Su and Ren's (2017) study on L1 American English learners of Chinese who may not be sensitive to sociopragmatic rules, particularly those involving power dynamics. The authors also found that learners of all proficiency levels consistently used Conventionally Indirect



Requests, regardless of the scenario, unlike NS of Chinese, who used indirectness exclusively when interacting with someone of higher social status. Similar findings were obtained by Göy et al.'s (2012) study in which both L1 Turkish beginner and upper intermediate EFL learners failed to adjust their use of downgraders according to the social context. Contrastively, advanced Saudi Arabian L1 Arabic EFL learners seemed to show sociopragmatic development in Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2011) study on the influence of language proficiency in the use of supportive moves in request sequences, especially with regard to the social parameter of power.

According to Díaz Pérez (2001), the power factor is not as fundamental in communication as social distance. Unlike power, which relies on clear hierarchical relationships where participants implement the knowledge they have received, distance varies across cultures since the degree of closeness existing between the participants can be lower or higher (Spencer-Oatey, 1996). Cross-cultural research has shown variability in how distance is labeled, with terms like solidarity, familiarity, and relational intimacy being used, which may indicate slightly different research perspectives on the concept. Some cultures also favor indirectness as a sign of politeness in unfamiliar interactions (Le Pair, 1996; Félix-Brasdefer, 2005; Holmes, 1995; Trosborg, 1995) while others use directness in such cases (Fukushima, 2000; Holtgraves & Joong-nam, 1990; Lee-Wong, 1994). Thus, the relationship between the level of directness and politeness differs across cultures as pointed out by several researchers (Almathkuri, 2021; Bartali, 2022; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Félix-Brasdefer, 2009; Márquez Reiter, 2000). This inconsistency in the findings indicates that social distance is the factor that has received the most contradicting results and criticism in the field (Fukushima, 2000) as evidenced by the studies discussed above.

As Brown and Levinson (1987) note, communication in each context is limited universally by the social parameters of power, distance, and degree of imposition. However, how L2 learners

evaluate the significance and importance of these universal contextual variables differs significantly across contexts and speech communities. These social parameters will be analyzed in the use of requests in Greek by the participants of the present study. To this end, the following section delves into the speech act of requests in Greek, previous studies, and their categorization.

## **2.4. The Speech Act of Requests in Greek**

### **2.4.1. Understanding Politeness and the Use of Requests in Greek**

Several experts have explored politeness in Greek culture (Bella & Ogiermann, 2019; Bella et al., 2015; Hirschon, 2001; Marangudakis, 2019; Ogiermann & Saloustrou, 2020; Pavlidou, 1994; Sifianou, 1992a, 1992b, 1999; 2023; Sifianou & Antonopoulou, 2005; Sifianou & Tzanne, 2010). These studies have concurred that Greek culture is oriented toward positive politeness, emphasizing involvement, positive face enhancement, and group belonging (Bella & Ogiermann, 2019). This assertion stems from cross-cultural research on politeness and speech acts in different languages. Sifianou (1992a) noted that in Greece, in-group behavior is associated with informality and positive politeness, which is in contrast to the formality and negative politeness used with out-groups. Greeks use positive politeness strategies in interactions among equals or acquaintances, while negative politeness is still present but less emphasized. It has been suggested that the status of speech acts and the power dynamics between speakers can be influenced by the kind of actions and situations that are important in understanding politeness (Sifianou & Antonopoulou, 2005). When interacting, positive politeness is rooted within the Greek language in the form of three key values highlighted by Hirschon (2001), namely freedom, personal autonomy of action and expression, and sociability. However, although Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) have argued that these perceptions of Greek politeness have remained consistent over time, with no studies to date

indicating otherwise, other researchers such as Terkoufari (2009) and Bella and Ogiermann (2019) have suggested a potential shift in the positive politeness orientation of Greek culture towards a greater concern for the negative face.

Owing to the positive politeness based on closeness and solidarity that characterizes Greek society, most requests are not regarded as imposing or face-threatening, since everyone in the in-group is expected to act in a similar manner (Sifianou, 1992a). Moreover, mitigating devices are unnecessary in certain situations, as there is no imposition involved, even when requests are made (Antonopoulou, 2001). Therefore, in Greek, careful attention is paid to the use of requests to protect the interlocutor's face. Greek requests can be made using three moods depending on the context as pointed out by Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005) in light of previous Greek grammars: indicative, subjunctive, and imperative. These moods are displayed in Table 4 and explained further below.

**Table 4**

*Three Moods in Greek Requests*

Moods	Used for	Context	Example
Indicative	Certainty, Immediacy, and Involvement	Both Formal and Informal Contexts	<i>Μου λες το όνομα σου;</i> Eng. (Can) you tell me your name?
Subjunctive	Uncertainty or Temporal Distance	Both Formal and Informal Contexts (High Cooperation)	<i>Να πάρω τα κλειδιά σου;</i> Eng. (Can) I get your keys?
Imperative	Everyday Requests (Commands, Desires, etc.).	Both Formal and Informal Contexts	<i>Δώσε μου το μπουκάλι.</i> Eng. Give me the bottle.

*Note.* Adapted from Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005).

First, present indicative interrogatives are a conventional means of making requests, as they convey certainty and immediacy, contrasting with the modals and subjunctives that imply uncertainty or temporal distance. This form indicates the capacity of the Greek language to express involvement and immediacy in requests. Second, subjunctive interrogatives are another polite form for requests, allowing for an easier negative response, and are used in both formal and informal contexts with high cooperation, highlighting the importance of cooperation in politeness research. Finally, imperatives are often used for everyday requests and are not considered less polite in Greek (unlike in other languages such as English). Regardless of the type of mood, requests are frequently accompanied by modifications such as diminutives (Sifianou, 1992b) to soften the illocutionary force of the act, except in very formal contexts.

The previous description by Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005) is primarily concerned with the verb moods used in requests by Greek NS. That is, they defined the types of requests according to the form of the verb (indicative, subjunctive, or imperative). However, in the studies that followed on L2 learners of Greek, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) categorization to Greek requests was adapted to provide a more exhaustive analysis and to gain a better understanding of the use of this speech act by NS and NNS in different contexts (see Bella 2012a, 2012b). These categorizations offer a more refined analysis of requests, since they involve the use of different strategies based on the degree of politeness as well as supportive moves in the form of internal and external modifiers. These strategies and modifications in Greek requests have been explored in the field of ILP. Thus, the findings obtained in these studies will be explored in depth in the following section to understand how L2 learners perform requests in Greek.

### 2.4.2. Previous Research on Requests in Greek as an L2/FL

In the last decades, different types of speech acts in Greek have been the subject of study in the field of ILP (apologies: Bella, 2014b; Koutsantoni, 2007, compliments: Sifianou, 2001, favor asking: Harissi, 2005, invitations: Bella, 2009, offers: Bella, 2016, 2019, refusals: Bella, 2009, 2011, 2014c, and thanking: Gkouma et al., 2020, 2023; Gkouma, 2024) including requests (Bella, 2012a, 2012b, Bella 2014a; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2002, 2005; Vassilaki & Selimis, 2020). Despite this growing body of research, however, studies on requests in Greek from both a comparative (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2002, 2005) and an acquisitional perspective, in both L2 (Bella, 2012b; Vassilaki & Selimis, 2020) and FL contexts (Bella, 2012a, 2014a), are still scarce. Therefore, more research is still needed on Greek requests, especially from an acquisitional perspective.

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2002, 2005) has conducted studies comparing Greek and English requests to understand the cultural differences in their use in specific situations. Both studies explored cross-cultural differences in request performance in telephone interactions between Greek and English speakers in the business context of a Greek airline call center. Findings revealed that Greek NS tend to draw on more direct request strategies when compared to their native English-speaking peers, showing the Greek culture's emphasis on directness. Although this could be regarded as impolite in English, they concluded that this behavior is driven by a need for efficiency and clear communication, as well as spontaneity and positive politeness. Furthermore, in Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2005) second study it was suggested that the direct request strategies used by the Greek participants served to increase social distance instead of minimizing it as Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) stated.

Regarding the acquisition of Greek requests in the L2 context, Bella (2012b) explored the impact of NNS's interaction with NS and length of residence on the pragmatic development of Greek requests with appropriate modification through two different approaches using DCT: those with a longer residence but limited interaction with NS and those with a shorter residence but more interaction. The results suggest that learners with more interaction with NS have some advantages in developing request modification skills, although both NNS groups were significantly behind NS in terms of lexical/phrasal modifiers. Developmental patterns were also observed in Vassilaki and Selimis's (2020) study on the request performance in L2 Greek shown by children from different L1 backgrounds. Findings from the Cartoon Oral Production Task revealed that the L2 learners demonstrated a wider range of request strategies and a higher level of sociopragmatic awareness.

As far as the acquisition of requests in the FL context is concerned, so far only the studies by Bella (2012a; 2014a) have been conducted. Both studies explore how FL learners of Greek across different proficiency levels perform requests in different situations, yielding similar findings. Bella (2012a) examined the use of request strategies and modification devices through DCT by L2 Greek learners from various proficiency levels (lower intermediate, intermediate, and advanced) who were enrolled in a six-week language course at the University of Athens. These learners, who were all undergraduate students, had attended Greek courses in their home countries. The DCTs employed in this study included one formal and two informal situations. The findings revealed that learners show a shift from Direct to Conventionally Indirect Requests and a wider range of both internal and external modifiers as proficiency increases. It was observed that pragmatic competence develops before grammatical competence, with learners at lower proficiency levels initially drawing on universal or L1 sociopragmatic knowledge. However, NNS did not seem to attain native-like pragmatic performance, owing to a lack of grammatical and

lexical resources. These findings appear to align with Bella's (2014a) subsequent study which investigated the use of requests and internal modifications by intermediate and advanced learners of Greek enrolled in the same program as those in Bella's (2012a) previous study. The data were also collected through DCTs involving one status-equal and one status-unequal situation. As in Bella's (2012a) first study, developmental patterns were observed, although NNS still lagged behind their native speaker peers. Cross-linguistic influence and situational variations might account for such differences between the non-native and native speaker participants' requesting behavior in both studies.

The categorization of Greek requests used in Bella's (2012a) study will be explored in depth in the following section given its use in the present study for the analysis of the data.

### **2.4.3. Categorization of Request Strategies in Greek**

In addition to the moods explained in Section 2.4.1, Bella (2012a) adapted Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme from their CCSARP to explore both request types and modifiers in Greek. This coding scheme for Greek requests will be further discussed below, as it is the request classification used and adapted in the present study. Table 5 below shows Bella's (2012a) classification of requests based on the degree of directness.

**Table 5**

*Bella's (2012a, p. 1925) Classification of Request Strategies in Greek*

Directness	Strategy Types	Tokens
Direct	Mood Derivable	<i><u>Καθαρίστε</u> την κουζίνα αμέσως!</i> Eng. <u>Clean up</u> the kitchen immediately!
	Performative	<i><u>Σας ζητώ</u> μια μικρή παράταση.</i> Eng. <u>I am asking you</u> for a small extension.
	Obligation Statement	<i><u>Πρέπει</u> οπωσδήποτε να καθαρίσεις την κουζίνα.</i> Eng. <u>You must</u> definitely clean up the kitchen.
	Need/Want statement	<i><u>Χρειάζομαι</u> μια παράταση για την εργασία αυτού του εξαμήνου.</i> Eng. <u>I need</u> an extension for this term's assignment.
Conventionally Indirect	Query Preparatory-Permission	<i><u>Θα μπορούσα</u> να πάρω μια παράταση μιας εβδομάδας για να τελειώσω την εργασία μου;</i> Eng. <u>Could I</u> take one week's extension to finish my assignment?
	Query Preparatory-Ability	<i><u>Μπορείς</u> να πληρώσεις και θα σου δώσω τα λεφτά αργότερα;</i> Eng. <u>Can you</u> pay and I will pay you back later?
	Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (No Modal)	<i><u>Πληρώνεις</u> εσύ τώρα και να τα βρούμε μετά:</i> Eng. <u>(Can you) pay</u> and we'll sort this out later?
	Suggestory Formula	<i><u>Δεν καθαρίζεις</u> λίγο την κουζίνα;</i> Eng. <u>(Why) don't you clean up</u> the kitchen a bit?
Non-Conventionally Indirect	Hint	<i><u>Η κουζίνα είναι</u> πολύ βρώμικη.</i> Eng. The kitchen is very dirty.

Direct Requests are used to express explicit and straightforward requests. They are typically used to express a high degree of demand and imposition. However, using Direct Requests does not necessarily mean being impolite in some cultures (see Mir, 1993). In fact, in the words of Economidou-Kogetsidis (2002), “bald-on record, direct request constructions in Modern Greek are so acceptable and widely used” (p. 17) and this can be attributed to the positive orientation of



Greek society towards politeness (Bella & Ogiermann, 2019). As seen in the previous table, there are several strategies for producing Direct Requests:

1. Mood Derivable (Imperative). This strategy is used to make requests straightforwardly and involves using imperative verbs and omitting the subject. Imperatives are the most bald-on record politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2002). However, modifications that are applied to imperative requests demonstrate distinct forms of politeness (Sifianou, 1992b).
2. Performative. The request is explicitly stated by the speaker in the actual wording of the utterance through main verbs such as *ζητάω* [zi'tao] (“to ask for something”). The desired outcome is achieved just by making the request. The speaker requests rather than just expressing a desire.
3. Obligation Statement. This Direct Request intends to convey a sense of duty or responsibility to the interlocutor. The *πρέπει να* ['prepi na] (“must” or “should”) particle is used in Greek to express obligation.
4. Need/Want Statement. Through this strategy, the speaker intends to communicate what they want, need, or wish from the interlocutor. The typical verbs used in Greek for this type of strategy are *χρειάζομαι* [xri'azome] (“I need”) and *θέλω* ['thelo] (“I want”).

On the other hand, speakers can also employ Conventionally Indirect Requests. These requests are used to express desires indirectly to be more polite and tactful, mitigate the imposing effect of the request, and ultimately, reach the intended goal in social or professional settings. These requests are conventional and widely recognized since they represent polite ways of asking for something. The realization of Conventionally Indirect Requests in Greek can be done based on

four different strategies, whose choice depends on the social norms and the level of formality in the given situation.

1. Query Preparatory-Permission. In this strategy, the speaker asks for permission, authorization, or approval before making the request to be more polite and considerate (speaker-oriented). This request is typically expressed in Greek through the conditional form at the beginning of the utterance. For example, *θα μπορούσα...*; [θa bo' rusa] (“Could I...”).
2. Query Preparatory-Ability. Through this strategy, the speaker expresses doubts or uncertainty about the hearer’s ability or possibility to perform a particular task (hearer-oriented). It is usually employed to ask for assistance without stating it explicitly. A typical structure for expressing ability in Greek requests is *Μπορείς να...*; [bo' ris na] (“Can you...?”).
3. Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal). This is the most common way to make a request (Bella, 2012a). It does not use any modals to mitigate the effect of the request, but instead, the main verb is expressed in the present indicative. This is especially common in circumstances involving solidarity as Sifianou (1999) points out.
4. Suggestory Formula. The speaker asks for something using suggestions to convey his or her desires without expressing the request explicitly. Thus, suggestions rely on the hearer’s ability to infer the implied request.

Requests can also be Non-Conventionally Indirect. These requests are formulated in the form of Hints to convey a need or desire without explicitly stating them. Hints are off-record and the most indirect (and polite) request strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Unlike Conventionally

Indirect Requests, which follow established social norms and are widely recognized as polite, Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests may not be as well understood or predictable. According to Blum-Kulka (1987), Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests lack the pragmatic clarity of conventional requests, which renders them less likely to convey politeness. Consequently, the recipient faces greater difficulty in deciphering the intended message. These Hints require the interlocutor to interpret the underlying message based on contextual cues, tone, and non-verbal communication.

#### **2.4.4. External Modifications**

External modifications usually constitute other types of speech acts and complement the request. Their main function is to support the request itself and provide context for it. These mitigating supportive moves are peripheral to the head act and intend to make the request more polite, considerate, and less imposing. They serve to justify or explain an action and help the listener grasp the speaker's motivation for making the request (Dombi, 2021). Additionally, these moves are used to maintain positive interpersonal relationships, especially when making requests that may impose on the interlocutor's time and resources. Through using mitigating supportive moves, the speaker intends to find a balance between achieving the desired outcome and being considerate with the hearer. The context, the relationship between participants, and the degree of politeness and formality affect the choice and amount of the supporting moves. Regarding their occurrence in discourse, external modifications can either be a pre-head act or a post-head act (Woodfield, 2012a), i.e., they can come before or after the request depending on the type of

strategy used by the speaker. Table 6 below shows Bella's (2012a)<sup>3</sup> categorization of external supportive moves.

**Table 6**

*Bella's (2012a, pp.1925-1926) Classification of External Modifications*

External Modification Devices	Tokens
Preparator	<i>Να μου κάνεις μια χάρη;</i> Eng. Can you do me a favor?
Grounder	<i>Καθάρισε την κουζίνα γιατί θα έρθουν οι γονείς μου απόψε.</i> Eng. Clean up the kitchen <u>because my parents are coming tonight.</u>
Disarmer	<i>Ξέρω ότι είσαι κουρασμένος, αλλά πρέπει να καθαρίσουμε την κουζίνα.</i> Eng. <u>I know you are tired</u> but we have to clean up the kitchen.
Imposition Minimizer	<i>Θα σου επιστρέψω τα χρήματα αύριο οπωσδήποτε.</i> Eng. I will definitely pay you back tomorrow.
Promise of Reward	<i>Θα σου δώσω τα λεφτά αύριο και θα σε κεράσω κι ένα ποτό!</i> Eng. I will return the money tomorrow and <u>I will buy you a drink!</u>
Apology	<i>Χίλια συγγνώμη που στο ρωτάω, αλλά ξέχασα το πορτοφόλι μου.</i> Eng. <u>A thousand apologies for asking,</u> but I left my wallet.
Considerator	<i>Αν έχεις βέβαια λεφτά πάνω σου, αλλιώς να πάω στην τράπεζα.</i> Eng. <u>If you have enough money of course,</u> or else I could go to the bank.

Bella's (2012a) categorization of the external modifiers included in the previous table is based on those defined by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Schauer (2007), and Trosborg (1995) in their coding schemes. Each supportive move is explained below.

<sup>3</sup>It is important to highlight that Bella (2012b) expanded the categorization of external modifications to investigate the effect of length of residence in Greece and intensity of interaction in the use of Greek requests. However, Bella's (2012a) original categorization is considered in the present dissertation since it explores requests in FL settings.

1. **Preparator.** This supportive move always precedes the main request and sets the tone from the very beginning. It shows the speaker's intention to utter the actual request and prepares the interlocutor for receiving it. In Greek, Preparators can resemble Direct Requests in the form of Need/Want Statements right before the real request.
2. **Grounders.** This is one of the most common strategies used in Greek as shown by previous studies (Bella, 2012a, 2012b; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009, 2012; Economidou-Kogetsidis et al., 2018; Vassilaki & Selimis, 2020). Speakers draw on Grounders to provide a rationale or explanation for the request. Thus, the request sounds more reasonable and convincing to the interlocutor. Grounders come usually after the Preparator (when used) and right before the main request. Some Grounders can appear after the request.
3. **Disarmer.** The speaker can use this strategy to alleviate any potential resistance or negative reaction from the hearer. Disarmers convey certain empathy or understanding on the part of the speaker, and they aim to anticipate possible objections or concerns from the interlocutor. Disarmers usually come in the pre-head act position.
4. **Imposition Minimizer.** This move intends to acknowledge the potential burden of inconvenience the request might cause to the interlocutor. It attempts to lessen the demand and the degree of imposition of the request, conveying empathy and respect for the hearer's time and effort. Imposition minimizers can be either a pre-head act or post-head act.
5. **Promise of Reward.** This strategy involves assuring the interlocutor that the speaker is committed to reciprocating or returning the favor in some way. Promise can function as a compensation strategy to thank the interlocutor for complying with the request (Gkouma et al., 2023). The promise strategy typically occurs in the post-head act position.

6. Apology. Requests can also be accompanied by an Apology, especially in those situations where the request might have inconvenienced or bothered the hearer's plans. Apologies can come either before or after the head act.
7. Considerator. This strategy aims at showing respect for the hearer's perspective and feelings and acknowledges the potential impact of the request on the hearer. Through using a Considerator, the speaker puts themselves in the interlocutor's position. Considerators can be similar to Disarmers but the difference between the two strategies lies in their occurrence in discourse. Disarmers, as seen above, are pre-head act strategies, whereas Considerators are post-head act moves.

#### **2.4.5. Internal Modifications**

In addition to external supportive moves, requests can also be changed internally to soften the illocutionary force of the head act. These internal modifications appear within the main head act of the request and can be divided into Downgraders and Upgraders. Downgraders are used to mitigate the effect of the request and can be either syntactic or lexical. They can be particularly important in maintaining social harmony and showing respect in communication. By contrast, Upgraders are employed to express demand and, therefore, aggravate the illocutionary force of the request. Bella's (2012a) categorization of Syntactic Downgraders for Greek requests follows those of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Trosborg (1995). In the case of Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders, Bella (2012a) follows the classification defined by Barron (2007). Both Syntactic and Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders for Greek requests are displayed in Table 7 below.

**Table 7***Bella's (2012a, p. 1926) Classification of Internal Modifications*

Internal Modifications	Tokens
<b>Syntactic Downgraders</b>	
Negation	<u>Δεν θα μπορούσατε να μου δώσετε μια μικρή παράταση;</u> Eng. <u>Couldn't you</u> give me a short extension?
Subjunctive	<u>Μήπως να καθαρίσεις λίγο την κουζίνα;</u> Eng. (Would you) <u>maybe clean</u> [subjunctive] the kitchen a bit?
Conditional	<u>Θα ήθελα</u> μια μικρή παράταση για την εργασία, αν γίνεται. Eng. <u>I would like</u> a small extension for the assignment, if this is possible.
Past Tense	<u>Ήθελα</u> να σας ζητήσω μια παράταση για την εργασία μου. Eng. <u>I wanted</u> to ask you for an extension for my assignment.
Present Indicative	<u>Καθαρίσεις</u> λίγο την κουζίνα; Eng. <u>[Can you] clean up</u> [present indicative] the kitchen a bit?
<b>Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders</b>	
Understaters	<i>Λίγο, κάπως</i> - Eng. a little, a bit
Politeness Marker	<i>Παρακαλώ</i> - Eng. please
Subjectivizers	<i>Φοβάμαι, Νομίζω, Φαντάζομαι</i> - Eng. I am afraid, I think, I guess
Downtoners	<i>ίσως, μήπως, απλώς</i> - Eng. Perhaps, maybe, just
Cajolers	<i>ξέρεις, καταλαβαίνεις</i> - Eng. You know, you understand
Solidarity Markers	<i>ρε, μωρέ</i> – Eng. Oh, dude (and also diminutives, endearments, first name + possessive pronoun)

As the previous table displays, both the Syntactic and Lexical/Phrasal types of Downgraders can be used to convey politeness, reduce the imposition on the hearer, or mitigate the potential negative response that a Direct Request might elicit. Syntactic Downgraders consist of internal changes in the structure of the head act. The following describes the different types of Syntactic Downgraders typically used in Greek, which are those shown in the current study's data.

1. Negation. This type of Downgrader involves including negative words or phrases to make an utterance sounds less direct. By using Negation, a sense of uncertainty or potential

refusal is introduced to make the communication more polite. In Greek, Negation is expressed at the beginning of the request using the  $\delta\epsilon\nu$  [ðen] (“no”) particle.

2. Subjunctive. As with Negation, Subjunctive is used as a Downgrader in requests to reflect uncertainty, but it can also express doubt or hypothetical situations. Subjunctive in requests conveys politeness and reduces the directness of the requests. The Subjunctive is formed using the particle  $\nu\alpha$  [na] followed by the conjugated verb.
3. Conditional. The use of this Syntactic Downgrader makes requests less direct and more tentative. This future-marked conditional, which is formed by using the future particle  $\theta\alpha$  [θa] (“will” or “shall”) before the verb, is a typical structure used by Greek NS when producing requests according to several corpora (Nikiforidou & Cacoullos, 2010).
4. Past Tense. The effect of the request on the hearer can be less forceful using the Past Tense to downplay its immediacy and urgency. The Past Tense is coded as a Syntactic Downgrader in this study only when it may be replaced with present time reference without changing the semantic meaning of the utterance.
5. Present Indicative. This Downgrader comprises not just preparatory structures that challenge the hearer’s ability or willingness to undertake the requested act, but also negative-interrogative and present indicative structures.

Regarding Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders, they are used to soften or mitigate the impact of a request, making it less direct, more polite, or less assertive. These Downgraders serve different functions in requests and are explained below.

1. Understaters/Hedgers. These words are employed to downplay the importance, magnitude, or certainty of a request, introducing an element of caution or modesty.



2. Politeness Markers. These devices convey respect or politeness and are often used to make requests more cautious.
3. Subjectivizers. Introducing an element of subjectivity into the request, makes it less assertive or more open to interpretation.
4. Downtoners. These devices help reduce the intensity or force of an utterance, mitigating the impact of the request to make it less direct or emphatic.
5. Cajolers. These expressions are used to appeal to someone in a gentle manner as a way to persuade.
6. Solidarity Markers. These words are used in requests to convey a sense of companionship or shared identity and to establish rapport or express empathy. These markers include diminutives, nicknames, or affectionate suffixes and they function mainly as forms of positive politeness mitigation (Blum-Kulka 2005; Sifianou 1992b). Diminutives are the most frequently used Solidarity Marker in Greek requests (Sifianou & Antonopoulou, 2005).

To date, Bella's (2012a) categorization of Greek requests, and external and internal modifiers, has only been adopted and further expanded in Bella's (2012b, 2014a) studies. To the best of my knowledge, no other studies involving Greek requests have used or adapted any of Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorization. Previous studies involving Greek requests (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2002, 2005, 2008) employed and adapted Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) classification of requests. However, as of completion of this dissertation, there is no categorization in the field of ILP on internal modification in the form of Upgraders for

Greek requests to aggravate the illocutionary force. Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorizations did not include these modifiers as they were beyond the scope of those investigations.

Considering the above categorization, and as discussed earlier in Section 2.3.3, the use of request strategies and types of modifiers may vary from one language to another depending on contextual factors (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Economidou-Koetsidis, 2010; Ervin-Tripp, et al., 1987). These variations may lead to pragmatic transfer (see Thomas, 1983) when requests are acquired in Greek. It follows then, that it is first necessary to understand how requests are produced in the participants' L1 and TLs. In the following section, the concept of pragmatic transfer is addressed and a contrastive analysis of requests in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek is carried out based on native-speaker data obtained in previous studies.

## **2.5. Pragmatic Transfer in Second Language Acquisition**

### **2.5.1. Defining Pragmatic Transfer**

Because of the social and cultural aspects of language use (e.g. speech acts such as requests, apologies, offers, and politeness strategies) involved in pragmatics, L2 learners may apply their L1 pragmatic norms to their use of pragmatics in the TL. This phenomenon is known as pragmatic transfer (see Thomas, 1983 and Kasper, 1992). In SLA, pragmatic transfer refers to the "transfer of L1 sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language" (Beebe et al., 1990, p. 56). That is, the communicative techniques and pragmatic rules from a learner's L1 may show up in how they use their L2, which can cause differences in their pragmatic competence. This is because there are elements that fall under universal pragmatic knowledge or that learners transfer from their L1 pragmatic knowledge, allowing for rapid pragmatic adaptation in the early

stages of language acquisition despite grammatical weaknesses (Bialystok, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig, 2012). L1 influence of sociopragmatic norms seems to account for obstacles in interaction, since “L2 learners see things in L2 through their L1 socio-cultural mind set” (Kecskes, 2013, p. 61). Such influence makes learners struggle to distinguish between different contexts and this might lead to them unconsciously applying their own cultural norms to language use. As Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) argue, the deeply rooted social standards and conventions that shape our identity make it challenging for learners to modify their conduct according to a different set of assumptions. Therefore, pragmatic transfer occurs due to learners’ prior linguistic and cultural experiences, which shape their communicative behaviors. For example, learners may transfer directness or indirectness patterns, politeness strategies, or formulaic expressions from their L1 to the L2, influencing their pragmatic competence. This influence can be either positive or negative (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). It is common knowledge that adult L2 learners of all proficiency levels transfer pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2 (see Bou Franch, 1998 and Félix-Brasdefer, 2020 on Pragmatic Transfer). That being said, while pragmatic transfer often results in deviations from TL norms (negative transfer), it can also lead to outcomes consistent with L2 patterns (positive transfer).

In light of Leech’s (1983) theory on general pragmatics and Thomas’s (1983) theory on cross-cultural pragmatic failure, Kasper (1992) divides pragmatic transfer into two types: pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer. Pragmalinguistic transfer involves the influence of the L1 on the learner’s perception and production of form-function mappings in the L2, including aspects like illocutionary force and politeness values. By contrast, sociopragmatic transfer occurs when language users’ evaluation of subjectively similar L1 settings influences the social perceptions that underlie their interpretation and performance of linguistic action in the L2.

Both dimensions are interrelated, as social factors often inform the choice of language-specific means for conveying politeness.

According to Alcón Soler and Martínez Flor (2008), research findings on pragmatic transfer are controversial, but the majority converge on the idea that the negative impact of L1 diminishes as language proficiency increases. As mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that in the early stages, pragmatic development precedes grammatical proficiency (Bialystok, 1993). This claim has been supported by several studies showing that L2 or FL learners use a pragmatic mode when they lack the grammatical resources to accomplish an action in the TL (Bella, 2012a; Pearson, 2006; Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Schmidt, 1983). Even in advanced L2 learners, the level of pragmatic competence does not match their grammatical competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; House, 1996; Youn, 2014). However, evidence showing that advanced grammatical knowledge is used in pragmatically inappropriate ways prompted Takahashi and Beebe (1987) to suggest that an advanced understanding of grammar may correlate favorably with a negative pragmatic transfer.

Additionally, as Jung (2002) points out, learners seem to transfer L1 language skills based on the speech act they are expressing. When learners transfer pragmatic norms from their L1 to the L2, they may exhibit similarities or differences in how they interpret and produce these speech acts (see Celaya et al., 2019). This includes the use of L1 apologetic phrases, L1 customary forms for making requests and expressing thanks, L1 modal verbs in requests, and the frequency, sequence, and content of phrases used in refusals. That is, the transfer of learners' L1 realization of speech acts to the L2 originates from a lack of culture-specific pragmatic knowledge, not linguistic proficiency (House, 1993). It is believed that L1 speakers continue to employ their own communication methods when speaking an L2, as L1 sociocultural communicative competence is

acquired in the learner's home country and native language, and because various ethnic groups have diverse communication styles. In this vein, while the typology of speech acts seems to be universal, the way they are conceptualized and verbalized might vary significantly across different cultures and languages as revealed by several studies in the field of ILP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cohen, 1996a). It follows then that L2 learners and NS share the same set of speech acts. However, in the case of L2 learners, they might draw on different strategies when performing speech acts compared to those that NS would use. In this sense, L2 learners need to develop sociocultural knowledge (Cohen, 1996a) to decide if the speech act is suitable in the given situation and, if so, to choose one or more semantic formulae for its execution. Bou Franch (1998) suggests that researchers should consider the conditions under which pragmatic transfer occurs, drawing on a variety of data sources, including native and non-native speaker data, as well as introspective and retrospective data to form contextual-based interpretive hypotheses. Such an approach will help distinguish between L1 transfer, interlanguage overgeneralizations, and instructional effects, enhancing the validity of research findings. In line with this, despite the obvious role that context plays in pragmatic transfer, Takahashi (2000) poses the question of how and when both context-external (closeness, status, etc.) and context-internal factors (imposition, obligation, etc.) affect L1 transfer.

Several studies have explored both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer concerning the realization of different speech acts (e.g., Alkawaz et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2018; Rahman, 2020; Saleem et al., 2021, to name but a few). Studies on pragmatic transfer in requests will be further explored in the next section as this speech act is the focus of the present study.

### 2.5.2. Previous Research on Pragmatic Transfer of Requests

Kranich et al. (2021) has highlighted the impact of cultural norms on request strategies. More specifically, several researchers have explored how pragmatic norms used in requests are transferred across languages both at the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic levels (e.g., Dendenne, 2014; Liu et al., 2017; Loutfi, 2015; Oktarina & Haristiani, 2021, to name but a few). Cross-cultural variations have also been shown to influence how learners formulate and interpret requests in the L2 context (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cialdini, et al. 1999; Ogiermann, 2009). Moreover, pragmatic transfer in requests can originate from divergences in the degree of directness and politeness conventions in different languages (see Blum-Kulka, 1987 on indirectness and politeness in requests).

The degree of directness and politeness strategies associated with request realization have received considerable attention in the field. Most studies have explored how L2 learners apply L1 pragmatic strategies when performing requests displaying conflicting results. Pinto (2005) and Félix-Brasdefer's (2007a) studies found instances of L1 transfer in L2 Spanish requests, even in advanced learners through using DCTs and role plays respectively. In their studies, Direct Requests did not decrease with proficiency, and no significant changes were observed in internal modification strategies. Similar results were obtained by Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) regarding the use of internal modification of requests by L1 Greek advanced ESL learners. They observed certain instances of pragmatic transfer in the learners' overuse of zero-marking due to challenges in using internal modifications and consultative devices, with a possible influence being the Greek culture's emphasis on solidarity and informality. Algerian L1 Arabic EFL learners from Dendenne's (2014) study also display a certain degree of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer in the requesting performance. The pragmalinguistic type was evident in

the use of linguistic structures influenced by the L1 and word-for-word translation whereas the sociopragmatic type was reflected in the use of request forms and perceptions of situational variables that were consistent with the learners' L1. The influence of sociocultural factors on the L2 was also present in Moroccan L1 Arabic EFL learners from Loutfi's (2015) study. Their findings show a noticeable difference in the request realization across two groups of NNS and one group of NS, suggesting that the learners' L1 affects their pragmatic competence in English. Evidence of pragmatic transfer was also found by Liu et al. (2017) in their exploration of pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic competence in requests employed by L1 Taiwanese EFL learners enrolled at university. The study revealed that learners struggle with adjusting politeness and indirectness based on social context (sociopragmatics). In addition, learners showed little pragmatic competence regarding the use of internal modifications (e.g., Consultative Devices) when compared to external ones (e.g., Grounders). In those instances where they were providing reasons for making the request, they displayed pragmatic development. By contrast, pragmalinguistic transfer was observed by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2022) in the request performance by L1 Greek EFL learners who showed a preference for hearer-oriented requests in all proficiency levels, deviating from native-speaker norms. These findings are also consistent with Talay's (2022) in which Moroccan L1 Arabic EFL learners transferred request forms from their native language to English, showing different pragmatic norms of indirectness.

Other studies showed mixed findings. Oktarina and Haristiani (2021) found both positive and negative transfer at pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic levels in request realizations by Indonesian learners of Japanese. Positive transfer was observed in the context of word usage between Japanese (L2) and Indonesian (L1), or when different words were still understandable to Japanese NS. By contrast, instances of negative pragmatic transfer were identified in differences

in request expressions, especially in giving and receiving contexts and other sentences not translated directly from the L1 which led to communicative failures. In another study, Brocca and Nuzzo (2024) found evidence of positive transfer shown by Austrian-German intermediate learners of Italian. These learners showed minimal differences from Italian NS in terms of the appropriateness of request structures, including the level of directness and politeness strategies. However, some differences were noted in the learners' use of request modifiers, which aligns with existing literature on L2 request patterns.

The studies reviewed above indicate that NNS can interpret and produce requests using inferencing skills and general pragmatic knowledge, although their strategies may differ from NS. As Blum-Kulka (1991) states, this pragmatic knowledge includes the ability to infer communicative intentions, perform speech acts non-explicitly, and be sensitive to contextual constraints. However, all the findings obtained in the previous studies have revealed that certain pragmatic transfer is shown, even in the case of advanced learners, implying that higher proficiency does not necessarily entail being pragmatically competent in the L2 (Taguchi, 2011). Most of these instances of transfer are the result of divergences in the sociocultural dimension of the L1 and the L2. Therefore, pragmatic transfer might result in cross-cultural misunderstanding and breakdowns in communication, which may lead to negative cross-cultural stereotypes and discrimination (Padilla, 2013).

Most of the studies that investigate pragmatic transfer in requests focus on English. Little attention has been given to other FLs such as Greek. The present study intends to contribute to the field of ILP by also exploring possible instances of pragmatic transfer in the use of address forms in the requests produced by L1 Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek. To this end, it is important to understand how requests are operationalized in Spanish and Catalan, the native



languages of the main participants in this study. This aspect will be explored qualitatively based on previous research on the use of requests by L1 Spanish and L1 Catalan speakers. Moreover, it is essential to examine how address forms are used in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek. Thus, the next section provides a contrastive analysis of requests and address forms in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek to highlight the differences among these three languages with regard to these aspects.

### **2.5.3. Contrastive Analysis of Requests in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek**

Several researchers have recently employed contrastive analysis to analyze language use in relation to different speech acts and expressions (Hopkinson, 2021; Kádár & House, 2020, 2021; Ja'afreh, 2023; Liu et al., 2021; Matsukawa, 2024, to name but a few). One of the main benefits of conducting contrastive analysis in pragmatics is that researchers can systematically document pragmalinguistic strategies and compare them across different groups and contexts (Taguchi & Li, 2020). For this purpose, it is necessary to rely on linguistic corpora to explore how speech acts are used across languages (see Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2014). As far as the speech act of requests is concerned, researchers have explored cross-cultural differences in request performance (Ahmed Al-Fattah, 2024; Lochtman, 2022; Maros & Halim, 2018; Marsily, 2018; Woodfield, 2008). However, although Greek requests have been compared with those of other languages (see Ogiermann & Bella, 2020), to the best of my knowledge no study has yet carried out a contrastive analysis of requests in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek. Therefore, such a contrastive analysis is conducted in the present study to provide insights into the challenges that learners face in acquiring appropriate request strategies in Greek, including potential instances of pragmatic transfer from either Spanish or Catalan.

First, a description of request realization in each language based on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme (Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests) is provided. Second, a comparison of requests between the three languages is carried out to identify similarities and differences regarding request formulation, degree of directness, and influence of cultural factors. As a reference, the present contrastive analysis will apply the findings obtained in different studies with respect to the use of requests made by L1 Spanish speakers (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018, Staszkievicz, 2018), L1 Catalan speakers (Pérez i Parent, 2002; Vanrell & Catany, 2021), and L1 Greek speakers (Bella, 2012a; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020).

In various studies (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018), the requesting behavior displayed by Spanish NS<sup>4</sup> shows a tendency to use hearer-oriented requests in the form of either prediction (indirect) or imperative (direct). The most common mitigators used by Spanish NS in these researchers' studies are Conditional and Present Tenses plus the *por favor* ("please") Politeness Marker. Regarding L1 Catalan requests, Vanrell and Catany (2021) found that Catalan NS also tend to perform hearer-oriented requests through conventionally indirect strategies, which can also include Conditionals and Politeness Markers (*si us plau*, "please"). The requests uttered by the Catalan NS in this study also include certain supportive moves such as Grounders and Considerators. For the present comparative analysis, the study by Pérez i Parent (2002) has also been considered; however, it only focuses on the analysis of the use of requesting strategies and does not explore the supportive moves used by the participants. Both Pérez i Parent

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<sup>4</sup>Although different varieties of Spanish have been explored with regard to requests (Mexican Spanish: Félix-Brasdefer, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Peruvian Spanish: García, 1993, 1996; Colombian Spanish: Vallejo, 2013; Nuzzo & Cortés Velásquez, 2020, etc.), the present study only considers Peninsular Spanish because it is the variety of the language spoken by the participants and because of the context in which they learn Greek as a FL.

(2002) and Vanrell and Catany (2021) analyzed how social variables such as distance or dominance affect the use of requests by L1 Catalan speakers.

In the case of Greek, Ogiermann and Bella (2020) conducted a contrastive analysis of request strategies across different languages, including Greek, indicating cross-cultural variations. The Greek NS from their study displayed a higher use of hearer-oriented request forms, using conventionally indirect strategies and Conditionals. They also showed a considerable use of Direct Requests, especially the Imperative and most requests were accompanied by high use of external mitigators such as Grounders and Considerators, although these were context dependent. These tendencies were also shown by L1 Greek speakers from Bella's (2012a) study, whose findings will be also considered for the present contrastive analysis.

In light of the findings summarized above, some variations can be observed in the use of modification devices in the three languages. However, all three present many similarities with regard to request performance, that is, the hearer-oriented perspective, the high use of Conventionally Indirect Requests, and modification devices (such as Conditionals and Grounders). These similarities seem to support the assumption that these three cultures are mainly oriented towards positive politeness as stated by Hickey (2000, 2005) in the case of Spanish, Curell (2012) regarding Catalan and by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2003), Sifianou (1999), Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005), and Tzanne (2001) in Greek.

To facilitate the comparison of the requests across the three languages, the results of the studies reviewed in this section can be summarized in the following table (see Table 8).

**Table 8***Description of Request Performance in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek*

Language	Spanish	Catalan	Greek
Perspective	Hearer-oriented <i>¿Me das...?</i> <i>Eng. Can you...?</i>	Hearer-oriented <i>Em dones...</i> <i>Eng. Can you...?</i>	Hearer-oriented <i>Μπορείς/Θα μπορούσες</i> <i>Eng. Can you/Could you...?</i>
Request Strategies (Directness/Indirectness)	Conventionally Indirect/prediction strategy <i>¿Me das un café?</i> <i>Eng. Can you give me a coffee?</i> Direct (Imperatives) <i>Dame un café.</i> <i>Eng. Give me a coffee.</i>	Conventionally Indirect <i>Podries acostar-me a la feina demà per poder arribar a l'hora?</i> <i>Eng. Could you give me a ride to work tomorrow so I can get there on time?</i>	Conventionally Indirect <i>Θα μπορούσα να δανειστώ τις σημειώσεις σου?</i> <i>Eng. Could I borrow your notes?</i> Direct (Imperatives) <i>Στείλε μου της σημειώσεις.</i> <i>Eng. Send me the notes.</i>
Modification Devices	Conditional/Past tense <i>Podrías/podías...</i> <i>Eng. Could you...</i> Present Tense <i>Puedes...</i> <i>Eng. Can you...</i> Politeness Marker <i>Por favor</i> <i>Eng. Please</i>	Conditional <i>Podries...</i> <i>Eng. Can you...</i> Politeness Marker <i>Vostè</i> <i>Eng. You (formal)</i> Grounders and Considerators	Modal interrogative constructions (Conditionals and Past Tense) <i>Θα μπορούσα...</i> <i>Eng. Could I...</i> Preparators and Grounders

*Note.* Created by the author based on studies on Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018; Staszkievicz, 2018), Catalan (Pérez i Parent, 2002; Vanrell & Catany, 2021), and Greek (Bella, 2012a; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020) requests. These studies have been selected because of their focus on the FL context.

Nevertheless, the use of request strategies and modification devices can vary according to the social parameters of the context. Although studies concerning the effect of these social parameters on the use of requests by NNS of different FLs have been already addressed in Section 2.3.3, several other studies that include L1 data are reviewed here for the purposes of the present research. Of the studies mentioned in the table above, those by Pérez-Ávila (2005), Ruiz (2018), and Staszkievicz (2018) on requests in Spanish, Pérez i Parent (2002) and Vanrell and Catany (2021) on requests in Catalan, and Bella (2012a) on requests in Greek have explored how NS of each language use this speech act and its modifiers in different situations taking the social parameters of social distance, power, and imposition into consideration. Although these studies explored the acquisition of requests by NNS and followed Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme, all of them rely on native-speaker data as a baseline. Therefore, only native-speaker data has been considered from these studies in order to carry out the present contrastive analysis.

Pérez-Ávila (2005) examined the use of requests and modifications by Spanish NS ( $N = 30$ ) and NNS from various backgrounds using DCTs that included two different situations<sup>5</sup> based on similar social parameters. Their findings revealed a predominant use of Conventionally Indirect Requests, although Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests were employed to a lesser extent in one of the situations. Notably, the internal modification involving the Politeness Marker *por favor* (Eng. "please") was rarely used by the NS. In another study, Ruiz (2018) explored how power affected the use of request strategies and modification devices by NS and NNS of Spanish in an email addressed to a professor (Speaker < Hearer). The Spanish NS ( $N = 8$ ) in her study used Conventionally Indirect or Direct Requests in the form of Performatives. Five of them preferred

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<sup>5</sup>One of the situations in Pérez-Ávila's (2005) study corresponds to one of the role plays used in the present dissertation (Cleaning situation).

Conventionally Indirect to Direct Requests. Regarding the modifiers, NS used internal modification devices such as the present, past, and conditional tenses, and external modification devices oriented towards negative politeness such as Grounders, Thanking Statements, and Apologies. Similarly, L1 Spanish speakers in Staszkievicz's (2018) study mostly used hearer-oriented requests, consistent with other studies (e.g., Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pinto, 2012). In almost all situations, except in those with high power and high imposition, speakers also employed more mitigating devices. In those situations where there were low levels of power, distance, and imposition between the interlocutors, Spanish NS tended to use more Direct Requests in the form of Imperatives.

Pérez i Parent (2002) also investigated request strategies produced by Catalan NS and Catalan EFL learners in six different scenarios. They found that, similar to Ruiz's (2018) Spanish native participants, Conventionally Indirect Requests were favored by Catalan NS regardless of the degree of distance and power in those scenarios. These findings seem to be consistent with Vanrell and Catany's (2021) study on the acquisition of requests in Catalan by Polish NS in which the L1 Catalan speakers showed higher use of Conventionally Indirect Requests when the distance between the interlocutors and degree of imposition was high. However, in line with Ruiz's (2018) findings, Catalan NS used more mitigation devices in high-imposition contexts, such as present and conditional tenses. Despite the preference for Conventionally Indirect Requests in both Pérez i Parent (2002) and Vanrell and Catany's (2021) studies, the use of Direct Requests is also common in scenarios where there is equal power between the interlocutors (Curell, 2012).

Conventionally Indirect Requests were also used by Greek NS in Bella's (2012a) study in three different scenarios (two informal situations showing low distance and low power, and a formal situation showing high distance and high power). A varied range of both external and

internal modification devices were used by the Greek NS across the three scenarios, and in those situations where both distance and power were lower between the participants, the NS used fewer external modification devices compared to the formal context. Thus, the repertoire of modification devices used by Greek NS in formal and informal situations seemed to be more extensive compared to that of the Spanish and Catalan NS in Ruiz (2018) and Vanrell and Catany's (2021) studies.

Another relevant difference between the three languages in the speech act of requests lies in the use of informal 'you' (Spa. *tú* / Cat. *tu* / Gr. *εσύ* [e'si]) and formal 'you' (Spa. *usted* / Cat. *vostè* / Gr. *εσείς* [e'sis]), and their agreement with the verb conjugation<sup>6</sup>. According to Félix-Brasdefer (2015), these forms of address are inherently relational, as they facilitate the negotiation of face (whether emphasizing involvement or independence) between interlocutors, helping to establish or reinforce their social relationships. Formality is expressed in Spanish and Catalan, by changing the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (Spa. *tú*/Cat. *tu*) to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (Spa. *usted*/Cat. *vostè*). In Greek, this modification is realized by changing the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (*εσύ*) to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (*εσείς*). The use of such pronouns in Spanish and Catalan is relatively similar (except for the spelling with or without orthographic accent), regardless of the degree of formality required in each situation (see Osváth, 2015). The use of informal 'you' is more widespread and accepted nowadays both in Spanish (*tú*) (Álvarez, 2005; Arnáiz, 2006; Sampedro, 2016, 2022) and in Catalan (*vostè*) (Nogué et al., 2022; Urteaga, 2008). In Spanish and Catalan, *tú/tu* is used in informal contexts where there is little distance between the participants (friends, relatives, etc.). By contrast, the formal 'you' form (Spa. *usted*/Cat. *vostè*) is used in situations requiring a higher

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<sup>6</sup>Although the conjugation of the verb involves a grammatical aspect, its agreement is associated with the use of informal or formal 'you'. Therefore, the use of the correct verb form depends not only on grammatical rules but also on the cultural and social context.

degree of formality where there is greater distance between the interlocutors (unknown people, hierarchy, elderly people) or to show respect.

In Greek, the use of informal ‘you’ (*εσύ*) is also similar to Spanish and Catalan. However, the use of the formal ‘you’ (*εσείς*) in Greek is more ambiguous and has a double function: to express formality in the singular and plural in informal and formal situations (Sifianou, 1992a). On the one hand, *εσείς* serves as the formal singular pronoun used to express politeness, respect, or social distance, when addressing an individual of higher status, an elderly person, or someone with whom the speaker does not have a close relationship (e.g., student/professor). On the other hand, *εσείς* is also the second person plural pronoun, used naturally in both formal and informal contexts when addressing multiple interlocutors, regardless of the level of familiarity. Due to this ambiguity in the use of *εσείς*, according to Sifianou (1992a), speakers need to rely more on pragmatic and contextual factors to interpret its precise function in any given interaction.

It is important to mention that in all three languages this personal pronoun is not mandatory and can be omitted. The following table serves to illustrate such differences in the address forms across the three languages (see Table 9). The translation in English is provided for a better understanding of the examples.

**Table 9**

*Examples of Informal and Formal Use of ‘You’ in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek*

Situation	Informal	Formal
	<i>Spa. ¿Puedes abrir la puerta?</i> (2nd person singular)	<i>Spa. ¿Puede abrir la puerta?</i> (3rd person singular)
	<i>Cat. Pots obrir la porta?</i> (2nd person singular)	<i>Cat. Pot obrir la porta?</i> (3rd person singular)
	<i>Gr. Μπορείς να ανοίξεις το παράθυρο;</i> (2nd person singular)	<i>Gr. Μπορείτε να ανοίξετε το παράθυρο;</i> (2nd person plural)
	<i>Eng. Can you open the door?</i>	<i>Eng. Can you open the door?</i>



Several conclusions can be drawn after reviewing the studies in the contrastive analysis outlined above. First, studies that analyze the role of the social parameters of distance, power, and imposition in the use of requests in Spanish, Catalan, and Greek are still scarce in the field. Therefore, the available data on how NS of these languages use requests in different communicative contexts is not comprehensive enough and more studies involving more native participants are needed in order to establish a more reliable framework. Second, in light of the data provided by these studies, it can be deduced that the use of Conventionally Indirect Requests and internal modifiers (e.g., the Conditional, the Present, or the Past predominate) is realized in a similar way across the three languages regardless of the social parameters. However, more differences can be observed with respect to the use of external modifiers among the three languages. In this sense, Greek NS draw on the use of a greater variety of external mitigators (e.g., Preparators, Grounders, Considerators, Imposition Minimizers, Disarmers, etc.), in comparison with Spanish and Catalan NS whose use of mitigators is more reduced, while the use of Politeness Markers and Grounders is increased. Finally, literature has shown that the address forms (Spa. *tú* vs *usted* / Cat. *tu* vs *vostè* / Gr. *εσύ* vs *εσείς*) can vary from one language to another, and the context will determine the use of one form over another. However, to the best of my knowledge, no empirical studies have focused on variations in the forms of address used in requests across different situations in these three languages.

The previous contrastive analysis between Spanish, Catalan, and Greek requests can serve as a framework to identify possible instances of pragmatic transfer in the data of the present research.

## **2.6. Chapter Summary**

The present chapter has intended to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for the purposes of this dissertation. First, Section 2.2 has presented an overview of the field of ILP paying special attention to Speech Acts and Politeness theories as well as the importance of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge in L2 pragmatic development. Existing literature in the field has emphasized that the speech act of requests, which is the focus of the present dissertation, is one of the most explored in the field due to its face-threatening nature. To that end, Section 2.3 has included a thorough explanation of the speech act of requests, previous studies and the role of the social parameters of social distance, power, and imposition affecting its use. Previous research on requests have emphasized the need for further acquisitional studies to understand the interplay between the social parameters and the use of requests in different FLs. In light of this, Section 2.4 has specifically focused on the use of requests in Greek, findings from previous studies, and its categorization of request strategies and external and internal modification. The scarcity in the number of studies reviewed in this section shows that Greek remains an under-researched language. Finally, Section 2.5 delved into the concept of pragmatic transfer and has included a contrastive analysis of the languages involved in this study, which are Spanish and Catalan as L1s and Greek as a FL, to understand how requests and address forms are used in the three languages.

## **2.7. Research Questions**

In light of the issues addressed in the literature review of this thesis and given the need for further research on ILP, the present dissertation will focus on the acquisition of requests in Greek as a FL by L1 Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). More specifically, it aims at investigating the

impact of proficiency on the acquisition of the speech act of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). Furthermore, it will analyze how these learners produce Greek requests in formal and informal communicative contexts. Finally, it will explore whether the NNS exhibit instances of pragmatic transfer in the use of address forms in their requests as compared to their L1s.

Considering the above, the present dissertation intends to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1. What is the role of proficiency in the acquisition of the speech act of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals?

As discussed in the literature review (Section 2.2.2), pragmatic competence tends to develop alongside increased proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001), as evidenced by numerous studies on the speech act of requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Celaya & Barón, 2015; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2022; Khazdouzian et al., 2021; Martínez-Flor, 2003; Taguchi, 2006). However, it has been argued that developing pragmatic competence is particularly challenging for L2 learners due to limited exposure to the TL (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) and the influence of deeply ingrained societal norms (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). It has been claimed that even advanced learners might not attain native-like performance (Taguchi, 2011). Researchers have emphasized the need for more acquisitional studies in this field (Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). In light of this need and the limited research on requests in Greek as a FL (Bella, 2012a; 2014a), this question seeks to explore how language proficiency affects the use of requests by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals in Greek as a FL. Additionally, it examines whether higher proficiency

levels lead to greater pragmatic competence and how learners' request strategies and modifications develop as proficiency increases.

Research Question 2. How do Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek as a FL express requests in formal and informal communicative contexts?

In light of Brown and Levinson's (1987) three sociopragmatic parameters (i.e., distance, power, and imposition) addressed in Section 2.3.3, researchers have pointed out the close relationship between these social parameters and the use of face-saving strategies when producing requests (Blum-Kulka & House et al., 1989; Kasper, 2004; Trosborg, 1995). These social parameters determine the appropriate degree of politeness in different circumstances, showing the dynamic nature of politeness and how it varies across contexts (Kádár, 2017). Thus, this question aims at identifying how Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek as a FL adapt their types of requests and modification devices depending on the level of formality of the interaction. It aims to determine whether their requesting behavior varies in contexts characterized by different social parameters (-D, -P; +D, -P; and +D, +P) and whether they align with native-speaker norms in these contexts.

Research Question 3. Do the requests in Greek as a FL produced by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals present cases of pragmatic transfer from their L1s? More specifically, do learners exhibit L1 pragmatic transfer in their use of address forms when making requests in Greek?

As highlighted in Section 2.5.2, cultural variations play a significant role in how learners produce and understand requests in an L2 context (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cialdini, et al. 1999; Ogiermann, 2009), often leading to pragmatic transfer (Thomas, 1983). As discussed, L2 learners tend to interpret and understand the L2 through the lens of the sociocultural norms and perspectives shaped by their L1 (Kecskes, 2013). In other words, their perceptions and interpretations in the L2

are often filtered through the values, customs, and cognitive patterns ingrained in their L1 cultural mindset. Consequently, this influence can make it challenging for learners to discriminate between various contexts and may lead them to unintentionally apply their L1 cultural norms to language use in the TL, as demonstrated in several studies on requests (e.g., Pinto, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007a). Pragmatic transfers may also extend to forms of address (Spa. *tú* vs *usted* / Cat. *tu* vs *vostè* / Gr. *εσú* vs *εσείς*), which can vary across languages and often are context-dependent when producing requests. In light of this, the present question investigates whether learners' requests in Greek are influenced by their L1s. More specifically, it explores the degree of pragmatic transfer by comparing NNS's use of address forms in Greek requests with those commonly used in their L1s, based on the contrastive analysis outlined in Section 2.5.3, and evaluates the extent to which their use of address forms deviates from native Greek norms.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the present study. The methodology includes a detailed description of the LETEGR2 corpus from which the data have been extracted (Section 3.1), participants (Section 3.2), contexts (Section 3.3), instruments (Section 3.4), and procedure (Section 3.5), in which the data codification and analysis are explained.

This study examines the requests made by Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek as a FL. It analyzes whether a learner's FL proficiency level can be a predictor for the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence in the speech act of requests, and whether the types of requests and strategies produced are consistent with those used by NS in the scenarios involved.

The research design employs a mixed-methods approach (House, 2018; Taguchi, 2018b), combining qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively analyze the acquisition of the target item under study. This approach aims to facilitate a holistic understanding of learners' request strategies, their linguistic and sociolinguistic components, and potential variations across different contexts.

#### **3.1. LETEGR2 Project**

This thesis has been carried out following the framework of the LETEGR2 project (Learning, Teaching, and Learning to Teach in Greek as a Second/Foreign Language) put forward by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece in collaboration with various institutions in Europe. The project's main goal was to explore different methods for learning and teaching Greek in L2 and FL environments (Andria, 2020, 2022; Andria & Iakovou, 2021; Iakovou, 2020; Iakovou et al., 2024; Panagopoulos et al., 2024; Rodríguez-Lifante & Andria, 2020). Among the different objectives of the LETEGR2 project was the study of the development

of pragmatic competence in Greek as an L2/FL and, more specifically, the acquisition of different speech acts by NNS of Greek in different contexts (Gkouma, 2024; Gkouma et al., 2020, 2023).

To achieve these objectives, the project relies on a large, carefully produced and curated corpus, which includes written and oral productions covering linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural aspects of Greek as an L2. A vast part of the LETEGR2 corpus of pragmatic data was compiled from the project's main data collection, which was conducted in Barcelona, Spain, and in Athens, Greece in the 2019-2020 academic year to compare the development of pragmatic competence in Greek in the study abroad and L2/FL learning contexts. The LETEGR2 corpus encompasses 165 role plays performed by NNS and 50 by NS, amounting to approximately 2,150 role plays and over 25,800 minutes of simulated conversations. To assess their validity, these role play scenarios were piloted for each speech act before the data collection process. The participant groups in this corpus represent a diverse range of language learners and contexts, each contributing valuable data for analyzing the speech act under study.

This dissertation draws on oral production data from this corpus, particularly transcriptions of role plays performed by NS and NNS, to examine their requesting behavior in Greek<sup>7</sup>. However, the L2 context and study abroad factors are beyond the scope of the present study, as the focus here is on the acquisition of requests in a FL context, specifically Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek in Barcelona, Spain. Therefore, only role play data and verbal retrospective reports from this group of participants were selected and analyzed for the present study.

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<sup>7</sup>The present dissertation complies with the requirements established by the Bioethics Committee of the University of Barcelona regarding the use of the data from the LETEGR2 corpus.

### 3.2. Context

The participants of the study belong to two different Greek language schools in Barcelona, Spain. The two contexts will be referred to in this dissertation as Language school 1 and Language school 2. The information about each context described below is based on Andria's (2024) study.

Language school 1 is a state-operated institution dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages located in Barcelona, Spain and is one of 45 state-run official language schools (*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas – EOIs*) across the country. Despite being under the jurisdiction of the Spanish Ministry of Education, the school is directly under the supervision of the regional Department of Education of Catalonia, which establishes the curriculum for the official language schools in the area. The school also adheres to the recommendations of the CEFR. The school, which was founded in 1969 and is the oldest official language school in Barcelona, offers instruction in 26 languages, including Greek. Although Greek is one of the least demanded languages at this center, about 100 students enroll each year. Candidates are required to have completed at least the first year of compulsory secondary education in Spain (or the equivalent grade in a foreign country) and have a minimum age of 16 years old.

The school mainly provides Greek language courses from A1 to B2 level. A total of 150 hours is taught at each proficiency level, except for the B2 level, which is divided into two courses (B2.1 and B2.2) of 150 hours each (300 hours in total). Students can access the courses either from level A1 or through a placement test if they already have previous knowledge of the Greek language; the school also offers preparatory courses for official certification exams. The official certificates can be issued by this school (B1 and B2 levels) and by the Center for Greek Language (the official institution for certifying Greek language proficiency). The Greek teachers at this



school hold language and humanities degrees, but a degree in Greek studies or any specialization in teaching Greek as a L2/FL is not mandatory.

Language school 2 is a non-profit foundation that represents the Greek diaspora and philhellenes in Barcelona. This school has offered Greek language courses for children and adults since 1997. Since then, the number of students enrolled in Greek courses has grown considerably with the student body growing from 25 students in 2010 to 90 in 2024. The school offers all proficiency levels from A1 to C2. Classes are held once a week and last between two and two and a half hours depending on the level. All teachers are Greek NS and hold university degrees in Greek Studies and Linguistics from Greek universities; some hold master's or doctoral degrees in Applied Linguistics and FL teaching. In addition, most of them have been trained in teaching Greek as an L2/FL.

Furthermore, both language schools aim to promote Greek language and culture among their members and in Catalan society. The institutions actively organize cultural events, festivals, and celebrations throughout the year. These events showcase Greek traditions, music, dance, cuisine, and art, allowing both Greeks and non-Greeks in Catalonia to experience Greek culture firsthand.

### 3.3. Participants

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted by the LETEGR2 members to test and refine the research instruments. This pilot study involved 40 ( $N = 40$ )<sup>8</sup> participants, comprising 10 ( $n = 10$ ) Greek NS and 30 ( $n = 30$ ) Spanish/Catalan bilingual students learning

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<sup>8</sup>Throughout this study, the  $n$  refers to the number of participants ( $N$  for the total cohort and  $n$  for a subgroup), unless placed directly after a linguistic feature or strategy (either head act or modification device), in which case it denotes frequency of use.

Greek as a second language, with varying levels of proficiency. The reliability of the instrument was checked, and it was found that it had high internal consistency, with a Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of .801. Following this pilot study, the final research instruments were designed and subsequently employed in the main data collection phase (Gkouma, 2024; Gkouma et al., 2020, 2023).

The present dissertation focused on data coming from 107 ( $N = 107$ ) participants of the LETEGR2 project: 53 ( $n = 53$ ) NS and 54 ( $n = 54$ ) Spanish/Catalan bilinguals of Greek as an FL (hereafter NNS). The NS group included 21 males and 29 females, aged 21 to 70 ( $M = 35.58$ ,  $SD = 12.51$ ), all permanent residents of Greece with secondary or higher education. Their data served as a reference for analyzing the speech act under investigation. The NNS group consisted of 26 males and 28 females, aged 22 to 78 ( $M = 51.0$ ,  $SD = 15.71$ ), all enrolled in formal Greek courses at the two Barcelona-based language schools described in the previous subsection. Table 10 illustrates their distribution across the different language proficiency levels.

**Table 10**

*Number of Non-Native Participants per Level at Both Contexts*

LEVEL	No of Participants	Language School 1		Language School 2	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
A2	15	3	6	3	3
B1	16	4	4	5	3
B2	19	10	4	1	4
C1	4	0	0	0	4
Total	54	17	14	9	14

Of the total number of NNS, 31 ( $n = 31$ ) were enrolled at Language school 1, whereas the remaining 23 ( $n = 23$ ) were enrolled at Language school 2. Both language schools adhere to the

same proficiency level framework<sup>9</sup>. The students were categorized into four levels of language proficiency according to the CEFR: A2, B1, B2, and C1. It should be noted that all NNS at the A1 level were excluded from the total cohort, as they had no previous knowledge of Greek at the time of data collection, which took place at the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year. All participants in the NNS group followed the annual (9-month) teaching program provided by each institution. Tables 11 and 12 show the demographic data<sup>10</sup> obtained through background questionnaires given to the participants in the NNS group (see Section 4.4.3. for a detailed description of the questionnaire).

**Table 11**

*Demographic Data for Participants Studying at Language School 1 (n = 31)*

N	Age Group						Proficiency Level				Gender			Education	
	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	A2	B1	B2	C1	Male	Female	Other	Secondary	University
	4	6	4	9	8	0	9	8	14	0	17	14	0	3	28

**Table 12**

*Demographic Data for Participants Studying at Language School 2 (n = 23)*

N	Age Group						Proficiency Level				Gender			Education	
	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	A2	B1	B2	C1	Male	Female	Other	Secondary	University
	7	2	1	4	4	4	6	8	5	4	9	14	0	1	22

<sup>9</sup>Statistical analyses conducted within the framework of the LETEGR2 project indicated that the participants from both contexts share similar characteristics (Andria, 2024) and there were not statistically significant differences among the groups of the two languages schools (Panagopoulos et al., 2024).

<sup>10</sup>Demographic data were not available for three of the participants of the total cohort (two enrolled in Language school 1 and one enrolled in Language school 2). Only their level of proficiency was available in the data.

Nearly half of the 54 NNS reported some prior exposure to Greek—either through language courses or travel—before enrolling in their current program at Language school 1 or 2. Notably, 21 learners indicated that they had previously attended the other language school before enrolling in the one they were attending at the time of this study. At the A2 level, seven learners are university graduates in language-related fields and speak multiple FLs. Additionally, a different group of seven learners had taken Greek language courses before enrolling in their current school, and ten reported having visited Greece. Among the B1 learners, all but one hold university degrees, and those with degrees also speak multiple FLs. Of the 16 B1 learners, nine had previously taken Greek language courses, and the same number had visited Greece. In the B2 group, all nineteen learners have completed a university degree, with four specializing in philology, and all speak multiple FLs. Sixteen of them reported having spent varying lengths of time in Greece. Finally, at the C1 level, three of the four learners hold university degrees and speak multiple FLs. All three had prior exposure to Greek, either through language courses or travel. All of this information was gathered through a background questionnaire, which will be further explained in Section 3.4.2.

### **3.4. Instruments**

The three instruments chosen for the present study were a background questionnaire, open role plays and retrospective verbal reports. These instruments will be thoroughly described below.

#### **3.4.1. Questionnaires**

The background questionnaire, developed within the LETEGR2 project framework (see Appendix A), was used in the present dissertation to identify and select only the Spanish/Catalan bilingual participants from the total cohort for analysis. The questionnaire intended to elicit biodata

about the participants, their language profile, the time spent learning the language, their previous experience with Greek, and their motivations for learning Greek. The information that was gathered through the questionnaires made it possible to comprehend the individual features of each participant. Most items in the questionnaire consisted of ticking boxes while other questions required the participants to rate items based on different Likert scales, which provided data that could be “profitably compared, contrasted, and combined with qualitative data-gathering techniques” (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014, p. 2). For the present study, the most relevant information from the questionnaire was each participant’s L1, their occupation, their prior experience with the language and whether they have been to or stayed in Greece. These individual variables were then discussed in the qualitative analysis of the results. The participants were given the option to complete the background questionnaire in Spanish, Catalan, or Greek, according to their preference.

### **3.4.2. Role Plays**

The second instrument consists of a series of role plays designed originally for the research purposes of the LETEGR2 project. Role plays make the data more representative of what respondents would say in authentic situations (Houck & Gass, 1996). As Félix-Brasdefer (2010) points out, role plays consist of “spoken data in which two interlocutors assume roles under predefined experimental conditions” (p. 47). Even if the roles are predefined, role plays are based on spontaneous interaction since speakers cannot plan subsequent turns (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012).

Despite the certain limitations of role plays, such as the uncertain representation of interactions in genuine situations (see Kasper, 2000) and the impossibility of eliciting various request forms (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007b) (among others; see also Bataller & Shively, 2011 and

Taguchi, 2018c for further explanations of the shortcomings of role plays), role plays were designed as part of the main project because of the advantages they present for investigating the development of pragmatic competence (Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Chang, 2006; Félix-Brasdefer, 2010; 2018) and speech acts specifically (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). One of their advantages is that they remain suitable for pragmalinguistic research since they allow for the controlling of social parameters and participant profiles (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). Additionally, according to Beltrán-Palanques (2020), role plays have the potential to yield significant pedagogical and research benefits if designed thoughtfully. Hence, role plays were intentionally selected for use in the LETEGR2 project as the main tool for investigating requests since they are one of the most face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and impositive (Haverkate, 1984) speech acts. Furthermore, open role plays offer spontaneity in speech act realization (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018), which allows speakers to act out impromptu oral discourse and engage in turn-taking, thereby facilitating the examination of discourse organization and meaning negotiation (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). That is, one particular interaction can display a wide array of speech acts related to each other. For instance, one participant might make a request which could be answered with a refusal or a thank you. This richness in the variety of speech acts in the interaction is precisely what has attracted most of the interest among researchers in the field of ILP in the use of role plays as the main method for analyzing pragmatic competence (e.g., Barón et al., 2020; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Cohen, 1996a; Félix-Brasdefer 2010, 2018; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010; Taguchi, 2006) since it is the most suitable elicited data approach for replacing real-world conversation (Kasper, 2000).

The dataset used in this dissertation included ten distinct role plays (see Appendix B for the description of the role plays and Appendix C for the instructions). Seven role plays were the

target scenarios and aimed at eliciting the speech act of requests. The other three role plays were distractors meant to elicit other speech acts beyond the scope of the present research to prevent participants from becoming aware of the real target structure under investigation. Each of the seven target role plays was thoroughly planned to examine the nuances and variations of requesting behavior and to encompass a wide range of scenarios. These target scenarios were deliberately designed to mirror a variety of real-life situations, which allowed for a deeper analysis of request-making strategies and patterns in different contexts. The chosen scenarios gave a full picture of the complexity of using requests, shedding light on the linguistic strategies, levels of politeness, and contextual factors affecting this communicative act. The role plays corresponding to the target scenarios are the following:

- i. Role play 1. *Suitcase Scenario*: Next week you are travelling, but you don't have a suitcase. You call a close friend and ask him/her to give you his/her suitcase.
- ii. Role play 2. *Cleaning Scenario*: You are a university student, and you share an apartment with another student (a roommate). Your roommate threw a party last night and now the apartment is dirty. You ask him/her to clean it.
- iii. Role play 3. *Sugar Scenario*: You want to make a coffee, but you have no sugar. There is a new neighbor in the apartment next door. You knock on his/her door and ask for sugar.
- iv. Role play 4. *Shoes Scenario*: You are shopping at a store. You find a pair of shoes that you like and ask the seller to bring them to you.
- v. Role play 5. *Deadline Extension Scenario*: You have an assignment to submit for a university course, but you don't manage to complete it on time. You go to your professor's office and ask for more time.

- vi. Role play 6. *Overtime Scenario*: You are a director/boss of a company. You talk to an employee. You want him/her to work four hours more on one of the next days.
- vii. Role play 7. *Day off Scenario*: It's been a short while since you have been hired by a company. You go to your manager and ask for a day-off next week.

The role plays used as distractors are listed below:

- viii. Role play 8. *Restaurant Scenario*: You are at a good and expensive restaurant, and your food is taking a long time to arrive. You talk to the server about it.
- ix. Role play 9. *Advice from a colleague Scenario*: Lately, you haven't been feeling very well. During a break at work, you talk to a colleague and ask for his/her opinion.
- x. Role play 10. *Party Scenario*: You're throwing a party for your birthday. You call a friend and invite them.

In all the seven target scenarios seen above, participants were prompted to request something from their interlocutor, who would then fulfill their request. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted by each participant on the realization of the speech act of request and the peripheral elements accompanying the head act (cf. literature review Sections 2.4.3, 2.4.4, and 2.4.5).

The role plays depict various scenarios involving different degrees of formality and differ in terms of the social parameters of power and distance. These parameters play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of interpersonal communication and have a significant impact on how requests are produced and received. Besides, variations in these two social parameters can occur across cultures (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Furthermore, each combination of the two basic social parameters includes two situations that are either obligatory, meaning the speaker has a right to



formulate the request and the interlocutor has an obligation to satisfy it (House, 1989), or non-obligatory. Also, although the roles of employee, boss, and university student (in the Day Off, Overtime, and Deadline Extension Scenarios, respectively) share the same social parameters, the social power is inverted in the boss scenario (Overtime), compared to the employee (Day Off) and student (Deadline Extension) scenarios. In the Overtime Scenario, the speaker (boss) assumes a dominant role, whereas in both the Day Off (employee) and Deadline Extension (student) scenarios, the speakers exhibit power (direction of imposition). In addition, the social context (working versus academic) distinguishes the roles of employee and student. Therefore, the distinction between the two fundamental social parameters (social distance and power) and the particular social features of the situations (obligatory/non-obligatory, social context, and direction of imposition) function as independent variables when examining how participants in each group perform requests.

Table 13, presented below, is a comprehensive illustration that categorizes the social parameters associated with each scenario. This table offers a clear visual representation, allowing for a better understanding of the diverse range of social dynamics inherent in the role plays of the target scenarios.

**Table 13***Social Parameters for Every Communicative Situation*

Role Play Scenario	Social Distance	Social Power	Degree of Imposition	Basic Nature of the Situation
Suitcase	-	-	-	-
Cleaning	-	-	+	+
Sugar	+	-	-	-
Shoes	+	-	-	+
Deadline Extension	+	+	+	-
Overtime	+	+	-	-
Day Off	+	+	+	+

*Note.* Extracted and adapted from the LETEGR2 Corpus instrument description. An additional column has been added to illustrate the basic nature of each situation to understand certain variations in social parameters. The (-) in this column indicates a situation where compliance with the request is not obligatory for the interlocutor, while the (+) represents a situation where compliance is obligatory.

### 3.4.3. Retrospective Verbal Reports

The third instrument employed in the present study is a retrospective verbal report designed and collected as part of the LETEGR2 project (Gkouma, 2024; Gkouma, et al. 2020, 2023). It was used as a complementary data source in order to provide better insights into participants' perceptions of the different situations involved in the role plays. Different types of verbal retrospective reports (see Cohen 1996b for an in-depth exploration of the types) have been used by researchers in the field of ILP as a valuable technique for L2 speech act research (e.g., Beltrán-Palanques, 2016; Nguyen, 2019; Woodfield, 2010; 2012b). This instrument allows access to each NNS's familiarity with and perception of a given situation, enabling researchers to draw conclusions regarding their pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge as well as their cognitive processing (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010).

The retrospective verbal report used in the study consists of a semi-structured interview conducted with the NNS (see Appendix D). The instrument features general questions aimed at exploring learners' overall perception and linguistic response, allowing even the lower-proficiency NNS to participate and provide a comprehensive perspective of their approach to each communicative situation. More specifically, these questions focused on learners' familiarity and prior experience with the scenarios and the level of difficulty they perceived in each interaction. The retrospective verbal report includes the following questions:

1. Have you played any of these roles in your life? (Which one(s)?)/Have you ever been in any of these situations? (Which one(s)?)
2. Have you played any of these roles in your Greek class? Which one(s)?
3. In which story do you think you performed better? Which role did you express best? Why?
4. In which story was it more difficult for you to speak? Why?

It should be noted that the NNS's retrospective verbal reports do not focus specifically on the speech act of request but have a more general scope, as reflected in the questions above. This is because the L2 data collection for the present study was part of a broader data collection within the LETEGR2 research project, examining various aspects of Greek language acquisition (Gkouma, 2024; Gkouma, et al. 2020, 2023). As with the background questionnaire, the participants could answer the questions of the retrospective verbal reports either in Spanish, Catalan, or Greek.

### **3.5. Procedure**

#### **3.5.1. Data Collection**

The data collection process for the NNS group took place within the initial two weeks of their 2019-2020 academic program. Prior to the data collection, all the participants provided written consent for their participation in the study. The study began by administering the background questionnaire to the participants. Following this, the role play data collection was conducted in a quiet room with only the participant and a trained researcher present. The instructions for the role play task were given individually, and each scenario was presented on a card, one at a time, in a random order. The participants were encouraged to perform these role plays in a natural, unrehearsed manner as they would in real-life situations. All dialogues were recorded with the participants' knowledge. Each scenario card was crafted to offer clear information, aiding participants in understanding the communication context and essential social dynamics such as distance and hierarchy. In this case, the contextual information was intentionally kept brief and to the point, while being informative due to the inclusion of students at the beginner level and the extensive range of scenarios. On average, the scenarios consisted of 22.3 words. To enhance the tool's validity, every scenario was accompanied by a visual aid. Incorporating these cues into the role play descriptions is "useful for learners to imagine the situations" (Nguyen, 2019, p. 9). Once the learners completed the role plays, the retrospective verbal reports were conducted and the learner's responses to the aforementioned questions presented in the previous section were recorded. Each retrospective verbal report lasted an average of 3 minutes. The total duration of the retrospective verbal reports was 183 minutes and 22 seconds. Each retrospective verbal report lasted an average of 3 minutes and 7 seconds. All NNS participated in the retrospective verbal reports, except for four (three at the A2 level and one at the B2 level), whose responses were either

incomplete due to time constraints or unavailable due to technical difficulties. The participants, especially those at beginner levels, were given the option to choose or switch the language in which they responded to the retrospective verbal reports. They could answer either in Greek or their L1 to ensure that potential language difficulties did not hinder their responses.

A similar approach was taken with the NS group. The majority of the data was collected in Athens, Greece in person. However, a part of this data collection had to be carried out online using platforms like Zoom and Skype due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This shift in approach is not seen to negatively affect participants' performance, as they maintained visual contact and accessed the scenario cards like their NNS peers. The call quality remained consistently excellent.

Since the corpus used for the present study did not include L1 empirical data from the same participants, the information regarding requests in Spanish and Catalan was elicited from the studies reviewed in Section 2.5.3. This information served as a basis for comparison to analyze possible instances of pragmatic transfer (RQ3) in the address forms used in Greek requests by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals in the data of the present study.

### **3.5.2. Data Coding and Analysis**

Prior to data coding, the transcription of the role plays was extracted from the LETEGR2 corpus to identify the types of request and strategies used by both the NS and NNS participants. Then, the data were encoded based on a classification created for the speech act in question. The classification was primarily based on the data, considering previous classifications suggested in relevant literature. As the present research investigates the production of requests and modifications in Greek, the classification encompasses request types (head acts) and modifiers employed by the participants.

Regarding the speech act of request and its peripheral elements, many researchers have proposed different coding schemes based on various criteria (Alcón et al., 2005; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Bulka et al., 1989; Trosborg, 1995; Sifianou, 1999). The original categorization proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) has been widely used in many studies in the field involving different FLs (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2005, 2009; Francis, 1997; Karatepe & Ünal, 2019; Khalib & Tayeh, 2014; Nugroho & Rekha, 2020; Nugroho et al., 2021; Ren & Fukushima, 2020; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016), and in those studies specifically focused on the acquisition of Greek requests (e.g., Bella, 2012a, 2012b, 2014a). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) categorization of requests has also been employed in other studies involving L1 Greek speakers (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005, 2010, 2011; 2013; Mavromati, 2021; Tsimpiri, 2019). However, research on the acquisition of requests in Greek as a FL is still scarce as seen in Section 2.4.2.

For the present study, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Bulka et al. (1989), and Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorization of requests and strategies were taken into consideration, with particular attention given to Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorization since it is based on Greek requests and, therefore, more suitable for the data of the present study. Such categorization of requests, and external and internal modifications, have been further expanded in this study, with the inclusion of Upgraders to meet the needs of the data. Table 14 shows the classification of the types of requests and strategies adopted in this study, as well as examples in Greek and their translation in English.

**Table 14***Request Categorization Employed in the Present Research*

Degree of Directness		Strategy Types	Examples
Direct Request		Mood Derivable (Imperative)	<u>Πλύνε</u> τα ρούχα αμέσως. / <u>Wash</u> the clothes immediately.
		Performative	<u>Σας ζητάω</u> ένα τσιγάρο. / <u>I am asking you</u> for a cigarette.
		Obligation Statement	<u>Πρέπει να</u> πληρώσεις το λογαριασμό. / <u>You must</u> pay the check.
		Need/Want Statement	<u>Χρειάζομαι</u> αύξηση μισθού. / <u>I need</u> a pay raise.
Indirect Request	Conventionally	Query Preparatory-Permission	<u>Θα μπορούσα</u> να δανειστώ το μολύβι σου; / <u>Could I</u> borrow your pencil?
	Indirect Request	Query Preparatory-Ability	<u>Μπορείτε να</u> μου δώσετε άδεια για διακοπές; / <u>Can you</u> grant me vacation leave?
		Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	<u>Ετοιμάζεις</u> εσύ τον καφέ και τον πίνουμε όταν είναι έτοιμος; / ( <u>Can you</u> ) <u>prepare</u> [present ind.] the coffee and we'll drink it when it's done?
		Suggestory Formula	<u>Δεν βάζεις</u> τα ρούχα στην ντουλάπα; / ( <u>Why</u> ) <u>don't you</u> put the clothes in the closet?
	Non-Conventionally Indirect Request	Hint	<i>Τα έπιπλα είναι πολύ σκονισμένα.</i> / The furniture is very dusty.

*Note.* Adapted from Bella's (2012a) categorization of Greek requests in which the degrees of directness and strategies have been maintained. Examples in Greek and their translation in English have been provided for a better understanding of how each type is produced.

External modifications accompany the main request and serve to mitigate the illocutionary force, reducing its impact on the hearer's face. They can appear before or after the request (i.e., pre-head act or post-head act position). The categorization employed in the present study for coding external modifications have been adapted mainly from Bella's (2012a, 2012b) coding schemes. Although Bella's (2012b) categorization of requests focuses on the L2 context, the

external modification of “Sweeteners” has been included in the present coding scheme as some FL learners in the data used this supportive move, especially in some formal situations. Sweeteners are used to engage the hearer by positive comments and compliments, thereby increasing the likelihood of fulfilling the request. Additionally, other types of external modifiers have been included from other coding schemes defined by other researchers. The mitigating supportive moves “Getting a Precommitment” and “Discourse Orientation Move” have been taken from Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) to suit the needs of the data. Getting a Precommitment is employed before uttering the main request to engage the hearer in the planning or agreement process. This device is similar to the Preparator<sup>11</sup>, although it comes as a question addressed to the interlocutor to increase the chances of a positive response. Discourse Orientation Move, on the other hand, involves providing context and sets the tone for the forthcoming request. It is used to seek the hearer’s willingness to engage and accept the request. This move usually comes immediately before the head act, after Preparators (if any). “Attention Getters”, taken from Alcón et al.’s (2005) typology of modifiers, is another type of mitigating move that has been included in the coding scheme to meet the Greek data. This modifier is used to capture the hearer’s attention before uttering the actual request, serving as a framing device. In Alcón et al.’s (2005) classification of modifiers, Attention Getters are categorized as an internal modification of the request. However, in the present study, they are classified as external modifications, as they typically occur at the beginning of the interaction, with other strategies (such as Preparators or Grounders), appearing between the Attention Getter and the head act. In the case of the Greek data, this modifier does not

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<sup>11</sup>Given the fact that the present study explores the requests used in role plays, Preparators can present broader interpretations than those which are used in the DCTs in Bella’s (2012a, 2012b) studies as they are more specific to the actual request. For instance, in the present study, some general Preparators employing the verbs *μιλάω* [mi’lao] / “to talk”, *λέω* [’leo] / “to tell” or *ενοχλώ* [eno’jlo] / “to bother” are used as icebreakers to initiate the conversation related to the main request (e.g. *Μπορώ να σας μιλήσω για λίγο;* / “Can I talk to you for a moment?”).



alter the core of the request but rather it modifies how it is introduced in a conversation. Furthermore, the “Promise of Reward” strategy, as defined by Bella (2012a), has been changed to “Promise of Future Action/Reward” based on Bu’s (2012) categorization of requests. This adjustment was necessary to better align with the data since Bella’s Promise of Reward did not fully capture instances where the modification involved other types of promises or commitments made by the speaker.

Table 15 below presents the coding scheme used in the present dissertation for analyzing the types of external modifications employed by the participants in the role plays.

**Table 15***External Modifications*

External Modification	Types	Examples
Mitigating Supportive Moves	Attention Getter	<i>Συγγνώμη / Excuse me, Άκουσε / Listen, Να σου πω... / Let me tell you, Λοιπόν / So..., etc. and proper names.</i>
	Preparator	<i>Θα ήθελα να σας ζητήσω μια μεγάλη χάρη. / I'd like to ask you for a big favor.</i>
	Getting a Precommitment	<i>Μου κάνεις μία χάρη; / Can you do me a favor?</i>
	Grounder	<i>Σιδέρωσε το πουκάμισο γιατί έχω πάρτι σήμερα το βράδυ. / Iron the shirt because I have a party tonight.</i>
	Disarmer	<i>Ξέρω ότι είσαι κουρασμένη από το ταξίδι αλλά πρέπει να ξεπακετάρουμε τις βαλίτσες. / I know you're tired from the trip, but we have to unpack the suitcases.</i>
	Imposition Minimizer	<i>Θα ήθελα να ζητήσω άδεια, αλλά μόνο για δύο ημέρες. / I'd like to ask for a leave but just for two days.</i>
	Promise of Future Action/Reward	<i>Θα σας ενημερώσω σύντομα. / I'll let you know soon.</i>
	Apology <sup>12</sup>	<i>Συγγνώμη που το ζητάω, αλλά ξέχασα τις φωτοτυπίες στο σπίτι. / I apologize for asking, but I forgot the photocopies at home.</i>
	Considerator	<i>Αν έχεις βέβαια χρόνο, αλλιώς να πάω στο μαγαζί. / If you have time of course. Otherwise, I'll go to the store.</i>
	Discourse Orientation Move	<i>Ξέρεις το τεστ που δίνω στις 15 του μήνα... / You know the exam I'm taking on the 15th...</i>
	Sweetener	<i>Είσαι πάντα πολύ ευγενικός, μπορείς να με βοηθήσεις με αυτό το πρόβλημα; / You're always very kind, can you help me with this problem?</i>

*Note.* Adapted from Bella's (2012a, 2012b) external modification categorization for requests. The types of mitigators "Attention Getters" (Alcón et al. 2005), "Getting a Precommitment", and "Discourse Orientation Move" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) have been incorporated into the categorization to suit the needs of the data. Bella's (2012a, 2012b) "Promise of Reward", which was insufficient to account for this strategy, has been changed to "Promise of Future Action/Reward" (Bu, 2012) in general to also meet the needs of the data.

<sup>12</sup>In some instances, Apologies were not explicitly expressed, yet the speaker still intended to communicate regret or offer an apology. For instance, *θα ήθελα να σου δώσω την έρευνα από το πανεπιστήμιο, αλλά...* / "I wanted to give you the assignment from university, but...".

Regarding internal modifications, the present study mainly follows Bella's (2012a, 2012b) internal modification categorization for requests. However, other categorizations developed by other authors have been taken into account, especially for the inclusion of some other internal strategies that Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorizations of requests did not envisage, and which are evident in the data of the present study. Thus, the Syntactic Downgrader of "Aspect"<sup>13</sup> (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) has been included in the categorization as some participants used this strategy. This Downgrader entails a change in the initial structure of the request, and it is typically found in Conventionally Indirect Requests to mitigate the illocutionary force by showing distance with the interlocutor and using a more tentative request (Woodfield, 2008). In Greek, aspect markings can be expressed with the verb *αναρωτιέμαι* ('I wonder'). For the present research, this type of syntactic internal modification from Blum-Kulka et al.'s, (1989) categorization, which Bella (2012a, 2012b) did not address in her coding scheme, has been considered for the coding of the data. Additionally, two new internal syntactic modifiers have also been included in the categorization: the Future and the Passive Voice, which were not included in any of the coding schemes defined by Bella (2012a, 2012b), but appeared in the data of this study. For the present study, however, the syntactic modification of Present Indicative in interrogative requests from Bella's (2012a, 2012b) categorizations has not been considered in the coding scheme of the present study as it is embedded within the "Query Preparatory with Present Indicative" (No Modal) type of head act. Participants in the present study automatically perform such modification when using this type of indirect request.

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<sup>13</sup>The internal modification of "Aspect", as described by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), indicates uncertainty when formulating a request (e.g., "I wonder"). This Syntactic Downgrader will be maintained in this dissertation for Greek requests. Thus, it should not be mistaken for the grammatical aspect of Greek verbs (i.e., complete vs incomplete action).

Concerning the Lexical Downgraders, “Consultative Device” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and “Appealers” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Sifianou, 1999) were added to the categorization. By using Consultative Devices, the speaker intends to seek input or engage the hearer in a more collaborative manner. These devices usually appear at the beginning of the head act to lessen the effect of the request on the hearer and are used to ask for the interlocutor’s opinion about the potential act. Appealers, on the other hand, are words or phrases used to appeal to the interlocutor’s willingness, empathy, or sense of obligation, making the request more persuasive. They come in the form of a question tag after the head act to seek the hearer’s confirmation to commit to the speaker’s request.

Additionally, “Upgraders”, which were not contemplated at all in Bella’s (2012a, 2012b) categorizations, have been introduced. Data in the present study shows that some participants draw on this strategy to aggravate the illocutionary force of their request. Their use is aimed at making the request more direct and assertive, conveying a strong sense of urgency or emphasis. The speaker uses Upgraders to express demand and thus, increase the likelihood that the interlocutor will agree to comply with the request. Upgraders in the form of Intensifiers have been adopted from other studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Halupka-Rešetar, 2014) that match those used by some of the participants in the present study. In Greek, Upgraders can usually appear in the form of adverbs and time markers to convey a higher degree of demand or emphasize a specific deadline to express the need for the hearer to carry out immediate action.

Table 16 below shows the actual coding scheme for internal modification employed in the present study. Examples in Greek and their translation in English have been provided for a better understanding of each internal modifier.

**Table 16***Internal Modifications*

Internal Modification		Types	Examples
Downgraders	Syntactic	Negation	<u>Δεν</u> θα μπορούσες να μου δώσεις λίγο χρήματα; / <u>Couldn't</u> you give me some money?
		Subjunctive	Μήπως <u>να στείλεις</u> εσύ το γράμμα; / (Would you) maybe <u>send</u> [subjunctive] the letter?
		Conditional Structures	<u>Θα ήθελα</u> μία άδεια <u>αν είναι δυνατόν</u> . / <u>I would like</u> a leave <u>if it's possible</u> .
		Past Tense	<u>Ήθελα</u> να σας ζητήσω ένα δάνειο; / <u>I wanted</u> to ask you for a credit.
		Future Tense	<u>Θα χρειαστώ</u> ένα στυλό. / <u>I'll need</u> a pen.
		Aspect	<u>Αναρωτιέμαι αν</u> θα μπορούσα να έρθω μαζί σου στο σπίτι. / <u>I wonder if</u> I can go back home with you.
		Passive Voice	<u>Το σπίτι πρέπει να καθαριστεί</u> . / The house needs <u>to be cleaned</u> .
		Lexical/Phrasal	Understaters/Hedgers
	Politeness Marker		παρακαλώ / please
	Subjectivizers		φοβάμαι / I'm afraid, νομίζω / I think, θεωρώ / I reckon, φαντάζομαι / I guess
	Downtoners		ίσως / perhaps, μήπως / maybe, απλώς or απλά / just
	Cajolers		ξέρεις / you know, καταλαβαίνεις / you understand
	Solidarity Markers		ρε, μωρέ / dude, diminutives, affectionate terms, person's name + possessive pronoun (Ελένη μου / My Helen), παιδί μου / my dear, αγόρι μου / my boy, κορίτσι μου / my girl
	Consultative Devices		νομίζεις ότι θα μπορούσα... / do you think I could..., θα ήταν δυνατόν / would it be possible..., είναι εντάξει αν / is it ok if...
	Appealers	εντάξει; / ok? έτσι δεν είναι; isn't it? Ναι; / right?	
Upgraders (Lexical Modifiers)		Intensifiers	απολύτως / absolutely, εντελώς / completely, εξαιρετικά / extremely, αρκετά / rather, πραγματικά / really, τόσο / so, πάρα πολύ / totally, καθόλου / at all, αυτή τη στιγμή / right now, τώρα / now, αμέσως / immediately. - Πραγματικά πρέπει να κάνετε την εργασία σας. / You really must do the homework.

*Note.* Adapted from Bella's (2012a, 2012b) internal modification categorization for requests. The Syntactic Downgrader of "Aspect" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) has been included in the categorization as some participants used such strategy. The same applies to the Lexical Downgraders of "Consultative Device" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and "Appealers" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Sifianou, 1999). Additionally, the category of Upgraders (Intensifiers) has been introduced following Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Halupka-Rešetar's (2014) categorizations.

The example of a request in Greek with its translation in English provided below serves to illustrate the data coding carried out in this study. Subsequently, Table 17 further down shows the coding of the sentence in the given example:

(1) Gr. *Συγγνώμη<sup>14</sup>, μπορώ να πάρω το ποτηράκι σου αν δεν το χρησιμοποιείς; Ξέχασα που έβαλα το δικό μου.*

Eng. Excuse me, can I get your (little) cup if you are not using it? I forgot where I put mine.

**Table 17**

*Coding Example*

Type	Category	Element
1. External Modification	Attention Getter	‘Συγγνώμη’ Eng. ‘Excuse me’
2. Request Perspective	Speaker-oriented	‘Μπορώ να’ Eng. ‘Can I’
3. Request Strategy/Degree of Directness	Conventionally Indirect/Query Preparatory-Permission	‘Μπορώ να πάρω’ Eng. ‘Can I get’
4. Internal Modification/Downgraders	Lexical/Solidarity Markers	‘ποτηράκι’ (-άκι ending expresses diminutive) Eng. ‘(little) cup’
5. Internal Modification/Upgraders	-	None
6. External Modification	Considerator	‘αν δεν το χρησιμοποιείς;’ Eng. ‘if you are not using it?’
7. External Modification	Grounder	‘Ξέχασα που έβαλα το δικό μου’. Eng. I forgot where I put mine.

The previous coding procedure was carried out with all the role plays from the data<sup>15</sup>. Subsequently, the data was transferred to two Excel spreadsheets, one designed for the NS and the

<sup>14</sup>In this specific example, *Συγγνώμη* (‘Excuse me’) functions as an Attention-Getter rather than an Apology, even though it may appear to serve as one. This usage occurs recurrently in the data.

<sup>15</sup>Sometimes, the form or structure alone does not determine a specific type of request or modification. Instead, it is the speaker’s intention, inferred from the context of the entire role play, that defines it.

other for the NNS. These spreadsheets included the following information: participants' ID, level of proficiency in Greek, context, types of requests and subcategories, external modification strategies, internal modification strategies (Downgraders and Upgraders), as well as proficiency level in the case of the NNS. Additionally, the cases of absence or unclear request types were included in the spreadsheets for the first coding.

To evaluate interrater reliability, two independent raters—the author of the present doctoral dissertation and a second coder, an SLA researcher and native speaker of Greek—independently coded 20% of the dataset. Interrater agreement was assessed using Cohen's Kappa ( $\kappa$ ) as the primary measure of reliability, following the interpretive guidelines proposed by Landis and Koch (1977). Percentages of agreement were also reported to complement the interpretation.

For role play 1 (Suitcase Scenario)<sup>16</sup>, Cohen's Kappa was  $\kappa = .851$ , indicating almost perfect agreement, with a corresponding percentage agreement of 91.3%. Role play 2 (Cleaning Scenario) yielded a  $\kappa = .718$ , suggesting substantial agreement, with 87% percentage agreement. For role play 5 (Deadline Extension Scenario),  $\kappa = .871$  was obtained, reflecting almost perfect agreement, with a percentage agreement of 91.3%. In role play 6 (Overtime Scenario),  $\kappa = .929$  was recorded, again indicating almost perfect agreement, with a 95.6% percentage agreement. Finally, role plays 3 (Sugar Scenario), 4 (Shoes Scenario), and 7 (Day Off Scenario) presented a Kappa of NaN<sup>17</sup>, which occurs when there is perfect agreement (100%) and no variability between coders. Across the coded subset, the overall observed agreement was 95.57%, demonstrating a high level of consistency between raters. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion, and consensus decisions were adopted for subsequent analyses.

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<sup>16</sup>Interrater reliability was calculated based on the categorization of head acts.

<sup>17</sup>The NaN values for role plays 3 (Sugar Scenario), 4 (Shoes Scenario), and 7 (Day Off Scenario) occur because there was 100% agreement among raters, which makes the kappa calculation mathematically undefined (division by zero). This actually indicates perfect agreement in these cases.

Once the coding was complete, the frequencies were calculated as to the number of times the participants performed the types of requests by level as well as the external and internal modification strategies.

Regarding the statistical treatment used in the present study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected through the role plays. The data consisted of categorical variables (head acts) and continuous variables (modifications). The independent variables were proficiency level, and L1 influence (Spanish/Catalan). On the other hand, the dependent variables under analysis were the types of request strategies (Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect) and external and internal modifications.

Descriptive statistics were conducted to measure frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, regarding the request strategies and modifications employed by the native and non-native speaker groups across the four proficiency levels (A2, B1, B2, and C1) in all seven role play scenarios. A combination of frequency tables and bar charts were used to compare the distribution of request strategies and modifications employed by the different groups in each scenario. These visual representations help visualize potential significant changes in the learners' requesting behavior as their proficiency level increases as they adapt to the communicative context of the interaction.

Concerning the inferential statistics, they were used to address RQ1 and RQ3. With regards to RQ1, different tests were used to ascertain whether proficiency level affects the use of request strategies and modifications significantly. Nominal logistic regression was used to assess the probability to use a specific category of head act (Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests). In addition, one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was run



to test whether significant differences exist in the number of request modifications used across groups and proficiency levels. Post hoc tests were employed to observe where the significant differences are. To address RQ3, Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were first employed to explore statistically significant differences in address form usage between NS and NNS. Additionally, logistic regression was conducted to examine the probability of using (or not using) the formal address form 'you' in Greek across different proficiency groups.

It should be mentioned that although tests for normality (Shapiro-Wilk) indicated that the sample distributions deviated from normality ( $p < .05$ ), parametric methods were nonetheless employed. This decision was based on previous research suggesting that parametric tests are generally robust to violations of the normality assumption (Blanca et al., 2017, 2023; Lumley et al., 2002; Schmider et al., 2010; Lantz, 2012). Moreover, visual inspection of the data (via histograms and Q-Q plots) suggested only minor deviations from normality without extreme skewness or kurtosis. Therefore, parametric analyses were considered appropriate and more powerful for detecting group differences.

Version 29 of SPSS software was utilized for carrying out the aforementioned tests.

## **Chapter 4. Results**

This chapter will present the main findings of the current study concerning the participants' acquisition of requests in Greek while focusing on proficiency (RQ1), formal vs informal contexts (RQ2), and instances of pragmatic transfer (RQ3). A mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitatively and quantitatively analyses, was employed to address RQ1 and RQ3, whereas RQ2 was examined using qualitative methods. First, to observe possible divergences in requesting behavior across different proficiency levels, Section 4.1 will show the qualitative and quantitative results for the first research question regarding the role of proficiency in the acquisition of the speech act of requests in Greek by NNS. Subsequently, Section 4.2 will present the qualitative results from the data for the second research question concerning the use of requests by NS and NNS in formal and informal contexts according to the social parameters of power, distance and imposition (Section 4.2). Next, Section 4.3 will introduce the qualitative and quantitative results in regard to the third research question, that is, the possible instances of pragmatic transfer shown by the NNS observed in the role plays. Following, Section 4.4 will present the results obtained in the retrospective verbal reports. Lastly, Section 4.5 includes a summary of the chapter highlighting the most relevant findings.

#### **4.1. RQ1: The Role of Proficiency in the Acquisition of the Speech Act of Requests in Greek as a Foreign Language by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals**

The first research question explores the role of proficiency in the acquisition of the speech act of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. Specifically, it examines whether there are differences among the groups (NS and NNS) in their pragmatic competence in producing requests in Greek. Thus, this section presents the results for the types of requests (head acts) and modifications employed by both NS (as a baseline for comparison) and the NNS groups<sup>18</sup> per role play scenario, based on the coding scheme outlined in Section 3.5.2. A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis is used to provide a comprehensive examination of the data. The qualitative analysis includes descriptive statistics and offers observations on NNS's use of request types and modifications. To illustrate these observations, providing examples of the NS's and NNS's requests and modifications was deemed relevant. In contrast, the quantitative analysis identifies patterns and statistical relationships between groups, employing nominal logistic regression for request types (head acts), and one-way ANOVA for modifications. The seven scenarios were initially included in the nominal logistic regression analysis for the categorical variable of head acts. However, only three yielded reliable results as the remaining four could not converge due to empty cells (i.e., an empty combination of group and choice). The three role plays that produced reliable results are the Cleaning, the Sugar, and the Shoes Scenarios.

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<sup>18</sup>Despite there being only four participants at the C1 level, percentages are provided for this group for data consistency. However, the results obtained from this group will be interpreted tentatively.

#### 4.1.1. Suitcase Scenario

In this role play, the participants had to ask a friend for a suitcase (-D, -P). Table 18 presents the overall distribution (frequency and percentages) of the types of request strategies used in this scenario by all the groups of participants, both NS and NNS of different proficiency levels.

**Table 18**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Suitcase Scenario*

Request Type (Head Act)	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need/Want Statement	5	9	1	6	2	12	0	0	0	0
Total Direct	5	9	1	6	2	12	0	0	1	10
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	5	9	3	20	0	0	1	5	0	0
Query Preparatory-Ability	23	43	3	20	9	56	6	31	3	90
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	12	22	8	53	4	24	10	52	0	0
Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	40	75	14	93	13	81	17	89	3	90
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	8	15	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	8	15	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

As shown in the previous table, both NS and NNS exhibited a strong preference for Conventionally Indirect Requests in this scenario. Among the NS, the two most frequently used Conventionally Indirect Requests were the Query-Preparatory of Ability ( $n = 23$ ) and the Query

Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal) ( $n = 12$ ). NNS across all levels also favored these same types, although their preferences varied. Participants at the A2 and B2 levels preferred the Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal) ( $n = 8$  and  $n = 10$ , respectively), while those at the B1 and C1 levels tended to use the Query-Preparatory of Ability more frequently ( $n = 9$  and  $n = 3$ , respectively). The following examples illustrate this variation in the use of the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative and the Query-Preparatory of Ability across groups in the Suitcase Scenario:

(2) A2. Gr. *Παρακαλώ εσύ έχεις μια βαλίτσα για μένα;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Please, (do) you have one suitcase for me? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(3) B1. Gr. *Μπορείς να μου δώσεις τη δική \*της;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you give me yours? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(4) B2. Gr. *Έχεις μία βαλίτσα για να πάω για ένα ταξίδι μου;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. (Do) you have one suitcase for me to take on my trip? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(5). C1. Gr. *Μήπως μπορείς να μου δίνεις την βαλίτσα σου την έχω κάποιες μέρες για το ταξίδι;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you maybe lend me your suitcase so I can have it for a few days for the trip?

[Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(6). NS. Gr. *Μπορείς να μου δανείσεις τη δική σου για μια βδομαδούλα;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you lend me yours for one week? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

To a lesser extent, both NS and NNS opted for Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests in the form of Hints when asking the interlocutor for the suitcase. At the B2 level, this type of request

was used less frequently ( $n = 2$ ), compared to the NS, who exhibited a greater use of Hints ( $n = 8$ ). Conversely, Direct Requests appeared to be the least employed by the participants in both groups. Most participants relied on the Need/Want Statement (NS:  $n = 5$ ; NNS at A2:  $n = 1$ ; B1:  $n = 2$ ; B2:  $n = 0$ ; and C1:  $n = 1$ ), except for one NNS at the C1 level who opted for the Performative ( $n = 1$ ). None of the participants in any group opted for either Mood Derivable (Imperative) or Obligation Statement. Similarly, none of them used the Suggestory Formula type of request. Finally, one participant at the B1 level did not manage to produce the request.

Table 19 shows the means and standard deviations for the use of Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests by all groups.

**Table 19**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Suitcase Scenario*

<b>Groups</b>		<b>Direct</b>	<b>Conventionally Indirect</b>	<b>Non-Conventionally Indirect</b>
NS	Mean	1.25	10	8
	Standard	2.16	8.64	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	0.25	3.5	0
	Standard	0.43	2.87	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	0.5	3.25	0
	Standard	0.86	3.7	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	0	4.25	2
	Standard	0	4.02	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0.25	0.75	0
	Standard	0.43	1.3	0
	Deviation			

As it was mentioned before, the nominal logistic regression analysis failed to yield reliable statistical results for the types of head acts used by NS and NNS in this scenario. Consequently, the data for this scenario could not be included in the inferential analysis, as it did not meet the assumptions required for reliable statistical modelling.

Regarding external and internal modifications, Table 20 includes the frequencies and percentages of the modifications used by all groups in this specific scenario.

**Table 20**

*Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Suitcase Scenario*

Modifications	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
External	177	76	35	87	46	83	68	77	10	66
Internal	54	23	5	12	9	16	15	22	5	33
Total	231	100	40	100	55	100	83	100	15	100

As the above table shows, all groups of participants strongly favored external modifications. However, NS displayed a higher use of external ( $n = 177$ ) and internal ( $n = 54$ ) modification devices than NNS. In the case of the NNS, B2 level participants employed the highest number of modification devices (external:  $n = 68$ ; internal:  $n = 15$ ) to mitigate the force of their requests followed by those at the B1 level (external:  $n = 46$ ; internal:  $n = 9$ ). Participants at the A2 level employed a lower number of modification devices (external,  $n = 35$ ; internal,  $n = 5$ ). These results indicate a greater use of modifiers with increased proficiency. Regarding the C1 level, they exhibited a high use of modifications (external;  $n = 10$ ; internal,  $n = 6$ ) but the low number of participants in this group ( $n = 4$ ) should be noted. The means and standard deviations for the use of external and internal modifications per group are included in Table 21.

**Table 21***Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Suitcase Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	1	0	1
	Max	8	3	10
	Mean	3.34	1.02	4.36
	Standard Deviation	1.49	0.90	1.92
A2	Min	1	0	1
	Max	4	2	5
	Mean	2.33	0.33	2.67
	Standard Deviation	0.90	0.61	1.04
B1	Min	2	0	2
	Max	4	2	5
	Mean	2.88	0.56	3.44
	Standard Deviation	0.95	0.72	1.09
B2	Min	1	0	1
	Max	7	2	9
	Mean	3.58	0.79	4.37
	Standard Deviation	1.77	0.71	2.24
C1	Min	2	0	2
	Max	3	3	6
	Mean	2.50	1.25	3.75
	Standard Deviation	0.57	1.25	1.70

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of proficiency in the total number of request modifications in the Suitcase Scenario. The test revealed statistically significant differences in the number of modifications,  $F(3, 238) = 4, p = .015$ . The effect size, calculated using eta squared ( $\eta^2 = .113$ ), indicated that these differences were large. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD revealed significant differences between A2 and NS, ( $p = .014$ ); No statistically significant differences were found between the other three proficiency levels and the NS. The following examples below show the difference in the number of modifications used by one A2 participant and one NS in the Suitcase Scenario:

(7) A2. Gr. Θα ήθελα [Conditional] μια βαλίτσα, νομίζω εσύ έχεις μία βαλίτσα. [Grounder]

Eng. I would like [Conditional] a suitcase, I think you have a suitcase. [Grounder]

(8). NS. Gr. *θέλω να σου ζητήσω μια πολύ μεγάλη χάρη*. [Preparator] [...] *Ξέρεις ότι φεύγω ταξίδι την επόμενη βδομάδα* [Discourse Orientation Move], *αλλά δυστυχώς δεν μπορώ να βρω*



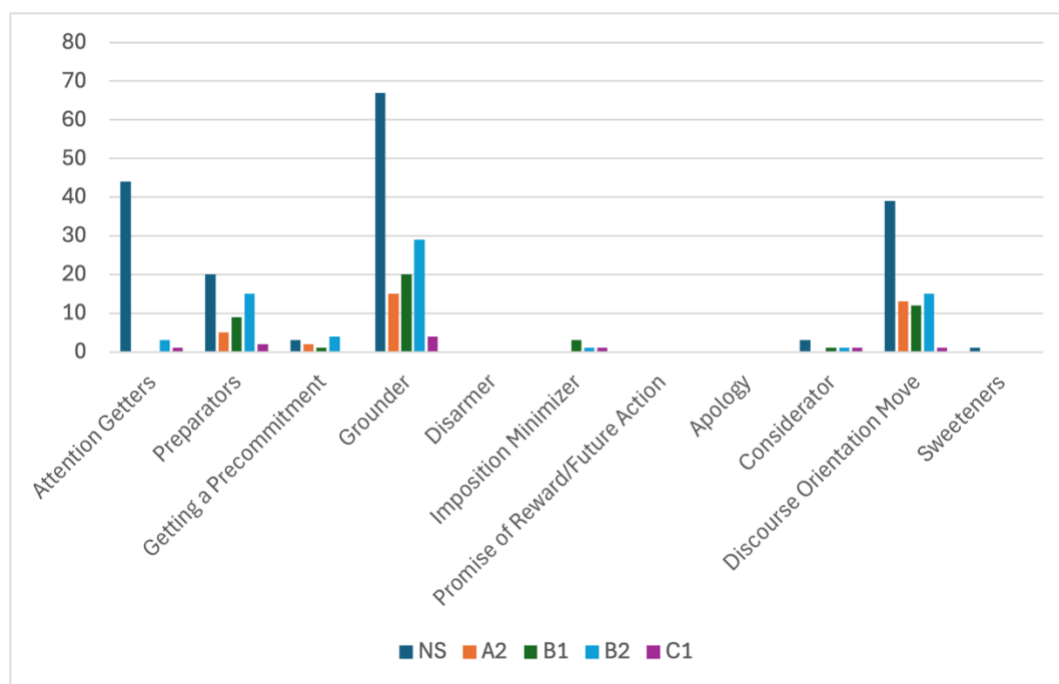
πουθενά τη βαλίτσα μου, δεν ξέρω τι έχει γίνει [Grounder]. Μήπως [Downtoner] θα μπορούσα [Conditional] να δανειστώ [Passive Voice] τη δική σου;

Eng. I want to ask you a big favor. [Preparator] [...] You know that I'm going on a trip next week [Discourse Orientation Move], but unfortunately, I can't find my suitcase anywhere, I don't know what happened [Grounder]. Could I [Conditional] possibly [Downtoner] borrow [Passive Voice] yours?

Figure 1 below displays the frequencies of external modifications used by all groups in this scenario.

**Figure 1**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Suitcase Scenario*



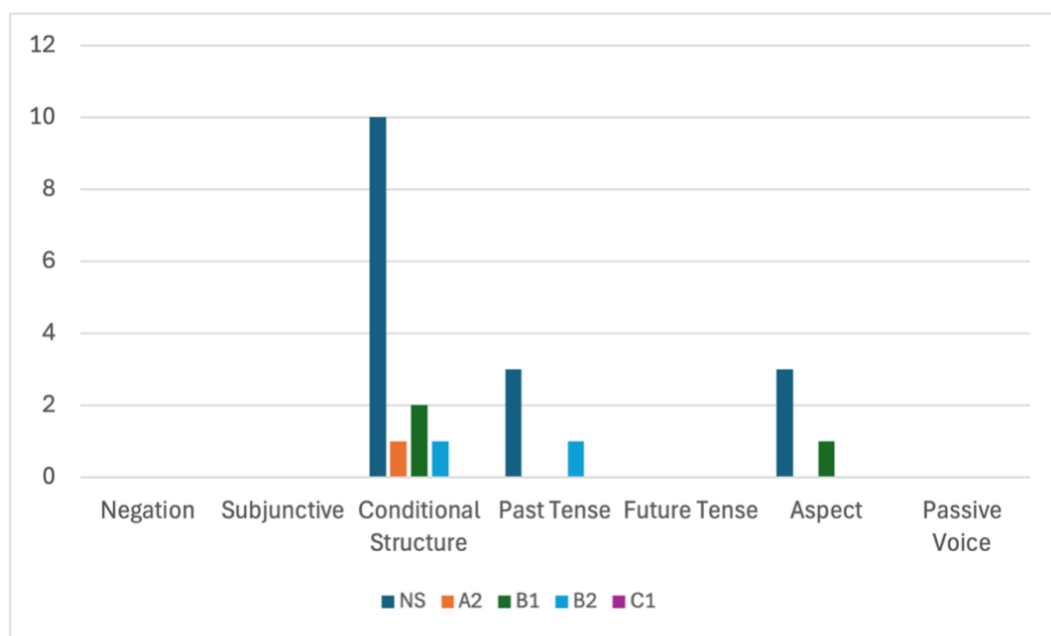
As the previous figure illustrates, Preparators, Grounders and Discourse Orientation Moves are the most frequently used external modifiers. NS predominantly used these three modifications ( $n = 20$ ,  $n = 67$ , and  $n = 39$ , respectively) in their requests, and it can be observed that the NNS's use of Preparators (A2:  $n = 5$ ; B1:  $n = 9$ ; B2:  $n = 15$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ) and Grounders (A2:  $n = 15$ ; B1:  $n$

= 20; B2:  $n = 29$ ; C1:  $n = 4$ ) became more frequent with increased proficiency. Despite being commonly used across all levels, the frequency of Discourse Orientation Moves used by NNS followed a non-linear trend—with frequency decreasing from level A2 ( $n = 13$ ) to B1 ( $n = 12$ ), increasing at B2 ( $n = 15$ ), and then declining again at C1 ( $n = 1$ ). Some differences can also be observed in the use of Attention Getters. NS seemed to favor this modification ( $n = 44$ ) more than NNS, who used them sparingly in the upper levels (B2:  $n = 3$ ; and C1:  $n = 1$ ). Finally, other types of external modifications, such as Getting a Precommitment, Imposition Minimizers, Considerators, or Sweeteners, were rarely used by both NS and NNS, while Disarmers, Promises of Future Action/Reward and Apologies were not used at all in this scenario.

Concerning internal modifications, Figure 2 below illustrates the frequencies in the use of syntactic modifiers used by all groups in this scenario.

**Figure 2**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Suitcase Scenario*

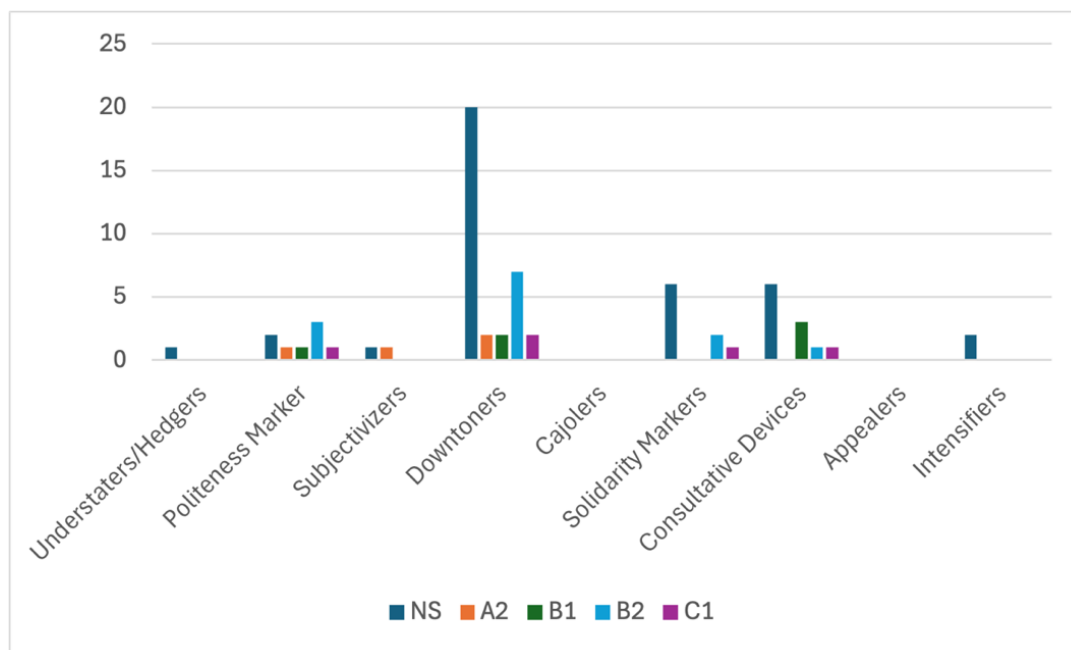


The previous figure indicates a low overall usage of syntactic modifications across groups. The Conditional Structure ( $n = 10$ ) was the most highly used by NS. To a lesser extent, NS drew on the use of the Past Tense ( $n = 3$ ) and the Aspect modifier ( $n = 3$ ) to express uncertainty or doubt. As for the NNS, some use of the Conditional Structure (A2:  $n = 1$ ; B1:  $n = 2$ ; B2:  $n = 1$ ) was found at the A2 and B1 levels, although its occurrence became less frequent at the B2 level and was nonexistent at the C1 level. Other syntactic modifiers such as the Past Tense (B2:  $n = 1$ ), and the Aspect modifier (B1:  $n = 1$ ) were rarely used. Finally, none of the participants internally modified their requests by using Negation, Subjunctive, Future Tense, or Passive Voice.

Regarding the lexical/phrasal modifiers, Figure 3 shows the number of types used by the participants in all groups.

**Figure 3**

*Frequencies of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Suitcase Scenario*



As observed in the previous figure, NS made more frequent use of some lexical modifications than NNS. Downtoners and Politeness Markers were used by participants across all

groups, though their use follows a non-linear trend. NS used Downtoners ( $n = 20$ ) predominantly, which were also employed by some NNS (B2:  $n = 7$ ). However, this modifier was used to a lesser extent by the other groups (A2:  $n = 2$ ; B1:  $n = 2$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ). By contrast, Politeness Markers were employed less frequently across all proficiency levels, with B2 participants using them sparingly ( $n = 3$ ), and only some NNS used Consultative Devices (B1:  $n = 3$ ; B2:  $n = 1$ ; C1:  $n = 1$ ). Finally, the use of other lexical/phrasal modifiers was limited, such as Understaters/Hedgers, Subjectivizers, Solidarity Markers, Appealers, and Intensifiers, with no Cajolers being employed in this scenario.

#### 4.1.2. Cleaning Scenario

In this role play, the participants had to ask a roommate to clean the apartment after throwing a party (-D, -P). Table 22 includes the frequencies and percentages per type of request employed by NS and NNS in this scenario. From the total cohort, data for this role play were unavailable for three NS and six NNS, specifically one at the B1 level and five at the B2 level.

**Table 22**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Cleaning Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
Request Type (Head Act)	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	3	6	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
Performative	0	0	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
Obligation Statement	8	16	2	13	4	26	8	57	1	25
Need/Want Statement	1	2	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Direct	12	24	4	26	5	33	9	64	1	25
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0
Query Preparatory-Ability	10	20	5	33	4	26	1	7	3	75
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	1	2	1	6	2	13	0	0	0	0
Suggestory Formula	7	14	1	6	1	6	1	7	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	18	36	7	46	7	46	3	21	3	75
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	20	40	3	20	3	20	2	14	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	20	40	3	20	3	20	2	14	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	50	100	15	100	15	100	14	100	4	100

The previous table shows several differences in the use of requests across the groups. NS mostly preferred to use Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests ( $n = 20$ ) followed by a

Conventionally Indirect Request, the Query Preparatory of Ability ( $n = 10$ ) and a Direct Request, Obligation Statement ( $n = 8$ ). Other NS also used a Conventionally Indirect Request, the Suggestory Formula ( $n = 7$ ). However, although this type of request became less frequent as proficiency increased, Hints ( $n = 3$ ) were used by some participants at the lower levels (A2 and B1). None of the participants at the C1 level used Hints, which contrasts with the higher frequency of this request type ( $n = 20$ ) among the NS. Instead, the NNS mostly favored the Query Preparatory of Ability (A2:  $n = 5$ ; B1:  $n = 4$ ; C1:  $n = 3$ ); However, most participants at the B2 level opted for Direct Requests using the Obligation Statement ( $n = 8$ ), which was barely used by the NS. Similar patterns between NS and NNS can be observed in the minimal use of other Conventionally Indirect Requests such as the Suggestory Formula and Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal). Finally, neither NS nor NNS used the Query Preparatory of Permission, except for one B2 participant. It is also worth mentioning that two participants (one at the A2 level and another at the B1 level) failed to fully produce the request. The following examples highlight this variation in the types of requests used across groups in the Cleaning Scenario:

(9) A2. Gr. *Το σπίτι είναι βρόμικο.* [Non-Con./Hint]

Eng. The house is dirty. [Non-Con./Hint]

(10) B1. Gr. *Αλλά δεν είναι καλά που όλα είναι βρόμικο.* [Non-Con./Hint]

Eng. It's not good that everything is dirty. [Non-Con./Hint]

(11) B2. Gr. *Πρέπει να το καθαρίσεις.* [Direct/Obligation Statement]

Eng. You must clean it. [Direct/Obligation Statement]

(12). C1. Gr. *Μπορείς εσύ να μαζέψεις λίγο τα πράγματα και αν χρειάζεται αύριο μπορούμε να το τελειώσουμε μαζί;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you tidy up a bit, and if needed, we can finish it together tomorrow? [Query-

Preparatory of Ability]

(13). NS. Gr. *Το σπίτι είναι λίγο βρόμικο από χτες.* [Non-Con./Hint]

Eng. The house is a bit dirty since yesterday. [Non-Con./Hint]

Table 23 below shows the means and standard deviations of the use of the types of requests in the Cleaning Scenario.

**Table 23**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Cleaning Scenario*

Groups		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect
NS	Mean	3	4.5	20
	Standard	3.8	4.15	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	1	1.75	3
	Standard	0.71	1.92	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	1.25	1.75	3
	Standard	1.64	1.48	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	2.25	0.75	2
	Standard	3.35	0.43	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0.25	0.75	0
	Standard	0.43	1.30	0
	Deviation			

A nominal logistic regression<sup>19</sup> was conducted to examine the effect of proficiency level on the probability of using Direct, Conventionally Indirect, or Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Cleaning Scenario. Overall group differences were not statistically significant, (Wald = 10.57,  $p = .103$ ). However, significant pairwise differences were obtained between the B2 group and NS. Specifically, the odds of producing a Conventionally Indirect Request (vs. a Direct

<sup>19</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.

Request) were significantly lower for B2 participants compared to NS,  $\text{Exp}(b) = 0.22, p < .05$ . Similarly, the odds of producing a Non-Conventionally Indirect Request (vs. a Direct Request) were also significantly lower for the B2 group,  $\text{Exp}(b) = 0.13, p < .05$ .

Concerning external and internal modifications, the frequencies and percentages for their use by the different groups of participants are outlined in Table 24.

**Table 24**

*Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Cleaning Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
Modifications	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
External	99	57	28	87	28	82	35	71	12	66
Internal	72	42	4	12	6	17	14	28	6	33
Total	171	100	32	100	34	100	49	100	18	100

The frequencies shown in the above table indicate that all groups exhibit a higher preference for external modification. However, NS used more external ( $n = 99$ ) and internal ( $n = 72$ ) modifiers overall in this particular scenario. Contrastively, all groups of NNS employed fewer modification devices, lagging far behind their NS peers, as shown by the total number of devices used by each group. Regarding the external modifiers, B2 participants employed them considerably ( $n = 35$ ), followed by participants at the A2 and B1 levels, who used the same number of devices (both  $n = 28$ ). C1 participants mostly used external modifications ( $n = 12$ ). In contrast, the highest number of internal modifiers ( $n = 14$ ) was employed by the B2 group. This was followed by those who used these devices the least (B1:  $n = 6$ ; C1:  $n = 4$ ; A2:  $n = 4$ ). Notably, both types of modifiers appeared to increase with proficiency. Table 25 includes the means and standard deviations of external and internal modifications used by each group of participants.



**Table 25**

*Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Cleaning Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	0	0	0
	Max	5	3	7
	Mean	1.87	1.38	3.25
	Standard	1.35	1.06	1.82
	Deviation			
A2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	3	1	3
	Mean	1.87	0.27	2.13
	Standard	0.91	0.45	0.91
	Deviation			
B1	Min	0	0	1
	Max	3	2	4
	Mean	1.75	0.38	2.13
	Standard	1.00	0.71	1.08
	Deviation			
B2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	11	2	12
	Mean	1.84	0.74	2.58
	Standard	2.60	0.80	3.00
	Deviation			
C1	Min	2	0	2
	Max	5	5	8
	Mean	3.00	1.50	4.50
	Standard	1.41	2.38	3.00
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between groups in the number of request modifications in the Cleaning Scenario,  $F(2, 381) = 4, p = .056$ . The following examples show some modifications used by one learner at each proficiency level and a NS:

(14) A2. Gr. Παρακαλώ [Politeness Marker] εσύ έχεις να καθαρίζεις το σπίτι, είναι \*πανταβρόμικο.

[Grounder]

Eng. Please, [Politeness Marker] you have to clean the house, it's very dirty. [Grounder]

(15) B1. Gr. Τι είναι αυτή, αυτή \*η χάλια; [Discourse Orientation Move] Μπορεί, πρέπει να καθαρίσ...  
το σπίτι. Είναι πολύ βρόμικο. [Grounder]

Eng. What is this mess? [Discourse Orientation Move] Can, you, have to clean... the house. It is very dirty. [Grounder]

(16) B2. Gr. *Όταν έχεις χρόνο* [Considerator] μπορείς να \*καθαρίσει όλα αυτά, παρακαλώ; [Politeness Marker]

Eng. Whenever you have time, [Considerator] can you clean all this, please? [Politeness Marker]

(17). C1. Gr. *Πωπωπωπω, πολύ βρόμικο είναι.* [Grounder] *Κατερίνα* [Attention Getter] *τι έκανες εδώ;* [Discourse Orientation Move] *Ναι, αλλά όλα είναι βρόμικα.* [Grounder] [...] *Κοίτα εγώ είμαι πτώμα, είμαι πολύ κουρασμένη, δεν μπορώ να σε βοηθήσω τώρα.* [Grounder] μπορείς εσύ να μαζέψεις λίγο [Understater] τα πράγματα και αν χρειάζεται αύριο [Considerator] μπορούμε να το τελειώσουμε μαζί;

Eng. Wow, it's so dirty. [Grounder] Katerina, [Attention Getter] what did you do here? [Discourse Orientation Move] Yeah, but everything's a mess. [Grounder] Look, I'm exhausted, I'm really tired, I can't help you right now. [Grounder] Can you... clean up a bit, and if you need it, [Considerator] we can finish it together tomorrow?

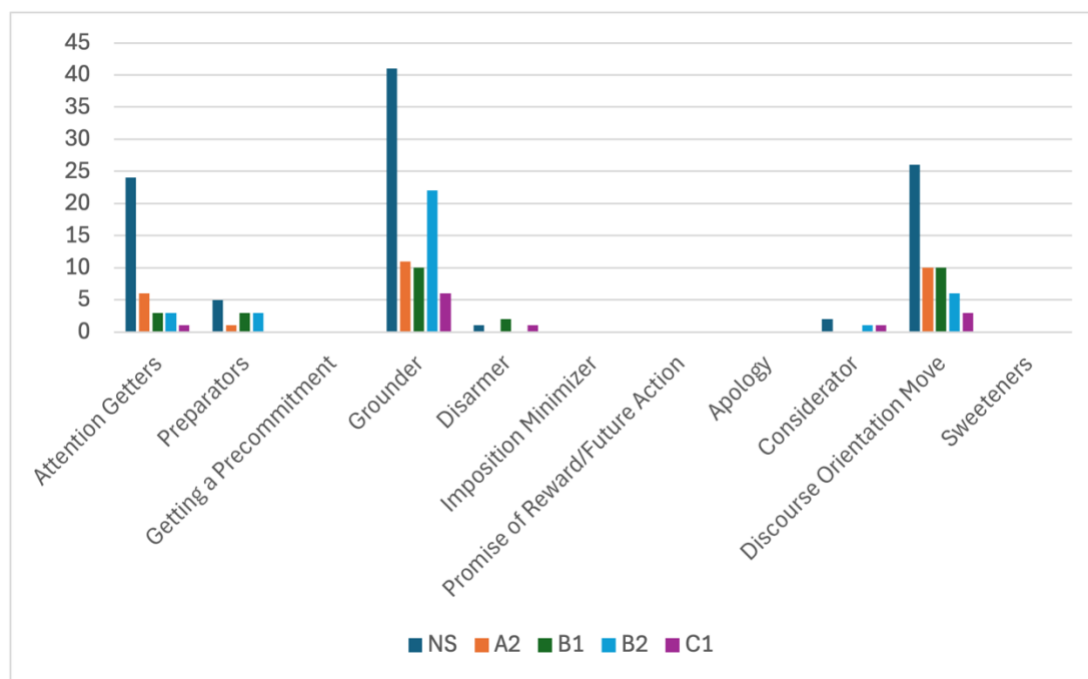
(18). NS. Gr. *Να σου πω,* [Attention Getter] *νομίζω ότι* [Subjectivizer] *μετά τα χθεσινά* πρέπει λίγο [Understater] να συμμαζέψουμε και να επικρατήσει η καθαριότητα στο χώρο. [Grounder]

Eng. Listen, [Attention Getter] I think [Subjectivizer] after everything that happened yesterday, we should tidy up a bit [Understater] and bring some cleanliness back to the place. [Grounder]

The number of the types of external modifications used by NS and NNS in this specific role play is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Cleaning Scenario*

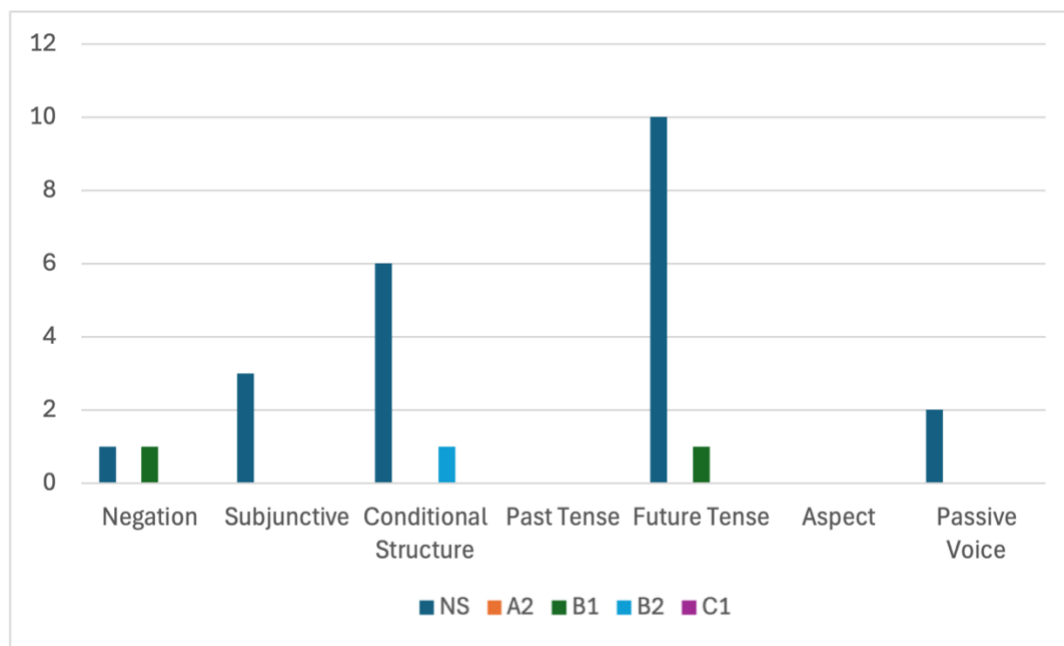


As can be observed in the figure above, both NS and NNS mostly opted for the same types of external modifications to accompany their main request in this scenario: Attention Getters, Grounders, and Discourse Orientation Moves. Despite this similarity, the use of these three modifiers by NNS seemed to decrease with proficiency. Both the A2 and B1 groups displayed similar frequencies in the use of Grounders ( $n = 11$  and  $n = 10$ , respectively) and Discourse Orientation Moves (both  $n = 10$ ). While the number of Grounders ( $n = 22$ ) increased at the B2 level, Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 6$ ) declined. At the C1 level, however, both of these modifiers were used moderately ( $n = 6$  and  $n = 3$ , respectively). On the other hand, participants from all groups barely used Disarmers and Considerators, and no use of Getting a Precommitment, Imposition Minimizers, Promises of Future Action/Reward, Apologies or Sweeteners was observed.

Concerning internal modifications, Figure 5 below illustrates the frequency of syntactic modifiers to the requests used by all groups in this scenario.

**Figure 5**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Cleaning Scenario*

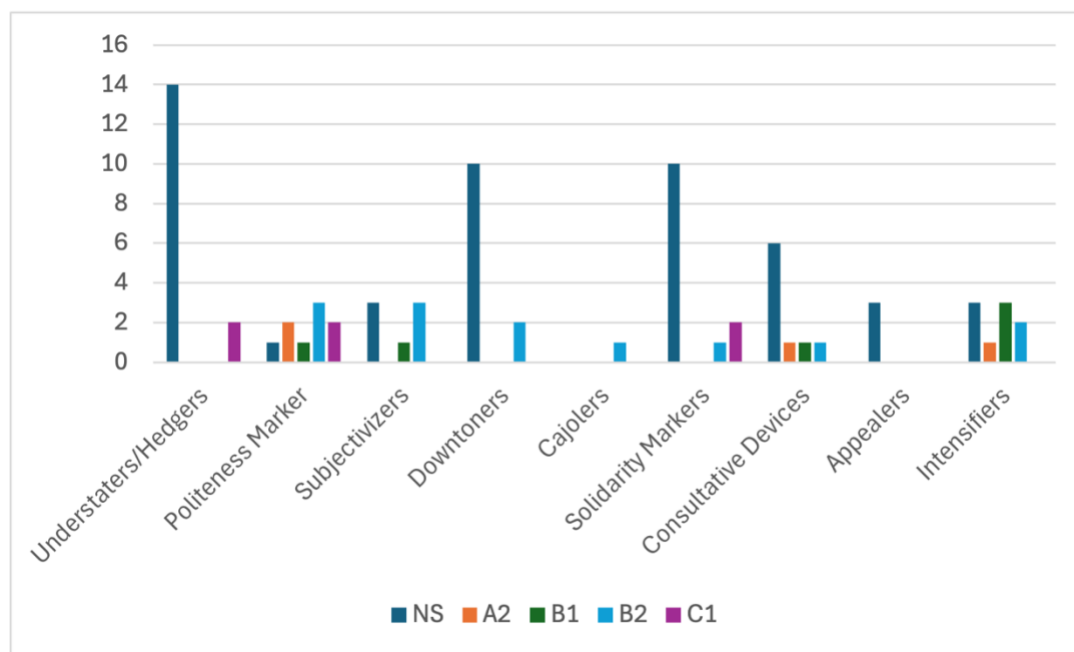


The data presented in the previous figure highlights the NS's use of various syntactic modifiers. It appears that the NS group mostly favored the Future Tense ( $n = 10$ ) and Conditional Structure ( $n = 6$ ) while also employing the Subjunctive ( $n = 3$ ), Passive Voice ( $n = 2$ ), and Negation ( $n = 1$ ) to some extent. In contrast, NNS scarcely used any of these devices to modify their requests internally, with a few exceptions being at the B1 level for Negation and Future Tense (both  $n = 1$ ), and at the B2 level for the Conditional Structure ( $n = 1$ ). Neither NS nor NNS used the Past Tense or the Aspect modifier in the role play.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of frequencies per type of lexical/phrasal modifiers used by the participants in all groups.

**Figure 6**

*Frequencies of Types of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Cleaning Scenario*



As shown in the previous figure, NS displayed a higher use of lexical/phrasal modifiers than NNS. The modifiers mostly preferred by NS in this scenario were as follows: Understaters/Hedgers ( $n = 14$ ), Downtoners ( $n = 10$ ), and Solidarity Markers ( $n = 10$ ). In contrast, these modifiers were barely used by NNS. In fact, participants at the A2, B1, and B2 levels showed no use of Understaters/Hedgers, while it was the most frequently employed modifier ( $n = 14$ ) by NS. Overall, NNS across different levels opted for Politeness Markers, Consultative Devices, and Intensifiers to modify their request although use was still minimal. However, it is worth mentioning that participants at the B2 level used a wider variety of modifiers compared to other proficiency levels.

### 4.1.3. Sugar Scenario

In this role play, the participants were asked to act out a situation in which one neighbor requests sugar from another (+D, -P). The frequencies and percentages for each type of request used by NS and NNS in this scenario are presented in Table 26 below. Data for this role play were not available for one NNS participant at the B2 level.

**Table 26**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Sugar Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
Request Type (Head Act)	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	5	1	25
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need/Want Statement	12	22	1	6	2	12	1	5	0	0
Total Direct	12	22	1	6	3	18	2	11	1	25
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	6	11	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Query Preparatory-Ability	15	28	3	20	6	37	5	27	2	50
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	17	32	8	53	6	37	9	50	1	25
Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	38	71	12	80	12	75	14	77	3	75
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	3	5	2	13	1	6	2	11	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	3	5	2	13	1	6	2	11	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	18	100	4	100

As shown, most NS and NSS opted for the same types of requests, with Conventionally Indirect Requests being the most frequently employed in this scenario. More specifically, NS

showed a higher preference for Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal) ( $n = 17$ ), followed by Query Preparatory of Ability ( $n = 15$ ). In addition, some NS preferred to make Direct Requests using a Need/Want Statement ( $n = 12$ ). The NNS also displayed a similar performance to that of the NS regarding the choice of request types. All NNS groups showed a higher use of Conventionally Indirect Requests using the Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal) and the Query Preparatory of Ability. However, the choice of one type over another varied across proficiency levels as the frequencies indicate. While NNS at both the A2 and B2 levels predominantly used the Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal) ( $n = 8$  and  $n = 9$ , respectively), participants at the B1 level showed an equal preference for this type as well as the Query Preparatory of Ability (both  $n = 6$ ). At the C1 level, the Query Preparatory of Ability was also favored ( $n = 2$ ). Some NS used Query Preparatory of Permission ( $n = 6$ ) and Hints ( $n = 3$ ) to a lesser extent, but these two types of requests were barely employed by NNS. It can also be observed in the frequencies that NNS rarely used Direct Requests compared to NS, but no instances of Mood Derivable (Imperative) or Obligation Statement were used by any group. Moreover, Conventionally Indirect Requests like the Suggestory Formula were also not observed in the data. The following examples show the use of requests across groups in the Sugar Scenario:

(19) A2. Gr. *Έχεις, έχετε ζάχαρη να μου δώσετε;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you have sugar to give me? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(20) B1. Gr. *Έχεις για να μου δίνεις;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you have (some) to give me? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(21) B2. Gr. *Έχεις ζάχαρη;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you have sugar? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(22). C1. Gr. *Ίσως μπορείτε να μας δώσετε λιγάκι, σας παρακαλώ;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you maybe give us a little bit, please? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(23). NS. Gr. *Μήπως έχεις λίγο ζάχαρη για τον καφέ;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you happen to have a bit of sugar for the coffee? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Table 27 includes the means and standard deviations for the use of request types by all groups in this scenario.

**Table 27**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Sugar Scenario*

Groups		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect
NS	Mean	1.75	10.2	5
	Standard	1.79	10.1	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	0.25	3	2
	Standard	0.5	3.5	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	0.75	3	1
	Standard	0.95	3.4	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	0.5	3.5	2
	Standard	0.5	4.3	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0.25	0.75	0
	Standard	0.5	0.95	0
	Deviation			

A nominal logistic regression<sup>20</sup> was carried out to examine the effect on proficiency level on the probability of using different request types in the Sugar Scenario. Results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences across the groups (Wald = 3.79,  $p = .704$ ). However, the odds ratios are provided for descriptive purposes: for Conventionally Indirect vs. Direct Requests,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 3.79$  (A2 vs. NS), 1.26 (B1 vs. NS), and 2.21 (B2 vs. NS); for Non-

<sup>20</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.



Conventionally Indirect vs. Direct Requests,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.13$  (A2 vs. NS), 0.83 (B1 vs. NS), and 0.24 (B2 vs. NS).

In relation to external and internal modifications, Table 28 includes the frequencies and percentages of their use by NS and NNS in the Sugar Scenario.

**Table 28**

*Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Sugar Scenario*

Modifications	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
External	110	52	28	68	35	72	36	61	8	42
Internal	100	47	13	31	13	27	23	38	11	57
Total	210	100	41	100	48	100	59	100	19	100

As observed in the table, the use of external and internal modifications by NS was quite balanced ( $n = 110$  and  $n = 100$ , respectively). Among the NNS, the use of external modifications increased across proficiency levels, with the B1 and B2 groups showing the highest frequencies ( $n = 35$  and  $n = 36$ ), followed by the A2 group ( $n = 28$ ). Notably, participants at the C1 level favored internal modifiers ( $n = 11$ ) over external ones ( $n = 8$ ), a trend that contrasts with the lower-level groups. The A2 and B1 groups showed similar use of internal modifiers ( $n = 13$  each), whereas the frequency increased at the B2 level ( $n = 23$ ).

The means and standard deviations of external and internal modifications used by each group are highlighted in Table 29.

**Table 29***Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Sugar Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	0	0	1
	Max	6	4	9
	Mean	2.08	1.89	3.94
	Standard	1.23	1.03	1.64
	Deviation			
A2	Min	0	0	1
	Max	3	3	5
	Mean	1.87	0.87	2.67
	Standard	0.99	0.99	1.29
	Deviation			
B1	Min	1	0	2
	Max	6	3	6
	Mean	2.19	0.81	3.00
	Standard	1.37	0.83	1.21
	Deviation			
B2	Min	0	0	2
	Max	5	3	6
	Mean	1.89	1.21	3.11
	Standard	1.15	1.13	1.56
	Deviation			
C1	Min	0	1	3
	Max	6	4	7
	Mean	2.00	2.75	4.75
	Standard	0.81	1.50	1.70
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences between all the groups,  $F(3, 637) = 4, p = .008$  in the Sugar Scenario. The effect size was large, with eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) = .125. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD, however, only revealed significant differences between the A2 group and NS ( $p = .041$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the other three proficiency levels and NS. The examples below illustrate the difference in the number of modifications between A2 participants and NS in the Sugar Scenario:

(24). A2. Gr. *Συγγνώμη* [Attention Getter] *αλλά δεν έχω ζάχαρη* [Grounder], *έχεις ζάχαρη;*

Eng. Excuse me [Attention Getter] but I don't have sugar [Grounder], do you have sugar?

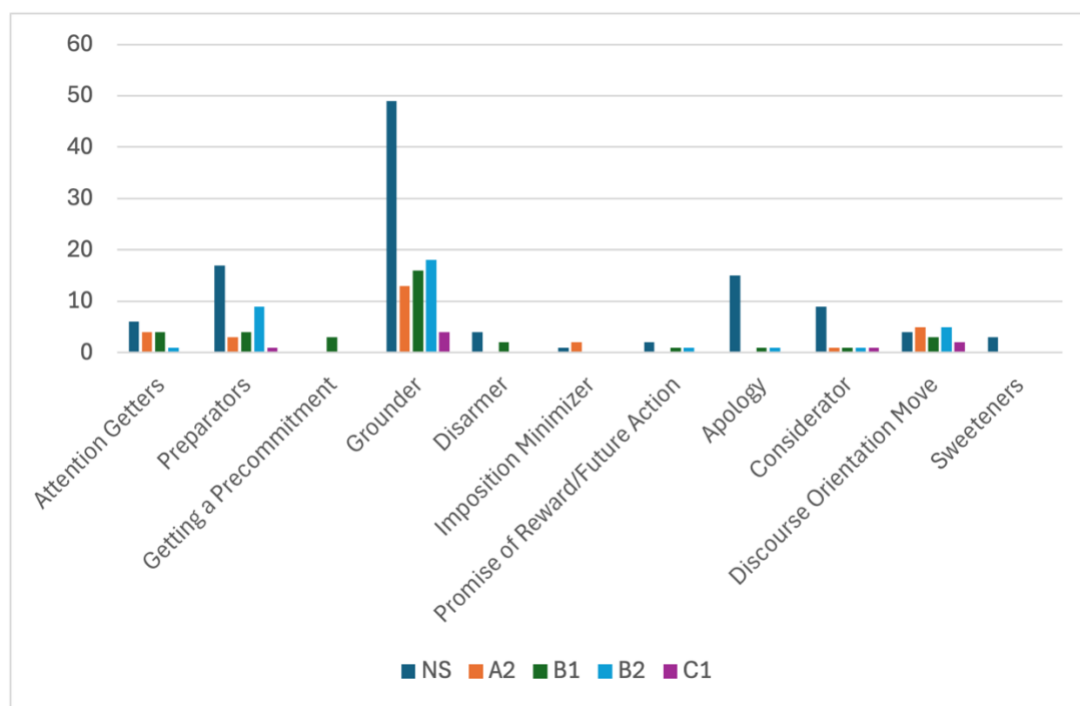
(25). NS. Gr. *Συγγνώμη για την ενόχληση* [Apology]. *Μου λείπει ζάχαρη* [Grounder], *θέλω να φτιάξω καφέ* [Grounder]. *Θα μπορούσατε* [Conditional] *να μου δώσετε λίγο* [Understater] *Αν βέβαια σας είναι εύκολο* [Considerator].

Eng. I'm sorry to bother you [Apology]. I run out of sugar [Grounder]. I want to make coffee [Grounder]. Could [Conditional] you give me a little bit [Understater]? if, of course, if that's ok with you [Considerator].

Figure 7 below shows the frequencies of external modifiers by type across groups.

**Figure 7**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Sugar Scenario*



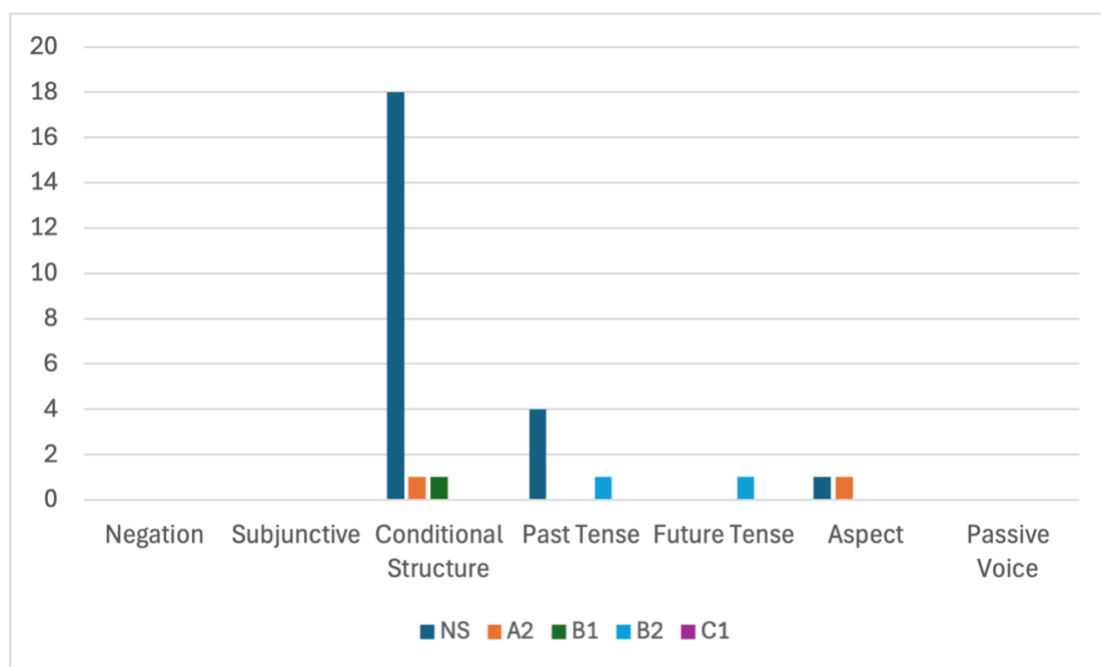
The previous figure indicates that Grounders and Preparators were the most frequently used external modifiers across groups. Grounders were particularly common, with high usage ( $n = 49$ ) by NS and NNS across proficiency levels (A2:  $n = 13$ ; B1:  $n = 16$ ; B2:  $n = 18$ ; C1:  $n = 4$ ). Although

NNS barely employed other strategies, the use of Preparators ( $n = 9$ ) by the B2 group is particularly noteworthy. Preparators were also the second most frequently used modifier ( $n = 17$ ) among NS. Another external modifier observed across proficiency levels, albeit less frequently used, was the Discourse Orientation Move. Notably, A2 and B2 participants used this external modification (both  $n = 5$ ) more frequently than NS. Apologies were rarely employed by NNS (B1:  $n = 1$ ; B2:  $n = 1$ ), while NS used them more frequently ( $n = 15$ ) to introduce requests.

As for the internal modification devices employed by all groups, Figure 8 below shows the frequency of syntactic modifiers found in the requests in this role play.

**Figure 8**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Sugar Scenario*



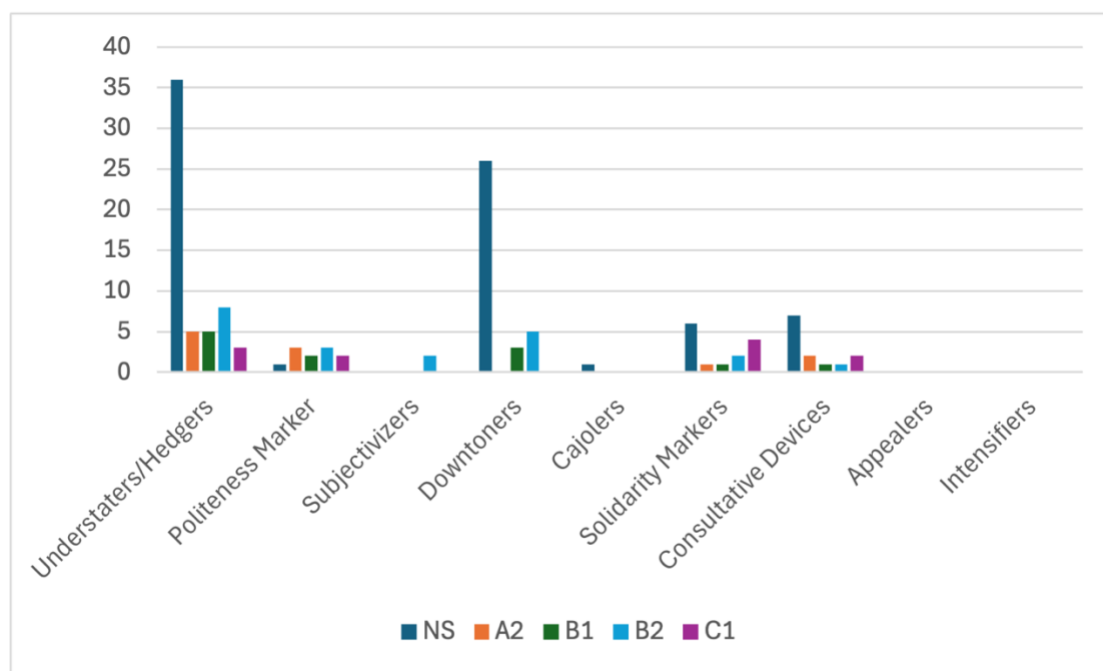
The frequencies presented in the figure above reveal that syntactic modifiers were used more often by NS compared to NNS, who used them sparingly. NS primarily relied on the Conditional Structure ( $n = 18$ ) with occasional use of the Past Tense ( $n = 4$ ). In contrast, these

modifiers appeared only once in the NNS data for this role play. None of the groups made use of Negation, the Subjunctive, or the Passive Voice.

With respect to the lexical/phrasal modifiers identified in this role play, Figure 9 below includes the frequencies of their use across groups.

**Figure 9**

*Frequencies of Types of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Sugar Scenario*



As can be observed, NS relied on various lexical/phrasal modifiers in this scenario, which were used to a lesser extent by NNS. The NS frequently used Understaters/Hedgers ( $n = 36$ ), whereas NNS employed them more moderately, with their highest occurrence ( $n = 8$ ) observed at the B2 level. Politeness Markers, Solidarity Markers, and Consultative Devices were employed across groups, though their overall use remained minimal. Similarly, the use of Subjectivizers and Cajolers was sparse and none of the participants used Appealers or Intensifiers in their requests.

#### 4.1.4. Shoes Scenario

In this role play, the participants were asked to engage in a conversation where a client requests a pair of shoes from a shop assistant (+D, -P). Table 30 below presents the frequencies and percentages of each type of request employed by all participant groups.

**Table 30**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Shoes Scenario*

Request Type (Head Act)	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need/Want Statement	17	32	11	73	7	43	12	63	2	50
Total Direct	17	32	11	73	7	43	12	63	2	50
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	9	16	0	0	3	18	2	10	0	0
Query Preparatory-Ability	10	18	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	14	26	3	20	1	6	4	21	1	25
Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	33	62	3	20	5	31	6	31	1	25
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	3	5	1	6	3	18	1	5	1	25
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	3	5	1	6	3	18	1	5	1	25
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

The distribution shown in the previous table highlights several differences in the types of requests chosen by the groups for this specific scenario. While NS strongly preferred Conventionally Indirect Requests ( $n = 33$ ) (mostly Query Preparatory with Present Indicative),

NNS opted more for Direct Requests across all proficiency levels. Notably, Need/Want Statements (A2:  $n = 11$ ; B1:  $n = 7$ ; B2:  $n = 12$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ) were the most favored among NNS, which were also employed by NS but to a lesser degree ( $n = 17$ ). The use of Conventionally Indirect Requests by the NNS was scarce, with only some participants at the B2 level using the Query Preparatory with Present Indicative more frequently ( $n = 4$ ). None of the participants in any of the groups produced either a Suggestory Formula or any types of Direct Requests (i.e., Mood Derivable, Performative, or Obligation Statement). Finally, one participant at the B1 level was not able to formulate a complete request. The following examples illustrate the use of request types among the groups:

(26) A2. Gr. *Θέλω αυτά παπούτσια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I want these shoes. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(27) B1. Gr. *Εγώ θέλω ένα \*φεγάρι παπούτσια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I want a pair of shoes. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(28) B2. Gr. *Ηθελα να αγοράσω ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια που είδα την περασμένη εβδομάδα.*

[Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I wanted to buy a pair of shoes that I saw last week. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(29). C1. Gr. *Θα ήθελα να αγοράσω αυτό το ζευγάρι παπούτσια που έχετε εδώ.* [Direct/Need-

Want Statement]

Eng. I would like to buy this pair of shoes that you have here. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(30). NS. Gr. *Μήπως έχετε αυτό το ζευγάρι παπούτσια σε 38;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you have this pair of shoes in size 38? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

The means and standard deviations for the use of requests by each group is shown in Table 31.

**Table 31**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Shoes Scenario*

Groups		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect
NS	Mean	4.25	8.25	3
	Standard	8.5	5.9	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	2.75	0.75	1
	Standard	5.5	1.5	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	1.75	1.25	3
	Standard	3.5	1.25	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	3	1.5	1
	Standard	6	1.9	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0.5	0.25	1
	Standard	1	0.5	0
	Deviation			

A nominal logistic regression<sup>21</sup> was conducted to examine the effect of proficiency level on the probability of using Direct, Conventionally Indirect, or Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Shoes Scenario. Overall group differences were statistically significant (Wald = 15.28,  $p = .018$ ). Pairwise comparisons revealed significant differences between the A2 group and NS. Specifically, the odds of producing a Conventionally Indirect Request (vs. a Direct Request) were significantly lower for A2 participants compared to NS,  $\text{Exp}(b) = 0.14$ ,  $p < .05$ . Similarly, the odds of producing a Conventionally Indirect Request (vs. a Direct Request) were also significantly different between B2 and NS,  $\text{Exp}(b) = 0.26$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Table 32 below displays the frequencies and percentages of the use of external and internal modifications by the different groups in this particular scenario.

<sup>21</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.



**Table 32***Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Shoes Scenario*

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>NS</b>		<b>A2</b>		<b>B1</b>		<b>B2</b>		<b>C1</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
External	62	61	9	81	20	74	20	60	9	56
Internal	39	38	2	18	7	25	13	39	7	43
Total	101	100	11	100	27	100	30	100	15	100

The previous table indicates a greater preference for external modifications over internal ones by all groups. As indicated, NS used more external ( $n = 62$ ) than internal modifiers ( $n = 39$ ), which was similar to both B1 and B2 NNS who also used more external modifiers (both  $n = 20$ ). The main difference between B1 and B2 participants was observed in their use of internal modifications ( $n = 7$  and  $n = 13$ , respectively). Moderate usage of modifications was shown among participants at the A2 level (external:  $n = 9$ ; internal:  $n = 2$ ). Finally, participants at the C1 level made considerable use of modifications, opting for external ( $n = 9$ ) over internal modifiers ( $n = 7$ ). Below, the relevant means and standard deviations for both types of modifications used by all groups are shown in Table 33.

**Table 33***Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Shoes Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	0	0	0
	Max	4	2	5
	Mean	1.17	0.74	1.91
	Standard	1.03	0.71	1.13
	Deviation			
A2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	2	1	2
	Mean	0.60	0.13	0.73
	Standard	0.63	0.35	0.79
	Deviation			
B1	Min	0	0	0
	Max	4	2	4
	Mean	1.25	0.44	1.63
	Standard	1.00	0.62	0.95
	Deviation			
B2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	3	2	3
	Mean	1.05	0.68	1.74
	Standard	0.91	0.67	0.99
	Deviation			
C1	Min	1	1	2
	Max	4	3	6
	Mean	2.25	1.75	4.00
	Standard	1.25	0.95	1.82
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences between groups in the number of modifiers in the Shoes Scenario,  $F(8, 135) = 4, p < .001$ . The effect size was large, with eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) = .242. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD identified statistically significant differences between several proficiency levels: A2 and C1, ( $p < .001$ ), A2 and NS ( $p = .003$ ), B1 and C1 ( $p = .001$ ), B2 and C1 ( $p = .002$ ), and C1 and NS ( $p = .002$ ). No statistically significant differences were revealed when comparing B1 and B2 levels to each other or when they were compared to NS. The examples below shows the use of modifications by participants in different groups in this particular scenario:

(31) A2. Gr. *Μου αρέσουν αυτά τα παπούτσια πάρα πολύ.* [Discourse Orientation Move] *θέλω να αγοράσω.*

Eng. I like these shoes a lot [Discourse Orientation Move]. I want to buy (them)

(32) B1. Gr. Θα ήθελα [Conditional] να δω δύο \*ζευγάρι παπούτσια, για ένα γιορτή [Grounder].

Eng. I would like to see two pairs of shoes, for a party [Grounder].

(33) B2. Gr. Ηθελα [Past Tense] να αγοράσω ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια που είδα την περασμένη εβδομάδα...

Eng. I wanted [Past Tense] to buy a pair of shoes that I saw last week...

(34). C1. Gr. Συγγνώμη [Attention Getter], έχω δει ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια εκεί στο παράθυρο [Grounder] και δεν ξέρω [Subjectivizer], αν έχετε το νούμερό μου. Είναι το τριάντα έξι [Grounder].

Eng. Excuse me [Attention Getter], I've seen this pair of shoes here in the window case and I don't know [Subjectivizer] if you have my size. It's thirty-six [Grounder].

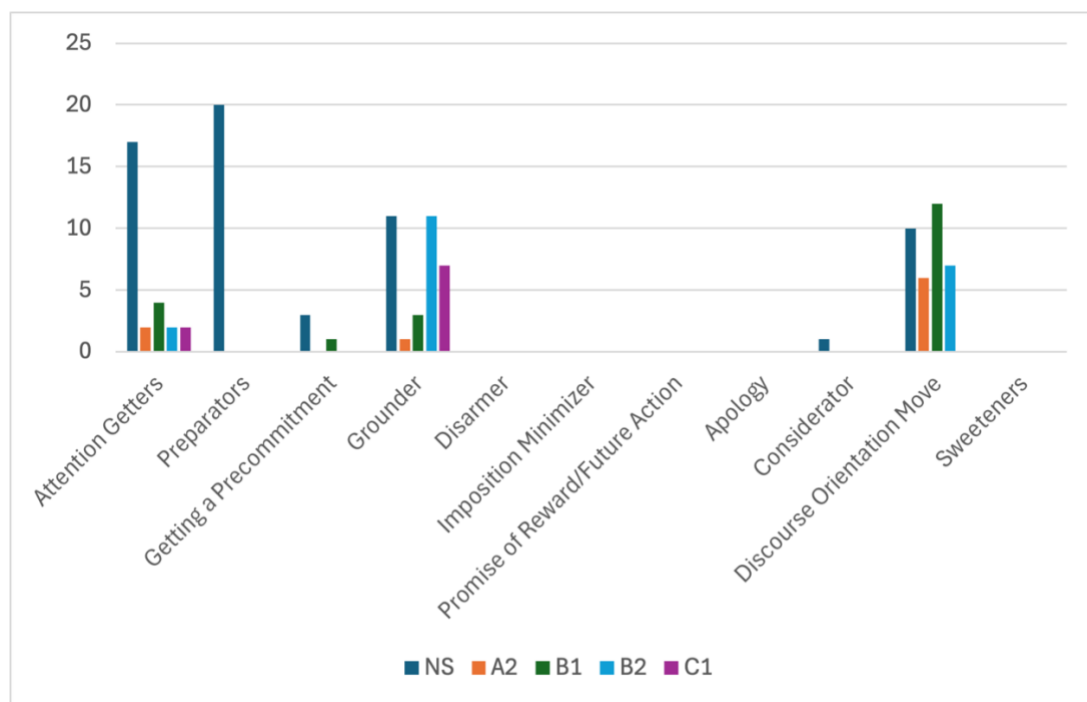
(35). NS. Gr. Συγγνώμη [Attention Getter], να σας ρωτήσω κάτι; [Preparator] υπάρχουν μήπως [Downtoner] σε 43; Γιατί τα βλέπω στη βιτρίνα μόνο μεγάλα... 45... [Grounder]

Eng. Excuse me [Attention Getter], can I ask you something? [Preparator] do you happen to [Downtoner] have them in a size 43? Because I see them only big in the window case ... 45... [Grounder]

Subsequently, Figure 10 presents the frequencies of use of external modifiers by each group in this scenario.

**Figure 10**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Shoes Scenario*

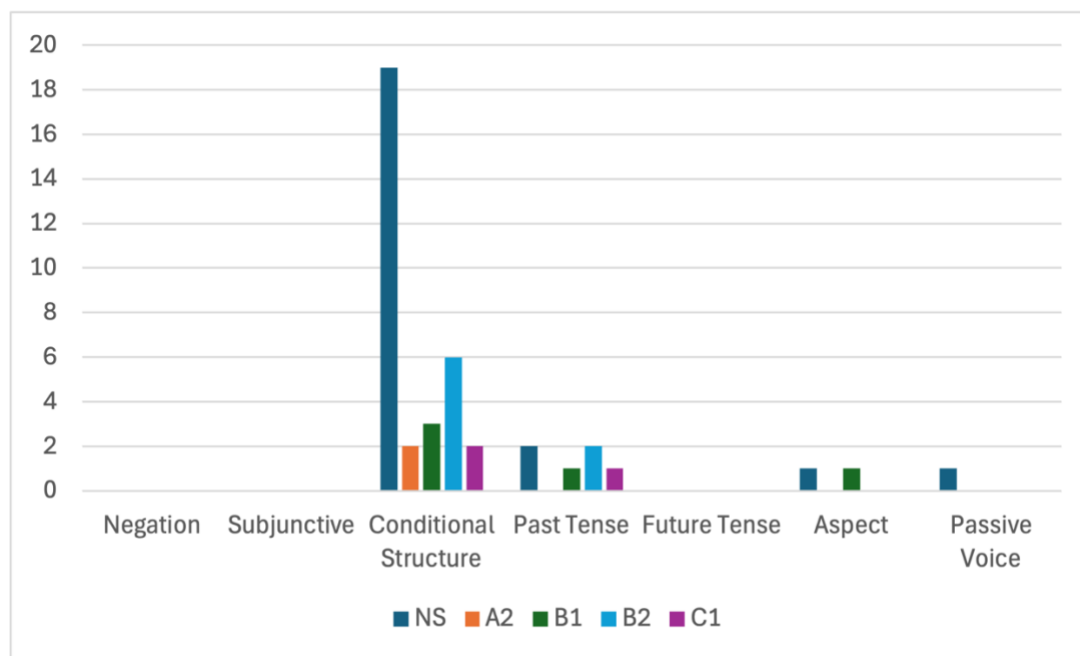


As the previous figure illustrates, NS mostly prioritized Preparators ( $n = 20$ ), Attention Getters ( $n = 17$ ), Grounders ( $n = 11$ ), and Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 10$ ) in this role play. In contrast, NNS relied more heavily on Grounders (A2:  $n = 1$ ; B1:  $n = 3$ ; B2:  $n = 11$ ; C1:  $n = 7$ ) and Discourse Orientation Moves (A2:  $n = 6$ ; B1:  $n = 12$ ; B2:  $n = 7$ ) with the B2 group demonstrating the highest number of frequencies for both modifications. Moreover, NNS used Attention Getters less frequently (A2:  $n = 2$ ; B1:  $n = 4$ ; B2:  $n = 2$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ) and did not employ any Preparators, unlike their NS counterparts. Other types of modifications such as Disarmers, Imposition Minimizers, Promise of Future Action/Reward, Apology or Sweeteners were not used by any group.

As far as the internal modification devices are concerned, Figure 11 below shows the frequencies of the different types of syntactic modifiers used across groups.

**Figure 11**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Shoes Scenario*

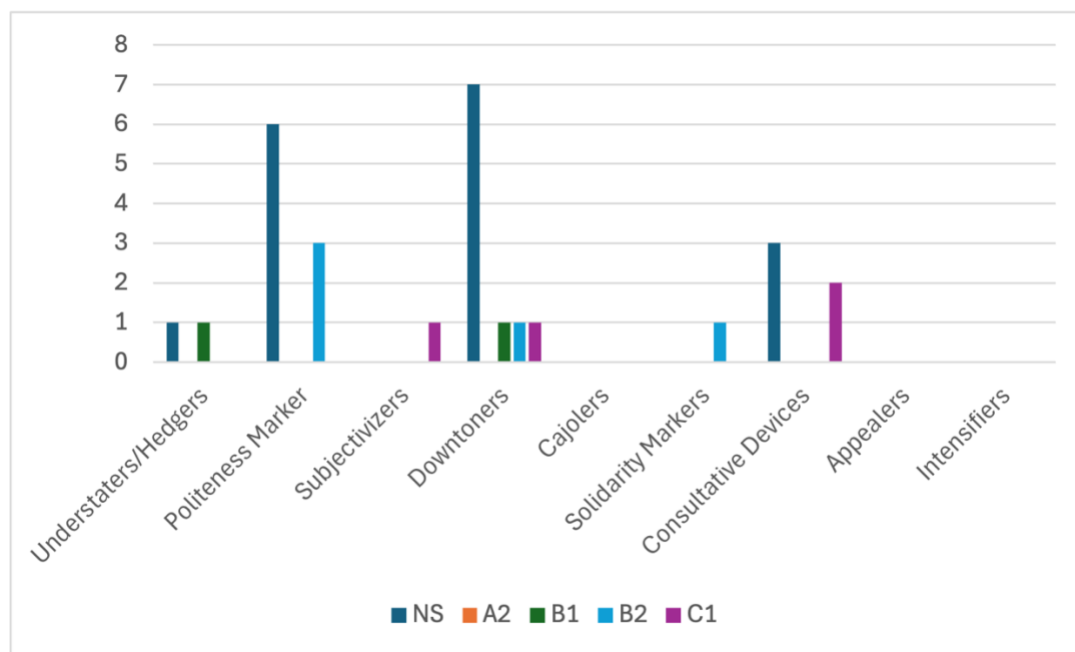


The previous figure indicates that NS showed a clear preference for the Conditional Structure ( $n = 19$ ) to internally modify their request. Similarly, this modifier was also employed by some NNS across proficiency levels, though to a lesser degree. Notably, its usage increased with proficiency, from A2 ( $n = 2$ ) to B1 ( $n = 3$ ), and B2 ( $n = 6$ ), before declining again at the C1 level ( $n = 2$ ). As can be observed, the B2 group exhibited the highest frequency of syntactic modifiers in their requests. In a few cases, NS used the Past Tense ( $n = 2$ ), which was also employed by some NNS (B1,  $n = 1$ ; B2,  $n = 2$ ; C1,  $n = 1$ ), but no instances of the Negation, Subjunctive, Future Tense, or Passive Voice were found in the data from this role play.

Concerning the lexical/phrasal modifiers, Figure 12 below displays the frequencies of their use across groups.

**Figure 12**

*Frequencies of Types of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Shoes Scenario*



As observed in the figure above, Downtoners ( $n = 7$ ) and Politeness Markers ( $n = 6$ ) were the most frequently used lexical/phrasal modifiers by NS. The NNS at lower proficiency levels made less use of these types of modifiers in their requests. Participants at the A2 level did not employ any type of lexical/phrasal device. The rest of the proficiency levels exhibited some use of these modifiers, although it was limited. Once again, the B2 group used the highest number of modifiers overall in this scenario among the NNS groups. The C1 group also displayed some use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, particularly Consultative Devices ( $n = 2$ ). No participants used Cajolers, Appealers, or Intensifiers.

#### 4.1.5. Deadline Extension Scenario

In this role play, the participants were tasked with performing a conversation in which a student requests a deadline extension for submitting an assignment to a professor (+D, +P). The frequencies and percentages of requests strategies employed by NS and NNS in this scenario are presented in Table 34. Data for this role play were not available for one NNS participant at the B2 level.

**Table 34**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
<b>Request Type (Head Act)</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need/Want Statement	17	32	3	20	5	31	6	33	1	25
Total Direct	20	37	3	20	5	31	6	33	1	25
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	17	32	8	53	6	37	8	44	1	25
Query Preparatory-Ability	13	24	2	13	2	12	3	16	2	50
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	0	0	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
Suggestory Formula	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	32	60	11	73	9	56	11	61	3	75
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	1	2	0	0	2	12	1	5	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	1	2	0	0	2	12	1	5	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	18	100	4	100

As shown in the previous table, both NS and NNS demonstrated a similar use of requests, with a strong preference for Conventionally Indirect Requests. Specifically, the Query Preparatory of Permission ( $n = 17$ ) was highly utilized not only by the NS, but also by the NNS who exhibited a clear preference for this request strategy (A2:  $n = 8$ ; B1:  $n = 6$ ; B2:  $n = 8$ ). NS used the Query Preparatory of Ability less frequently ( $n = 13$ ), and NNS used it sparingly (A2:  $n = 2$ ; B1:  $n = 2$ ; B2:  $n = 3$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ). In order to illustrate the use of Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Deadline Extension Scenario, examples for all levels are provided below:

(36) A2. Gr. *Μπορώ να έχω \*πολύ χρόνο;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Can I have more time? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

(37) B1. Gr. *Μπορώ να σας δίνω την επόμενη εβδομάδα;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Can I give (it) to you next week? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

(38) B2. Gr. *Μπορώ να σας στείλω την έκθεση λίγο αργότερα;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Can I send you the report a bit later? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

(39). C1. Gr. *Ήθελα να ρωτήσω αν μπορείτε να μου δώσετε λίγο πιο χρόνο ακόμα για να το τελειώσω.* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. I wanted to ask you if you could give me a bit more time to finish it. [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(40). NS. Gr. *Ίσως θα μπορούσα να ζητήσω κάποιες λίγες μέρες παραπάνω προθεσμία κατ' εξαίρεση;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Maybe I could ask for a few days as an exception? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Additionally, NS also seemed to strongly favor Direct Requests in this scenario, such as the Need/Want Statement and the Query Preparatory of Permission, both of which had the same



frequency of use ( $n = 17$ ). Less common types among the NS were the Mood Derivable (Imperative) ( $n = 1$ ) and the Performative ( $n = 2$ ). In contrast, NNS relied less on Direct Requests overall. However, the use of the Need/Want Statement increased with proficiency, particularly from A2 ( $n = 3$ ) to B1 ( $n = 5$ ) and B2 ( $n = 6$ ). This type of request was chosen by one participant at the C1 level. In this specific role play, one participant at the A2 level could not produce a comprehensive request.

The means and standard deviations in the use of the three main types of requests across groups are provided in Table 35.

**Table 35**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

Groups		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect
NS	Mean	5.00	8.00	1.00
	Standard Deviation	6.96	7.18	0
A2	Mean	0.75	2.75	0
	Standard Deviation	1.30	3.11	0
B1	Mean	1.25	2.25	2.00
	Standard Deviation	2.16	2.27	0
B2	Mean	1.50	2.75	1.00
	Standard Deviation	2.60	3.27	0
C1	Mean	0.25	0.75	0
	Standard Deviation	0.43	0.83	0

As it was mentioned before, the nominal logistic regression analysis failed to yield reliable statistical results for the types of head acts used by NS and NNS in this scenario. Consequently, the data for this scenario could not be included in the inferential analysis, as it did not meet the assumptions required for reliable statistical modelling.

In regard to external and internal modifications, Table 36 outlines the frequencies and percentages of the modifiers used across groups in this scenario.

**Table 36***Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>NS</b>		<b>A2</b>		<b>B1</b>		<b>B2</b>		<b>C1</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
External	180	67	35	81	39	81	47	73	12	57
Internal	86	32	8	18	9	18	17	26	9	42
Total	266	100	43	100	48	100	64	100	21	100

The previous table highlights a stronger preference for external modifications across groups. After the NS, the B2 group showed the greatest use of modifications in this role play compared to the other proficiency levels. Notably, it can be observed that the frequency of external and internal modifiers increased with proficiency from levels A2 (external:  $n = 35$ ; internal:  $n = 8$ ) to B1 (external:  $n = 39$ ; internal:  $n = 9$ ) and B2 (external:  $n = 47$ ; internal:  $n = 17$ ). Participants at the C1 level also showed a frequent use of modifiers to accompany their requests (external:  $n = 12$ ; internal:  $n = 9$ ). Table 37 below provides the means and standard deviations for the use of external and internal modifications by group.

**Table 37**

*Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	1	0	1
	Max	9	3	11
	Mean	3.40	1.62	5.02
	Standard	1.60	0.76	1.84
	Deviation			
A2	Min	1	0	1
	Max	5	2	5
	Mean	2.33	0.53	2.87
	Standard	1.11	0.74	1.30
	Deviation			
B1	Min	0	0	0
	Max	4	2	6
	Mean	2.44	0.56	3.00
	Standard	1.26	0.81	1.41
	Deviation			
B2	Min	0	0	1
	Max	5	2	6
	Mean	2.47	0.89	3.37
	Standard	1.30	0.73	1.67
	Deviation			
C1	Min	2	1	4
	Max	4	3	6
	Mean	3.00	2.25	5.25
	Standard	0.81	0.95	0.95
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences between groups regarding the number of request modifications in the Deadline Extension Scenario,  $F(9, 188) = 4, p < .001$ . The effect size, as measured by eta squared ( $\eta^2 = .265$ ), indicated a large effect. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD revealed significant differences between NS and the following proficiency levels: A2 and NS ( $p < .001$ ), B1 and NS ( $p < .001$ ), and B2 and NS ( $p = .003$ ). To illustrate this, examples from the Deadline Extension Scenario are provided for A2, B1, B2, and NS, highlighting the differences across these groups:

(41). A2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα να σου λέω κάτι.* [Preparator] *Δεν είχα καιρό αρκετά να τελειώσω το δουλειά* [Grounder] [...] *χρειάζομαι λίγο* [Understater] *\*πιος καιρό.*

Eng. I would like to tell you something [Preparator] I didn't have enough time to finish the assignment [Grounder] [...] I need a bit [Understater] more time.

(42). B1. Gr. Έχω, έχω πολλή δουλειά στο πανεπιστήμιο και δεν μπορώ να τελειώσω τη εργασία για μέρα [Grounder]. Μπορώ να έχω πιο πολύ χρόνο; παρακαλώ [Politeness Marker].

Eng. I have, I have a lot of work at university, and I can't finish the assignment for today [Grounder]. Can I have more time? Please [Politeness Marker].

(43). B2. Gr. Έχω ένα μικρό πρόβλημα με τα με την εργασία που μου πρέπει να σας δώσω [Preparator] και θα ήθελα [Conditional] να έχω λίγο [Understater] πιο χρόνο.

Eng. I have a little problem with the assignment that I have to give you [Grounder], and I would like [Conditional] to have a bit [Understater] more time.

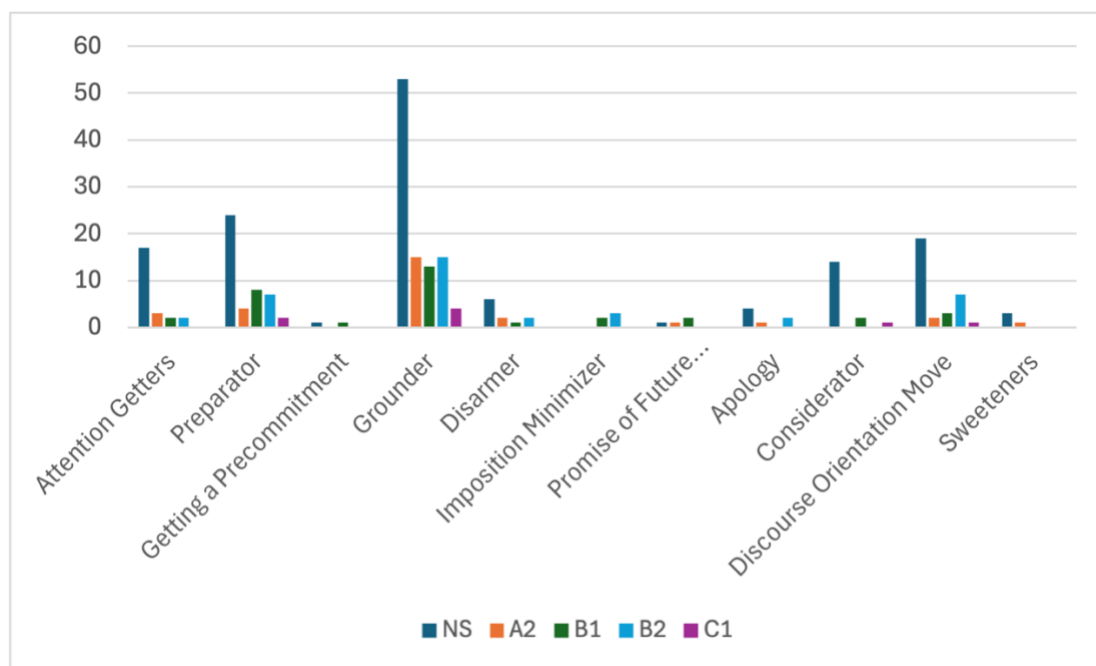
(44). NS. Gr. Η εργασία που μας είχατε βάλει για να γράψουμε μέχρι σήμερα [Discourse Orientation Move], δυστυχώς λόγω κάποιων υποχρεώσεων που είχα δεν κατάφερα να την ολοκληρώσω [Grounder]. Θα μπορούσατε [Conditional], σας παρακαλώ [Politeness Marker + Solidarity], να μου δώσετε μία βδομάδα περιθώριο να σας τη φέρω; Θα με εξυπηρετούσε πολύ αυτό [Grounder], αν μπορούσατε αυτό να το κάνουμε [Considerator].

Eng. The assignment that you gave us to write today [Discourse Orientation Move], unfortunately, due to some obligations I had, I couldn't finish it [Grounder]. Could you [Conditional], please [Politeness Marker + Solidarity], give me an extra week to bring it to you? It would really help me if we could do that [Considerator].

Figure 13 below illustrates the frequencies of external modifications used in this role play by type across groups.

**Figure 13**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

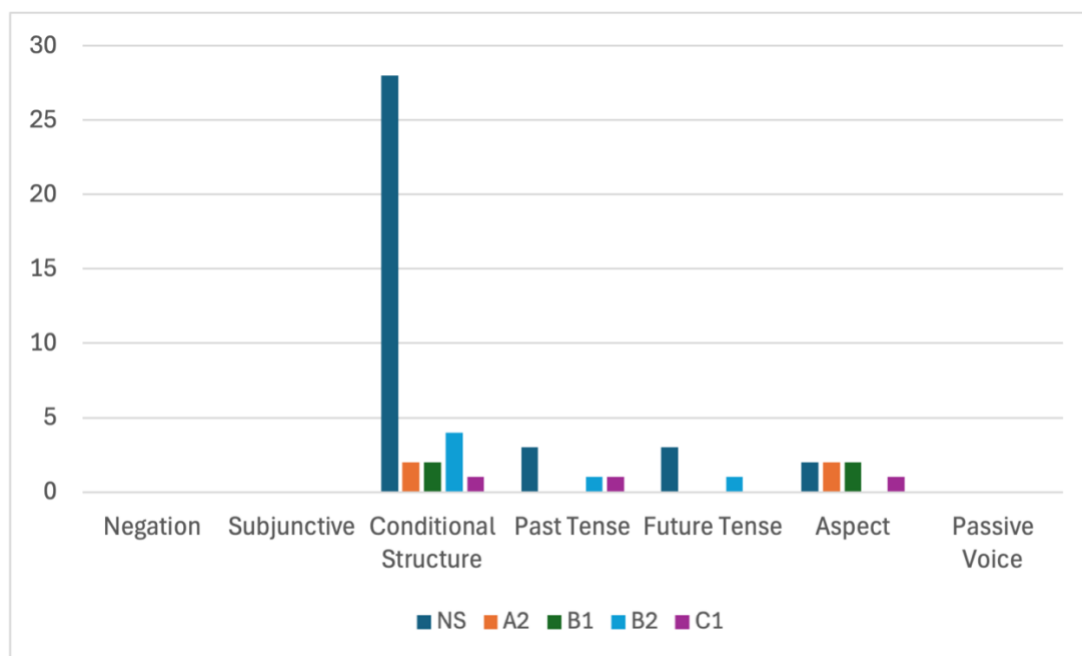


As can be observed in the previous figure, participants across all groups demonstrated a greater variety in the type of external modifiers used, although their frequencies varied. The most frequently employed external modifier across groups was the Grounder, with NS favoring it the most ( $n = 53$ ). Similarly, NNS also relied on Grounders, but their usage followed a non-linear trend (A2:  $n = 15$ ; B1:  $n = 13$ ; B2:  $n = 15$ ; C1:  $n = 4$ ). Moreover, all the groups used Preparators, but to a lesser extent in this scenario; NS exhibited a high frequency of use ( $n = 24$ ) and NNS participants also displayed notable use (B1:  $n = 8$ ; B2:  $n = 7$ ). Regarding other strategies favored by the NS in this role play, such as Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 19$ ), Attention Getters ( $n = 17$ ), and Considerators ( $n = 14$ ), NNS used them minimally. From these modifiers, only the moderate use of Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 7$ ) by the B2 group stands out.

Figure 14 displays the frequencies of use of syntactic modifiers by NS and NNS in the role play.

**Figure 14**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

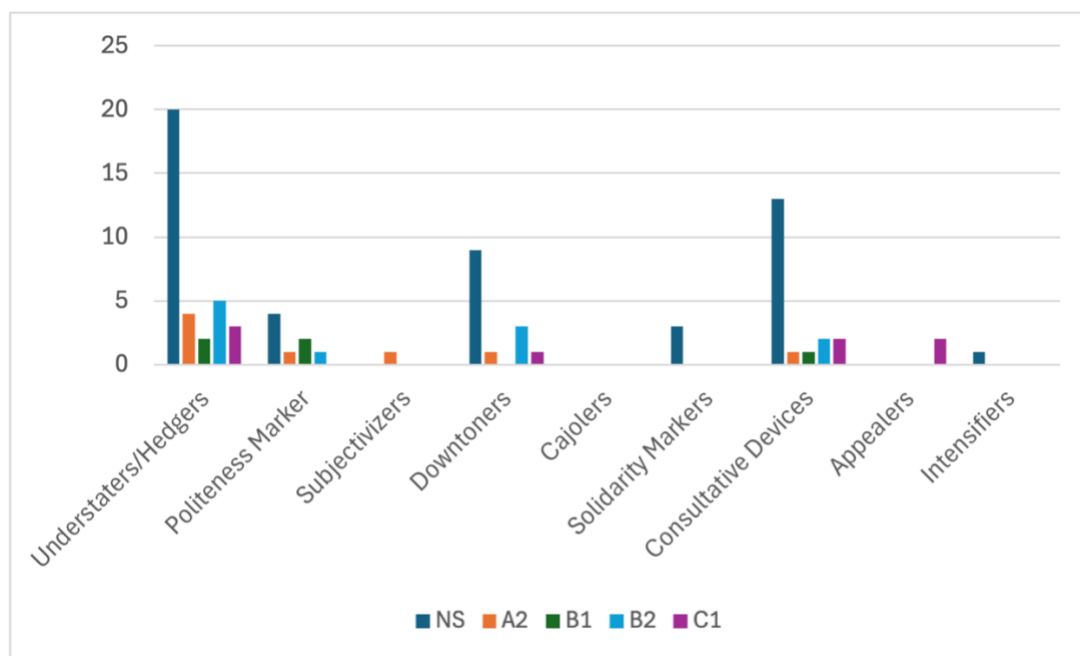


From the figure above, it can be observed that NS frequently employed the Conditional Structure ( $n = 28$ ) to internally modify their requests in addition to the Past Tense and Future Tense (both  $n = 3$ ) but to a lesser degree. In contrast, the overall use of syntactic modifiers by NNS was scarce with only some participants at the B2 level relying on the Conditional ( $n = 4$ ). None of the groups showed instances of Negation, Subjunctive, and Passive Voice in their requests.

The frequencies of lexical/phrasal modifiers per type across groups are presented in Figure 15.

**Figure 15**

*Frequencies of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Deadline Extension Scenario*



The previous figure highlights the NS's preference for Understaters/Hedgers ( $n = 20$ ), Consultative Devices ( $n = 13$ ), and Downtoners ( $n = 9$ ). Of these three types of modifications, the NNS primarily opted for Understaters/Hedgers, though its usage followed a non-linear trend (A2:  $n = 4$ ; B1:  $n = 2$ ; B2:  $n = 5$ ; C1:  $n = 3$ ). The B2 group exhibited the highest frequency of lexical/phrasal modifiers compared to the other proficiency levels. Data from this role play also revealed limited use of other modifications across groups, such as Subjectivizers, Solidarity Markers, Appealers, and Intensifiers. Additionally, no Cajolers were utilized by the participants in this scenario.

#### 4.1.6. Overtime Scenario

In this role play, the participants had to act out a conversation in which a boss asks an employee to work extra hours due to the workload (+D, +P). The types of requests that both NS and NNS employed in this scenario are included in Table 38.

**Table 38**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Overtime Scenario*

Request Type (Head Act)	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	6	11	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0
Obligation Statement	7	13	0	0	2	12	3	15	0	0
Need/Want Statement	26	49	8	53	4	25	4	21	0	0
Total Direct	39	73	8	53	6	37	8	42	0	0
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Query Preparatory-Ability	9	16	6	40	8	50	11	57	4	100
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suggestory Formula	3	5	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	12	22	7	46	9	56	11	57	4	100
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

The previous table shows differences in the types of requests used by NS and NNS. The NS relied more on Direct Requests using a Need/Want Statement ( $n = 26$ ) which was also used predominantly by participants at the A2 level ( $n = 8$ ). In contrast, the NNS mostly favored



Conventionally Indirect Requests using the Query Preparatory of Ability (B1:  $n = 8$ ; B2:  $n = 11$ ; C1:  $n = 4$ ). Although NS employed this strategy to a lesser degree ( $n = 9$ ), the NNS's use of this request type became more frequent with increased proficiency. In addition, NS also opted for other Direct Requests but minimally, such as Obligation Statement ( $n = 7$ ) or Performative ( $n = 6$ ). The NNS used these Direct Requests sparingly. Finally, one learner at the B1 level was not able to complete the request appropriately. Such differences in the use of requests in this scenario are shown in the following examples:

(45) A2. Gr. *Θέλω να δουλέψεις μια μέρα τέσσερα ώρες πιο πολύ.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I want you to work one day for four more hours. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(46) B1. Gr. *Μπορείς να κάνεις δύο ή τέσσερα ώρες κάθε μέρα μόνο αυτή την εβδομάδα;*

[Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you do two or four hours each day only this week? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(47) B2. Gr. *Θα μπορέσεις να κάνεις τέσσερις ώρες έξτρα αυτήν εβδομάδα;* [Query-Preparatory of

Ability]

Eng. Will you be able to work four extra hours this week? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(48). C1. Gr. *Μήπως μπορείς να μείνεις τέσσερις ώρες πιο πολύ μία μέρα για να τελειώσουμε*

*αυτή τη δουλειά που πρέπει να δώσουμε;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you possibly stay four extra hours one day so we can finish this work that needs to be submitted? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(49). NS. Gr. *και κατ' εξαίρεση για μία μέρα θα ήθελα να δουλέψεις τέσσερις ώρες παραπάνω.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. As an exception for one day I would like you to work four more hours. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Table 39 below includes the means and standard deviations of the requests by all groups in this scenario.

**Table 39**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Overtime Scenario*

<b>Groups</b>		<b>Direct</b>	<b>Conventionally Indirect</b>	<b>Non-Conventionally Indirect</b>
NS	Mean	9.75	3.00	2.00
	Standard	11.2	4.24	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	2.00	1.75	0
	Standard	4.00	2.87	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	1.50	2.25	0
	Standard	1.91	3.86	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	2.00	2.75	0
	Standard	1.82	5.50	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0	1.00	0
	Standard	0	2.00	0
	Deviation			

As it was mentioned before, the nominal logistic regression analysis failed to yield reliable statistical results for the types of head acts used by NS and NNS in this scenario. Consequently, the data for this scenario could not be included in the inferential analysis, as it did not meet the assumptions required for reliable statistical modelling.

As for external and internal modifications, Table 40 outlines the frequencies and percentages of the modifications used by all groups in this role play.

**Table 40***Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Overtime Scenario*

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>NS</b>		<b>A2</b>		<b>B1</b>		<b>B2</b>		<b>C1</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
External	195	67	36	81	31	73	53	76	19	76
Internal	92	32	8	19	11	26	16	24	6	24
Total	287	100	44	100	41	100	69	100	25	100

In this specific scenario, external modifiers were preferred over internal ones by all groups as can be observed in the previous table. The NS employed modifications ( $n = 287$ ) more than any other group to mitigate the effect of their requests. In the case of the NNS, the overall use of modifiers appeared to increase with proficiency, especially from B1 ( $n = 41$ ) to B2 ( $n = 69$ ). Additionally, the four participants at the C1 level demonstrated a high use of modifiers ( $n = 25$ ). In regard to external modifiers, their use followed a non-linear trend across the proficiency levels. That is, the occurrence of external modifications slightly decreased from A2 ( $n = 36$ ) to B1 ( $n = 31$ ), increased considerably at the B2 level ( $n = 53$ ), and then declined at C1 level ( $n = 19$ ). On the other hand, B1 and B2 learners employed internal modifiers more frequently ( $n = 11$  and  $n = 16$ , respectively).

Table 41 below highlights the means and standard deviations of external and internal modifiers used across groups.

**Table 41***Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Overtime Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	0	0	3
	Max	11	5	12
	Mean	3.68	1.74	5.42
	Standard	1.94	1.04	2.04
	Deviation			
A2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	5	2	7
	Mean	2.40	0.53	2.93
	Standard	1.35	0.74	1.75
	Deviation			
B1	Min	0	0	0
	Max	5	2	7
	Mean	1.94	0.69	2.63
	Standard	1.34	0.79	1.82
	Deviation			
B2	Min	1	0	1
	Max	5	2	7
	Mean	2.79	0.84	3.63
	Standard	1.31	0.68	1.53
	Deviation			
C1	Min	2	3	3
	Max	8	9	9
	Mean	4.75	1.50	6.25
	Standard	2.50	0.57	2.50
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed highly significant differences between groups in the number of modifiers in the Overtime Scenario,  $F(11, 147) = 4, p < .001$ . The effect size, as measured by eta squared ( $\eta^2 = .304$ ), suggested a large effect. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD identified statistically significant differences between several groups: A2 and C1, ( $p = .021$ ), A2 and NS ( $p < .001$ ), B1 and C1 ( $p = .008$ ), B1 and NS ( $p < .001$ ), and B2 and NS ( $p = .006$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the C1 level and the NS group. The following examples serve to illustrate the difference between the modification devices used by an A2 participant, a C1 participant, and a NS in this situation:

(50). A2. Gr. Συγγνώμη [Attention Getter], μπορείς να δουλεύεις αύριο 5 ώρες πιο πολύ;

Eng. Excuse me [Attention Getter], can you work tomorrow for five extra hours?

(51). C1. Gr. *Θέλω να σας μιλάω για κάτι* [Preparator]. *Το ξέρω και νομίζω ότι δεν είναι εύκολο για σένα* [Disarmer], *αλλά έχουμε πολύ δουλειά* [Grounder] *και θέλω να σε ρωτήσω* [Consultative Device] *αν μπορείς να δουλέψεις τέσσερις ώρες πιο πολύ.* *Είναι μόνο για δύο εβδομάδες, αυτό δεν θα είναι για πάντα* [Imposition Minimizer]. *Έχει σχέση με την δουλειά που έχουμε τώρα* [Grounder] *και το ξέρω ότι όλοι έχετε οικογένεια και πρέπει να είσαι για τα παιδιά στα απογεύματα* [Disarmer], *αλλά είναι μία χάρη* [Grounder], *που την εταιρία θα σας δίνει μετά αυτό, μία, δύο ή τρεις απογεύματα αν θέλεις άδεια* [Promise of Reward/Future Action]. *Για μας είναι πάρα πολύ σημαντικό αυτό* [Grounder].

Eng. I want to talk to you about something [Preparator]. I know, and I think that it's not easy for you [Disarmer], but we have a lot of work [Grounder], and I want to ask you [Consultative Device] if you can work four extra hours. It's only for two weeks; this won't be forever [Imposition Minimizer]. It's related to the work that we have now [Grounder], and I know that everyone has a family and needs to be with their children in the afternoons [Disarmer], but it's a favor [Grounder]. The company will later give you something in return, one, two or three afternoons off if you want [Promise of Reward/Future Action]. This is very important for us [Grounder].

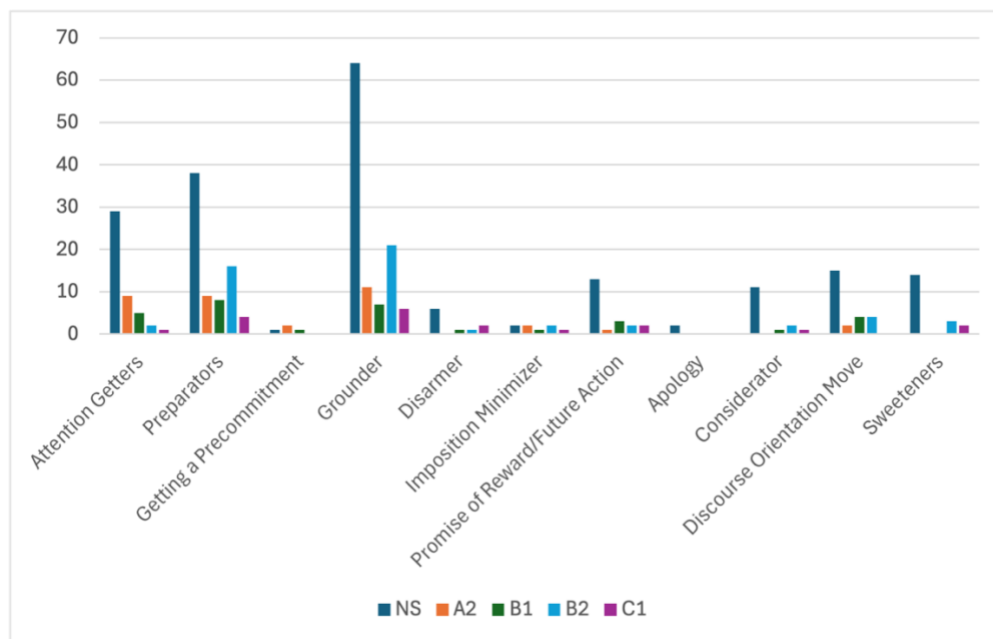
(52). NS. Gr. *Θέλω να σου ζητήσω μια μεγάλη χάρη.* [Preparator] *Ξέρω ότι δεν είναι στις αρμοδιότητές σου όλο αυτό και στους χρόνους σου,* [Disarmer] *αλλά θα 'θελα* [Conditional] *τη Δευτέρα να κάτσεις τέσσερις ώρες παραπάνω στη δουλειά,* *γιατί πρέπει να τελειώσει αυτό το project και έχουμε deadline την Τρίτη.* [Grounder]

Eng. I want to ask you a favor. [Preparator] I know this isn't part of your responsibilities or within your usual working hours, [Disarmer] but I'd like [Conditional] you to stay four extra hours at work on Monday. We really need to finish this project, and we have a deadline on Tuesday. [Grounder]

Figure 16 below presents the frequencies of external modifications used by NS and NNS in this role play.

**Figure 16**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Overtime Scenario*



The previous figure indicates a varied use of external modifications by all groups in this scenario. Although the results revealed similar choices of external modifiers between NS and NNS, the frequencies vary from one type to another. NS mostly relied on Grounders ( $n = 61$ ), Preparators ( $n = 38$ ), and Attention Getters ( $n = 29$ ) to support their requests, and moderately relied on other modifiers, such as Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 15$ ) and Promises of Future Action/Reward ( $n = 13$ ). Moreover, this group drew on Considerators and Sweeteners ( $n = 11$  and  $n = 14$ , respectively), and Disarmers to a lesser extent ( $n = 6$ ). Similarly, NNS strongly preferred Grounders and Preparators with B2 participants using the greatest number of these two modifiers ( $n = 21$  and  $n = 16$ ) when compared to the other proficiency levels. Unlike the NS, NNS rarely used other external modifiers, such as Promises of Future Action/Reward or Discourse Orientation

Moves. The following examples show some NNS's use of Sweeteners in this scenario, similar to the NS's performance:

(53). B2. Gr. *\*Μπλέπω ότι δουλεύεις πολύ καλά, είμαι πολύ χαρούμενη για σένα, είμαι πολύ χαρούμενη με την δουλειά σου*

Eng. I see you work very well, I am very happy with you, I am very happy with your work.

(54). B2. Gr. *Γιατί εσείς \*δουλεύετε πολύ καλά είμαι πολύ \*χαρούμενος για την δουλειά σας.*

Eng. Because you work very well, I am very happy with your work.

(55). B2. Gr. *Είμαι πολύ χαρούμενος με τη την δουλειά \*της δουλειά σου.*

Eng. I am very happy with your work, your work.

(56). C1. Gr. *Εγώ \*σέρω που εσύ είσαι \*ένα πουλήτρια \*ένα no μια \*υπάλληλα, \*μια υπάλληλη καταπληκτική. Εγώ σου \*έβλεψα πολλές φορές και πάντα \*σε δουλεύεις \*σε δουλεύεις σιγά σιγά, αλλά δουλεύεις πολύ καλά.*

Eng. I know that you are a saleswoman, a no, a wonderful employee. I saw you many times and you always work, work slowly, but work very well.

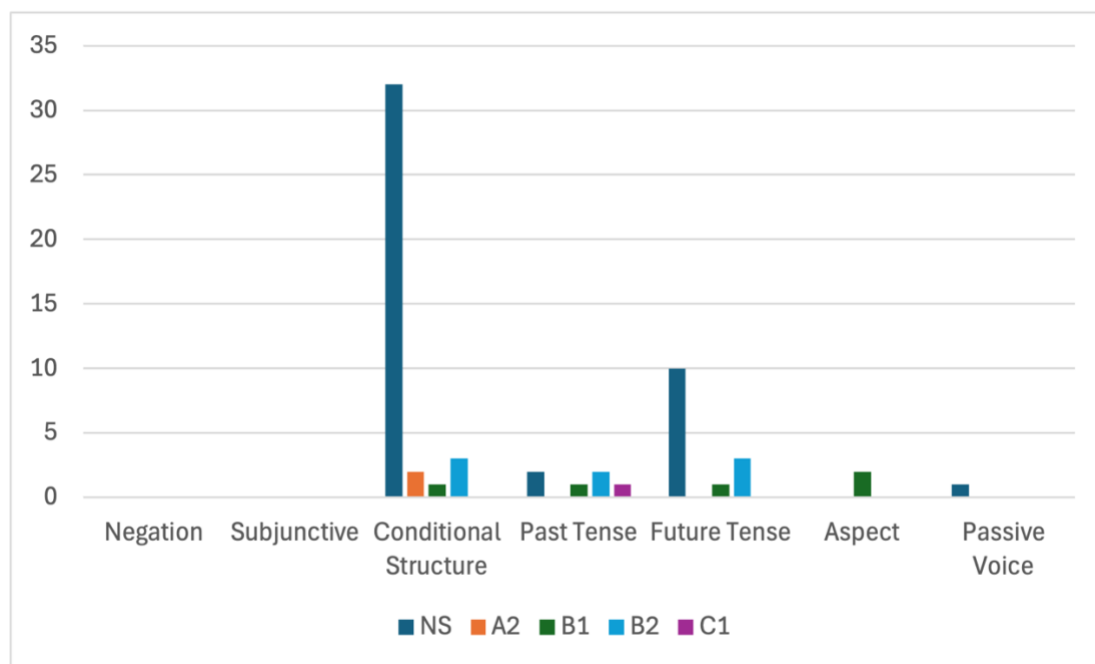
(57). NS. Gr. *Επειδή είσαι μία από τις καλές υπαλλήλους και τη γνωρίζεις αυτή τη δουλειά...*

Eng. Because you are one of the best workers and you know this work...

Regarding internal modifiers, Figure 17 below provides the frequencies of syntactic modifiers used in requests across groups in this scenario.

**Figure 17**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Overtime Scenario*



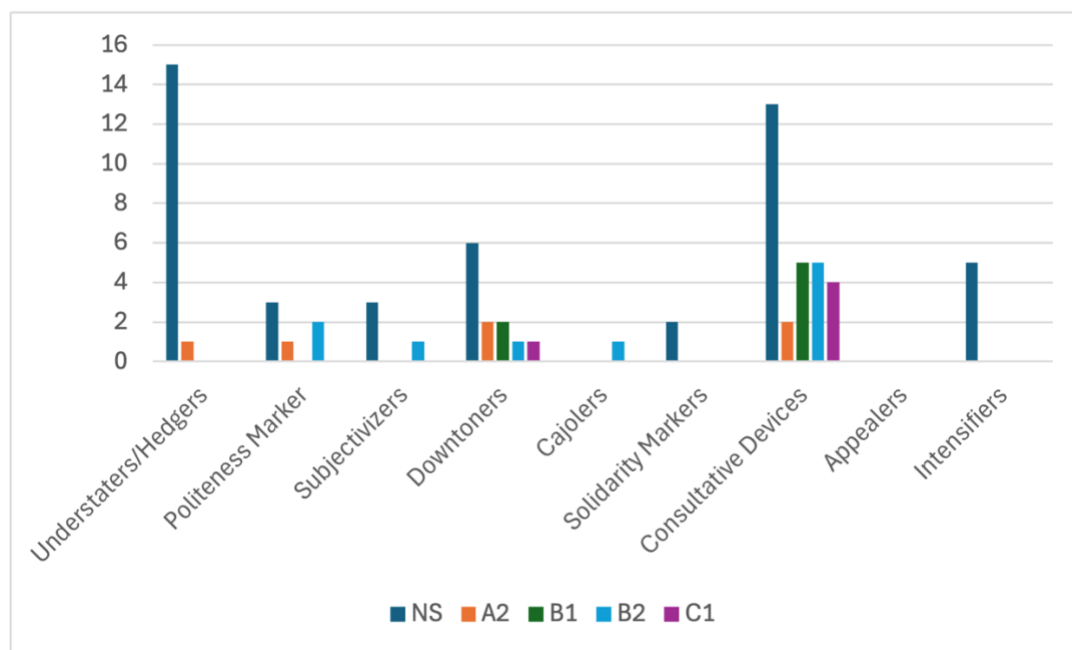
As can be observed from the previous figure, NS relied more on syntactic modifications than NNS. Specifically, NS mostly opted for using the Conditional Structure ( $n = 32$ ), and less frequently, the Future Tense ( $n = 10$ ). Other modifiers such as the Past Tense ( $n = 2$ ) and the Passive Voice ( $n = 1$ ) were employed minimally. On the contrary, NNS sparingly used syntactic devices to modify their requests internally. The B2 group showed some use of the same modifiers favored by the NS; the Conditional Structure and the Future Tense (both  $n = 3$ ). Participants at the C1 level made no use of syntactic modifiers, except for one learner who employed the Past Tense ( $n = 1$ ) in their request. None of the groups utilized Negation or the Subjunctive.

Concerning the lexical/phrasal modifiers, Figure 18 displays the frequencies of the devices used by each group.



**Figure 18**

*Frequencies of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Overtime Scenario*



As shown in the previous figure, some differences can be observed in the types of lexical/phrasal modifiers used across groups. It can be seen that NS predominantly opted for Understaters/Hedgers ( $n = 15$ ) and Consultative Devices ( $n = 13$ ). To a lesser extent, they also used Downtoners ( $n = 6$ ) and Intensifiers ( $n = 5$ ). In the case of the NNS, both Consultative Devices and Downtoners were the only modifiers used across all groups. Results revealed that NNS employed lexical/phrasal modifiers more moderately than NS, favoring Consultative Devices strongly, especially at the B1 and B2 levels (both  $n = 5$ ). However, NNS demonstrated limited use of Downtoners and barely used Understaters/Hedgers, as opposed to NS who relied highly on these as mentioned previously. Participants at the C1 level also displayed usage of some modifiers, particularly Consultative Devices and Appealers (both  $n = 3$ ). None of the participants in the NNS group employed any Solidarity Markers or Intensifiers.

#### 4.1.7. Day Off Scenario

In this role play, the participants had to request a day off for personal matters from their boss at work (+D, +P). Table 42 includes the frequencies and percentages of requests per type across groups in this scenario.

**Table 42**

*Distribution of Requests Used by Participants per Level in the Day Off Scenario*

Request Type (Head Act)	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct										
Mood Derivable (Imperative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performative	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need/Want Statement	33	62	8	53	8	50	15	78	3	75
Total Direct	35	66	8	53	8	50	15	78	3	75
Conventionally Indirect										
Query Preparatory-Permission	10	18	7	46	6	37	2	10	1	25
Query Preparatory-Ability	8	15	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0
Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no modal)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Conventionally Indirect	18	33	7	46	7	43	2	10	1	25
Non-Conventionally Indirect										
Hint	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	5	0	0
Total Non-Conventionally Indirect	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	5	0	0
Unclear/Incomplete Requests	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0
Total Head Acts	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

The previous table indicates that both NS and NNS exhibited a similar performance in the use of requests in the Day Off Scenario. All the groups showed a greater preference for making a Direct Request by using a Need/Want Statement. Specifically, NS strongly favored this type of

request ( $n = 33$ ) over indirect requests, and in the case of the NNS, use of this request strategy became more frequent across proficiency levels (A2:  $n = 8$ ; B1:  $n = 8$ ; B2:  $n = 15$ ; C1:  $n = 3$ ). The examples below illustrate this consistency in the use of Need/Want Statements across groups in the Day Off Scenario:

(58) A2. Gr. *Θέλω να μου δώσετε μια μέρα άδεια την επόμενη εβδομάδα.* [Direct-Need/Want Statement]

Eng. I want you to give me one day off next week. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(59) B1. Gr. *Χρειάζομαι μια μέρα άδεια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I need one day off. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(60) B2. *Θα ήθελα να έχω μία μέρα άδεια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like a day off. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(61). C1. Gr. *Θα ήθελα μία μέρα που θα πάω για να κάνω αυτό.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like a day off to do that. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(62). NS. Gr. *θα χρειαστώ μια μέρα άδεια την επόμενη βδομάδα.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I will need a day off next week. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

To a lesser extent, all groups employed Conventionally Indirect Requests, particularly the Query Preparatory of Permission. NS and A2 participants favored this type the most ( $n = 10$  and  $n = 7$ , respectively), though its use decreased with proficiency. Other NS used the Query Preparatory of Ability ( $n = 8$ ), which was used minimally by NNS, and less frequently, a Direct Request using the Performative ( $n = 2$ ). Hints were used sparingly by some NNS (B1:  $n = 1$ ; B2:  $n = 1$ ). None of the participants in any group opted for other types of requests such as Mood Derivable (Imperative), Obligation Statement, the Query Preparatory with Present Indicative (no

modal) or Suggestory Formula in this scenario. One student at the B2 level was unable to complete the request. Below, the means and standard deviations regarding the use of requests by all groups in this scenario are included in Table 43.

**Table 43**

*Means and Standard Deviations in the Use of Requests by NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario*

<b>Groups</b>		<b>Direct</b>	<b>Conventionally Indirect</b>	<b>Non-Conventionally Indirect</b>
NS	Mean	8.75	4.50	0
	Standard	16.1	5.25	0
	Deviation			
A2	Mean	2.00	1.75	0
	Standard	4.00	3.50	0
	Deviation			
B1	Mean	2.00	1.75	1.00
	Standard	4.00	2.87	0
	Deviation			
B2	Mean	3.75	0.50	1.00
	Standard	7.50	1.00	0
	Deviation			
C1	Mean	0.75	0.50	0
	Standard	1.50	1.00	0
	Deviation			

As it was mentioned before, the nominal logistic regression analysis failed to yield reliable statistical results for the types of head acts used by NS and NNS in this scenario. Consequently, the data for this scenario could not be included in the inferential analysis, as it did not meet the assumptions required for reliable statistical modelling.

Regarding the external and internal modifications, Table 44 includes the frequencies and percentages of the modifiers used by NS and NNS in this role play.

**Table 44***Distribution of Request Modifications Used by NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario*

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>NS</b>		<b>A2</b>		<b>B1</b>		<b>B2</b>		<b>C1</b>	
	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
External	188	73	38	79	29	70	47	81	12	75
Internal	69	26	10	21	12	29	11	18	4	25
Total	257	100	48	100	41	100	58	100	16	100

As observed, NS demonstrated a high use of modifications to support their requests ( $n = 257$ ), favoring external devices ( $n = 188$ ) over internal devices ( $n = 69$ ). Regarding the NNS groups, the B2 group employed the greatest number of modifications ( $n = 58$ ), followed by the A2 ( $n = 48$ ) and B1 ( $n = 41$ ) groups. Participants at the C1 level also showed a frequent use of modifications ( $n = 16$ ), despite the small number of participants. However, although the overall use of modifications was high across groups, a non-linear pattern can be seen in the frequencies of external and internal modifiers per group. B1 used external modifiers less frequently ( $n = 29$ ) than the A2 group ( $n = 38$ ), but they employed more internal modifiers ( $n = 12$ ) than those learners at the B2 level ( $n = 11$ ). Table 45 below provides the means and standard deviations for the use of external and internal modifiers by each group in this scenario.

**Table 45**

*Descriptive Statistics of Modification Devices by NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario*

Groups		External	Internal	Total
NS	Min	0	0	
	Max	7	3	
	Mean	3.55	1.30	4.85
	Standard	1.62	0.66	1.82
	Deviation			
A2	Min	0	0	1
	Max	5	3	5
	Mean	2.53	0.67	2.73
	Standard	1.35	0.90	1.53
	Deviation			
B1	Min	0	0	0
	Max	3	2	5
	Mean	1.81	0.75	2.56
	Standard	1.16	0.85	1.82
	Deviation			
B2	Min	0	0	0
	Max	5	2	6
	Mean	2.47	0.58	3.05
	Standard	1.17	0.69	1.43
	Deviation			
C1	Min	2	1	3
	Max	4	1	5
	Mean	3.00	1.00	4.00
	Standard	1.15	0.00	1.15
	Deviation			

A one-way ANOVA revealed highly significant differences between groups in the number of modifiers in the Day Off Scenario,  $F(9, 481) = 4, p < .001$ . A large effect size was observed, with eta squared calculated at .271. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD identified statistically significant differences between several groups: A2 and NS, ( $p < .001$ ), B1 and NS ( $p < .001$ ), and B2 and NS ( $p = .001$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the C1 level and the NS group. The following examples taken from the Day Off Scenario present the use of modifiers by one C1 participant and one NS:

(63) C1. Gr. *θέλω να σας ρωτήσω κάτι* [Preparator]. [...]. *Ξέρω, ότι εγώ δουλεύω εδώ μόνο λίγες μέρες πριν* [Disarmer], *αλλά πρέπει να σας ρωτήσω* [Consultative Device], *αν μπορώ να έχω μία μέρα \*άδειας*, *γιατί έχω ένα ραντεβού στο πανεπιστήμιο και πρέπει να πάω* [Grounder]. *Δεν*

*ξέρω πως λειτουργεί με τις ώρες ή αν μπορώ να πάω έξω λίγες ώρες και μετά θα γυρίσω.*

[Grounder].

Eng. I want to ask you something [Preparator]. [...]. I know that I have been working here for a few days [Disarmer], but I need to ask you [Consultative Device] if I can have a day off because I have an appointment at the university and I need to go [Grounder]. I'm not sure how it works with the hours or if I can leave for a few hours and then come back [Grounder].

(64) NS. Gr. *Λοιπόν* [Attention Getter], *κοιτάζετε να δείτε* [Attention Getter] *έχω πρόβλημα την άλλη βδομάδα* [Preparator], *θα χρειαστεί* [Future Tense] *να χειρουργηθεί* [Passive Voice] *η μητέρα μου...* [Grounder] *και αναρωτιέμαι αν* [Aspect] *μπορείτε να μου δώσετε άδεια για την επόμενη Τρίτη.*

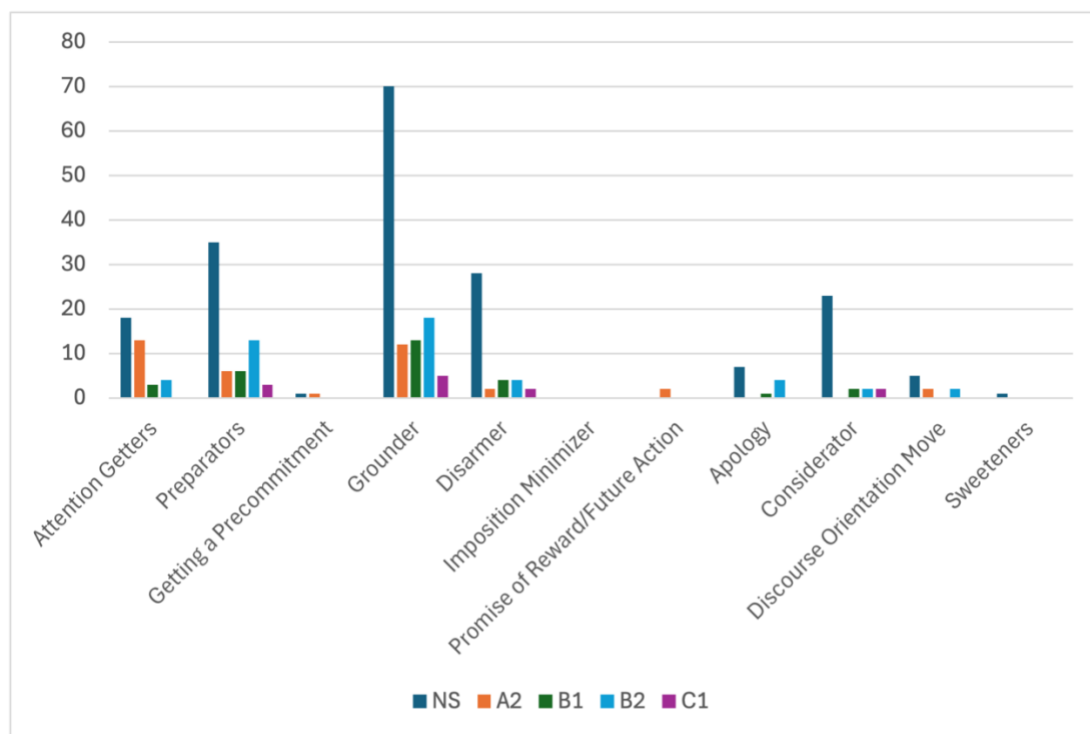
Eng. Well [Attention Getter], look [Attention Getter], I have a problem next week [Preparator], my mother will need [Future Tense] to be operated... [Passive Voice] [Grounder] and I wonder if [Aspect] you could give me a leave for next Tuesday.

As the previous examples show, the C1 participant exhibited a more elaborate range of modifications to accompany the request, closely resembling those used by the NS.

Figure 19 below illustrates the frequencies of external modifications used across groups in this role play.

**Figure 19**

*Frequencies of Types of External Modifiers per Group in the Day Off Scenario*



The previous figure shows that NS predominantly used external modifiers to accompany their requests in the Day Off Scenario. Specifically, data from this role play indicated that NS mostly relied on a greater use of Grounders ( $n = 70$ ), Preparators ( $n = 35$ ), Disarmers ( $n = 28$ ), Considerators ( $n = 23$ ), and Attention Getters ( $n = 18$ ). To a lesser degree, they also employed Apologies ( $n = 7$ ) and Discourse Orientation Moves ( $n = 5$ ). The NNS also favored Grounders and Preparators, particularly at the B2 level, with Grounders being more frequently used as proficiency increased from A2 ( $n = 12$ ) to B1 ( $n = 13$ ) and B2 ( $n = 18$ ). In contrast, Preparators were not employed as frequently by the lower proficiency levels (A2:  $n = 6$  and B1:  $n = 6$ ), and only some use was exhibited at the C1 level, i.e., Grounders ( $n = 5$ ) and Preparators ( $n = 3$ ). All proficiency levels demonstrated some use of Disarmers, though their use was more limited. Finally, NNS rarely employed other external modifiers that were favored by the NS in this specific

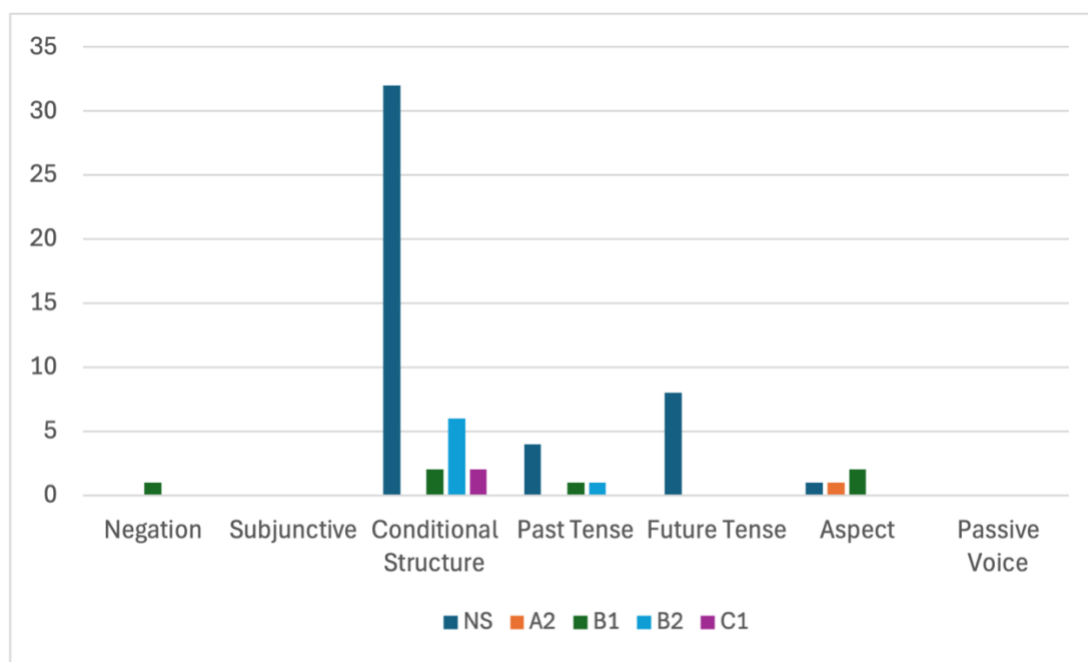


scenario, such as Attention Getters or Considerators. No use of Imposition Minimizers was found in the data from this role play.

Concerning internal modifications, Figure 20 below provides the frequencies for the use of syntactic modifiers per group in this scenario.

**Figure 20**

*Frequencies of Types of Syntactic Modifiers per Group in the Day Off Scenario*

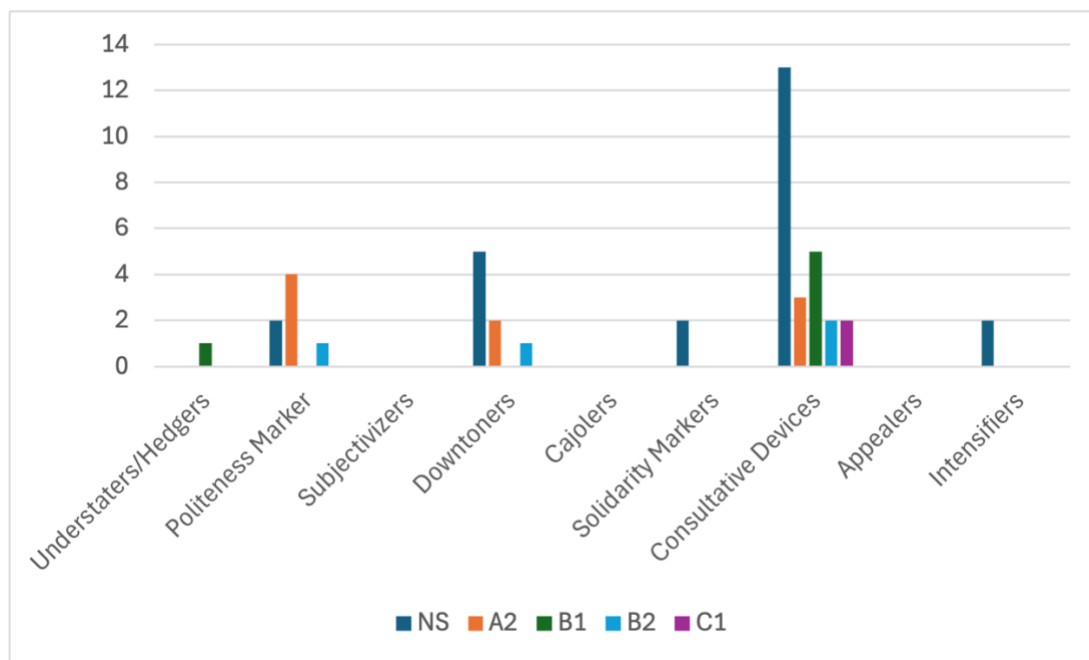


As the figure above shows, NS greatly employed the Conditional Structure ( $n = 32$ ) to modify their requests internally. Other NS opted for the Future Tense ( $n = 8$ ) and the Past Tense ( $n = 4$ ) to a lesser extent. In contrast, NNS employed syntactic modifiers less frequently, except at the B2 level, for which the data displayed a moderate frequency of the Conditional Structure ( $n = 6$ ). It can be observed that the B1 group relied on a wider variety of syntactic modifications, despite their low use. In contrast to NS, none of the NNS groups used the Future Tense. Furthermore, none of the groups, be they NS or NNS, utilized the Subjunctive or the Passive Voice in their requests.

Regarding the lexical/phrasal modifiers, Figure 21 shows the number of types used by NS and NNS in the role play.

**Figure 21**

*Frequencies of Lexical/Phrasal Modifiers per Group in the Day Off Scenario*



The previous figure indicates that Consultative Devices were the most frequently used by all groups with NS strongly favoring this modifier ( $n = 13$ ). In the case of the NNS, however, the use of Consultative Devices diminished with proficiency. Participants at the higher levels (B2 and C1) used them less frequently ( $n = 2$ ) compared to the A2 ( $n = 3$ ) and B1 ( $n = 5$ ) levels, where its use was slightly higher. Consultative Devices was the only lexical/phrasal modification device used by all groups. Moreover, it can be observed that some learners at the A2 level relied on other modifiers, such as Politeness Markers ( $n = 4$ ) and Downtoners ( $n = 2$ ). By contrast, other modifiers shown in the NS data were either employed sparingly or not at all by the NNS, such as Solidarity Markers, Appealers, Intensifiers, Subjectivizers, or Cajolers.

Section 4.1 has outlined the results regarding the impact of proficiency on the use of requests by NNS in the seven different scenarios. The next section will present the findings related to the second research question which focuses on the differences in request types and modifications across contexts categorized by social parameters.

#### **4.2. RQ2: The Use of Requests in Formal and Informal Communicative Contexts by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals in Greek as a Foreign Language**

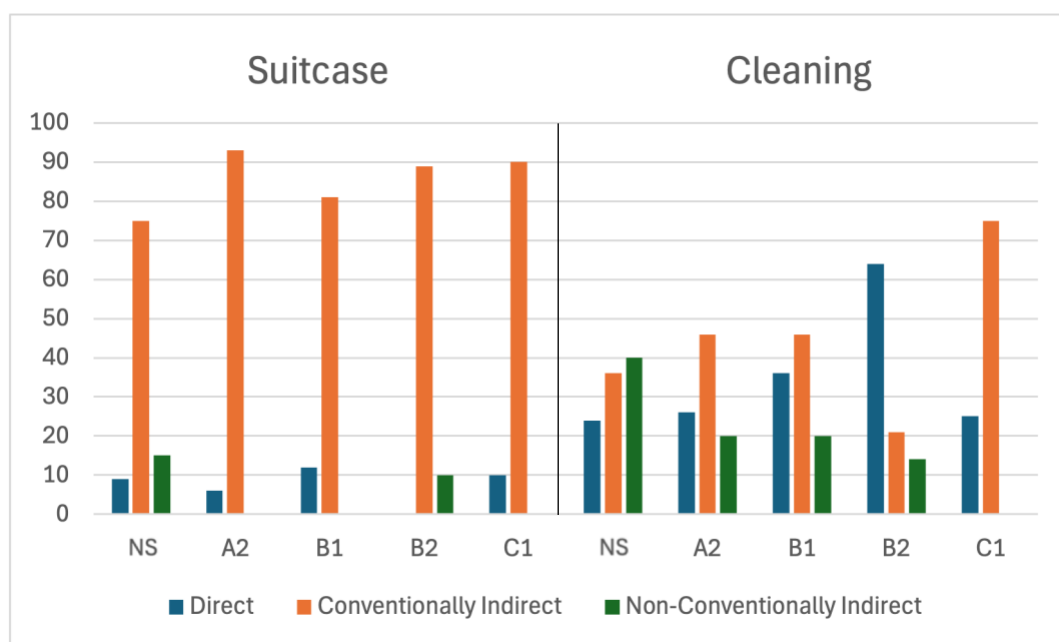
The second research question addressed the use of request types in formal and informal contexts by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals in Greek as a FL (NNS). This section compares the results of the use of requests and modifications by all groups across role plays that have been grouped according to their shared levels of distance and power (see Table 13 in Section 3.4.2): two informal scenarios that share low distance (-D) and low power (-P) (Suitcase and Cleaning), two informal scenarios that share high distance (+D) and low power (-P) (Sugar and Shoes), and three formal scenarios that share high distance (+D) and high power (+P) (Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off). These comparisons aim to assess, first, whether the overall group of NNS displays patterns similar to those of NS, and second, whether any of the proficiency groups of NNS align with NS in their requesting behavior across scenarios as defined by the aforementioned social parameters. The comparisons across groups and scenarios will be based, first, on the types of requests used in the role plays; second, on the total number of modifications employed; and third, on the type of external and internal modifications selected. The results of this research question are presented qualitatively and are supported by descriptive statistics.

#### 4.2.1. Low Distance and Low Power Scenarios (-D, -P)

The Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios were role plays that represented familiar situations characterized by low distance and low power between the interlocutors. Figure 22 provides a comparison of the types of requests (Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect) used by participants across groups in these two scenarios, presented in terms of percentages.

**Figure 22**

*Comparison of Request Types by Group in the Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of participants.

As shown in this figure, Conventionally Indirect Requests were strongly preferred across all groups in the Suitcase Scenario (NS: 75%,  $n = 40$ ,  $M = 10$ ,  $SD = 8.64$ ; A2: 93%,  $n = 14$ ,  $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 2.87$ ; B1: 86%,  $n = 13$ ,  $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 3.7$ ; B2: 89%,  $n = 17$ ,  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 4.02$ ; C1: 75%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ), particularly the Query-Preparatory of Ability and Query-Preparatory of Present strategies. In contrast, several differences can be observed in the types of

requests used by all groups in the Cleaning Scenario. In this role play, the NS slightly favored Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests (40%,  $n = 20$ ,  $M = 20$ ,  $SD = 0$ ) over Conventionally Indirect Requests (36%,  $n = 18$ ,  $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 4.15$ ). This pattern differed from all the NNS groups, who tended to rely most heavily on Conventionally Indirect Requests, as they did in the Suitcase Scenario, particularly A2 (46%,  $n = 7$ ,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ), B1 (46%,  $n = 7$ ,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ), and C1 levels (75%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). Notably, they also favored Direct Requests (A2: 26%,  $n = 4$ ,  $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ; B1: 33%,  $n = 5$ ,  $M = 1.25$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ; C1: 25%,  $n = 1$ ,  $M = 0.25$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ) over Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests (A2: 20%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 3$ ,  $SD = 0$ ; B1: 20%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 3$ ,  $SD = 0$ ; C1: 0%,  $n = 0$ ,  $M = 0$ ,  $SD = 0$ ). As an exception, the B2 group showed a marked preference for Direct Requests (64%,  $n = 9$ ,  $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 3.35$ ), especially Obligation Statements, over Conventionally Indirect ones (21%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ). While Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests remained the least used type by all NNS groups, they employed them more frequently in the Cleaning Scenario than in the Suitcase Scenario.

The following examples illustrate the differences in the use of requests between the two contexts by a participant at the B2 level. Example 65 corresponds to the Suitcase Scenario while 66 is taken from the Cleaning Scenario:

(65) B2. Gr. *Μπορείς να μ' αφήσεις αυτή τη βαλίτσα αυτό το σαββατοκύριακο, σε παρακαλώ;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you lend me this suitcase this weekend, please? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(66) B2. Gr. *Πρέπει, πρέπει να, να καθαρίσεις το, το διαμέρισμα.* [Direct/Obligation Statement]

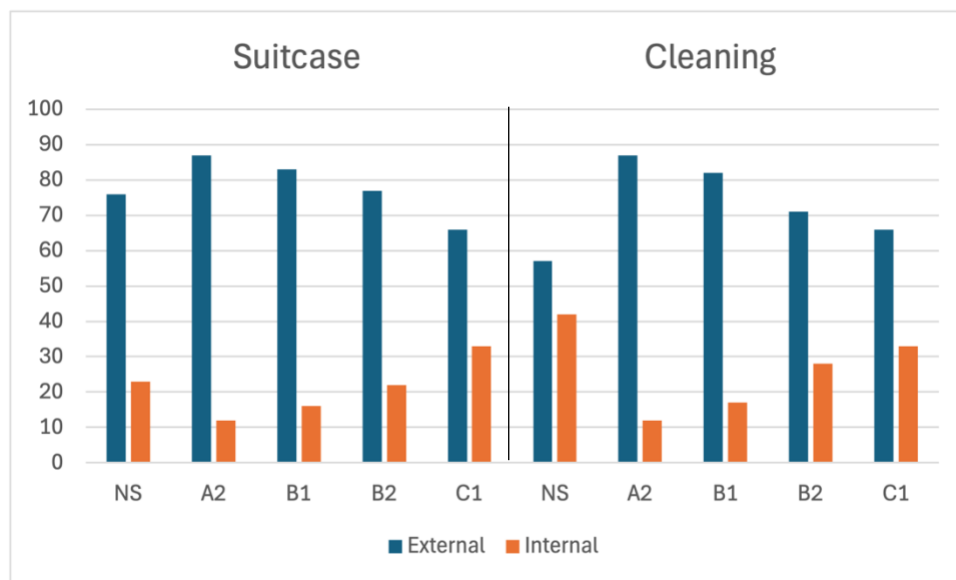
Eng. You must, must, clean the, the apartment [Direct/Obligation Statement]

Regarding the modifications used in each role play, when comparing the total number of modifications per group across the Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios (see Section 4.1., Tables 20 and 24, respectively), it can be observed that NS draw on a higher use of modifiers in the Suitcase Scenario ( $n = 231$ ) than in the Cleaning Scenario ( $n = 171$ ). NNS mostly performed similarly across levels. While A2 ( $n = 40$ ), B1 ( $n = 55$ ), and B2 ( $n = 83$ ) levels employed more modifiers in the Suitcase Scenario (like the NS) than in the Cleaning Scenario, participants at the C1 level showed a slightly higher use of modifiers in the latter ( $n = 18$ ) and fewer in the former ( $n = 15$ ). The modifications used in each scenario will be compared by type to identify similarities and differences across contexts in what follows.

Figure 23 provides the comparison of the percentages of use of external and internal modifiers by all groups.

**Figure 23**

*Comparison of Modifications by Group in the Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of modifications.

As observed, all groups displayed similar patterns in modifying their requests across both scenarios. External modifiers were strongly favored over internal devices in both the Suitcase (NS: 76%,  $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ; A2: 87%,  $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ; B1: 83%,  $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ; B2: 77%,  $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ; C1: 66%,  $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) and Cleaning Scenarios (NS: 57%,  $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ; A2: 87%,  $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ; B1: 82%,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ; B2: 71%,  $M = 1.84$ ,  $SD = 2.60$ ; C1: 66%,  $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ). However, NS used external modifiers more moderately in the Cleaning Scenario (57%,  $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) than in the Suitcase Scenario (76%,  $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ). Internal modifiers, in contrast, were used minimally across groups in both role plays, with the NS showing a notable increase in their use in the Cleaning Scenario (42%,  $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). While the use of external modifiers appeared to decrease as proficiency increased, developmental patterns were observed in the use of internal modifiers among the NNS groups in both scenarios.

Table 46 displays the distribution of the types of external modifiers used by NS and all NNS groups in both role plays, with the aim of assessing whether they use similar devices in these -D and -P scenarios.



**Table 46***Distribution of External Modifications Used by All Groups in Both Scenarios*

External Modifications		Suitcase					Cleaning				
		NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Attention Getters	f	44	0	0	3	1	24	6	3	3	1
	%	24	0	0	4	10	24	21	10	8	8
Preparators	f	20	5	9	15	2	5	1	3	3	0
	%	11	14	19	22	20	5	3	10	8	0
Getting a Precommitment	f	3	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	1	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounder	f	67	15	20	29	4	41	11	10	22	6
	%	37	42	43	42	40	41	39	35	62	50
Disarmer	f	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	0	8
Imposition Minimizer	f	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	6	1	10	0	0	0	0	0
Promise of Reward/Future Action	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Considerator	f	3	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1
	%	1	0	2	1	10	2	0	0	3	8
Discourse Orientation Move	f	39	13	12	15	1	26	10	10	6	3
	%	22	37	26	22	10	26	35	35	17	25
Sweeteners	f	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	f	177	35	46	68	10	99	28	28	35	12
	%	76	87	83	77	66	57	87	82	71	66

As observed, the choice of external modifications is very similar across both role plays with the most commonly used external modifiers across groups being Grounders and Discourse Orientation Moves. However, the use of these two modifiers was higher in the Suitcase Scenario across all groups (NS: 37%,  $n = 67$ ; A2: 42%,  $n = 15$ ; B1: 43%,  $n = 20$ ; B2: 42%,  $n = 29$ ; C1: 40%,  $n = 4$ , for Grounders, and NS: 22%,  $n = 39$ ; A2: 37%,  $n = 13$ ; B1: 26%,  $n = 12$ ; B2: 22%,  $n = 15$ ; C1: 10%,  $n = 1$ , for Discourse Orientation Moves), than in the Cleaning Scenario (NS: 41%,  $n = 41$ ; A2: 39%,  $n = 11$ ; B1: 35%,  $n = 10$ ; B2: 62%,  $n = 22$ ; C1: 50%,  $n = 6$ , for Grounders, and NS: 26%,  $n = 26$ ; A2: 35%,  $n = 10$ ; B1: 35%,  $n = 10$ ; B2: 17%,  $n = 6$ ; C1: 25%,  $n = 3$ , for Discourse Orientation Moves). Several examples of Grounders and Discourse Orientation Moves as used by the NNS are provided below:

(67) B1. Gr. *Γιατί η βαλίτσα μου δεν είναι \*καλό, καλή γιατί είναι πολύ μικρή.* [Grounder]

Eng. Because my suitcase is not good, good because it's very small. [Grounder]

(68) B1. Gr. *Θυμάσαι ότι την προσεχή εβδομάδα θα πάω ένα ταξίδι;* [Discourse Orientation Move]

Eng. Do you remember that next week I'll go on a trip? [Discourse Orientation Move]

(69). B2. Gr. *Είχα πολλές μερικές μπαλίτσες, αλλά οι κόρες μου μου παίρνουν πάντα τις βαλίτσες.* [Grounder]

Eng. I had several many suitcases, but my daughters always take the suitcases. [Grounder]

(70) B2. Gr. *την επόμενη εβδομάδα ξέρεις ότι εγώ φεύγω για ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα.* [Discourse Orientation Move]

Eng. Next week you know I'm going on a trip to Greece. [Discourse Orientation Move]

NS also relied heavily on Attention Getters (24%,  $n = 44$  in the Suitcase Scenario and 24%,  $n = 24$  in the Cleaning Scenario), and, to a lesser extent, on Preparators (11%,  $n = 20$  in the Suitcase Scenario and 5%,  $n = 5$  in the Cleaning Scenario). These two modifiers were less favored by NNS in both the Suitcase (B2: 4%,  $n = 3$ ; C1: 10%,  $n = 1$ , for Attention Getters and A2: 14%,  $n = 5$ ; B1: 19%,  $n = 9$ ; B2: 22%,  $n = 15$ ; C1: 20%,  $n = 2$ , for Preparators) and Cleaning Scenarios. Other types of external modifications were used minimally or not at all by any group.

As far as the internal modifications are concerned, Table 47 presents the distribution of modifiers used in both contexts per group.

**Table 47***Distribution of Internal Modifications Used by All Groups in Both Scenarios*

Internal Modifications			Suitcase					Cleaning				
			NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Syntactic	Negation	f	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	16	0	0
	Subjunctive	f	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
	Conditional Structure	f	10	1	2	1	0	6	0	0	1	0
		%	18	20	22	6	0	8	0	0	7	0
	Past Tense	f	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	5	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Future Tense	f	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	1	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	16	0	0
Aspect	f	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	%	5	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Passive Voice	f	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
	%	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
Lexical/Phrasal	Understaters/Hedgers	f	1	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	2
		%	2	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	33
	Politeness Marker	f	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	3	2
		%	3	20	11	20	20	1	50	16	21	33
	Subjectivizers	f	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
		%	2	20	0	0	0	4	0	0	21	0
	Downtoners	f	20	2	2	7	2	10	0	0	2	0
		%	37	40	22	46	40	13	0	0	14	0
	Cajolers	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
	Solidarity Markers	f	6	0	0	2	1	10	0	0	1	2
		%	11	0	0	13	20	13	0	0	7	33
	Consultative Devices	f	6	0	3	1	1	6	1	1	1	0
		%	11	0	33	6	20	8	25	16	7	0
	Appealers	f	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Intensifiers (Upgraders)	f	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	2	0	
	%	3	0	0	0	0	4	25	33	14	0	
Total	f	54	5	9	15	5	72	4	6	14	6	
	%	23	12	16	22	33	42	12	17	28	33	

The previous table highlights differences between the two contexts regarding the types of internal modifications preferred by NS and NNS. It can be observed that NS used more internal modifications in the Cleaning Scenario than in the Suitcase Scenario. Specifically, they most frequently employed Understaters/Hedgers (19%,  $n = 14$ ), the Future Tense (13%,  $n = 10$ ), Solidarity Markers (13%,  $n = 10$ ), and Downtoners (13%,  $n = 10$ ). However, these modifiers were less preferred by NS in the Suitcase Scenario, except for Downtoners, which were used more

frequently (37%,  $n = 20$ ), alongside the Conditional Structure (18%,  $n = 10$ ). In contrast, NNS showed a greater use of internal modifiers in the Suitcase Scenario, although their usage remained minimal across groups. Of all proficiency levels, the B2 group demonstrated the highest use of internal modifiers in both scenarios, especially Downtoners in the Suitcase Scenario (46%,  $n = 7$ ). In the Cleaning Scenario, this group showed a more varied use of internal modifications. The following examples serve to illustrate the use of internal modifications by two participants at the B2 level and two others at the C1 level in both scenarios:

(71) B2. Gr. *Ήθελα να σε ρωτήσω* [Past Tense + Consultative Device] *αν έχεις μία βαλίτσα*

Eng. I wanted to ask you [Past Tense + Consultative Device] if you have one suitcase.

(72) B2. Gr. *Μήπως* [Downtoner] *μπορείς να το καθαρίσεις;*

Eng. Can you maybe [Downtoner] clean it?

(73) B2. Gr. *Μήπως* [Downtoner] *έχεις εσύ μία βαλίτσα;*

Eng. Do you happen to [Downtoner] have one suitcase?

(74) C1. Gr. *Ίσως* [Downtoner] *μπορείς να μου δώσεις τη δική \*της, σας παρακαλώ* [Politeness Marker + Solidarity];

Eng. Can you maybe [Downtoner] give me yours, please [Politeness Marker + Solidarity]?

(75) C1. Gr. *Σας παρακαλώ* [Politeness Marker + Solidarity], *μπορείς να \*κλύνεις μόνο* [Understater] *την κουζίνα;*

Eng. Please [Politeness Marker + Solidarity], can you clean only [Understater] the kitchen?

In summary, notable differences were observed in the types of requests and modifications used by all groups across the two contexts. While all groups relied heavily on Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Suitcase Scenario, the Cleaning Scenario revealed more variation in the

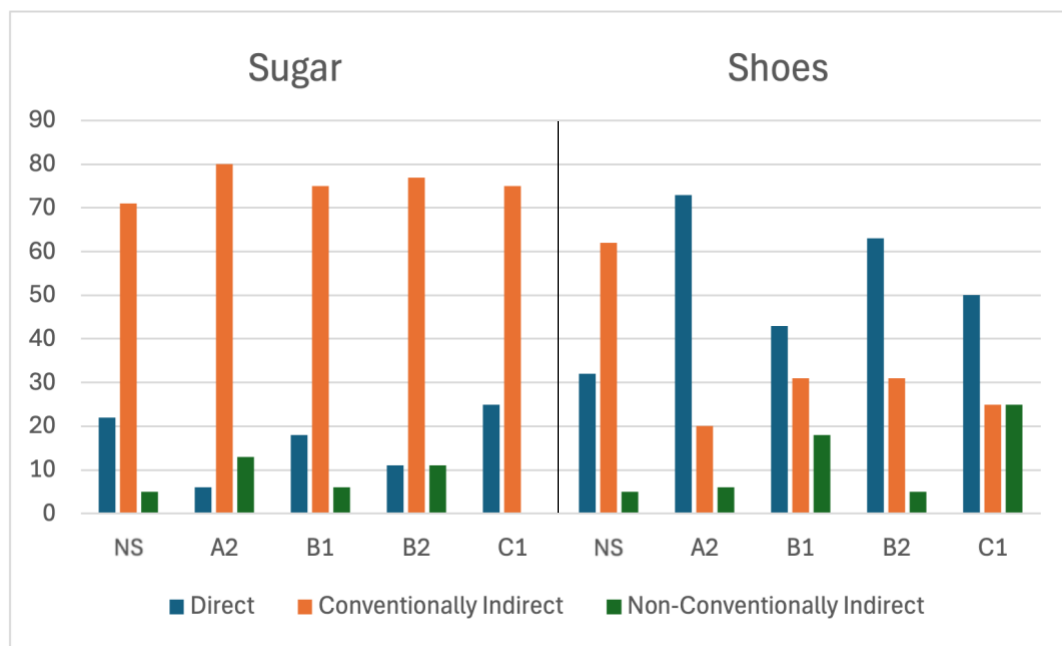
types of requests employed. Regarding the use of modifications, all groups used external and internal modifiers in comparable quantities overall, though some differences were found in the choice of specific types of devices, particularly regarding the internal modifiers.

#### 4.2.2. High Distance and Low Power Scenarios (+D, -P)

The Sugar and Shoes Scenarios were role plays that represented situations where the participants were either strangers or had minimal familiarity (high social distance) but held equal status (low power). Figure 24 compares the percentages of the types of requests used by NS and NNS in these two scenarios.

**Figure 24**

*Comparison of Request Types by Group in the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of participants.

The previous figure highlights differences in the types of requests across groups in the two scenarios characterized by high distance and low power. In the Sugar Scenario, both NS and NNS strongly preferred Conventionally Indirect Requests (NS: 71%,  $n = 38$ ,  $M = 10.2$ ,  $SD = 10.1$ ; A2: 80%,  $n = 12$ ,  $M = 3$ ,  $SD = 3.5$ ; B1: 75%,  $n = 12$ ,  $M = 3$ ,  $SD = 3.4$ ; B2: 77%,  $n = 14$ ,  $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ ; C1: 75%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). However, in the Shoes Scenario, the preference for Conventionally Indirect Requests was maintained primarily by NS (62%,  $n = 33$ ,  $M = 8.25$ ,  $SD = 5.9$ ), while NNS at all proficiency levels predominantly opted for Direct Requests, especially participants at the A2 level (A2: 73%,  $n = 11$ ,  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 5.5$ ; B1: 43%,  $n = 7$ ,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 3.5$ ; B2: 63%,  $n = 12$ ,  $M = 3$ ,  $SD = 6$ ; C1: 50%,  $n = 2$ ,  $M = 0.5$ ,  $SD = 1$ ). This is in contrast to the NS's use of Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario (32%,  $n = 17$ ,  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 8.5$ ). Notably, some participants at the B1 and B2 levels still relied on Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Shoes Scenario, though to a lesser extent (B1: 31%,  $n = 5$ ,  $M = 1.25$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ; B2: 31%,  $n = 6$ ,  $M = 1.5$ ,  $SD = 1.9$ ). Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests were rarely employed by any group in either scenario. The difference in the use of requests across contexts is represented in the following examples:

(76) A2. Gr. *Εσύ έχεις;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. (Do) you have? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(77) A2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like a pair of shoes. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(78) B1. Gr. *Θα μπορείτε να μου δώσετε λίγη ζάχαρη;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you give me a bit of sugar? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(79) B1. Gr. *Θέλω να αγοράζω αυτά τα παπούτσια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I want to buy these shoes. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(80) B2. Gr. *Μπορείτε να μου \*δώσει λιγάκι ζάχαρη;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you give me ehk a little little sugar? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(81) B2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα να το δοκιμάσω.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like to try them on. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(82) C1. Gr. *Μήπως έχετε ζάχαρη και μπορείτε να μου δώσετε λίγο;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you perhaps have sugar and can give me a little? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(83) C1. Gr. *Θα ήθελα να αγοράσω αυτό το ζευγάρι παπούτσια που έχετε εδώ.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like to buy this pair of shoes that you have here. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(84) NS. Gr. *Έχεις καθόλου ζάχαρη;* [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

Eng. Do you have any sugar? [Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative]

(85) NS. Gr. *Μήπως θα μπορούσατε να μου δείξετε το ζευγάρι αυτό επάνω το δετό;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Could you perhaps show me that pair up there, the laced ones? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

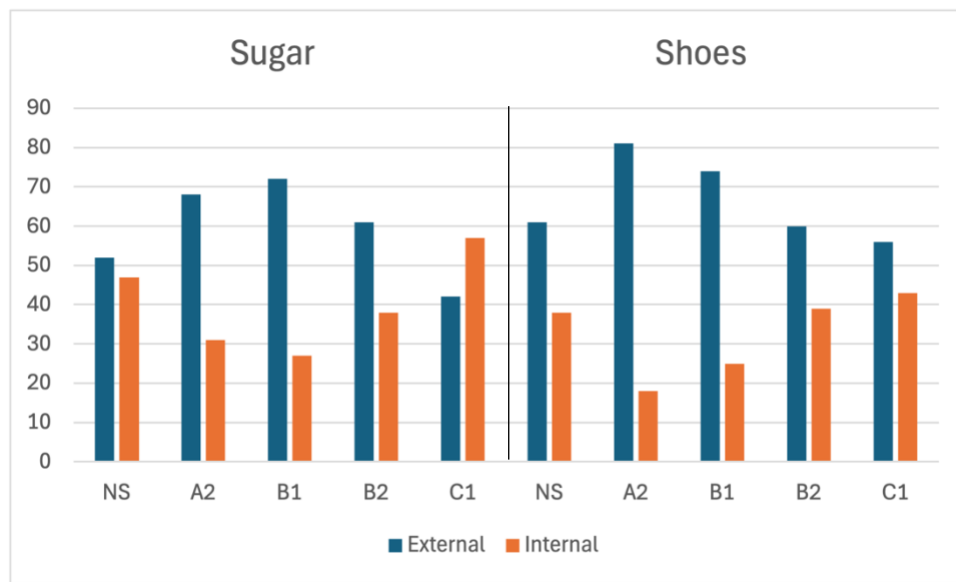
Concerning the modifications, based on the total number of modifiers used in the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios (see Section 4.1., Tables 28 and 32, respectively), a comparison of the sums reveals that NS relied more on the use of modifiers in the Sugar Scenario ( $n = 199$ ) than in the Shoes Scenario ( $n = 98$ ). All NNS groups exhibited a similar pattern to NS, using more modifiers in the Sugar Scenario (A2:  $n = 41$ ; B1:  $n = 46$ ; B2:  $n = 55$ ; C1:  $n = 19$ ) than in the Shoes Scenario (A2:  $n = 5$ ; B1:  $n = 27$ ; B2:  $n = 30$ ; C1:  $n = 15$ ). While the total number of modifications used in both role plays increased with proficiency, the A2, B1, and B2 levels displayed a greater difference

in the number of modifications between the two scenarios. In what follows, the modifications used in each scenario will be compared by type to identify similarities and differences across contexts. Such similarities can also be observed when comparing the modifications by type.

Figure 25 below presents the comparison of the percentages of use of external and internal modifiers by all groups in both scenarios.

**Figure 25**

*Comparison of Modifications by Group in the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of modifications.

As shown in the previous figure, similar patterns can be observed in the modifications used across groups in both scenarios. The overall use of modifications across groups, especially the internal modifiers, is higher compared to those characterized by low distance and low power as addressed in the previous section. In the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios, the NS, as well as the participants at the A2, B1, and B2 levels, all relied more heavily on external modifiers (Sugar Scenario: NS: 52%,  $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ; A2: 68%,  $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ; B1: 72%,  $M = 2.19$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ; B2: 61%,  $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ , and Shoes Scenario: NS: 61%,  $M = 1.17$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ; A2:



81%,  $M = 0.60$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ; B1: 74%,  $M = 1.25$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ; B2: 60%,  $M = 1.05$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). In contrast, those at the C1 level opted for internal over external modifiers in both the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios (57%,  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ , and 43%,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ , respectively). B1 level participants employed the greatest number of external modifiers in both role plays but used fewer internal modifiers (27%,  $M = 0.81$ ,  $SD = 0.83$  in the Sugar Scenario and 25%,  $M = 0.44$ ,  $SD = 0.62$  in the Shoes Scenario).

Table 48 below displays the distribution of the types of external modifiers used by all groups in the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios, highlighting their preferences for request modifications in these +D and -P role plays.

**Table 48**

*Distribution of External Modifications Used by All Groups in Both Scenarios*

External Modifications		Sugar					Shoes				
		NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Attention Getters	f	6	4	4	1	0	17	2	4	2	2
	%	5	14	11	3	0	27	22	20	10	22
Preparators	f	17	3	4	9	1	20	0	0	0	0
	%	15	10	11	25	12	32	0	0	0	0
Getting a Precommitment	f	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	0
	%	0	0	8	0	0	5	0	5	0	0
Grounder	f	49	13	16	18	4	11	1	3	11	7
	%	44	46	45	50	50	17	11	15	55	77
Disarmer	f	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imposition Minimizer	f	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promise of Reward/Future Action	f	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology	f	15	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	13	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Considerator	f	9	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	%	8	3	3	3	12	1	0	0	0	0
Discourse Orientation Move	f	4	5	3	5	2	10	6	12	7	0
	%	3	17	8	13	25	16	66	60	35	0
Sweeteners	f	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	f	110	28	35	36	8	62	9	20	20	9
	%	52	68	72	61	42	61	81	74	60	56

Overall, NS displayed a wider range of modifiers in both role plays, particularly in the Sugar Scenario. Specifically, this group strongly favored Grounders (44%,  $n = 49$ ), and to a lesser extent, Preparators (15%,  $n = 17$ ), and Apologies (13%,  $n = 15$ ). Regarding the Shoes Scenario, Preparators were highly used (32%,  $n = 20$ ) alongside Attention Getters (27%,  $n = 17$ ) and Discourse Orientation Moves (16%,  $n = 10$ ). In the case of the NNS, all proficiency levels mostly favored Grounders in both scenarios. However, their use was higher in the Sugar Scenario (A2: 46%,  $n = 13$ ; B1: 45%,  $n = 16$ ; B2: 50%,  $n = 18$ ; C1: 50%,  $n = 4$ ) compared to the Shoes Scenario (A2: 11%,  $n = 1$ ; B1: 15%,  $n = 3$ ; B2: 55%,  $n = 11$ ; C1: 77%,  $n = 7$ ), which is similar to the performance of NS. Other types of external modifiers were used by the NS in both scenarios, but not by NNS, with the main difference lying in the use of Preparators. While NNS used them rarely in the Sugar Scenario (A2: 10%,  $n = 3$ ; B1: 11%,  $n = 4$ ; B2: 25%,  $n = 9$ ; C1: 12%,  $n = 1$ ), and not at all in the Shoes Scenario, NS favor them considerably. The examples below serve to illustrate the use (or nonuse) of Preparators by NS and NNS in both role plays:

(86) C1. Gr. *Έχω δει ότι δεν έχω ζάχαρη.* [Grounder].

Eng. I've seen that I don't have sugar. [Grounder]

(87) NS. Gr. *Θα ήθελα μια χάρη βασικά* [Preparator]. *Ξέρω ότι ακούγεται πολύ συνηθισμένο* [Disarmer], *αλλά όντως μου έχει τελειώσει η ζάχαρη.* [Grounder]

Eng. I just would actually like to ask a favor [Preparator]. I know this sounds very common [Disarmer], but I've actually run out of sugar. [Grounder].

(88) B2. Gr. *Μου αρέσουν παρά αυτά τα παπούτσια.* [Grounder]

Eng. I like these shoes a lot. [Grounder]

(89) NS. Gr. *Συγγνώμη* [Attention Getter], *να σας ρωτήσω κάτι;* [Preparator]

Eng. Excuse me [Attention Getter], Can I ask you something? [Preparator]

The types of internal modifiers employed by the groups in both scenarios are shown in Table 49 below.

**Table 49**

*Distribution of Internal Modifications Used by All Groups in Both Scenarios*

Internal Modifications			Sugar					Shoes				
			NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Syntactic	Negation	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subjunctive	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conditional Structure	f	18	1	1	0	0	19	2	3	6	2
		%	18	7	7	0	0	48	100	42	46	28
	Past Tense	f	4	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	1
		%	4	0	0	4	0	5	0	14	15	14
	Future Tense	f	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	f	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
		%	1	7	0	0	0	2	0	14	0	0
	Passive Voice	f	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
		%	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Lexical/Phrasal	Understaters/Hedgers	f	36	5	5	8	3	1	0	1	0	0
		%	36	38	38	34	27	2	0	14	0	0
	Politeness Marker	f	1	3	2	3	2	6	0	0	3	0
		%	1	23	15	13	18	15	0	0	23	0
	Subjectivizers	f	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
		%	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	14
	Downtoners	f	26	0	3	5	0	7	0	1	1	1
		%	26	0	23	21	0	18	0	14	7	14
	Cajolers	f	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Solidarity Markers	f	6	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	1	0
		%	6	7	7	8	36	0	0	0	7	0
	Consultative Devices	f	7	2	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	2
		%	7	15	7	4	18	7	0	0	0	28
	Appealers	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intensifiers (Upgraders)	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	f	100	13	13	23	11	39	2	7	13	7	
	%	47	31	27	38	57	38	18	25	39	43	

As observed in the table above, NS employed a higher number of internal modifications in the Sugar Scenario (47%,  $n = 100$ ) than in the Shoes Scenario (38%,  $n = 39$ ). Similarly, NNS also seemed to exhibit a higher use of internal modifiers in the Sugar Scenario (A2: 31%,  $n = 13$ ; B1:

27%,  $n = 13$ ; B2: 38%,  $n = 23$ ; C1: 57%,  $n = 11$ ) than in the Shoes scenario (A2: 18%,  $n = 2$ ; B1: 25%,  $n = 7$ ; B2: 39%,  $n = 13$ ; C1: 43%,  $n = 7$ ). However, NNS used them less frequently in both role plays. In this sense, several differences can be observed in the types of internal modifiers used across groups. While NS strongly favored the Conditional Structure in both the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios (18%,  $n = 18$  and 48%,  $n = 19$ , respectively), NNS displayed minimum use of this syntactic device (A2: 7%,  $n = 1$ ; B1: 7%,  $n = 1$  and A2: 100%,  $n = 2$ ; B1: 42%,  $n = 3$ ; B2: 46%,  $n = 6$ ; C1: 28%,  $n = 2$ , respectively). Regarding the use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, NS frequently used Understaters/Hedgers in the Sugar Scenario (36%,  $n = 36$ ), although they barely used them in the Shoes Scenario (2%,  $n = 1$ ). NNS also used Understaters/Hedgers more frequently in the Sugar Scenario (A2: 38%,  $n = 5$ ; B1: 38%,  $n = 5$ ; B2: 34%,  $n = 8$ ; C1: 27%,  $n = 3$ ), compared to their minimal use in the Shoes Scenario (B1: 14%,  $n = 1$ ). NNS barely employed Downtoners (B1: 23%,  $n = 3$ ; B2: 21%,  $n = 5$  and B1: 14%,  $n = 1$ ; B2: 7%,  $n = 1$ ; C1: 14%,  $n = 1$ , respectively), which appeared to be highly preferred by NS in the Sugar Scenario (26%,  $n = 26$ ), but less in the Shoes Scenario (18%,  $n = 7$ ). The use of internal modifiers by several NNS in both scenarios is illustrated in the examples below:

(90) A2. Gr. *Av \*μου ρωτάω [Aspect] αν μπορείς να μου δώσεις λίγο [Understater/Hedger] ζάχαρη.*

Eng. I wonder [Aspect] if you can give me a bit [Understater/Hedger] of sugar.

(91) A2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα [Conditional] ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια*

Eng. I would like [Conditional] a pair of shoes

(92) B1. Gr. *Θα μπορούσατε [Conditional] να μου δώσετε λίγο [Understater/Hedger] ζάχαρη;*

Eng. Could you [Conditional] give me a bit of sugar?

(93) B1. Gr. *Θα ήθελα [Conditional] να ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια για ένα γιορτή.*

Eng. I would like [Conditional] to see one pair of shoes for a party.

(94) B2. Gr. *Μπορείτε να μου δώσει λιγάκι* [Understater/Hedger + Solidarity Marker] *ζάχαρη; Παρακαλώ.*

[Politeness Marker]

Eng. Can you give me a little (diminutive) [Understater/Hedger + Solidarity Marker] sugar, please?

[Politeness Marker]

(95) B2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα* [Conditional] *να το δοκιμάσω, παρακαλώ.* [Politeness Marker]

Eng. I would like [Conditional] to try them on, please. [Politeness Marker]

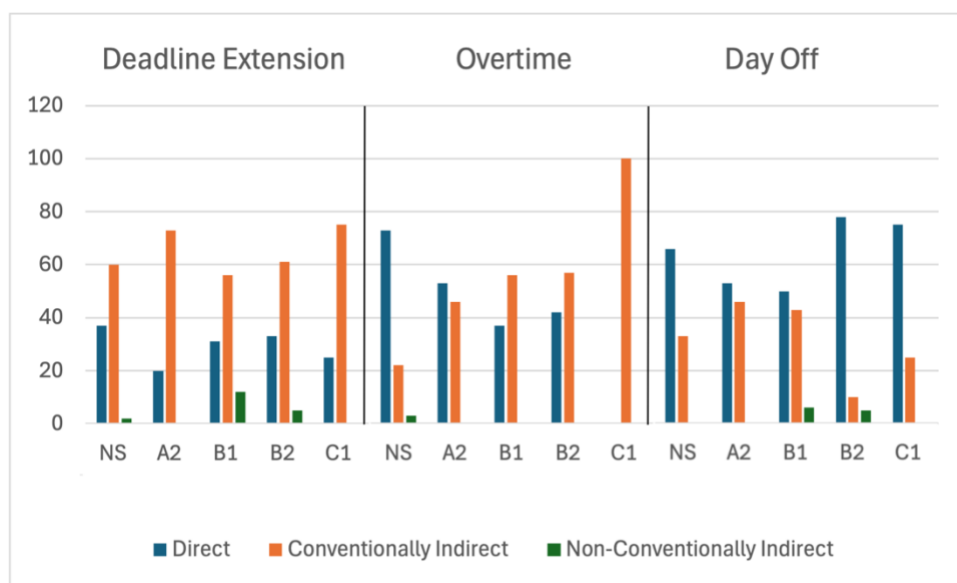
To conclude, contrasting patterns in the use of requests were found across groups. While NS strongly leaned towards Conventionally Indirect Requests in both role plays, NNS only opted for this type of request in the Sugar Scenario, while preferring Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario. Additionally, all groups favored external over internal modifiers, except for those at the C1 level who preferred internal modifiers overall specifically in the Sugar Scenario. Overall, Grounders were mostly used by both NS and NNS across contexts, although the latter group exhibited a more limited use, particularly regarding other modifiers such as Preparators or the Conditional Structure.

### 4.2.3. High Distance and High Power Scenarios (+D, +P)

The three remaining role plays—the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios—depict formal situations characterized by high social distance and high power between the interlocutors. Figure 26 presents the results regarding the types of requests used by all groups in these formal contexts.

**Figure 26**

*Comparison of Request Types by Group in the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of participants.

The previous figure highlights several differences among groups in the use of requests across the three formal scenarios. In the Deadline Extension Scenario, all groups predominantly employed Conventionally Indirect Requests (NS: 60%,  $n = 32$ ,  $M = 8.00$ ,  $SD = 7.18$ ; A2: 73%,  $n = 11$ ,  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 3.11$ ; B1: 56%,  $n = 9$ ,  $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ; B2: 61%,  $n = 11$ ,  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 3.27$ ; C1: 75%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). Similarly, this type of request was favored in the Overtime Scenario by participants at the B1 (56%,  $n = 9$ ,  $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 3.86$ ), B2 (57%,  $n = 11$ ,  $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 5.50$ ), and C1 (100%,  $n = 4$ ,  $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 2.00$ ) levels, whereas NS and A2

participants leaned towards Direct Requests (73%,  $n = 39$ ,  $M = 9.75$ ,  $SD = 11.2$  and 53%,  $n = 8$ ,  $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 4.00$ , respectively). Regarding the Day Off Scenario, Direct Requests were predominantly used across all groups (NS: 66%,  $n = 35$ ,  $M = 8.75$ ,  $SD = 16.1$ ; A2: 53%,  $n = 8$ ,  $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 4.00$ ; B1: 50%,  $n = 8$ ,  $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 4.00$ ; B2: 78%,  $n = 15$ ,  $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 7.50$ ; C1: 75%,  $n = 3$ ,  $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ). However, Conventionally Indirect Requests were also employed to some extent by NS (33%,  $n = 18$ ,  $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 5.25$ ), A2 (46%,  $n = 7$ ,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 3.50$ ), and B1 (43%,  $n = 7$ ,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 2.87$ ) participants. Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests were rarely used in any of the scenarios. The following examples show the types of requests used by some NS and B2 participants across the three scenarios:

(96) B2. Gr. *Μπορώ να σας στείλω την έκθεση λίγο αργότερα;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Can I send you the assignment a bit later? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

(97) B2. Gr. *Μπορείς να δουλεύεις \*τέσσερα ώρες πιο πολύ σήμερα;* [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

Eng. Can you work four hours extra today? [Query-Preparatory of Ability]

(98) B2. Gr. *Θέλω να πάρω άδεια.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I want to take a day off. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(99) NS. Gr. *Μήπως θα μπορούσα να έχω δύο μέρες παραπάνω να την ολοκληρώσω;* [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

Eng. Could I just have two more days to complete it? [Query-Preparatory of Permission]

(100) NS. *Θα ήθελα, αν γίνεται, την επόμενη εβδομάδα να δουλέψεις λίγες παραπάνω ώρες.*

[Direct/Need-Want Statement]

Eng. I would like you to work a few extra hours next week, if possible. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

(101) NS. Gr. *Μια μέρα άδεια θα ήθελα να αιτηθώ.* [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

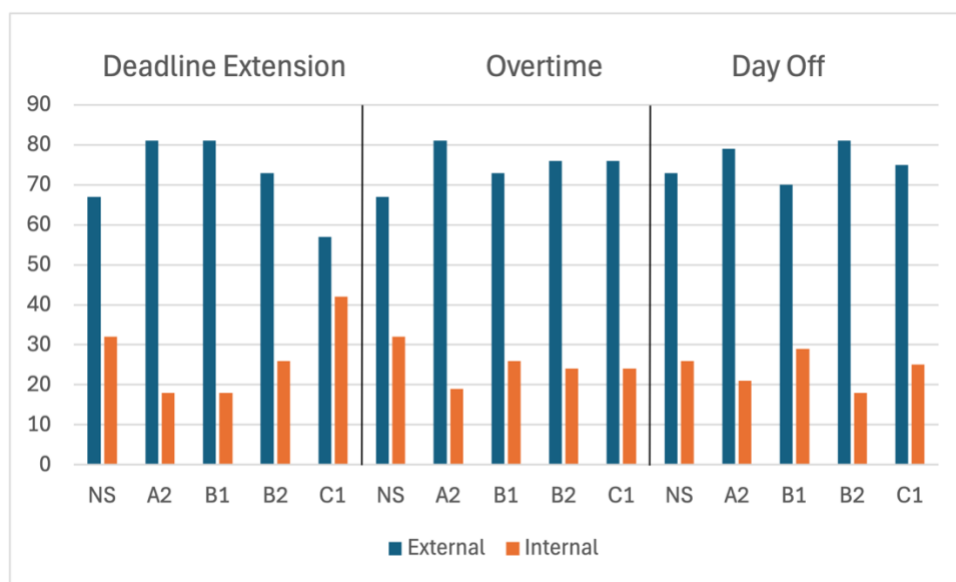
Eng. One day I would like to request. [Direct/Need-Want Statement]

When comparing the total number of modifications across the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios (see Section 4.1., Tables 36, 40, and 44, respectively), all groups exhibited a similar performance and used comparable numbers of modifiers in the three role plays. In the Deadline Extension Scenario, NS ( $n = 266$ ) along with A2 ( $n = 43$ ), B1 ( $n = 48$ ), and B2 ( $n = 64$ ) participants, used slightly more modifications than in the other two scenarios. Across all three role plays, the number of modifiers increased with proficiency, particularly from the A2 to B2 level. In contrast, C1 participants used slightly more modifiers in the Overtime Scenario ( $n = 23$ ). These similarities were also reflected in the types of modifications employed by each group.

Figure 27 compares the percentages of use of external and internal modifiers by all groups in the three formal scenarios.

**Figure 27**

*Comparison of Modifications by Group in the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios*



*Note.* The vertical axis of the figure shows the percentage of modifications.

As the previous figure shows, findings revealed a similar performance across groups in the three formal role plays. As can be observed, all groups highly favored external modifications over



internal in the Deadline Extension (NS: 67%,  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ ; A2: 81%,  $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ; B1: 81%,  $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ; B2: 73%,  $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ; C1: 57%,  $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), Overtime (NS: 64%,  $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.94$ ; A2: 80%,  $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ; B1: 83%,  $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ; B2: 74%,  $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ; C1: 65%,  $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ), and Day Off (NS: 73%,  $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ; A2: 75%,  $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ; B1: 70%,  $M = 1.81$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ; B2: 81%,  $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ; C1: 75%,  $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) Scenarios. Unlike the previously discussed Sugar and Shoes Scenarios characterized by +D and -P, participants across all groups did not draw on internal modifiers as much and opted most predominantly for external modifications.

Table 50 below presents the distribution of the types of external modifiers used by the NS and NNS in the three scenarios in order to clearly observe similarities and differences.

**Table 50**

*Distribution of External Modifications Used by All Groups in the Three Scenarios*

External Modifications		Deadline Extension					Overtime					Day Off				
		NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Attention Getters	f	19	4	2	2	0	29	9	5	2	1	18	13	3	4	0
	%	10	11	5	4	0	14	25	16	3	5	9	34	10	8	0
Preparators	f	27	4	8	8	2	38	9	8	16	4	35	6	6	13	3
	%	15	11	20	17	16	19	25	25	30	21	18	15	20	27	25
Getting a Precommitment	f	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
	%	-1	0	2	0	0	-1	5	3	0	0	-1	2	0	0	0
Grounder	f	84	20	18	23	8	64	11	7	21	6	70	12	13	18	5
	%	46	57	46	48	66	32	30	22	39	31	37	31	44	38	41
Disarmer	f	6	2	1	2	0	6	0	1	1	2	28	2	4	4	2
	%	3	5	2	4	0	3	0	3	2	10	14	5	13	8	16
Imposition Minimizer	f	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	5	6	0	1	5	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	0
Promise of Reward/Future Action	f	1	1	2	0	0	13	1	3	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
	%	-1	3	5	0	0	6	2	9	3	10	0	5	0	0	0
Apology	f	4	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	4	0
	%	2	3	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	8	0
Considerator	f	16	0	2	0	1	11	0	1	2	1	23	0	2	2	2
	%	8	0	5	0	8	5	0	3	3	5	12	0	6	4	16
Discourse Orientation Move	f	19	2	3	7	1	15	2	4	4	0	5	2	0	2	0
	%	10	5	7	14	8	7	5	12	7	0	2	5	0	4	0
Sweeteners	f	3	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
	%	1	3	0	0	0	7	0	0	5	10	-1	0	0	0	0
Total	f	180	35	39	47	12	195	36	31	53	19	188	38	29	47	12
	%	67	81	81	73	57	67	81	73	76	76	73	79	70	81	75

The previous table highlights that all groups leaned mainly towards Grounders and Preparators across the three role plays. Specifically, all NNS proficiency levels favored Grounders in the Deadline Extension Scenario (A2: 57%,  $n = 20$ ; B1: 46%,  $n = 18$ ; B2: 48%,  $n = 23$ ; C1: 66%,  $n = 8$ ), whereas all groups used them slightly less in the other two role plays. This performance aligns with the use of this modifier by NS (46%,  $n = 84$  in the Deadline Extension Scenario; 32%,  $n = 64$  in the Overtime Scenario and 37%,  $n = 70$  in the Day Off Scenario). Regarding Preparators, all groups appeared to employ them more in the Overtime (NS: 19%,  $n = 38$ ; A2: 25%,  $n = 9$ ; B1: 25%,  $n = 8$ ; B2: 30%,  $n = 16$ ; C1: 21%,  $n = 4$ ) and Day Off (NS: 18%,  $n = 35$ ; A2: 15%,  $n = 6$ ; B1: 20%,  $n = 6$ ; B2: 27%,  $n = 13$ ; C1: 25%,  $n = 3$ ) Scenarios when compared to the Deadline Extension Scenario (NS: 15%,  $n = 27$ ; A2: 11%,  $n = 4$ ; B1: 20%,  $n = 8$ ; B2: 17%,  $n = 8$ ; C1: 16%,  $n = 2$ ). To a lesser extent, NS also used Attention Getters across the three role plays (10%,  $n = 19$  in Deadline Extension; 14%,  $n = 29$  in Overtime and 9%,  $n = 18$  in Day Off). This modifier was mostly used by NNS in the Overtime (A2: 25%,  $n = 9$ ; B1: 16%,  $n = 5$ ; B2: 3%,  $n = 3$ ; C1: 5%,  $n = 1$ ) and Day Off (A2: 34%,  $n = 13$ ; B1: 10%,  $n = 3$ ; B2: 8%,  $n = 4$ ) Scenarios. NS also drew on Considerators (8%,  $n = 16$  in the Deadline Extension Scenario, 5%,  $n = 11$  in the Overtime Scenario, and 12%,  $n = 23$  in the Day Off Scenario) and Discourse Orientation Moves (10%,  $n = 19$  in the Deadline Extension Scenario; 7%,  $n = 15$  in the Overtime Scenario, and 2%,  $n = 5$  in the Day Off Scenario), but more moderately. However, these modifiers were barely employed by the NNS groups in any of these scenarios. The examples below illustrate the use of some of these external modifiers across the three role plays:

(102) B1. Gr. *Έχω πολλή δουλειά στο πανεπιστήμιο και δεν μπορώ να τελειώσω τη εργασία για \*μέρα.* [Grounder]

Eng. I have, have a lot of work at university and I can't finish the assignment for (to)day.

[Grounder]

(103) B2. Gr. *Θέλω να μιλάω με εσένα.* [Preparator]

Eng. I want to talk to you.

(104) C1. Gr. *Θέλω να σας ρωτήσω κάτι.* [Preparator]

Eng. I want to ask you something. [Preparator]

(105) NS. Gr. *Επειδή έχω ένα προσωπικό ζήτημα γιατί συγχρόνως εργάζομαι και δεν έχω προλάβει να ολοκληρώσω την εργασία μου.* [Grounder]

Eng. Because I have a personal matter, since I am also working at the same time, and I haven't had the chance to finish my assignment. [Grounder]

(106) NS. Gr. *Μπορώ να σε απασχολήσω για λίγο;* [Preparator]

Eng. Can I bother you a moment? [Preparator]

(107) NS. Gr. *Θέλω να σας απασχολήσω για λίγο.* [Preparator]

Eng. I want to bother you for a moment. [Preparator]

Regarding the types of internal modifiers, Table 51 below displays their use by NS and NNS across the three contexts.

**Table 51***Distribution of Internal Modifications Used by All Groups in the Three Scenarios*

Internal Modifications			Deadline Extension					Overtime					Day Off				
			NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1	NS	A2	B1	B2	C1
Syntactic	Negation	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
	Subjunctive	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conditional Structure	f	28	0	2	4	1	32	2	1	3	0	32	0	2	6	2
		%	32	0	22	23	11	34	25	9	18	0	46	0	16	54	50
	Past Tense	f	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	1	0
		%	3	0	0	6	11	2	0	0	0	16	5	0	8	9	0
	Future Tense	f	3	0	0	1	0	10	0	1	3	0	8	0	0	0	0
		%	3	0	0	6	0	10	0	9	18	0	11	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	f	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
		%	2	0	22	0	11	0	0	18	0	0	1	10	16	0	0
	Passive Voice	f	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lexical/ Phrasal	Understaters/ Hedgers	f	20	4	2	5	3	15	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
		%	23	50	22	29	33	16	12	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
	Politeness Marker	f	4	1	2	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	2	4	0	1	0
		%	4	12	22	6	0	3	12	0	12	0	3	40	0	9	0
	Subjectivizers	f	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	12	0	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Downtoners	f	9	1	0	3	1	6	2	2	1	1	5	2	0	1	0
		%	10	12	0	17	11	6	25	18	6	16	7	20	0	9	0
	Cajolers	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Solidarity Markers	f	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
		%	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Consultative Devices	f	13	1	1	2	2	13	2	5	5	4	13	3	5	2	2
		%	15	12	11	11	22	14	25	45	31	66	18	30	41	18	50
	Appealers	f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intensifiers (Upgraders)	f	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
		%	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Total		f	86	8	9	17	9	92	8	11	16	6	69	10	12	11	4
		%	32	18	18	26	42	32	19	26	24	24	26	21	29	18	25

The previous table shows that NNS used internal modifiers minimally across the three role plays when compared to the NS group. NS mostly employed the Conditional Structure (32%,  $n = 28$  in the Deadline Extension; 34%,  $n = 32$  in the Overtime, and 46%,  $n = 32$  in the Day Off Scenarios) and Consultative Devices (15%,  $n = 13$  in the Deadline Extension; 14%,  $n = 13$  in the Overtime, and 18%,  $n = 13$  in the Day Off Scenarios), but NNS showed limited use of these modifiers in all three role plays. However, they did draw on internal modifications more in the Deadline Extension Scenario than in the other two, particularly in the use of Understaters/Hedgers (A2: 50%,  $n = 4$ ; B1: 22%,  $n = 2$ ; B2: 29%,  $n = 5$ ; C1: 33%,  $n = 3$ ). Other modifiers were favored by NNS in the other two situations, such as Consultative Devices in both the Overtime Scenario

(A2: 25%,  $n = 2$ ; B1: 45%,  $n = 5$ ; B2: 31%,  $n = 5$ ; C1: 66%,  $n = 4$ ) and the Day Off Scenario (A2: 30%,  $n = 3$ ; B1: 41%,  $n = 5$ ; B2: 18%,  $n = 2$ ; C1: 50%,  $n = 2$ ); the Conditional was also employed in the Day Off Scenario (B1: 16%,  $n = 2$ ; B2: 54%,  $n = 6$ ; C1: 50%,  $n = 2$ ). Additionally, NS favored Understaters/Hedgers in the Deadline Extension Scenario (23%,  $n = 20$ ) and, to a lesser extent, in the Overtime Scenario (16%,  $n = 15$ ); NS did not employ this modifier in the Day Off Scenario. Notably, NNS only exhibited some usage of Understaters/Hedgers in the Deadline Extension Scenario (A2: 50%,  $n = 4$ ; B1: 22%,  $n = 2$ ; B2: 29%,  $n = 5$ ; C1: 33%,  $n = 3$ ). Other modifiers such as the Past Tense, the Future Tense, the Politeness Marker, or Downtoners were used sparingly by all groups across scenarios. The examples below show some use of internal modification devices in each formal role play:

(108) A2. Gr. *Χρειάζομαι λίγο* [Understater/Hedger] *\*πιος καιρό*.

Eng. I need a bit [Understater/Hedger] more time.

(109) B1. Gr. *Σε ρωτάω* [Aspect] *αν μπορείς να μένεις αύριο τέσσερις ώρες* *\*πια*.

Eng. I ask [Aspect] if you can stay tomorrow four more hours.

(110) B2. Gr. *Θα ήθελα* [Conditional] *να έχω μία μέρα άδεια*,

Eng. I would like [Conditional] to have a day off.

(111) C1. Gr. *Ηθελα* [Past Tense] *να ρωτήσω* [Consultative Device] *αν μπορείτε να μου δώσετε λίγο*

[Understater/Hedger] *\*πιο χρόνο ακόμα για να το τελειώσω*.

Eng. I wanted [Past Tense] to ask [Consultative Device] if you can give a little [Understater/Hedger] more time to finish it.

(112). NS. Gr. *Θα πρέπει* [Future Tense] *να καθίσεις λίγο* [Understater/Hedger] *παραπάνω*.

Eng. You will have [Future Tense] to stay a little [Understater/Hedger] longer.

In summary, several differences were observed in the types of requests used by all groups in these three formal role plays. While all groups favored Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Deadline Extension Scenario and Direct Requests in the Day Off Scenario, their performance seemed to differ in the Overtime Scenario, i.e., NS and A2 participants relied more on Direct Requests while B1, B2, and C1 participants strongly favored Conventionally Indirect Requests. Regarding the use of modifiers across the three scenarios, however, all groups exhibited a similar performance, relying mostly on external devices such as Grounders and Preparators, which were the most commonly used by all groups. Additionally, NNS used internal modifiers minimally when compared to the NS in all three role plays.

### 4.3. RQ3: Pragmatic Transfer in Greek Requests by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals

The third research question of the present dissertation aimed to examine potential instances of pragmatic transfer in the requesting behavior of Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek as a foreign language (NNS). Specifically, it investigated whether the NNS participants used the formal form of address (formal ‘you’: Spa. *usted* / Cat. *vostè* / Gr. *εσείς*) when making requests in three of the seven role plays: the Shoes (+D, -P), Deadline Extension (+D, +P), and Day Off (+D, +P) Scenario<sup>22</sup>. These scenarios were selected because they were expected to reveal differences between the Greek NS and the Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners (NNS). This tendency toward formal address in Greek, as outlined by Sifianou (1992a), was further supported by the NS participants in this study. As discussed in the contrastive analysis included in the literature review (Section 2.5.3), the informal form of ‘you’ is now more commonly used and widely accepted both in Spanish (*tú*) (Sampedro, 2016, 2022) and in Catalan (*vostè*) (Nogué et al., 2022). This analysis is particularly relevant since the informal ‘you’ in Spanish (*tú*) and Catalan (*tu*) is generally used consistently regardless of the degree of formality in a given situation (Osváth, 2015).

In light of this, this section presents the findings on the forms of address used by all groups in each of the three scenarios. Descriptive statistics are first provided to highlight the use of informal and formal forms of address by NS and NNS (as an overall group and by proficiency level). Then, Chi-square and Fisher’s exact tests were used to examine whether there are any statistical differences between NS and NNS. Additionally, logistic nominal regression was conducted to explore the probability of using the formal address form of ‘you’ across proficiency

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<sup>22</sup>This analysis considers all of the requester’s turns across the three role plays, as the form of address was sometimes missing in the turn where the request was made. Additionally, the analysis considers not only the participants’ explicit use of the forms of address (whether formal or informal) but also the verb conjugation, which, as discussed in Section 2.5.3, differs in Greek compared to Spanish and Catalan.

groups. Examples are provided to illustrate the address forms used by the groups in the three scenarios.

#### 4.3.1. Shoes Scenario (+D, -P)

Table 52 below provides a detailed overview of the frequencies and percentages regarding the absence or use of formal and informal ‘you’ in the Shoes Scenario. It compares the choices made by NS as a group to those made by the NNS as a group (regardless of proficiency level), highlighting how each group navigates formality in this specific context.

**Table 52**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS in the Shoe Scenario*

	NS		NNS	
	f	%	f	%
No Use of Any Form of Address (ø)	11	20	26	48
Informal ‘You’ (εσú)	1	2	10	18
Formal ‘You’ (εσείς)	41	77	18	33
Total	53	100	54	100

As the previous table shows, most NS used the formal ‘you’ (εσείς) in this role play ( $n = 41$ ). In contrast, NNS used the formal ‘you’ (εσείς) less frequently ( $n = 18$ ), although it was used more overall than the informal ‘you’ (εσú) ( $n = 10$ ). Notably, nearly half of the NNS chose not to use either the informal or formal ‘you’ in Greek when requesting the shoes, opting for speaker-oriented requests instead ( $n = 26$ ). In order to explore whether the difference in the use of formal ‘you’ was significantly different between NS and NNS in this scenario, a Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the differences. The test revealed significant differences between the two groups  $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 14.093, p < .001$ .

Table 53 compares the use of informal and formal ‘you’ by the NS and the four proficiency groups.



**Table 53**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS across Proficiency Levels in the Shoe Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
No Use of Any Form of Address (ø)	11	20	9	60	6	37	11	57	0	0
Informal ‘You’ (εσύ)	1	2	2	13	5	31	2	10	1	25
Formal ‘You’ (εσείς)	41	77	4	26	5	31	6	31	3	75
Total	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

As observed, the use of the formal ‘you’ was more common than the informal ‘you’ across all proficiency levels, except for the B1 participants who made equal use of both forms of address (both  $n = 5$ ). However, although some developmental patterns can be perceived, the presence of the formal ‘you’ was still very limited in the A2 ( $n = 4$ ), B1 ( $n = 5$ ), and B2 ( $n = 6$ ) levels. In these levels, most participants did not use any form of address due to the speaker-oriented nature of their requests. The C1 level participants displayed some use of forms of address in this role play, with three out of the four participants employing the formal ‘you’ in Greek ( $n = 3$ ).

A nominal logistic regression<sup>23</sup> was conducted to explore the probability of using the formal address form of ‘you’ across proficiency levels in the Shoes Scenario. Overall, the learners’ levels were found to affect the probability of using the target form (Wald = 9.835, df = 4,  $p = .043$ ). It was found that the highest predicted probability of using the formal ‘you’ was for the NS ( $M = .98$ , s.e. = .02), whereas the lowest probability was found for the B1 group. Significant differences were found between B1 and NS ( $d = .48$ ,  $p = .003$ ), while the other groups performed similarly.

The following examples serve to illustrate developmental patterns in the use of the formal address either in the head acts or modifiers in Greek across proficiency levels in this scenario:

(113) A2. Gr. Έχεις \*αυτή παπούτσια στο πράσινο;

<sup>23</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.

Eng. Do you have these shoes in green? (Informal ‘you’)

(114) B1. Gr. *Ίσως \*το μπορώ να έχω λίγο βοήθεια από σένα;*

Eng. Perhaps I can have a little help from you? (Informal ‘you’)

(115) B2. Gr. *Αυτά τα κόκκινα [εε] τα έχει στο τριάντα οκτώ;*

Eng. Do you have these red ones in size 38? (Formal ‘you’)

(116) C1. Gr. *Δεν ξέρω, αν έχετε το νούμερό μου.*

Eng. I don’t know if you have my number (Formal ‘you’).

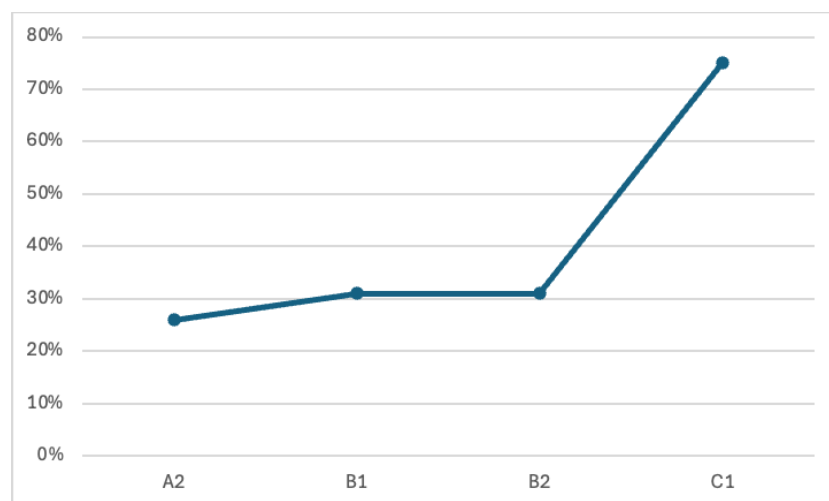
(117). NS. Gr. *Μήπως έχετε αυτό το ζευγάρι παπούτσια σε 38;*

Eng. Do you perhaps have this pair of shoes in size 38? (Formal ‘you’)

Figure 28 provides a clearer illustration of these developmental patterns in the use of the informal and formal ‘you’ in Greek across proficiency levels in this particular scenario.

**Figure 28**

*Use of Formal ‘You’ in Greek across Proficiency Levels in the Shoes Scenario*



As shown in this figure, the use of the formal ‘you’ in Greek showed an increase from the A2 ( $n = 4$ ) to B1 ( $n = 5$ ) level, remained constant at the B2 level ( $n = 6$ ), and rose again at the C1 level ( $n = 3$ ).

#### 4.3.2. Deadline Extension Scenario (+D, +P)

Table 54 presents the breakdown of frequencies and percentages of the forms of address employed by both groups of NS and NNS, highlighting differences in patterns and preferences within this specific scenario.

**Table 54**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

	NS		NNS	
	f	%	f	%
No Use of Any Form of Address ( $\emptyset$ )	1	2	14	26
Informal ‘You’ ( $\epsilon\sigma\upsilon$ )	0	0	22	41
Formal ‘You’ ( $\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ )	52	98	17	32
Total	53	100	53	100

A clear divergence in the use of the forms of address is evident across groups, as shown in the previous table. None of the NS used the informal ‘you’ in this context. Instead, the vast majority strongly preferred the formal ‘you’ ( $n = 52$ ) to address the professor. On the contrary, nearly half of the NNS employed the informal ‘you’ ( $n = 22$ ) in this situation. The formal ‘you’ was less commonly used by this group ( $n = 17$ ), while the remaining portion did not use either form ( $n = 14$ ). For this scenario, a Fisher’s exact test was performed to examine whether there were significant differences between NS and NNS in the use of the formal ‘you’ in this particular role play. The test revealed significant differences between both groups,  $p < .001$ .

Concerning the use of these forms across proficiency levels, Table 55 includes the frequencies and percentages per group to highlight developmental patterns.

**Table 55**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS across Proficiency Levels in the Deadline Extension Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
No Use of Any Form of Address (ø)	1	2	5	33	4	25	5	27	0	0
Informal ‘You’ (εσύ)	0	0	8	53	8	50	4	22	2	50
Formal ‘You’ (εσείς)	52	98	2	13	4	25	9	50	2	50
Total	53	100	15	100	15	100	19	100	4	100

Despite the clear difference shown in Table 50 between NS and NNS in their choice of forms of address, Table 51 reveals an increased use of the formal ‘you’ in Greek across proficiency levels, gradually replacing the informal form. At the A2 and B1 levels, participants predominantly used the informal ‘you’ (both  $n = 8$ ) when requesting a deadline extension. In contrast, nearly half of the B2 group strongly favored the formal ‘you’ ( $n = 9$ ). At the C1 level, an equal preference for the informal and formal ‘you’ was observed, with both used at the same frequency ( $n = 2$ ).

A nominal logistic regression<sup>24</sup> was conducted to explore the probability of using the formal address form of ‘you’ across proficiency levels in the Deadline Extension Scenario. In this case, nearly all NS used the formal form of ‘you’. Thus, this group was excluded from the analysis. Overall, proficiency level was not found to affect the probability of using the target form in this scenario (Wald = 5.77,  $p = .124$ ). However, the A2 and B1 groups performed below the B2 group.

The examples below provide several instances of pragmatic transfer in the address forms used in this scenario:

(118) A2. Gr. Ξέρω να έχουμε να \*εστέλνω σου \*το δουλειά σήμερα.

Eng. I know that we have to send you the assignment today. (Informal ‘you’)

(119) B1. Gr. Μπορώ να σε ρωτάω αν μπορώ να έχω μια βδομάδα \*πια να το τελειώνω;

<sup>24</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.

Eng. Can I ask you if I can have one more week to finish it? (Informal ‘you’)

(120) B2. Gr. Θα ήθελα να μου δώσεις λίγο πιο πολύ χρόνο για να τελειώνω.

Eng. I would like you to give me a bit more time to finish. (Informal ‘you’)

(121) C1. Gr. Θέλω να \*σου ρωτήσω αν εσύ μου επιτρέπεις να κάνω εγώ σιγά σιγά και τη δουλειά.

Eng. I want to ask you if you allow me to do little by little the assignment. (Informal ‘you’)

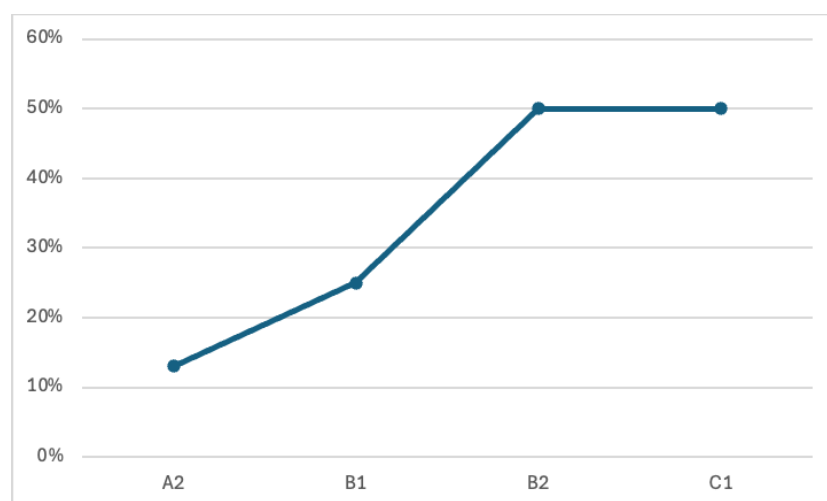
(122). NS. Gr. Ήθελα να σας πω ότι αυτή την εργασία που μου έχετε βάλει δεν θα προλάβω να την τελειώσω.

Eng. I wanted to tell you that this assignment that you gave me I won’t be able to finish it.  
(Formal ‘you’)

Figure 29 shows the trend in the use of the formal ‘you’ across NNS proficiency levels.

**Figure 29**

*Use of Formal ‘You’ in Greek across Proficiency Levels in the Deadline Extension Scenario*



The previous figure shows a steady increase in the use of the formal ‘you’ in Greek from levels A2 ( $n = 2$ ) to B1 ( $n = 4$ ) to B2 ( $n = 9$ ), but then remaining stable at the C1 level ( $n = 2$ ).

### 4.3.3. Day Off Scenario (+D, +P)

Table 56 includes the frequencies and percentages of the forms of address preferred by both NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario. The data highlights the distribution of the formal and informal ‘you’, as well as cases with no explicit form of address, providing insights into the variations between the two groups in this particular scenario.

**Table 56**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario*

	NS		NNS	
	f	%	f	%
No use of Any Form of Address (ø)	0	0	30	55
Informal ‘You’ (εσύ)	2	4	11	20
Formal ‘You’ (εσείς)	51	96	13	24
Total	53	100	54	100

As shown in the table above, the preference in the forms of address differ between the two groups. On the one hand, a vast majority of the NS used the formal ‘you’ ( $n = 51$ ). On the other hand, although NNS slightly favored the formal ‘you’ ( $n = 13$ ) over the informal ‘you’ ( $n = 11$ ), its use was still limited. Additionally, over half of the participants in this group did not use any form at all ( $n = 30$ ), since most of them leaned towards using either the Query-Preparatory of Permission or a Direct Request using a Need/Want Statement, as observed in the findings for RQ1 and RQ2. A Fisher’s exact test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences between NS and NNS in their use of the formal ‘you’ in this context. The results showed significant differences between both groups,  $p < .001$ .

However, different patterns were observed in the preferences for the forms of address across proficiency groups. The comparison is outlined in Table 57.

**Table 57**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Formal and Informal ‘You’ by NS and NNS across Proficiency Levels in the Day Off Scenario*

	NS		A2		B1		B2		C1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
No Use of Any Form of Address (ø)	0	0	10	66	11	68	9	47	0	0
Informal ‘You’ (εσú)	2	4	3	20	1	6	5	26	2	50
Formal ‘You’ (εσείς)	51	96	2	13	4	25	5	26	2	50
Total	53	100	15	100	16	100	19	100	4	100

As observed, the use of the formal ‘you’ increases from the A2 to B2 levels although its use across levels was still limited. While the A2 group slightly favored the use of the informal ‘you’ ( $n = 3$ ) over the formal ‘you’ in this scenario ( $n = 2$ ), some participants at the B1 level showed a higher preference for the formal form of address ( $n = 4$ ). Regarding the B2 and C1 levels, both groups displayed equal use of both forms ( $n = 5$  and  $n = 2$ , respectively).

A nominal logistic regression<sup>25</sup> was conducted to explore the probability of using the formal address form of ‘you’ across proficiency levels in the Day Off Scenario. Overall, proficiency level was found to affect the probability of using the target form in this scenario (Wald = 15.591,  $p = .004$ ). Post hoc pairwise comparison results, however, failed to yield statistical significance. A2 and B2 performed similarly in the use of the formal ‘you’, and B1 closely resembled the NS group.

The following examples show the use of the formal and informal ‘you’ across proficiency levels in this scenario:

(123) A2. Gr. *Ίσως μπορείς να μου κάνεις μια \*χαρά.*

Eng. Maybe you can do me a favor. (Informal ‘you’)

(124) B1. Gr. *Με συγχωρείτε, εγώ θα ήθελα να σας κάτι \*σητήσω.*

<sup>25</sup>The C1 group was excluded from this type of analysis due to the limited number of participants.

Eng. Excuse me, I would like to request something from you. (Formal ‘you’)

(125) B2. Gr. *Ηθελα \*σας ζητήσω κάτι.*

Eng. I wanted to ask you something. (Formal ‘you’)

(126) C1. Gr. *Πρέπει να σας ρωτήσω, αν μπορώ να έχω μία μέρα άδειας,*

Eng. I must ask you if I can have a day off. (Formal ‘you’)

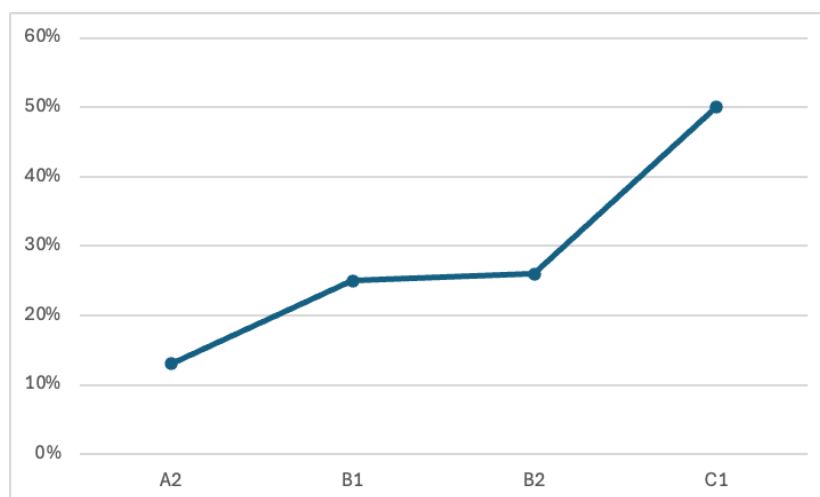
(127). NS. Gr. *Θα ήθελα να σας απασχολήσω για ένα ζήτημά μου.*

Eng. I would like to take up some of your time for a personal matter. (Formal ‘you’)

Figure 30 presents the developmental trends in the use of both forms of address in this role play across proficiency levels.

**Figure 30**

*Use of Formal ‘You’ in Greek across Proficiency Levels in the Day Off Scenario*



The figure above illustrates a steady increase in the use of the formal ‘you’ across all proficiency levels in this scenario (A2:  $n = 2$ ; B1:  $n = 4$ ; B2:  $n = 5$ ; C1:  $n = 2$ ).



#### 4.4. Results from the Retrospective Verbal Reports

This section presents the results of the retrospective verbal reports completed by the Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek (NNS) after participating in the role plays. Examples of responses are provided either in Greek or Spanish, with their translation in English. The results presented here are primarily qualitative.

The retrospective verbal reports proved highly valuable for this study, as they allowed for some degree of confirmation regarding the reliability of the main research instrument (i.e., role plays) and provided a general overview of the NNS's self-perceptions and pragmatic concerns across proficiency levels. Since requests were the focus of all the scenarios, these retrospective reports provided insightful information about the participants' use of this speech act, despite the general scope of the questions posed.

Table 58 includes the NNS groups' perceptions by proficiency level toward the familiarity and difficulty of each situation. The numbers in the table below indicate the frequency with which each role play was mentioned at each proficiency level.

**Table 58***NNS's Perceptions Taken from the Retrospective Verbal Reports*

Role Play	Proficiency Level								
	Prior Experience (Questions 1 & 2)								
	A2		B1		B2		C1		
	Outside	In	Outside	In	Outside	In	Outside	In	
	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class	
	Suitcase	5	0	2	4	5	3	2	0
Cleaning	5	0	3	1	6	3	2	0	
Sugar	8	1	4	1	9	4	2	0	
Shoes	9	4	12	4	15	7	4	0	
Deadline Extension	6	1	4	3	8	4	1	0	
Overtime	3	0	1	1	4	1	2	0	
Day Off	4	1	4	3	7	2	2	0	
	Level of Difficulty (Questions 3 & 4)								
	A2		B1		B2		C1		
	Easy	Difficult	Easy	Difficult	Easy	Difficult	Easy	Difficult	
	Suitcase	3	0	6	0	4	1	1	1
	Cleaning	0	1	3	3	4	1	0	2
Sugar	4	1	5	1	4	1	2	0	
Shoes	5	1	9	2	14	1	1	0	
Deadline Extension	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	
Overtime	0	7	0	6	0	7	0	1	
Day Off	1	4	2	4	1	3	1	2	

*Note.* The “In Class” column refers to Greek lessons taken by the learners.

First, findings from the responses given by the A2 participants revealed that some of them ( $n = 5$ ) believed that the Shoes Scenario was easier since they had learned the basic vocabulary related to shopping and had practiced it in class. In addition, they considered it an everyday situation that requires vocabulary that is easily accessible. Some other A2 participants ( $n = 3$ ) also felt comfortable with the Suitcase Scenario, reporting that the language needed for this role play is more colloquial, and mentioning that they have asked friends for favors at some points in their

lives. Some learners at this level also reported that they found the Sugar ( $n = 4$ ) and Cleaning Scenarios ( $n = 5$ ) moderately familiar. The Deadline Extension Scenario was also deemed as familiar by several participants ( $n = 7$ ) in this group. Specifically, four senior participants ( $n = 4$ ) reported being familiar with this situation as teachers or university professors, while the other three participants ( $n = 3$ ) said that they had encountered it as students. Despite the high familiarity with these scenarios, some participants ( $n = 3$ ) shared that they struggled with finding vocabulary at the moment of the role play. Moreover, several participants ( $n = 6$ ) at this level stated that they had never engaged in any of the seven role plays in their Greek language classes. Those who reported that they had practiced role plays ( $n = 4$ ), indicated that the Shoes Scenario was the most common one, as illustrated in the following responses to question two of the report:

(128) A2. *Hemos hablado de estas temáticas, pero nunca... ¡sí! El de la tienda sí, el año pasado en A1, pero el resto hemos hecho el vocabulario, pero sin el rol en sí.*

Eng. We've talked about these topics, but never... yes! We did the shop one last year in A1, for the rest we've done the vocabulary, but not the actual role plays.

(129) A2. *Si, τα μαγαζιά muchas veces, cosas en clase, pocas y del resto poco, hacemos mucho de μαγαζιά, πελάτης...*

Eng. Yes, the shops many times, things in class, very few, and the rest very little, we do a lot about the shops, client...

(130) A2. *Este sí lo hemos hecho (μαγαζιά), y en principio como rol, nada, solo la tienda.*

Eng. We've done this one (shop), and basically as a role [play], nothing, just the shop.

(131) A2. *Το μαγαζί, γιατί στο βιβλίο έχουμε δύο διαφορετικά βιβλία, έχουμε ψώνια y son muy prácticos para la vida diaria.*

Eng. The shop because in the book, we have two different books, we have shopping and they're very practical for everyday life.

In contrast, some of the other A2 participants were not as familiar with the other situations, stating that they had difficulties using vocabulary in two role plays, specifically the Overtime ( $n = 7$ ) and Day Off ( $n = 4$ ) Scenarios. Those who were familiar with the Day Off Scenario ( $n = 2$ ) reported that they had previously experienced that situation in their lives. However, none of them explicitly reported having experienced anything similar to the Overtime Scenario, even though some ( $n = 3$ ) stated that they were familiar with almost all the scenarios. The following examples indicate some A2 participants' difficulties with these role plays, as reported in question four:

(132) A2. *Este (Overtime), el de pedir... porque no tenía el vocabulario. No... no lo he hecho nunca y no sé... no tengo las palabras adecuadas para pedirle a alguien que haga algo.*

Eng. This one (Overtime), the one asking for... because I didn't know the vocabulary. No... I've never done it before, and I don't know... I don't have the appropriate words to ask someone to do something.

(133) A2. *Quizás en esta... (Day Off) porque no sabía argumentar, no tenía las palabras para argumentar.*

Eng. Perhaps in this one... (Day Off) because I didn't know how to argue, I didn't have the words to argue.

(134) A2. *Supongo que el del director porque es el que menos identificada me siento.*

Eng. I guess the one with the boss, because it's the one I feel the least identified with.

(135) A2. *En estos dos (Overtime and Day Off), y este, este por la cuestión del trabajo (Overtime) y del sí... en donde no puedes ofender a la persona y lo controlo menos.*

Eng. In these two (Overtime and Day Off), and this one, this one because of work (Overtime) and for... where you can't offend the other person, and I control it less.

Besides the lack of vocabulary, some A2 participants ( $n = 2$ ) stated that the use of the appropriate form of address (informal vs. formal) was another critical challenge, especially in the most formal scenarios. The other formal scenario (Deadline Extension) was not as frequently mentioned by participants as a difficult scenario ( $n = 2$ ). In fact, several participants ( $n = 6$ ) reported that they had experienced such a situation at some point in their lives and therefore were highly familiar with it. However, some struggled with the vocabulary and the forms of address due to the degree of formality ( $n = 3$ ). The following examples include some participants' perceptions towards the degree of difficulty in the formal scenarios, as responded in question four:

(136) A2. *Quizás está la de... (Deadline Extension), me parece que en Grecia es señor profesor, aquí no.*

Eng. Perhaps this one of... (Deadline Extension), I think in Greece it is "Mr. Professor", not here.

(137) A2. *Menos habitual quizás lo del trabajo, un poco más difícil porque... los dos... porque igual hay un vocabulario de estos que hacemos menos... también esto pasa que como en castellano estamos poco habituados a hablar en usted y es un poco más difícil también... pues lo que me resulta difícil a veces es como dirigirme...*

Eng. Less common is the working situations, more difficult because... both... (Overtime and Day Off) because perhaps we see this vocabulary less... it also happens that, like in

Spanish, we are less used to speaking using “usted” (formal ‘you’), and it is a bit more difficult too... so the most difficult thing for me is to know how to address (someone)...

Regarding the B1 level, nearly all the participants could relate to the Shoes, Sugar, and Suitcase Scenarios, having experienced them in their own lives. However, most of them reported not having practiced them in their Greek courses, except for some cases. The Shoes Scenario was generally considered the easiest one at this level ( $n = 9$ ), since the interactions were shorter and the vocabulary was more familiar to the participants, as reported. However, some participants ( $n = 2$ ) still found difficulties with this role play because they struggled to find keywords required to purchase something in a shop (such as “try on” or “size”). The other two informal scenarios (Sugar and Suitcase) were also considered easy ( $n = 5$  and  $n = 6$ , respectively) as they did not require complex structures. Several participants ( $n = 3$ ) reported that they were also familiar with the Cleaning Scenario due to personal experience living with other people in the same apartment. Some of these perceptions reported by the B1 participants in question four can be observed in the following examples:

(138) B1. *Ίσως με τη φίλη, ψώνια και γείτονα... γιατί είναι πιο “informal”, είναι πιο εύκολο, δεν πρέπει να \*σκεφτόμαστε τις λέξεις, πρέπει να χρησιμοποιώ, είναι πιο ελεύθερο.*

Eng. Maybe the friend one, shop, and neighbor... because they are more informal, easier, you don’t need to think of the words I must use, [it] is more free.

(139) B1. *Ίσως με το γείτονα, γιατί ήταν εύκολο, \*το ρόλο, είναι εύκολο για να μιλήσω με το γείτονα, δεν ξέρω γιατί είναι \*ένα “normal” \*ρόλο. Si, porque una situación habitual que se da frecuentemente. Ναι, στα μαγαζιά, γιατί ξέρω αυτές τις λέξεις, γιατί δεν πρέπει να*

*πω δύσκολα πράγματα. Όλα είναι εύκολα. Με τη βαλίτσα, γιατί \*το φίλος, γνωρίζω τον φίλο, porque le puedo tratar de tí, είναι εύκολο, είναι πιο εύκολο.*

Eng. Maybe with the neighbor, because it was easy, the role play, it's easy to talk to the neighbor, I don't know because it's a normal role. Yes, because it's a common situation that happens frequently. Yes, in the stores, because I know these words, because I don't have to say difficult things. Everything is easy. With the suitcase, because the friend, I know the friend, because I can address him informally, it's easy, it's easier.

In contrast, the three formal scenarios (Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off) were also regarded as the most challenging for most B1 participants ( $n = 3$ ,  $n = 6$ , and  $n = 4$ , respectively). As reported, the lack of vocabulary and the need to use more formal types of structures were perceived as the most common problems. Consequently, some struggled when asking favors in these formal scenarios. The Overtime Scenario was considered the most difficult due to lack of familiarity, as reported by some participants ( $n = 6$ ). However, different perceptions were had regarding the Deadline Extension Scenario. For some participants ( $n = 4$ ), this scenario was easy to deal with because they had similar experiences in their lives. For other participants, however, it was difficult because of the high degree of formality and negotiation involved in the interaction ( $n = 3$ ). B1 participants reported some of the obstacles they came across in these formal scenarios, as indicated in the responses given in question four:

(140) B1. *Αυτή, διευθυντής, γιατί δεν δουλεύω και δεν είναι καθημερινό λεξιλόγιο και καθημερινή "situation".*

Eng. This, boss, because I don't work and it's not everyday vocabulary and everyday situation.

(141) B1. *Τσως το διευθυντής γιατί δεν ήξερα τι να πω ούτε στα ισπανικά, δεν ξέρω, γιατί δεν είμαι πολύ \*χαλαρό όταν προσπαθώ να κάνω κάποιον να κάνει κάτι που εγώ θέλω. Τότε είναι “incómodo”.*

Eng. Maybe the director because I didn't know what to say, not even in Spanish. I don't know, because I'm not very relaxed when I try to get someone to do something I want. Then, it's uncomfortable.

(142) B1. *Νομίζω αυτά, τα πιο δύσκολα, δεν ξέρω πώς να το ζητήσω αυτό, bueno, είναι πολύ, δεν είναι ίδια αλλά είναι πολύ “similar”, ήταν \*τρία ιστορίας που πρέπει να ζητήσω ένα “favor”. Δεν είναι εύκολο να \*βρίσκεται \*τα λέξεις.*

Eng. I think these are the most difficult ones, I don't know how to ask for this, well, it's a lot, it's not the same but it's very similar. There were three situations where I had to ask for a favor. It's not easy to find the words.

Similar perceptions were elicited from the B2 participants. Again, the Shoes Scenario was regarded as the easiest one as reported by most participants ( $n = 14$ ) due to their familiarity with the vocabulary and having had practiced it in class. Almost all of them said that they had been a customer in a shop at some point in their lives ( $n = 15$ ), and some of them had even experienced it in Greece ( $n = 7$ ). However, one participant ( $n = 1$ ) at this level shared that they struggled with the Shoes Scenario because they did not like shopping. Most participants also reported that they found the other informal role plays easy to act out due to prior experience, namely the Suitcase, Sugar and Cleaning Scenarios (each  $n = 4$ ). The following examples show some responses given by several B2 participants to question one regarding familiarity with the contexts:



(143) B2. *Στη ζωή μου, όταν εγώ ήμουν στην Ελλάδα, εγώ αγόρασα πράγματα και εγώ, έπαιξα τον ρόλο αυτό, στα μαγαζιά, και πιστεύω ότι εγώ ξέρω καλά τις λέξεις των ρούχων και εδώ στο μάθημα επίσης.*

Eng. In my life, when I went to Greece, I bought things and I played this role, in the shop, and I think that I know the words about clothes well and in the class too.

(144) B2. *Ναι, στα μαγαζιά, γείτονας, φίλος.*

Eng. Yes, in the shop, neighbor, friend.

(145) B2. *Ναι, αυτό (μαγαζιά) το κάνω όταν αγοράζω παπούτσια... όταν είχα τα παιδιά μου \*μικρή, το έκανα (γείτονα).*

Eng. Yes, this (shop) I do it when I buy shoes... when my kids were small, I did this (neighbor).

Nevertheless, participants at the B2 level expressed less prior experience with the more formal role plays such as the Overtime and Day Off Scenarios. This did not occur as much with the Deadline Extension, which seemed to be more familiar for some participants ( $n = 8$ ). Some were connected to educational settings (either university professors or students) ( $n = 4$ ) and others reported having practiced this role play in Greek classes ( $n = 4$ ). The Overtime Scenario was also the most difficult one for the B2 participants ( $n = 7$ ) due to the need for politeness, formal address, and a lack of vocabulary. Moreover, the Day Off Scenario was also reported to be challenging for some participants ( $n = 3$ ), while several others ( $n = 7$ ) shared that they had never experienced a similar situation in their life. In both the Overtime and Day Off Scenarios, some participants expressed their concern for grammar accuracy and the use of correct structures in these contexts due to lack of exposure ( $n = 5$  and  $n = 2$ , respectively). Despite these difficulties, some participants

reported that their experience in work settings allowed them to communicate more easily in both role plays ( $n = 2$  and  $n = 5$ , respectively). Others, however, mentioned that they had never practiced these role plays before ( $n = 6$ ), and therefore, found them more difficult ( $n = 7$  and  $n = 3$ , respectively). Some participants' perceptions regarding familiarity in the formal scenarios are provided in the following examples:

(146) B2. *Για παράδειγμα αυτό (Day Off), στη δουλειά, έπρεπε να, την προηγούμενη εβδομάδα να μιλήσω με όχι με τον διευθυντή αλλά με την γραμματέα, γιατί ήθελα να της ζητήσω να μην πάω στη δουλειά την προηγούμενη Παρασκευή, αφού είχε απεργία.*

Eng. For example, this (Day Off), at work, I had to, last week, speak not with the director, but with the secretary because I wanted to ask her not to go to work the previous Friday since there was a strike.

(147) B2. *Νομίζω ναι, εδώ (Deadline Extension) με την [name of the Greek teacher], μία φορά πριν δύο χρόνια έκανε εργασία και δεν \*μπορώ να \*τελευταία την εργασία και \*μιλάω \*στο [name of the Greek teacher] παρακαλώ θέλω μία μέρα, μία εβδομάδα.*

Eng. I think so, here (Deadline Extension) with [name of the Greek teacher], a year or two ago she did an assignment, and I can't finish the assignment, and I talk to [name of the Greek teacher] please I want one day, one week.

(148) B2. *Αυτό (Deadline Extension), αυτό (Day Off), ναι αυτά μου (Overtime) γιατί εγώ \*η δουλειά μου μου είπαν πολύ.*

Eng. This (Deadline Extension), this (Day Off), yes these me (Overtime) because I, my job they told me a lot.

Lastly, and in a similar vein to the aforementioned proficiency levels, participants at the C1 level considered the Suitcase, Sugar and Shoes Scenarios to be the easiest ( $n = 1$ ,  $n = 2$ , and  $n = 1$ , respectively), since they are informal and familiar contexts. Similar to the other proficiency levels once again, formal contexts were reported as being the most challenging (Deadline Extension:  $n = 1$ ; Overtime:  $n = 1$ ; and Day Off:  $n = 2$ ), since they required more elaborated strategies due to the high degree of politeness and the existence of a hierarchy, often leading to difficulties in using vocabulary and specific verbs. Two participants ( $n = 2$ ) also mentioned the Cleaning Scenario as difficult since they perceived it as a socially sensitive situation where the request can sound awkward. Regarding exposure to these role plays in Greek lessons, none of the participants in this group remembers having practiced anything similar in class. The following examples show some perceptions of participants at the C1 level regarding their difficulties with the formal contexts:

(149) C1. *Ήταν αυτό με τον υπάλληλο (Day Off) γιατί δεν είχα τις λέξεις, ήθελα να πω “solucionar un problema” και δεν βρήκα τη λέξη για αυτό, επομένως δεν ήξερα πώς να συνεχίσω.*

Eng. It was this with the employee (Day Off) because I didn't have the words, I wanted to say, “solve a problem” and I didn't find the word for this, that's why I didn't know how to move on.

(150) C1. *Με αυτή (Deadline Extension), δεν ξέρω, για τις λέξεις, λόγω των λέξεων, δεν ξέρω, για μένα είναι δύσκολα όλα.*

Eng. With this (Deadline Extension), I don't know, for the words, because of the words, I don't know, for me all are difficult.

To conclude, the informal role plays such as the Suitcase, Sugar, and Shoes Scenarios were regarded as the easiest due to the basic vocabulary, simpler grammatical structures and the participants' previous experiences ( $n = 15$ ,  $n = 14$  and  $n = 29$ , respectively). In contrast, most participants at all proficiency levels struggled with the more formal scenarios, particularly those related to the workplace. The Overtime Scenario was considered the most difficult across groups ( $n = 21$ ), since it entails a higher degree of politeness and formality and requires more negotiation strategies. Another recurring response across groups in the retrospective verbal reports was the limited practice of similar role plays for both informal and formal scenarios in their Greek classes, as stated by a high number of participants ( $n = 28$ ). The only exception was the Shoes Scenario, which emerged as the most frequently practiced in class ( $n = 15$ ). However, some differences were observed in the responses regarding the way in which they interpreted the level of difficulty in a particular situation. That is, while some participants struggled with the formal role plays because of lack of linguistic resources, e.g., levels A2 ( $n = 10$ ) and B1 ( $n = 9$ ), others considered these scenarios difficult because of the kind of social interaction involved, e.g., levels B2 ( $n = 10$ ) and C1 ( $n = 4$ ).

#### 4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results obtained in the study for each research question. First, Section 4.1 has addressed the results for RQ1 about the role of proficiency in the acquisition of Greek requests by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). Although differences were observed in the qualitative analysis regarding the use of head acts between NS and NNS in the Cleaning, Shoes and Overtime Scenarios, the statistical analysis only revealed significant group differences in the Shoes Scenario. Group difference was not found to be significant in the Sugar and Cleaning scenarios. Regarding the number of modifications used, statistically significant differences between A2 and NS were found in all the role plays, except for the Cleaning Scenario. In addition, findings revealed significant differences between B1 and B2 groups and NS in the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios. No significant differences were found between the C1 and NS in any scenario.

Second, Section 4.2 has presented the results for RQ2 concerning the use of requests in Greek in formal and informal situations by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). The qualitative analysis revealed similarities and differences between NS and NNS in the use of requests and modifications. In the Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios (-P, -D), all groups favored Conventionally Indirect Requests, especially in the former, while in the latter some variation in the types of requests was more evident. The use of modifications in these two scenarios were comparable. In the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios (-P, +D), NS consistently used Conventionally Indirect Requests, while NNS opted for Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario. Almost all proficiency groups favored external modifications in these situations, although they used them less than NS. Regarding the three formal scenarios (i.e., Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off) (+P +D), all groups favored Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Deadline Extension Scenario and Direct Requests

in the Day Off Scenario. In the Overtime Scenario, NS and A2 participants preferred to use Direct Requests, while B1 and C1 leaned toward Conventionally Indirect Requests. All groups mostly used external modifiers, with NNS relying less on internal modifiers than NS.

Third, Section 4.3 has explored the results of RQ3 about L1 pragmatic transfer in the use of address forms in the requests used by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). Differences were observed in the qualitative analysis of the use of address forms in Greek between NS and NNS in the three role plays (Shoes, Deadline Extension, and Day Off Scenarios). These findings were supported by the inferential statistics, yielding significant differences between the two groups. Regarding the probability to use the formal address form of ‘you’ across proficiency levels in the three scenarios, statistical analysis revealed that proficiency level was found to affect the probability of using the target form in both the Shoes and Day Off Scenarios, but not in the Deadline Extension Scenario.

Lastly, Section 4.4 has included the results of the retrospective verbal reports. Participants generally found the Suitcase, Sugar, and Shoes Scenarios easier, mentioning basic vocabulary, simpler grammar, and familiar contexts as the main reasons. In contrast, the formal workplace scenarios were perceived as more challenging due to their higher demands in politeness, formality, and negotiation. Many participants noted limited classroom practice, except for the Shoes Scenario. Differences in perceived difficulty were linked to proficiency levels. While lower-level learners (A2 and B1) struggled with linguistic limitations, higher-level learners (B2 and C1) found the social complexity of formal scenarios more challenging.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

The main objective of this dissertation was to examine how Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS) acquire requests in Greek as a FL. It focused on three research questions: (1) whether proficiency influences request production and how closely the NNS's performance aligns with that of the native Greek speakers (NS), (2) how NNS formulate requests in formal versus informal contexts, and (3) whether evidence of pragmatic transfer from the L1 emerges in Greek request production. Section 5.1 discusses findings related to proficiency. Section 5.2 addresses the influence of context (formal/informal), and Section 5.3 examines potential L1 transfer, particularly in the use of address forms.

## **5.1. RQ1: The Role of Proficiency in the Acquisition of the Speech Act of Requests in Greek as a Foreign Language by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals**

The first research question sought to examine the effect of proficiency on the acquisition of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. This section builds on the findings presented in the previous chapter, by discussing the types of requests (head acts) and modifications used by all groups (NS and NNS) across different contexts. The discussion seeks to determine whether proficiency impacts L2 learners' requesting behavior in Greek and the extent to which it resembles that of NS in the different communicative scenarios.

### **5.1.1. Proficiency and Types of Requests (Head Acts)**

The statistical analysis of head act usage revealed few statistically significant differences across proficiency levels. However, qualitative findings suggest that proficiency might have an impact on the use of requests by NNS (e.g., Rose, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011; Celaya & Barón, 2015), though not consistently across all role plays. While NS and NNS demonstrated similar patterns in the Suitcase, Sugar, Deadline Extension, and Day Off Scenarios, more notable differences were observed in the Cleaning, Shoes, and Overtime Scenarios. These differences were primarily qualitative. The statistics focused on the general categories (Direct, Conventionally Indirect, and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests) and did not fully capture the variety of the NNS's answers. As such, these findings should be interpreted cautiously as qualitative tendencies rather than statistically confirmed patterns.

The similarity in the requesting performance across groups in the Suitcase, Sugar, and Deadline Extension Scenarios might be due to several reasons. First, L1 speakers of Greek, Spanish, and Catalan might behave in the same way linguistically speaking in these types of



situations. The types of Conventionally Indirect Requests (Query-Preparatory of Permission, Query-Preparatory of Ability or the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative) used by most participants in these three role plays are widely considered as polite and socially acceptable in Greek, Spanish, and Catalan (see Section 2.5.3). Moreover, NNS might have relied more on using Conventionally Indirect Requests in these situations as a means to express politeness and mitigate imposition, instead of using Direct Requests and risking communication breakdowns. However, the use of the Query-Preparatory of Permission, Query-Preparatory of Ability or the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative varied across proficiency levels (see examples 2 to 6 in Section 4.1.1). Some participants at different proficiency levels favored the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative over the Query-Preparatory of Ability, in both the Suitcase and the Sugar Scenarios, such as those at the A2 and B2 levels. For the A2 participants, the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative possibly required less cognitive demand given that the structure is simpler, resembling that of most indirect requests in their L1s (Spa. *¿Tienes...?* / Cat. *Tens...?* / Gr. *Έχεις...*; / Eng. *(Do) you have...?*), as observed in the contrastive analysis in Section 2.5.3. Moreover, this type of request might have been more accessible to them, since the present indicative is learned from early proficiency levels (Center of Greek Language, n.d.). However, despite the lack of statistical significance in the Sugar Scenario, the quantitative results suggest that A2 learners might have a tendency to overuse Conventionally Indirect Requests, while reducing the probability of using Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests. In the case of the B2 participants, their preference for the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative in both situations might be either because of individual preferences in communication (see Taguchi & Roever, 2017 on agency), or because these learners might not have possessed sufficient command of modal verbs in Greek, which are needed to properly execute the Query-Preparatory of Ability. However, most of the other

participants at the B2 level did indeed lean towards the Query-Preparatory of Ability, alongside the four participants in the C1 group. This suggests that L2 learners acquire more sophisticated linguistic means with increased proficiency (Bella, 2012a), such as modal verbs in Greek, which explains the transition from the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative to the Query-Preparatory of Ability.

Nevertheless, a lack of grammatical competence did not seem to be as evident in the Deadline Extension Scenario. In this situation, the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative was rarely used by the NNS participants at any proficiency level. Instead, they either employed the Query-Preparatory of Ability or the Query-Preparatory of Permission (see examples 36 to 40 in Section 4.1.5). This trend seemed to be more in line with the NS's requesting performance. It is particularly noteworthy that even at the lower levels (A2 and B1), the use of these types of Conventionally Indirect Requests in such a formal situation was similar to that of NS. While grammatical competence might have contributed to the use of the Query-Preparatory of Ability or the Query-Preparatory of Permission in this role play, particularly at higher proficiency levels (B2 and C1), this comparable use of Conventionally Indirect Requests may also be linked to cross-cultural similarities, as seen in Section 2.5.3 (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018; Staszkievicz, 2018 on Spanish requests; Pérez i Parent, 2002; Vanrell & Catany, 2021 on Catalan requests). That is, the NNS participants in this study might have chosen the same type of requests in the analogous scenarios based on their L1 cultural norms. Another reason for their similar performance in this context might have been their familiarity with the actual situation, since they were students in a classroom setting and might have been accustomed to asking a teacher for different favors. This seems to align with Gkouma (2024), where L2 learners exhibited similar pragmatic performance in the Deadline Extension role play, which they attribute to their possible

familiarity with this situation in real life. In fact, this scenario was reported by the NNS in the retrospective verbal reports of this study as being highly familiar, particularly for those learners at the A2, B1 and B2 levels (see example 147 in Section 4.4). Hence, they might have been more pragmatically aware of the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors in this particular situation.

Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that NS showed equal use of the Query-Preparatory of Permission (Conventionally Indirect Request) and the Need/Want Statement (Direct Request) in the Deadline Extension Scenario. However, the NNS participants rarely employed Direct Requests because they might have felt cautious or hesitant in expressing requests that could impose a high degree of obligation on the hearer. For L2 learners, using Direct Requests in this situation might be regarded as inappropriate or overtly blunt, and the NNS in this study might have felt the need to maintain politeness and avoid being very face-threatening in this situation. This could show certain awareness of the sociopragmatic norms in Greek, where indirectness is often preferred in high-imposition situations (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2018; Sifianou, 1992a). Thus, the NNS in the current study might have opted for indirect requests to soften the impact of their requests, reflecting their sensitivity to the social parameters in this interaction.

Another similarity in the use of the types of requests across groups was observed in the Day Off Scenario. Despite the consistent use of Direct Requests across groups, specifically the Need/Want Statement, some participants, particularly at the A2 and B1 levels, also demonstrated some use of Conventionally Indirect Requests. These learners might have opted for these requests either due to the degree of formality inherent in the situation or because they were compensating for their lack of sociopragmatic awareness, i.e., their uncertainty about when it is acceptable to be

more direct. In contrast, the use of this type of request was less frequent among participants at the B2 and C1 levels. Thus, the NNS's requesting performance at higher levels, i.e., the preference for Direct Requests using Need/Want Statements, might indicate a deeper understanding of Greek sociopragmatic norms that are intrinsic to this particular situation (as in Bella 2012a), as exemplified by most of the NS.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, differences in the use of requests between NS and NNS were found in the other three scenarios: Cleaning, Shoes, and Overtime. One notable divergence could be observed in the Cleaning Scenario, where NS preferred Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests to ask their roommate to clean the apartment. They also employed Conventionally Indirect Requests, but slightly less. Conversely, Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests were seldom favored by the NNS. Instead, they mostly opted for Conventionally Indirect Requests at the A2, B1, and C1 levels, and Direct Requests at the B2 level. Interestingly, findings revealed an inverse trend in the use of Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests by NNS compared to that of the NS in this role play, with some participants at levels A2 and B1 using this type more frequently than those at the B2 and C1 levels (see examples 9 to 13 in Section 4.1.2). This suggests that those learners at the lower levels might have opted for Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests because Hints typically involve simple affirmative structures, and therefore, are easier to produce. It is possible that these learners had not yet developed the necessary linguistic resources to formulate more complex requests, as in Bella's studies (2012a, 2014a), such as Conventionally Indirect Requests, which were also preferred by NS in the current study. Instead, they may have drawn on the use of a pragmatic mode given this lack of grammatical resources, as suggested by previous researchers (Bella, 2012a; Bialystok, 1993; Pearson, 2006; Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; and Schmidt, 1983). In fact, the Cleaning Scenario was rarely mentioned in the retrospective

verbal reports as a familiar situation by participants at lower levels (A2 and B1). Additionally, the preference for Direct Requests among many B2 participants is noteworthy. Learners at this level may have opted for Direct Requests to convey a sense of urgency or to appear more straightforward and assertive. This preference in the B2 group was supported by the statistical analysis, revealing a lower probability of using Conventionally Indirect and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests compared to NS. This might suggest that despite attaining a B2 proficiency level, learners may not yet have acquired the pragmatic competence necessary to produce indirect requests in certain situations. In contrast, C1 participants seemed to prioritize politeness, opting instead for Conventionally Indirect Requests. The variations in the types of requests chosen in this scenario suggests that L2 learners' performance can still diverge from native-speaker norms, even at higher proficiency levels (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Taguchi, 2011). This trend could indicate that learners at advanced levels felt more confident using either Direct Requests or Conventionally Indirect Requests, which was potentially influenced by their L1 cultural mindset, as in Kecskes (2013), or by their agency, as in Taguchi (2019) and Taguchi and Roever (2017). However, this confidence shown by participants at the B2 and C1 levels could also be attributed to their familiarity with this situation, as corroborated by some of them (B2:  $n = 6$  and C1:  $n = 2$ ) in the retrospective verbal reports.

Opposing results were also observed in the use of requests between NS and NNS in the Shoes Scenario. While NS strongly favored Conventionally Indirect Requests, NNS across proficiency levels mostly preferred Direct Requests using Need/Want Statements and exhibited less use of Conventionally Indirect Requests (see examples 26 to 30 in Section 4.1.4). This trend was supported by the quantitative analysis, revealing statistically significant differences between both A2 and B2 learners and the NS in the use of request types. Learners at these levels were

significantly less likely to use Conventionally Indirect Requests and Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests. The strong preference for Direct Requests may stem from L1 influence, as these types of requests are socially accepted and used in various situations in both Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018) and Catalan (Curell, 2012). However, these NNS participants might not have been able to recognize Greek politeness norms, since these conventions are not always obvious, as stated by Taguchi (2010). This could suggest that the NNS in the current study lacked sociopragmatic awareness at the lower levels (A2). It may also indicate a possible delay in pragmatic development, even at more advanced levels (B2), since in this context the Greek NS typically drew on Conventionally Indirect Requests. Consequently, no developmental patterns were observed across proficiency levels. This contrasting use of Direct Requests by the NNS in this scenario renders support to Usó-Juan's (2010) claim that learners must understand how to make requests appropriately, without coming across as rude, offensive, or demanding. Another possible explanation for the frequent use of Direct Requests across proficiency groups might be related to the perceived degree of compliance expected from the interlocutor (a shop assistant). The NNS participants might have recognized the interlocutors' obligatory compliance to the request and thus felt more comfortable using Direct Requests, since as customers they feel they have the right to request. This seems to be in line with Gkouma's (2024) findings in the Shoes Scenario where L2 learners relied on standard structures due to the specific nature of the context (service provision) being less threatening. Moreover, as indicated in the retrospective verbal report, many participants across all proficiency levels considered the Shoes Scenario the easiest ( $n = 29$ ) and most familiar ( $n = 55$ ), which was likely due to its day-to-day nature, simple vocabulary and prior classroom practice (see examples 128 to 131 and 143 to 145 in Section 4.4).

Divergences in the use of requests across groups were also observed in the Overtime Scenario (see examples 45 to 49 in Section 4.1.6). In this context, NS exhibited a strong preference for Direct Requests when asking the employee to work extra hours. Notably, only the A2 group's performance resembled that of the NS who favored Direct Requests. However, the preference for Direct Requests in the A2 group probably stemmed more from a lack of linguistic resources to produce more polite forms rather than actually reflecting the behavior of NS. In fact, several A2 participants described the Overtime Scenario as the most difficult ( $n = 7$ ), mainly due to a lack of both vocabulary and familiarity with the situation (see examples 132 and 135 in Section 4.4). For the other proficiency levels, all groups preferred Conventionally Indirect Requests over Direct Requests. This could be attributed to the type of context in which communication unfolded. Most participants at the B1, B2, and C1 levels might have thought that maintaining politeness in the workplace was important. While it is more than likely that the L2 learners at these levels had acquired the necessary linguistic resources to produce pragmatically appropriate requests in this situation, several of them ( $n = 15$ ) also reported it as the most challenging scenario (see examples 140 and 141 in Section 4.4). As a result, they opted for Conventionally Indirect Requests to soften the impact and appear less imposing, despite being given the authority of the boss.

To conclude, while developmental patterns in the use of requests by NNS were observed in some situations, this was not consistent across contexts. In scenarios such as Suitcase, Sugar, Deadline Extension and Day Off, the NNS may have been able to formulate requests in line with native-speaker norms, due to either familiarity with the situations or cross-cultural and linguistic similarities. As discussed in the contrastive analysis (Section 2.5.3.), studies have emphasized a common preference for Conventionally Indirect Requests in Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018; Staszkievicz, 2018), Catalan (Vanrell & Catany,

2021), and Greek (Bella, 2012a; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020), which was the case for the Suitcase, Sugar, and Deadline Extension Scenarios. In the Day Off Scenario, all NNS groups relied strongly on Direct Requests, which seemed to be in line with studies done on Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pinto, 2012; and Ruiz, 2018) and Catalan (Curell, 2012). However, in the Cleaning, Shoes, and Overtime Scenarios, the NNS performed differently than the NS, occasionally employing opposite types of requests. This may be attributed to a lack of (socio)linguistic resources needed to produce pragmatically appropriate requests, particularly in contexts where Direct Requests are preferred. Another explanation for this type of use could be a deliberate effort to maintain politeness and mitigate the impact of the requests, as reflected in the frequent use of Conventionally Indirect Requests. These divergences between the NS and NNS in request usage likely stem from varying cultural and linguistic norms. As observed in the Shoes Scenario, the NNS may have relied on pragmalinguistic strategies or direct translations from their L1 that deviate from native-speaker conventions, showing a lack of culture-specific pragmatic knowledge (House, 1993). Regardless of the similarities and differences across groups, variability in request usage was also evident within each group, including NS. This disparity suggests that agency (as in Taguchi, 2019 and Taguchi & Roever, 2017) might play a significant role in shaping how requests are formulated. In this vein, the retrospective verbal reports revealed variability across proficiency levels in the perceived familiarity and difficulty of specific scenarios, with some learners finding some situations more intuitive due to previous experience with Greek or classroom practice, while others struggled with unfamiliar contexts or linguistic structures. For instance, some participants might have perceived the Shoes Scenario as being the most challenging due to lack of interest in shopping, while others might have felt more comfortable in formal situations because they somehow identified with the roles (see examples 146, 147, and 148 in Section 4.4). Such variability



of requests may also be linked to contextual factors (perceptions of formality and power, distance, and imposition) in learners' L1 culture, which may differ from those of NS (as in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000), influencing L2 learners' choice of request types.

### 5.1.2. Proficiency and Request Modifications

Regarding the request modifications, the findings revealed several significant differences in the amount of request modifiers between NS and all proficiency levels of NNS. However, these differences were not consistent across scenarios.

As the findings show, the most significant differences in the statistical analyses were found in the A2 group. Data shows that learners at the A2 level displayed a simple and limited use of modifiers in all situations compared to the other groups. The A2 learners relied mainly on the use of formulaic structures and basic modifiers, such as 'Excuse me' (Gr. *Συγγνώμη*) or 'I don't have sugar' (Gr. *δεν έχω ζάχαρη*) to mitigate their requests (see example 24 in Section 4.1.3). Their use of formulaic structures and basic modifiers in the Sugar Scenario was also predominant across the other five role plays, specifically the Suitcase, Shoes, Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios. In addition, it is important to highlight that significant differences were also found between the A2 and C1 levels in both the Shoes and Overtime Scenarios. Again, this could support the assumption that the A2 participants did not possess the necessary linguistic resources at their disposal, and they instead drew on their pragmatic knowledge, as claimed by Kasper and Rose (2002). This was corroborated by the retrospective verbal reports, revealing that these participants felt they had insufficient vocabulary or grammatical competence in almost all of the role plays (see examples 132, 133, 135, and 137 in Section 4.4). These findings seem to be consistent with Bella's (2012a) low intermediate participants, who also demonstrated the use of formulaic language in

their requests. Interestingly, this did not seem to occur in the Cleaning Scenario, for which no significant differences were found in the A2 group. The absence of differences in this context may be attributed to the nature of the situation, suggesting that participants' requesting behavior might not vary significantly across cultures in this case. The A2 learners might have perceived that this specific situation did not require elaborate modifications, since it is based on a regular task, and therefore, it was the interlocutor's duty to comply with the request. Besides this, most of the A2 participants might have chosen pragmatic options that stem from similar cultural expectations around the task that the situation involves. Moreover, several learners ( $n = 5$ ) in the A2 group reported being familiar with this situation and almost no one considered it difficult (see examples 128 to 131 in Section 4.4).

Regarding the B1 and B2 groups, the statistical analysis yielded similar findings for both proficiency levels across four of the role plays. That is to say, no significant differences were found in the number of modifications used in the Suitcase, Sugar, Cleaning, and Shoes Scenarios. In contrast, significant differences emerged in the three formal role plays, specifically the Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios. This indicates that, while developmental patterns were observed across some scenarios at both proficiency levels when compared to the A2 group, they still exhibited a lack of pragmatic competence in other scenarios, failing to align with native-speaker norms. As reported in the retrospective verbal reports, learners at the B1 and B2 levels struggled more with the three formal situations either due to a lack of linguistic resources, the high degree of formality, or difficulties in asking for favors in such contexts (see examples 140 to 142 and 146 to 148 in Section 4.4). This seems to be consistent with the evidence that grammatical competence and pragmatic ability do not always align (Barron, 2003; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993;

Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1992; Kasper & Rose, 2002). The amount and repertoire of modifications used by the B1 and B2 participants were still limited compared to those employed by the NS (see examples 42 and 43 in Section 4.1.5). In fact, their limited use of modifiers could be also attributed to the high degree of politeness, negotiation, and lack of familiarity involved in these situations, as reported by several learners at these levels (B1:  $n = 8$ , and B2:  $n = 11$ ). Specifically, B1 and B2 learners tended to rely more on standard modifications such as Preparators or Grounders. These learners likely found them easier to use, possibly due to pragmalinguistic universals (Marmaridou, 2011), and because such modifications may be more commonly used in their L1 in similar situations, as observed in some of the studies reviewed in the contrastive analysis (Section 2.5.3). In addition, internal modification devices such as the marker “please”<sup>26</sup> (Gr. *παρακαλώ*) or the Conditional ‘I would’ (*θα ήθελα*) appeared frequently in the data. These modifiers are examples of formulaic language that learners might have been repeatedly exposed to, and therefore, overused (Bella, 2012a; Bella, 2014a). One possible reason for this limited amount and variety of modifications by the B1 and B2 groups is that they might have perceived such situations as not requiring as many justifications for the requests in their own cultural context, unlike the NS, who used a wider range of modifiers. Another notable finding is the dominant use of Sweeteners by NS in the Overtime Scenario, which some learners at the B2 level (and also one at the C1 level) employed (see examples 53 to 56 in Section 4.1.6). This might show development in pragmatic competence among these L2 learners as they may have perceived it as an effective strategy to persuade the interlocutor by using compliments and positive comments.

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<sup>26</sup>The frequent use of the politeness marker “please” may not be solely attributed to L1 influence. Its dual function as a mitigator that increases both directness and transparency of the request (Alcón Soler et al., 2005; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Fraser, 1973), especially conventionally indirect forms, could also explain its dominance among L2 learners.

Lastly, the absence of any statistically significant differences between the C1 level and the NS across scenarios (except for the Shoes Scenario) suggests that, despite the small sample size in this group ( $n = 4$ ), their use of modifications in all role plays closely mirrored that of the NS (see example 63 in Section 4.1.7). The C1 learners incorporated more nuanced and contextually appropriate modifications, unlike the learners in the A2, B1, and B2 groups, who relied more on formulaic language, as discussed earlier. This suggests that learners at the C1 level were more equipped to effectively use a wide variety of request modifications in discourse, in line with Zhang and Aubrey (2024), demonstrating both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic awareness. Furthermore, their advanced level, exposure to authentic language, and interaction with NS, as elicited from the background questionnaires, may also have contributed to their ability to produce requests and modifiers that were more in line with native-speaker norms. Moreover, the retrospective verbal reports revealed that none of the C1 learners remembered having practiced any other role plays in Greek lessons, suggesting that their pragmatic knowledge derived more from personal experience than from formal learning. The results obtained from this group, however, should be interpreted cautiously.

Everything considered, findings in the amount and types of request modifications varied across role plays and groups. That is, while A2 learners relied on single forms to modify their requests, learners at the B1, B2, and C1 levels gradually exhibited a wider range of forms and incorporated more complex structures in their discourse. These differences in the developmental patterns seem to be in line with Andersen's (1990) one-to-one and multifunctionality principles. As discussed, the A2 group showed the greatest number of significant differences in six out of seven role plays, likely due to their limited grammatical competence, which primarily consisted of formulaic language and basic structures. However, they performed similarly to the other groups in

the Cleaning Scenario, possibly due to their familiarity with the context. Familiarity may have also influenced the performance of B1 and B2 learners in certain contexts (Gkouma, 2024), aligning their requests more closely with native-speaker norms. Additionally, in the questionnaire most learners at the B1 and B2 levels reported prior exposure to Greek. This factor might have played a role in their use of modifications. Nonetheless, these learners displayed a lack of sociopragmatic understanding in other situations, despite showing certain pragmalinguistic competence. Therefore, they may have failed to recognize differences between the interlocutors in a conversation, leading them to make requests without appropriate mitigation (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). This suggests that the emergence of modifications may occur earlier or later depending on the context, and that learners' pragmatic ability develops very slowly beyond a certain point, as stated by Kasper and Rose (2002). In contrast, C1 participants seemed to demonstrate the ability to map pragmalinguistic forms onto sociopragmatic meanings, in line with Kasper and Roever's (2005) findings. However, this needs to be interpreted cautiously, given the small number of participants in the C1 group ( $n = 4$ ). Moreover, some of these variations in the amount and types of modifications used across groups may be attributed to contextual factors specific to each scenario. The following section discusses the findings on how informal and formal contexts, along with social parameters, might have affected the use of requests by all proficiency groups of NNS in the current study.

## **5.2. RQ2: The Use of Requests in Formal and Informal Communicative Contexts by Spanish/Catalan Learners of Greek as a Foreign Language**

The second research question intended to explore the use of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals in formal and informal contexts. This section discusses the results of the qualitative analysis regarding the use of requests by NS and NNS across a variety of role plays that were grouped according to shared social parameters (distance and power), as presented in Section 4.2.

### **5.2.1. Low Distance and Low Power Scenarios (-D, -P)**

The results obtained from the two -D and -P role plays (i.e., the Suitcase and Cleaning Scenarios) regarding types of requests used by NS and NNS revealed different preferences. As already seen, the findings show that all groups strongly favored Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Suitcase Scenario, whereas the choice of request type differed across groups in the Cleaning Scenario (see examples 65 y 66 in Section 4.2.1).

Although both contexts share the same degree of distance and power, the degree of imposition in each situation may have affected the NNS's requesting behavior. In the Suitcase Scenario, despite the low degree of imposition, the learners might have still considered it more appropriate to use polite forms of requests and therefore perceived Conventionally Indirect Requests as the "safest" option since politeness is socially expected (Blum-Kulka, 1989), regardless of the interlocutor being a friend. On the contrary, the variation in the types of requests observed in the Cleaning Scenario may be attributed to the high degree of imposition of the request, given that the situation is particularly face-threatening, as it demands the addressee's time, effort and emotional strain (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2018). Imposition is further influenced by the

speaker's right to make the request, and the addressee's obligation to comply with it (Fukushima, 2000; House, 1989). Accordingly, the NS in the current study tended to use Non-Conventionally or Conventionally Indirect Requests, likely as a way to protect the interlocutor's face, reflecting the emphasis on involvement and concern for others in Greek society (Economidou-Koetsidis, 2003; Pavlidou, 1994; Sifianou, 1992a; 1999). The participants at the A2, B1, and C1 levels opted mostly for Conventionally Indirect Requests, suggesting a certain awareness of the high imposition and of the severity of potential social offence in this scenario. Their tendency to mitigate requests aligns with the idea that greater social imposition calls for increased indirectness, as pointed out by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), Trosborg (1995), and Schauer (2007). This ability is connected to sociopragmatic knowledge (Economidou-Koetsidis, 2018), as learners adjust their directness based on context and social relationships. In contrast, the B2 learners' high preference for Direct Requests may have stemmed from their perception that the speaker has the right to be more straightforward and demanding, perhaps due to their frustration with the addressee's lack of responsibility in this situation. Consequently, they mostly used Obligation Statements to convey assertiveness, a sense of urgency and demand, reflecting the commonly accepted use of Direct Requests in Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018) and Catalan (Curell, 2012). However, this performance did not seem to match that of the NS.

Regarding the use of modifications across contexts, the degree of imposition in each scenario might have also influenced the number of modifiers used by both NS and NNS. Unlike previous studies claiming that a higher degree of imposition leads to a greater use of modifications in EFL (Abdolrezaipoor & Eslami-Rasekh, 2012; Schauer, 2007), this does not appear to hold true in these two contexts in Greek, where social distance and power are low. In the Suitcase role play, where the degree of imposition was low, NS and most NNS groups (A2, B1, and B2) exhibited a

higher use of modifiers. This could indicate that, in situations where the speaker lacks the authority to impose the request, they still might prefer to compensate by employing more politeness strategies to mitigate the imposition and maintain social harmony (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Kasper, 1990). Conversely, the Cleaning Scenario, characterized by a higher degree of imposition, led to a lower number of modifications among NS and most NNS. One possible interpretation is that when the request is more urgent or the speaker perceives a right to impose, there is less need for politeness and extensive mitigation (Ackermann, 2023; Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, the C1 learners deviated from this pattern and exhibited a slightly higher number of modifications in the Cleaning Scenario. This might suggest greater awareness of potentially breaking social harmony, leading them to employ more mitigating strategies to soften the request despite the high imposition. In addition, fringing (Kádár, 2017) may explain the C1 learners' increased modification in the Cleaning Scenario, since they might have attempted to align their requesting behavior with the perceived emotional and moral expectations of the interaction (Kádár & Haugh, 2013), rather than just adhering to conventional politeness norms. In fact, two out of the four learners at this level considered this situation challenging due to its socially sensitive nature where the request can be cumbersome, as elicited from the retrospective verbal reports. This might show their increased sociopragmatic competence, as they demonstrated sensitivity to contextual factors and adjusted their modification strategies accordingly (Kasper and Roever, 2005).

As the findings revealed, all groups displayed a similar performance in the use of external modifiers, and specifically Grounders, to justify the requests in both scenarios. Grounders were indeed the most frequently used type of external modification across groups, which is in line with Faerch and Kasper's (1989) research, as they constitute an efficient mitigating strategy and minimize the potential threat to the addressee's face. Grounders were used in most cases to explain



the reason for the request (i.e., not having, lost, or broken suitcase), and in addition to these, Discourse Orientation Moves were employed by both the NS and NNS as a means to frame the request and provide context (i.e., going on a trip). Although these two external modifications were used less frequently in the Suitcase Scenario than in the Cleaning Scenario, this could be due to the high degree of imposition and less need to mitigate. However, they still were the most favored external modifiers overall (see examples 67 to 70 in Section 4.2.1). The similarity in the NS's and NNS's performance could imply that the NNS not only considered the use of external modifiers necessary to mitigate their requests but also felt the need to do so through the same types of modifiers (mostly Grounders and Discourse Orientation Moves). The NNS might also have thought that other types of external modifiers did not fit in any of these situations, since they were rarely employed. This shows that in scenarios such as those with low distance and low power, L2 learners might be aware that Grounders and Discourse Orientation Moves are necessary and socially expected, and this might be influenced by their L1 sociocultural mindset (Kecskes, 2013).

In contrast, opposing results were obtained regarding internal modifications. While NS used more internal modifiers in the Cleaning Scenario, the NNS instead favored them in the Suitcase Scenario. Again, this difference in the use of internal modifiers may be attributed to the degree of imposition inherent to each situation. The NS might have employed more internal modifications in the Cleaning Scenario due to the high level of imposition and the demands of the context. In contrast, the NNS might have chosen to use more internal devices in the Suitcase Scenario in favor of politeness strategies because they believed the friend had no obligation to lend the suitcase. In the Cleaning Scenario, the NNS might have thought that internal modifications were not as necessary since the interlocutor was responsible for performing the task. The overall use of internal modifiers remained low across proficiency levels in both situations which might

indicate that the NNS relied more on external modifiers rather than employing a more nuanced internal mitigation, which can require higher grammatical competence. However, the B2 group deviated from this slightly in their high use of internal modifications in both role plays. While this group exhibited more internal mitigation in the Suitcase Scenario, they used a wider variety in the Cleaning Scenario<sup>27</sup>, which is more in line with native-speaker norms. This performance could suggest pragmatic development and sensitivity to situational factors, which was also observed in the performances of the four participants at the C1 level. The frequent use of the Downtoner *μήπως* (“maybe”) in both scenarios might suggest an attempt to soften the request, making it sound less imposing. Although certain pragmatic competence was observed in the B2 group regarding the use of internal modifiers in both role plays, the C1 learners aligned more with sociopragmatic norms in Greek despite the small number of participants. Notably, the use of *σας παρακαλώ* (“please”)<sup>28</sup> deserves attention as it is a pragmatically appropriate mitigator to show politeness, fostering solidarity and a cooperative tone, which was not as frequently used by participants at other levels. Overall, learners at the B2 and C1 level displayed a wider use of internal modifiers in both scenarios (see examples 71 to 75 in Section 4.2.1), which indicates some pragmatic awareness, though it should be noted that it still was not fully aligned to the NS’s performance.

The findings in this study differ from those reported by Bella (2012a) regarding B1, B2, and C1 learners of Greek as a FL and their requesting performance in -D -P contexts. Interestingly, while Bella (2012a) found that the intermediate and advanced participants in their study struggled

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<sup>27</sup>It is important to highlight that five participants at the B2 level did not participate in the Cleaning role play. Therefore, the findings are interpreted carefully in this section.

<sup>28</sup>It is important to highlight the differences between the formulaic “please” (*παρακαλώ*) and the more nuanced “please” with an address form (*σε/σας παρακαλώ*). The latter form carries a stronger connotation of formality due to the pronominal object, making it more effective in terms of politeness, despite its standard form (Gkouma, 2024). The use of “please” with the address form reflects an effort to establish a closer connection with the interlocutor (Sifianou, 1992), thereby increasing the likelihood of request fulfillment. The address forms in Greek will be discussed further in the next section on Pragmatic Transfer.

to align their pragmalinguistic knowledge with specific sociopragmatic functions in familiar situations (-D -P), this issue did not appear to affect the B1, B2, and C1 participants in the current study. As observed in the results for RQ1, these participants showed no statistically significant differences from the NS in informal contexts. This suggests that they might have been able to apply pragmalinguistic norms effectively to understand and use sociopragmatic meanings, which is in line with research done by Kasper and Roever (2005), McNamara and Roever (2006), and Roever (2004). The contrasting findings between the intermediate and advanced participants in Bella's (2012a) study and those at the same proficiency levels in the present study could be attributed to several factors. First, the use of role plays in the present study may have allowed participants to demonstrate a broader range of request behaviors, whereas Bella's (2012a) use of DCTs may have been more limiting because of the nature of the instrument. Second, the NNS's L1 background as Spanish/Catalan bilinguals could have influenced their requesting performance in familiar situations, as the participants in the present study were from the same context, while Bella's (2012a) participants came from various L1 backgrounds with differing politeness norms. Lastly, the participants in the present study reported more exposure to Greek, particularly the B1 and B2 learners, as indicated in their background questionnaires (see Methodology chapter, Section 3.3). In contrast, the participants in Bella's (2012a) study had no prior exposure to the target language before data collection as those with any exposure were excluded from the cohort. Their learning experience was primarily grammar-oriented and based on reading comprehension, with little instruction in pragmatics.

### 5.2.2. High Distance and Low Power Scenarios (+D, -P)

The findings regarding the use of requests in the two +D and -P role plays (i.e., the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios) revealed several differences between the NS and NNS. While NS mostly preferred Conventionally Indirect Requests in both situations, all proficiency groups exhibited a distinct preference for Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario (see examples 76 to 85 in Section 4.2.2).

These variations suggest that the NNS may have perceived differences in the social dynamics of the two situations, thereby affecting the choice of their requests. One possible explanation is that the Shoes Scenario, despite the equal power existing between the interlocutors, involves a transactional interaction characterized by conciseness and clarity (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005), leading them to favor Direct Requests. This preferred use of Direct Requests might further indicate an influence from their L1, given that, as discussed above, directness is acceptable in both Spanish and Catalan regardless of the situation. Additionally, the NNS might have perceived Direct Requests in this scenario as less face-threatening (Alcón et al., 2005), and therefore, felt that they had the right to use them, given that it was the interlocutor's obligation to sell the shoes. Such performance might also reflect a developing interlanguage system (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Taguchi, 2010; Woodfield, 2008), as the NNS did not seem to have fully developed the pragmalinguistic conventions of requests in Greek in this role play. In contrast, in the Sugar Scenario, which involved borrowing sugar from a neighbor, the NNS might have relied on different sociopragmatic expectations related to maintaining personal relationships, making indirectness more preferable.

Both the NS and NNS opted for Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Sugar Scenario. However, they seemed to differ in the types of requests used in the Shoes Scenario. As mentioned

earlier, the groups of NNS across all proficiency levels leaned towards Direct Requests using Need/Want Statements in this role play, unlike the NS who still favored Conventionally Indirect Requests. Although the NNS deviated from the NS's preferred form in this situation, they exhibited grammatical accuracy in their request, which is in line with Economidou-Kogetsidis's (2011) research. This might indicate that cross-cultural differences might influence how L2 learners perceive the degree of imposition (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010), especially in a transactional situation. It is possible that a commercial exchange, such as the one occurring in the Shoes Scenario, was regarded as a low imposition act in the NNS's own culture, due to the interlocutor's professional role. Thus, Direct Requests may be considered as neutral and appropriate in both Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018) and Catalan (Curell, 2012). This overuse of Direct Requests in a context where indirectness is preferred may reflect deviations from the expected Greek politeness norms. Consequently, it can lead to the unintentional violation of politeness norms, as pointed out by Kasper (1990), and result in pragmatic failure.

Similar patterns were observed in the use of modifications by both NS and NNS in these two role plays. All groups exhibited a higher use of modifiers in both the Sugar and Shoes scenarios than the scenarios that were characterized as being -D and -P. This might be attributed to the nature of the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios, where there is a greater social distance between the interlocutors, making more mitigation necessary. Both NS and NNS used more modifiers in the Sugar Scenario. This could be attributed to the NNS's perception that this interaction was more face-threatening than the Shoes Scenario (where more significant differences were found across groups), and like the NS, this led them to apply more mitigation strategies. This is consistent with previous research on request modification, which suggests that L2 learners are more likely to employ more

mitigations when making requests that might be seen as more face-threatening (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987). In contrast, the Shoes Scenario appeared to be less face-threatening, and, therefore, mitigations were less necessary, due to the shared advantage of both interlocutors, as pointed out by Antonopoulou (2001). In Greek culture, requests in situations such as the one in the Shoes Scenario are not considered as face-threatening (Sifianou, 1992a, 1992b; Pavlidou, 1994). Despite this, both NS and NNS in the present study still exhibited a relatively high use of modifiers in the Shoes Scenario, which shows sensitivity to contextual differences in request imposition.

When analyzing the types of modifications employed by both NS and NNS in both scenarios, findings revealed that both groups exhibited relatively similar patterns in their use of external modifications. Specifically, Grounders were the most employed modification by all groups in both role plays, though their usage was less frequent in the Shoes Scenario. Conversely, while NS tended to use Preparators in both role plays, the NNS did not employ them in the Shoes Scenario (see examples 86 to 89 in Section 4.2.2). Instead, they chose to use Grounders or Discourse Orientation Moves, or just produced the main head act without any supportive moves. Not even those participants at the C1 level used Preparators, with the exception of one of the four doing so in the Sugar Scenario. This might suggest a certain lack of pragmatic awareness in the use of this external modifier by the NNS, where more nuanced politeness strategies might be expected. In the case of the Shoes Scenario, the absence of such external devices might indicate that the NNS in the current study may have been guessing when certain mitigations are not necessary, such as in transactional contexts as pointed out earlier. Another possibility is that the NNS do not often use Preparators in their L1 in similar contexts.

Regarding the use of internal modifications in both role plays, findings revealed that both the NS and NNS showed a higher frequency of internal modifiers in the Sugar Scenario compared to the Shoes Scenario. This might indicate that FTAs such as requests can also be perceived as threatening to the negative face when claiming personal possessions (Chen, 2017). In this sense, both the NS and NNS in the current study seemed to recognize the need for greater mitigation when making requests that impose on the interlocutor's resources. In contrast, less mitigation was necessary in the Shoes Scenario where the obligation to fulfil the request was clearer due to its transactional nature. The NS mostly favored the Conditional Structure, Understaters, and Downtoners in the Sugar Scenario, and to a lesser extent, in the Shoes Scenario. The NNS seemed to follow this pattern, suggesting a certain awareness of pragmatic norms (see examples 90 to 95 in Section 4.2.2) as they aligned with the NS in their reliance mostly on the Conditional and Understaters. However, it is not surprising that the Conditional was frequently used across contexts, and that the NNS seemed to have internalized this grammatical form (*θα ήθελα*, i.e., "I would") given that it is introduced as a formulaic expression in Greek language classes from A1-A2 levels, making it familiar to learners from early stages. Furthermore, this wide use of the Conditional Structure by the NNS in the current study could also be due to the fact that Greek FL textbooks emphasize this kind of grammatical structure (Bella, 2009; 2011; 2012a, 2012b, 2014a). However, the overall lower use of internal modifications by the NNS compared to the NS might indicate a gap in pragmatic competence. Again, L2 learners might rely more on directness either because of transfer from their L1 (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007a; Pinto, 2005), or a lack of exposure to native-like request modifications (Bella, 2012a, 2012b, 2014a; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012).

In summary, the NS and NNS in the present study exhibited different patterns for the head act in both the Sugar and Shoes Scenarios. Specifically, while the NNS across proficiency levels

had similar preferences for Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Sugar Scenario, they opted for Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario, which differed from the NS's performance. This might suggest a lack of pragmatic competence in the Shoes Scenario, where the NNS favored directness, which aligns with their L1 norms. Additionally, although both groups followed a similar pattern regarding the use of modifiers (i.e., a higher use in the Sugar Scenario compared to the Shoes Scenario), the NNS did not rely on them as much as the NS. This suggests, on the one hand, that L2 learners might be aware of the need to mitigate more in contexts like the one found in the Sugar Scenario, and on the other, that L1 influence might lead to a scarcity of modifications in contexts similar to the Shoes Scenario.

### **5.2.3. High Distance and High Power Scenarios (+D, +P)**

As previously presented, the findings highlight differences between NS and NNS in their use of requests across the three formal role plays (Deadline Extension, Overtime, and Day Off Scenarios) (see examples 96 to 101 in Section 4.2.3). Again, Conventionally Indirect Requests were the most commonly used type, particularly in the Deadline Extension and Overtime Scenarios. However, divergences were observed between NS and NNS in both of the role plays taking place at the workplace (Overtime and Day Off Scenarios).

The dominant use of Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Deadline Extension Scenario across all groups of participants in the current study suggests that L2 learners might recognize the need for indirectness in formal situations. In this particular context, the NNS may have opted for Conventionally Indirect Requests to convey a higher degree of politeness, respect, and deference, given the high social distance and the interlocutor's dominant role. Additionally, as discussed earlier, familiarity with the academic setting might have influenced their request choices. In fact,



in the retrospective verbal reports several participants at the A2 ( $n = 6$ ), B1 ( $n = 4$ ), and B2 ( $n = 8$ ) levels confirmed their familiarity with this situation (see examples 147 and 148 in Section 4.4), having taken on the role of a student at various points in their lives.

However, different patterns emerged in the Overtime Scenario. While B1, B2, and C1 participants continued to favor Conventionally Indirect Requests in this context, possibly to sound less imposing, the NS and A2 participants employed more Direct Requests. This might indicate that those at the B1, B2, and C1 levels preferred to sound more polite in this scenario, following the universal claim that more indirectness implies more politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Searle, 1975). It is likely that NS preferred Direct Requests, expressing urgency and demand, since a boss usually holds a position of authority and can explicitly ask an employee to work extra hours. For the A2 participants, however, the preference for directness might not necessarily reflect native-like pragmatic competence but rather a lack of necessary resources to formulate more complex and polite requests. Such limitation of linguistic resources was corroborated by several A2 participants ( $n = 6$ ) in their retrospective verbal reports (see examples 132, and 135 in Section 4.4). Despite Sifianou's (1992a) assumption that Imperatives serve to communicate role-related obligations, none of the groups employed this type of request in this scenario and instead, opted mostly for Need/Want Statements.

Direct Requests were also strongly favored by the NS in both the Overtime and Day Off Scenarios, and to a lesser extent in the Deadline Extension Scenario. This seems to be consistent with the idea that bald-on record and directness in Greek may be acceptable and widely employed (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2002), even in the workplace. This contrasts with the universal preference for indirectness in formal contexts proposed by general politeness theories (Blum-Kulka, et al. 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987). In the Day Off Scenario, all groups exhibited a

higher use of Direct Requests, possibly because requesting a day off is perceived as less face-threatening. The NNS might have perceived that, as employees, they have the right to request personal leave, even if they had just started working (as indicated in the role play instructions), making directness more socially acceptable. These participants might have been aware of the appropriate level of directness that is expected in this situation and adjusted their language use accordingly, which is in line with Ishihara and Cohen (2021).

Interestingly, while both the Deadline Extension and Day Off Scenarios involve the person making the request (student/employee) asking a higher status interlocutor (professor/boss) for something, the difference in the request types may be attributed to contextual nuances (academic vs. workplace). In professional settings, Direct Requests might be perceived as more efficient and appropriate, whereas in academic contexts, greater deference and mitigation might be expected, given the hierarchical nature of student/professor interactions. Moreover, the NNS may have struggled to recognize the inherent power dynamics and level of imposition in these situations, supporting Fraser's (1978) and Schauer's (2009) stance that L2 learners must understand these factors before selecting the appropriate request based on social status. Furthermore, the variations in the choice of requests and modification across contexts might be aligned with Economidou-Kogetsidis' (2010) claim that, beyond social parameters of distance, power, and imposition, additional contextual and cultural elements must be considered to fully understand L2 learners' requesting behavior. The retrospective verbal reports further supported this, revealing that the NNS's perceptions of difficulty varied based on their familiarity with the scenarios. Most of these participants struggled with these formal settings, while others felt more comfortable in such situations, highlighting the influence of individual experiences and exposure.

Regarding the use of modifications, the NNS seemed to be aware of the need for mitigation in the three formal contexts and employed them similarly, regardless of who had the dominant role. This is shown by the higher number of modifications that these participants employed in these three role plays, compared to the other five. They might have considered it necessary to justify the request and its urgency as much as possible. However, as seen in the results, significant differences were found at the A2, B1, and B2 levels when compared to the NS. This might show that the participants at the A2, B1, and B2 levels did not seem to be sufficiently sensitive to the social parameters of +D and +P in these formal contexts, and therefore, may not have been able to carry out a remapping of pragmalinguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012). This possibility appears to be supported by the NNS's perceptions gathered in the retrospective verbal reports, in which most of them shared that they considered the formal role plays to be the most challenging.

As discussed earlier, the A2 participants' limited use of modifications in these formal scenarios could be attributed to their lack of grammatical competence, as corroborated by the retrospective verbal reports. For B1 and B2 participants, prior exposure might not have had a significant impact on their performance in these formal situations. This could be due to the nature of their previous experience with Greek, where opportunities for interaction in formal settings were likely more limited compared to informal settings which are more centered around daily interactions (such as buying shoes or asking a friend for a favor). In fact, the retrospective verbal reports revealed that formal situations had not been addressed in the participant's Greek courses at all. None of the participants in any proficiency level mentioned practicing role plays for formal contexts; instead, they recalled role plays in shops or with friends and relatives and this might have left them uncertain about how to navigate interactions in these formal contexts. Consequently, most of the participants in the current study felt unprepared to communicate in Greek in such

settings, mentioning a lack of exposure, limited social sensitivity, and not possessing the relevant vocabulary. Hence, their performance regarding the use of modifiers did not align with native-speaker norms for making pragmatically appropriate Greek requests in formal situations. For the NNS, this ultimately led to pragmatic failure, or rather, an inability to properly convey requests in formal settings in a way that was considered polite in Greek.

As indicated in the retrospective verbal reports and consistent with the findings of Gkouma (2024), most of the NNS perceived the formal role plays to be more challenging. These findings appear to be supported by the assumption that unequal power situations are challenging for learners (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009) and do not appear to align with Bella's (2012a) findings regarding intermediate and advanced L2 learners' similar performance to NS in the use of modification devices in a formal setting<sup>29</sup>. This lack of alignment with Bella (2012a) might be attributed to possible task effects since they used DCTs instead of role plays. As discussed in the -D and -P scenarios (Section 5.2.1.), the role play format in the present study may have placed greater demands on the participants' pragmatic competence, revealing differences in their ability to modify requests appropriately in formal contexts. In contrast, DCTs might have limited the learners' repertoire of pragmatic strategies in Bella's (2012a) study. Moreover, the three formal role plays used in the present study took place in different settings, two professional and one academic, while Bella's (2012a) study only analyzed the use of requests in an academic setting.

Regarding the use of specific types of external modifiers, several similarities and differences between the NS and NNS were observed in the three formal scenarios. Grounders were commonly used by all groups, especially in the Deadline Extension Scenario. This might indicate that all of the participants in the current study recognized the importance of providing justifications

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<sup>29</sup>The formal scenario presented in the DCT used in Bella's (2012a, 2014c) studies is similar to the Deadline Extension role play employed in the present dissertation.

in formal settings, which is in line with previous studies (e.g., Bella, 2012a; Economidou-Koetsidis, 2011, 2023; Ellis, 1992; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Mir, 1993; Schauer 2007). They might have also perceived that asking for an extension calls for more justification in order to be accepted by the interlocutor. In this sense, the NNS exhibited certain sociopragmatic awareness about the need for mitigating requests in this context. In contrast, it seems that Preparators were preferred in the Overtime and Day Off Scenarios, possibly due to the NNS (like the NS) feeling the need to check the interlocutor's willingness before making the request. However, although this performance might indicate that the NNS had some level of awareness of the nature of the situation being a negotiation, they still displayed a more limited use of Preparators compared to the NS. This could suggest the NNS were still not completely sure of how to use this modification appropriately in highly formal contexts. In these two role plays, the A2 participants relied on Attention Getters, which are devices that may be perceived as easy to access (Celaya & Barón, 2015; González-Cruz, 2014). Nevertheless, the participants at the B1, B2, and C1 levels did not seem to employ them as much, which shows that they shifted toward more nuanced mitigation strategies (Zhang & Aubrey, 2014) (see examples 101 to 107 in Section 4.2.3).

Concerning internal modifiers, clear differences were observed across groups in the three formal scenarios. When compared to NS, findings revealed a minimal use of internal modifiers by the NNS which suggests that they may not have fully developed the pragmalinguistic resources needed to increase politeness through internal mitigation. For instance, the NNS employed Understaters/Hedgers in the Deadline Extension Scenario more than in the other two role plays and this might indicate that they perceived requests in academic settings as more face-threatening. In the other two scenarios, they leaned towards Consultative Devices, possibly because negotiation with an authority figure was involved. While the NNS in the current study seemed to recognize

that mitigations in formal contexts are important when formulating requests (e.g., Bella, 2012a; Codina-Espurz, 2022), their use of internal modifications differed from that of the NS (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Flores-Salgado, 2011) (see examples 101 to 107 in Section 4.2.3). The NNS's performance across the three scenarios might indicate that they could not fully grasp appropriate politeness norms in Greek. Specifically, they underused Conditional Structures and Consultative Devices in situations where NS would typically use them. These divergences may indicate that these participants adjusted their requests with internal modifiers according to context, though they still lacked the pragmatic repertoire displayed by the NS, which is in line with previous studies (Bella, 2012a; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009; 2018; Su & Ren, 2017).

To conclude, several differences were observed between the NS and NNS in the use of requests and modifications in the three formal role plays. While all groups mostly used Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Deadline Extension Scenario, and Direct Requests in the Day Off Scenario, different patterns were found in the Overtime Scenario; NS used Direct Requests while NNS employed Conventionally Indirect Requests. This might indicate that the NNS still preferred to sound more polite in the Overtime Scenario. Regarding modifications, although the NNS seemed to be aware of the need to mitigate requests in formal situations, their performance did not resemble that of the NS, neither in the quantity nor in the specific types of modifications, especially with respect to internal modifications. Generally, these findings might suggest that L2 learners may show a lack of sociopragmatic competence when interacting in formal situations.

### 5.3. RQ3: Pragmatic Transfer in Greek Requests by Spanish/Catalan Bilinguals

The third research question attempted to explore possible instances of L1 pragmatic transfer in the use of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals (NNS). More specifically, this question aimed at exploring whether the NNS's L1 influenced their use of address forms (informal and formal use of 'you') in Greek requests in the Shoes (+D, -P), Deadline Extension (+D, +P), and Day Off (+D, +P) Scenarios. The findings obtained will be discussed in this section to shed light on the NNS's use of the formal 'you' (Spa. *usted* / Cat. *vostè* / Gr. *εσείς*) in Greek, and whether this usage aligns with pragmatically appropriate norms in Greek.

#### 5.3.1. Shoes Scenario (+D, -P)

The findings revealed significant differences between NS and NNS in the use of the formal address form of 'you' in Greek (*εσείς*) in the Shoes Scenario. As the results show, the NS exhibited a dominant use of the formal 'you' in this role play, as most of them employed hearer-oriented requests, like those used in Economidou-Kogetsidis (2022). This occurrence is supported by the notion that L1 Greek speakers tend to employ a high level of formality in service encounters (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005; Sifianou & Tzanne, 2018). In contrast, the absence of any form of address observed in the NNS group might have happened because of the preferred use of speaker-oriented requests, mostly Direct Requests using Need/Want Statements. The fact that almost half of the NNS avoided using the formal or informal 'you' might suggest possible difficulties in selecting the appropriate address form in Greek in this situation, despite many of them having practiced this context in the classroom. This might align with previous research suggesting that L2 learners often struggle with pragmatic features that differ from their native language(s) (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Kecskes, 2013). This

performance could be attributed to underdeveloped pragmatic competence and uncertainty about politeness norms. A lack of grammatical competence could also account for the NNS's performance, since the 2nd person plural is generally a more complex structure than the 2nd person singular in verb conjugation (see Section 2.5.3). Additionally, the NNS might have preferred to use speaker-oriented requests (e.g. Need/Want Statements) as an alternative to avoid choosing the wrong form. Those NNS who leaned towards hearer-oriented requests (e.g., Query-Preparatory of Ability) used the formal 'you' ( $n = 18$ ) more than the informal 'you' ( $n = 10$ ). Those who leaned towards the formal form exhibited more pragmatic awareness, despite the widespread use of the informal 'you' in formal contexts in Spanish (Álvarez, 2005; Arnáiz, 2006; Sampedro, 2016, 2022) and Catalan (Nogué et al., 2022; Urteaga, 2008). Another explanation for the NNS's performance in this scenario might be associated with L1 transfer from Spanish and Catalan where address forms function differently compared to Greek, as discussed in Section 2.5.3, and speaker-oriented requests might be more predominant in such situations.

When comparing the performance of the NS and NNS across proficiency levels, the findings indicate that the use of the formal 'you' might increase with proficiency. The statistical analysis indicated that proficiency level seemed to affect the probability of using the formal 'you', revealing a statistically significant difference between the B1 group and the NS. No significant differences were found between the other proficiency groups and the NS. However, the NNS used it less frequently than NS, although several participants in the B2 group and three out of four participants at the C1 level demonstrated a usage pattern closely resembling that of the NS. This might suggest that proficiency may be a predictor for the use of the formal address form in Greek, at least in situations like the Shoes Scenario. When the NNS used the formal 'you', they incorporated it either in the main requests (see examples 113 and 115 in Section 4.3.1), or within



external modifiers (see examples 114 and 116 in Section 4.3.1). Additionally, they expressed the formal form of address in various ways, including the personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, indirect pronoun, and verb conjugation. Remarkably, an example from a B2 participant (see example 115 in Section 4.3.1) shows an interesting case of sociopragmatic awareness but still an instance of grammatical/lexical transfer, since the participant was trying to express the formal form by using the third person singular, following Spanish or Catalan norms.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that although the use of formal form of address in Greek became more frequent with increased proficiency, the overall use of this form in the NNS group still reflects a lack of pragmatic competence when compared to the NS's performance in the Shoes Scenario.

### **5.3.2. Deadline Extension Scenario (+D, +P)**

The findings obtained in this scenario revealed significant differences in the choice of address forms by NS and NNS. While the vast majority of NS employed the formal 'you' in their requests (consistent with the expected politeness form in formal and respectful situations), nearly half of the NNS group opted for the informal 'you'. This opposing behavior might indicate pragmatic transfer due to cross-cultural differences in address forms across the three languages, since the use of informal 'you' in Spanish (*tú*) and Catalan (*tu*) in academic contexts is widely accepted (Osváth, 2015). By contrast, using the informal 'you' in Greek academic contexts might be regarded as inappropriate and even rude (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, 2018, 2023). Interestingly, as indicated in the retrospective verbal report, an A2 participant struggled with this situation due to his uncertainty about the appropriate address form in this role play, showing some level of awareness that the formal form is expected in Greek (see example 136 in Section 4.4).

Therefore, this might imply that the NNS applied their L1 sociocultural mindset to the L2 (Beebe et al., 1990; Kecskes, 2013), and may have not fully grasped the nuances of formal address in Greek. However, other NNS appeared to show sensitivity to the contextual nuances in this scenario, as evidenced by their choice of the formal form to address the professor. This suggests that these learners may be aware of the expected level of politeness in this context. Prior exposure to Greek language may explain the divergence in the NNS's pragmatic competence. Some learners who used the formal 'you' in Greek had either visited Greece before or attended Greek language courses (see Andria, 2014; Andria & Serrano, 2017 on the effect of stay abroad in Greek as an L2), particularly those at the B2 level, and to a lesser extent, at the B1 level, as elicited from the background questionnaires. However, these factors did not appear to have an impact on other participants' performance who employed the informal 'you' in this context. Moreover, individual differences or agency (Taguchi, 2017; Taguchi & Roever, 2017) might explain why other learners preferred the formal address form, despite never having been to Greece either for travel or language courses.

Proficiency might have also played a role in the use of the formal 'you' in Greek, as observed in the comparison between NS and the four proficiency levels. Although the quantitative analysis indicated that proficiency level did not significantly affect the probability of using the target form in this scenario, the descriptive statistics showed an increased use of the formal 'you' across proficiency levels, which may suggest developing pragmatic competence, albeit still limited (see examples 118 to 121 in Section 4.3.2). The NNS employed the informal 'you' either in the indirect pronoun or verb conjugation (see examples 121 and 122 in Section 4.3.2) in the Deadline Extension Scenario, unlike NS who clearly favored the formal 'you' (see example 122 in Section 4.3.2). This suggests that the NNS might not have been sufficiently exposed to the appropriate use

of polite address forms in Greek in formal situations. Consequently, they may have addressed the professor in the role play in Greek in the same way they would have in their L1s. This is notable since sociopragmatic failure might result in hostility towards the speaker, reluctance to engage in communication, and potential bias or exclusion against them (Cheng, 2005; Yates, 2010).

To sum up, findings have shown that the address forms become more pragmatically appropriate with proficiency in this scenario. However, the informal ‘you’ was preferred over the formal form by the NNS. As discussed, these results might be attributed to cross-cultural differences in politeness forms between Spanish and Catalan, and Greek. The findings support the notion that use of informal ‘you’ by L2 learners in Greek academic contexts might result in an unintended display of rudeness or disrespect, as pointed out by Kasper (1990) and Rianita (2017).

### **5.3.3. Day Off Scenario (+D, +P)**

Significant differences also emerged in the use of address forms in Greek by NS and NNS in the Day Off Scenario. The findings revealed a marked preference for the formal ‘you’ among NS, suggesting that addressing the interlocutor with politeness and social distance is a well-established norm in this context. The NNS slightly favored the formal ‘you’ over the informal form, however, the overall use of the formal form remained limited. This might indicate that many of the NNS had not internalized the use of the formal form completely. More than a half of NNS participants did not use any address form when requesting a day off, which might be attributed to their preference for speaker-oriented forms (such as Query Preparatory of Permission or Need/Want Statements), as observed in the Shoes Scenario. Their avoidance in the use of any of the forms of address may also reflect either their uncertainty about the appropriate form or possible L1 influence. In fact, as indicated in the retrospective verbal reports, two participants specifically

found this scenario challenging, as they were unsure which address form to use (see examples 135 and 137 in Section 4.4). As discussed in Section 2.5.3, the use of informal ‘you’ is commonly accepted in workplace interactions in Spanish (Arnáiz, 2006) and Catalan (Urteaga, 2008), allowing employees to address their boss informally. Consequently, the NNS’s performance in this particular context might indicate a gap in pragmatic competence, as they appeared to struggle with understanding and applying sociopragmatic conventions of politeness and formality in Greek.

As revealed by the quantitative analysis, proficiency level significantly affected the probability of using the formal ‘you’ in this scenario. Moreover, the descriptive statistics seem to show a certain tendency to the pragmatically appropriate use of this form as proficiency increased (see examples 123 to 126 in Section 4.3.3), despite its overall limited use among the NNS group. The limited use of this form at the A2 level may suggest a lack of pragmatic awareness regarding formality in Greek. Moreover, this communicative situation might have been particularly demanding for the A2 participants, as they might not have developed sufficient grammatical competence. This is evident in an A2 participant’s example (see example 123 in Section 4.3.3), where the second-person singular verb form is used. In contrast, the B1 group exhibited a higher preference for the formal form, which could indicate greater sensitivity to politeness norms and higher grammatical competence, as reflected in the use of second-person plural verb form and the indirect pronoun in a participant’s example (see example 124 in Section 4.3.3). At the B2 and C1 levels, participants showed equal use of the formal ‘you’ and informal ‘you’, suggesting that learners may not have fully internalized this aspect of Greek sociopragmatic conventions. Again, this suggests that even L2 learners at higher levels might still transfer the use of the informal ‘you’ to address a boss in a context such as that found in the Day Off Scenario, as they would do in Spanish and Catalan.

Once again, the findings in the use of formal and informal ‘you’ in this particular context could indicate that L1 influence affects the choice of address forms in formal contexts. Building on the research done by Economidou-Kogetsidis et al., (2018), insufficient exposure to Greek or lack of instruction on Greek politeness norms could also explain the NNS’s variability in the use of address forms in the present study.

#### **5.4. Chapter Summary**

The findings obtained for the three research questions have been discussed and interpreted in this chapter. First, Section 5.1 discussed the findings for RQ1, which explored the role of proficiency in the use of request types and modifications used by the participants in this study, namely, native Greek speakers (NS) and Spanish/Catalan bilingual learners of Greek (NNS) in each of the seven scenarios. As discussed, proficiency seemed to play a role in the requests produced in Greek by the NNS as they exhibited a similar requesting behavior to the NS in most role plays with regard to the request types. Familiarity and prior knowledge might have had an impact on the NNS’s request production in some communicative situations. However, although pragmalinguistic knowledge seemed to improve with proficiency, the NNS still displayed a lack of sociopragmatic competence, especially regarding the use of modifications in the most formal situations. Lack of exposure or lack of familiarity might account for the NNS’s performance in those scenarios. Second, Section 5.2 followed with the discussion of the findings for RQ2, focusing on the use of requests and modifications based on the degree of formality and the social parameters of each scenario. While the NNS exhibited a similar performance to the NS in their requests and modifications in -P and -D contexts, several differences were observed in the types and number of head acts and modifiers employed across groups in the -P and +D contexts. Regarding the three

formal scenarios (+P and +D), both NS and NNS leaned towards similar request types in two of the role plays but relied on different types in the third. Clear differences were apparent in the number of modifications used by the NNS in these three formal settings, which were not aligned with the NS. Lastly, Section 5.3 included the interpretations of the findings for RQ3, highlighting instances of pragmatic transfer in the address forms used by the NNS in their requests across three of the seven role plays. Specifically, although the address forms seemed to become more pragmatically appropriate with proficiency in the three scenarios under analysis, a possible influence of the L1 informal address form was observed, especially in the two +P and +D contexts. Following, Chapter 6 will elaborate on some conclusions considering the findings obtained in the present study.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

The present study has investigated the acquisition of requests in Greek by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. Specifically, it has explored the role of proficiency in request use, their realization in informal and formal contexts, and instances of pragmatic transfer in address forms. The findings have revealed that proficiency in Greek seems to play a role in the performance of requests by L2 learners, but its effect may vary across scenarios. Regarding the participants of this study, while higher proficiency was associated with increased complexity in request types and modification devices, the NNS did not always use them appropriately, or rather, they showed development of pragmalinguistic knowledge but often lacked sociopragmatic competence in both formal and informal contexts. This might be attributed to the fact that the NNS's requesting performance did not appear to always align with the social distance and power dynamics associated with each of the role plays they were asked to carry out. As noted by Economidou-Koetsidis (2010), these social parameters alone do not fully account for a speaker's pragmatic choices. Instead, the NNS's requests might have been influenced by cross-cultural differences in distance, power, and imposition (e.g., the preference for directness in the Shoes Scenario), frequent exposure to certain structures (e.g., the overuse of the Conditional), and limited familiarity with workplace settings and their norms (e.g., the underuse of mitigation). Furthermore, the degree of imposition inherent in each scenario may also explain their requesting performance. In low imposition contexts, the NNS largely aligned with native-speaker norms, favoring Conventionally Indirect Requests. However, in contrast, they often displayed a stronger preference for Direct Requests in high imposition contexts, possibly due to L1 influence or an underdeveloped interlanguage system. In this sense, the NNS exhibited partial but inconsistent acquisition of Greek requests. In other words, while these participants approximated native-speaker norms in request production in informal

settings, they struggled with those that required a higher degree of formality, as pointed out by most of them in the retrospective verbal reports.

In certain situations (i.e., the Suitcase, Sugar, and Deadline Extension Scenarios), the NNS's performance resembled that of the NS, possibly due to cross-linguistic similarities and the widespread use of Conventionally Indirect Requests in Greek, Spanish, and Catalan. It was observed that learners at lower levels favored simpler structures, such as the Query-Preparatory with Present Indicative. The simplicity in the structure of this form of request could also be linked to a learner's compensation strategy (Trosborg, 1995), given the shortage of linguistic resources available to them. This seems to be consistent with Felix-Brasdefer's (2007) claim that lower-level learners possess limited competence in adapting their language use to different situations during the early stages of foreign language learning. However, in this study, the A2 and B1 participants' general preference for indirectness in the three aforementioned scenarios does not seem to align with Bella's (2012a, 2014a) studies, where learners at the same proficiency level consistently opted for Direct Requests across all situations. Regarding the higher proficiency levels in the present study, these learners opted for more complex structures, such as the Query-Preparatory of Permission or Query-Preparatory of Ability, which are findings that are in line with previous research (Bella, 2012a, 2014a; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2022; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007; Flores Salgado, 2011; Hill, 1997; Rose, 2000, 2009; Trosborg, 1995). In the current study, a similar performance was observed in the Day Off Scenario, where all groups strongly opted for Direct Requests using Need/Want Statements, which shows an awareness that directness is acceptable in these types of situations. In regard to the social and pragmatic expectations associated with certain contexts, this resemblance in request usage might be attributed to cross-cultural similarities between Spanish (Escandell-Vidal, 2005; Pérez-Ávila, 2005; Pinto, 2012; Ruiz, 2018;



Staszekiewicz, 2018), Catalan (Pérez i Parent, 2002; Vanrell & Catany, 2021), and Greek (Bella, 2012a; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020).

Moreover, the NNS in this study might not have been able to recognize the contextual nuances and pragmatic expectations in the other role plays (i.e., the Cleaning, Shoes, and Overtime Scenarios) when producing requests. While the NS mostly preferred to use Non-Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Cleaning Scenario, and Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Shoes Scenario, the NNS predominantly favored either Direct Requests or simpler Conventionally Indirect types. This divergence across groups might indicate a lack of sociopragmatic competence regarding Greek pragmatic conventions in certain situations. Additionally, potential pragmatic transfer might explain the NNS's preference for Direct Requests in the Shoes Scenario, where NS favored Conventionally Indirect Requests, meaning that they transferred the types of requests they would use in their L1 in this particular scenario, since directness is more socially acceptable in Spanish or Catalan culture. Even participants at the C1 level used Direct Requests, which aligns with Pavan's (2019) suggestion that politeness is shaped by cultural and linguistic boundaries. This pattern seems to be consistent with the assumption that pragmatic competence involves not only linguistic ability but also cultural and contextual awareness. It follows, then, that the variations in the use of requests observed in the different contexts (e.g., the Overtime Scenario) might not necessarily be attributed to proficiency limitations. Instead, agency may have influenced the NNS's performance, as suggested by Taguchi and Roever (2017). That is, some NNS (and even NS) may have chosen certain forms based on personal preferences and interests when communicating with others, as shared by participants in the retrospective verbal reports. It could be that some individuals prefer a more direct or less conventional form of request, especially in contexts where they feel more comfortable with the setting or in particular situations that align

better with their personal or cultural approach to politeness. This can also be linked to the concept of fringing (Kádár, 2017), which argues that politeness is not always clear-cut. L2 learners may opt for requests that are neither strictly polite nor impolite, but rather reflect their own communication styles, personal backgrounds, and social moral frameworks, as noted by Kádár and Haugh (2013). This could explain why some NNS in this study shared in the retrospective verbal reports that they felt more at ease with formal settings (such as the Overtime or Day Off Scenarios), whereas others were not as comfortable in informal settings (such as the Shoes or Cleaning Scenarios).

The differences found between the NS and NNS in the number and types of modifications employed, as well as the variation observed across contexts, seems to be supported by findings from previous studies (Achiba, 2003; Barron, 2007; Bella, 2012a, 2014a; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Schauer, 2004, Woodfield & Economidou-Koetsidis, 2010 to name but a few). Such deviations from native-speaker norms in the use of modifications could be attributed to learners perceiving a need to mitigate (or not) in certain situations. That is, Spanish/Catalan speakers might consider it unnecessary to mitigate their requests in specific contexts, and this suggests that the modifications that a given learner chooses across scenarios are influenced by their L1 pragmatic and cultural conventions. In addition, some modifications might be acquired earlier or later depending on the context, as stated by Kasper and Rose (2002). It would seem that in the current study, the NNS's pragmatic competence in Greek request mitigation had not fully developed, which aligns with previous research (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

The results show that pragmalinguistic competence of the NNS regarding request mitigation improved with increased proficiency, although most participants displayed a lack of

sociopragmatic competence, especially in formal contexts (Bella, 2012a, 2014a; Hill, 1997; Rose, 2000, 2009; Šegedin, 2017; Szczepaniak-Kozak, 2016; Trosborg, 1995). Specifically, the A2 participants employed significantly fewer modifiers compared to the other groups in all scenarios, drawing mainly on basic structures and formulaic language, displaying a more limited ability to modify their requests appropriately. Participants at the B1 and B2 levels, while exhibiting a wider range and use of mitigators, still seemed to lack sociopragmatic competence in those situations that required higher mitigation (+D, +P). These findings are supported by Taguchi's (2011) assumption that learners' processing speed and fluency in pragmatic performance remain behind native-speaker norms. It is possible that these learners were not fully aware of the contextual factors involved in formal situations in Greek such as the type of interaction or relationship between interlocutors (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Taguchi, 2010), and therefore, were not able to soften the illocutionary force of their requests sufficiently (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). In contrast, the C1 participants closely resembled the NS in their performance across all scenarios, which suggests a development in both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, although such findings must be taken with caution due to the low number of participants in this group. In line with Zhang and Aubrey (2014), advanced learners typically use a more diverse repertoire of speech act strategies and integrate them more effectively into discourse due much in part to an increased exposure to authentic language use. The resemblance of the C1 participants' requesting behavior could indicate that pragmatic competence improves with proficiency, as supported by previous studies (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Su, 2018; Celaya & Barón, 2015; Roever & Ikeda, 2023; Rose, 2000; Wu & Roever, 2021).

While L1 influence may account for the NNS's request choices in certain situations, as discussed above, this dissertation specifically examined instances of pragmatic transfer related to address forms in L2 learners' request formulation. The findings revealed significant differences between the NS and NNS in the three particular scenarios (i.e., Shoes, Deadline Extension, and Day Off Scenarios) under study. Although certain developmental patterns in the use of the formal address form (*εσείς*) were evident across proficiency levels, the NNS still used it less frequently than NS. This might indicate a lack of pragmatic competence, particularly in the Deadline Extension and Day Off Scenarios (+D, +P), where participants favored the informal form of address (*εσύ*). In the Shoes Scenario, they primarily used speaker-oriented requests, possibly as a compensation strategy due to their uncertainty, or simply as a personal preference in that context. It is likely that the NNS mistakenly transferred the common use of the informal 'you' in Spanish and Catalan to Greek conventions. This suggests that the NNS had not been sufficiently exposed to Greek politeness conventions, particularly regarding address forms. Building on Takahashi's (2000) question regarding when and how social parameters affect L1 transfer, the findings on the use of address forms in Greek across different contexts suggest that L1 influence is more likely to occur in +D and +P contexts where the NNS of the current study used the formal address form considerably less than the NS. This might be due to learners being more susceptible to transfer when they are not fully aware of or exposed to Greek norms, leading them to draw on L1 address forms (the informal 'you' in Spanish and Catalan). The lack of formality shown in the address forms used by the participants in the two +D and +P scenarios indicates that perceived social hierarchy may have played a role in transfer.

Findings from this study suggest that while L2 learners' pragmalinguistic competence appears to develop with increased proficiency, sociopragmatic competence may be more

challenging to acquire. Although proficiency seems to predict an expansion of a learner's pragmalinguistic repertoire, they do not consistently map these forms onto sociopragmatic meanings (Kasper & Roever, 2005). These findings align with previous research highlighting an imbalance between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Taguchi, 2010). The retrospective verbal reports employed in this study show that the participants progressed from using basic structures at lower levels to a more nuanced use of language at higher levels. Nevertheless, they still encountered difficulties when interacting in the most formal situations. This emphasizes the importance of teaching politeness and negotiation strategies at advanced levels to improve learners' pragmatic competence in Greek. Consequently, these conclusions point to several pedagogical implications for teaching requests to learners of Greek as a FL, which will be explored in depth in the following chapter.

In summary, the present study offers new insights regarding the acquisition of pragmatic competence in a FL, more specifically, in the speech act of requests in Greek. By analyzing request production in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals, several general conclusions can be drawn about L2 pragmatic development. First, the findings obtained in the present study suggest that pragmatic competence is not acquired uniformly or automatically with increased linguistic command. Instead, pragmatic competence depends upon several key factors such as explicit instruction, exposure to authentic input and L1 pragmatic transfer. Second, this study emphasizes the idea that the acquisition of speech acts in an L2 is a dynamic process where learners negotiate between the formal knowledge of the language, L1 and L2 sociopragmatic norms, and communicative strategies that they consider appropriate. Lastly, this study contributes to the field of ILP by providing empirical evidence regarding how Spanish/Catalan bilinguals manage pragmatic competence in Greek, allowing for reflection on broader trends in L2 pragmatic

acquisition. Findings suggest that development of L2 pragmatic competence does not only entail learning linguistic structures but also internalizing sociocultural norms and discursive strategies specific to the target speech community.

## Chapter 7. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings of the present study, this chapter will provide several pedagogical implications, which aim to support Greek teachers in addressing challenges related to teaching contextually appropriate requests. As observed in the findings, the NNS appeared to struggle more when using requests and mitigations in formal situations compared to informal situations. This was corroborated by the retrospective verbal reports employed in this study, in which most NNS indicated that they faced greater difficulties in the three formal role plays, citing a lack of grammatical structures and vocabulary, or uncertainty about how to navigate the interaction. Although Greek textbooks may have evolved since Bella (2009) highlighted the vague treatment of Greek politeness conventions in classroom materials, the difficulties that the NNS faced with the formal scenarios in the present study suggest that these contexts seem to still be insufficiently represented. Consequently, learners do not seem to be sufficiently exposed to Greek pragmatic norms. To help address what may be an inadequate and decontextualized presentation of speech acts in textbooks (Barron, 2016; Usó-Juan, 2007) and a lack of pragmatic input (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991), teachers of Greek as a FL should tackle contextual nuances in request formulation by implementing innovative techniques and materials to increase learners' awareness. This could be achieved by explicit instruction of sociopragmatic norms, greater opportunities for interaction, awareness-raising activities, metapragmatic discussion, role-playing, pragmatic assessment and feedback, or even a combination of these (see Barón et al. (2024) for a wide variety of activities to be used in the foreign language classroom). By applying these techniques and strategies which are each discussed in depth in what follows, educators can increase students' understanding of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge

to overcome obstacles in teaching pragmatics (Bialystok, 1993; Kasper, 1997; Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Thomas, 1983).

First, adopting an explicit approach to teaching sociopragmatic norms has the potential to help learners grasp contextual nuances and use requests more appropriately, particularly in formal situations. Given that the NNS in this study used less mitigation than NS in all three formal role plays, explicit instruction on Greek sociopragmatic norms could highlight the importance of politeness and mitigation in these similar situations. Likewise, considering the NNS's overuse of the informal 'you' in Greek, explicitly teaching when and how to use informal versus formal address forms in requests could be beneficial to raising learners' awareness of the potential consequences of misusing these forms. Additionally, based on the idea that pragmatic competence does not necessarily align with linguistic proficiency, instruction should integrate pragmatics from early stages and gradually build upon it, ensuring that even advanced learners continue to enhance their ability to produce requests and choose address forms appropriately.

Second, awareness-raising activities based on comparing politeness conventions in Greek and Spanish and Catalan would help learners recognize differences and avoid negative pragmatic transfer. To highlight the nuances of native-like request behavior and appropriate address form use, this could be achieved through activities like dialogues from real-life interactions (e.g., Barón et al., 2020; Cheng, 2016), movies and TV series (e.g., Barón & Celaya, 2022; Khazdouzian et al., 2021; Omar & Razi, 2022), and metapragmatic discussions (e.g., Taguchi & Kim, 2016; Takimoto, 2012), which are more deeply discussed below. As a result, teachers would increase pragmatic input and exposure in the classroom and help learners overcome obstacles when interacting in both formal and informal situations. For example, activities contextualizing service encounters, such as in the Shoes Scenario, could improve learners' awareness of the preferred use of Conventionally



Indirect Requests in various situations in Greek. Similarly, the NNS's overgeneralization of the informal 'you' in the formal role plays in Greek suggests the need for context-rich activities that help learners associate each form of address with specific situations. Thus, these types of awareness-raising activities could strengthen learners' sociopragmatic competence in Greek, making them less reliant on their L1 cultural and politeness conventions.

Third, despite the shortcomings identified by previous researchers (Bataller & Shively, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007b; Kasper, 2000; Taguchi, 2018), role plays could also be a valuable activity in the Greek as a FL classroom, given that the NNS varied their request types and modification strategies depending on the context. Role plays can help learners practice appropriate forms of request and address in different social situations, however, teachers need to ensure that different degrees of formality and diverse social parameters are covered in the role plays as a means to enhance adaptability in spontaneous pragmatic use. In addition, role plays should be carefully designed with clear instructions to effectively elicit learners' requesting behaviors. The role plays employed in this dissertation could serve as a model for teaching requests in Greek as a FL, as they cover various situations across different levels of formality.

Fourth, teachers could put forward metapragmatic discussions in the classroom, given the limited opportunities for metapragmatic reflection, as claimed by Bella (2016) and Usó-Juan (2007). That is, learners could reflect on their choices and compare them with Greek pragmatic norms, judging when it is more appropriate to use a specific request or address form. Discussions could also be more oriented towards politeness expectations in Greek culture. For instance, learners of Greek as a FL could discuss why they think native speakers are using directness in a specific situation (e.g., the Overtime Scenario), or why a formal form of address is commonly used to address a professor (e.g., the Deadline Extension Scenario).

Lastly, a variety of assessment techniques should be considered to observe learners' progress in pragmatic competence. For instance, targeted feedback could help learners identify situations where formal address forms are expected, so that they may overcome their tendency to overuse the informal 'you' in formal contexts. Self-assessment activities could also encourage learners to reflect on their request choices by comparing them to native-speaker preferences. Similarly, peer-feedback activities could allow learners to analyze their classmates' requests in interaction, to identify missing or incorrect modifications. Additionally, teachers could provide corrective feedback when learners choose pragmalinguistic structures that do not match the intended sociopragmatic meaning.

In addition to the aforementioned techniques and strategies, it is important for educators to adopt a more inclusive perspective that embraces the complexities of L2 learners' linguistic realities (Dewaele et al., 2022; Ishihara, 2021), without seeing the NS as the ideal model that learners need to emulate. Moreover, educators need to encourage learners to embrace their multilingual identities and recognize their own agency (Taguchi, 2017). Thus, teaching should focus on helping learners understand the social and cultural context in which language is used, and the ability to adapt their language accordingly, rather than emphasizing native-like competence or adherence to one particular set of conventions. The differences found in the use of requests by the NNS in this study sheds light on the need for a sociopragmatic approach to teaching where learners are shown how to navigate different communicative situations in culturally appropriate ways.

## **Chapter 8. Limitations and Further Research**

Some limitations have been identified in the present study and merit attention. This section discusses these limitations and also suggests new directions for further research.

The first limitation concerns the sample size used in the present study. Although the overall sample is relatively large, the uneven distribution of participants across proficiency levels might have limited the statistical power, thereby reducing the generalizability of the findings. In particular, the C1 level included only four participants, making it difficult to draw robust conclusions on whether pragmatic competence improves with proficiency. Advanced-level learners of Greek are relatively rare in this context, which makes it challenging to recruit a representative sample of this student population. To address this limitation, future studies should consider introducing a more balanced number of participants across proficiency levels to guarantee more reliable comparisons. Moreover, given the small number of participants at the C1 level, future studies could focus specifically on highly proficient L2 learners (C1 and C2 levels) to examine whether their requesting behavior aligns with expected Greek politeness conventions.

Furthermore, while the role plays compared and analyzed in this study were carried out by L1 Greek speakers and L1 Spanish/Catalan bilinguals, the contrastive analysis (Section 2.5.3) drew on previous research examining the requesting behavior of speakers of the three target languages separately. Therefore, future studies could benefit from incorporating actual data from L1 Spanish/Catalan bilinguals to gain deeper insights into how they navigate similar communicative situations, particularly in relation to pragmatic transfer.

Another limitation relates to the instruments used in this study. The findings were obtained mainly from role plays, which may bring certain contextual constraints and not fully reflect how learners make requests in spontaneous real-life communication. Since the data belongs to the

LETEGR2 project and was collected between 2019 and 2020, naturally occurring data could help assess whether L2 learners' requests match real-life behavior, despite the well-documented challenges associated with its collection (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013). Furthermore, employing innovative methodologies, such as eye-tracking (Taguchi & Kádár, 2025) or virtual reality (Taguchi & Hanks, 2024), could offer new insights into learners' pragmatic competence. Finally, researchers could also conduct studies following a pretest/posttest methodological design, including pedagogical interventions focused on request-based activities to provide evidence on the effectiveness of instruction in pragmatic development.

Moreover, the role plays in the present study were originally designed to specifically elicit the speech act of requests and modifications. To investigate L2 learners' use of informal and formal address forms in Greek, future studies could employ a range of instruments that elicit these address forms across multiple communicative contexts. As observed, the NNS predominantly relied on speaker-oriented requests, which do not require the use of address forms since they are formulated in the first-person. Therefore, it would be interesting to design role plays that prompt learners to use hearer-oriented requests, requiring them to address the interlocutor with either the formal or informal form of 'you'. This would provide further insights on the use of address forms in Greek and whether the formal 'you' becomes more frequently used with higher proficiency, indicating sociopragmatic awareness in formal contexts.

It should also be noted that the present study is cross-sectional. Therefore, it offers a snapshot of the learners' requesting behavior at a specific point in time. To gain a deeper understanding of pragmatic development in the use of requests, future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to track L2 learners' pragmatic development over time, as suggested by other researchers (e.g., Taguchi, 2018b; Timpe-Laughlin, 2017). This approach

would offer clearer insights into the role of proficiency in the acquisition of requests in Greek as a FL. Additionally, longitudinal studies could help address the challenge of gathering sufficient participants, particularly at advanced proficiency levels. Alternatively, comparative studies involving L2 learners from different L1s could be conducted to determine whether request production patterns are culture-specific or generalizable across learners of Greek.

Despite the previously outlined limitations, it is hoped that this study offers a meaningful contribution to the field, as it is, to the best of my knowledge, the first to investigate the acquisition of requests in Greek as a FL by Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. While requests have been widely investigated in ILP, the language combination explored in this study (Spanish, Catalan, and Greek) remains largely under-researched. Additionally, it is likely the first study to employ role plays to examine how learners of Greek formulate requests in different situations, in contrast to the predominant use of DCTs in the field, particularly in Greek (Bella, 2012a; 2012b; 2014a). Another contribution of the study is the updated coding scheme for requests in Greek, primarily adapted from Bella (2012a) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), among others. While Bella's (2012a; 2012b) original coding schemes were suitable for DCTs, they were not sufficient to meet the needs of the data from the role plays in this study. Further studies could build on the coding scheme from this study to analyze request performance in Greek across a broader range of learners, adapting and expanding as needed to better suit their data. Furthermore, this study has investigated whether Spanish/Catalan bilinguals appropriately used the formal form 'you' in Greek requests—an aspect that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been explored in the field. Thus, the insights gained from this research could shed light into the field of ILP and cross-cultural pragmatics, laying the foundation for future studies on L2 learners' pragmatic development in Greek as a FL.

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## Appendix A

### Background Questionnaire (extracted from LETEGR2 corpus)



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν  
Πανεπιστήμιον Αθηνών



#### CUESTIONARIO

##### A. DATOS PERSONALES

**NOMBRE Y APELLIDO(S):** .....

(Tus datos personales y respuestas al cuestionario serán codificadas usando un número de identificación y, por lo tanto, serán anónimas.)

¡Muchas gracias por tu colaboración!

1. **EDAD** ☐
2. **SEXO** HOMBRE ☐ MUJER ☐ OTRO ☐
3. **NACIONALIDAD:** .....
4. **NIVEL DE EDUCACIÓN:**  
Secundaria ☐  
Estudios Universitarios ☐ ¿Qué has estudiado? .....
5. **PROFESIÓN:** .....

##### B. IDIOMAS

1. Primera(s) lengua(s): .....

1

2. Para todos los idiomas que hablas (**incluyendo tu(s) lengua(s) materna(s)**) indica la edad en la que comenzaste a aprenderlos y también haz una valoración de tu nivel en cada uno ellos según este baremo:  
(1= elemental, 2=intermedio bajo, 3= intermedio, 4= intermedio alto, 5=avanzado, 6=nativo)

IDIOMA	Edad	comprensión oral	producción oral	comprensión escrita	producción escrita	¿Tienes algún certificado oficial? ¿Cuál?

##### C. CONTACTO CON EL GRIEGO MODERNO

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas aprendiendo griego moderno?: .....
2. ¿Has recibido otras clases de griego **antes** de empezar este curso aquí? Sí ☐ No  
Si has contestado que sí:  
¿Dónde?.....  
¿Por cuánto tiempo?.....

LEARNING, TEACHING AND LEARNING TO TEACH IN GREEK AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
EVIDENCE FROM DIFFERENT LEARNING CONTEXTS  
(LETEGR2, RESEARCH CODE 1656)



ΠΡΕΤ  
ΕΤΕΡΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΚΗ  
ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ





ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
Εθνικών και Καποδιστριακών  
Πανεπιστημίων Αθηνών



3. Antes de empezar las clases aquí ¿practicabas este idioma? Escribe un número del **1** al **5** según esta escala:

0= nada, 1=una o dos veces al mes, 2= una o dos veces por semana, 3= casi cada día,  
4= por lo menos una vez al día, 5=muchas veces al día

Escuchar (TV, radio, películas, etc.)	Hablar (especialmente conversaciones largas)	Leer (periódico, revistas, libros, etc.)	Escribir (cartas, emails, redacciones etc.)

4. Durante el tiempo que llevas aprendiendo griego, ¿ha habido algún momento en el que consideras que tu conocimiento de la lengua progresó de forma más radical?

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

Si "sí", indica qué hiciste/qué pasó:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Has estado alguna vez en Grecia?

Sí ☐ No ☐

2

- Si **sí**, por favor responde a las preguntas indicando para **CADA UNA** de tus estancias en Grecia:

- a) La duración, b) el motivo, c) el grado de aprovechamiento de la estancia para practicar griego:

(Por favor, utiliza un número del **0**=mínimo, casi no practiqué al **10**=máximo, considero que practiqué todo lo que pude).

ESTANCIA	DURACIÓN DE LA ESTANCIA	MOTIVO DE LA ESTANCIA 1.curso de verano, 2.programas de intercambio (Erasmus etc.), 3. vacaciones, 4. otros	ESCUCHAR (TV, radio, películas, etc.)	HABLAR (especialmente conversaciones largas)	LEER (periódico, revistas, libros, etc.)	ESCRIBIR (cartas, emails, redacciones etc.)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

LEARNING, TEACHING AND LEARNING TO TEACH IN GREEK AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
EVIDENCE FROM DIFFERENT LEARNING CONTEXTS  
(LETEGR2, RESEARCH CODE 1656)



ΓΓΕΤ  
ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑ  
ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ





ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
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6. ¿En qué medida crees que has progresado en cuanto a tu nivel de griego después de cada estancia en Grecia?

(Escribe un número del 0 al 10 según esta escala: 0=nada, 10=muchísimo)

Estancia	escuchar	hablar	leer	escribir	vocabulario	gramática	pronunciación	aspectos socioculturales
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								

7. En total, ¿cuánto tiempo has estado en Grecia? \_\_\_\_\_

#### D. MOTIVACIÓN

1. Para mí, el griego moderno es \_\_\_\_\_
2. En este momento, ¿por qué te interesa aprender griego moderno?  
(Escribe una cruz en los espacios de la escala entre 1 (Estoy en total DE acuerdo) y 5 (Estoy totalmente DE acuerdo)).

	1	2	3	4	5
Para conocer mejor Grecia.					
Para ver la televisión, cine, etc. sin dificultad.					
Porque lo necesito en mis estudios (Universidad...)					
Para conocer mejor a los griegos.					
Para conocer mejor a personas de otros países.					
Para leer libros, revistas, etc. sin dificultad.					
Por placer.					
Para tener más posibilidades profesionales					
Para estar en contacto con o conocer la cultura griega.					
Para viajar.					
Para conocer otros países.					
Porque tengo amigos griegos o/y familiares griegos.					
Otros motivos (escribe cuáles):					

3

3. ¿Qué piensas sobre cada uno de los siguientes enunciados?

(Escribe una cruz en los espacios de la escala entre 1 (Estoy en total DE acuerdo) y 5 (Estoy totalmente DE acuerdo). Para los enunciados sobre los que no puedas señalar tu acuerdo o desacuerdo por no ser aplicable, puedes elegir la opción NA (No se Aplica).

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1 En el futuro, si ofrecieran clases de griego en mi universidad o en otro lugar, me gustaría matricularme.						
2 Si se ofreciera un curso de griego en línea, tendría ganas de inscribirme.						

LEARNING, TEACHING AND LEARNING TO TEACH IN GREEK AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
EVIDENCE FROM DIFFERENT LEARNING CONTEXTS  
(LETEGR2, RESEARCH CODE 1656)





ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
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3	Dedico mucho tiempo a aprender griego.								
4	Es importante aprender griego.								
5	Creo que hago todo lo posible para aprender griego.								
6	Me gustaría dedicar más tiempo al griego.								
7	Preferiría estudiar griego a otros idiomas.								
8	Si la profesora /el profesor de griego me diera un trabajo optativo, lo haría.								
9	Creo que soy una/un buen aprendiz de lenguas.								
10	Intento comunicarme en griego cada vez que puedo.								
11	Si lo intentara mucho, podría lograr un nivel alto en griego.								
12	He tenido buenas experiencias durante todo el tiempo que he estudiado griego.								
13	He tenido buenas experiencias durante todo el tiempo que he estudiado otras lenguas extranjeras.								
14	Me gusta el ambiente que hay en clase de griego.								
15	Mi profesora/profesor de griego me motiva.								
16	Estoy contenta/o de aprender griego aquí.								
17	Es interesante aprender griego.								
18	Me gusta aprender otras lenguas.								
19	Me gustaba el griego antes de visitar Grecia.								
20	En las clases de griego del último año, he tenido muy buenas/os profesoras/es.								
21	La experiencia con las clases de griego siempre fue positiva.								
22	Me gustan las clases de griego.								
23	Me gustaría ser griega/griego.								
24	Me gustaría parecerme a una/un griega/o.								
25	Creo que es importante conocer griego para conocer mejor la cultura de quienes hablan esa lengua.								
26	Me gustaría vivir una temporada en Grecia.								
27	Me gustaría trabajar durante un tiempo en Grecia.								
28	Me gustaría tener más contacto y saber más sobre las personas que hablan griego.								
29	Me gustaría viajar más a Grecia.								
30	Cuando pienso en mi carrera profesional, me veo usando griego en mi trabajo.								
31	Me imagino a mí mismo como alguien capaz de hablar griego.								
32	Sueño con ser capaz de hablar muy bien griego.								
33	No puedo imaginarme el futuro sin el griego.								
34	En realidad, siento que es una obligación aprender griego.								
35	Necesito el griego por otras razones que no son personales.								
36	Tendré problemas en mi carrera profesional si no aprendo griego.								
37	Me gusta escuchar música en griego.								
38	Me gusta ver cine griego.								
39	Me gusta leer en griego.								
40	Me gusta la cultura griega en general.								

4

LEARNING, TEACHING AND LEARNING TO TEACH IN GREEK AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
EVIDENCE FROM DIFFERENT LEARNING CONTEXTS  
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## Appendix B

**Role play cards (7 target scenarios + 3 distractors) (extracted from LETEGR2 corpus)**

### **Γείτονας [A]**

Θέλεις να φτιάξεις καφέ και βλέπεις ότι δεν έχεις ζάχαρη. Στο διπλανό διαμέρισμα ήρθε ένας καινούργιος γείτονας. Χτυπάς την πόρτα του για να σου δώσει.



### **Γείτονας [B]**

Είσαι στο σπίτι και ένας καινούργιος γείτονας σου χτυπά το κουδούνι. Σου ζητά ζάχαρη, αλλά εσύ δεν έχεις να του δώσεις.



**Καθηγητής – φοιτητής [Α]**

Έχεις μια εργασία για το Πανεπιστήμιο, αλλά δεν προλαβαίνεις να την τελειώσεις μέσα στον χρόνο που πρέπει. Πηγαίνεις στο γραφείο του καθηγητή και ζητάς να σου δώσει πιο πολύ χρόνο.

**Καθηγητής – φοιτητής [Β]**

Είσαι καθηγητής στο Πανεπιστήμιο. Μια φοιτήτρια έρχεται στο γραφείο σου και θέλει να της δώσεις πιο πολύ χρόνο για να τελειώσει την εργασία της. Δεν μπορείς να της δώσεις πιο πολύ χρόνο.



**Πάρτι [Α]**

Κάνεις ένα πάρτι για τα γενέθλιά σου.  
Τηλεφωνείς σε μια φίλη σου και την καλείς.

**Πάρτι [Β]**

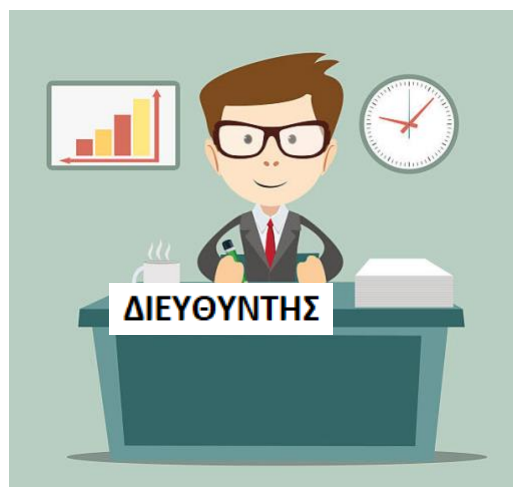
Μια φίλη σου σε καλεί στο πάρτι για τα  
γενέθλιά της. Της λες ότι θα πας.



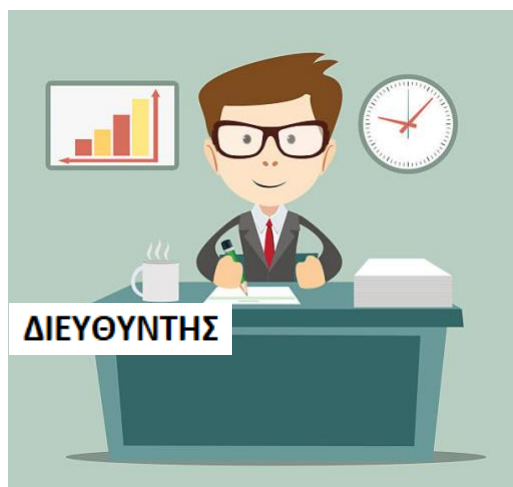


**Υπάλληλος [Α]**

Πριν λίγες μέρες άρχισες να δουλεύεις σε μια εταιρία. Θέλεις να σου δώσει ο διευθυντής μια μέρα άδεια την επόμενη εβδομάδα.

**Υπάλληλος [Β]**

Είσαι διευθυντής σε μια εταιρία. Μια νέα υπάλληλος θέλει μια μέρα άδεια, αλλά δεν μπορείς να της δώσεις την άδεια.





**Διευθυντής [Α]**

Είσαι διευθυντής σε μία εταιρία. Μιλάς με μία υπάλληλο. Θέλεις να δουλέψει μια μέρα 4 ώρες πιο πολύ.

**Διευθυντής [Β]**

Δουλεύεις σε μια εταιρία. Ο διευθυντής σου θέλει να δουλέψεις μια μέρα 4 ώρες πιο πολύ. Εσύ δεν μπορείς να το κάνεις.



**Συζήτηση με συνάδελφο [Α]**

Τον τελευταίο καιρό δεν νιώθεις/ είσαι πολύ καλά. Μιλάς με έναν συνάδελφο από τη δουλειά στο διάλειμμα και ζητάς τη γνώμη του.

**Συζήτηση με συνάδελφο [Β]**

Μιλάς με έναν συνάδελφο στη δουλειά. Δεν νιώθει/ είναι πολύ καλά και ζητά τη γνώμη σου. Του λες τι να κάνει.



**Φίλος [Α]**

Την επόμενη εβδομάδα φεύγεις για ταξίδι, αλλά δεν έχεις βαλίτσα. Τηλεφωνείς σε μια καλή φίλη σου, για να σου δώσει τη δική της.

**Φίλος [Β]**

Μια καλή φίλη σου τηλεφωνεί. Πάει ταξίδι και θέλει να της δώσεις τη βαλίτσα σου. Εσύ δεν μπορείς να τη δώσεις.



**Εστιατόριο [Α]**

Είσαι σε ένα καλό και ακριβό εστιατόριο και το φαγητό σας αργεί πολύ να έρθει. Μιλάς σε έναν σερβιτόρο γι' αυτό.

**Εστιατόριο [Β]**

Είσαι σερβιτόρος σε ένα καλό και ακριβό εστιατόριο. Μια πελάτισσα σου λέει ότι η παραγγελία της αργεί πολύ. Της απαντάς.



**Στα μαγαζιά [Α]**

Είσαι σε ένα μαγαζί για ψώνια. Βλέπεις ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια που θέλεις να αγοράσεις και το λες στην πωλήτρια.

**Στα μαγαζιά [Β]**

Είσαι πωλήτρια σε ένα μαγαζί. Μια κοπέλα θέλει να της δώσεις ένα ζευγάρι παπούτσια στο νούμερό της. Δεν έχεις το νούμερό που θέλει.





### ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑ ΣΤΟ ΣΠΙΤΙ [Α]

Είσαι φοιτητής στο πανεπιστήμιο και μένεις με κάποιον άλλο (συγκάτοικο). Ο συγκάτοικός σου έκανε ένα πάρτι χτες το βράδυ και το σπίτι είναι βρόμικο. Του ζητάς να το καθαρίσει.



### ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑ ΣΤΟ ΣΠΙΤΙ [Β]

Είσαι φοιτητής στο πανεπιστήμιο και μένεις με κάποιον άλλο (συγκάτοικο). Έκανες ένα πάρτι χτες και ο συγκάτοικός σου ζητάει να καθαρίσεις το σπίτι, αλλά εσύ δεν μπορείς σήμερα.

## Appendix C

### Instructions for Role Plays (extracted from LETEGR2 corpus)

#### Role plays scenarios (target situations)

*You are asked to participate in a role play with different situations. At first you will read every situation that is described in a card and afterwards you will take part in a role play with me. Try to respond as naturally as possible, as you would if this was a natural situation in which you were involved.*

#### 1. Neighbor (Sugar Scenario)

You want to make a coffee but you have no sugar. In the next-door apartment there is a new neighbor. You knock his/ her door and ask for sugar.

#### 2. University student (Deadline Extension Scenario)

You have an assignment to submit for a university course, but you don't manage to complete it on time. You go to your professor's office and ask for more time.

#### 3. Employee (Day Off Scenario)

It's been a short while since you have been hired in a company. You go to your manager and ask for a day-off next week.

#### 4. Boss (Overtime Scenario)

You are a director/ boss in a company. You talk to an employee. You want him/ her to work four hours more one of the next days.

#### 5. Friend (Suitcase Scenario)

Next week you are travelling, but you don't have a suitcase. You call a close friend and ask him/ her to give you his/ her suitcase.

#### 6. Client/ Shopping (Shoes Scenario)

You have gone shopping in a store. You find a pair of shoes that you like and ask the seller to bring it to you.

#### 7. Roommate (Cleaning Scenario)

You are a university student and you share an apartment with another student (a roommate). Your roommate threw a party last night and now the apartment is dirty. You ask him/her to clean it.

## Appendix D

### Retrospective Verbal Report Questions (extracted from LETEGR2 corpus)

#### Ερωτήματα για τον ερευνητή

1. Έκανες αυτούς τους ρόλους στη **ζωή** σου/ Ήσουν σε μια από αυτές τις θέσεις; (Ποιους;)
2. Στο **μάθημα** των Ελληνικών έπαιξες κάποιον από αυτούς τους ρόλους; **Ποιον;**
3. Σε ποια ιστορία (νομίζεις ότι) ήσουν καλύτερος/ Ποιο ρόλο είπες **καλύτερα;** **Γιατί;**
4. Σε ποια ιστορία ήταν πιο **δύσκολο** να μιλήσεις; **Γιατί;**

