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Communicating with Generation Z
The Development of Pragmatic Competence of Advanced Polish Users of English

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Introduction

The character of global communication is changing due to multifarious reasons of social, technological or even political nature. The taxonomy created by Howe and Strauss (2000) and by Chester (2002) differentiates between various age generations – baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y), and Generation Z, and each of them seems to constitute a unique group thinking, working, living, and communicating in its specific and age-appropriate way.

Generation Z has gained the reputation of being the most IT-literate group and the one that enjoys the privilege of easily accessible second language education. This kind of education is commonly introduced even at the kindergarten level (e.g., in Poland, it is a norm to introduce second language classes even to three-year-olds). As a result, this is probably the second generation after Millennials (at least in the post-communist countries) that derive pleasure from the unlimited and free choice of second language education, that is getting more and more accessible through web-based courses, programmes, learners and teachers resources, etc. (Dronia, 2020). Thus the average command of foreign language usage (and English specifically) among this particular age group is much higher than it used to be before. However, the importance of the context and hidden meaning for the correct interpretation of a communicative act is crucial in successful L2 communication. Pragmatic competence is undeniably one of the most fundamental yet commonly overlooked competences in the second/foreign language classroom. The status and the dominance of grammatically and lexically-oriented activities are always taken for granted, and their role in developing one's language accuracy is barely questioned. For some reason, though, even relatively advanced non-native speakers of English still find it difficult to produce native-like pragmatically appropriate utterances. Pragmatic competence encompassing such abilities as using the language for different purposes, understanding various intentions, and last but not least, choosing and connecting appropriate utterances in order to create a discourse (Bialystok, 1993) is rarely placed in the limelight of classroom attention.

Thus, such negligence commonly contributes to students' inability to behave appropriately and conform to different social situations requiring both verbal and non-verbal behaviour adaptations strategies (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Dronia & Garczyńska, 2017).

This book intends to shed some light on the problem of second language communication from sociolinguistic, pragmalinguistic, and cross-generational angles. The prime objective, however, is to look closely at the generation that is youngest, and which therefore has not yet been well researched. Generation Z is the generation now entering universities. Theoretically, being young and fully exposed to the second language (English) from early in life, they stand a great chance of becoming successful users of this language. Nevertheless, recent studies (cf. Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, 2019) on advanced users of English indicate that at least in internationalised higher education, the students would probably rely on English as the lingua franca (with its grammatical, lexical, and phonological limitations) rather than using its more advanced form, far more appropriate in the context of academic learning.

The primary objective of this study is to describe Generation Z Polish students of English as second language users – not only to assess their language proficiency level, but also their problems in communication. One's communication efficacy, however, rests on the development of pragmatic competence. Therefore, particular emphasis is placed here on describing this process, as it seems that this ability is not sufficiently developed and may even be increasingly neglected. To understand the phases of pragmatic progress among Polish Generation Z advanced users of English, one should have a closer look at many other interconnected factors, such as linguistic mastery and sociocultural variables significantly affecting L2 learning, but also understand the learning context as well as other propensities pertaining to this particular age group.

The studies on cognitive processes employed while performing speech acts are very limited, and to the best of my knowledge, there has been not even one of them conducted on Polish users of English. Thus the longitudinal study described in the empirical part of this book (from Chapter 4 onwards) intends to examine students' pragmatic development by analysing their thoughts while performing requests, reacting to compliments, and apologising. The choice of those speech acts is deliberate, as all of them may evoke face threats. Requests and apologies place themselves in the context of "socially vulnerable situations," where one either has to ask someone for a favour or express regret for causing

some harm. This in itself may be already demanding (even for advanced users of a second language) not only in terms of the choice of appropriate linguistic resources, strategies used, etc., but also in terms of stress and various emotions it conveys. Additionally, the acts of requesting and apologising may be determined by differing cultural norms, constraints, and expectations (cf. Chapter 3). Different cultural attitudes towards a particular speech act are also clearly visible in case of compliments, as not every culture finds it easy to accept them. This idea, together with other cross-cultural pragmatic differences, is discussed in the Chapter 3 and later juxtaposed with the findings gathered from the research project (Chapters 5 and 6). The corpus collected through the implementation of WDCTs and WRVPs enabled us to conduct content and statistical analysis. The former focuses on identifying the most common themes and patterns, and the latter examines the corpus based on some software – LIWC 20 and SAILEE (receptiviti.com) and Grammarly application – and Flesch-Kincaid readability test. The findings gathered allow us to draw further conclusions concerning the development of the pragmatic and linguistic competence of the respondents.

The book is divided into theoretical (Chapters 1–3) and empirical part (Chapters 4–6). The first chapter, which focuses on the nature of communication acts, discusses particular variables that affect the process of information exchange. It also highlights some factors (such as anxiety and inhibition) that pertain only to L2 communication and can, in turn, significantly contribute to overall communication efficiency. Cross-cultural differences affecting communication quality are also discussed therein. English philology students should represent a very high level of achievement (C1 or even C2); that is, they should possess the ability to use the second language for various intents and purposes with both fluency and correctness. Such L2 users should exercise communicative competence and interactional and pragmatic awareness to be able to partake in various cross-cultural encounters. Thus this part intends to describe different proficiency stages that L2 students may represent; however, particular attention is paid to the characteristics of C1 and C2 levels and the description of pragmatic competence. The second chapter characterises age generations in terms of their prevalent features, the values and norms they hold, and their communication preferences. Special attention is paid to Generation Z as this is the cohort whose members took part in the research described in the empirical part of the book. The chapter additionally attempts to provide some educational perspective and describe this age group specifically as second language learners.

The intention of Chapter 3 is to briefly discuss sociopragmatic variables that may significantly contribute to effective second language communication. The chapter starts with some suggestions concerning the future of communication preferences when English has already become a lingua franca, attempting to determine "global" or universal features of politeness that a second language user may rely on in communication. It then moves on to intercultural communication and various barriers that may impact its effectiveness. The chapter primarily focuses on the concept of pragmatic competence and then on cross-cultural differences (Polish and English) visible in some speech acts – requesting, responding to a compliment, and apologising. The aim of this comparison is to juxtapose the ways Polish and English native speakers produce those speech acts and illustrate some potential areas of pragmatic divergence.

Chapter 4 introduces the empirical part of the book. Along with specifying the research objectives and tools used (three questionnaires distributed among Polish students of English belonging to Generation Z, a set of three WDCT scenarios, Written Retrospective Verbal Protocol, and a test in pragmatics), it also provides some biographical information concerning the subjects as well as the process of research implementation.

Chapter 5 presents the data gathered from the respondents and analyses it to assess their general second language level and the development of pragmatic competence specifically. The data obtained from three questionnaires (pre- and post-study questionnaire and a pragmatic comprehension questionnaire) and the results of WDCT scenarios and WRVPs enable us to finally characterise Polish Generation Zers as second language learners. The last part of the book presents general conclusions stemming from the research and verifies the development of the generation's linguistic and pragmatic competences. Last but not least, it also provides the limitations of this study and some areas for future research.

At the time of writing, the world is in the grips of a pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This has lead to massive disruption in all forms of education, including L2 teaching. Traditional classroom lessons have been replaced by alternative, mainly online forms of teaching such as those taking place via Skype, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, or simply text-based channels like email. This change of contact form will have significant and far-reaching consequences.

The youngest of generational groups partaking in the research study has already demonstrated a clear preference for online communication channels

(the data gathered before the coronavirus outbreak are displayed in the empirical part of the study). Now, when the whole world is forced to live in a cyber reality, and most forms of teaching have been transferred there, too, one may assume that this preference will only get stronger. Hence it is equally impossible to predict how this situation will affect Generation Z's soft skills and the ability to maintain real-life communication. Unfortunately, sad and ominous as this prospect may seem, we can only hope that the consequences of the lockdowns for face-to-face communication will not be as long-lasting.

Communicating in the Second Language

The intention of this chapter is to briefly characterise the specifics pertaining to second language communication as well as to describe some factors that have a substantial impact on the development of communication efficacy. Secondly, this part also discusses various components of communicative competence together with the features and skills that an advanced second language user will display.

1.1 The Nature of L2 Communication

> Human essence is revealed in the internal and external communication.
>
> (Bakhtin, 1979, in Malyuga & Orlova, 2018, p. 20)

The nature of second language communication has been thoroughly discussed from many various angles, for example, affective variables, such as attitudes, motivation, perceived competence, and anxiety in predicting success in second language learning and communication have been well researched (MacIntyre, 1996). Speakers of a second language,[1] regardless of their age, learning preferences or proficiency level, will manifest various specific purposes and thus will need to employ a plethora of communication strategies. Communication strategies (hereafter: CSs) may be analysed from the point of view of both interactionist (sociolinguistic) and cognitive (psycholinguistic) perspectives. The former theoretical standpoint (cf. Ellis, 1994; Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Nakatani & Goh, 2007) sees CSs as "external devices learners fall back on in interactions not only to resolve communication breakdowns but also to make

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[1] The primary difference between second language and foreign language is that the former is a language a person learns after their mother tongue, especially as a resident of an area where it is in general use, while the latter refers to any language other than that spoken by the people of a specific place. For the purpose of this book the term "second language" will be primarily understood as English.

communication more effective through the use of negotiation of meaning, self-repair, and time-gaining strategies" (Pawlak, 2018, p. 273). The latter, in turn, as pertaining to mental processes which are employed whenever a learner encounters a language deficit, "with the effect that the focus is primarily on compensatory devices" (Pawlak, 2018, p. 273).

Although it is true that people also use communication strategies while interacting in their mother tongue, it is common knowledge that while doing it in the second language their linguistic resources and the associated cognitive processes are typically less developed and thus the choices concerning not only what to say, but also how to express it, are much more complicated. According to Pawlak (2018, p. 270), to attain their communicative goals, second language learners should acquire different types of TL knowledge (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, multiword units, phonology, pragmatics, genre types and purposes of the act of speaking, characteristics of spoken language), as well as the ability to "deploy these resources in real-time under considerable time pressure."

> These are two interrelated facets which are referred to in the literature in terms of the distinction between language as a system and language in contexts of use (Bygate, 2002), form and meaning (Tarone, 2005), oral repertoires and oral processes (Bygate, 2008), but can also be conceived of in terms of explicit and implicit (highly automatized) knowledge or declarative and procedural knowledge (DeKeyser, 2010, 2017; Ellis, 2009).
>
> (Pawlak, 2018, p. 270)

Oral communication in the second language can be compared to a very complex and multi-stage process of message conceptualisation, formulation, and articulation supported by constant monitoring affecting all of the stages. Research on spoken word production has been approached from many angles; however, there exist some underlying processes that are always present, that is: "(1) the speaker's selection of a word that is semantically and syntactically appropriate; (2) the retrieval of the word's phonological properties; (3) the rapid syllabification of the word in context; and (4) the preparation of the corresponding articulatory gestures" (Levelt, 1999, p. 223).

It is clear that second language learners require some assistance on their way to successful interactions. However, opinions on whether it is possible to teach second language communication strategies differ significantly. In the

article written by Azarnoosh (2009, online), the author provides much evidence stemming from previous studies (cf. Dörnei, 1995; Tarone, 1981; Kellerman, 1991; Canale & Swain, 1980; Bialystok, 1990) showing some disagreement over whether communication strategies, being part of strategic competence and because of that potentially transferable from L1 to L2, should/can or should not/cannot be taught. Interestingly, to Canale and Swain (1980) and to Bialystok (1990), such strategies can be acquired only through the participation in natural, face-to-face encounters rather than through classroom practice, and what educators should do is not to worry about how to teach the strategies, but rather the language (Bialystok, 1990, p. 147, in Azarnoosh, 2009, online). These contradictory opinions on communication strategies teachability just emphasise how important and difficult it is to communicate effectively in the second language and that the situation whenever one interacts in one's L1 is not really to be fully juxtaposed to the L2 encounters. Thus one may pose the following question: What is different?

The following sections will discuss some of the most salient aspects pertaining to the nature of L2 communication.

1.1.1 Communication Act

> [...] much communication is a pragmatic enterprise – directed at accomplishing an array of practical tasks (e.g., negotiating treaties to resolve armed conflicts between nations, conveying information clearly in the classroom, winning votes in popular elections, consoling a sad friend, preserving one's property and freedom in courts of law, enhancing cohesiveness in work teams, settling on a price for potatoes in the village marketplace).
>
> (Green & Burleson, 2003, p. xiii)

It seems that defining communication should not pose any difficulties because it is one of the activities that everyone performs on a daily basis, including even such mundane issues as "settling on a price for potatoes in the village marketplace." Dictionary definitions do not really differ from each other in this respect, namely, Merriam-Webster (n.d., online) describes it as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior" while Cambridge Dictionary (n.d., online) defines it as "the act of communicating with other people." A more detailed

approach to communication is presented in another online dictionary, namely Dictionary.com (n.d.), which shows many more possible interpretations of this term:

1. the act or process of communicating; fact of being communicated.
2. the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.
3. something imparted, interchanged, or transmitted.
4. a document or message imparting news, views, information, etc.
5. passage, or an opportunity or means of passage, between places.

communications,

1. means of sending messages, orders, etc., including telephone, telegraph, radio, and television.
2. routes and transportation for moving troops and supplies from a base to an area of operations.

The *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (2001, p. 135), however, describes communication as the transmission of something, such as a signal, a message or a meaning, emphasising at the same time that to make the process successful, both the transmitter and the receiver have to share a common code. A communication unit, on the other hand, is understood here as a system encompassing several significant elements, such as a sender (transmitter) "which encodes a message, a communication channel through which the message travels and a receiver which receives and decodes the message" (*Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, Reber & Reber, 2001, p. 135.). Effective communication must be precise and unambiguous at the same time, avoiding any possible distortions that may affect the whole process, and it will be successful only when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information.

One of the most well-recognised definitions of communication in the context of business has been offered by Murphy and Hildebrandt (1991), who believe that it is a "process of transmitting and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages that produce a response." While providing additional elements belonging to this area, Luthans (1985, in Akarika et al., 2017) mentions the flow of material, information, perception and understanding between various

parts of an organisation and encompassing all possible means and channels, that is, written and spoken forms and the media. Finally, as Allen (1958, in Anbuvelan, 2007, p. 195) holds, "communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding." As can be seen, Allen emphasises the hearing and understanding of a message by the receiver. It seems however, that the interpretation offered by Rodriques (1992, p. 28, in Rodriques, 2000, p. 17) is the most extensive, as it defines communication taking into account several significant variables: "Communication can be defined as an exchange and exact replication of thoughts, feelings, facts, beliefs and ideas between and among the individuals through a common system of symbols to cause some actions or changes in behavior."

An interesting theory referring to activities or aspects of activities governed directly by the rules of language use and pertaining to the components of the communication act was put forward by Hymes (1967, in Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 17). The notion of speech event, according to him, encompasses such aspects as:

- participants (e.g. speaker and hearer, sender and receiver),
- setting (i.e. physical time and place),
- scene (i.e. psychological or cultural setting),
- the cultural form of a message (i.e. a linguistic description of the message),
- topic (i.e. what the message is about),
- purpose (i.e. goal, intention),
- key (e.g. serious, mock),
- channel (e.g. oral, written),
- code (i.e. language or variety within a language),
- norms of interaction (e.g. loudness of voice, when and how to interrupt, physical distance between participants),
- norms of interpretation (i.e. how different norms of interaction or violations of them are interpreted),
- and genre (e.g. casual speech, poem, prayer, form letter).

The foregoing elements of speech events are significant in the process of defining the norms of language use and in the interpretation of the social meaning of utterances.

As has been stated above, effective communication will happen when both parties (sender and receiver) obtain a full understanding of a message. Those messages may obviously take not only verbal, but also non-verbal forms that in turn produce a response. Thus it can be inferred that successful communication occurs when visible and hidden, intended and unintended meanings are clear and understood in the way we intended them to be understood. The problem, however, is the fact that those hidden elements are deeply embedded in one's culture and start giving meaning to the real communication process. Ideally, both parties will need to share some signs or signals as only in this way can they have a genuine interaction. The essence of process of communication is well depicted in the model created by a mathematician and a scientist, that is, the Shannon–Weaver Model of Communication, which has been labelled "mother of all models." Its superiority lies in the fact that it shows a set of basic constituents that not only explain how communication happens, but why communication sometimes fails, because quite commonly the message sent differs from the one that was received. Figure 1.1 shows the model's eight discrete components:

Figure 1.1. The Shannon–Weaver model of communication
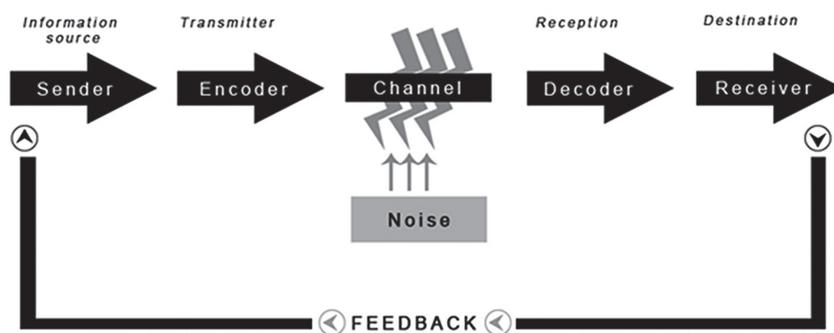
Source: www.communicationtheory.org.

As can be seen in Figure 1.1, the model enumerates an information source (a sender) and a creator of a message, transmitter – the encoder converting the message into signals; the signal flowing through a channel; a decoder being the reception place of a signal which converts signals into message and destination (a receiver) – presumably the person the message has been directed at. The last element mentioned in the diagram is noise.

Channel. Communications take the form of oral (verbal), non-verbal and written interaction. Communication channels can refer to the methods we use to communicate as well as the specific tools we use in the communication process. The channel, or medium, used to communicate a message affects how accurately the message will be received. Channels vary in their "information richness." Information-rich channels convey more non-verbal information. Table 1.1 illustrates the information richness of different channels.

Table 1.1. Information channels and their richness (Daft & Lenge, 1984)

Information Channel	Information Richness
Face-to-face conversation	High
Videoconferencing	High
Telephone conversation	High
E-mails	Medium
Handheld devices	Medium
Blogs	Medium
Written letters and memos	Medium
Formal written documents	Low
Spreadsheets	Low

The key to effective communication is to match the communication channel with the goal of the message. For example, written media may be a better choice when the sender wants a record of the content, less urgently needs a response, is physically separated from the receiver, and does not require a lot of feedback from the receiver, or when the message is complicated and may take some time to understand.

In contrast, oral communication is more useful when the sender is conveying a sensitive or emotional message, needs feedback immediately, and does not need a permanent record of the conversation. One element of verbal

communication is tone. A different tone can change the perceived meaning of a message, like in the following table:

Table 1.2. *Don't use that tone with me!* (Kiely, 1993)

Placement of Emphasis	Meaning
I did not tell John you were late.	Someone else told John you were late.
I *did not* tell John you were late.	This did not happen.
I did not *tell* John you were late.	I may have implied it.
I did not tell *John* you were late.	But maybe I told Sharon and Jose.
I did not tell John *you* were late.	I was talking about someone else.
I did not tell John you *were* late.	I told him you still are late.
I did not tell John you were *late*.	I told him you were attending another meeting.

As seen in Table 1.2 changing one's tone of voice, emphasising different parts of a sentence, can incite or defuse a misunderstanding.[2] Each communication channel has its advantages and disadvantages in terms of speed, clarity, maximum size of message transferred, cost, etc. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that each channel is suitable for a different set of circumstances. Moreover, it has to be also stated here that the use of a given channel may determine a different level of linguistic correctness as well as of directness and politeness. We generally tend to use spoken communication for informal purposes and written forms for formal businesses. Spoken communication or speech is almost entirely synchronous while written communication is almost entirely asynchronous.[3] Moreover, the latter form is dense and attached in time and space. Last but not least, it has to be taught in formal way – primarily the rules pertaining to style and politeness (Ur, 1991). It is true that new technologies are changing many of the dynamics of speech and writing. For example, many people use email informally alike spoken conversation, as an informal form of verbal communication. Because of this, they often expect that email operates and functions like a private spoken conversation between the sender and

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2   Cross-cultural differences in tone will also be analysed in the section pertaining to paraverbal aspects and conversational rules.

3   However, text messaging and social media comprise forms of written communication that follow the rules of spoken conversation in that they function as synchronous communication.

receiver. However, emails require a certain etiquette and norms of pragmatic behaviour (Dronia, 2019).

Noise. Noise is one of those elements that can significantly affect the overall communication effectiveness. Defined as secondary signals that confuse or distort the original, noise may obscure the message and thus hinder the encoding process. Noise can take the form of external, internal, and semantic factors (Skinder, 2013). The former may be explained as purely physical noise in the form of, for instance, horn sounds, thunder, extreme heat and crowd noise that can literally affect the process of reception as it impacts our hearing abilities. Internal noise, on the other hand, can be defined as interactants' feelings and psychological predisposition, for example, growing fatigue, distractors, toothache, headache, irritation, etc. Anger, hatred or prejudice can also be added to this category, too. Internal noise may also include physical distractions posed by recurring illnesses, jet lag, or even the onset of a midlife crisis. Phobias, such as the fear of public speaking or a fear of enclosed spaces, also can function as sources of this kind of noise. Finally, semantic noise is the consequence of intended or unintended wrong (word) use by the sender, which blocks correct deciphering and encoding of the meaning by the receiver. This type of disturbance in the transmission of a message interferes with the interpretation of the message due to ambiguity in words, sentences or symbols used in the information transmission. The ambiguity is caused because everybody may see a different meaning in the same words, phrases or sentences. The differences in interpretation can be quite small, even undetectable, in regular communication between people of the same culture, age education, and experience, or radically different because of differing cultures, age or experience. Thus conducting a conversation in a second language can cause additional obstacles concerning different social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, which, in turn, can additionally increase the level of internal noise (e.g., a set of negative attitudes or stereotypes that people may hold regarding their interlocutors).

It is of utmost importance for the sender to use those means of communication that will enable him or her to send a message comprehensible to the hearer. The message reaches the receiver and is analysed from several angles, and this analysis determines the effectiveness of the communication process. The language a person uses plays a significant role here. It is common not to think about the various functions it performs until one travels abroad and

is forced to express oneself in a second language. It is clear that in a simple communication act conducted in the L2 more variables may coalesce:

Figure 1.2. The model of L2 communication. Self-created
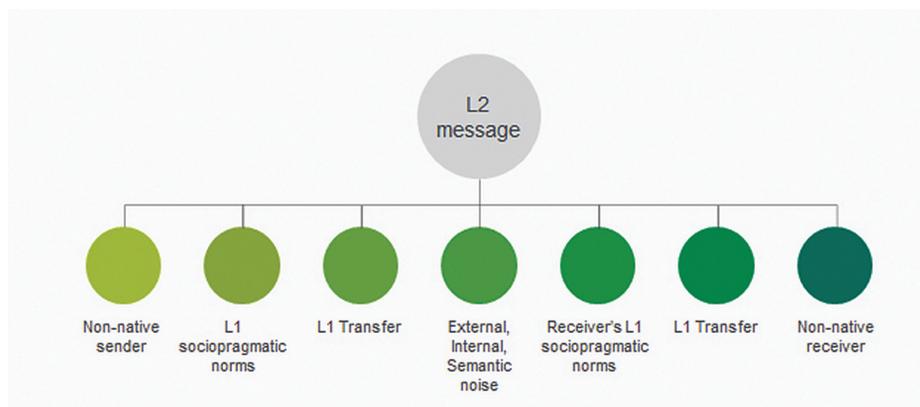
To start with, the sender is not a native speaker and thus while producing the language may face various dilemmas, such as, among others, not only the problem what to say but also how to say it (which depends upon sufficiently well-developed linguistic competence to express oneself in terms of grammar and lexis). It is probable that in creating the message in the second language the speaker will have to resort to many communicative competencies (cf. Canale & Swain, 1980), including grammatical, sociocultural, and strategic, to help him or her compensate for some difficulties in communication due to lexical constraints.[4] This leads to another potential obstacle closely connected to the channel. Not having sufficient linguistic resources at their disposal, a person may start expressing themselves through a system of non-verbal ones and employ, for example, gestures that may not be comprehensible to their interlocutor,[5] which in turn may lead to a communication fiasco and misunderstanding of the sender's intentions. The act of decoding a message will provide additional problems as it is quite possible that each of the parties

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4   L2 learners who do not have any linguistic limitations may also decide not to speak, as their willingness to communicate (WTC) may be affected by some other variables not present in the case of mother tongue communication (cf. MacIntyre et al., 1998). This aspect will be further analysed later.

5   The fact that gestures represent culture-specific forms of communication and are not globally recognised is well described by Stewart (1995).

involved in the communicative act will adhere to their own sociopragmatic norms (due to pragmatic, communication or production transfer[6]) and hence analyse the message taking into account different realities and norms. Last but not least, the presence of noise will increase the level of difficulty, too. As has been already stated, internal noise may appear as a result of growing fatigue or anxiety. The studies conducted by Ellis (1994) and by Horowitz et al. (1986) have shown the negative and highly debilitating impact of the latter (foreign language anxiety) on spoken effectiveness. Semantic noise, in turn, manifesting itself in negative attitudes and sets of stereotypes, is bound to diminish the quality of conversation. Such effects are definitely less visible when the communication happens between the people sharing the same language and coming from similar cultural backgrounds. This is asserted by Gibson (2010, p. 9), who claims that "[i]ntercultural communication takes place when the sender and the receiver are from different cultures. Communication can be very difficult if there is a big difference between the two cultures; if there is too much 'cultural noise', it can break down completely."

Language Functions. The act of conversing in the second language is also intertwined with our needs and the functions we use the language for. Seven such functions were listed, for instance, by Halliday (1975): instrumental, regulatory, representational, interactional, personal, heuristic, and imaginative.[7]

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6   The aspect of communication transfer and production transfer is further discussed in Chapter 3.

7   The instrumental function, helping us to manipulate the environment and fulfill a need, such as e.g. getting food or drink, is one of prime intentions that a second language learner may wish to practice, as the ability to express instrumental functions caters for basic needs. The regulatory function, on the contrary, helps us to influence the behaviour of others and is further defined in this way: "The regulations of encounters among people – approval, disapproval, behavior control, setting laws and rules – are all regulatory features of language" (Brown, 2000, p. 200). The representational function is used to relay or ask for information, to present facts and to describe reality. The interactional function is comprised of language helping one to interact with others, maintain relationships and keep communication channel open. "Successful interactional communication requires knowledge of slang, jargon, jokes, folklore, cultural mores, politeness and formality expectations, and other keys to social exchange" (Brown, 2000, p. 200). It is through personal function that we are able to express our identity, feelings and attitudes, while through the heuristic one we can learn about the outside world, develop knowledge, learn and discover. The final function, imaginative,

It seems that the type of function one uses in second language conversation is determined by the level of advancement and particular stage of L2 development. Thus since instrumental, interactional, and regulatory functions are considered easier, they are acquired during the first stage of learning a language.[8] In the second stage children will normally learn macrofunctions, that is, how to combine and use various functions at the same time (Thwaite, 2019).

The second stage is referred to as the pragmatic macrofunction, since its overarching function is one of "using language as action, getting what you want and getting people to do things" (Thwaite, 2019).

> [...] the Phase functions consist of the Mathetic macrofunction or "language for learning", which has a referential or experiential function, and the Pragmatic macrofunction or "language as action", which has an interpersonal or "speech functional" meaning.
>
> (Painter et al. , 2007, p. 567, in Thwaite, 2019, p. 46, online)

The second stage marks remarkable progress in children's development, but the ability to apply many functions is linguistically and cognitively demanding. Thus it may be assumed that second language learners will also need more time and pragmatics-oriented activities in order to catch illocutionary meaning and combine various macrofunctions.

By the end of the third stage, however, a child is capable of producing utterances that contain one or more of various metafunctions at the same time. Moreover, children at this time are also more skilled in the rules of dialogue (Painter et al., 2007, p. 567, in Thwaite, 2019, p. 46). As can be inferred, being an adult second language learner does not necessarily imply that one will be able to use the language freely to perform various functions, because their proper application comes with time and is linked to higher levels of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic competence. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that for L2 language functions, those requiring higher-order thinking or the development of academic, not only conversational, language (cf. Hill & Miller, 2006) may not

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serves the purpose of "playing with the language", creating imaginary constructs, telling jokes, writing poems or stories.

8   Halliday (1975), and Halliday and Webster (2004) describe three phases children undergo in the process of L1 acquisition.

be introduced at all. Last but not least, one should also remember that speech acts and their culture-specific method of performing individual functions, (such as apologising, reproaching, promising, etc.) are also culture-dependent.[9] In fact, any given speech act may be culture-specific, for instance, "the speech act of promising has no place among the Ilongots, [...] in aboriginal language Yolngu[, in turn,] there does not seem to be any speech act of thanking, [and] in the Australian aboriginal language Walmajarri, one may find a speech act of requesting that is based on kinship rights and obligations" (Huang, 2007, p. 121). Moreover, the same speech act may vary in its level of directness or indirectness.

> [...] it has now been established that there is indeed extensive cross-cultural/lin-
> guistic variation in directness/indirectness in the expression of speech acts,
> especially in FTAs [face-threatening acts] such as requests, complaints, and
> apologies, and that these differences are generally associated with the different
> means that different languages utilize to realize speech acts.
>
> (Huang, 2007, p. 125)

Studies conducted by Hill and Miller (2006) and Huang (2007) undeniably shed some light onto cross-cultural and cross-linguistic dissimilarities and emphasise the need for development of intercultural training.

1.1.2 Acquisition vs Learning Distinction

When describing the nature of second language communication it is important to analyse some variables affecting interactants' communication effectiveness. A plethora of studies leaves no doubt that the learning environment may significantly contribute to L2 success (cf. Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1980, 1981, 1982; Scarcella et al., 1979). Krashen (1980) in his well-known Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis describes the former term as the process of subconscious picking up of the properties of the language. Acquisition takes place as a result of prolonged exposure to input produced by native speakers of the language in a natural environment (target language community) and is comparable to the way children pick up their mother tongue. Since we are not aware of the fact that we are acquiring the language, the acquired competence is subconscious

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9   This aspect will be also discussed in Chapter 3.

and available for automatic processing. Despite the fact that one may still not know the grammatical rules of a given language, still one will have a "feeling" of what sounds or looks correct. "Other ways of describing acquisition include implicit learning, informal learning, and natural learning. In non-technical language, acquisition is 'picking-up' a language" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). This process should be contrasted with learning, which according to Krashen will be used "to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is 'knowing about' a language, known to most people as 'grammar', or 'rules'. Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language, or explicit learning." It is significant to note that the acquisition–learning distinction sheds light on the process of language development, specifically it posits that it is equally possible for adult learners to pick up a second language and that they can "access the same natural 'language acquisition device' that children use" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). This hypothesis is equally useful in providing some evidence on the nature of second language communication and the presence of errors. Evidence from child language acquisition confirms that error correction does not influence acquisition to any great extent (Brown, 1973, in Krashen, 1982, p. 11); however, it seems very useful in the classroom situation of practice when the feedback received from the teacher may help the students to follow the correct rules and use some self-monitoring strategies in the further production of their output.

Moreover, the hypothesis can also account for the differences in terms of language used by any two speakers. It is likely that a person spending a considerable amount of time abroad in the target language culture (hereafter: TLC) will use native-like[10] language, whereas one who learnt it only during traditional courses will probably communicate with a more "bookish" form.[11] As Krashen puts it (1982, p. 59), "the range of discourse that the student can be exposed to in

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10 The term native-like is understood in this work in its very traditional meaning, that is, specifically designating proficiency in a foreign language comparable to that of a native speaker. It should be remembered, however, that native speakers differ in terms of their linguistic mastery and level of education, which can impact the level of represented fluency and accuracy of their speech as well as knowledge and attitude they have towards linguistic and cultural norms. Thus "native-like" will be understood here as the most commonly used language variant among English L1 users.

11 This idea shall be furthered analysed in the empirical part of this book.

a second language classroom is quite limited, no matter how 'natural' we make it. There is simply no way the classroom can match the variety of the outside world, although we can certainly expand beyond our current limitations." It has to be acknowledged that the classroom context provides lots of limitations, but it can still, however, succeed in preparing students to function later in the real world by bringing them to the point "where they can begin to use the outside world for further acquisition" (Krashen, 1982, p. 59). The differences between genuine and non-authentic language produced as a result of exposure either to natural or modified (simplified) input can also account for overall second language communication efficacy.

In both processes, that is, first and second language development, age plays a significant role. According to Arabski (1983, p. 65), "the age of a learner is one of the most important factors deciding about the degree of success in second and foreign language learning and teaching." The process of first language acquisition starts virtually at the beginning of our lives and undergoes various stages, from pre-language period to telegraphic speech. Mother tongue mastery is possible due to constant exposure to the natural linguistic environment surrounding the child in all daily-life contexts. To begin with, a child is provided with so-called caretaker speech (Yule, 1996, pp. 177–178), a simplified form of human interaction characterised by grammatical and lexical limitation, repeated questions, exaggerated intonation and even childish speaking ("baby-talk"). Repetition is another important component of this form of communication. It is due to these features that a child starts gradually understanding the structural organisation of the language. The speed of first language acquisition is remarkable and by the time of entering primary school a child has become a fully-fledged native speaker. This happens as a result of possessing some innate predisposition to acquire a language. Noam Chomsky (1965) called this faculty a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and defined it as a hypothetical tool hardwired into the brain that helps children rapidly learn and understand language. It is true that many children grow up in bilingual environments and are exposed to two, or even more, languages from the very beginning of their lives. However, the process of learning a second language is more often than not associated with picking it up at an older age, for instance, when one enters kindergarten or elementary education. By this time a child does not have to start with the pre-language stages of development as we assume that they have already developed the ability to speak their mother tongue. "The general

belief is that during childhood (up until puberty), there is a period when the human brain is most ready to "receive" and learn a particular language. This period is referred to as the critical period"[12] (Yule, 1996, p. 171). The Critical Period Hypothesis has been analysed by many researchers (cf. Lenneberg, 1967; Krashen, 1973; Penfield & Roberts, 1959, Arabski, 1983, Wiley et al., 2005) and it seems that certain linguistic aspects are more affected by the age of a person. A younger critical age has been suggested for learning phonology than for grammar. Interestingly, as Singleton and Lengyel (1995) believe, there is no critical period for learning L2 vocabulary as it is picked consciously through the application of declarative memory.

An additional note of caution that may be sounded here is that the acquisition–learning distinction and the knowledge one develops as a result of exposure to either natural or classroom situations is linked not only with age, but also with a higher or lower level of anxiety. According to Dewaele and Al Saraj (2013, p. 72), "[p]articipants who had started learning an FL at a later age reported higher levels of FLA in different situations. The context in which a FL had been acquired also played a role: participants who had acquired a FL only through formal classroom instruction felt significantly more anxious than mixed and naturalistic learners."[13] Research also shows (Dewaele, 2007, p. 181) that the context of acquisition significantly impacts the three constituent parts of pragmatic competence in the L2, that is self-perceived proficiency, communicative anxiety, and perception of the characteristics of the L2. In his study, the participants absorbing the language in its naturalistic (target) setting turned out to be more proficient and less anxious than students picking the language in the classroom context. Moreover, "the authentic use of L2 during the process of learning it contributes to attaining high levels of it" (Dewaele, 2007, p. 181, in Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, p. 121).

Authentic communication in an L2 can be seen as the result of a complex system of interrelated variables. The problem, however, is that teachers of

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12   On a terminological note, a distinction is sometimes made between "critical" and "sensitive" periods, the latter term suggesting milder post-CP effects on learning outcomes than the former. Some studies use these terms interchangeably, while others use only one of them (Ruben, 1997). Here, for the sake of simplicity and consistency, "critical period" will be used as a generic cover term.

13   As the presence of anxiety can significantly determine one's overall communication effectiveness it will be discussed separately in in section 1.1.5.

a second language do not always provide their students with activities that would foster the development of a genuine language. In turn, it is quite likely that L2 learners will be able to communicate solely in the classroom context, but not necessarily outside it. Moreover, the acquisition-gained vs learnt-knowledge distinction can also have some implications for the willingness to use a given medium of communication, as according to MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 559), "[d]ifferences between language learning in the classroom and language acquisition in informal social settings may engender differences in WTC [willingness to communicate], such as a greater willingness to use oral or written communication."

1.1.3 First Language Development

Regardless of which language – first or second – one analyses, the person communicating in it will follow some stages and with time move from less advanced to more sophisticated ones. The studies conducted mainly by Krashen (1980, 1981, 1982) but also by Brown (1973) have proven the existence of a particular order for the acquisition of grammatical structures:

> Brown (1973) reported that children acquiring English as a first language tended to acquire certain grammatical morphemes, or functions words, earlier than others. For example, the progressive marker ing (as in "He is playing baseball") and the plural marker /s/ ("two dogs") were among the first morphemes acquired, while the third person singular marker /s/ (as in "He lives in New York") and the possessive /s/ ("John's hat") were typically acquired much later, coming anywhere from six months to one year later. De Villiers and de Villiers (1973) confirmed Brown's longitudinal results cross-sectionally, showing that items that Brown found to be acquired earliest in time were also the ones that children tended to get right more often.
>
> (Krashen, 1982, p. 12)

Describing the sequence of first (English) language acquisition, Fromkin (1983) and Yule (1996, pp. 178–182) enumerate the following stages:
a) pre-language stages:
- cooing (3 months)
- babbling (6 months)
- late-babbling (10–11 months)

b) holophrastic stage (12–18)
c) the two-word stage (18–20)
d) telegraphic speech (2–3 years).

Therefore, a child ascends through three pre-language stages that teach it how to produce individual sounds[14] (cooing) or a shorter or longer combination of different vowels and consonants (babbling). The holophrastic stage, also known as the one-word stage, marks the moment in the first language development during which a child communicates with the environment using one word, for example "drink", which can be understood in several ways – 'I want to drink', 'I don't want to drink', or just as a kind of affirmative statement – this is something to drink. The two-word stage begins when a child communicates through a combination of two words, for example "baby toy", which again, may be open to a few possible interpretations (e.g. a request, a question or an order). The last stage enumerated in this taxonomy is telegraphic speech, defined as the stage at which a child is ready to communicate through multiple-word utterances, and although a sentence-building ability has already developed, children may still make many grammatical mistakes. It is also believed that by the time the child reaches the age of three, its vocabulary range has grown to hundreds of words and its pronunciation is almost adult-like.

1.1.4 Second Language Development

The process of second language development is relatively similar to that of the first language. However,

> Dulay and Burt (1974, 1975) reported that children acquiring English as a second language also show a 'natural order' for grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language. The child second language order of acquisition was different from the first language order, but different groups of second language acquirers showed striking similarities.
>
> (Krashen, 1982, p. 12)

More visible differences characterising these two processes (especially in terms of the acquisition of grammar and inflectional morphemes), and the

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14   Especially velar consonants and long vowels (Yule, 1996, pp. 178–182).

average order typical for both children and adults second learners of English, are presented below:

Figure 1.3. "Average" order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language (children and adults). Adapted from Krashen (1982, p. 13)

ING (progressive)
PLURAL
COPULA ("to be")

↓

AUXILIARY (progressive, as in "he is going")
ARTICLE (a, an, the)

↓

IRREGULAR PAST

↓

REGULAR PAST
III SINGULAR s
POSSESSIVE s
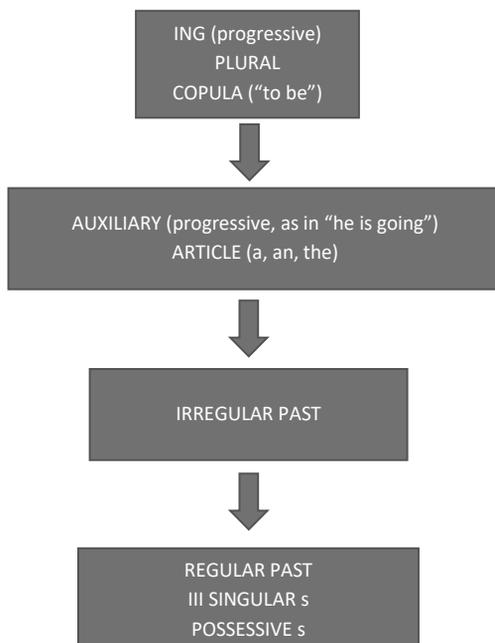
The development of the second language competence usually follows a five-stage pattern: the silent period (also known as pre-production), early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. The first stage aims at establishing students' comprehension and preparing them for future language production. Its length varies between 0 and 6 months and depends on a student's individual characteristics. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983, p. 78), during this stage it is of the utmost importance for the teacher to concentrate on the provision of comprehensible input to the students, focusing on the message and lowering students' affective filter. A problem that may concern adults is that they are often deprived of the possibility of developing "just" their comprehension, and the teacher forces them to produce the language while ignoring the fact that they are not ready yet to do it. This, as Newmark (1966, in Krashen, 1982) stated, is doomed to end up with interlingual transfer because

the students will rely on the syntactic rules of their first language when producing sentences in the second one. Early production may last from 6 months to one year and is characterised by a very limited comprehension and the very first attempts to communicate using a small grammatical and lexical repertoire. Its length is determined by the amount and quality of input a person receives, but also by some affective factors, for example a low level of anxiety is conducive to progress. Speech emergence will manifest itself in the form of short sentences and phrases and this is probably the first moment when learners start communicating with each other more freely. Although students' comprehension increases, they will still make some grammatical mistakes and will not operate on the level of figurative speech (and may still find it difficult to understand e.g. jokes). The fourth level in the development of the second language competence, known as intermediate fluency, is characterised by an increased comprehension and lessening tendency to make grammatical mistakes. A person produces longer and more complex utterances. In order to reach this level one will have to, on average, study a language for about three to five years. The final stage, comparable to native-like mastery of a language, is advanced fluency.

One note of caution should be sounded at this point, namely that at a given point in time learners may use sentences typical of several different stages. As Lightbown and Spada (2004, p. 85) state,

> it is perhaps better to think of a stage as being characterized by the emergence and increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the disappearance of an earlier one. Even when a more advanced stage comes to dominate in a learner's speech, conditions of stress or complexity in a communicative interaction can cause the learner to "slip back" to an earlier stage.

In describing the stages of second language development it seems important to quote an interesting piece of evidence coming from Hill and Miller (2006), who make a further distinction between conversational and academic language. Characterising the former, they base their interpretation on Krashen and Terrell's (1983) taxonomy and compare it to the already described five stages above. For them, reaching these stages can be compared to the iceberg model, where a visible tip stands for basic interpersonal communicative skills. Such skills would be sufficient for students to function in an English-speaking community,

to converse with their peers and understand a teacher's questions. However, attaining conversational proficiency will not guarantee school success because only by reaching the level of academic proficiency can one display cognitive "readiness" for more sophisticated mental processes.

> Without a mastery of academic English, students cannot develop the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills needed to understand and express the new and abstract concepts taught in the classroom. However, academic language takes at least five to seven years to develop, and it can take even longer for a student who was not literate in her primary language when she started in a U.S. school.
>
> (Collier & Thomas, 1989, in Hill & Miller, 2006: 18)

On the contrary, students exposed to classroom and "bookish"/"inkhorn" language may have good written academic English skills but be less fluent in face-to-face oral communication or more colloquial English (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 31).

The final point that may be provided in the discussion concerning the linguistic development that L2 learners undergo is the description of their progress (interlanguage development) in reference to the types of errors they make. Brown (2000, pp. 211–212) lists four stages that may appear, namely: random errors (presystematic) where cardinal grammatical mistakes may appear, an emergent stage – with some growing linguistic awareness of rules, a systematic stage – when a student is ready to use the rules, but also to notice and correct his or her own errors, and finally the stabilisation stage (postsystematic), with a significantly smaller number of errors, increased knowledge of rules and the ability for self-correction.

1.1.5 Anxiety and Inhibition

The problem of anxiety affecting speakers of a second language has been much studied. Anxiety has been defined as a feeling of apprehension, stress, and nervousness, especially if one suffers from low self-esteem. In the field of psychology, anxiety is seen as an emotion resulting from experiencing stress and "its task is to prepare the individual for action in dangerous situations" (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011, p. 200). Friedman and Bendas-Jacob (1997, p. 1035,

cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008, p. 27) also define it as "a sense of discomfort and worry regarding an undefined threat." Anxiety can lead to a debilitating condition when a person is virtually speechless and so stressed that he or she finds it barely possible to utter anything. A high level of anxiety can bring about an opposite, enhancing effect manifesting itself in boosting one's speech and helping one to produce a language (Ellis, 1999).

Spielberger (1983, p. 1, in Brown, 2000, p. 148) defined anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system." More simply put, anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry (Scovel, 1978, p. 134, in Brown, 2000, p. 148). Anxiety can be experienced at many levels and the one that is deepest affects the person to a "global" extend and results in a constant tendency to worry. The situational level can be compared to a normal perception of apprehension caused by some momentary acts, whereas task anxiety appears solely as a result of a given activity (Horwitz, 2001; Oxford, 1999, in Brown, 2000).

The studies conducted by Horwitz et al. (1986) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, 1991c, in Brown, 2000, p. 148), have demonstrated the existence of three components of anxiety, namely:

1. Communication apprehension, arising from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas.
2. Fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others.
3. Test anxiety, or apprehension over academic evaluation.

As can be seen, the first two types, that is, communication apprehension and fear of negative social evaluation, may have a fundamental impact on the way a person interacts in the second language and may potentially lead to a communication fiasco. As Piechurska-Kuciel (2008, p. 67) holds, language anxiety may emerge as a result of various factors that can be generally divided into two groups, namely true causes and fallacious (other) ones. The former category encompasses six groups of sources of language anxiety, that is, personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing.

The latter category, that is, fallacious causes of anxiety, includes other variables, absent in the first group, but which may constitute serious sources of language anxiety, such as, for example, developmental dyslexia.

Researchers have indicated two types of factors affecting learners, that is inter- and intra-individual variation (Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2013, p. 72): the former attempts to explain who is affected most by Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), while the latter focuses more on additional variables leading to this feeling, such as a situational context or particular features of a given interlocutor who happens to be an anxiety-provoking speaker. Inter-individual research has managed to find some data correlating the appearance of anxiety with personality traits, emotional intelligence traits, Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity, levels of perfectionism, in addition to

> a range of socio-biographical variables, including the language learning history and current language practices, and educational variables. FLA/FLCA was found to be linked to age, academic and FL achievement, previous contact with FLs, perceived scholastic competence, self-worth, intellectual ability and job competence.
>
> (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999, 2000, in Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2013, p. 72)

Knowledge of more languages has proven to lead to smaller perception of anxiety in students but the factors of gender and age yielded inconsistent results in this respect.

Intra-individual variation has been analysed in terms of social context and the type of interaction one is engaged in. Thus it has been discovered (Dewaele, 2007, 2010a, 2010b, in Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2013) that the most anxiety-provoking situations while using L2 are speaking to strangers, rather than friends, producing public speeches and conversing on the phone.[15]

Taking part in a second language communication act requires one to pay attention not only to the meaning (what to say) but also to the form (how to say it) and thus the communicative effort is presumably bigger.

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15 If one looks at the examples cited, one cannot help but notice that intra-individual factors actually pertain to a very significant number of daily second language encounters and, if present, they may seriously jeopardise our communication effectiveness.

However, studies conducted by Hoffman (1986, p. 261, in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 401) show that this logical rule seems to be disturbed by the influence of anxiety:

> In a [previous] review […] it was found that intense anxiety directs one's attention to physical features of words (acoustic properties, order of presentation, phonetic similarities) and that occurs to the relative neglect of semantic content. This suggests that affect can determine the extent to which semantic and non-semantic modes of processing are brought into play.

Focusing on form rather than meaning may be perceived as a negative factor that can seriously impede conversational skills.

Foreign language learning, and communicating in this language, may also bring about a plethora of various negative consequences, such as "threatening one's self-concept or lowering self-esteem" (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011, p. 200). In addition, such problems may be intertwined with growing language anxiety, that in turn "obstructs the development of the speaking skill" (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011, p. 200). The acquisition of a new language also goes hand in hand with the acquisition of a new language ego. The studies conducted by Guiora et al., 1972b, in Brown, 2000, pp. 68–70) pertain to the appearance of another difficulty that especially adult learners of English may encounter, that is, protecting their vulnerable and pliable ego. As noted in Brown (2000, p. 69): "For any monolingual person, the language ego involves the interaction of the native language and ego development. One's self-identity is inextricably bound up with one's language, for it is in the communicative process – the process of sending out messages and having them 'bounced' back – that such identities are confirmed, shaped, and reshaped." A person taking up the second language will need to develop a new identity and this process seems challenging especially for adult learners. Physical, emotional, and cognitive changes happening to the individual the moment he or she reaches puberty will further entail the development of various defensive strategies that a person adopts in order to combat such difficulties.

> The language ego clings to the security of the native language to protect the fragile ego of the young adult. The language ego, which has now become part and parcel of self-identity, is threatened, and thus a context develops in which

you must be willing to make a fool of yourself in the trial-and-error struggle
of speaking and understanding a foreign language.

(Brown, 2000, p. 69)

As not every adult learner is willing to "make a fool of themselves" or face various highly face-threatening situations (cf. Dronia, 2014), they may simply postpone, or even completely avoid, L2 conversation-provoking social encounters.

The studies conducted on anxiety have also focused on some negative consequences people fear when talking to strangers or members of different ethnic groups. Thus, according to the data gathered by Stephan and Stephan (1985), there are four basic groups of factors we may be anxious about:

1. Fear of damaging our own self-esteem. While interacting with others we may feel less competent, apprehensive, and deprived of control; we fear that we will feel uneasy, frustrated and irritated due to unclear rules of interaction with different groups. We can also fear that we may potentially offend someone.

2. Fear of being (over)used or dominated by others. We are anxious thinking that in the presence of others we may turn out to be less effective or that some physical or verbal conflict will arise.

3. Fear of negative assessment. We may be anxious about potential rejection, ridicule, or lack of acceptance or that someone may evaluate us through the lens of social stereotypes. Such negative assessments can in turn be perceived as a threat to our social identity.

4. Fear of negative assessment coming from our own ingroup, who may not approve of our intercultural contacts. In such a case we may fear potential rejection and social alienation from our own cultural community.

To sum up, none of the situations described above will facilitate the process of efficient second language interaction. A person full of anxiety is not really likely to be genuinely engaged in any conversation.

1.1.6 Willingness to Communicate and Motivation

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been defined as "the intention to initiate communication given a choice" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 369).

The concept of WTC was first introduced by McCroskey et al. (1985) in relation to the communication taking part in one's first language. It was assumed

that notions such as introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, communication apprehension, and cultural diversity would actually affect the appearance of WTC. However, the studies of MacIntyre (1994) have shown "that communication apprehension and perceived competence would be the causes of WTC when introversion would be related to both communication apprehension and perceived competence, and self-esteem would be related to communication apprehension" (in Mahmoodia & Moazam, 2014, p. 1070, online). Thus it may be assumed that we will be willing to communicate only in a situation of positive evaluation of our communication abilities and lack of apprehension. Further studies conducted by MacIntyre and Charos (1996, in Mahmoodia & Moazam, 2014, p. 1070, online), revealed a correlation between increased WTC and one's personality, motivation, and communication context.

The problem of WTC in the context of second language learning has been widely analysed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) and interpreted from the point of view of psychological, linguistic, and communicative variables. These authors have also provided a comprehensive conceptual model that may be useful in describing, explaining, and predicting L2 communication.

Figure 1.4. Heuristic Model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)
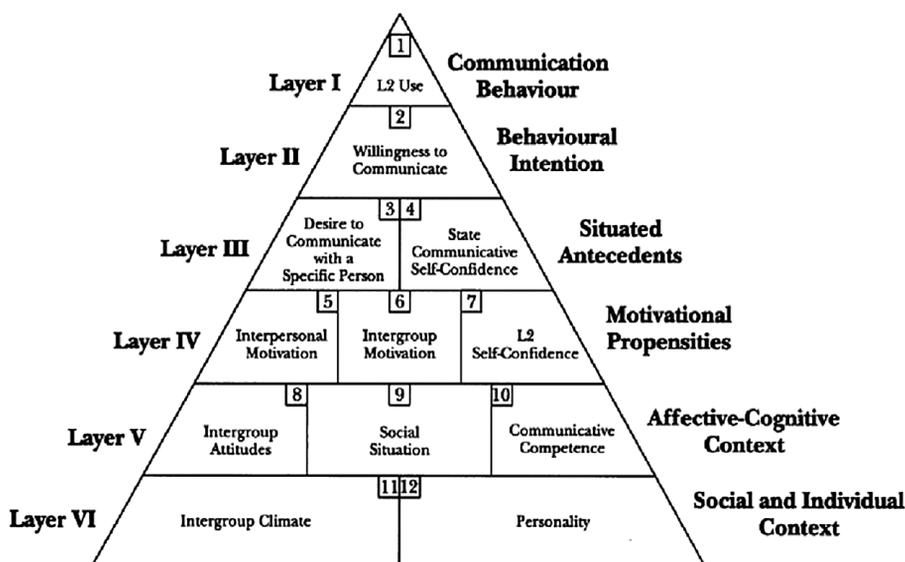
The top of the pyramid marks the moment when a speaker is ready to communicate in L2. The base of the triangle and hence the most significant variable influencing WCT is one's personality. However, MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 546) have also made a distinction between enduring influences and situational ones:

> The enduring influences (e.g., inter-group relations, learner personality, etc.) represent stable, long-term properties of the environment or person that would apply to almost any situation. The situational influences (e.g., desire to speak to a specific person, knowledge of the topic, etc.) are seen as more transient and dependent on the specific context in which a person functions at a given time.

The top three layers represent situation-specific influences on WTC and encompass such aspects as communication behaviour, behavioural intention, and situated antecedents of communication. Layers IV to VI pertain to enduring influences on the communication process, such as motivational propensities, the affective and cognitive, as well as societal and individual context. Motivational aspects in the language learning process have been discussed for many years and focus on the analysis of goals (studies conducted by Gardner & Lambert, 1972), their source (extrinsic vs intrinsic) and the influence motivation has in sustaining the process of L2 learning. Thus it is seen as the concept based on values, resulting attitudes and beliefs, as well as expectations vis-à-vis outcomes (Ushioda, 2003; Komorowska, 2007, 2018).

An additional piece of research devoted to WTC and a practical application of the model offered by MacIntyre et al. (1998) comes from Yashima (2002), who investigated the influence of L2 proficiency, attitudes or motivation, L2 communication confidence, and international posture on L2 communication. The results of her study show that international posture influences motivation, which, in turn, predicts proficiency and L2 communication confidence. Moreover, as Day and Bamford (1998) observe, students motivation to achieve a given goal is determined by "the degree to which the learner values this goal" and "the learner's expectations as to his/her ability to achieve it" (in Komorowska, 2018, p. 9). In sum, WTC in the second language, apart from a purely contextual need to transmit a message, may combine with other psychological, social or even cultural variables. Foreign language anxiety, as described above, can also lead to a feeling of uneasiness and thus determine the decision to remain silent. Furthermore, as MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 546) have found, there are

over thirty variables that may have a potential impact on L2 WTC. They also observe that "L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use," so that a communication act conducted in a second language between interlocutors who do not share the same sociocultural background will entail more aspects than one conducted in one's mother tongue. As there are many more variables determining the effectiveness of intercultural communication, which do not necessarily pertain to the act itself, they will be discussed separately in the following sections.

1.2 Communicative Competence

Since the ability to communicate rests on the assumption that one develops communicative competence, it is worthwhile to discuss this notion in some depth. The term "communicative competence" was coined by Hymes (1967, 1972, in Brown, 2000, p. 227) and can be defined as "that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts."

The attitudes to and interpretations of communicative competence (hereafter: CC) differ. To start with, there is some disagreement concerning the definition of the term and its components. For example, Hymes (1972, p. 281) believes that the notion of CC represents the learner's knowledge of language use in context. Thus there are four abilities that relate to it:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

As seen in the foregoing typology, Hymes focuses here on grammatical aspects (formal possibility), psycholinguistic achievability, context appropriateness, and probability of the act of performing, and at the same time emphasises the importance of perlocution, that is, "what its doing entails".

When discussing second language approaches we may start with a well-known division created by Chomsky (1965) in which he distinguishes between competence (our knowledge of the language) and performance (the actual use of language in a given situation). As was later added to the stronger claim of this theory, competence pertains to the linguistic system that a native speaker of a language recognises, whereas performance relates to psychological variables present in the process of perception and production of speech and may include such aspects as memory limitation. Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) enriched the understanding of CC by stressing the importance of other factors, not included in Chomsky's earlier distinction, involving sociocultural appropriateness. Finally, it was they who also proposed the notion of communicative competence rather than mere competence.

In their seminal work, Canale and Swain (1980) identified three components of communicative competence, namely, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic. The first "will be understood to include knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology" (p. 29). The second competence is made up of two subgroups, namely sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. "Knowledge of these rules will be crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning [...]" and "sociocultural rules of use will specify the ways in which utterances are produced and understood *appropriately* [...]" (p. 30). Strategic competence, encompassing both verbal and nonverbal strategies, "may be called into action to compensate for breakdown in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence" (p. 30). This competence relies in turn on two groups of strategies: those pertaining to grammatical competence (e.g. paraphrasing grammatical structures one cannot recall in a given situation) and those that derive more from sociolinguistic competence, "(e.g. various role-playing strategies, how to address strangers when unsure of their social status)" (pp. 30–31). Corder (1981, in Nagy, 2016, p. 161) also believes that strategic competences are comprised of two major types:

> Message adjustment strategies, also called avoidance strategies (when speakers lacking the necessary vocabulary to refer to an object, avoid mentioning it or say something different from what was originally intended), and resource expansion strategies, or achievement strategies (when the interlocutors attempt to overcome the communication problems by paraphrasing, approximation

(using a similar term to the needed one), non-linguistic means (e.g. gestures or miming), borrowed or invented words (e.g. auto for car, etc.).

In 1983 Canale broadened the interpretation of CC by adding the fourth component, namely discourse competence, which is "the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances" (in Brown, 2000, p. 228). Recent understanding of communicative competence relies on the idea put forward by Bachman (1990, p. 87), who suggests the concept of language competence be subdivided into organisational and pragmatic competence. The former pertains to the rules of grammar and discourse (textual competence connected with cohesion and rhetorical organisation), and the latter is made up of two separate pragmatic categories, that pertaining to functional aspects of language (e.g. illocutionary competence) and that of sociolinguistic aspects related to general concept of politeness, formality, or register (Brown, 2000, p. 229).

In describing some teaching implications related to the concept of boosting the development of CC in the second language classroom, it should be noted that teachers of a language mainly rely on the adoption of three types of approaches, that is, grammatical, communicative or functional (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 2). Interestingly, the outcome of a research study carried out by Macnamara (1974) and Oller and Obrecht (1968) shows significant impact of grammatical usage and grammar-based activities on the process of L2 learning. What was also observed was the beneficial influence of meaningful context in which learning takes place. However, the results of the studies conducted by Savignon (1972), Tucker (1974), and Upshur and Palmer (1974) clearly indicate that in order to develop communicative competence one does not necessarily have to rely on grammar-based activities in the teaching/learning process. Moreover, teaching CC can be facilitated by the fact that at least some knowledge of appropriateness conditions, so the sociocultural competence necessary for some basic communicative needs in L2, may have already been acquired during the process of learning the first language. This knowledge, however, cannot be treated as universal and suitable to all cultural backgrounds (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 12).

The Communicative Approach, and especially Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has gained many followers and is commonly applied in English teaching classrooms worldwide. The major teaching objective of this method is to prepare the students to be communicative and fluent, to be able to use the

language for many social purposes and for many functions. Thus a student's proficiency level is assessed in terms not only of grammatical or lexical richness, but also of sociocultural and pragmatic awareness and his or her readiness to use the language in diversified contexts.

1.3 Characteristics of an Advanced L2 User of English

There exist numerous criteria assessing second language students in terms of their proficiency level. Early studies by Carroll (1978 in Canale & Swain, 1980, pp. 25–26) indicate "three levels of performance (viz. basic, intermediate, and advanced) with respect to the four skill areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening." These levels are defined with reference to ten evaluation criteria. Five of them are beneficial in the process of test construction (e.g. complexity, size or speed) and the remaining during performance assessment (e.g. appropriacy, repetition or hesitation). However, recently it is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2018), that has been more widely recognised as the international standard for describing language ability, describing it on a six-point scale, from A1, for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language (Komorowska, 2003).

Figure 1.5. English exams on the CEFR (www.cambridgeenglish.org)
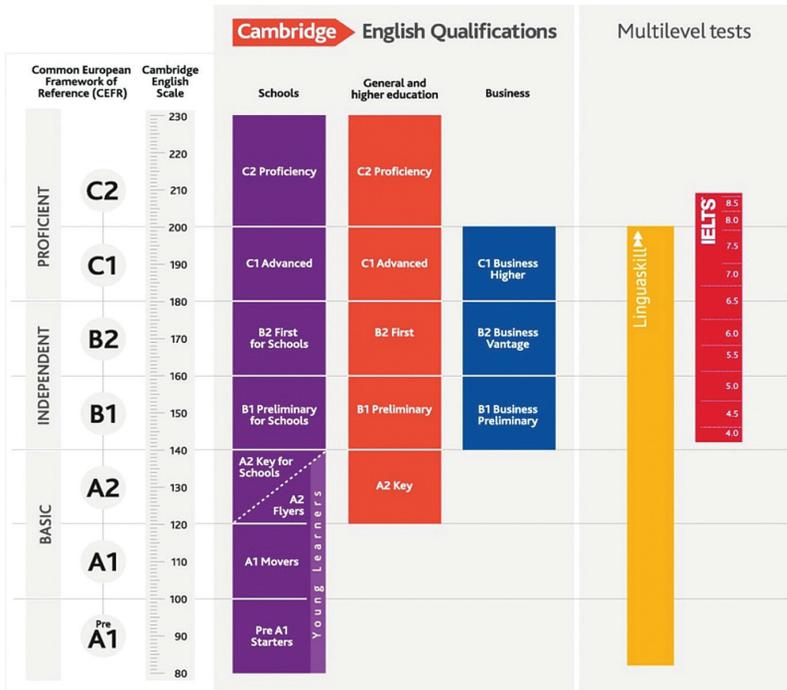
As the CEFR claims, a person representing a C2 level demonstrates the following abilities and can:

- study demanding subjects at the highest level, including postgraduate and PhD programmes
- negotiate and persuade effectively at senior management level in international business settings
- understand the main ideas of complex pieces of writing
- talk about complex or sensitive issues, and deal confidently with difficult questions. (www.cambridgeenglish.org, online).

According to the CEFR, C level applies only to proficient users of a language, where C1 level is described as effective operational proficiency and C2 as mastery (http://rm.coe.int/1680459f97). The total characteristics of all reference levels are described in the following way:

Table 1.3. Characteristics of all reference levels

Proficient user	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent user	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Independent user	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

While specifically describing the various abilities and competences a second language learner should possess, the CEFR taxonomy also takes into account the importance of well-developed sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and pragmatic competences. Among the former one may distinguish between linguistic markers of social relations, register differences, expressions of folk wisdom, dialect and accent, and politeness conventions. A proficient L2 student should therefore represent the following attributes of sociolinguistic appropriateness[16]:

C2: Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly. Can mediate effectively between speakers of the

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16 As the empirical part of this book focuses on the research conducted on English philology students, the description of various proficiency levels will emphasise the characteristics that pertain to advanced L2 users.

target language and those of his/her community of origin taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.

C1: Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.

<div align="right">(https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97)</div>

Sociocultural competence, defined as "awareness of the socio-cultural content in which the language concerned is used by native speakers and of ways in which this context affects the choice and the communicative effect of particular language forms" (Neuner, 1998, p. 56, in Komorowska, 2006a, p. 65) will demonstrate itself in the learner "be[ing] able to interpret and bring different cultural systems into relation with one another, to interpret socially distinctive variations within a foreign cultural system, and to manage the dysfunctions and resistances peculiar to intercultural communication" (Byram & Zarate 1998, p. 13, in Komorowska, 2006a, p. 65).

Pragmatic competence, in turn, which is defined in this document as knowledge of the principles according to which messages are:

a. organised, structured and arranged ('discourse competence');
b. used to perform communicative functions ('functional competence');
c. sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata ('design competence');

is further concerned with discourse and functional competence. The former may manifest itself (in the case of C2 level) in "show[ing] great flexibility in reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to give emphasis, [...] differentiat[ing] according to the situation, interlocutor, etc. and [...] eliminat[ing] ambiguity" (https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97). An advanced speaker of a language is also capable of performing various microfunctions, macrofunctions, and interaction schemata. Microfunctions aim at:

1. imparting and seeking factual information:
   identifying
   reporting
   correcting
   asking
   answering

2. expressing and finding out attitudes:
   factual (agreement/disagreement)
   knowledge (knowledge/ignorance, remembering, forgetting, probability, certainty)
   modality (obligations, necessity, ability, permission)
   volition (wants, desires, intentions, preference)
   emotions (pleasure/displeasure, likes/dislikes, satisfaction, interest, surprise, hope, disappointment, fear, worry, gratitude)
   moral (apologies, approval, regret, sympathy)

3. suasion:
   suggestions, requests, warnings, advice, encouragement, asking help, invitations, offers

4. socialising:
   attracting attention, addressing, greetings, introductions, toasting, leave-taking

5. structuring discourse:
   (28 microfunctions, opening, turntaking, closing, etc.)

6. communication repair (16 microfunctions).

(https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97)

As for macrofunctions, they have been defined in the document as "categories for the functional use of spoken discourse or written text consisting of a (sometimes extended) sequence of sentences, for example:

- description
- narration
- commentary
- exposition
- exegesis
- explanation

- demonstration
- instruction
- argumentation
- persuasion etc.

(https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97)

The final aspect of functional competence is interaction schemata, which serve as particular patterns used in various social sequenced interactions.

As Komorowska reminds us (2006a, pp. 65–66; 2018), *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, lists – alongside with linguistic competences – four "general competences", that is, declarative knowledge (savoir), existential competence (savoir-etre), skills and know how (savoirfaire) and ability to learn (savoir-apprendre), each of which is in some way related to the socio-cultural competence of the learner." Declarative knowledge includes socio-cultural knowledge together with intercultural awareness, skills and know-how pertain to practical (such as, among others, social and living skills) and intercultural skills and existential competences relate to attitudes and "motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality factors" (Komorowska, 2018). Ability to learn, the final component of the four general competences, includes

- language and communication awareness,
- general phonetic awareness,
- study skills and
- heuristic skills, e.g. the ability to come to terms with new experience, to find new information, to use information technology.

(CEF, 2001, in Komorowska, 2006a, p. 66)

As can be seen, a learner representing a C1 or C2 level should be close to native-like command of a language, including not only general mastery of the language (which may be compared to the development of purely linguistic competence), but also the ability to react to various social situations requiring from them to adjust the language, use an appropriate register and follow context-specific sociocultural conventions. While describing and assessing the writing abilities that a proficient L2 user of English should demonstrate, Waller (1993 in Leśniewska, 2006, p. 97) also mentioned such

aspects as lexical sophistication, variation, and density. It has also been observed that

> [a]n important characteristic of advanced learners' L2 production is that deviations from native-speaker norms may be very subtle, and do not often take the form of explicit errors. Advanced L2 users may produce phrases and expressions which, considered individually, are correct, in the sense that they do not violate the L2 rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, etc. However, the cumulative effect of the use of certain phrases rather than others may give the impression of non-nativeness.
>
> (Leśniewska, 2006, p. 99)

Although Leśniewska primarily focuses here on collocations that may be difficult to acquire by second language learners, still the idea that advanced L2 users may produce sentences that are only apparently correct may be juxtaposed to the other findings (cf. Thomas, 1983) and claims that pragmatic violations can be observed even at almost native-like levels of proficiency.

The problems advanced students of a second language may encounter are also thoroughly discussed by Richards (2008, pp. 2–3), who lists five potential areas, namely:

1. A gap between receptive and productive competence.
2. Increased fluency at the expense of complexity.
3. Limited vocabulary range.
4. Using language lacking the characteristics of natural speech.
5. Persistent fossilized language errors.[17]

The first problem learners face is addressed by the author in the form of two hypotheses, namely the noticing hypothesis (formulated by Schmidt, 1990) and the output hypothesis. The former holds that we will acquire some new language (e.g. pragmatic rules) provided we will be exposed to correct language input containing such new elements and that we will notice some novelties in it (or a teacher will alert us to them through appropriately-chosen activities). L2 learners who have some linguistic problems either have not been

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17 The problems discussed in this section will be further analysed in the conclusive chapter.

exposed to such activities or have not noticed anything in them. The output hypothesis, on the other hand, stresses the importance of meaningful output production as, according to Richards, developing only comprehension will not boost production abilities.

The second potential problem bedeviling advanced students may coalesce with increased fluency at the expense of complexity. "The development of fluency may mean greater ease of use of known language forms, but it does not necessarily imply development in complexity" (Schmidt, 1990, p. 7). Apparently the development of fluency, accuracy, and complexity is not synchronised, as the learners who give the impression of being otherwise fluent may at the same time rely on relatively simple grammatical constructions.

Limited vocabulary range may manifest itself in the way that vocabulary development has not progressed sufficiently. Thus some learners may tend to overuse lower-level vocabulary and fail to acquire more advanced lexis and usage.

The fourth dilemma listed by Richards (2008) refers to the fact that many L2 students have been exposed to bookish, rather than colloquial, language. As a result their output does not resemble that of a native speaker.[18]

The final obstacles on the way to second language success are persistent errors closely linked to the fossilisation phenomenon. Defined as "the persistence of errors in learners' speech despite progress in other areas of language development" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, in Richards, 2008, p. 19), this remains a substantial problem in developing a successful L2 encounter, although, as Richards (2008) says, it may not block communication completely, but rather evoke the interlocutor's irritation with the presence of errors. Some scholars attribute the presence of persistent errors to communicative approaches to language teaching:

> The promise that the communicative classroom activities would help learners develop communicative competence, as well as linguistic competence, did not always happen. Programs where there was an extensive use of "authentic communication," particularly in the early stages of learning, reported that students

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18 Although the examples cited mainly pertain to spoken discourse (e.g. the acquisition of conversational routines or fixed expressions), it would be safe to assume that a similar difficulty can be found in terms of pragmatic niceties, too.

often developed fluency at the expense of accuracy, resulting in learners with good communication skills but a poor command of grammar and a high level of fossilization.

(Higgs & Clifford, 1982, in Richards, 2008, p. 19)

Along with describing the linguistic features an advanced L2 learner should be able to produce, some additional insights must be devoted to writing ability. There have been numerous studies relating the existence of syntactic difficulty and high proficiency level (e.g. Ai & Lu, 2013; Kim, 2014; Lu, 2011; Mazgutova & Kozrmos, 2015, in Lahuerta, 2018, p. 17), for instance "Ji-Young Kim (2014) showed that more proficient L2 writers produced longer texts, used more diverse vocabulary, and showed the ability to write more words per sentence and more complex nominalizations than less proficient learners did" (Kim, 2014). Thus it seems that an advanced level of proficiency is characterised by syntactic complexity, longer utterances and lexical richness, but at the same time some collocation-related problems are still likely to arise (cf. Leśniewska, 2006).

1.4 Recapitulation

The aim of this chapter is to shed some light on the nature of second language communication, and, what is more important, to juxtapose its context and multiple variables affecting this act with L1 communicative encounters. As was mentioned before, the nature of L2 communication is not fully comparable to L1 communication due to the existence of many differences – starting age, anxiety, and inhibition, to name just a few.

Communicating across Generations

The intention of this chapter is to provide most salient characteristics typically ascribed to given generational cohort. Special attention is paid to the description of Generation Z as this group has been chosen to take part in the longitudinal study presented in the empirical part of this book. Additionally, the chapter discusses most typical communication channels that particular age group favours most.

2.1 Identifying Generations

> To identify the persona of a generation, look for these attributes: perceived membership in a common generation; common beliefs and behaviors; and a common location in history.
>
> (Howe & Strauss, 2000)

A generation may be defined as a group of people who witness the same historical events and have had similar sociological influences. At the same time it can be also a group of people who are living at the same time and who are within a certain age range, and in this understanding sometimes it is referred to as a "cohort". Cambridge Dictionary (n.d., online) also states that "generation" may refer to "a period of about 25 to 30 years, in which most human babies become adults and have their own children." Thus the term "generation" is usually attached to a numerous group sharing some experience that equip its members with some sort of solidarity and a sense of belonging, and which will last for an extended period of time. People born in the same period would hence be thought to possess some similar characteristics. Finally, as Howe and Strauss (1992, online) describe, a generational constellation is "the sum of its parts [...] coexist[ing] at that moment in time."

The idea of dividing the population into age groups is nothing new. However, the terminology used here, recognising, for instance, Millennials or baby

boomers, was probably introduced by Howe and Strauss in 1987, as these two authors are widely credited with naming the Millennials. They are also the ones who created the generational theory, known also as the Fourth Turning Theory. According to its principles, historical events are associated with recurring generational personas (archetypes). Each generational persona unleashes a new era (called a turning) in which a new social, political, and economic climate exists. Turnings tend to last around 20–22 years. The generational theory proposed by Mannheim in 1952 (in Beaven, 2014, p. 69, online) advances additional criterion for a group to be called a generation, namely "a 'similar location' of individuals in a social structure" (Beaven, 2014, p. 69). This "location" however, is not sufficient in itself to classify one a member of a given generation. As Beaven explains (2014, p. 69), "In order for one to be 'similarly located' within a generation, an individual must participate similar social processes, experience similar historical events, and be exposed to similar cultural information."

Howe and Strauss (2000) believe that America today contains six basic generations, namely: the GI Generation (born 1901–1924), the Silent Generation (born 1925–1942), the Boom Generation (i.e. baby boomers, born 1943–1960), Generation X (1961–1981), also known as GenXers, the Millennial Generation (born 1982 to roughly 2005) and the Homeland Generation (born roughly 2005–2025). The terminology used by various authors differs significantly and thus the newest or youngest generation is also referred to as Cuspers (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Hammill, 2005 online; Hesket, 2007, online), "Me generation" or Generation Z, whereas "Millennials" is commonly replaced by "Generation Y" or "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001, online), the "N-Gen" (for "net") or "D-Gen" (for "digital"), or Net Generation (cf. Jones et al., 2009). Bencsik et al. (2016, online) recognise even the sixth group, that is, the Alfa Generation (Millennials' children), born after 2010 (the term created by McCrindle, 2005). The most deeply-rooted taxonomy, enumerating five groups, is presented below:

Table 2.1. Generational overview (Heskett, 2007, online)

Generation	Born between	Characteristics	Sometime stereotyped as
TRADITIONALISTS	1925–1942 Now 78–95	Hardworking & dedicated – Respectful of rules & authority – Conservative & traditional – Self-sacrificing	Old-fashioned; behind the times – Rigid/ autocratic – Change/ risk averse
BABY BOOMERS	1943–1960 Now 60–77	Youthful self-identity – Optimistic – Team player – Competitive – Hard-working	Self-centered – Unrealistic – Political – Power-driven; workaholic
GENERATION X	1961–1981 Now 39–59	Balanced (work/life quality) – Self-reliant – Pragmatic – Skeptical – Eliminate the task – Challenging others	Slackers – Selfish; impatient – Cynical
MILLENNIALS	1982–2002 Now <39	Fast paced/ multitasking – Extreme fun – Technological savvy – Social responsibility	Short attention span – Spoiled & disrespectful – Technology-dependent
CUSPERS	Born in the 3–5 years that overlap two generations	May demonstrate characteristics of both generations they overlap	N/A

As seen from the description presented in Table 2.1, there exist numerous differences visible among the generations. Some of them relate to social, professional, or even ethical aspects of life. At this point, however, the most significant dissimilarities may be observed in terms of generations' approach to technology and pace of life. More detailed characteristics of their lifestyle comes from Hammill (2005, online):

Table 2.2. Generational personal and lifestyle characteristics (Hammill, 2005, online)[1]

Attitudes	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Core Values	Respect authority – Conformers – Discipline	Optimism – Involvement	Skepticism – Fun – Informality	Realism – Confidence – Extreme fun – Social
Family	Traditional nuclear	Disintegrating	Latch-key kids	Merged families
Education	A dream	A birthright	Way to get there	Great expense
Communica-tion/Media	Rotary phones – One-on-one – Write a memo	Touch-tone phones Call me anytime	Cell phones – Call me only at work	Internet – Picture phones – Email
Budget/ Money	Put it away – Pay cash	Buy now, pay later	Cautious Conservative	Earn to spend

As Hammill claims, "each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits and motivational buttons" (2005, online), but in the light of this book what seems to be most salient is the fact that each generation also communicates in a different way, having its own communication norms and preferences. What is visible at first glance is "the attitude to interrupting," that is, what distinguishes a particular generation is, among other features, their availability. Baby boomers follow the approach "call me anytime," and for this generation one does not have to schedule an appointment in a formal way, but is welcomed to "pop in" at any time without any further ado. On the contrary, Generation X will probably accept the telephone call but only during working time. This shift in flexibility together with sharp differences in technological proficiency (which will be further discussed below) is one of the most striking differences existing among these age groups.

According to Howe and Strauss (2000, in Törőcsik et al., 2014, p. 25, online), there are three major factors defining generations more precisely than age,

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1   Generation Z, as seen, is not yet included in the publications issued before 2010 but will be discussed in the following section.

but since these factors are also related to age; they are therefore connected to cohort experiences:

– *perceived membership*: the self-perception of members, which starts with adolescence and becomes complete in adulthood;
– *common beliefs and behaviour*: attitudes towards family, career, private life, politics, religion etc. and behaviour (decisions concerning job, marriage, children, health, crime, sex, drugs etc.), which characterise the generation;
– *common place/situation in history*: the turning points of historical trends and significant events that affect the generation during its important years, such as adolescence or young adulthood.

It is true that all age cohorts see themselves as special and unique. Interestingly, their perception of this uniqueness also differs, as there are different attributes that these generations value, and each of them possesses distinct reasons for feeling unique. Thus according to Pew Research results (2010), what makes Millennials special is a combination of five features, namely technology use, music/pop culture, being liberal and tolerant, "being smarter"[2], and the clothes they wear. As for Generation X, these features are technology use, the work ethic, being conservative and traditional, being smarter and being respectful. The baby boom generation, however, is proud of its work ethic, being respectful, having strong values and morals, just of being "Baby Boomers" and of being smarter. As can be seen, the identity badges of technology use, a work ethic, the feeling of being smarter and of being respectful were mentioned by members of all the groups analysed.

The Generation Alpha, a term created in 2005 by Mark McCrindle (www.huf fpost.com), has been described as "not a return to the old, but the start of something new." While the traits that come to define generations often do not start to manifest until their members' adolescence or early adulthood, it is possible to identify certain notable features of this cohort. This newest generation in the US will have a high share of children with foreign-born parents and children who are foreign-born themselves, representing more countries around the world than previous generations. Moreover, as McCrindle points out, "this generation of children will be shaped in households that move more frequently, change careers more often and increasingly live in urban, not just suburban, environments." McCrindle also believes those in Generation Alpha will stay

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2   Most probably, than other generations.

in education longer, start their earning years later and thus live at home with their parents, on average, for longer than it was previously the case – even into their late 20s. Another element important while defining this group is technology. As the researcher holds, the omnipresence of technology in those formative years leads to increased digital literacy and gamification of learning and shorter attention spans, and impaired social formation. Generation Alpha is unique and cannot be compared to any other group: "This newest American generation displays unprecedented diversity in almost every dimension one can examine – ethnicity, nativity, income, family arrangements, you-name-it" (McCrindle, 2005, online).

2.2 Communicating across Age Generations

> Technology, in particular the rapid evolution of how people communicate and interact, is another generation-shaping consideration. Baby Boomers grew up as television expanded dramatically, changing their lifestyles and connection to the world in fundamental ways. Generation X grew up as the computer revolution was taking hold, and Millennials came of age during the internet explosion. In this progression, what is unique for Generation Z is that all of the above have been part of their lives from the start.
>
> (Pew Research, 2019, online)

There have been lots of stereotypes, and apparently, some sort of misunder-standing, concerning communication preferences typical for various age cohorts. What is, however, unquestionable is the impact technology has had on the way people communicate: starting from differences concerning the preferences for using particular channels (e.g. face-to-face vs social media), and extending to the frequency of interactions (real ones vs virtual). Three generations are active in the labour market (baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y–Millennials), one has already retired and is not really employed any more (the Silent Generation) and one is entering the brave new world of both the labour market and universities (Generation Z). Thus, since all of them have reached different stages in their lives, they will demonstrate different communication needs and preferences.

Generation Y were born into an emerging world of technology and have grown up surrounded by smart phones, laptops, tablets, and other gadgets.

As a generation, these people are constantly plugged into technology and it has become an essential aspect of the generation's life. It is no surprise to discover that they are referred to as "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001, online). Generation Y prefers to communicate more quickly and effectively via email, social networks or text messaging as opposed to traditional means of communication.

As Chester (2002) observes, this generation favours, above all, social media, that is, Facebook and similar platforms. Naumovska (2017) finds that the first place is held by Facebook, followed by Instagram, Candy Crush Saga, Twitter, Chrome, Google Maps, YouTube, Gmail, Pandora radio and Facebook Messenger which occupies the tenth position on top apps used.

It is interesting to see a huge discrepancy in our communication channels preferences; what Generation X favours most, Generation Y favours least. Below one can see these preferences put in the form of a pyramid:

Figure 2.1. Chester's hierarchy of communication needs (Chester, 2002)

Chester's Hierarchy of Communication Needs©

People born before 1980
Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X

People born after 1980
Millennials or Gen Y/Z
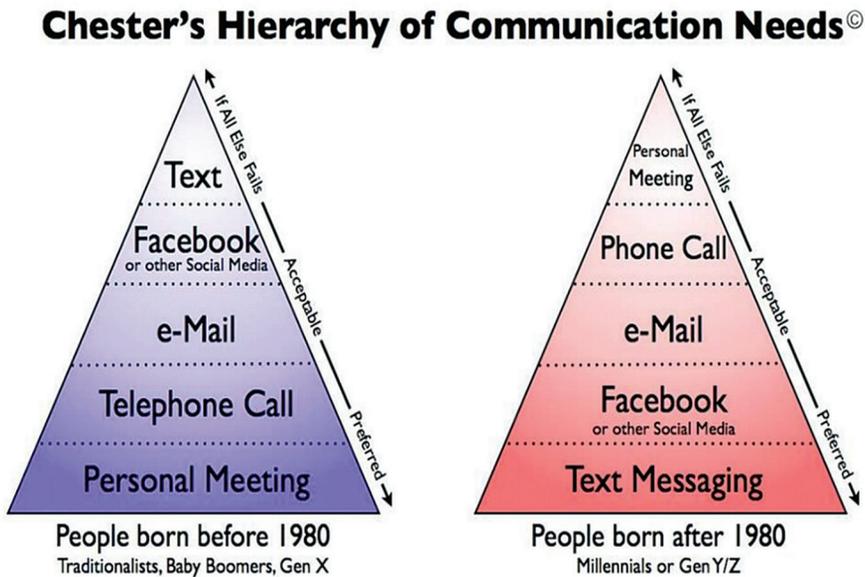
In his study, Chester (2002) formulated a hypothesis claiming that people's (workplace) communication preferences are determined by their age. As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the hierarchy of communication needs varies significantly between the two groups. In fact, the only communication channel their preferences agree on is email. According to Chester, the two groups communicate

differently. Generation X prefers direct, even blunt and immediate forms of communication, an informal style and a straightforward approach. Millennials, on the other hand, opt for a more polite, respectful, electronic communication style. They will talk face-to-face only if all else fails, or the message is extremely important (Chester, 2002). It seems that the biggest difference here lies in the fact that for them, technological devices comprise the norm, something they have acquired and use on a regular basis. This is not so true for Generation X as, in their case, technology has been learnt and personal contact will always be treated as more natural (Dronia, 2017).

Undeniably communication is key for Millennials so they are attracted to this form where technology is at the forefront. Only by technology-based communication can they make sure that it is on the right (their own) terms. Thus sending a member of Generation Y an email, a tweet or a Facebook message will receive an instant reply whereas a phone call may take a little longer for a return. Within the office environment, members of Generation Y prefer communication via email whereas the baby boomer generation prefer to pick up the phone.[3] Communication which is quick, effective, and on Generation Y's terms will be conducted in a heartbeat. Interestingly, a research study conducted by Ogbeide et al. (2013, online) shows Millennials (Generation Y) from a completely different, even totally contradictory perspective. The outcome of their analysis was that in a workplace context, the preferred channels of communication among Millennials were face-to-face communication, directly followed by email, and then text messaging. These results also indicated that the Millennial Generation appreciated the use of technology for communication (e.g., Wi-Fi and audience polling apps for immediate feedback) and expected it to be accessible during meetings and events. As the sample population was quite numerous (1,787 Millennial respondents) one may take the results to be statistically significant and assume that they show a dominant trend typical for this age group. As a generation known for communicating through memes, GIFs and emoticons/emojis, Millennials express themselves through imagery and respond best to strategies that incorporate the same mode of communication.

When it comes to other generational groups, they also differ a lot. Millennials and baby boomers, for example, differ in terms of interpersonal

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3   Though the finding presented by Chester (2002) would imply that the only communication channel that these age groups share is email.

communication. Generation Y uses more computer-mediated communication (CMC) whereas baby boomers rely on face-to-face communication with its body language and non-verbal cues, but also telephone conversations and email. They will seldom use blogs, wikis, social networking sites and texting or instant messaging in more formal situations, such as in the work context (Heng & Yazdanifard, 2013, p. 838, in Venter, 2017, p. 504, online).

A completely different angle of cross-generational communication that should be mentioned here pertains to some highly negative communication tendencies displayed by younger generations when addressing their elders. Hargie and Dickson (2005, p. 28) enumerate some patronising communication strategies that are typical of the language directed towards this age group. According to them, there are at least seven common propensities recognised in this discourse, namely:

- *Simplification strategies* – using a simplified register as one might with a child (e.g. basic vocabulary, short sentences, simple sentence structure, more restricted range of sentence patterns).
- *Clarification strategies* – ways of making yourself heard and understood (e.g. speaking more loudly, slowly, and with exaggerated intonation; using repetition).
- *Diminutives* – being dismissively familiar or patronising; includes calling the person 'honey', 'love' or 'dear', etc., or describing some thing or event, such as a nap, as 'little' (e.g. 'It's time for a little nap, dear').
- *Demeaning emotional tone* – acting superciliously.
- *Secondary baby talk* – talking as one would to a baby (e.g. 'Just a teensy-weensy bit more?').
- *Avoidance* – discussing the older person, in their presence, with a relative rather than addressing them directly.
- *Overly controlling* – being impatient or assuming the person's needs are already known.

A negative stereotype of older people is quite commonly displayed (also by their caretakers, Grainger, 1995, in Hargie & Dickson, 2005) in the language and that, in turn, may further imply their "incompetence, decline or senility". This tone is intertwined with additional communication problems different age groups may have while talking to each other.

Generations seem to differ also in terms of their approach to freedom of communication. As Pew Research Center (2019, online) informs, 77% of Americans support the freedom of speech even if that speech would insult their religion, beliefs, and opinions. Moreover, there is a difference among the generations and races. The younger the generation is, the more supportive it is for some governmental restriction of hate speech. As many as 40% of Millennials, 27% of Generation Xers, 24% of baby boomers, and 12% of the Silent Generation support such limitations. Hence it may be inferred that Generation Z is the one that pays most attention to politically correct speech, free of any bias and prejudice.

2.2.1 Telephone Communication and Texting

As Alton (2017, online) claims, there is only anecdotal evidence indicating that Millennials hate talking on the phone. However, their aversion to telephone communication has been confirmed by a study conducted by a telephone company. It turned out that phones are no longer used for their prime purpose, that is, making telephone conversations, but are much more commonly used for accessing the various apps they offer. As Alton puts it in an article published by *Forbes* online:

> This generation grew up with the gradual introduction of instant messaging, texting, email, and other forms of written communication. Because they're just as instantaneous, but provide you the ability to think over your words, they're more comfortable and precise communication forms. For a group of people dubbed "the anxious generation" this is of the utmost importance. It could also be that phone calls require a kind of interruption to someone's day, while text messages and emails can be opened and read at the recipient's leisure.
>
> (Alton, 2017, online)

Comparing the preference for use of telephones across the two age groups, one cannot but notice that this discrepancy is very vivid. We may ascribe this to the fact that telephones have always comprised the reality of Generation X – this is what they remember from their earliest years and it has always been a part of their daily existence. At that time however, phones were used just

for making calls and the glitter offered by smartphones did not exist. Millennials, on the other hand, belong to a generation that was introduced from the outset to smart watches, smart apps, smart gimmicks of this and that sort. Making calls can be done through many devices, mundane phones being just one example. As a result, what has actually become a norm in their lives is to operate on smartphone daily-basis as only this can satisfy their technological expectations. The reality of Generation X, especially for those residing in the former bloc of communist-ruled countries, was even more twisted. Not everyone knows (and this is something that the contemporary generation may find difficult to believe) that possessing a telephone in the 1980s suggested high privilege that only a few could afford. This limitation may have resulted in a certain learnt ability to be able to manage without a phone. What was always left at one's disposal was a face-to-face meeting and personal interaction. Thus it may be deduced that the generation raised in such "disenfranchised" conditions had to both develop and master the ability to conduct spoken interaction and written forms of communication, for instance letters. In time, through easier and then unlimited access to phones, Generation X has gradually learnt how to operate all those smart phones and the various applications that they offer. But for this generation, face-to-face and telephone conversation will do.

An interesting piece of evidence referring to the way Americans communicate on a daily basis is shown in a paper published by Newport (2014, online). According to it, the ways they communicate vary significantly by age. Sending and receiving text messages is the most prevalent form of communication for Americans below 50 years of age. More than two-thirds of 18-to-29-year-olds say they sent and received text messages "a lot" the previous day, as did nearly half of Americans between 30 and 49. Younger Americans are also well above average in their use of cellphones, email and social media on a daily basis.

Among Americans aged 65 and older, the most-used methods of communication are cellphones, landline phones and email, although this older group is generally much less likely than those who are younger to use any form of communication. A detailed distribution of the answers collected is presented in Figure 2.2:

Figure 2.2. Use of communication devices among Americans, by age (Newport, 2014, online)

% Who did this "a lot" the previous day
Sorted by % among 18- to 29-year-olds

	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65+
	%	%	%	%
Send or read a text message	68	47	26	8
Make or receive a phone call using a cellphone	50	41	40	18
Send or read an email message	47	44	38	16
Post or read messages on Facebook, Instagram or some other social media site	38	20	17	6
Use Twitter, including posting or reading tweets	14	3	2	0
Make or receive a phone call using a business landline phone	13	19	15	8
Make or receive a phone call using a home landline phone	7	6	10	17

Sept 9-10, 2014

GALLUP'

The findings presented in Figure 2.2 come from a wide-scale research study (encompassing 1,015 individuals aged 18 and older, interviewed via telephone) conducted by Gallup (2015), a global analytics and advice firm (www.gall up.com), which decided to have a closer look at various communication modes that Americans use. What turned out was that:

- Texting is the most frequently used form of communication among Americans younger than 50. Texting drops off significantly after age 50, and is used infrequently among those aged 65 and older.
- Use of cellphones and email to communicate is highest among the youngest age group, with little drop off among those 30 to 64, and is lowest among those aged 65 and older. Still, despite seniors' relatively infrequent use of cellphones and email, both are essentially tied with landline phone use as the most frequently used method of communication even in this oldest age group.
- The use of social media to communicate is in the top four among those aged 18 to 29, but its use drops off significantly among those 30 or older.

- Few Americans of any age report using Twitter frequently, although its use is higher among the younger group. Three percent or less of those aged 30 and older report using Twitter a lot, including virtually no Americans aged 65 and older.
- The use of home landline phones shows a different pattern by age than the other communication methods: it is low across all age groups, albeit slightly higher among those 65 and older. Business landline use is slightly lower among seniors.

(Newport, 2014, online)

The study also revealed the following correlation: the younger the American, the more likely they are to communicate using these newer technologies, and this, in turn, may mean that Millennials today are a generation that is highly "in touch" with their friends and relatives. Seniors' low relative use of even the landline phone may imply that they are less likely than those who are younger to be in touch with others on a daily basis. Yet, it may also be true that older Americans compensate for their lack of use of these modes of communication by talking to others in person, or by sending and receiving traditional mail. Since Millennials are "digital natives," it is safe to presume that use of such technology will increase in older age cohorts as the Millennials age in the years ahead. To sum up, it is evident that for the older generation of Americans (i.e. baby boomers) use of these devices is not very common. This may stem from the fact that they still lack access to computers, tablets or smartphones to send and receive emails or text messages. What has to be remembered, however, is that these large-scale research studies have been mainly conducted by American demographic research centres and the data gathered from them reflect financially stable residents of developed countries. Hence it is logical to assume that the communication trends pertaining to all age groups described above may look different in less privileged and underdeveloped parts of the world, where free of charge face-to-face interactions will be still more common than technology-oriented ones.

2.2.2 Email Communication

As has already been stated, email communication comprises the only channel that is equally liked by all generations (Chester, 2002). According to *E-mail*

Statistic Report 2015-2019 (online), every person, regardless of their gender or age, sends on average over 29 emails daily, that is, 205 billion emails are sent every day. In the era of newer forms of communication it is worth wondering why this particular mode has remained so popular. One of the possible explanations is that emails are less urgent and provide "the writer" with more space; emails can contain whole paragraphs "with bulleted lists and other formatting choices, rather than being limited to a few hundred characters" (Alton, 2017, online). Emails are also not as immediate as text messages are, so they enable receivers to wait even a few hours before answering them. The above-mentioned report (online) clearly forecasts the future of email communication and presents data indicating that worldwide email use continues to grow at a healthy pace.

In 2015, the number of worldwide email users was nearly 2.6 billion. It was estimated that by the end of 2019, this number would increase to over 2.9 billion. Over one-third of the worldwide population would be using email by year-end 2019.

Table 2.3. Worldwide daily email traffic (billions), 2015–2019. Adapted from *Email Statistics Report* (2015–2019, online)

Daily email traffic	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	N [growth rate]				
Total worldwide emails sent/received per day (billions)	205.6	215.3 [5%]	225.3 [5%]	235.6 [5%]	246.5 [5%]
Business emails sent/received per day (billions)	112.5	116.4 [3%]	120.4 [3%]	124.5 [3%]	128.8 [3%]
Consumer emails sent/received per day (billions)	93.1	98.9 [6%]	104.9 [6%]	111.1 [6%]	117.7 [6%]

As seen in the foregoing table, the amount of consumer emails continues to grow. However, there exists a large discrepancy between the groups in terms of their approach to internet use and the idea of communicating on the basis of emails. Detailed characteristics are presented in Table 2.4:

Table 2.4. Internet Use: 2005–2010. Per cent of public who use the internet or send and receive email at least occasionally. Adapted from www.pewresearch.com (2010, p. 27)

Groups	2005	2010	Change
All	68	77	+9
Millennial	83	90	+7
Gen X	84	87	+3
Boomer	73	79	+6
Silent	36	40	+4

2.2.3 Face-to-Face Communication

According to Alton (2017, online), the fundamentals of good communication do not change between generations. He claims that such virtues as (active) listening, remaining concise, and including all the important details are as important as they have ever been; the differences now seem to be in the modes of communication we choose to apply those fundamentals. Yet one may speculate whether these are so great. Some findings (cf. Chester, 2002; Alton, 2017, online; Agraval, 2017, online) show that Millennials do strongly favour informal communication by making conversations and workplaces less formal. They are known to be pushing for more flexible hours, more casual environments and relaxed dress codes. That means that all forms of communication have friendlier, more familiar tones, and casual forms of exchange, like emojis, are also becoming more popular. This has obviously led to changing standards and norms of politeness (cf. Marcjanik, 1997; Kita & Piłat, 2016; Dronia, 2019). The yardstick seems different for various age groups and generations. Generation X might complain about the shortening of personal distance, or the use of too informal greeting formulae in emails (Dronia, 2019; Wrycza-Bekier, 2013, online), imposing first-name terms, etc. But for "generation Me" such usage can be treated as a norm, or indeed still too formal.

Agraval (2017, online) states that Millennials actually struggle with face-to-face communication.

> Perhaps one of the biggest differences in why Millennials struggle with face-to-face communications is because they've always had the ability to edit a message.

Even for the most mundane of conversations, younger generations have always had the time to think something over. This not only removes a sense of vulnerability but the raw emotion that could come with it.

This finding corresponds again to one provided by Chester (2012) and the pyramid(s) already displayed (see Figure 2.1). Face-to-face communication is employed by Generation Z when there is no way to avoid it. The lack of so-called soft skills, so necessary in maintaining spoken interaction, may contribute to their generally negative attitude to this form of information exchange. It has already been stated that in written communication Millennials commonly come back to a text, edit it, correct it, and attempt to improve it. They may also rely on emoticons to convey their emotions. However, in a real-life communication one would have to look for words to describe one's feelings, and this might turn out to be difficult. Constant editing and the chance to paraphrase words, which is so useful and handy in written communication, may in turn have a debilitating effect on one's mastery of spoken language. Being engaged in a live interaction requires the ability to use the language on here-and-now basis, in a spontaneous and immediate way. One does not have the opportunity for "thinking over" options and in order to be understood, has to communicate in a clear, concise and straightforward manner. It seems that having grown up in a digital world, Millennials' biggest strength has also become their biggest weakness. As Agraval (2017, online) reminds us, "the tough stuff (being it a breakup, getting fired, or handling a problem) has to be faced in person, even if one suffers from a lack of consideration from the medium."

According to the findings presented by Cook (2015, online), Hammill (2005) and Wasserman (2007, online, in Bejtkovský, 2016, pp. 108–109), generations' approaches towards communication differ a lot and can be briefly compared in the following way:

Table 2.5. Communication characteristics by generation. Self-modified

Views toward communication	Veterans (1922–1945)	Baby boomers (1946–1964)	Generation X (1965–1980)	Generation Y (Millennials) (1981–2000)
	formal	in person	direct, immediate	email, voice mail

It is true that not every representative of a given generation will share all of its characteristic, however, these examples may be taken as indicative of general patterns in the social relationships a person may be involved in. As Hammill (2005, in Bejtkovský, 2016, p. 109) claims, individuals born at one end of the date range or the other may display overlapping characteristics with the preceding or succeeding generation.

2.3 Describing Generation Z

There seems to be a certain misunderstanding over the different terminology as well as classifications of and naming attached to particular age groups. According to Feiertag and Berge (2008; online in Salleh et al., online; Dolot, 2018), Generation Z is the one born between 1995 and 2012, whose members are also sometimes known as "digital natives," "Me Generation," "iGeneration," "Gen-Tech," "Online Generation," "Facebook Generation," "Switchers," "always clicking," and "Generation N". However, Prensky (2001) claims that the foregoing terms are more often used to describe Millennials. As has already been mentioned, however, Heskett (2007, online) calls the generation born after Millennials the "Cuspers". According to Renfro (2013) and White (2015), there is a dispute over the exact starting and stopping points for Generation Z's years of birth. Pew Research (2010, 2019, online) holds that "there are no comparably definitive thresholds by which later generational boundaries are defined. But for analytical purposes, we believe 1996 is a meaningful cutoff between Millennials and Gen Z for a number of reasons, including key political, economic and social factors that define the Millennial generation's formative years." There was a time (due to the repercussions of the events of September 11 on their lives) when it was predicted that the name "Homeland Generation" would be adopted (Howe & Strauss, 2007, p. 206, in Sandeen, 2008, p. 13). But for the purposes of this book, this youngest generation, now coming into the labour market or continuing their studies, will be referred to as Generation Z. That is the group born around 2000 and thus comprised of young adults in their late teens or early twenties. Generally, members of Generation Z are tech-savvy, pragmatic, open-minded, and individualistic, but also socially responsible. Moreover, for them "swiping, tapping and scrolling are about as second nature as breathing" (Howe & Strauss, 2007, p. 206, in Sandeen, 2008, p. 13).

Figure 2.3. The generations defined (pewresearch.com, online)

GENERATION AGE
IN 2019

Born 1997-2012 — **Generation Z** ages 7-22*

Born 1981-96 — **Millennials** ages 23-38

Born 1965-80 — **Generation X** ages 39-54

Born 1946-64 — **Boomers** ages 55-73

Born 1928-45 — **Silent** ages 74-91

1920   1940   1960   1980   2000   2020

*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. For this analysis, Generation Z is defined as those ages 7 to 22 in 2019.

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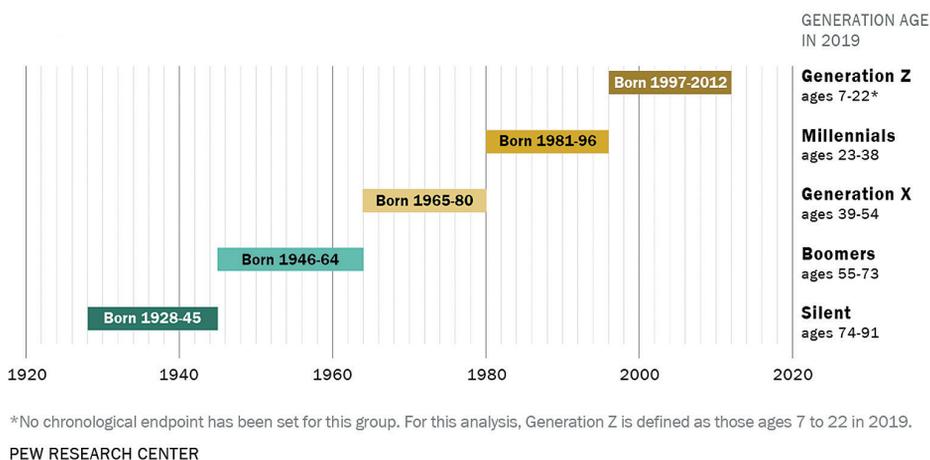
Although many authors acknowledge significant and very visible behavioural differences existing between generations, yet all of them agree on the fact that the Generation Z cohort has become the generation most widely and directly exposed to digital technologies such as social networking sites and an information overload on the internet (Turner, 2015, in Salleh et al., 2017, online).

Generation Z behavioural characteristic development is significantly shaped and influenced by its diverse environment and surrounding elements. Members of this generation grew up in a highly sophisticated media and technological environment that made them into an internet-savvy group. Simultanously, it has made them heavily addicted to this technology. Social networking websites have been introduced to them at a very early stage of their life by the generation of their parents, many of whom are also well educated and IT literate. Salleh et al. (2017, online) provide an insightful set of characteristics pertaining to the description of Generation Z. The first of these is the "hypertext mindset" and concerns some drawbacks this generation suffers from, such as an inability to focus for long on one aspect, but also showing the ability and even desire to multitask, for example: "while reading a textbook, they might do it [*sic*] while listening to the Ipod and at the same time updating their social media status" (Salleh et al., 2017, online).[4]

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4   There have been additional studies described by Gaidhani, Arora and Sharma (2019, online), leaving no doubt that Generation Z is generally affected by attention deficit disorder and characterised by a short attention span.

Moreover, "due to applications that support multitasking, being precise or being able to concentrate, memorize something in the long term" has become more difficult for Generation Z (Tari, 2011, after Csobanka, 2016, p. 69, in Dolot, 2018, p. 45). Their favourite channel is visual (in the form of video) rather than reading hardcopy media (books and manuals).

Another important feature characterising this cohort is their low maturity level: an almost complete lack of autonomy development combined with a strong reliance on their parents. This child-like behaviour is nicely described as a spoon-feeding tendency evinced by their parents, who at the same time, try to facilitate their children's lives by eliminating potential obstacles lying in their paths. However, according to Jaleniauskiene and Juceviciene (2015, in Salleh et al., 2017), "it is most likely they would demand the same atmosphere to be created at universities," requiring the assumption of additional, almost parental roles by their academic teachers.

Generation Z is also perceived, alike Generation Y (Millennials), as having some communication deficits. This is mainly ascribed to individual, online and "shorthand" type of communication that dominates their daily interactions. Having hundreds of "virtual friends" can in practice result in having only a few real ones, and being chatty online leads in real life to potential problems with maintaining deep interpersonal relationships. Moreover, Generation Z is also accused of being frequently impatient and expecting "a quick fix": "[their] upbringing has made them to be impatient, rebellious and expecting instant results and gratification" (Turner, 2015, online). Such features may in turn result in additional problems that become manifest when reading traditional, bound books and being quick-minded. Another limitation ascribed to this generation has been also found in studies conducted by Coombs (2013, online in Gaidhani et al., 2019) that characterise it as lacking in problem-solving skills, "the ability to look at a situation, put it in context, analyze it and make a decision." This evident disadvantage may also create further learning difficulties, but at the same time should be analysed in terms of teaching/learning implications emphasising the need to use online rather than printed materials. Since Generation Z is the first generation truly growing up with technology, they can be expected to be more comfortable with it and inclined to go digital and use all electronic forms in the process of their education, for example e-books. However, according to the results of a research study conducted by Linnes and Metcalf (2017, online), the acceptance of e-books is not overwhelmingly positive

among Generation Z; they are also less likely, in comparison with the earlier generations of students, to own a tablet or an e-book reader and to purchase and read an electronic book than some might think. What is more, Linnes and Metcalf also discovered that a typical Generation Z student might own a smartphone and a laptop, but not one of the preferred devices for reading books (a tablet or an e-book reader). Thus, as can be seen, their adaptation to e-books seems to take place at a slower rate than might be expected.

Bencsik et al. (2016, online) also contrast Generation Z with the other cohorts in terms of teamwork and knowledge. The following table demonstrates the most salient differences between the groups:

Table 2.6. Different generational characteristics from the viewpoint of teamwork and knowledge sharing

Facet of cooperation	Baby boomers	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z
Teamwork	Unknown	natural environment (multinational companies)	belief in the success of a common effort	on a virtual level (only if forced)
Knowledge sharing	Willingly, voluntarily	it is based on mutuality and cooperation	only in cases of self interest or if forced	on a virtual level, easily and rapidly, no stake, publically

Source: Tóth-Bordásné and Bencsik (2011, adapted from Bencsik et al., 2016, p. 94, online).

Apart from some visible discrepancies pertaining to teamwork and knowledge sharing, Bencsik and Machova (2016, in Bencsik et al., 2016, p. 95, online) list additional characteristics typical for Generation Z:

- Lack of sense of commitment
- Virtual and superficial relationships
- Living for the present
- Intuitive approach to IT
- Rapid reaction to everything, being brave
- High esteem for rapid information access and content search
- Lack of consequential thinking
- Overlapping boundaries of work and entertainment.

When discussing potential problems for interpersonal contacts and communication, Bencsik and Machova (2016, in Bencsik et al., 2016, pp. 96–97, online) list some possible areas, such as incentive/motivation, performance evaluation, training, learning and development, and conflict management. Many of the findings of this study are similar to those in previously conducted research (cf. Salleh et al., 2017, online) describing members of Generation Z as motivated by immediate reward and valuing freedom and non-commitment. However, they are also perceived as overconfident and possessing a distorted self-image, and therefore not recognising their own limits. Their self-developing abilities are very much determined by their level of interest and so are acquired in an informal way. Moreover, Generation Z triggers conflicts and reacts aggressively to them. Poor communication between generations and significant differences in terms of thinking have been reported as major sources of conflict in the workplace.

Limited interpersonal skills and the trait of not being good listeners coalesce and they contribute to the overall negative picture that Generation Z in part projects. Overdependence on virtual forms of interaction rather than face-to-face communication has resulted in a lack of the soft skills necessary in maintaining deep relationships. Moreover, as suggested by some researchers (cf. Cook, 2015; Gouws & Tarp, 2016; Harber, 2011, online; Singh, 2014, in Bejtkovský, 2016, p. 109), this age group can establish many acquaintanceships only within the community of cyberspace.

2.4 Generation Z and Their Learning Preferences

As Generation Z is the youngest of the commonly discussed generational groups it has not yet been heavily studied. A survey that was conducted by the portal LinkedIn (2018, online) managed to gather some interesting learning preferences and expectations that those young adults may have. Thus it has been found out that this cohort would benefit from more independence in learning as they prefer a fully self-directed and independent approach to it. Interestingly, for over 60% of Generation Z respondents it is more important to develop hard, rather than soft, skills which unfortunately raises some doubts among organisational leaders expressing apprehension about the students' interpersonal communication. It seems that a typical university student of this age will "rely on PC-recordings instead of taking notes, [will] more tend

to raise questions online, see a lecture as 'come and entertain me' and does not like waiting for a response but demand[s] instant information and communication" (Dauksevicuite, 2016; Rothman, 2016, in Cilliers, online). What is also remarkable is that the brains of Generation Z members are no longer structurally the same as those of the previous generations. As Rothman (2016, in Cilliers, online) puts it,

> The brains of Generation Zs have become wired to sophisticated, complex visual imagery, and as a result, the part of the brain responsible for visual ability is far more developed, making visual forms of learning more effective [...]. Auditory learning, such as lectures and discussions, is very strongly disliked by this group, whereas interactive games, collaborative projects, advance organizers, and challenges, are appreciated.

Moreover, Rothman adds that Generation Z cohort, most probably under the influence of "constant bombardment of small bits of information from Twitter, Facebook or TV with its six second patterns of imaging is rewiring the brain to expect information to be delivered in short, rapid bursts," has been also affected by acquired Attention Deficit Disorder, that in turn, strongly impacts their learning abilities, in particular, the average student attention span has shortened from seven to ten minutes in the classroom to eight seconds online.

It comes as no surprise that their preference is for using social media not only to communicate on a daily basis but also to receive academic information from their classmates (e.g. through Whats App), or even to contact their lecturers. As for students' preferences pertaining to formal study material, there have been noticed some changes, for example, most respondents prefer written examinations to electronic ones and electronic study material. There is also a steady increase in their preference for having more lectures and viewer assignments (Rothman, 2016, in Cilliers, online). The final set of teaching-learning implications stemming from a research study conducted by Cilliers (online) and Stern (2014, online), Rothman (2016, online), Streetline (2013, online) and Hanzl (2007, online) is summarised in Table 2.7:

Table 2.7. Bridging the student-lecturer view (Cilliers, online)

Student view	Lecturers view	Possible bridge
Know they have more technology know-how than their lecturers	realize that they teach a student with more technology know-how	instructors teaching Generation Z must be prepared to teach using software, hardware, and digital, technological and social media. Creative classroom setups will need to form part of the education process
Staying online throughout the day resulting in quick transmission of information	include some technology in teaching, but it is limited	explore the internet as a communication tool in a group decision-making process and seek to not work in isolation, but enhancing the interconnectedness of the group
Requesting more technology-usage as part of their modules	they realize that social media can benefit teaching-learning strategies, but do not have the knowledge to implement such initiatives	research social networks and their impact on the traditional approach to urban planning as possible integration method. Explore virtual place-making processes and creative classroom setups
Growing interest in online examinations; online study material	believe traditional teaching methods (such as written examinations and formal study sessions) are best strategies	explore applications and supporting software to implement a gradual change. Replace PowerPoints with open discussions, lively debate and structured group work.
Prefer more contact sessions	prefer more (traditional) contact sessions	move away from traditional teaching approaches to more learner-based learning. Include visual methods and creative teaching sessions (indoors and outdoors)
Born into the internet-era and does not understand a different view	they are not fully aware of the characteristics, challenges, and preferences of the Generation Z student but are willing to learn	some lecturers will need professional development support to help them move from a traditional to a transformational learning model.

As seen above, the students' and teachers' preferences differ considerably but in order to satisfy the expectations of the Z cohort, educators should express more empathy and do their best to put themselves in Generation Zers' shoes.

Generation Z representatives have the reputation of being "the most educated and sophisticated generation ever (Hysa, 2016, p. 390, Steinerowska-Streb & Wziątek-Staśko, 2016, pp. 81–82, after Dolot, 2018, p. 45) and it is also believed that one of their most recognisable features is mobility and knowledge of foreign languages.[5] As for workplace communication, according to the findings gathered by Dolot (2018), they value clear communication with immediate feedback. Due to their computer literacy they are also capable of finding information quickly and sharing it with others through a wide variety of communication channels (Twitter, blogs, and internet forums, but also Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, or YouTube). They will learn more effectively if they are to work in teams or small groups to solve problems and find solutions by trial and error. Instead of memorising information they should rather focus on critical thinking, managing information, and discovering something for themselves.

2.5 Recapitulation

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the idea of dividing age cohorts into generations and to present the values each group holds. Moreover, apart from discussing some of the most common characteristics pertaining to various age groups, the chapter focuses on the description of the youngest group, that is, Generation Z, with a particular focus on their learning preferences, because this cohort takes part in the research study that will be further analysed in the subsequent chapters. Special attention is paid to the various forms of communication channels each group prefers and to potentially problematic areas that may impede successful cross-generational communication. Generation Z appears to be unique and stands out from the other age groups – not only because they are technology-savvy, but above all, since they represent particular communication needs. Such needs are mainly visible in their daily communication preferences and the special place social media have gained in their lives.

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5   The latter aspect is of utmost importance for this book and it is the subject of the study
     described and analysed in the following chapters.

Communicating Effectively in Various Sociopragmatic Contexts

The objective of this chapter is to briefly discuss sociopragmatic variables that may significantly contribute to effective second language communication. The chapter starts with some suggestions concerning the future of communication preferences in the time when English has already become a lingua franca. It then moves on to intercultural communication and various barriers that may impact its effectiveness. It primarily focuses on the concept of pragmatic competence and lastly on cross-cultural differences (Polish and English) visible in some speech acts. It introduces a review of the literature, that is, presents some of the most significant findings pertaining to the speech acts of requesting, complimenting (and especially reacting to compliments), and apologies, and analyses them in terms of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences (primarily Polish-English areas of divergence).

3.1 The Future of Communication Preferences: English as a Global Language

> It is a universal feeling that language is changing for the worse. For all our progress in science and standard of living, the people of today feel they are unable to use language as well as their ancestors.
>
> (Cook, 1997, pp. 241–242)

The influx of immigrants and constant migration have effected some changes between languages and cultures, as they are no longer locked in their traditional national or geographical territories. Appadurai's model (1996, in Canagarajah, 2012, p. 112) of "transcultural flows" has recognised, for example, five different dimensions or "scapes", namely:

1. Ethnoscapes (flow of persons).
2. Mediascapes (flow of information).

3. Technoscapes (flow of technology).
4. Finansescapes (flow of finance).
5. Ideoscapes (flow of ideology/ideas).

Based on Appadurai's taxonomy, we may also single out the visible existence of "linguascapes" (1996, in Canagarajah, 2012, p. 112) understood as the constant mixture and changes that languages undergo, with English as a prime example of such alterations.

> Sometimes, speakers of English have to negotiate with speakers of other languages. While English enables these functions and facilitates the negotiation of intercultural differences, its character is also changing. [...] The new geopolitical relationship between languages I call "linguascapes".
>
> (Appadurai, 1996, in Canagarajah, 2012, p. 112)

English has become the language of global communication, and its international status has been recognised in various spheres, including the worlds of business, economics, travelling, medicine, and politics, to name just a few. It is adopted by speakers of different languages as a common medium for any purpose and at any level.[1] It has served as a lingua franca in demographically diverse populations (McArthur, 1997, p. 353). Moreover, it possesses all the features mentioned by Crystal (2003) as being necessary to make a given language a global one – "it has developed a special role that is recognized in every country" (p. 3). It has also succeeded in meeting three additional requirements determining the possibility of becoming a global lingua franca: being the official language of a country (or countries) used as a means of institutional communication, gaining the status of a chief foreign language taught worldwide and being used by militarily and politically powerful people (Crystal, 2003, p. 9). However, as the number of non-native speakers is greater than that of native speakers (Crystal, 1999), the process of modification of English is never-ending. Speakers of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds will constantly alter this language by bringing with them not only their sociopragmatic or grammatical norms, but also phonological transfer significantly impacting their pronunciation and, in the end, communication efficiency.

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1   As a result, proficiency in the new lingua franca rather than multilingualism has become an essential commodity in the global marketplace (Dewaele, 2009, in Collins & Muñoz, 2016, p. 138).

Through the type of fluid interactions we see between languages in various domains, English is showing a lot more mixing and hybridity than ever before. English is also attaining a global speech community, which speaks different varieties with different norms, with people having to negotiate these differences across borders.

(Crystal, 1999, p. 9)

A further impact these changes may bring about can be seen in the way cultures and languages interact with each other in "transnational relationships". Thus what should be noted here is that English has been used for a number of intercultural aims, such as negotiating cultural differences, or "to reconstruct one's community affinity and identity in ways that transcend cultural boundaries" (Crystal, 1999, p. 117).

Users of diverse varieties of English as a lingua franca (hereafter: ELF) have been categorised by Kachru (1986). In his well-known model he described three circles showing how English is spreading worldwide, especially in postcolonial countries. He identifies expanding, outer, and inner circles, described in the following way:

[…] *expanding circle* (where English was beginning to be used as a foreign language [EFL] – e.g., Brazil, Japan, Vietnam), *outer circle* (where English was introduced during colonial times, and now functions as a second language [ESL] with its own well-established varieties – e.g., India, Nigeria, Singapore), and the *inner circle* (where ownership of English was traditionally claimed and norms were considered to originate – e.g., Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia).

(Canagarajah, 2012, p. 118).

ELF descriptions have mainly focused on phonological and pragmatic features (such as long pause, overlapping speech), but there have also been attempts to describe the lexico-grammatical or morpho-syntactical characteristics of such interactions. A preliminary list of grammatical items which are "deviant" from native-speaker norms, but which are considered unproblematic in ELF communication, is provided by Seidlhofer (2004, in Nagy, 2016, p. 158):

– the omission of *-s* in third person singular: *he look very sad*;
– the omission of articles: *our countries have signed agreement*;

– treating who and which as interchangeable;
– substituting bare infinitive for *-ing*: *I look forward to see you*;
– using *isn't it?* as a universal tag.

In a list prepared by Mauranen (2010, in Nagy, 2016, p. 158), there are other morpho-syntactical features of ELF conversations, such as "the non-standard uses of articles (*of the* Wilson's *disease*) and of prepositions (*discuss about*, *obsession in*), regularization of verb forms (*teached*, *stucked*), regularization of countable and uncountable forms (*furnitures*, *researches*), also productive or non-standard morphology (irrelatively, commentated), and creative solutions (far away uncle)." In the article Nagy (2016, p. 158) also portrays pragmatic features of ELF and states that in a communication act non-native speakers simply negotiate meaning and use various strategies, not necessarily orienting themselves to native-speaker norms. Functional effectiveness, adaptation, and negotiation are thus the most salient features in an interaction held among people representing different L1 backgrounds.

It has also been stated that the role English has acquired is primarily to function as a contact language among multilingual speakers communicating in multinational contexts (Graddol, 1999). Crystal (1999, 2003) prophesied that English would not fragment into mutually unintelligible languages, but that there would be more varieties of spoken English (so-called New Englishes) developing worldwide, for instance, in such countries as India, Ghana or Singapore. Moreover, it is also predicted that in the near future the international standard of English will be treated as a starting point and British or American English varieties will have merely the status of "optional localizations" (Crystal, 2004, p. 40). Such a situation should facilitate intercultural communication as "speakers don't have to master some other community's linguistic and cultural norms to communicate. They'll be using a common variety that is 'native' to all of them" (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 120). A further disagreement concerns the nature and character this international means of communication should display. For Crystal (2004) it should be based on American English while other scholars assume that it should be rather culture-free and neutral, used as language for communication rather than cultural identification. Thus, "[m]ultilingual speakers will use English for utilitarian purposes with a pragmatic attitude; they won't develop a cultural affinity with the language or attempt to represent their identities through English" (House, 2003; in Canagarajah, 2012, p. 120).

The opinions of Komorowska (2006b) and Seidlhofer (2004) shed some light on the future of English-based communication as well as on teaching English as a second language. Seidlhofer (2004, p. 218) predicts that one should not bother about acquiring pragmatic aspects of English as "miscommunication is rare in ELF." She further says that second language learners develop many communication strategies (such as repetition, topic change or avoidance, and paraphrasing) that can come in handy while interacting with other non-natives.

"As long as a certain threshold of understanding is obtained, interlocutors seem to adopt what Firth (1996) has termed the 'let it pass' principle, which gives the impression of ELF talk being overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive, and thus fairly robust" (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 218, in Canagarajah, 2012, p. 123). Consequently, communication may be difficult only when dealing with native speakers, because "they don't bring a tolerant attitude." That is, non-native speakers would probably succeed in communicating in ELF with other non-natives because both parties would employ culture-specific pragmatic strategies complementing this interaction. Additionally, apart from pragmatic strategies one might also implement discourse strategies operating on both textual and syntactic levels. Meierkord (2004) divides syntactic strategies into segmentation and regularisation. The former is based on the idea of simplification through, for instance, shortening. The latter relies mainly on the use of only such forms as are clear and exact. Topicalisation and fronting of the emphasised aspect is a prime example here.

It seems that what is most likely to happen in future global communication is interaction in World English(es) but without a core variety. Non-native speakers may be able to negotiate meaning without reference to grammar and sociocultural norms, but with effective and diversified strategies. This idea is best described by Canagarajah (2012, p. 129):

> [...] we have to move away from an obsession with correctness and norms. Correctness usually assumes the existence of a common/legitimate core of grammar or cultural norms. This means that rather than focusing on rules and conventions, we have to focus on strategies of communication. This shift will enable our students to be prepared for engagement in communities of practice and collaboratively achieve communication through the use of pragmatic strategies. Our pedagogical objective is not to develop mastery of a "target language," but to develop the ability to work with a repertoire of codes among our students.

We have to develop the sensitivity to decode differences in dialects as students engage with a range of speakers and communities. What would help in this venture is the focus on developing a metalinguistic awareness.

In the light of the concerns of this book, and especially its empirical part, such a statement raises many important questions. The sentence "students [...] achieve communication through the use of pragmatic strategies" is also gaining a new interpretation as "pragmatic strategies" should not be interpreted now from the point of view of native-speakers' expectations, or their relation to English sociocultural norms. Pragmatic, to my mind, should be rather understood as sensible and sagacious, and sufficiently practical to enable one to develop a metalinguistic awareness. Such findings would obviously have further impact on the process of teaching – second language educators should instill negotiation strategies in their learners, as only then can they be prepared to communicate in multinational settings and "to negotiate difference." However, the development of metalinguistic awareness will not suffice to interact with native speakers.

3.2 "Global" Politeness

There are five domains in which politeness, exercised in multilingual situations, has effects on the hearer. These are: social measures according to different traditions, speech formulae, action patterns, illocutionary acts, and procedures from different linguistic fields (Rehbein & Fienemann, 2004, p. 260). Certain social conflicts are likely to appear if the people involved in multilingual communication proceed according to social measures for social cooperation anchored in different linguistic traditions and then try to apply these measures to multilingual communication. As Rehbein and Fienemann (2004, p. 260) note, the essence of polite multilingual communication is the application of a large number of speech formulae and "similar conventionalized verbal means [...] which are tightly bound to the deep structures of the cooperative action." What affects the language of politeness are also linguistic procedures of different linguistic fields of the individual languages:

– Expressions from the *deictic field,* especially those relating to personal deixis, appear impolite because they focus strongly on one party in the interaction.

The polite "pronouns of address" are therefore very differentiated in many languages (cf. Rehbein 1996).

– The effect of expressions used in the *prompting field*, with which the speaker makes a direct appeal to the hearer's action apparatus and emotional apparatus (e.g. imperative or vocative form, paraexpeditive expressions such as "please" and "thank-you" etc.), can seem impolite in many cases. To avoid expeditive expressions *symbol field expressions,* usually verbs or names, are often chosen instead.

– The *toning field* of a language is especially involved in the production of politeness for a particular language through its specific prosody. When introducing oneself for example, a friendly, outspoken tone is in order, when making a request, a slightly quieter one. In multilingual communication, languages' different toning fields rub up against each other and are often transferred.

– The *symbol field* of a language with its expressions for titles, forms of address and familial relationships (with and without names) often causes misunderstanding. Symbol field elements are also activated in matrix constructions in order to place an utterance in its interactional framework (cf. Rehbein 2003). In the verbal area, the symbol field is important because of the use of *modal verbs* (cf. Redder 1999).

– The *operation field* – with its complex, finite forms such as the subjunctive, optative, diathesis (where they exist), impersonal constructions, the use of particles, etc. – is relevant in the expression of politeness.

(House & Rehbein, 2004, p. 261)

As House (1989) noted, polite formulae in a language are particularly challenging to learn, with the understanding and reproduction of the forms depending upon a competence on the part of all involved that is close to that of a native speaker. Communication involving interactors representing different mother tongues is especially threatened when they engage in polite speech actions. In a situation when opposition occurs, "the familiar mediating forms of politeness no longer seem to apply, even if the actors are all using a common lingua franca" (House, 2002, 2003; Knapp & Meierchord, 2002, in House & Rehbein, 2004, p. 262). The outcome of a study conducted by Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2004, in Rehbein & Fienemann, 2004, p. 262) showed the importance of a mutual awareness of the forms of politeness and the need

"to recognize the opposite party's *system of presuppositions*." Moreover, it has to be remembered that verbal politeness expressed through various linguistic action patterns (e.g., thanking, requesting, apologising) is deeply rooted in a way that is specific to a given language. Communicating in the second language may entail the introduction of linguistic patterns and linguistic formulae that are non-existent in one's first language. The reason for such problems may stem from the so-called pattern knowledge which may be defined as "one of those knowledge structures which, when it is reorganised in the course of multilingual communication, gives rise to one of the positive effects of inter-cultural action and which, conversely, when the pattern is perpetuated, can lead to a fossilisation that is very hard to reverse" (Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2004, in Rehbein & Fienemann, 2004, p. 263). The difficulty that arises here is the probable influence of first language pattern knowledge on the second language structure of communication:

> Here the notion of "influence" is not to be seen simply as a plain "transfer", but as the effect of divergent action patterns on the communication in the lingua franca. This effect produces a *communicative synthesis of* patterns or elements of patterns in the medium of a common target language, with the partial retention of pattern positions formed by the native language of the speaker. The influence varies depending on the *language constellations* (cf. on this category Rehbein 2000).

Thus, as Rehbein and Fienemann (2004, p. 263) hold, pattern knowledge action may be compared to that of "a catalyst" for the influence of one language on other languages. This impact may be understood as pragmatic transfer, especially noticeable in "social measures of polite action from different traditions, linguistic formulae, action patterns, illocutionary acts and linguistic procedures from different linguistic fields" (Rehbein & Fienemann, p. 264).

For the purposes of this book, it is of utmost importance to note that while describing L2 communication in a lingua franca, we have to take into account the manner in which multinational, but also cross-generational, respondents use English and which rules (L1 or L2) they use in an attempt to speak politely. All in all, in a multilingual environment using lingua franca for communication, it is very likely that each cultural group will use their own discourse patterns. Moreover, in a situation when the interactors share a mother tongue

and the conversation is held in the second language, manifestation of pragmatic transfer, and primarily the norms of politeness, will be determined by the level of proficiency.

3.3 Barriers in Intercultural Communication

The concept of intercultural communication is gaining in importance. In the era of globalisation and mass technological development, soft skills more than ever play a major role in our daily encounters. As the world has already become a global village and English has acquired the role of lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2004; Komorowska, 2006b), it is important to communicate in such a way that people can understand each other, even if for the majority of us this language is not our mother tongue. As Gibson (2002) observes, intercultural communication takes place when a sender and a receiver do not share the same linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds. As not all speakers possess a high level of L2 development, it may happen that both interlocutors will communicate using a code that is also affected by the influence of their mother tongues (e.g. pragmatic transfer). What appears as a result is a peculiar mixture: non-native speakers of English, very often still not confident in this language, start interacting with other non-natives representing different backgrounds, who are possibly at a relatively low language level and likewise affected by transfer from their own mother tongue. As a result of so many factors, intercultural-related communication breakdown is likely to occur.[2]

> Students with high entry-level test scores may still experience major difficulties with everyday interactions, both socially and academically, as well as with intercultural adjustment (Dong 1997). Similarly, students may also have difficulty communicating about emotional or personal matters directly affecting their study as they may not have the resources in English to express feelings that are tied to their first language or they may feel uncomfortable talking to someone from a different cultural background and/or gender.
>
> (Bradley 2000, in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 31)

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2   The process during which a second language learner gradually becomes acquainted with the target language is called interlanguage development. "This language system is intermediate between the learner's native language and his or her target language" (Huang, 2007, p. 125).

As seen in the foregoing quotation, a good linguistic command of a language does not guarantee cross-cultural communication success because intercultural communication pertains not only to the behavioural aspects of communication, but also to their affective and cognitive ones (Chen 2014, p. 19, in Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, pp. 12–13). What should be also stressed here is that the understanding of one's own culture, its characteristic behavioural patterns and emotional reactions is a necessary pre-requisite in becoming successful intercultural communicator (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, 2008, p. 32).

"There are over 200 recognized countries or nation-states in the world, and the number of cultures is considerably greater because of strong regional variations" (Lewis, 1996, p. 27). It goes without saying that learning so many languages is hardly possible. Hence, in an era in which English plays the role of lingua franca, people from many cultures rely on this language.[3] Nevertheless, it is interesting to ponder over the way they may interact in English as communication styles often differ between cultures. Hence in order to successfully interact with members of other culture groups one must recognise those components that determine the communication uniqueness of a given community. One should learn both the behaviours that are desired and those that are perceived negatively as only then can we adjust our communication style to make it congruent with cultural norms and rules (Leathers, 2007).[4] Lewis (1996, p. 29) also stresses the importance of making some categorisations because by their means one can:

- predict a culture's behavior,
- clarify why people did what they did,
- avoid giving offense,
- search for some kind of unity,
- standardize policies, and
- perceive neatness and Ordnung.

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3   The extent to which cross-cultural L1 pragmatic transfer will be visible in people's L2 interactions is also determined by the level of development of their pragmatic competence. This aspect will be discussed later.

4   All translations from sources written in Polish are mine.

When describing various obstacles impacting successful intercultural communication, Zając (2012, p. 335, in Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, pp. 54–55) lists numerous examples, such as:

– Meaning attributed by society or connotations specific to a given lexeme and its cultural representation;
– Speech acts and their culture-specific method of performing individual functions, such as apologizing, reproaching, promising, etc.;
– Internal organization of communication, including specific discourse conventions, for example, yielding floor, interrupting, negotiation stages, etc.;
– Topic discussed, depending on a situation (public or private);
– Type of communication in the case of direct or indirect communication and the level of its explicitness;
– Language registers forming alternative methods of expressing thoughts related to a specific situation, speaker's age, interlocutor's social status, and the language register;
– Para-verbal factors, such as loudness, speed, pausing, and rhythm;
– Non-verbal factors such as gesticulation and proxemics;
– Values and attitudes specific to individual cultures (this criterion refers to the above-mentioned cultural norms);
– Actions, their sequences and cultural rituals (including verbal and non-verbal actions specific to a given culture, such as welcome kisses in France).

In the sections that follow one may find some of the most disturbing obstacles to cross-cultural dialogue:

3.3.1 Nonverbal Cross-cultural Differences

Separating the verbal from the nonverbal is barely possible in a real communication act as such behaviours happen simultaneously and influence each other all the time. Non-verbal reactions in interaction can be roughly grouped into vocalics and kinesics. The former can be defined as those nonverbal uses of the voice that indicate emotion and provide cues as to how the message should be interpreted. Nonverbal cues can take many forms, including pitch, tone, rate, volume, and accent pattern, and will influence how the message is

received and interpreted (DeFleur et al., 2005). Kinesics, characterised by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (online), is described as "a systematic study of the relationship between nonlinguistic body motions (such as blushes, shrugs, or eye movement) and communication."[5] Kinesics is mainly concerned with movement and encompasses a wide repertoire of movement-based behaviours, such as mimicry, posture, gestures, eye-contact (oculistics), proxemics, and haptics (Grove, 1991). Nonverbal behaviours are ubiquitous and often subconscious, and usually their meaning is context-determined. Hence some components of this form of communication are interpreted differently, depending on the culture and social norms a person has been raised in. There are neither universal nor even common gestures or postures recognised by the majority of cultures (Giddens, 2007). Almaney and Alwan (1982) also posited that nonverbal abilities are even more significant than verbal ones in determining our communication efficiency. These abilities are gradually acquired through the process of acculturation and can even replace verbal abilities in the time when a child cannot properly communicate in the verbal form. Ultimately they become deeply rooted and subconscious.

The sharpest discrepancies in terms of the interpretation of nonverbal signs can be noted with reference to eye contact, gestures, and an approach to touch and time.

The acquisition of conventions for conveying messages by means of eye signals is the means of expressing various feelings, among them interest, boredom, and understanding. Cultural differences are very noticeable in this visual modality. Hence, in some countries prolonged eye contact can be interpreted as a sign of respect and interest (e.g. Western Europeans or the USA), whereas in others it signals disrespect and rudeness (Japan), or even an open attack as is the case among some Asian gang members (Roach & Wyatt, 2005, p. 224). Moreover, attention to faces with a direct gaze differs across cultures.

> Studies using eye-tracking methodology have demonstrated that East Asians
> look at the center of a face, while Westerners alternate their focus along
> a triangle formed by the eyes and mouth when they are required to learn

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5   Other notions, also important, but having more direct relationship with interaction, coalesce person object, and perception of time (chronemics).

and recognize facial identity. However, when recognizing facial expressions Japanese participants attend to the eyes, while Americans focus on the mouth.

(Uono & Hietanen, 2015, p. 2, online)

Thus the amount of eye contact, its character (be it accidental gaze or prolonged "staring"), or even the place in the face we look at, can significantly contribute to one's overall L2 interaction success. Facial expressions and our mimicry may in fact be quite universal and the interpretation of six basic feelings (happiness, surprise, disgust, anger, sadness, and fear) should not pose any difficulties for cross-cultural communication (cf. Ekman & Friesen, 1976). However, in some countries, for example, in Japan, culture-bound experiences will determine which feelings should or should not be manifested. Hence the Japanese face tremendous problems with decoding disgust through facial expressions, since according to their social and cultural constraints this feeling should not be displayed in public (Leathers, 2007, p. 384). Moreover, the frequency of showing some emotions is also culturally determined, depending on how much a given emotion is valued in a culture. The differences in the level of the ability to decode subtle nuances of facial expression meanings can be attributed not to our inborn abilities but to culturally acquired experiences.

According to Brown (2000, p. 241), there exists tremendous cross-cultural discrepancy also in the interpretation of gestures. The understanding of the same act can vary from reading it as perfectly natural, acceptable and even welcomed, to something treated as obscene or insulting. This leads to potential problems because both gestures and body posture, together with facial expression and mimicry, constantly supplement our communication while conveying messages in which no words are involved. Through these forms we may joke, or express irony or doubt, but only when we are really sure that a particular gesture will evoke the same perlocutionary effect.

Perhaps the most striking cross-cultural differences pertaining to gestures are noticed in terms of emblems (non-verbal signals playing the role of direct replacement of words) which may convey completely different meanings depending on the culture, in particular, an American speaker may raise a middle finger in order to (rudely) communicate the meaning 'go away' or 'walk out', whereas to do the same, an Italian may shrug their shoulder. In the United States nodding signals approval, but in Japan it is mere acknowledgment that the message has been received (Leathers, 2007, p. 391). The studies conducted

by Morris et al. (1979; in Leathers, 2007, p. 391) indicate not only that the same gestures have different meanings in various cultures, but also that some cultures use distinctive gestures to communicate the same meanings. Moreover, gestures commonly applied in one European culture are not recognised in another, for example, a gesture known as the hand purse (interpreted as 'please, be more precise') in the Italian-speaking world is comprehensible to only 3% of the French respondents residing in the neighbouring southern part of France (Morris et al., 1979, in Leathers, 2007, p. 391).

A very noticeable cross-cultural difference can be seen in our approach to touch and the perception of space. Proxemics, understood as space management, also results from one's level of engagement in interaction, the relations obtaining between participants and other context-specific variables. Cultures vary considerably in their approach to appropriate distances for conversation. A study conducted by Hall (1969) led to the creation of a well-known taxonomy distinguishing between the distances a person may maintain while conversing with others, namely: public, social-consultative, personal, and intimate. He also posited that a given culture may emphasise some sense modalities more than others to code or decode non-verbal messages. For instance, Arabs make more use of the senses of smell and touch than Americans do (in Leathers, 2007, p. 392). Touch, in particular, is an extremely culturally loaded aspect. As Brown (2000, p. 243) puts it:

> How we touch others and where we touch them is sometimes the most misunderstood aspect of nonverbal communication. Touching in some cultures signals a very personal or intimate register, while for other cultures extensive touching is commonplace. Knowing the limits and conventions is important for clear and unambiguous communication.

Chronemics has become an area of study for anthropologists who look at cultural norms around the use of time, and the way cultures can vary and converge around different time norms. Defined also as the measure of the ways in which community members describe, experience, structure, and use time, it reveals more vivid cultural discrepancies. The most salient research in this area has been conducted by Hall (1963, 1984), who recognises formal and informal time. The former is described as clockwise perception, taking into account minutes, days, weeks and months, and this interpretation prevails in

the Western cultures. Informal time, on the other hand, is measured not on the basis of a clock, but through the subjective perception of speakers involved in interaction (Leathers, 2007, p. 393). Here people use such expressions as "very short time," "short time," "long time" or "very long time" and even "extremely long time." However, this distinction is not the only one that functions in, for instance, the world of international business. Hall and Hall (1987) have also differentiated between monochronic and polychronic perception, where the former is based on focusing on one thing at a time, and the latter on being involved in many simultaneous activities. Western cultures use monochronic perception which further determines formal understanding of time but also rather minimal personal bonds with business accomplices. Polychronic time encourages both parties to engage in business and professional interactions that also have social aspects. This understanding is typical of Latin American and Southern European countries.

The concept of time has been also discussed by Hofstede (1991), who distinguishes the countries that more highly value the past from those that are more present or future-oriented. Thus there are short-term and long-term orientation cultures. The former value traditions and would like to spend more time on developing social bonds, whereas the latter tend to display such features as "traditions adapted for modern context" or "people [who] persevere for slow results" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 173).

Despite the mentioned differences, there are three nonverbal behaviours that relate most to intercultural competence in all researched cultures (cf. Leathers, 2007). These are direct eye contact, attentive listening, and smiling. These three, more than any other behaviours, have been found to have the greatest importance in projecting a positive image in all cultures. Moreover, as Axtell (1993, in Leathers, 2007, pp. 405–406) holds, there is a list of useful recommendations pertaining to proper nonverbal behaviours not only in European countries, but also the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific and Asia, Middle and South America, and the USA and Canada. Such suggestions include the following tips:

· Familiarise oneself with the types of emotions shown through mimicries that are considered acceptable or, on the contrary, that should be avoided especially in public places. Try to adjust your own mimicry to these rules
· Learn and stick to culturally appropriate rituals expected during greetings

- Learn which status-related differences must be emphasised and use culturally appropriate nonverbal behaviours to acknowledge such differences
- Assess the degree of physical contact, engagement, and accessibility that is publicly expected and behave in such a way as to satisfy those expectations
- Try to be sensitive to culture-specific expectations pertaining to touching, moving, eye contact and time perception so as to be able to behave appropriately nonverbally
- Familiarise yourself with nonverbal conversational regulators that should or should not be used in culturally appropriate conversational norms
- Think about the types of nonverbal behaviours that are considered to be the most significant in this cultural ritual so as to be able later, should such a need arise, to modify your own nonverbal behaviour, identifying yourself in this way with some important cultural values
- Learn to recognise and avoid using some emblems that may in a given culture communicate meanings that are interpreted as offensive and insulting.

3.3.2 Paraverbal Aspects and Conversational Rules

Another problem affecting communication acts performed by people not sharing the same language pertains to paraverbal behaviour and conversational rules, in particular Transition Relevance Place.

Paralanguage, which is defined as "the tone of voice, and the speed or pitch of what we say" (Gibson, 2010, p. 31), can also be responsible for serious communication breakdowns caused by faulty interpretation of a speaker's feelings or intentions. As the intonation patterns and the tone of voice vary across cultures, "[w]hat in one culture sounds like a hysterical argument, in another would be considered to be the norm for a reasonable discussion" (Gibson, 2010, p. 31). Cross-cultural differences in intonation patterns are depicted in a diagram created by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997, in Gibson, 2010, p. 31):

Figure 3.1. Intonation patterns (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, after Gibson, 2010, p. 31)
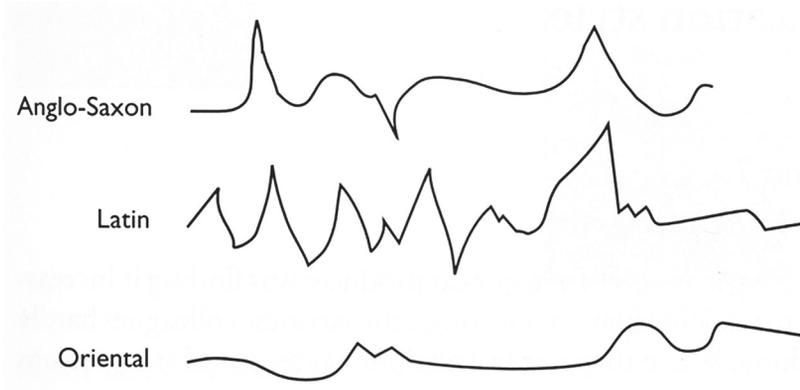
As can be seen in Figure 3.1, patterns used in Anglo-Saxon countries do not share many similarities with those used in Latin or Oriental cultures. Thus a speaker exposed to the different intonations of a language may come to the wrong conclusion when judging some communication context. Similarly, one of the conversational rules that seems so universal to all the societies, that is, the rule of turn-taking, may actually be performed in various ways. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997, in Gibson, 2010, p. 32), in some cultures interrupting during a conversation may be treated as the norm and even a manifestation of desired behaviour, whereas in others it is perceived as a serious violation of social norms and etiquette. Moreover, the attitude towards silence, that is, waiting for someone to finish, or a longer pause between contributions, is culturally determined, too. As Sifianou (1997, p. 75, in Nakane, 2007, p. 13) observes,

> [...] the length of 'gaps,' types of fillers and amount of the overlapping talk are culture-specific. In some societies, gaps and silences are preferred to what is considered to be 'idle chatter.' In others, such idle chatter is positively termed as 'phatic communion,' [...].

Silence, according to Nakane (2007, pp. 11–12), plays a number of roles, including cognitive, discursive, social (e.g., negotiating and maintaining social distance), and affective ones. However, some culture-specific uses of silence have been acknowledged, for example, during nonverbal expressions

accompanying silence, but also in the perception of polite vs impolite behaviours:

> [...] from Anglo-American perspectives, their communication with the Athabaskan people is perceived as a failure, as suggested by the title of Scollon's (1985) paper, "The machine stops." On the other hand, from the Athabaskan point of view, Anglo-Americans talk too much and are rude.
>
> <div align="right">(Scollon & Scollon, 1981, p. 36, in Nakane, 2007, pp. 11–12)</div>

At a wider sociocultural level, different norms may operate in terms of the context-specific distribution of talk and silence as well as turn-taking. A well-known set of conversational patterns is presented by Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. Turn-taking (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, after Gibson, 2010, p. 32)
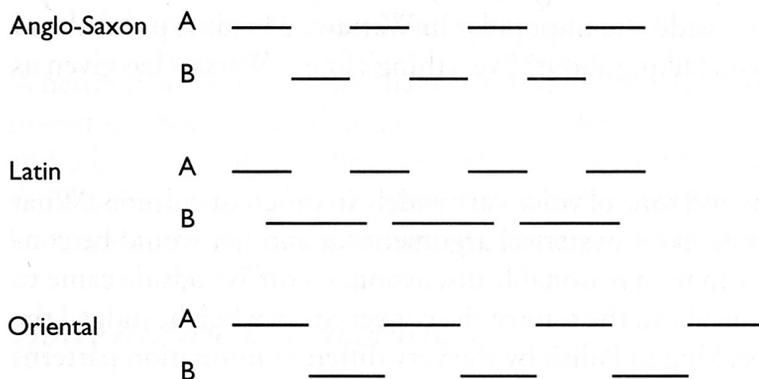
Turn-taking (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997)

Conversation analysts define the moment when the turn could switch between parties as transition relevance point (TRP). "At the TRP point, a simple rule system can be used to determine who would be expected to speak next" (Sacks et al., 1978, in Qu, 1997, p. 122, online). As seen in the diagram, the norms for turn-taking are not universal. A conversational pattern typical in the Anglo-Saxon context, due to lack of a period of silence between contributions may be even considered rude in oriental cultures.

3.3.3 Attitude and Stereotypes

As has already been stated, any communication act is always immersed in a given social and cultural context which will determine the proper interpretation of messages. The theories of culture, such as culture as an iceberg, culture as a tree, a barrel, etc. (cf. Gibson, 2000) share some characteristics, namely, they all emphasise that the most significant features are not to be seen at first glance but remain hidden until one starts learning about them and gradually unpacks their layers. Thus it has to be said here that the process of adapting to a new culture (known as acculturation, cf. Schumann, 1976) is a component of successful intercultural encounters. Successful partaking in intercultural communication entails learning or acquiring necessary components of a culture, especially that only some of its elements are universal. As Murdock (1961, pp. 45–54, in Brown, 1994, p. 164) claims, "there exist seven universal patterns of behaviour characterised by the following features":

1. They originate in the human mind
2. They facilitate human and environmental interactions
3. They satisfy basic human needs
4. They are cumulative and adjust to changes in external and internal conditions
5. They tend to form a consistent structure
6. They are learned and shared by all the members of a society
7. They are transmitted to new generations

As seen in the foregoing list, some of these patterns show the need to develop intercultural competence, especially if we bear in mind the fact that culture-bound behavioural patterns are shared by the members of a social group and lack of such knowledge would prevent us from maintaining social bonds and camaraderie.

Culture might be defined "as the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time" (Brown, 1994, p. 164). Failing to understand existing differences may result in misunderstanding between members of different backgrounds. The opinions we hold toward representatives of the target language and culture are our attitudes, and their importance in the process of communication act cannot be underestimated.

Attitudes, briefly defined as sets of beliefs one holds towards a language or native speakers of this language, have been found to significantly contribute to second learners' success (cf. Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Benson & Lor, 1999; Alanen, 2003). It has also been shown that such beliefs are context-specific, influenced by previous experiences, but at the same time, likely to be changed. According to Gabillon (2007, online), "attitude concerns individuals' evaluation of their experience or the learning situation / outcome before they actually engage in the learning experience. Thus, it is assumed that aggregates of negative beliefs, as a rule, lead to negative attitudes and aggregates of positive beliefs lead to positive attitudes towards the behavior or object in question." Nevertheless, stereotypes may be formed not only by negative beliefs, but also positive ones, irrelevant whether it is favourable, or, in fact, completely irrelevant. Negative beliefs, in turn, can lead to the formation of stereotypes that in fact are mere packs of oversimplifications. Negative or false stereotyping may jeopardise one's communication effectiveness by failing to acknowledge people's uniqueness. However, stereotyping does not always have to bring about only negative outcomes because such generalisations "can be useful as long as allowance is made for individual differences" (Gibson, 2000, p. 10).

In the process of L2 learning we may single out a set of three attitudes. The most important ones have been studied by Gardner and Lambert and pertain to "the attitude learners have toward the members of the cultural group whose language they are learning" (1972, in Brown, 1994, p. 168). The other two revolve around the attitude towards the particular language we may want to pick up (e.g. a negative attitude towards the German language, but positive towards French) or towards the idea of language learning in general. Thus a person's positive attitude may also lead to high integrative motivation to learn a given language.

Another concept closely correlated with attitudes is the one devoted to the ethnocentric approach. Ethnocentrism, conducive to inter-groups conflicts, can be defined as "the sentiment of cohesion, internal comradeship, and devotion to the in-group, which carries with it a sense of superiority to any out-group and readiness to defend the interests of the in-group against the out-group" (Sumner, 1911, in Bizumić et al., 2012, p. 36). It is also believed that an ethnocentric approach can give rise to the development of negative attitudes. The studies conducted by, for instance, Adorno et al. (1950), Hosseini et al. (2016), Jakobovits (1968), Putnam (2011, online, cited in Shakeebaee et al., 2017, p. 344,

online) have also shown that knowing a foreign language may reduce eth-nic-related issues such as social distance, stereotyping, and ethnic hostility. An ethnocentric approach holding that our own language and culture is superior to others can also lead to making judgments about other cultural groups and even trigger some conflicts and determine the quality of interactions (Sha-keebaee et al., 2017, p. 345).

3.3.4 Communication Style Differences

In an attempt at cultural juxtaposition, one should not forget about some visible differences pertaining to communication styles. In his seminal work, Lewis (1996) distinguishes between three basic cultural categories, namely: Linear-Active, Multi-Active, and Reactive countries. He claimed that humans can be divided into three clear categories, based not on nationality or religion but on behaviour. Though these cultures are wildly diverse, geographically and in their religions, beliefs and values, they can be categorised as a group, as be-haviourally they follow the same pattern with similar traits and commonalities. The *Linear-Active* group is easily identified and comprises the English-speaking world – North America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, and Northern Europe, including Scandinavia and Germanic countries. The *Reactive* group, in turn, is located in all major countries in Asia, except the Indian subcontinent, which is hybrid. The last, *Multi-Active* group is more scattered as it covers Southern Europe, Mediterranean countries, South America, sub-Saharan Africa, Arab and other cultures in the Middle East, India and Pakistan and most of the Slavs.

Unfortunately, there exist many levels of difficulty found when speak-ers of different backgrounds start interacting. The first one is seen between task-oriented and highly organised linear-active planners and people-oriented, loquacious multi-active interlocutors when they are contrasted with introverted, respect-oriented reactive listeners (Lewis, 1996, p. 39).

As for other common traits of linear-active, multi-active, and reactive com-munication-oriented categories, they have different attitudes to punctuality (only the first group is punctual), interrupting, use of body language and ways of retrieving information (linear-active prefer getting information from sta-tistics, reference books, and the internet, multi-active rely more on first-hand oral information, and reactive cultures use both first-hand and researched

information). Another significant difference is manifested in the way they perceive two modes of communication:

> In reactive cultures the preferred mode of communication is monologue – pause – reflection – monologue. If possible, one lets the other side deliver its monologue first. In linear-active and multi-active cultures, the communication mode is a dialogue. One interrupts the other's monologue with frequent comments, even questions, which signify polite interest in what is being said. As soon as one person stops speaking, the other takes up his or her turn immediately, since the Westerner has an extremely weak tolerance for silence.
>
> (Lewis, 1996, p. 35)

These groups can also vary in the level of directness and speaking time. Linear-active societies are less direct than multi-active but definitely more straightforward than reactive countries. Reactive cultures have a reputation for being good listeners and they also value silence, especially when one is to respond to something that has been presented by others before. Then they feel obliged to pause and are unlikely to voice any strong opinion immediately (Lewis, 1996, p. 35). Another significant area of difference may be seen in a culture's preference for dialogue rather than monologue. Lewis (2006, p. 35) holds that the former communication mode is favoured in both linear-active and multi-active cultures, whereas reactive ones opt for "monologue – pause – reflection – monologue." Poland, Hungary, France, and Lithuania are grouped together and belong to linear-active/multi-active category. Moreover, Lewis (2006, p. 33) claims that Poles, together with Italians and Jews, may share some common characteristics, namely as they are placed in the same scale one might assume that they are similar to a certain degree; however, "[i]t does not impute other cultural resemblances (core beliefs, religion, taboos, etc.)" (Lewis, 2006, p. 42). Although both the USA and the UK are examples of linear-active societies, the former is placed on the linear-active and multi-active scale, whereas the latter is on the linear-active and reactive spectrum.

The division into linear-active, multi-active, and reactive societies can be compared to the theory described by Schumann (1976c, in Brown, 2000, p. 178) and the concept known as social power, which attempts to account for some L2 communication and language learning-related problems. Schumann's assumption is that the level of social distance can impede the development of

L2, because "the greater the social distance between two cultures, the greater the difficulty the learners will have in learning the second language." Social distance is a figurative expression pertaining to cultural dissimilarities and refers to some "cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures that come into contact with an individual" (Schumann, 1976c, in Brown, 2000, p. 178). As the Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology (Springer Link, online) holds,

> Social distance refers to the extent to which people experience a sense of familiarity (nearness and intimacy) or unfamiliarity (farness and difference) between themselves and people belonging to different social, ethnic, occupational, and religious groups from their own.

This distance can be experienced at three levels: affective, normative, and interactive. The first category can determine how willing a person is to interact with people from other groups. The second distinction appears the moment one realises how different "the others" are, and that they may represent a different class, religious group, gender or nationality. It appears at the moment we start making some comparisons between "us" and "them", not necessarily in a judgmental manner, but rather to indicate that we are aware of the differences. The last type of social distance refers to the extent to which different groups of people interact with one another, in terms of both frequency and intensity of communication. It seems that social distance can also affect the L2 learning context and eventually determine the communicative level one reaches. Brown (2000, p. 178) provides two examples of "bad" language learning situations that had been described by Schumann (1976c, p. 139):

1. One of the bad situations would be where the TL group views the 2LL group as dominant and the 2LL group views itself in the same way, where both groups desire preservation and high enclosure for the 2LL group, where the 2LL group is both cohesive and large, where the two cultures are not congruent, where the two groups hold negative attitudes toward each other, and where the 2LL group intends to remain in the TL area only for a short time.
2. The second bad situation has all the characteristics of the first except that in this case, the 2LL group would consider itself subordinate and would also be considered subordinate by the TL group.

Thus it is logical to believe that smaller social distance and greater camaraderie between cultures can boost the process of L2 acquisition.

A final factor in cross-cultural communication dissimilarities is visible in terms of low-context (LC) and high-context (HC) cultures. This concept, created by Edward Hall (1976), distinguishes between high-context cultures, where much of the conveyed information comes from context or is not communicated verbally, and low-context cultures, where most information stems from verbal messages. The examples of HC include China, Japan, and Korea, as the context there possesses special value. Moreover, members of cultures with high appreciation of context are better at interpreting nonverbal behaviours. The concept of high- and low-context cultures is compared by Trompenaars (1997, online) to "circling around or getting to the point." In high-context cultures "people start from the general and then get down to the specifics, while in low-context cultures it is the other way round [...]" (in Gibson, 2000, p. 34).

3.4 Pragmatic Competence

By far the most important linguistic ability is that of being able to "produce or understand utterances which are not so much *grammatical* but, more important, *appropriate to the context in which they are made*" (Campbell & Wales, 1970, p. 247, in Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 4).

> Pragmatics can essentially be defined as one of the aspects of linguistics studying the relationship between the utterances, the participants of the communication and the context (both verbal and extralinguistic). In other words, linguistic pragmatics focuses on the verbal settings comprising not only the mere sentence (i.e., what is being said), but also the speaker and the recipient (participants of the communication), as well as their knowledge, both general and specific.
>
> (Malyuga & Orlova, 2018, p. 18).

As can be seen, the foregoing definition of pragmatics emphasises the importance of the context and hidden meaning for the correct interpretation of a communicative act (cf. Soler & Martines-Flor, eds., 2008; Ariel, 2008; Timpe-Laughlin, 2016). Thus this relationship can be also explained as a "context-bound relation between what is said and what is communicated" (Trask,

2007, p. 227). Crystal (1997, p. 301) also refers to it as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication."

Pragmatic competence, on the other hand, is broadly understood as a notion encompassing three abilities:

1) the speaker's ability to use language for different purposes;
2) the listener's ability to get past the language and understand the speaker's real intentions (e.g. indirect speech acts, irony and sarcasm); and
3) the command of the rules by which utterances come together to create discourse.

<div align="right">(Bialystok, 1993, in Rueda, 2006, pp. 173–174)</div>

Pragmatic competence comprises two dimensions, namely pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. The former knowledge "requires mappings of form, meaning, force and context" (Kasper, 2001, p. 51, in Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, p. 121), whereas the latter "is related to implicit social meaning [...] and to the link between action-relevant context factors and communicative action [...]" (Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, p. 121).

It seems that one of the most important reasons why people fail to appropriately convey and receive messages is lack of adequately-developed pragmatic competence (Choraih et al., 2016). Surprisingly enough, even L2 learners representing an advanced language level may still have evident shortages of pragmatic skills (Chang, 2011; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Dronia & Garczyńska, 2014; Morkus, 2021). Ishihara and Cohen (2010) add that if there is no formal instruction provided to students, on average it will take about ten years of being exposed to second language contexts before one will eventually develop pragmatic abilities. The truth is that some students do not really prioritise the development of native-like pragmatic use, but wish to remain "themselves" – "Research indicates that learners' sense of identity is intertwined with how they use the language, and for this reason they sometimes choose not to behave in a native-like fashion" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 76). However, as Thomas (1983, pp. 96–97) observes, being otherwise grammatically fluent but still making pragmatic mistakes is very unfortunate because people would expect someone who seems to have mastered linguistic rules also to observe "pragmatic niceties".

Native speakers' tolerance for linguistic violations made by L2 learners seems to be wider for stylistic than for grammatical inaccuracies. Nevertheless, the questions of how much they can tolerate while also coping with sociocultural problems, and whether the said problems are more or less seriously treated by them remains still open to discussion (cf. Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 12).

In an attempt to answer the question what prevents learners from using the language exactly as they want in order to communicate their meaning, Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 77) provide five major causes of divergence from native-like pragmatic norms. What they list results from insufficient pragmatic ability and encompasses the following aspects:

1. negative transfer of pragmatic norms;
2. limited grammatical ability in the L2;
3. overgeneralization of perceived L2 pragmatic norms;
4. effect of instruction or instructional materials.

Pragmatic divergence due to learner choice:

5. resistance to using perceived L2 pragmatic norms.

<div align="right">(Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 77)</div>

Insufficiently exercised pragmatic skills may, according to the authors, stem from several factors, such as "a partial lapse in pragmatic awareness, insensitivity to pragmatic norms of the L2, or insufficient linguistic ability" (Ishihara & Cohen, pp. 77–78).

The notion of transfer can be defined as "the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to subsequent learning" (Brown, 2000, p. 90). This "carryover" can actually result in the appearance of two learning situations. In the case of the first, the transfer of structures, words or simply some linguistic mechanisms will be positive, which means that due to some analogies and similarities between a learner's L1 and L2, he or she may relatively safely turn to this repertoire without fear of being misunderstood. A prime example of a positive transfer situation is a German speaker of English giving his or her age. As both of those languages rely on the same verb here (i.e. *to be* in English and *sein* in German) the likelihood of making a mistake is small. Thus a positive transfer will facilitate the L2 learning process. On the contrary, a negative transfer resulting from some discrepancies between languages, increases the chance of error. The interference from the student's L1 is "incorrectly transferred

or incorrectly associated with an item to be learned" (Brown, 2000, p. 90). In a Polish-English learning context, the case quoted above is an instance of negative transfer, very likely to lead to grammatical error, as a Polish speaker using English may rely on the verb "to have" (where the phrase *mam … lat* is literally translated), rather than "to be" (*być … lat starym* – a non-existent phrase in proper Polish). This kind of negative transfer can not only be observed in the area of grammar, but can also lead to pragmatic violations. Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 78) note that "[i]n a community where the L2 norms are quite different, however, the transfer of behavior consistent with L1 norms may cause awkwardness, misunderstanding, or even a temporary communication breakdown. This is especially the case when the listener is not familiar with learners' language or culture." It has been further suggested that transfer in communication and in learning are intertwined because the first impacts the second. Communication transfer is perceived as a result of some deficiencies in the interlanguage system (cf. Corder, 1983) and refers to production and comprehension transfer. As Ellis (1999, p. 337) explains, "[t]ransfer in communication is motivated by the learner's desire to comprehend or produce messages, but it may also have an effect on the process of hypothesis construction and testing, which many scholars see as central to interlanguage development." Færch and Kasper (1986b; 1989, in Ellis, 1999, p. 336) put forward a hypothesis that not all communication transfer need to be strategic in nature and further distinguish three types of production transfer, namely strategic (possibly connected with the impact of a student's L1 as it entails planning and finding solutions to problems), subsidiary (where the focus of attention is centred neither on production nor the transferred L1 knowledge), and automatic. The last category "takes place when the learner makes use of a highly automatized L1 subroutine [...] [and] attention is completely diverted to other aspects in the production process."

Odlin (1989; 1990, in Ellis, 1999, p. 317) holds that the social context can additionally impact the intensity of transfer. According to him, a negative transfer is less likely to appear in the classroom context (referred to as "focused context"), as "learners constitute a 'focused' community and as a consequence treat L1 forms as intrusive and even stigmatized." Should an L2 conversation take place in a natural setting, however, it is not so straightforward which community, that is, "focused" or "unfocused", learners may comprise, as in the case of the latter "language mixing will be freely permitted, thus encouraging negative transfer to take place" (Ellis, 1999, p. 318). Kasper (1992, p. 207, in

Kecskés, 2013, pp. 78–79) provides an additional definition of pragmatic transfer and states that it is "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on the comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information." Thus there are two types of pragmatic transfer, that is, pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. The former appears when "the functional and social meanings of certain linguistic forms in the L1 affect the comprehension and production of "form-function mappings in L2" (Kasper, 1992, p. 20). The latter, however, results when L1 context influences the social perception of a linguistic action performed in L2.

The second reason responsible for insufficiently developed pragmatic ability mentioned by Ishihara and Cohen (2010) is limited grammatical ability in the L2. As has been stated in the section devoted to communicative competence (CC), in order to develop it one does not necessarily have to master grammatical niceties. Yet lack of properly developed basic level of grammatical competence is bound to result in communication problems. For example, when hearing a speech act of requesting, a student limited only to the knowledge of a single-clause request such as *Could I use your pen for a second?* might struggle to understand internal modification in a request relying on lexical or phrasal downgraders, for instance, in the form of consultative devices (openers), such as *Would you mind if ..., I was wondering ... if* (Cohen, 2010, p. 80). Hassall (2003, in Salgado, 2011, p. 15) expresses a similar concern, claiming that learners' proficiency level is decisive for acquiring pragmatic features: "As learners increased their L2 grammatical forms and achieved more control over them, they avoided transferring pragmatic features from the L1 and tended to use more complex linguistic forms to express different communicative purposes in different social situations."

Overgeneralisation of perceived L2 pragmatic norms is the third major reason for pragmatic flaws. The phenomenon of overgeneralisation concerns not only the second language, but is also visible during L1 acquisition, for instance, in the process of the development of morphology and the marking of regular and irregular plurals and verbs. A child who has got used to saying "boys" or "played" may also attempt to say "womans," or "goed" (Yule, 1996a, p. 182). Overgeneralisation will appear when the previously adopted assumptions or hypotheses are introduced into other, this time unacceptable contexts. The problem of overgeneralisation pertains also to the process of development of pragmatic competence, as a student with "[...] only a rudimentary understanding

of the target culture and the nature of its pragmatic norms, [...] may depend on their preconceived notions about L2 norms and wrongly apply them to different contexts" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 81). Hence due to some preconceived cultural stereotypes a person may also fail to recognise "some other social, geographical or situational variability in the L2" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 81). Ellis (1999, p. 183) presents more reasons behind pragmatic overgeneralisation. He claims that:

> Learners may overextend a realization strategy from a situation in which it is appropriate to one in which it is not. Also, the extent to which learners are able to encode illocutionary acts in socially appropriate ways may depend on whether their attention is focused on simply getting the propositional content of their utterance across or also on its modality.

The fourth problem a person may encounter on their way to successful pragmatic as well as communicative competence can arise as an effect of instruction or instructional materials. This time, however, as Ishihara and Cohen (2010) claim, the problem does not lie with the learner, but with the nature of the classroom teaching context. Students encouraged to produce as much L2 as possible or to employ some sophisticated grammatical structures may produce very pragmatically awkward, yet grammatically correct, sentences. For example, when shopping in a small English village for groceries and being asked by a shop assistant *Is it your first visit here?*, it would be just ridiculous for a foreign learner to answer *Never have I been to Britain before*. Similarly, producing too long and redundant utterances when a short yes/no reply would do, can be seen in the same way:

> "Have you already had a chance to go canoeing on the beautiful Lake of the Isles this summer?"
> "Yes. I have already had a chance to go canoeing on the beautiful Lake of the Isles this summer."
>
> (Cohen, 2010, pp. 84–85)

In conclusion, it seems that the most commonly occurring pragmatic problems are due to misunderstandings between the speakers, "participating in a conversation as a listener (backchannelling), understanding metalanguage

and metapragmatics, understanding the unsaid and assessing the unsaid, avoiding a speech act to accommodate a target culture norm, nonverbal behavior" (Kusevska et al., 2015, p. 151). Tracing the sources of pragmalinguistic errors specifically, Thomas (1983, p. 101) provides two major causes of this problem, namely, "teaching-induced errors" and "pragmalinguistic transfer." The latter appears whenever speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from one language to another, or "the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias', tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language" (Thomas, 1983, p. 101). Pragmalinguistic failure may manifest itself in using a direct speech act where a native speaker would use an indirect speech act or "off-record" politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 216, in Thomas, 1983, p. 102). This, in turn, can lead to some misunderstanding, confusion, or even offense. A good illustration of such pragmatic overgeneralisation is visible in polite usage in Russian that permits many more direct imperatives than does English, for example, "The usual way to ask directions, for example, is simply to say (in Russian!), *Tell me (please) how to get to ...*, and to use a more elaborate strategy, such as *Excuse me, please, could you tell me ...?*, is completely counterproductive, as it often means that your interlocutor is half way down the street before you finish speaking. Transferred into English, such direct imperatives seem brusque and discourteous" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 216, in Thomas, 1983, p. 102). Pragmatic overgeneralisation is particularly likely to occur where a narrow range of structures in the mother tongue has a wider range of possible "translations" in the target language. Such a case is visible in the Polish word *przepraszam*, which is invariably expressed in English by the semantically equivalent *I'm sorry*, when often it would be more appropriate to use *Excuse me*, *Pardon*, or even *I beg your pardon.* However, it is difficult to attribute a given error to any one particular source. Yet, some teaching techniques may actually increase the likelihood of pragmalinguistic failure. Kasper (1981) holds that one may blame, among others, teaching materials (inappropriate use of modals) or classroom discourse (lack of marking for modality, complete sentence responses and inappropriate prepositional explicitness). Moreover, "complete sentence responses violate the textual pragmatic 'principle of economy'" (see Leech, 1983, pp. 67–68) and it is easy to see how they can create an unfortunate impression" (in Thomas, 1983, p. 102). Thus it is the job of the teacher to increase students' pragmatic awareness, or, to employ what Sharwood-Smith

(1981, pp. 162–163) terms "consciousness-raising." By discussing with students what force they intended to convey an educator may focus their attention not on apparent, but more subtle meaning a given structure of utterances conveys. And this does not necessarily have to rely on enforcing Anglo-Saxon standards of behaviour, linguistic or otherwise, but rather "[equipping] the student to express her/himself in exactly the way s/he chooses to do so – rudely, tactfully, or in an elaborately polite manner. What we want to prevent is her/his being *unintentionally* rude or subservient" (Thomas, 1983, p. 102).

A word of caution that should be sounded here is that apart from unintended pragmatic flaws, a learner may actually choose to speak and/or behave against L2 norms. This intentional resistance may derive from the learner's strong conviction and the need to assert their identity. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) and Ellis (1999, p. 182) also believe that these intentional pragmatic violations may result from accommodation theory and the desire to accentuate one's linguistic identity and differences. Thomas (1983, p. 104, in Ellis, 1999, p. 183) supports this claim by stating that "sociopragmatic decisions are *social* before they are linguistic, and while foreign learners are fairly amenable to corrections they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social judgement called into question." As Kecskés (2013, p. 63) further observes, "in L2 it is not exposure and social interaction but individual willingness, motivation and acceptance that play the primary role in pragmatic development." Moreover, while characterising pragmatic competence in the L2, Kecskés (2013, p. 64) points to the fact that NNs (non-native speakers) acquiring the target language in the classroom usually have more access to pragmalinguistics than to sociopragmatics and this may have further consequences in their L2 use, as in intercultural communication the "interplay of pragmalinguistic resources for conveying communicative acts and sociopragmatic factors assuring social appropriateness of communicative behavior" is very important. This leads to a predictable pattern in which a second language learner may demonstrate higher pragmalinguistic than sociopragmatic skills.

3.4.1 Cross-cultural Pragmatic Variations

As Riley (1989: 247) emphasizes, cultural transfer is evident in the types of communicative events that learners expect to occur in a given situation, the manner of their participation in them, the specific types of acts they perform

and the way they realize them, the way topics are nominated and developed, and the way discourse is regulated.

(Ellis, 1999, p. 187)

Interacting across cultures entails not only the knowledge of grammar and lexis, but also the understanding of the new meaning an utterance may acquire when produced in different social and/or situational contexts. This "conversational inference", defined as a sort of reading-between-the-lines ability, becomes very helpful, if not indispensable, in cross-cultural encounters. The terms "cross-cultural" and "intercultural", though often used interchangeably, are not the same. According to Stadler (2018, online),

> The term "cross-cultural" refers to exploring how natives speak and act in their native language and within their own cultural context and comparing how native behavior in one culture compares with that in another culture. This definition of cross-cultural therefore does not refer to the exploration of issues relating to people conversing across cultural boundaries – as the literal meaning of the term suggests – but rather the exploration of issues pertaining to *intra*cultural communication. Cross-cultural pragmatics adopts a comparative methodological approach which contrasts the findings of the characteristics of *intra*cultural communication in two different cultures by identifying similarities and differences in their (speech) behavior.

"Intercultural", on the other hand, refers to a situation when speakers representing different linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds start interacting with each other and approach a communicative act from different angles, that is, their social norms, expectations, and beliefs are not the same. It has also to be emphasised that many speech acts are actually culture-specific as it is a set of social and cultural rules that dictates the strategies and the linguistic means used in the given context. Performing some institutionalised speech act, such as that of divorcing, in some Muslim communities, by repeating three times 'I hereby divorce you' can result in a husband divorcing his wife. This speech act does not possess a similar power in Western cultures (Huang, 2007, p. 120). Other examples of cross-cultural pragmatic differences may pertain to the lack of particular speech act, for instance, the absence of promising among Ilongots in the Philippines or of thanking in the Australian Aboriginal language

Yolngu, or, on the contrary, the presence of elsewhere non-existent acts, that is, the speech act of requesting based on kinship rights and obligation (in the Australian Aboriginal language Walmajarri). Additional differences observed in pragmatic contexts refer to the employment of different speech acts in similar situations:

> In some East Asian and Western cultures, if one steps on another person's toes, one normally performs the speech act of apologizing. But apparently this is not the case among the Akans, a West African culture. As reported by Mey (2001: 287 crediting Felix Ameka), in that culture, such a situation does not call for an apology but calls for an expression of sympathy.
>
> <div align="right">(Huang, 2007, p. 121)</div>

Other examples of such cases refer to the application of a speech act of apology in Japanese in a situation that would require thanking (after leaving a party and talking to the host or receiving a present) in English. The third difference can be noticed in terms of cross-cultural responses to particular speech acts.[6]

> A typical compliment response formula in Chinese would be something like:
>
> A: ni cai zuode zhen hao!
> B: nali, nali, wo bu hui zuocai.
> A: bie keqi, ni cai zhende zuode hen hao!
> B: ni tai keqi le.
>
> A: 'You cook really well!'
> B: 'No, no, I don't really know how to cook properly.'
> A: 'Please don't be too modest. You really cook very well.'
> B: 'You're too kind.'
>
> <div align="right">(Huang, 2007, p. 121)</div>

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6   This aspect, because of its importance for this work, will be further analysed in the following chapters.

Though this example shows a typical pattern of responding to compliments in Mandarin Chinese, the same reaction can be observed in Japanese or in Polish in similar situations. Such visible discrepancies in terms of politeness are referred to by Leech (2003) as pragmatic quasi-paradoxes. In a situation when for one speaker it would be a norm to accept a compliment (e.g. an American sender), but for another (e.g. Chinese or Polish receiver) to reject it, a quasi-paradox is likely to occur – an American may think that his or her interlocutor is actually "fishing for compliments" but in fact for the Chinese speaker the situation may be getting more and more face-threatening and it may not be resolved.[7]

Additional observation concerning cross-cultural differences in the perception of speech acts is connected with significant discrepancies in their levels of directness or indirectness. The results of the extremely extensive Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) clearly indicate some cross-linguistic and also cross-cultural variations among the languages studied, especially in reference to complaints, requests, and apologies (Huang, 2007). Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 60) enumerated a set of five strategies of performing face-threatening acts (FTA), namely: not do the FTA, perform the FTA off record, do it bald on record, negative politeness, and positive politeness. These strategies differ significantly not only in terms of the level of imposition, directness and "weightiness" (e.g. social distance or relative power), but also in the perception of imposition in a particular culture. In one article, Solska (2012, pp. 128–129) provides many examples of research showing visible differences between cultures; for example, American English speakers compared with Egyptian Arabic users differed in terms of directness when refusing and in the number of mitigation devices they employed (Nelson et al., 2002, in Solska, 2012). Similarly, when refusing, Japanese speakers of American English also produced different language from that of native speakers:

> Overall patterns they [Beebe et al. 1990] identified were that native speakers of Japanese were more likely to express a positive opinion and show empathy when speaking to an interlocutor with a higher social status and the excuses they used tended to be vague. In contrast, native speakers of American English were more likely to express positive opinions regardless of whether they were

---

7 In some cases it would be possible to resolve it through a series of implicit negotiations (Leech, 2003, in Huang, 2007).

speaking to someone with a higher or a lower social status than themselves. They were also more likely to express a regret at having to refuse and to give more specific excuses. When speaking (American) English, native speakers of Japanese continued to use vague excuses and would typically adopt their native pattern of expressing a positive opinion and show empathy when their interlocutor was of higher status.

<div align="right">(Solska, 2012, p. 129)</div>

Bartłomiejczyk (2019), Jakubowska (1999), and Wierzbicka (2003) also point out a set of pragmatic differences visible in many cultures and languages, for instance, in the level of directness (English vs many Slavic languages, such as Polish or Russian), terms of address, apologising, complimenting (and reacting to compliments) or even the speech acts they would entail, for example the question *How are you?* generating a positive response among English speakers, and a negative one among Poles, being a prime case in point here.

3.4.2 Cross-cultural (Polish-English) Speech Acts Differences: Literature Overview

The intention of this part is to focus on some theoretical notions concerning three speech acts, namely, those of requesting, complimenting, and apologising, that appear in Discourse Completion Task (DCT) scenarios further described in the practical section.

Requests. The speech act of requesting has been the subject of investigation in several disciplines. Studied first by Austin (1962) and later by Searle (1969), requests lie at the core of Searle's taxonomy distinguishing between various rules they follow:

Propositional content:	Future act A of H.
Preparatory:	1. H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A.
	2. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal courses of events of his own accord.
Sincerity:	S wants H to do A.
Essential:	Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.

<div align="right">(in Fukushima, 2003, p. 64)</div>

In 1979, however, Searle simplified this grouping and provided one more set of conditions:

Preparatory condition: H is able to perform A.
Sincerity condition: S wants H to do A.
Propositional content condition: S predicates a future act A of H.
Essential condition: Counts as an attempt by S to get H to do A.

<div align="right">(Fukushima, 2003, p. 64)</div>

A dimension specifying the emphasis S makes in carrying out a request is referred to as request perspective, and its choice constitutes a significant source of requests variation. Thus Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984, p. 203) suggested four categories of request perspective, such as:

(a) Hearer-oriented
(29) Can **you** tidy up the kitchen soon?
(b) Speaker-oriented
(30) Do you think **I** could borrow your notes from yesterday's class?
(c) Speaker and Hearer oriented (inclusive)
(31) So, could **we** please clean up?
(d) Impersonal (The use of people/they/one as neutral agents or passivization)
(32) So it might not be a bad idea to **get it cleaned up**.

Trosborg (1995, p. 187, in Salgado, 2011, p. 11) defines requests as "an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker." At the same time, she classifies requests into a few strategy types: mood derivable, hedged performatives, obligation statements, want statements, suggestory formulae, query preparatory, strong hints and mild hints.

Many speech acts, including that of requesting, are considered face-threatening acts.

FTAs can threaten positive face, negative face, or both. Acts that threaten positive face include expressions of disapproval, accusations, criticism,

disagreements, and insults; those that threaten negative face include advice, orders, requests, suggestions, and warnings; those that threaten both positive and negative face include complaints, interruptions, and threats.

<div align="right">(Huang, 2007, p. 117)</div>

Additional categorisation of speech acts can be made on the basis of whose face, speaker's or addressee's, is threatened. And thus,

> The speaker can threaten his or her own face by performing, for example, the acts of accepting compliments, expressing thanks, and making confessions. On the other hand, acts such as advice, reminding, and strong expression of emotions threaten primarily the addressee's face wants.

<div align="right">(Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 67–68, in Huang, 2007, p. 117)</div>

In their seminal work on strategies for doing FTAs, Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 68–70) classified requests in the following way:

1. On record without redress (Direct requests)
   e.g. *Open the window.*
2. On record with redress (Conventionally indirect requests)
   e.g. *Would you mind opening the window please?*
3. Off record
   e.g. *It's hot in here.*

A direct speech act appears as a result of a direct relationship between the structure of a sentence and its function. However, an indirect relationship between a structure and a function would result in an indirect speech act (Yule, 1996b). The act of requesting can be direct if a speaker chooses to go on record. This can be done in two ways, namely:

1. without redressive action, baldly,
2. with redressive action.

Doing an act baldly, without redress, involves doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way possible (e.g. for a request, saying *Do X!*) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69, in Fukushima, 2003, p. 64). It is also believed that indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts (Yule, 1996b, p. 56).

An indirect request can be perceived as an example of a speech event whenever we ask whether the necessary conditions for a request are met, and thus a speaker assumes (preparatory condition) that obeying our request is within the power of our hearer, so he can, or is able to, perform the action. A content condition, on the other hand, refers to the future action that a hearer will perform. The diagram below illustrates this pattern (Yule, 1996b, p. 56):

Indirect requests:

a. Content condition   Future act of hearer   "WILL you do X?"
                            (= hearer WILL do X)

b. Preparatory condition   Hearer is able to perform act "CAN you do X?"
                            (= hearer CAN do X)

c. Questioning a hearer-based condition for making a request results in an indirect request.

A request, from this perspective, is an imposition by the speaker on the hearer (and therefore requests are intrinsically considered to be face-threatening acts, FTAs), however if the speaker asks about preconditions, no direct request is made (Yule, 1996b, p. 57). As Huang (2007, p. 111) observes, requests are rarely performed in English through imperatives, but rather through a virtually unlimited number of indirect possibilities, for instance:

a. I want you to close the window.
b. Can you close the window?
c. Will you close the window?
d. Would you close the window?
e. Would you mind closing the window?
f. You ought to close the window.
g. May I ask you to close the window?
h. I wonder if you'd mind closing the window.

(Huang, 2007, p. 111, adapted from Levinson, 1983, pp. 264–265)

The structure of request consists of two fragments, that is, the core request and the various peripheral elements (Sifianou, 1992, p. 99). Blum-Kulka

et al. (1989) define the former part as a Head Act, whereas the latter are called alerters and supportive moves (Fukushima, 2003, p. 74).

As can be further read in Fukushima (2003, pp. 74–75),

> The core requests, or Head Acts, fulfill the function of requesting; and the peripheral elements, or alerters and supportive moves, mitigate or aggravate the force of requests. Requests can be realised only by the core parts, while the peripheral elements may precede or follow the core requests. In off-record requests, however, only the peripheral elements serve as requests. The following examples illustrate this.
>
> 1. The kitchen is in a terrible mess.
> 2. The kitchen is in a terrible mess, could you please clean it up?
>
> (Weizman, 1989, pp. 74–75).

As has been said, the Head Act may serve to realise the act independently of other elements and it may also include some internal modifications, namely, devices which operate within the Head Act. The peripheral elements, in turn, may include such options as alerters, external modifiers, preparators, disarmers, sweeteners, supportive reasons, and cost minimizers (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

Sifianou (1992, pp. 121–122 and 125–126) lists several forms requests may take, such as imperatives, interrogatives, negatives, elliptical constructions, and declaratives. The last category is further subdivided into need statements and hints. As for the categories that can be distinguished in requests, they are requests either for information or for action (e.g., goods or help). The choice of requesting strategies is determined by the relationship between some variables, such as the interlocutors' social distance (referred to as 'D'), the relative power (or social status) of speaker and addressee ('P') and the ranking (or degree) of imposition "associated with the required expenditure of goods or services which an act forces on the addressee in a certain group or culture ('R')" (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987, pp. 74f.). It has also been acknowledged that the number of strategies used is thus determined by the "weightiness" (Wx) of a situation, that is, "the bigger the face threat (computed by the three variables), the higher the number of the strategy is employed" (Fukushima, 2003, p. 76). Huang (2007, p. 117) also adds that "[t]he strength of an FTA is measured by adding together the three variables D, P, and R, on the basis of which the amount of face work

needed or the degree of politeness required can be worked out." Wang (2011) also asserts that the level of politeness exhibited in the act of requesting depends on speaker–hearer relation, which means that it is common to behave more politely towards strangers than towards friends, and also when asking for larger "favour", service or good, for instance, borrowing a considerable sum of money is weightier than using someone's pen. The act of requesting a pen specifically and the possible strategies that may be employed are depicted in the following diagram created by Brown and Levinson (1990, p. 69):

Figure 3.3. How to get a pen from someone else (Brown & Levinson, 1990, p. 69)
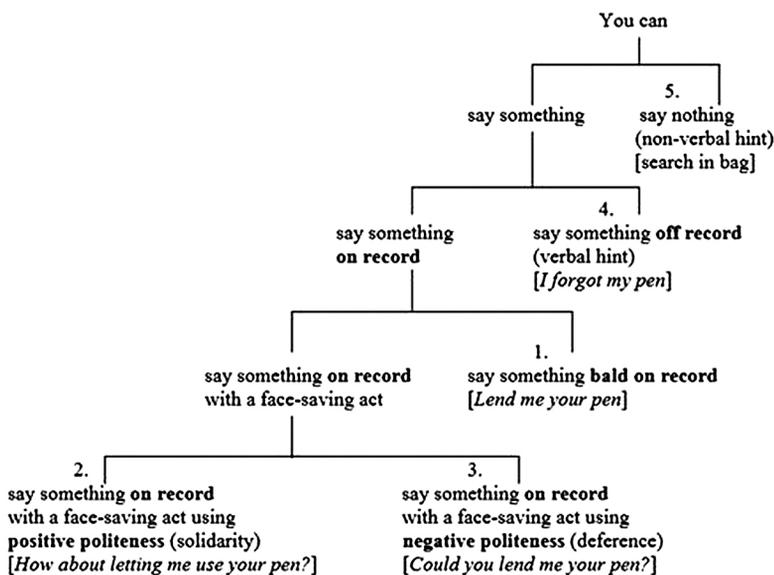
However, while asking for a pen, a person may also employ some pre-requesting strategies described by Yule (1996b, p. 67):

Her: Do you have a spare pen?
Him: Here. (Hands over a pen)

As can be seen, those pre-requesting strategies actually function as real requests and are responded to. It is by such a "short-cut" process of going from pre-request to its granting that one may explain "the literal oddness" of such patterns as the one below (Yule, 1996b, p. 67):

Her: Do you mind if I use your phone?
Him: Yeah, sure.

While analysing the same example, that is, asking for a pen, Leech (2014, p. 12) observes that "there is a tendency for politeness to be associated with wordiness: the more indirect and 'mitigated' a request is, the more words it is likely to contain":

Lend me your pen. → *Could you lend me your pen?* → *I wonder whether you would be kind enough as to lend me your pen?*

Moreover, it has also been proved that different varieties of English (together with a number of other languages, such as Hebrew, German, French, Argentinian, and Spanish; cf. Blum-Kulka, 1989), make use of three major realisation strategies, namely: direct (characterised by the use of imperatives), conventionally indirect (use of forms that downgrade the degree of imposition), and non-conventionally indirect (use of hints to let the hearer know what the speaker intends). "However, the way in which these request strategies are selected and deployed is based upon cultural norms and values that make them different from language to language" (Salgado, 2011, p. 12).

As Zufferey (2016, online) writes, "requests are among the first speech acts acquired by children across languages and cultures, and that sensitivity to the social status of the addressee is visible from a very early age in children's speech." She adds that such social aspects of pragmatic competence rest in part on cognitive skills, but not all attributes of pragmatic acquisition are universal and thus second language learners have to acknowledge cross-linguistic and cross-cultural dissimilarities. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011, p. 112) ascribes learner's pragmalinguistic deviations to three factors, namely: "choice of request strategy and directness level; choice of internal modification through the addition of mitigating or aggravating modality markers; and choice of external modification by means of supportive moves introductory or subsequent to the head act." At a sociopragmatic level, these are various sociocultural constraints that may determine the choice of a given strategy. Of those variables, probably the most salient are those of social distance, social power, and imposition of the requested act (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Extending the interpretation offered by those scholars, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011, p. 112) holds that it is

logical to assume that "the greater the power, social distance and imposition involved, the greater mitigation should be expected by the speaker." However, even when speakers vary their linguistic action patterns according to basic principles that hold across cultures, the relative impact of these patterns is contextually and culturally mediated. Kasper and Schmidt (1996, p. 154) describe this idea in the following way:

> For some speech acts, sets of realization strategies (semantic formulae or speech act sets [Olshtain & Cohen, 1983]) have been identified by which these speech acts are regularly performed. For instance, the same conventions of means are available to implement apologies in English, French, German, and Hebrew (Olshtain, 1989), Thai (Bergman & Kasper, 1993), and Japanese (Maeshiba et al., 1996). For requests, the major realization strategies – direct, conventionally indirect, nonconventionally indirect – have been found in different varieties of English, French, Hebrew, and Spanish (Blum-Kulka, 1989), German (House, 1989), Danish (Faerch & Kasper, 1989), Japanese (S. Takahashi & DuFon, 1989), and Chinese (Zhang, 1995). However, particular strategies are tied more closely to culture-specific pragmalinguistic conventions (Blum-Kulka, 1989). For example, requesting by means of an ability question (*Can you return the videos?*) is not conventionalized in Polish, according to Wierzbicka (1985a).

As has already been stated, internal modifications operate in the Head Act and their function is to soften or increase the impact a request strategy is likely to have on the hearer. These devices, according to Trosborg (1995, pp. 210–218), comprise syntactic as well as lexical downgraders. The former group can take the form of questions (as they are always more polite than statements), for example, *Can/will you do the cooking tonight?* and tag questions (*Hand me the paper, will you?*); using past tense or negation (*Could you hand me the paper, please?*, *Can't you hand me the paper?*); -*ing* forms (*I was wondering if you would give me a hand?*); conditional clauses (*I would like to borrow some of your records if you don't mind lending me them*); cost minimising (*Could I borrow your car tonight? I'll have it back in time for you to drive to work tomorrow*), or promise of a reward (*It'll be to your advantage if you do this for me, I promise*). The other syntactic downgrading strategies include embedding (commonly adopted together with conditional clauses), where a speaker introduces a clause where a request is embedded, in the following way:

a. Tentative

   (107) I *wonder* if you would be able to give me a hand.

b. Appreciative:

   (108) I *hope* you'll be able to give me a hand.

   (109) I'd really *appreciate* it if you'd be able to give me a hand.

   (110) I'd be so *grateful* if you'd give me a hand.

c. Subjective: A request can be presented as a requester's personal opinion, belief, etc. Characteristic phrases are *I think/believe/imagine*, *I'm afraid, in my opinion, as far as I know*, etc.

   (111) I *thought* that maybe you wouldn't mind giving me a hand.

   (112) I'm *afraid* you'll have to leave now.

<div style="text-align: right">(Trosborg, 1995, pp. 210–218)</div>

The final syntactic downgrading possibility rests on the premise of providing certain forms of justification and explanation, referred to as supportive reasons (*Would you mind doing my shopping today? I've got so many other things to do*).

As for lexical downgrading strategies, the most common are politeness markers (e.g., *please*), understaters (e.g., *little*) or downtoners (e.g., *possibly*) (Fordyce & Fukazawa, 2003, p. 238).

An interesting observation concerning the development of pragmatic competence and the ability to produce various speech act realisation is given by Scarcella (1979) and Trosborg (1987, in Schmidt, 1985, p. 151). "It is not clear whether the greater variety of linguistic material is simply a reflection of expanded vocabulary and syntactic structures, or the more advanced learners have developed a better command of the pragmalinguistic potential of lexical and syntactic devices." To conclude, there is strong evidence showing a correlation between learners' ability to formulate speech acts and their linguistic proficiency level. L2 learners representing lower levels of advancement tend to use different request strategies from those used by native speakers, resulting in different levels of indirectness in requesting (Blum-Kulka, 1989). This, in turn, can "indicate different levels of politeness from native norms and conventions, affecting the interpersonal rapport between the speaker and the hearer" (Wang, 2011, pp. 4–5).

Polish vs English Requesting Strategies – Syntactic Downgraders. According to Ogiermann (2009a), Polish requests are rather direct, especially those that take the form of imperative constructions. However, the role of the imperative

is acknowledged by Wierzbicka, who also stresses "the softening effect of the diminutive on its illocutionary force and the restricted applicability of interrogative constructions" (Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991; 1992, in Ogiermann, 2009a, p. 193). Imperative constructions are more likely to be interpreted as polite requests in Polish (Marcjanik, 1997; Lubecka, 2000) than in English.

> Marcjanik maintains that although imperatives are mainly associated with orders in Polish, they can also serve as polite requests (1997: 159), in particular if their illocutionary force is softened, e.g., through intonation, the addition of address forms, personal pronouns or modal particles (1997: 160).
>
> (Ogiermann, 2009a, pp. 193–194)

These contrasting features of English and Polish are also described by Wierzbicka (2002) who states that English, as compared with Polish, places heavy restrictions on the use of the imperative and makes extensive use of interrogative and conditional forms. Lubecka's (2000) contrastive analysis of Polish and English requests also shows that imperatives are more frequent in Polish than they are in English, but interrogative constructions form the largest group of request strategies in both languages. The above assumptions were also confirmed in a study conducted by Ogiermann (2009a, pp. 193–194) where she asked Polish students to fill in DCT with a scenario featuring requests for notes, a common theme used in other studies on speech acts (cf. Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). Not surprisingly, it turned out that questions constitute the most frequent request type in Polish while imperatives made up 20% of the total sample. However, according to Ogiermann (2009a, p. 198), "the restricted applicability of interrogative constructions suggested for Polish and Russian in previous literature cannot be confirmed." The respondents chose ability questions with the modal verb *can* over other strategies, and they also preferred conditional rather than present tense constructions. Another visible tendency was to apply a syntactic downgrader, namely, negation, which in Polish may imply genuine doubt about the ability to comply with the request and soften its illocutionary force (*nie pożyczyłbyś?* .... 'would you lend?', Ogiermann, 2009a, p. 200). The addition of the downtoner *może* 'perhaps' or *przypadkiem* 'by any chance' was also found in Ogiermann's data.

An additional finding stemming from Ogiermann's research is the data gathered from English native speakers. This indicated that when performing

the act of request, English speakers chose speaker-oriented structures relying on the verb "borrow" (76 instances of 100) rather than hearer-oriented structures and the verb "lend" (18 out of 100). Thus the construction *can you?* was less common than *can I?* Although both modal verbs (cf. *can* and *may*) can be used interchangeably, the latter verb did not occur in Ogiermann's data.[8] In sum, the choice of the modal verb *can* across languages may be demonstrated in the following way:

Table 3.1. Preferences of the modal verb *can* across languages. Adapted from Ogiermann (2009a, p. 199)

English	Number	Polish	Number
Can I	45	*mogę*	4
Can you	10	*możesz*	14
Could I	15	*mógłbym*	5
Could you	3	*(nie) mógłbyś*	34
Total	73	Total	57

Inclusive or impersonal ways of performing the act of requesting (*could we...?* or *is it possible to...?*) did not appear in the quoted study.

Polish vs English Requesting Strategies – Lexical Downgraders. The research study conducted by Ogiermann (2009a) revealed that apart from syntactic downgraders English respondents also applied lexical ones, in the form of consultative devices: *Do you think I could copy your notes?* (Ogiermann, 2009a, p. 202). Of 34 consultative devices found in her corpus data, Ogiermann classified only two as combined with the hearer's perspective "while seven were embedded in infinitive constructions," like in the example: *Would it be at all possible to copy some notes?* (Ogiermann, 2009a, p. 201). Since such devices belong to the negative politeness repertoire, it comes as no surprise to learn that they are basically frequently found in English. However, the corpus gathered from Polish respondents showed that similar consultative formula were also used:

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8   Interestingly, the verb *may* might have been more likely to appear if the research had been conducted among American native speakers. Children in American schools learn to use the modal *may* when asking for permission. There are many instances of teachers' jokes directed at students, who happen to, for example, ask for permission to leave the room by saying *Can I leave the room?* The reply is *You* can, *but you* may *not* (Merriam-Webster, online).

Czy byłbyś tak miły i mógłbyś przynieść mi notatki?

'Would you be so kind and could you bring me the notes?'

(Ogiermann, 2009a, p. 202)

It is interesting to note that use of the politeness marker *please* seems to be a universal strategy, yet its frequency varied a lot, that is, this word was recorded 16 times in the English data and the Polish equivalent *proszę* was introduced only three times. In accounting for this difference, Ogiermann (2009a, p. 203) states that "the low frequency of politeness marking in the Polish data is, at least in part, related to the fact that *proszę* cannot occur within the head act." She has also observed some culture-specific limitations concerning the combination possibilities with the different types of head acts and the possibility of embedding them into the request:

> Whereas in English, German and Russian, the politeness marker can precede, follow the head act, or appear within it, Polish does not offer the last possibility. Hence, *proszę* cannot be regarded as an internal modifier, and even English shows a strong preference for using *please* outside the head act. (2009a, p. 204)

When it comes to the distribution of the devices reducing the level of imposition of the request (downtoners), this is also culture-specific, namely, there were only two occurrences of *possibly*, one of *at all* and one of *by any chance* in the English data, while the Polish corpus provided four cases of *może* 'perhaps'. Thus the final data can be summarised in the following way:

Table 3.2. Distribution of lexical downgrading across languages. Adapted from Ogiermann (2009a, p. 205)

N = 100	English	Polish
Consultative devices	34	3
Politeness markers	15	3
Adverbial downtoners	4	4
Minimizers	2	1
Diminutives	0	0
Total	55	11

As can be seen in the Table 3.2, diminutive constructions, which form the basics of Polish politeness by softening the illocutionary force (Wierzbicka, 1991), are non-existent in both the Polish and English corpora.

The final observation coming from the research study organised by Ogiermann (2009) concerns the application of grounders, or supportive moves that the respondents used as off-record requests, minimising the illocutionary force.

Table 3.3. Distribution of supportive moves across languages. Adapted from Ogiermann (2009, p. 206)

N = 100		English	Polish
Grounders		81	59
Preparators	(introduction)	1	16
	(availability)	7	6
Indebtedness	(gratitude)	4	12
	(compensation)	2	6
	Total	95	99

The results displayed in Table 3.3 clearly indicate some differences between the languages, that is, in the number of formulaic expressions of gratitude (greater in Polish) and expressions minimising the imposition of the request (also more common in Polish).

Compliment Responses. According to Kasper (2000, p. 319), "[c]ompliments are most frequently packaged as single-turn utterances with a simple, short, highly formulaic structure." In the present study, my main intention is to focus not on the ways of producing compliments in English, but rather on how to respond to them.

Responding to Compliments. As has already been stated, cultures differ significantly in their approach to politeness and also in the idea of complimenting. According to Pomerantz (1978), two vital conditions have to be met, namely acceptance and agreement. "To accomplish this, compliment receivers are required to produce modest responses by using rejections and disagreements in order to avoid self-praise such as saying 'Thank you'" (Fujimura-Wilson, 2014, p. 23). Compliments may be described as "speech acts that notice and attend to the hearer's interests, wants, needs and goods" (Brown & Levinson,

cited in Holmes, 1995, p. 116). Complimenting is one of the positive politeness strategies recognised and discussed by many researchers. According to Holmes, "a compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer" (Holmes, 1986, p. 485). As Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 57) have posited, compliments in English function as "social lubricants" and help social relations to "go smoothly." These authors give the following themes of compliments:

1. Appearance/possessions (e.g., *You look absolutely beautiful!*)
2. Performance/skills/abilities (e.g., *Your presentation was excellent.*)
3. Personality traits (e.g., *You are so sweet.*)

According to Ishihara and Cohen (2010, pp. 59–60), compliment responses can be divided into three broad categories: accept, reject/deflect, and evade. Semantically, common responses to compliments can be categorised into acceptance, mitigation, and rejection. Each category has subcategories:

Accept
    Token of appreciation (*thanks/thank you*)
    Acceptance by means of a comment (*Yeah, it's my favourite, too*)
    Upgrading the compliment by self-praise (*Yeah, I can play other sports well, too*)
Mitigate
    Comment about history (*I bought it for the trip to Arizona*)
    Shifting the credit (*My brother gave it to me/It really knitted itself*)
    Questioning or requesting reassurance or repetition (*Do you really like them?*)
    Reciprocating (*So's yours*)
    Scaling down or downgrading (*It's really quite old*)
Reject
    Disagreement (A: *You look good and healthy.* B: *I feel fat.*)
No response
Request interpretation

Addressee interprets the compliment as a request (*You wanna borrow this one too?*).

The study conducted by Herbert (1989) on the usage of compliment responses by speakers of American English has led to the emergence of the revised Pomerantz taxonomy and the creation of a twelve-type categorisation of compliment response:

1. appreciation token ("Thanks," "Thank you"),
2. comment acceptance ("Yeah, it's my favorite too"),
3. praise upgrade ("Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?"),
4. comment history ("I bought it for the trip to Arizona"),
5. reassignment ("My brother gave it to me," "It really knitted itself"),
6. return ("So's yours"),
7. scale down ("It's really quite old"),
8. question ("Do you really think so?"),
9. disagreement ("I hate it"),
10. qualification ("It's alright, but Len's is nicer"),
11. no acknowledgment, and
12. request interpretation ("You wanna borrow this one too?").

However, according to Wierzbicka (1991, p. 137, in Jakubowska, 1999, p. 83), compliment response types may most basically be said to belong to three categories, that is, acceptances, rejections, and self-praise avoidance. Polish responses to compliments can be put into the same categories as their English counterparts, but their frequency of occurrence appears to differ.

Polish vs English Reaction to Compliments. As has already been said, only some nationalities will accept compliments, and the English are definitely one of these. By contrast, Japanese, Chinese, and even Poles would be more likely to use self-denigration. Thus the typical reaction of a Chinese student of English towards a compliment might be as follows:

> Foreign visitor to China: Your English is excellent.
> Chinese student: No, no. My English is very poor. There's much room for improvement. I still have a long way to go in my study....
>
> (Huang, 2007, p. 130)

A famous study conducted by Herbert (1991) on Polish university students revealed that "over half of compliments were adjectival compliments, such as 'nice', 'great' and 'lovely', and these types of compliments appeared among Polish speakers less frequently than Americans" (Fujimura-Wilson, 2014, p. 28). What is more, Poles tend to provide more possessions-oriented compliments for others, but we avoid self-praise and generally tend to disagree with compliments when they are directed towards us.

Hassal's study (2003, in Salgado, 2011, p. 15) has also confirmed the detrimental impact of a learner's proficiency level on the process of acquiring pragmatic aspects. Development and control over grammatical features seem to align with the decreasing influence of L1 pragmatic transfer, which is also visible while paying and accepting compliments.

Jakubowska (1999, pp. 77–78) portrays many syntactic similarities existing between Polish and English:

Polish	English
a. Świetnie wyglądasz. ("You look great.")	You look very nice.
	You are looking great.
b. Podoba mi się twoja fryzura. ("I like your hair-do.")	
c. Ta sukienka jest szałowa. ("This dress is terrific.")	It's really terrific.

In both languages there are three major syntactic patterns of compliment formulae:

Polish	English
a. NP. jest { wygląda } naprawdę { Adj { Adv	NP. is/looks (really) Adj
b. NP. mi się naprawdę podoba	I really like/love NP
c. To (jest) naprawdę Adj NP.	PRO is (really) a Adj NP.
(Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989, p. 77)	(Wolfson, 1983, p. 85)

English, and American English specifically, differs from Polish in terms of compliments' function, that is, their use to reinforce the desired result, for instance, in an educational context:

a. Joe, you did an excellent job on the report last night. (Manes, 1983: 97)

b. John found out what the homework was, somehow, I don't know how. But that's great, John.

(in Jakubowska, 1999, p. 80).

This function, largely absent in Polish, may have some motivational and encouraging effect. Poles, whose attitude to praising and complimenting is different from that of English speakers, would probably resort to this type of compliment only in the context of primary education. The final observation that should be made refers to the attitude Poles have towards receiving compliments. It seems that we treat them more seriously and do not use them as often as Americans do. "To Poles, native speakers of English often seem to use elaborate language to compliment things that deserve no more than a mention. Poles, on the other hand, are much more reserved in giving praise when it is not deserved" (Ronowicz, 1995, in Jakubowska, 1999, p. 82). Moreover, the frequency of the occurrence of compliments is different, especially in situations when "self-praise-avoiding responses are prevalent, especially those which downgrade the praise of Rc [recipient], or which reject the compliment or disagree with its force" (Ronowicz, 1995, in Jakubowska, 1999, p. 82). However, presumably under the influence of globalisation and the impact of English, the young generation of Poles has shown a growing tendency to accept compliments.

Apologies. Apologies constitute a very important speech act that aims at restoring and maintaining social relationships. Described by Leech (1985, p. 125) as transactions involving "a bid to change the balance-sheet of the relation between *s* and *h*" and by Trosborg (1985, p. 373) as actions taken whenever the speaker commits an act of offending and acknowledges responsibility for making it, apologies can include action or utterance taken (or which should have been taken) to "set things right" (Trosborg, 1985, p. 373) and restore the status quo. They are also referred to as a "social lubricant" which indicates that the primary function of apology is to repair a damaged relationship between the offended and the offender.

Kitao and Kitao (2013, pp. 1–2) pay attention to the difficulty and complexity of apologising, and observe that employing one strategy only may not be sufficient. A word of caution that should be sounded here is that the act of apologising threatens the speaker's face:

Apologizing can be difficult, because by apologizing, a speaker is taking a degree of responsibility, downgrading the speaker's face, humbling him or herself to some degree and conceding a mistake, but on the other hand, failing to apologize can threaten the hearer's face and possibly the relationship between the speaker and hearer.

(Wipprecht, 2004; Salgado, 2011, in Kitao & Kitao, 2013, pp. 1–2)

As Ogiermann (2009b, p. 45) remarks, apologies (using Austin's taxonomy) fall under the category of "behabitives", along with congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging, which Austin defines as "a kind of performative concerned roughly with reactions to behaviour and with behaviour towards others and designed to exhibit attitudes and feelings" (1975[1962], p. 83). In apologising, the speaker performs:

A **locutionary** act S utters the words: I apologise (explicit performative) or I'm sorry (primary performative)

An **illocutionary** act S apologises

A **perlocutionary** act S placates the hearer (who accepts the apology and forgives).

According to Searle (in Ogiermann, 2009b, p. 45), apologies belong to the category of expressives, which further includes thanking, congratulating, condoling, deploring, and welcoming. However, for Leech (1983), apologies belong to "the convivial speech act type, in which the illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal. In the case of apologies it is the goal of maintaining harmony between speaker and hearer, which makes them inherently polite" (Leech, 1983, p. 46). There are a number of linguistics strategies for expressing apologies. Olshtain (1983) proposes the following division:

1. Direct Apology (e.g., *I'm sorry*, or *I apologize*)
2. Explanation of why the speaker (the one who apologizes) did what he/she did
3. Acceptance of responsibility (e.g., *it's my fault*)
4. Offer of repair (e.g., *let me pay for it*)
5. Promise of forbearance (e.g., *it'll never happen again*)

However, one of the most salient Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), initiated by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), identified three expressions for the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) of apologies:

1) an expression of regret ("I'm sorry")
2) an offer of apology ("I apologize")
3) a request for forgiveness ("Forgive me," "Excuse me," "Pardon me")

As Kirchhoff et al. (2012, p. 110) explain, "the IFID indicates that the phrase is meant to be a realization of an apology." Moreover, the categories of acknowledgement of responsibility, offer of repair, statement of alternative, and verbal avoidance are further divided into subcategories. "The typology also includes adjuncts to apologies, such as using intensifiers, minimizing the offense, and expressing concern for the interlocutor" (Kirchhoff et al., 2012, p. 2). Kirchhoff et al. (2012, p. 111) identified several elements of apologising, namely the following:

Figure 3.4. Elements of apology introduced by Kirchhoff et al. (2009, in Kirchhoff et al., 2012, p. 111)

Elements of apology	Description
Statement of apology (IFID)	Using a phrase that states that the given statement is an apology, such as "I want to apologize."
Naming the offence	Naming the offence(s) for which the apology is given.
Taking responsibility	Stating that one accepts responsibility for the offence(s).
Attempting to explain the offence	Trying to explain one's behavior that led to the offence(s) without applying an external attribution.
Conveying emotions	Revealing emotions such as shame and remorse that one has committed the offence(s)
Addressing emotions and/or damage of the other	Addressing of emotions and/or damages that the offence(s) caused on behalf of the offended.
Admitting fault	Admitting that with the offence(s) one violated an explicitly or implicitly agreed-upon rule.
Promising forbearance	Saying that one wants to refrain from repeating the offence(s).
Offering reparation	Offering to account for harm and/or damages on behalf of the offended by monetary or symbolic restitution.
Acceptance request	Stating that one hopes, the apology can be accepted by its receiver.

In their study, Kirchhoff et al. (2012) clearly showed that there exists a strong correlation between apologising strategies and forgiveness and that, for example, when apologising in a neighbourhood conflict-context it is essential to apply four apologising elements: "[...] conveying emotions, admitting fault, the statement of apology (IFID), such as 'I apologize,' and an attempt at explanation" (Kirchhoff et al., 2012, p. 124). Thus it has been acknowledged that the number of apologising strategies is not universal, but varies according to the seriousness of the situation, level of anger and social context. Wierzbicka (1985) also agrees that speech acts and other verbal behaviour cannot be fully understood without reference to cultural values and attitudes. What seems to be most binding however, are the conditions presented by Lakoff (2001, p. 33, in Ogiermann, 2009b, p. 71), who maintains that "unlike most speech acts it is the form of the apology that counts" (2001, p. 23) and Thomas, who argued that "the words only become an apology when H chooses to take them as such" (Thomas, 1983, p. 101).

Polish vs English Apologies. A specific recognisable structure of apologies in Polish and typical feature of them is the repeatability of specific lexical and grammatical forms. The structure of the explicit classic apology usually includes three components: 1 – the apologising lexeme *przepraszam* ('I'm sorry') with additional lexemes 2 – naming a fault, and 3 – giving an excuse. The pattern may thus look like this:

1 (*Przepraszam bardzo Kasiu,*) 2 (*że tak się zachowałem,*) 3 (*nie wiem, co mi strzeliło do głowy.*)
1 (*I'm very sorry Kate,*) 2. (*for behaving in this way*) 3. (*I don't know what I was thinking.*) (Kozicka-Borysowska, 2008, online)

The first component forms a basic structure necessary for the identification of the apology speech act, and the following two are constitutive and facultative (Kozicka-Borysowska, 2008, online). Within the first component, in order to enhance the power of the apology utterance, *przepraszam* ('I am sorry') may be replaced by its equivalents *proszę mi wybaczyć* ('please forgive me'), *proszę o wybaczenie* ('I beg (your) forgiveness'). Suszyńska (1999, p. 1060) also holds that the performative form *przepraszam* or *przykro mi* ('I'm sorry') is sometimes intensified by *proszę mi wybaczyć* ('please forgive me'). However, in the case of

more substantial offences, a speaker may resort to one of the five strategies forming the speech act set of apology (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983):

a. the general strategies:
   - the IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device), containing the formulaic forms of apology (containing explicit performative verbs)
   - the expression of S's responsibility
b. the situation-specific strategies:
   - the explanation, or account, of the situation (cf. Termińska, 1991)
   - the offer of repair
   - the promise of forbearance.

(Jakubowska, 1999, pp. 71–72)

An interesting cross-cultural difference between Polish and English ways of apologising is described by Ronowicz (1995), who claims that Poles apologise less often than native speakers of English for trifles and when they want to express disagreement with other people (cf. Dąbrowska, 1992; in Jakubowska, 1999, p. 71). Jakubowska (1999, p. 72) also posits that the two languages differ in terms of the distribution of specific strategies:

> The use of IFID is the most common way of expressing apology. Yet English native speakers are much more often willing to express their responsibility for the offence than Poles are [...]. The explanation of the situation, which is the most common strategy employed in Polish, is relatively infrequent in English. The offer of repair (e.g. *I'll pay for the broken window* and *Ja to naprawię* ("I'll mend it")), which is relevant mainly in the case of physical injury or other damage, is much more frequently used in English than in Polish.

The final word in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic divergence between Polish and English comes from a study conducted by Suszczyńska (1999), who, while comparing apologising behaviours of Poles, Hungarians, and English speakers, observed that the last group is not so keen on taking responsibility when apologising (and being involved in and responsible for some other person's injury – e.g. hurting their leg), which is further attributed to the Anglo-Saxon unwillingness to display emotions in public, when admitting one's responsibility may be seen as embarrassing and discrediting. Poles, on the other hand,

do not have a problem with accepting their own guilt, which is explained in the following way:

> People are more publicly available to each other, which implies less social distance and a smaller personal preserve – the hurting leg is verbally noticed, speakers are more ready (and expected) to display their weakness in order to "pay" for the offense and the private territory of the offended person is easily "invaded" in the offender's eagerness to offer help.

The internal intensification of the IFID is more common in Polish than in English. It is usually effected by means of adverbial modifiers: *bardzo* ('very') and *very*, respectively. In Polish it is also common to introduce adverbs in the positive degree (*bardzo*, *naprawdę*, *serdecznie* – 'very', 'really', 'whole-heartedly'), but also in the superlative degree (*najmocniej*, *najserdeczniej*, lit. 'most strongly', 'most heartily', coll. 'with my most heartfelt...'), and clauses consisting of two adverbs (*naprawdę bardzo przepraszam* – 'I am really very sorry') (cf. Jakubowska, 1999; Kozicka-Borysowska, 2008). Polish speakers are also more likely to disregard their negative face needs than members of a negative politeness culture, who might be more reluctant to allow a threat to their negative face, and be more likely to apologise indirectly or avoid confrontation than members of positive politeness cultures. "At the same time, they might apologise more readily in situations involving damage to H's [hearer's] negative face; situations which may not require an apology in positive politeness cultures" (Ogiermann, 2009b, p. 55).

3.4.3 Development of Pragmatic Competence

As has been mentioned, one cannot communicate effectively without a proper understanding of the social, cultural, and pragmatic niceties of a given speech community. A communication act that takes place in a second language is much more complicated and demanding than one held in our mother tongue. Growing inhibition and anxiety can impact a person to such an extent that they may find it difficult to utter a word, or they may overemphasise the form, while ignoring the meaning and message that they intend to convey. For many educators teaching beginners, therefore, the ability to get one's meaning across is more important than appropriateness-related concerns, especially because

"the appropriateness conditions that hold for the most common communicative functions differ little from language to language in certain fundamental respects" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 15).

L2 learners' development of pragmatic ability has been studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Kasper (2001) thoroughly analyses different approaches and theories that attempt to account for the interlanguage pragmatics. The first approach, as she holds, locates the development of pragmatic ability within a comprehensive model of communicative competence, either examining pragmatics as an autonomous component or in its interaction with grammatical ability. The discussion then should focus on the evidence for and against the interdependence of pragmatic and grammatical ability. The second perspective interprets pragmatic learning as information processing, with a particular view to the roles of attention, awareness, input, and metapragmatic knowledge. The third approach according to Kasper (2001, p. 502), "investigates pragmatic learning in sociocultural perspective and that pragmatic knowledge emerges from assisted performance, both in student-teacher and peer interaction." The fourth theory is language socialisation, "investigating how cultural and pragmatic knowledge are jointly acquired through learners' participation in recurring situated activities" (Kasper, 2001, p. 502).

The debate about which language competence (i.e. grammatical or pragmatic) develops first in L2 learners has attracted lots of attention (Schmidt, 1993; Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, 1993; Rueda, 2006; Walters, 1980). It seems that there are two, quite opposed opinions. The first holds that "a restricted interlanguage grammar does not necessarily prevent pragmatic and interactional competence from developing, especially when language learners acculturate to the TL community" (Rueda, 2006, p. 175). What this theory implies is that in the case of shortcomings in grammar, L2 or FL learners will turn to their pragmatic repertoire and this "points to the perspective that pragmatics precedes grammar" (Rueda, 2006, p. 175). On the other hand, when not advanced adult learners of L2 want to convey a message, they will more often than not rely on their mother tongue pragmatic universals (and this may naturally lead to pragmatic transfer) to "communicate linguistic action in the TL" (Rueda, 2006, p. 175). This interpretation is also supported by Eckert (2000, p. 186), who emphasises the influence pragmatic universals and language- and culture-specific practices have:

[...] the pragmatic knowledge that beginning learners draw on is composed of pragmatic universals and language and culture-specific practices, both of which become available to L2 learners through prior experience in one or more speech communities and multiple communities of practice.

Rueda (2006, p. 175) further adds that "[a]s their interlanguage development progresses, their learning task changes and they start figuring out not only the primary functions of the TL grammatical forms they have achieved, but also their secondary meanings, so the order reverses, and form precedes function." Kecskés (2013, pp. 64–65 quoting Bardovi-Harlig, 1999) also adds that

grammatical competence and pragmatic competence are independent of one another, though a lack of grammatical competence in a particular area may cause a particular utterance to be less effective. According to another view (e.g. Barron 2003), grammatical competence is the prerequisite of pragmatic competence, but Barron argued that these two aspects are interrelated, and the way they correlate with each other is not linear, but rather complex.

Irrespective of which of those assumptions hold true, L2 learners must take part in meaningful communicative interactions in order to develop grammar and literacy. However, even realistic situations do not suffice to mushroom pragmatic discourse and sociolinguistic ability. Kasper and Rose (2002, in Rueda, 2016) hold that pragmatic awareness can be exercised as a result of two sets of circumstances. In the first situation pragmatic competence will appear as a certain side-effect of exposing students to instructional activities, whereas in the second it will be the consequence of deliberate pedagogical activities aimed at the acquisition of pragmatics. Classroom activities focusing on the development of pragmatic competence will at the same time concentrate on metapragmatic declarative knowledge, whereas those designed to exercise TL pragmatic abilities will aim at metapragmatic procedural knowledge (Wild-ner-Bassett, 1994). Providing such pragmatically genuine activities may be challenging because the majority of materials students are exposed to in the classroom present no appropriate language input and some speech acts or language functions are commonly overlooked and not practiced at all.

The acquisition-learning distinction that has already been mentioned in this work sheds more light on the process of the development of pragmatic

abilities. As was stated before, learning is a conscious process usually associated with classroom practice where a student is fully aware of picking up some grammatical or lexical items. On the contrary, acquisition has been equated with a subconscious and authentic process of being exposed to naturally-occurring language produced in the target country. Consequently, a student immersed in the classroom learning situation is not exposed to genuine language as there is not a sufficient amount of input there necessary to boost authentic communication in the TL (Kasper, 1998). It has also been emphasised that these drawbacks make it "difficult for learners to develop the processing control in utterance comprehension and production required for effective participation in conversation" (Kasper, 1998, p. 26, in Rueda, 2006, p. 175). The studies conducted by Matsumura (2001, 2003) and Schauer (2006a, in Xiao, 2015, p. 142) support the claim that exposure to target language benefits pragmatic development. What is more, "the SLA context can provide ample pragmatic input (e.g., opportunities for learners to interact with and observe native speakers) [...]." However, pragmatic development is likely also to be affected by all of the individual difference factors, such as motivation, and variability among learners in their engagement in interaction or identities in the community.

As has been stated, one of the phenomena preventing learners from using the language exactly as they want in order to communicate their meaning is pragmatic transfer. An interesting observation concerning the relationship between the level of pragmatic transfer and a student's level of L2 proficiency can be found in the studies conducted by Beebe and Takahashi (1987) on Japanese users of English. What they hypothesised and verified is that more advanced L2 learners display more L1 communicative characteristics in their English proficiency than less proficient students.

> The more proficient learners (defined in this study as those who had been resident longer in the United States) made more frequent use of native-language patterns – in particular, the high level of formality in the tone and content of refusals [...]. However, the results for the EFL learners (i.e. those studying English at college level in Japan) failed to support the hypothesis, there being no difference in the refusals of undergraduates and graduates.
>
> (Ellis, 1999, p. 180)

The study also showed that even advanced L2 learners, who otherwise would not find it difficult to refuse in English, may still use different strategies and thus refuse in a way different than native speakers do. The pragmatic failures these students demonstrate can be broken down into pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic kinds. In pragmalinguistics, according to Leech (2014, p. 13) "politeness can first be studied as to how it is conveyed or manifested, linguistically." Thus it encompasses such phenomena as "the range of lexico-grammatical resources of the language, their meanings, their degree of pragmaticalization, their frequency, and how they are deployed as linguistic strategies of politeness" (Leech, 2014, p. 14). Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, studies the "socially oriented facet of politeness" and "the various scales of value that make a particular degree of politeness seem appropriate or normal in a given social setting" (Leech, 2014, p. 14).

Pragmalinguistic failure, according to Thomas (1983, p. 99), is "caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force," whereas sociopragmatic failure happens as a result of "different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior." Pragmatic failure, in the opinion of Kecskés (2013, pp. 72–73) may also manifest itself in the wrong application of formulaic speech and especially of situation-bound utterances (hereafter: SBUs). He notes that students who are otherwise very advanced in terms of grammar and lexis may be recognised as non-native speakers not only on the basis of different accent (pronunciation) and word choices, but also SBUs, defined as appropriate language use in a given speech community. Failing to adopt formulae that would or should normally be used by native speakers in given conversational contexts may reveal non-native identity, or even lead to communication breakdown.[9] Thomas (1983, p. 95) also adds that pragmatic violations may take the form of "blurts", "flouts", and "lects". While each of them differs in terms of their "seriousness," they all represent certain form of pragmatic deviation. Blurts, being the pragmatic equivalent of the grammatical slip of the tongue or pen, do not pose a great threat in impacting communication efficacy as they simply represent "an involuntary deviation in performance from the student's current phonological, grammatical or lexical competence" (Thomas, 1983, p. 95). Pragmalects, similarly,

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9   Kecskés (2013, p. 73) stresses the importance of SBUs and adds that non-native speakers have to understand their linguistic meaning and know when to introduce them appropriately. As very often there is no one-to-one equivalent, SBUs provide many cases for L1 transfer.

shall not be perceived as the major cause of pragmatic failure since they are merely pragmalinguistic features of a given speech community. As Lakoff (1974, p. 26) observes, our interpretation of courteous behaviour may diverge due to different rules or hierarchy of acceptability. Flouts, however, shall be treated with due attention since they influence general perception of politeness. As Leech (1980, p. 10) points out, one may flout pragmatic principles, be extremely impolite, untruthful, and uninformative and yet remain within the pragmatic system and speak perfect English.

For describing the phases of pragmatic development, a study conducted by Bloom-Kulka (1991) differentiated between three broad stages of this process, namely: 1) message-oriented and unsystematic, 2) interlanguage-oriented and potentially systematic, and 3) interculturally-oriented and possibly systematic. During the first stage a learner applies any linguistic or non-linguistic means to communicate the intended meaning. At the same time, however, they are still not autonomous enough to be able to interpret the illocutionary force of a given speech act themselves, and thus have to rely on some situational hints. The second stage marks some progress, yet students are still producing some pragmatically unacceptable structures due to the influence of their L1 transfer. Their speech also differs from that of a native speaker not only because of transfer, but also due to verbosity. Not every learner reaches the third stage, and to do so requires many years of exposure to the L2. And yet a student who has finally reached this stage may still produce non-native language characterised by too many words used or by a "different distribution of linguistic devices used to realize speech acts, and generally, [...] oversensitivity and hesitancy in comprehending and performing face-threatening acts" (Ellis, 1999, p. 182).

Research on the development of pragmatics has drawn upon three perspectives: cognitive, socially oriented, and emergentist. The cognitive perspective is built on the premise that the development of pragmatics is an intrapersonal mental process that can be compared to the way a computer processes, stores and retrieves information (Timpe-Laughlin, 2016). Schmidt's (1990, 1993) noticing hypothesis can be found among the cognitive theories most commonly referenced in L2 pragmatics.

Although *noticing* refers to the act of becoming aware of a language aspect, it needs to be distinguished from *understanding*, which "implies the recognition of some general principle, rule or pattern" (Schmidt, 1995, p. 29). Therefore,

noticing "refers to surface level phenomena and item learning, while under-standing refers to deeper level [sic] of abstraction related to (semantic, syntactic, or communicative) meaning, system learning."

(Schmidt, 1995, p. 29, in Timpe-Laughlin, 2016, p. 2).

Thus it may be concluded that adult users of L2, who have already acquired L1 pragmatic norms, may and will resort to the strategies they are already familiar with. This, however, will lead to some struggle with the appropriate realisation of illocutionary force. Teaching and learning implications for this particular age group should therefore include: "(a) acquiring new, L2-specific sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge and integrating the new set of representations into preexisting pragmatic representations, and (b) controlling the new form–function–context relations that are appropriate in a given L2 environment" (Taguchi, 2015, in Timpe-Laughlin, 2016, p. 3).

The socially oriented perspective focusing on interpersonal processes ascribes the development of language knowledge to social interactions taking place in various cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts. Moreover, in this perspective the acquisition of pragmatics "is not the taking in of linguistic forms by learners, but the constant adaptation and enactment of language-using patterns in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in a dynamic communicative situation" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012, p. 211, in Timpe-Laughlin, 2016, p. 4). The emergentist perspective, on the other hand, advocates the idea that "language develops through interactions between context and individuals, and variability is central in development" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 66). Moreover, "L2 pragmatics as a complex subsystem of the larger system of language is viewed as emerging over time from the dynamic and complex interplay between an L2 learner's ID variables and environmental factors" (de Bot, 2008; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, in Timpe-Laughlin, 2012, p. 4).

This interplay between an L2 learner's ID and especially the norms he or she relies on recalls a certain form of transformation when L1 norms have to undergo some alteration and adjust to a new linguistic and cultural context. Kecskés (2013, p. 67) refers to this process of transition as "conceptual socialization," and further adds that:

During the process of conceptual socialization, the L1-dominated conceptual base is being gradually restructured, making space for and engaging with

the new knowledge and information coming through the second language channel (e.g., Kecskes 2003; Ortactepe 2012). This leads to the development of a conscious awareness of how another culture is different from one's own culture, the ability to reflect upon this difference in language production, and the development of an identity that is the reflection of the dual culture.

To conclude, the development of pragmatic competence can be boosted providing three conditions are met in the L2 classroom context: enhanced input is provided and thus the opportunities for noticing increase, awareness-building activities allowing for some reflection on pragmatic phenomena are introduced, and students are exposed to activities promoting social interaction (Timpe-Laughlin, 2016). A pragmatically-advanced L2 speaker should also know when and how to apply SBUs, should not look for "an equivalent SBU when there is none" (Kecskés, 2013, p. 74) or "use the communicative customs of one language in another language" (Kecskés, 2013, p. 74). However, it should be also emphasised that although non-native speakers may know target language norms and expectations, they would neither necessarily be willing "to develop a conscious awareness," nor wish to act accordingly themselves. As Kecskés (2013, p. 69) summarises, "[i]n intercultural communication (especially in lingua franca) this fact may support rather than hamper the smoothness of the communicative process. The too frequent use of 'thank you', 'I am sorry', 'have a nice day' type of expressions may be annoying for nonnative speakers."

3.4.4 Measuring Pragmatic Competence: The Case of Speech Acts

Although the necessity of teaching pragmatics has been already recognised, assessment of L2 pragmatic abilities is still a relatively young field of inquiry, awaiting further research and development (McNamara & Roever, 2006, in Eslami & Mirzaei, 2012). The reasons behind this scarcity may for example stem from "an inherent complexity involved in the assessment of second language pragmatics that arises from highly contextualised or social nature of what is intended to be tested" (Eslami & Mirzaei, 2012, p. 199). Moreover, the close connection between the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge makes it difficult to univocally assess which of the two components deficiency is responsible for pragmatic failure. Thirdly, social, contextual and individual variations contribute to a high level of pragmatic norms variability and thus

potential problems in measuring this kind of competence. Students' individual preferences and a desire to act according to one's identity may also increase the level of difficulty while assessing pragmatic competence (Ishihara, 2006; LoCastro, 2001).

Research into information-processing (e.g. Adams & Collins, 1979) suggests that "although (pragmatic) comprehension does depend on successful mastery of lower level skills (from the ability to recognize sounds/letters to the assignment of meaning in context), different levels of processing are carried on simultaneously, constantly feeding into and reinforcing each other" (in Thomas, 1983, p. 96).

While assessing pragmatic competence, and the ability to produce various speech acts specifically, Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 267) recommend taking a few factors into account, such as the degree of imposition in a request or the severity of the infraction in an apology situation; the level of acquaintance between the speaker and listener; and their relative social status.

For the purpose of holistic analysis, however, they suggest implementing additional criteria, for example:

- – the selection and use of strategies for realizing a given speech act,
- – the typicality of the expressions used,
- – the appropriateness of the amount of speech and information given,
- – the appropriateness of the level of formality,
- – the directness, and
- – the level of politeness.

<div align="right">(Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 276)</div>

Thirdly, when attempting to assess pragmatic ability, a teacher should analyse not only linguistic aspects (pragmalinguistic ability) but also cultural (sociopragmatic ability) and analytic ones (ability to analyse and evaluate practical use – referred to as metapragmatic ability) (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 292).

A detailed investigation of linguistic abilities should take into account the following variables:

- vocabulary/phrases (e.g., a big favor, I just need …);
- grammatical structures (e.g. Can you … / Would you … / I was wondering if … / Would it be possible …?);

- strategies for a speech act (i.e., the selection of formulas and the way they are used) (e.g., giving a reason for a request, apologizing for the trouble, thanking for complying with the request);
- choice and use of pragmatic tone (e.g., how sincere the speaker appears with verbal and non-verbal cues);
- choice and use of organization (rhetorical structure) of the written/spoken discourse (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion);
- choice and use of discourse markers and fillers (e.g., by the way, speaking of ..., well, um); and
- choice and use of epistemic stance markers (i.e., words and phrases to show the speaker's stance, such as: I think, maybe, seem, suppose, tend to, and of course).

(Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 293).

In the process of validating sociopragmatic abilities, one may also verify the following criteria:

- the level of directness, formality, and/or politeness in the interaction: the extent to which these are appropriate in the given context;
- the choice and use of speech acts: whether the speakers' choice of speech acts is appropriate in the given context;
- the handling of cultural norms in the target language: the extent to which the speakers adhere to appropriate cultural norms (if in fact this is their intent); and
- the handling of the cultural reasoning or ideologies behind the L2 pragmatic norms: the extent to which learners adopt target culture ideologies (if this is their intent).

(Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 295)

Different classroom-based measures may be adopted to verify the level of productive and receptive pragmatic competence. While measuring receptive competence students may be asked to assess others' pragmatic performance. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) advocate the application of a videotaped role-play, a multiple choice discourse completion test, and a scaled-response DCT. In the second stage, the students may also parttake in self- or peer-assessment of pragmatic competence, or provide an explanation for giving a certain ranking.

Learners' perception of contextual factors can be also verified through teacher's assessment.

Cognitive processes learners use in pragmatic production may be also analysed on the basis of retrospective verbal reports (RVRs): "RVRs are subsequent to the task and prompt learners to report on the thoughts they had during task completion (Jourdenais, 2001). This refers to information on how learners assessed and planned their speech act utterances, their language of thought, the planning of their responses and how they selected and retrieved language forms" (Cohen, 2013; Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Félix-Brasdefer, 2006, 2008; Hassall, 2008; Trosborg, 1995; Woodfield, 2010, 2012, in Maibodi et al., 2016). Although verbal reports elicit specific information regarding learners' cognitive processes, to date, only few studies on L2 pragmatics have examined learners' cognitive processes in the performance of speech acts (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Hassall, 2008; Ren, 2013; Woodfield, 2010, 2012; Maibodi et al., 2016).[10]

Pragmatic production of the students is mainly assessed on the basis of the data analysis gathered through written discourse completion tasks (WDCT). It is also possible to introduce an oral version of a DCT, namely an ODCT, when learners listen to or see some situational descriptions and are later required to audio-record their oral responses of what they would say in a given situation. Ishihara (2010) provides a useful example of a rating chart indicating various criteria for evaluation of learners' responses:

Table 3.4. Evaluation criteria. Adapted from Ishihara (2010).

1. Level of formality	4 3 2 1
2. Requesting Strategies	4 3 2 1
3. Word choice	4 3 2 1
4. Tone	4 3 2 1

Explanation: Scoring: 4 – very appropriate; 3 – somewhat appropriate; 2 – less appropriate; 1 – inappropriate.

Additional possibilities of assessing pragmatic production include a discourse role-play tasks (DRPT) in the form of open and closed tasks (Maibodi et al., 2016, p. 203). Measuring productive pragmatic abilities can also be done

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10   More information concerning RVPs is introduced in Chapter 4.

through self-assessment instruments (SAI) when the respondents are asked "to read the description of each one by rating themselves on a Likert scale based on different assessment criteria (pragmalinguistic aspects, sociopragmatic aspects, and cultural aspects)" (Maibodi et al., 2016, p. 204).

3.5 Interactional Competence

As has been described in the foregoing section, pragmatic competence is primarily concerned with an individual language user's knowledge of communicative norms and sociocultural conventions, entailing a number of different competences. Interactional competence (hereafter: IC), in turn, can be defined as the ability to communicate in context-specific ways by employing communicative resources necessary to developing understanding and accomplishing setting-specific goals. The notion of IC was first recognised by Kramsch (1986) who argued that its prime objective is to focus on the ability to communicate intended meaning and to establish mutual understanding. According to Young (2011, online), IC encompasses three groups of resources, as follows:

- Identity resources
  Participation framework: the identities of all participants in an interaction, present or not, official or unofficial, ratified or unratified, and their footing or identities in the interaction
- Linguistic resources
  Register: the features of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar that typify a practice *Modes of meaning*: the ways in which participants construct interpersonal, experiential, and textual meanings in a practice
- Interactional resources
  Speech acts: the selection of acts in a practice and their sequential organization: *Turn-taking:* how participants select the next speaker and how participants know when to end one turn and when to begin the next
  Repair: the ways in which participants respond to interactional trouble in a practice
  Boundaries: the opening and closing acts of a practice that serve to distinguish a given practice from adjacent talk

It has also been observed that IC pertains to knowledge and the application of the above-mentioned resources in various social settings. The most significant difference, however, between CC and IC is that the latter "is not what a person knows, it is what a person does *together with others in specific contexts*" (Young, 2011, online).

Taylor and Galaczi (2018, online) extend the definition of IC and claim that it is

> the ability to co-construct interaction in a purposeful and meaningful way, taking into account sociocultural and pragmatic dimensions of the speech situation and event. This ability is supported by the linguistic and other resources that speakers and listeners leverage at a microlevel of the interaction, namely, aspects of topic management, turn management, interactive listening, break-down repair and non-verbal or visual behaviours.

The authors have also identified various variables pertaining to the macrolevel context of the speech situation and the microlevel context of the speech event and speech act. Those aspects are further compared to the model of a tree:

> The main trunk of the tree represents the interlocutors, who are colocated, as a pair or a group, within a shared time and space, regardless of whether they are interacting face-to-face or online; [...] Their respective interactional skills of topic management, turn management, etc. are shown as larger limbs of the tree from which emanate smaller branches representing microfeatures of each skill (e.g., topic management encompasses initiating, extending, shifting, and closing down topics).

What the visualisation does not display is a set of aspects connected with the microlevel investigation, such as

- holding the conversational floor, e.g., through pausing or pitch
- assigning conversational rights, e.g., through asking questions or syntactic means
- use of deixis and ellipsis for between-turn cohesion
- use of vague language
- collaboratively completing turns.

<div align="right">(Leaper, 2014, in Taylor & Galaczi, 2018, online)</div>

Finally, there are also some additional variables of possibly cross-cultural character that may determine the overall interactional competence effectiveness. Those variables have been identified through numerous studies conducted by many scholars, for instance:

- genre awareness, e.g., sharing personal stories or exchanging ideas (Paltridge, 2001)
- sequencing practices in speech acts, especially where "face" is involved; e.g., the use of "face-saving pre-sequences" to avoid dis-preferred responses, as seen in responding to an invitation with a refusal (Pomerantz, 1984)
- politeness control (Brown & Levinson, 1987)
- nonverbal features, such as laughter, posture, gaze, and gestures.
                              (Ducasse & Brown, 2009; Gan & Davison, 2011;
                                   May, 2011, in Taylor & Galaczi, 2018, online)

Pair-work tasks or various group discussions do not really stand a chance of preparing the students to function and communicate in the real world. Walsh (2011, p. 159) argues that being fluent or accurate would not suffice because in a genuine communicative encounter one should comprehend the local context, infer the meaning through some subtle hints and reading-between-the-lines, but also know how to repair breakdowns. IC in the case of higher proficiency L2 learners would be characterised by a greater amount of involvement in conversation, but also by the ability to "[provide] support to the interlocutor to develop the topic of the conversation, [to be] less dependent on the interlocutor's support, more able to develop other-initiated topics, and more able to recognize a broader range of functions of a discourse marker and use it appropriately" (Ikeda, 2017, in May et al., 2019, online).

To conclude, IC pertains to the application of various communication strategies (which may also be used in cross-cultural contexts) resulting not only from linguistic knowledge, but also from identity-based resources and multiple other variables affecting the effectiveness of interaction (e.g. conversational rules).

3.6 Recapitulation

The aim of this chapter is to focus on the notion of interactional and communicative competence and its most important components, such as pragmatic

competence. The chapter pays most attention to the development of pragmatic competence and growing awareness of politeness. It also sheds some light on the future of English as a lingua franca, attempting also to determine the "global" or universal features of politeness that should be visible in any communication act. Effective communication in various sociopragmatic contexts would undeniably entail the development of pragmatic competence. One should exercise relevant sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic repertoires necessary to convey their thoughts on the one hand and remain polite on the other. However, assuming that this communication is in English, it is demanding to decide on the norms we should adhere to, as native speakers themselves differ in terms of education and the understanding of polite behaviour. Thus a non-native speaker, commonly lacking such pragmatic intuition, may struggle in choosing the language that would appeal to their interlocutor's taste that would be precise, inoffensive, and unambiguous at the same time.

The Scheme of the Research Study

This chapter initiates the empirical part of this book. It starts off with specifying research objectives and then moves on to describing research tools used in this longitudinal study, that is, pre- and post-study questionnaires, WDCT scenarios, WRVP, a test in pragmatics and a pragmatic comprehension questionnaire. It describes the participants of this research project – a group of Generation Z advanced users of English choosing this language as their major and studying at the University of Silesia, Poland.

4.1 Research Objectives

Communicating in the second language is much more demanding than using one's mother tongue and some potential obstacles affecting this process have already been described in the previous chapters. Pragmatic competence is undeniably one of those competences that may significantly contribute to one's overall communication success or failure, as language is always seen as a social construct as well, learned and acquired through interaction. Without a doubt, language proficiency should not only be equated with grammatical well-formedness, but also with how to use it appropriately and efficiently in the target language. Findings in the area of Interlanguage Pragmatics (hereafter: ILP) have shown that grammatical well-formedness alone does not suffice to warrant successful communication. In this regard, Hymes (1971, p. 278) argues that "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (in Choraih et al., 2016, p. 199). The studies conducted by Hoffman-Hicks, (1992), Yamanaka (2003), Garcia (2004), Rover (2006), Xu et al. (2016), Liu (2012), Taguchi (2013) have demonstrated that the EFL learners' ILP competence is also strongly related to their level of language proficiency. Chen (2007) further adds that the development of pragmatic competence depends on linguistic competence.

This foregoing chapters of this book have already provided a few definitions of pragmatics, but the one coined by Crystal (2008, p. 379) deserves a closer investigation. As this outstanding linguist holds, pragmatics is "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication." What this interpretation of pragmatics emphasises is the fact that the way we use language is conditioned by a number of sociocultural constraints. These constraints may affect not only our linguistic choices (the speaker's point of view), but also the way we comprehend language (the hearer's point of view). Moreover, the speaker's point of view can be also determined by their age, or a generational cohort he or she belongs to. On this view, ILP is the study of how speakers develop, produce, and comprehend linguistic action in context (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). This research project aims at verifying this process among Polish advanced users of English.

The empirical part of this work demonstrates the findings of a longitudinal study implementing five research tools, namely, two self-designed questionnaires, three Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) scenarios, Written Retrospective Verbal Protocol (WRVP), and a test in pragmatics. The study was carried out from June 2018 to March 2021 and included eight stages. The general objectives of this project are twofold:

1. To assess the development of pragmatic competence of Polish students belonging to the age cohort Generation Z ("Generation Zers").
2. To describe this group of students as L2 learners of English.

As has already been demonstrated, Generation Z is unique and cannot be compared to any other age cohort before. It is hence believed that their outlook towards learning languages and opinion on how to do it effectively, is also different than other generations may display. Since this is the most IT-literate generation, immersed in the digital world from the beginning of their lives, it may be speculated that the internet and cyber reality are the most significant variables influencing not only their general knowledge, but also significantly affecting the way they learn, the norms they consider appropriate as well as their perception of successful second language communication. The author of this book is therefore primarily focused on assessing Generation Zers' pragmatic awareness, discovering what

exactly shapes this perception and drives their learning and communicating mechanisms.

In order to do so, a three-year research project (longitudinal study) was carried out among the students of the English department of the University of Silesia. The study was divided into stages, each of which served different objectives. The number of tools used at particular phases of the research project was deliberate and aimed at enhancing its reliability by collecting data by means of different research instruments. Introducing the idea of triangulation has always been perceived as one of the features typical for good research designs (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2009, p. 92). Methodological triangulation "refers to the use of more than one methodology in a research design." Additionally, triangulation allows us for the "convergence of findings and corroboration of research results" (Angouri, 2010, p. 34):

> According to this view, the expectation is that different datasets or different methodologies will lead to similar results and hence allow for 'confident interpretation' (e.g. Lyons, 2000: 280) of the findings and strengthen the researcher's conclusions. As such the term is also widely associated with the concept of credibility of research findings.
>
> (Angouri, 2010, p. 34)

Thus the introduction of five research tools has some additional grounds that shall be described in the subsequent parts.

In particular, the aim of the research is also to shed some light on the process of ILP development and to answer the following queries:

1. To which extent is pragmatic competence developed among English majors?
   a. What is the level of the development of pragmatic production?
   b. What is the level of the development of pragmatic comprehension?
   c. What thoughts do the participants have while performing speech acts in English?
2. What is students' own perception of their own pragmatic development?
3. What is the level of their pragmatic awareness?
4. Which speech acts do they consider easy/difficult to produce in English?
5. Which factors influence their learning process in general and pragmatic development specifically?
6. How successful do they feel as L2 users of English?

Since many other studies have emphasised the impact linguistic development (proficiency level) has on the process of ILP, the final research question intends:

7. To assess the development of linguistic competence (grammatical and lexical).

The final objective was subjected to a complex and detailed analysis, in particular during the research project it was possible to collect a relatively large learners corpus (23,471 words gathered through WDCTs, WRVPs, and additional open-ended question accompanying pragmatic comprehension questionnaire) that was analysed on the basis of Grammarly application indicating the examples of various linguistic errors, for instance, wrong tense, wrong collocation, clarity, wordy sentences, punctuation and spelling mistakes, etc. The content validity of WDCTs was also based on their analysis conducted by Polish and American academic teachers evaluating students' responses along four criteria provided by Ishihara (2010), that is:

(1) overall directness, politeness, and formality;
(2) choice of requesting strategies;
(3) overall comprehensibility; and
(4) pragmatic tone.

The data obtained from all implemented tools shall hopefully help not only to describe these students in terms of what second language users they are, but also to draw some important sociolinguistic as well as educational conclusions. The research project also aspires to attract student's attention and kindle their interest as well as reflection upon cross-cultural pragmatic differences.

4.2 Research Tools and Procedures

The study was conducted from June 2018 to March 2021. However, following the rules of adequate design, the launch and implementation of this longitudinal research project required a significant amount of time and included also several months (from October 2017 to May 2018) before the research proper, that is, the period of planning (aim, sample and unit of analysis, method of data collection and analysis, considering practical aspects, such as documents and references needed, etc.) and piloting of a Questionnaire 1. The first stage began in June 2018 with 100 students of English Philology Department (attending teacher training, business, and translation programmes) filling in the

questionnaires (cf. Appendix, Questionnaire 1). All of those participants were in their freshman year, having chosen English as their major and having been studying at the University of Silesia already for nine months. In the second stage of the research initiated in October 2019 and lasting to March 2020, the participants (already in their second and – in 2020 – in their third year of undergraduate studies) were asked to respond in English to different social situations, with various levels of social power and social distance, namely, three WDCT scenarios, and produce speech acts of requesting, responding to compliments, and apologising in different social contexts (pragmatic production). The corpus gathered in this way was examined in terms of content, statistical and linguistic analysis (LIWC 20, Receptiviti and Grammarly applications). It was also later juxtaposed with the students' own self-reported perception of their level of pragmatic competence. This stage of the research consisted of two phases, namely filling in WDCTs and completing WRVPs (written retrospective verbal protocols). As the purpose of content analysis is to organise and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it, the idea of using the third tool was to understand the strategies the students deployed and their perception of contextual factors. Moreover, it was also intended to analyse their cognitive processes adopted during pragmatic production, what kind of thoughts they had during task completion. As has been already stated (cf. Chapter 3), to date, not many studies on L2 pragmatics have examined learners' cognitive processes in the performance of speech acts (none of them has been conducted on Polish learners of English) and therefore that became additional goal of this research. The value of retrospective verbal protocol is that it reflects not only individual differences, but may also serve as a tool helping in drawing some general conclusions pertaining to the whole group of respondents, and, in the case of this project, Polish Generation Zers specifically. That is why a WRVP was extended by one open-ended question where the participants were asked to provide their insights on the easiest and the most difficult speech act to produce in English. The data obtained from this instrument was subjected to the analysis and evaluation procedures involving both content and statistical analysis. Additionally the corpus collected was also examined in terms of its linguistic correctness.

The third stage of this project started in May 2020 with 78 final-year undergraduates respondents filling in the second questionnaire (a combination of a multiple choice discourse completion test and a scaled-response DCT) with

the intention to assess their pragmatic comprehension. As one of the queries there was an open question asking the respondents to provide some rationale for their previous decisions, additional objective of implementing this tool was also to verify the language the respondents produce and assess their linguistic competence. This was done through the implementation of both LIWC 20 as well as Grammarly application.

The subsequent phase started in October 2020 when the respondents began their post-graduate studies. According to the curriculum, students taking up a further level of their studies should attend a general course in pragmatics (an introduction to pragmatic studies) encompassing 15 hours of practical classes (workshops) and 15 hours of lectures. To finish this course, one has to take a final written test assessing the knowledge gained – this evaluation took part in January 2021. The final instrument used for the purpose of this longitudinal study was the questionnaire that had already been distributed to the respondents at the beginning of this research. The initial idea for implementing this tool had remained unchanged, that is, to check students' own pragmatic self-assessment and to verify the factors contributing to their L2 development and communication efficacy.

The research tools used in this project are self-designed questionnaires, WDCT scenarios, a written retrospective verbal protocol, and a test. The intention of the following sections is to describe all instruments of data collection.

4.2.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are one of the research tools employed in this study with the intention to find answers to research questions in a disciplined and systematic manner. The superiority of questionnaires stems from their practical and economical easiness – they are relatively easy to construct and versatile, and by their means one may generate large quantities of processible data in a short period of time. Defined by Brown (2001, p. 6, in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 102) as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers," questionnaires comprise the most popular research tool used in surveys. Through the distribution of questionnaires one may get feedback on respondents through three kinds of inquiry: factual questions, behavioural questions, and attitudinal questions. The last

category is of utmost importance to this study as it is through this type of query that we learn about respondents' feelings and perceptions, and that, in turn, will be later juxtaposed with the outcomes gathered through the DCT. In this way we may compare self-reported versus actual levels of interlanguage pragmatic development.

The pre- and post-study questionnaire employed in this research study is a structured-oriented one because it enables us to observe various patterns and comparisons. The questionnaire was also piloted and some minor modifications were introduced. It took two months to devise a survey questionnaire, pilot it, refine it, and set it out in a format that would eventually enable the data to be processed and statistics to be calculated.

There are several kinds of questions and response modes in questionnaire, including, for example, dichotomous questions, multiple choice questions, rating scales, constant sum questions, ratio data and open-ended questions. For the purpose of this research, however, close-ended queries were introduced. According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 321), "[c]losed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose. Highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. They also enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample (Oppenheim, 1992: 115)." Thus the instrument designed for the purpose of this study contained different types of closed questions (e.g., dichotomous, multiple choice and rating scales) that are quick to complete and straightforward to code and that would not "discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate respondents are" (Wilson & McLean 1994, p. 21, in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 321). An obvious disadvantage of closed questions, namely that they do not enable respondents to add any remarks, qualifications, and explanations to the categories, and there is a risk that the categories might not be exhaustive and there might be bias in them (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 115), was alleviated by adding to some questions an alternative ("other/others") so that the respondents could freely choose the options they would most identify with. The scale of data adopted here was nominal due to the fact that there were mainly dichotomous and multiple-choice queries posed; however, when it comes to the latter type, the respondents could sometimes tick several responses (multiple-answer mode). Rank ordering questions were also used in this study. As Cohen et al. (2007, p. 325) say, "[t]he rank order question is akin to the multiple choice question in that it identifies options from which respondents can

choose, yet it moves beyond multiple choice items in that it asks respondents to identify priorities. This enables a *relative* degree of preference, priority, intensity etc. to be charted." The queries of this kind were introduced to the respondents to ask them, for instance, to prioritise the communication channels they used for first and second language communication (cf. Appendix).

Rating scales are also powerful tools that are useful in research, as they build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response while still generating numbers (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 325) . A semantic differential is a variation of a rating scale which operates by putting an adjective at one end of a scale and its opposite at the other, for example:

How informative do you consider the new set of history textbooks to be?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Useful – – – – – – – Useless.

(Cohen et al., 2007, p. 325)

In the study used for this publication, there were some questions of semantic differential used, for example, "Indicate the degree of difficulty that you encounter while learning the following subjects at the university ...," where the respondents had to categorise them from "very easy" to "very difficult," or: "Who/what influences the development of your English level? Indicate the factors that impact this development," using such polar options as "no influence at all" to "very strong influence." Moreover, the questionnaire included matrix types of questions, because "[they] enable the same kind of response to be given to several questions, for example 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The matrix layout helps to save space, [...] [but also] enables the respondent to fill in the questionnaire rapidly" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 331).

The first instrument used for collecting data was a self-designed questionnaire administered to 100 undergraduate students of the English Philology department studying at the University of Silesia in Poland (all of them members of Generation Z, i.e. born around 2000).

The language of the questionnaires was English. A brief introduction informed participants what the aims were and assured them complete anonymity. The instrument consisted of two major sections including 31 questions, preceded by some general questions about background variables of the participants themselves: their gender, age, years of learning English, and knowledge

of other foreign languages. All items included in the questionnaire were closed questions.

As the prime intention is to evaluate the development of pragmatic competence (which undeniably determines the way L2 learners communicate), the first research tool's objective was to collect some data that would shed the light on the way students communicate in English as well as some most salient variables influencing their learning process. The questionnaire also helped to verify self-declared level of pragmatic competence, or rather students' perceptions on their own pragmatic awareness. All in all, the objectives intended to be met by the introduction of the first pre-study questionnaire are as follows:

1. To describe Polish Generation Z students' characteristics and draw some general conclusions pertaining to their L2 learning process:
   a. To discover their attitude towards L2 and the motivations they have for learning this language.
   b. To determine the problems they have during L2 learning.
   c. To determine which form of L2 they use most often (spoken or written).
   d. To learn their opinions about the process of studying this language.
   e. To determine the factors influencing their L2.
   f. To assess their language level and explore how successful they feel when using English.
   g. To assess their level of anxiety when communicating in English.
   h. To identify problematic areas in learning English.
2. To check the attitude they have towards correctness when communicating in English.
3. To check how students rate their own level of pragmatic development.

The same questionnaire was introduced at the end of this longitudinal study with the intention of comparing previously-collected data.

The second short questionnaire designed for the purpose of this research aimed at assessing respondents' pragmatic comprehension. It included seven queries: four multiple-choice items containing a question and different alternatives, from which the participants had to choose the most appropriate one, but also one open-ended question eliciting the rationale for the previous choice. The remaining two questions were designed in scaled-response formats, where the participants were to judge the degree of appropriateness (also the degree of power, distance, imposition, etc.) of a particular item in a specific context using a scale.

4.2.2 Discourse Completion Task

One of the major aims of this research is to compare speech act realisations in English performed by Polish students of English. This comparison is based on an analysis of the strategies used to perform a particular speech act (pragmalinguistic angle) and the influence of social variables on the choice of these strategies (sociopragmatic perspective). Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs) are merely one of many available methods of data collection used to investigate such pragmatic phenomena. As Jautz (2013) states, there are other options, including "authentic discourse or elicited conversations, interviews and role-plays, different kinds of production questionnaires, multiple choice questionnaires, rating scales, diaries or think-aloud protocols (cf. Kasper 2008; Kasper/Rose 2002: Chapter 3; or Kasper 1998b: 87)." Brown (2001, p. 301) defines DCT as "any pragmatics instrument that requires the students to read a written description of a situation (including such factors as setting, participant roles, and degree of imposition) and asks them to write what they would say in that situation." DCT developed (by Levenston, 1975; Levenston & Blum, 1978) and adapted to investigate speech act realisation (by Blum-Kulka 1982), is meant to elicit spontaneous responses resembling real life situations. The participants are asked to respond to several scenarios as they would themselves, "thus allowing them to retain their identities, which is likely to elicit more authentic responses reflecting their politeness norms than would a questionnaire requesting the subjects to take on a variety of roles" (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 82). A typical DCT contains a description of a situation to which the subject is expected to react and therewith provide the desired speech act. This kind of DCT is referred to as an open one; however, the respondents may be given some other scenarios as well (e.g., an incomplete dialogue consisting of an initiating or a closing line of dialogue). As Ogiermann (2009, p. 82) notes, in order to collect speech act data, it is also possible to use "DCTs with several turns requiring the respondents to provide two answers (Blum-Kulka, 1982) or both interlocutors' conversational turns (Barron 2003)."

Many researchers agree that a DCT may offer many advantages (cf. Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Kitao & Kitao, 2013; Jautz, 2013; Wojtaszek, 2016), such as its practicality and economy in terms of time and effort put in – large amounts of data can be collected in a relatively short time. Moreover, as Kitao and Kitao (2013) add, variables can easily be manipulated, for example, by using

an interlocutor of higher or lower status. Wojtaszek (2016, p. 164) also notes that DCTs offer a high degree of control of situational variables because all participants have the same background knowledge and act in the same roles as well as situations:

> This translates into high replicability of the study design and high comparability of the gathered data sets. Additionally, the DCT may be developed in such a way that it will contain entries representing many possible configurations of relevant socio-linguistic and contextual variables, including such settings which are usually inaccessible for naturalistic data collection. They can be manipulated at ease and adapted for the particular study purpose and research questions.

Above all, Kasper (2000, p. 329, in Cyluk, 2013, pp. 104–105) notes that through DCTs one may gain insight into "speakers' pragmalinguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms" that serve to realise communicative acts, and to examine contextual factors "under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate." It has to be remembered that a DCT should always resemble a real context and reflect various relationships as well as the contextual variables existing between interlocutors, namely, social distance, social power and the degree of imposition. In a DCT social distance is usually represented on three levels, such as strangers (high D), acquaintances (medium D), and friends (low D). Social distance on the other hand allows for three constellations, for example, with the interlocutors' status being the same (S = H), the speaker (the DCT character) being more powerful than the listener (S < H) or vice versa (S > H) (Ogiermann, 2018, p. 233).

DCTs have some limitations. To start with, since they exclude oral features of discourse (such as hesitation, para- and non-verbal behaviour), unless they can be recorded and transcribed, they are not recommended for spoken discourse data collection (Jautz, 2013). Another shortcoming pertains to the authenticity of the language samples they yield, as "subjects do not necessarily write down what they *would* say, but rather what they think they *should* say (cf. Kasper 2008: 293f.)" (in Jautz, 2013, p. 52). Moreover, as Bardovi-Harlig (1999, p. 239) observes, the informants are "asked to *write* down what they would/should *say*." However, according to the findings presented by Rintell and Mitchell (cf. 1989, p. 270, in Jautz, 2013), the written language elicited by

means of DCTs is generally very similar to oral language and thus it may be assumed that the data collected through DCTs to some extent reflects naturally produced discourse, or at least may yield significant information referred to as "'canonical shape' (Beebe and Cummings, 1996), 'polite norm' (Laver, 1975), or 'politic behaviour' (Watts, 2003)" (Schneider, 2008, p. 186, in Jautz, 2013; cf. also Wolfson et al., 1989).

Investigating the issue of type of knowledge accessed when responding to DCTs, Bardovi-Harlig (2013, p. 74) asserts that written DCTs are likely to tap explicit knowledge. She explains that "most DCTs are given as untimed tasks, further increasing the likelihood that a respondent might draw on explicit knowledge." But she equally states that "time pressure does not guarantee use of implicit knowledge and even lack of time pressure does not guarantee use of explicit knowledge" (in Labben, 2016, p. 75).

Long (2000, online) writes that there are six types of instruments (and DCT modifications) introduced to measure students' pragmatic abilities:

1. *Written Discourse Completion Tasks* are any pragmatics measures that oblige examinees to (a) *read* a written situation description and then (b) *write* what they would say next in the situation.

2. *Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks* are any pragmatic measures that oblige examinees to (a) read a written description then (b) select what they think would be best to say next in the situation from a list of options.

3. *Oral Discourse Completion Tasks* are any pragmatics measures that oblige examinees to (a) *listen* to a situation description (typically from a cassette recording) and (b) *speak aloud* what they would say next in that situation (usually into another cassette recorder).

4. *Discourse Role-Play Tasks* are any pragmatic measures that oblige the examinees to (a) *read* a situation description and (b) *play* a role with another person in the situation.

5. *Discourse Self-Assessment Tasks* are any pragmatic measures that oblige examinees to (a) *read* a situation description and (b) *rate* their own ability to perform pragmatically in that situation.

6. *Role-Play Self-Assessments* are any pragmatics measures that oblige the examinee to both (a) *view* their own pragmatic performance(s) in previously video-recorded role plays and (b) *rate* those performances.

However, doing research that requires informants to provide examples of the language they would use in a given context is, according to Labben (2016, p. 73), much more complicated and cognitively demanding than performing a speech act in a real-life context. Comparing those two situations it seems that there are at least three important areas of divergence:

1. When filling in a DCT, a respondent has to first "read and understand the situation description in terms of grammar, vocabulary items and syntactic structure used to describe the speech act situation."
2. "Imagine the situation as a real life situation."
3. Write something that otherwise would have to be said.

It has to also be added here that the process of imagining the situation is complex in itself, as apart from picturing contextual factors (such as age, gender, power relations, etc.) when filling in a DCT a person also lacks non-verbal hints that in a real-life context might significantly facilitate the process of understanding.

Vanrell et al. (2018, p. 195) classify DCTs (together with self-report responses and questionnaires) as the instruments to be found halfway between correlational and experimental research. She also reminds us that DCTs may take place simultaneously with think-aloud protocols (basically requiring participants to verbalise their thinking processes as they are performing a specific task), or, alternatively, they can also be used retrospectively (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Robinson, 1992). DCTs, together with multiple choice questionnaires and scaled-response formats may take the form of questionnaires, commonly used to gather information about pragmatic production and comprehension (Kasper & Rose, 2002). In scaled-response formats, the participants judge the degree of appropriateness (also the degree of power, distance, imposition, etc.) of a particular item in a specific context using a Likert scale.

All in all, DCTs have been found to be valuable tools for providing researchers with extensive data bearing close similarity to the naturally-occurring discourse. They can also provide insight into students' pragmalinguistic knowledge of strategies and linguistic forms. Thus, since communicative strategies used to perform particular speech acts are cardinal aspects of the research, DCT scenarios have been added to this study. Their detailed description is provided in Chapter 5.

4.2.3 Retrospective Verbal Protocol

The standard way of examining one's mental processes during performance of a task is to elicit verbal reports. "With retrospective verbal reports, subjects retrieve the memory traces of the thoughts they had during the task and directly verbalise them shortly after the task itself is finished" (Ericsson & Simon, 1993, p. 16, in Hassal, 2008, p. 76). Verbal reports have been used in the field of ILP in combination with other research instruments, particularly those of role-plays and DCTs (Beltrán-Palanques, 2016). A very interesting piece of research conducted by Woodfield (2010) has demonstrated the cognitive processes of advanced learners of English as a SL on written DCTs which elicited status unequal requests. The author also reported that verbal reports offered information about participants' language of thought and the difficulties they experienced with the research methodology employed. Moreover, Beltrán-Palanques (2013) conducted a study on the speech act of apologies employing retrospective verbal reports in combination with both open role-plays and interactive written DCTs. "Results revealed that retrospective verbal reports appeared to be instrumental in gathering information regarding participants' pragmatic production" (Beltrán-Palanques, 2016, p. 305). The same finding has been reported by Hassal (2008, p. 91), who also states that "retrospective verbal reports are valuable for revealing mental processes that underlie pragmatic performance. They reveal knowledge otherwise concealed, and help to illuminate the process of acquiring it and learning to use it." Last but not least, the use of DCTs in combination with verbal reports has been proven to increase the trustworthiness of the results (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010). Hence, taking into account the potential of verbal reports, the present study aims to investigate the cognitive processes undertaken by a group of Polish advanced learners of English as regards their pragmatic performance. Although many studies have used verbal reports to examine what L2 learners are thinking while they do language tasks, virtually none set out to investigate what learners are thinking while they do pragmatic tasks (cf. Hassal, 2008). According to Hassal (2008), there have been merely two studies in English that have attempted to investigate what learners are thinking while they do pragmatic and face-threatening speech acts. The first was conducted by Robinson's (1992) where she evaluated verbal reports for their ability to reveal the pragmatic knowledge of learners. She asked the respondents to make written refusals in six situations during

a written Discourse Completion Task, and examined their mental processes. The second study was conducted by Widjaja (1997), where she investigated mental processes underlying spoken pragmatic performance. Oral roleplay combined with retrospective verbal reports were chosen to investigate how female Taiwanese learners of English refused invitations for a date and what factors affected their refusals.

In my study, the respondents were asked to reveal what they had been thinking during the task itself. Nevertheless, their verbal reports also uncovered reasons or explanations for their behaviour as well as the state of their pragmatic knowledge. It has to be also pointed out that the process of collecting students verbal reports was time consuming. Although during this phase the respondents were specifically instructed as to fill in WRVPs together (and immediately after) with WDCTs so as not to forget their thoughts from during the task itself, one cannot be certain if they really complied with this instruction.

The analysis as well as the evaluation of written retrospective verbal protocols involved both content and statistical analysis. The former concentrates on identification of most common themes and categories whereas the latter makes use of the application of a specialised software, that is, LIWC 20, Receptiviti, SAILLEE, and Grammarly.

4.2.4 Test

A test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain (Komorowska, 2005). As Brown (2003, p. 3) further states, to meet the requirements of a method, a test should contain a set of techniques, procedures, or items as well as to be explicit and structured. Depending on the objective, a test may assess general ability, or specific competences. It is also important to bear in mind that a test measures performance, but the test results actually pertain to test-taker's ability within a particular domain. By conducting a test, the teachers can identify students' understanding of the material.

In the study of interlanguage pragmatic development, it is crucial to mention Bialystok's two-dimensional model: knowledge versus control. In her research, Bialystok (1993) argues that acquiring knowledge is of relatively minor importance for adult L2 learners of pragmatics. She acknowledges that they must acquire a certain amount of knowledge, in the form of an increasingly explicit understanding of L2 pragmatic features. However, she asserts

that the crucial process for them is acquiring control over attention to their knowledge. What she also postulates is that L2 students may generally produce inappropriate utterances "not because their knowledge is deviant but because they cannot access it rapidly enough to use it when they need it" (in Hassal, 2008, pp. 73–74). What this finding tells us, is that gaining explicit knowledge of pragmatics is essential in further attempts to produce and control one's L2 output. Bearing this in mind, I decided to incorporate the test measuring respondents' knowledge in pragmatics as one of the research tools. However, the control over this knowledge is further analysed on the basis of other tools verifying the level of pragmatic production (WDCTs and WRVPs).

The test used in this longitudinal study included self-designed queries aiming at verifying students' knowledge in pragmatics. The test was created in the form of twenty closed-ended questions, however, the author decided to introduce a few elicitation techniques, namely, a multiple-choice, matching or a true/false statements. A full version of the test is to be found in the appendix.

4.3 Sample Selection

The sample size of this research project encompasses 100 Polish Generation Z representatives, all of whom are students of an English Philology department of the University of Silesia (stratified random and convenience sampling). The process of selecting them was determined by both economic and substantive considerations. Easy access to these students was on the one hand a practical advantage, and on the other a research necessity – who, if not students of an English faculty, studying this language as their major (many of them are translators and teachers-to-be), should represent a high level of pragmatic development and grammatical accuracy? Moreover, knowing what determines their communication preferences and what kind of L2 learners they are may help to draw some significant teaching implications. The number of respondents was around 100, however, in the case of written retrospective verbal protocols (WRVP) only 44 students decided to take part in this stage of the research. This may be attributed to survey fatigue, that is, WRVPs were introduced to them together with WDCTs scenarios, required from them more writing and thus were more time-consuming. Unfortunately, like in many other longitudinal studies (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 82) "a drop-out" of participants was noticed. Apparently, some respondents got discouraged by this "research

overload" and did not send the WRVPs back. Additional reason that may account for a relatively low response rate may be ascribed to the fact that this stage of the research started with the onset of global Covid-19 pandemic when reaching the students "in person" was impossible. This may have possibly impacted their decision to ignore their previous declarations of participation in the research project. Interestingly, the sample size increased with the next step of the project requiring from the respondents to fill in a short pragmatic comprehension checking questionnaire (78 responses gathered). The subsequent stage of the research – a test in pragmatics was mandatory for all the students to take so it came as no surprise to observe a very high response rate again. The final phase of this longitudinal study (Questionnaire 1) attracted merely 68 respondents. In conclusion, it seems that the students participating in this study were much more motivated to fill in short, multiple-choice type statements (generally close-ended questions), whereas open-ended question (there was one introduced in a questionnaire checking their pragmatic level comprehension) or WVRPs were not "highly welcomed" and unfortunately, quite commonly ignored (e.g. a return rate of WVRPs was 44%). A detailed description of the sample size is provided in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1. Sample description

Partici-pants	Pre-study question-naire	WDCT	WRVP	Pragmatic comprehen-sion ques-tionnaire	Test in pragmatics	Post-study question-naire
Number	100	100	44	78	88	68
Age	18–21 (88%) 22–25 (12%)	18–21 (88%) 22–25 (12%)	18–21 (80%) 22–25 (20%)	18–21 (22%) 22–25 (78%)	18–21 (22%) 22–25 (78%)	18–21 (10%) 22–25 (80%) 26–28 (10%)
Gender	65F, 35M	65F, 35M	28F, 16M	49F, 29M	60F, 28M	50F, 18M

As seen in Table 4.1, the problem of attrition, understood as the usual decreasing pattern of participation in a long-term panel study was observed. Although proper tracing and staying-in-touch strategies were implemented, the rate of non-response was at times quite high. A detailed description of the participants is provided in Chapter 5.

4.4 Research Implementation: Stages of the Research Project

Prospective longitudinal studies aim at following the same participants over a period of time. One of the options this kind of research may include is a cohort panel where some or all individuals in a defined population with similar exposures or outcomes are considered over an extended period (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011, p. 205). Ortega and Iberi-Shea (2005) believe that since language learning happens through and over time, many topics concerning SL learning may be investigated within a full longitudinal perspective. Thus the gradual process of attaining advanced second language pragmatic competence was analysed in this project through the implementation of panel study where successive measures were taken at different points in time from the same respondents (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 81–82). Hence the study conducted for the purpose of this research project is the example of a longitudinal cohort study spanned for the period of four years (2017–2021) and encompassing eight stages:

1. The period of planning (aim, sample and unit of analysis, method of data collection and analysis, considering practical aspects, such as documents and references needed, etc.) and piloting of a questionnaire (October 2017– May 2018).

2. Filling in the initial, pre-study questionnaire (June 2018–) aimed at gathering general information concerning the participants of the research, for example, demographic information, but also more specific data pertaining to their learning motivation and attitude, communication preferences, and the variables that, in their eyes, contribute the most to their language progress. Additional objective was also to check students' own self-reported pragmatic as well as linguistic competence.

3. Completing WDCT – three scenarios (October 2019 – March 2020) – aiming at gathering the data necessary for the assessment of productive pragmatic competence.

4. Answering the questions relating to WDCT – retrospective verbal protocols (October 2019 – March 2020) enabling to investigate respondents' way of thinking and cognitive processes involved while producing given speech acts.

5. Taking a test (a combination of a multiple choice discourse completion test and a scaled-response DCT) with the intention to assess their pragmatic comprehension (May 2020).

6. Taking a course in pragmatics (October 2020 – January 2021) encompassing 15 hours of practical classes (workshops) and 15 hours of lectures (introduction to pragmatics)
7. Taking a final test in pragmatics (theoretical knowledge) January 2021.
8. Filling in the post-study questionnaire to revisit the same group of respondents over time with the intention to juxtapose the data collected (March 2021).

4.5 Content Analysis

Content analysis is one of the analysis methods used in qualitative research (Burnard, 1995). Krippendorff (2004, p. 18) defined content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." What matters specifically in this research project, is the interpretation provided by Ahuvia (2001, p. 139) characterising content analysis as a general term encompassing various methodologies coding texts into categories and then counting the frequencies of occurrences within each category. Thus, the objective of this research is to focus primarily on themes, patterns and frequencies of circumstantial ideas (e.g. reasons students may have to produce a given speech act using particular strategies) mentioned by the respondents. Retrospective verbal reports were introduced to them together with WDCTs scenarios (requesting, reacting to compliments, and apologising) and their major intention was to make respondents reflect on their own linguistic as well as pragmatic choices, namely, their task was to ponder over their thoughts and the strategies they used while performing given speech act.

4.6 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was conducted on the basis of LIWC 20, a software program designed by Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010) and Receptiviti platform, a device used in text analysis that "detects emotions and sentiment expressed in text." According to this platform (www.receptiviti.com), already pre-trained and custom-built models are powered by proprietary language psychology science, and thus enable to uncover insights about people, that is, their predictive models or decisions they take. Receptiviti offers a tool called

SALLEE – a Syntax-Aware LexicaL Emotion Engine. This program is based on the conviction that emotion is far more nuanced than simply being positive, negative, or neutral. Thus it detects 16 specific emotions, including 7 positive, 6 negative, and 3 ambivalent emotions. The SALLEE shows the percentage contribution of total emotionality that each emotion provides (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Receptiviti's Language-Based Personality framework is based on The Big Five personality traits, also known as the OCEAN model (or taxonomy) of personality traits. The Big Five model includes five main categories, each of which includes 6 underlying facets, for a total of 35 different measures of personality. It is important to note that Receptiviti's evaluation of personality is based on analysis of a person's language (receptiviti.com). This approach, according to its creators, accurately reflects how a person's personality is perceived by other people, whereas traditional personality assessments reflect a person's own perception of their own personality. The two can be markedly different for a variety of reasons including a person's own biases, but the language-based approach provides for a more objective evaluation.

As for LIWC 20, it is a text analysis program that counts and classifies words into psychologically meaningful categories. It is also a core component of Receptiviti's science. The LIWC dictionary is composed of approximately 6,400 words, word stems, and select emoticons. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010, p. 24), it specifies emotionality, thinking styles, individual differences, but also social relationships and attentional focus. Moreover, the program analyses a text on the basis of two major components, such as the processing component and a dictionary, that serves as a compilation of words defining a given category. In their article, Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010) provide further applications of LIWC potential, that is, the possibility to calculate statistical frequencies of the following categories:

– Linguistic processes (including word count, dictionary words, total function words, pronouns, verb tense, etc.);
– Psychological processes (including affective, social, cognitive, and perceptual processes);
– Personal concerns (including self-focus, cognitive complexity, social references, and emotional tone of the language used);

– Spoken categories (including tentative language, fillers, and features of language style).

(Tausczik & Pennebaker (2010, p. 27, in Kiliańska-Przybyło, 2017, p. 94)

The most salient potential that the LIWC 20 offers, is its possibility to examine people's cognitive processes, emotional condition, intentions and motivational drives. Such analysis can be computed taking into account the words people use. In a series of studies conducted by Pennebaker (2013), Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010) and Pennebaker, Boyd, Jordan and Blackburn (2015), it was discovered that particular categories of words may provide very insightful information about a particular language user. Function words, also referred to as style words, for example, are made up of pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs. These words reflect how people are communicating and "can detect emotional and biological states, status, honesty, and a host of individual differences" (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 30). Function words, such as personal pronouns, also reflect attentional allocation. The use of pronouns deserves a special attention here "because they show how individuals are referring to each other, thus they show the quality of their relationship with other person." According to the studies, "high rates of pronoun use have been associated with greater focus on one's self or on one's social world" (Pennebaker et al., 2014, p. 2). In his TED talk (online), Pennebaker also states that the "higher anybody is in status the less they use 'I' words; the lower someone is in status, the higher they use 'I' words" and "If you are using these third person pronouns, by definition you are paying attention to other people."

However, the introduction of articles and prepositions is also very meaningful, that is, "Prepositions, for example, signal that the speaker is providing more complex and, often, concrete information about a topic" (Tausczik & Pennebaker 2010, p. 28) and "higher grades were associated with greater article and preposition use, indicating categorical language (i.e., references to complexly organized objects and concepts) preposition and conjunction use has been associated with cognitive complexity" (Pennebaker et al., 2014, p. 1). While describing the differences between function (style) and content words, Pennebaker (2010, p. 29) observes that "[f]rom a psychological perspective, style words reflect how people are communicating, whereas content words convey what they are saying. It is not surprising, then, that style words are much more closely linked to measures of people's social and psychological worlds."

Content words comprised of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs convey the genuine content of a communication. Function words, however, encompass pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and a few other esoteric categories. The role of auxiliary verbs and conjunctions is also special – lower grades are generally associated with greater use of auxiliary verbs and may indicate a narrative language style (Pennebaker, 2014, p. 1). Conjunctions, on the other hand, (e.g., and, also, although) "join multiple thoughts together and are important for creating a coherent narrative" (Tausczik & Pennebaker 2010, p. 35).

The category of cognitive processes comprises another dimension analysed by LIWC 20. Thinking styles as well as cognitive mechanisms are described by Pennebaker (2010, p. 35) in the following way:

> Language can track what information people are selecting from their environment by monitoring attentional focus. By the same token, natural language use provides important clues as to how people process that information and interpret it to make sense of their environment. Thinking can vary in depth and complexity; this is reflected in the words people use to connect thoughts. Language changes when people are actively reevaluating a past event. It can also differ depending on the extent to which an event has already been evaluated.

The analytical thinking variable suggests formal, logical, and hierarchical thinking patterns, and "people low in analytical thinking tend to write and think using language that is more narrative ways, focusing on the here-and-now, and personal experiences." As Pennebaker (2010, p. 35) said, "[t]he analytic thinking factor reflects cognitive complexity. People [...] make higher grades in college, tend to be more honest, and are more open to new experiences. They also read more and have more complex views of themselves than those who are low in analytic thinking."

The corpus gathered through WRVPs was additionally examined through Grammarly application. The major assumption underlying this decision was to assess linguistic properties of the texts created in terms of their grammatical correctness and lexical richness. Moreover, as some of LIWC 20 categories also verify linguistic processes (e.g. word count, verb tense, length of words and sentences) both instruments were implemented. The analysis of the results computed from those tools enabled the author to draw some conclusions

pertaining not only to participants' cognitive processes, emotional states, intentions and motivations they had but also to describe the development of their linguistic competence. This decision was taken in reference to some previous studies (cf. Salgado, 2011; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Hassal, 2003) indicating that grammatical limitations may further significantly impact pragmatic comprehension and production. To conclude, linguistic analysis conducted on the basis of LIWC 20, Receptiviti, and Grammarly application helped to assess students' advancement and to juxtapose those results with the previously mentioned self-reported C2 and C1 level (cf. Questionnaire 1 results).

4.7 Recapitulation

The aim of this chapter is to present information about the objectives of this project, scheme of the research – its methodology and the instruments used. It describes the participants belonging to Generation Z group and finally provides the stages of research implementation and data collection (content and statistical analysis). The choice of organising a longitudinal study corresponds with the primary objective of this book, that is, to describe the development of pragmatic competence among advanced Polish users of English. The study proper lasted for three years, and during this time, the respondents were asked to reveal their declarative behaviours (pre- and post-study questionnaires), which were later juxtaposed with the findings collected through the implementation of other research instruments. The shortage of research on the analysis of cognitive processes while performing pragmatic tasks is an additional reason for selecting verbal protocol and implementing LIWC 20 software to further analyse the statistical data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The chapter provides the data computed for the needs of both content and statistical analysis. The findings come from five research tools implemented in this research project, that is, pre- and post-study questionnaire, WDCT scenarios, WRVPs, a questionnaire measuring one's pragmatic comprehension, and a test in pragmatics.

5.1 Pre-study Questionnaire

5.1.1 Presentation of the Results

The questionnaire was distributed among the group of 100 Polish students of the English Philology department studying at the University of Silesia in Sosnowiec, Poland. All of them belong to the youngest generation studied and are in their twenties. Sixty-five females and 35 males took part in the research. Only 12% of the students are between the ages of 22–25 and the rest are 18-to-21-year-olds. Figure 5.1 presents the data concerning the period of learning English and Figure 5.2 – the declared level of second language proficiency in the studied group:

Figure 5.1. Period of learning English
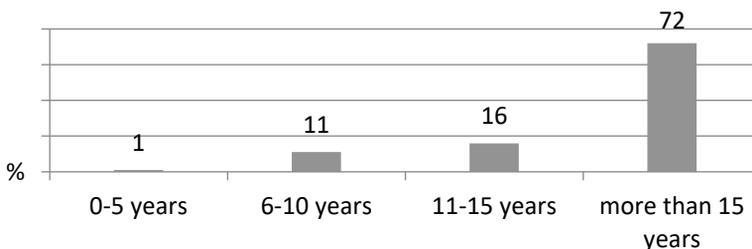
Figure 5.2. Declared level of language proficiency
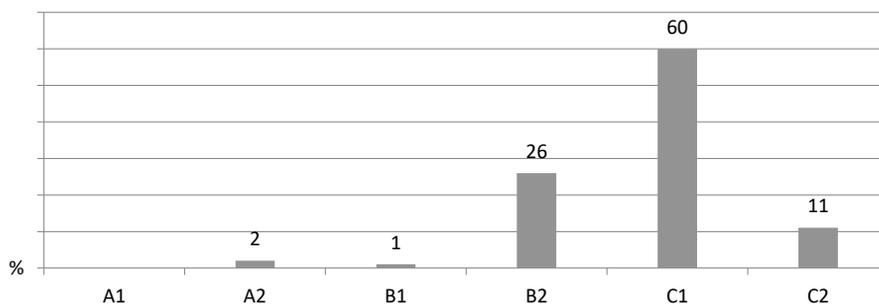
The data obtained clearly indicate very high self-reported level of proficiency that may in turn be accounted for by a long period of learning English – for the vast majority it is more than 15 years. Such a long exposure to this language indicates that the respondents must have started attending L2 courses at least while attending primary school, or even during kindergarten education. Referring to the CPH (i.e. Critical Period Hypothesis) presented in Chapter 2, and the importance of starting age, it seems that the respondents selected for the study, due to fortunate circumstances, were exposed to English before the critical/sensitive period and thus stand a good chance of becoming successful L2 users.

Figure 5.3. Knowledge of other foreign languages
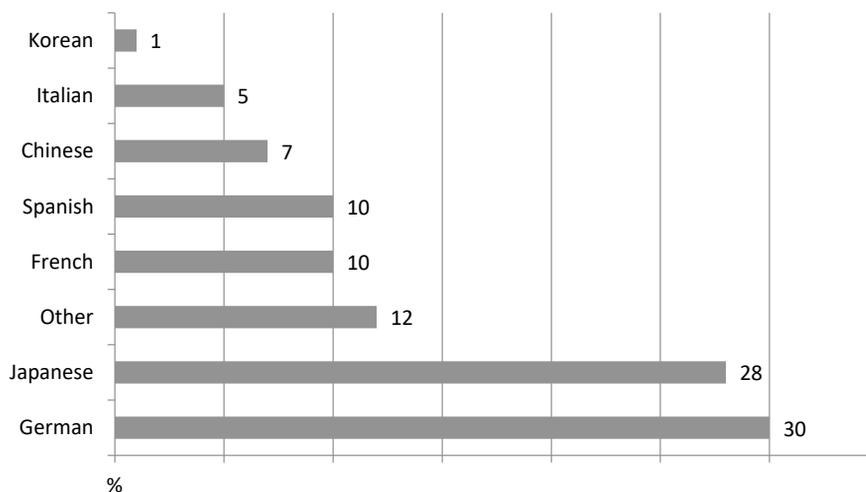
The students also declared their knowledge of other foreign languages, German and Japanese being most frequently reported. The average number of languages the subjects report knowing is 1.13 (excluding English). This finding may be perceived as an indication of being generally interested in languages, and this, in turn, may imply having not only a higher level of language aptitude, but also general awareness of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences. Moreover, it seems logical to assume that a student of a English philology department should exhibit open-mindedness and wider empathy and tolerance towards other nationalities, since, as the adage goes, learning languages promotes "broadening of one's horizons." When asked whether the learners like learning English, 98% answered affirmatively and only 2% negatively. As for the type of motivation they display, it seems that the students are quite heterogeneous in this respect, since 52% responded: "When I learn English I want to fully integrate with it, with its culture, norms, traditions, etc." standing for integrative motivation, and 48% are more inclined towards an instrumental motive, represented in the questionnaire as: "I treat English as a tool that should help me in the future (e.g. get a good job)."

A generally positive approach towards English is further strengthened by the responses given to the question: "Do you like communicating in English?," where the distribution of results is as follows:

Figure 5.4. Respondents' opinions on communicating in English (%)


Do you like communicating in English?
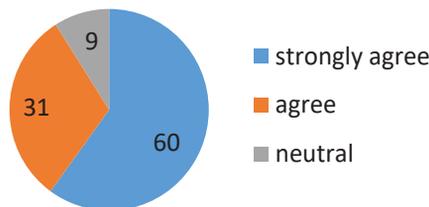
As can be seen, more than nine out of ten students at the English department who were asked this question enjoy communicating in this language. As for the remaining 9%, an additional set of questions pertaining to anxiety and

problems encountered while learning may provide some hints concerning the sources of this neutral attitude.

The next question posed to respondents is meant to assess their self-perception of how well they communicate in English. Having the choice of three answers, that is, "yes", "no", "difficult to say", the responses gathered show the following distribution:

Figure 5.5. Feeling successful while communicating in English (%)
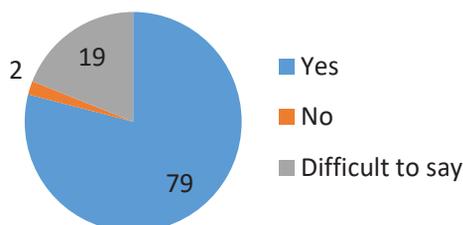
It is important to note that respondents' perception of being successful L2 communicators is very high, as almost 80% declare themselves to be confident in this regard. Combining this finding with the previously expressed report on the level of advancement, one may see some discrepancy. Only 60% of the participants believe they represent C1 level (as has been stated in Chapter 3, this level is characterised by the ability to express oneself flexibly and effectively), but almost 80% actually perceive themselves as successful. This, in turn, may further imply that for students partaking in the research a lower level of felt proficiency does not necessarily have to align with low communication success. As for the form in which they communicate most often, having the choice of three options: "I communicate mainly using spoken English", "I communicate mainly using written English", and "I communicate using both ways: speaking and writing equally", the respondents provided the following results:

Figure 5.6. Most popular form of communicating in English
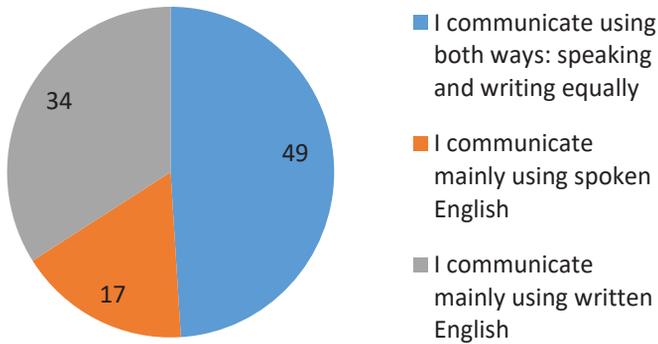
The responses gathered are quite intriguing and may indicate a high level of heterogeneity and deviation within the group. Almost half of the respondents report that they communicate in two forms, that is, spoken and written, to the same extent, whereas 34% state that it is the written form that dominates their L2 communication. Bearing in mind the fact that the respondents are English philology students, such results may be analysed in a different light, namely that the written form of communication may be overtaking the spoken interaction in terms of the frequency of such contacts. Taking into account the studying context and curriculum requirements, it can be also assumed that L2 learners (at least during their first year) are mainly provided with subjects that further determine written, rather than oral, encounters. The next question pertaining to the intensity of L2 contact shows even more alarming data: when asked how often they communicate in English, 30% of the students declared only "sometimes" and "seldom".

Table 5.1. The frequency of communication in English

"How often do you communicate in English?"	%
Always	6
Often	64
Sometimes	25
Seldom	5
Never	0

Such responses gathered from English philology students are more than unexpected since, as it was hypothesised, the group of freshmen should be the one that is completely immersed in the L2 language. Apparently, this perception is not equally experienced by the students. The second query pertaining not only to the frequency of communication, but also the channel that they use, yields the following data:

Table 5.2. The frequency of channels used for L2 communication (%)

Channel	Always	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Face-to-face communication	4	45	33	16	2
Telephone	3	8	14	44	31
Email	2	17	34	31	16
Text messages	17	41	26	8	8
Social media	43	34	13	6	4

One cannot help but notice that social media comprise the most frequently used channel for second language communication among this Polish Generation Z cohort. Their impact cannot be compared to any other form. Again, while bearing in mind the fact that the group chosen for this study is composed of English philology learners, such answers seem at least surprising. It is difficult to believe that the vast majority of this group communicates in written form either through social media or texting whereas face-to-face interaction is used frequently by only 50%. As the results raise some doubts, a detailed interview and a further study would be necessary to shed more light on the real sources of such responses.

The next section of the questionnaire aims at gathering information about the idea of students' general approach to fluency and accuracy while communicating in English. In the first question, the respondents are to express their attitude towards producing L2. A detailed distribution of the answers is displayed in Figure 5.7:

Figure 5.7. Respondents' attitude towards the way of producing L2: "Do you pay attention to the way you produce the L2?"
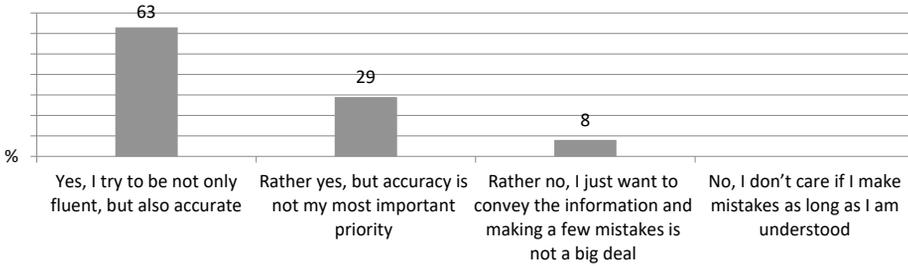
As seen in Figure 5.7, the respondents show rather a meticulous and careful attitude, as they desire to be not only fluent but also accurate, however for almost 30% of the interviewees what matters most is merely being communicative. The fact that almost 10% shows some form of linguistic negligence is surprising if one takes into account that those students are teachers or translators to be, whose productive L2 abilities should be impeccable.

The next query aims at identifying those communication channels that students consider important to communicate correctly in.

Table 5.3. Students' opinion on language correctness while using various channels (%)

Channel	Very important	Important	Quite important	Unimportant	Totally un-important
Face-to-face communication	29	47	19	3	2
Telephone	15	20	45	15	5
Email	60	25	15	–	–
Text messages	20	22	53	5	–
Social media	38	32	20	8	2

When analysing the two most affirmative answers (very important and important) together, it seems that correctness is most significant while face-to-face encounters (76%), but also while writing emails (85%) and using social media (70%). Another written mode, that is, texting, according to the respondents, does not require a high level of correctness as merely 42% assert such importance.

The third question revolving around accuracy concerns the opinions on being corrected. The teachers' correction, meant at improving one's linguistic production, is appreciated by 84%, of whom 42% "strongly agree" and another 42% "agree". The middle category "neutral" has been chosen by 15% of respondents, who, unfortunately, decided to opt for "the easy way out" (Dörneyi, 2003, p. 37) and as a result, it is relatively difficult to interpret this response. "Strongly disagree" appeared only once. Nevertheless, it seems that the learners look forward to their teacher's correction and appreciate it, acknowledging its importance on their way to linguistic mastery. The question devoted to correction assesses the importance of the teacher on shaping students' language, however the subsequent part of the questionnaire overlaps similar aspects, namely, it attempts to determine the factors influencing respondents' L2 as well as problematic areas (including those triggering the appearance of anxiety) they encounter while learning English.

Table 5.4. Respondents' opinions on the factors determining their L2 development (in %)

Factors	Very strong influence	Strong influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
Studying English at the university	25	39	24	7	5
Spending time with native speakers ("I improve my English through our interactions")	24	25	20	18	13
Spending time with non-native speakers of English ("I improve my English through our interactions")	1	21	42	24	12
Using English on various social media	44	26	20	5	5
Playing online games in English	39	15	10	13	23
Reading in English	54	24	17	4	1

My peers ("the way they speak English provides me with rich lg input")	2	14	38	31	15
Attending other forms of L2 tuition (lg course, one-to-one tutoring)	11	18	12	9	50

The data presented in Table 5.4 indicate that students' L2 is mainly impacted by reading (54%), social media (44%), and playing online games (39%). The option "reading in English" is actually open to many interpretations and thus the obtained result may be ambiguous. To start with, the students have not been asked what they read exactly, that is, do they read university coursebooks, classic English literature, and contemporary novels of various kinds (written and proofread by native speakers and/or language editors so that the quality of the input they come into contact with is fully verified), or are they mainly exposed to the language of internet forums, blogs or various forms of social media or online games, where one may read a lot, but where the language used is rarely, if ever, linguistically edited? Hence, as promising as this result may look (the statistics showing the percentage of people reading nowadays are very alarming, unfortunately), it is really doubtful whether the respondents actually meant that they read "credible sources". This assumption may be corroborated by the the poor result of university impact ("studying English at the university"). It seems that the students often do not really recognise the value of such studies and the potential influence it may or even should have on their own linguistic competence. Moreover, it also appears that the respondents partaking are not aware that the very option "studying English at the university" actually also entails reading in English. Thus it is safe to presume that the high result of the response on reading may be attributed to the reading of online texts rather than academic ones. Nevertheless, there should be additional research to verify the aspect of reading in more detail. Spending time with native speakers is underappreciated too, though it is really difficult to believe that students of the English department cannot see any benefit in interacting with target language users. The potential value of communicating with non-native speakers or their own peers is equally unattractive to their eyes. Holistic analysis of the data shows, unfortunately, a very low linguistic and educational awareness that only to some extent can be accounted for by their relatively young age and putative

immaturity. Juxtaposing the findings to the ones relating to motivation type (52% display integrative and 48% instrumental motivation) one may also see some connection, namely that the respondents are, to a great extent, inspired by purely practical motives. For almost half of the questioned respondents, learning a language at the university is mainly associated with potential future professional benefit, rather than a desire to acquire and integrate with English. When asked an additional question aiming at verifying their beliefs on the quality of the language they are picking, namely, whether it is genuine and real or merely bookish, the respondents showed the following viewpoints:

Figure 5.8. Respondents' opinions on the type of language they are learning

Legend:
- I believe I'm not learning real, authentic language, but rather a bookish one — 53
- I believe I am learning a genuine and authentic English — 47
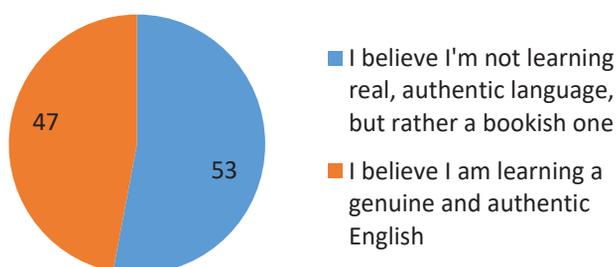
As seen in Figure 5.8, the group holds variant opinions on the type of language they are exposed to during their studies. However, the dominant answer indicates that the respondents have a feeling of being provided with a formal, ossified, and bookish type of English. Such a high response of this kind may be in turn correlated with their strong preference for social media and online games because there, presumably, they encounter more real-life language. The next question, in turn, tries to assess students' self-reported perception of the language they communicate with, namely whether it is rather "bookish" and grammatically correct.

Table 5.5. Respondents' opinion on the language they use

"While communicating in English I try to use rather bookish and grammatically correct language"	%
Yes	18
No	26
Difficult to say	56

According to the data gathered, the students do not really know what type of discourse they produce as more than half of them have chosen the "difficult to say" option. However, only 26% denied being sure that they communicate in more real-like language. When comparing these answers to the ones given before, that is, referring to the type of discourse they are taught at the university, one cannot help but notice a considerable divergence in their answers. Fifty-three per cent believe that they are learning bookish language but, at the same time, 56% find it difficult to provide a univocal answer to the second query. Such a substantial variance in the answers can be attributed to lack of linguistic awareness of what is and what is not "native-like" discourse. At the same time it may also indicate a relatively careless attitude towards the quality of the language they communicate with – all in all, a person choosing to study a foreign language and voluntarily taking part in a research study should be able to assess their own approach to grammatical correctness.

Phrasal verbs, idioms, slang and colloquial expressions have always been acknowledged as the essence of genuine and native-like language. Thus, in order to test the manner in which students of English communicate, and their attitude towards real-life communication and their efforts to imitate them, it was decided to introduce a set of queries that might help to gather relevant data. Figure 5.9 displays the results pertaining to the frequency of adopting phrasal verbs, idioms and colloquial expressions:

Figure 5.9. The frequency of using slang, colloquial expressions, idioms and phrasal verbs
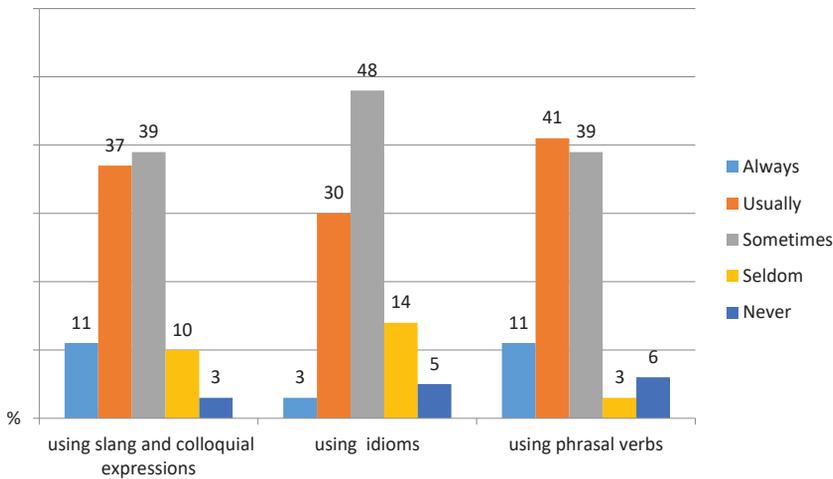
The presented data shows considerable variation in students' answers. To start with, it seems that the most frequently applied "particles" of real-life English are phrasal verbs (the combined 52% of replies to "always" and "usually") and slang and colloquial expressions (48% altogether for "always" and "usually"). Idiomatic expressions are least commonly employed (33%). Such a poor result may stem from their difficulty. From a semantic point of view, the meanings of the individual words cannot be added together to produce the meanings of the expression as a whole (as they are metaphorical rather than literal) and this poses many problems for second language learners. From a syntactic viewpoint, most idioms do not lend themselves easily to manipulation by speakers and writers; they are invariable and must be learned as wholes – and this constitutes another obstacle for L2 students. Lastly, idiomatic expressions in English correspond to a wide range of grammatical types or patterns (Hameed Joodi, 2012). What also attracts attention is the very high score (in all three aspects analysed) of middle answers and the choice of "sometimes" (39%, 48%, and 39%, respectively). As has already been said, this response is primarily adopted by undecided respondents, and this, in turn, can also be interpreted as a sign of a careless attitude towards the subject itself, or real lack of effort on the side of the respondents. A general conclusion stemming from this section is that, on the one hand, Polish students of English present very vivid opinions when it comes to the type of language they are exposed to at the university, claim that it is bookish and that the very fact of studying there does not really impact their language development. On the other hand, when asked what kind of contribution they make themselves to their L2 development they are either indecisive (56% do not know what register of language they produce) or openly admit that they do not try hard to acquire natural and genuine elements of language, such as slang, colloquialisms, idioms or phrasal verbs.

The following section of the questionnaire is meant to assess respondents' problematic areas of learning and potential anxieties. The distribution of the data presented in Table 5.6 indicates that there are two most challenging subjects for respondents, namely grammar and phonetics.

Table 5.6. Students' opinions on the difficulty of "practical English" subjects (%)

Subject	Very easy	Easy	Middle level of difficulty	Difficult	Very difficult
Conversations	33	40	24	3	–
Phonetics	2	17	45	27	9
Reading comprehension	9	31	30	22	8
Composition	11	26	38	20	5
Grammar	3	21	30	34	12

It is true that more respondents consider grammar easy or very easy than hold this view of phonetics; however, the number of respondents considering the former subject to be difficult, or even very difficult, is also greater. The block of practical English subjects has always been considered difficult, primarily for first-year students, especially that some of those subjects (e.g. phonetics) are barely introduced on the secondary school level.[1] At the university level, the syllabus for the first-year students introduces the system of phonetic transcription, and many learners complain about its difficulty because they are exposed to detailed aspects of pronunciation for the first time. Thus, the data gathered is not surprising here, and actually just confirms the assumptions that I had prior to commencing this research study. What is surprising, though, is the remarkably high return of "difficult" and "very difficult" answers. Grammar has always been introduced to all levels of proficiency and this is undeniably one of those subsystems (together with vocabulary) that is commonly willingly taught in Poland. Moreover, one may also agree that the number of teachers overemphasising the importance of grammar and prioritising its teaching time has always been high, presumably due to various exam criteria according to which it is treated as an indispensable component of any language assessment. Hence Polish students are used to learning this subject from the beginning of the language learning process. Yet, apparently, the grammar taught at secondary school level is much easier than the sort they encounter at university. One may ponder over the reasons for such problems. Perhaps they can be traced to the ubiquitous and overwhelming presence of a communicative approach,

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1   This is the case at least in Poland.

which, as we know, emphasises the development of communicative competence and fluency. However, if one juxtaposes this finding with the previous results pertaining to the factors shaping students' language (i.e. online games and social media having the strongest impact), one should not be very surprised. The analysis of other data (cf. Figure 5.9 and Tables 5.4 and 5.5) seems to align with those responses, too. As for other learning dilemmas the respondents encounter, it seems that the level of anxiety they experience is relatively high. As has already been stated in Chapter 2, second language anxiety may manifest itself in communication apprehension, mainly affecting speaking, primarily with native speakers. Thus the students partaking in the research were about to indicate those L2 areas where anxiety and stress strike the most.

Figure 5.10. Per cent of respondents declaring anxiety or stress while using L2
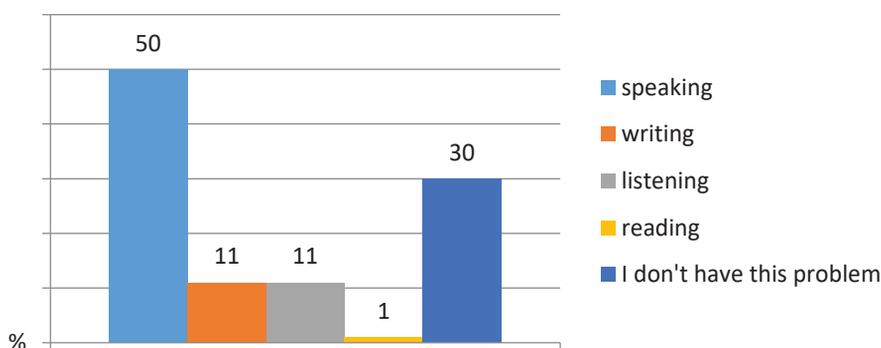
The data gathered from this question stand in strong opposition to those presented before. To begin with, the number of Generation Zers considering conversations easy or very easy equals 73%, so seeing that 50% declare themselves to be suffering from anxiety while speaking is confusing. The analysis is open here to at least a few possible interpretations, that is, while providing the answers to the previous question (cf. Table 5.6), the interviewees might have thought of relatively facile criteria to pass this subject, or the fact that teachers running it are learner-friendly and open. They might have also taken into account the low level of the contribution to classes required from them, namely, lack of homework, etc. All in all, it is still difficult to account for such diverging opinions. The respondents could select more than one problem, but merely 11% of them chose two problems: 4% indicated the combination of

speaking and listening anxiety, 6% speaking-writing anxiety, and 1% speak-ing-reading anxiety. Only 2% of all participants indicated a mixture of three anxiety-provoking areas, such as speaking-listening-writing. Again, referring to the previously quoted results, where reading comprehension was difficult or very difficult for 30%, and an additional 30% considered it "middle level of difficulty", this extremely low response (merely 1%) for problems with reading does not align with the others. In order to shed more light on this issue, it might help to conduct another study, for example, in the form of an interview probing the types of texts the students consider difficult and stress-inducing. To summarise, it is evident that communication in the second language leads to the appearance of stress as 70% of the questioned students confessed suffering from various forms of it.

The next two queries aimed at establishing additional variables triggering the appearance of stress, that is, the presence of a native speaker or other, non-native interactors. The results obtained from the analysis of those two items are presented in Figure 5.11:

Figure 5.11. Respondents' answers on their level of anxiety while communicating in English with native and non-native speakers ("Are you anxious while communicating with...?")
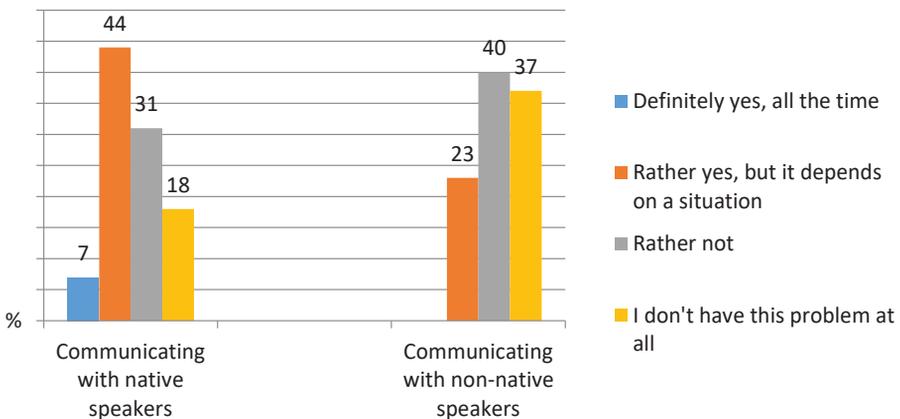

The fact that a native speaker's presence evokes some stress is nothing new. One could hypothesise, however, that students of an English philology department would not be affected by this problem to such a significant ex-tent – yet the results clearly indicate that 51% of respondents admit to being

anxious either all the time or in a majority of situations when interacting with native speakers. This result may stem from additional problems with inhibition, or the fact that many of them are introverts, but they also might be attributed to insufficient contact with the language itself and infrequent encounters with native speakers. The level of anxiety involved in contact with non-native English users is much lower, but still merely 37% of Generation Zers actually deny experiencing it at all. This, in turn, may support the previous assumption, namely, that the respondents suffer from a serious communication anxiety.

The final section of the questionnaire contains three queries devoted to the development of pragmatic competence and the students' own perception of how pragmatically aware they are. In order to test their general cross-cultural as well as pragmatic awareness, they were asked to indicate the option they agree with, that is, whether "there is only one perception of polite behaviour", or whether, perhaps, "the perception of polite behaviour may vary depending on cultural or social norms."

Figure 5.12. Respondents' opinion on polite behaviour
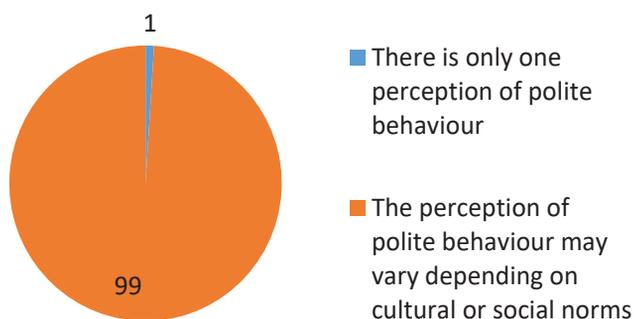
As seen in Figure 5.12, the respondents express very broad-minded views that may indicate not only a high level of pragmatic awareness, but also tolerance. This assumption, unfortunately, cannot be bolstered in light of the results obtained from the subsequent question:

Figure 5.13. Respondents' opinion on learning polite formulae ("While learning English, you: ...")
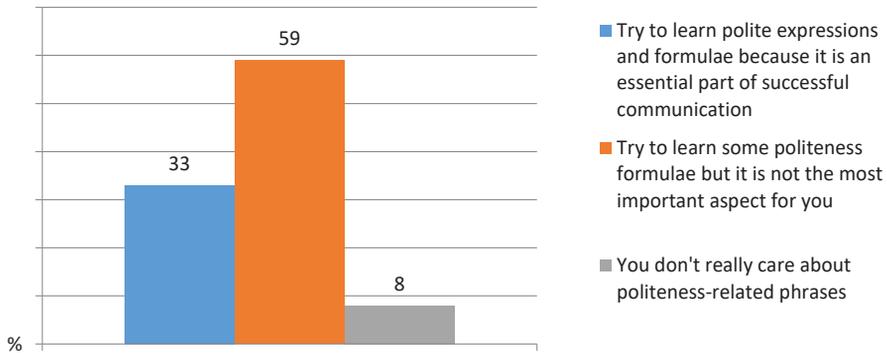
For almost 70% of students, politeness-related formulae are not considered to be indispensable aspects of successful second language communication. The answer to the previous question, acknowledging the existence of many possible interpretations of polite behaviour, indicates that students are aware of the notion of cross-cultural differences, and they also probably know that what is considered polite in one sociocultural group is not necessarily considered as such in the other, however, it seems that the studied group does not really attach much importance to their own polite behaviour. Learning anything is a conscious and laborious process requiring dedication and effort. Apparently picking up politeness-related formulae is not high on their priority list.

In the final questions the interviewees were asked to state their own self-perception of pragmatic competence – "Do you think you really know how to use English and your pragmatic competence (the knowledge of how the language is really used in a given context) is adequately developed?" – and indicate whether they are interested in learning more about pragmatics and developing in this area.

Figure 5.14. Self-reported level of pragmatic competence ("Do you think you really know how to use English and your pragmatic competence is adequately developed?")
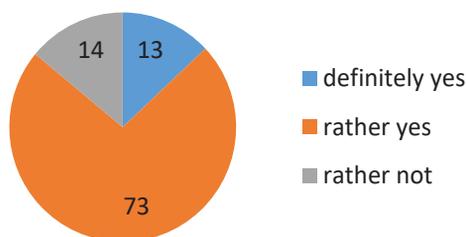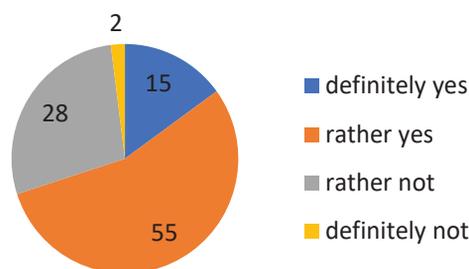

Figure 5.15. Students' willingness to learn more about pragmatics ("Are you interested in learning more about pragmatics and develop in this area?")

The results displayed clearly indicate that the respondents think highly of their own pragmatic competence and believe it to have been already sufficiently developed. In light of the answers quoted before, and rather confident viewpoints on the lack of a need to learn polite formulae, such opinions are quite astonishing.

5.1.2 Recapitulation

The intention of the discussed research tool is to display the results gathered from the questionnaire addressed to Polish Generation Z students. The respondents comprise a homogenous group in terms of their linguistic background, that is, all of them are Poles, first-year students, students of an English

philology department. The fact that they have chosen English as their major already suggests some assumptions concerning the character of their learning process as well as some hypotheses pertaining to their higher than avarage linguistic and pragmatic awareness. The data obtained seem to contradict those initial beliefs. To start with, only about half of the respondents display integrative motivation, and the other half openly admit to studying English to increase their future professional prospects. While there is nothing wrong about it, still it shows that the learners are often taking up the language for instrumental purposes only and seem not to possess a generally "linguistically open" awareness and approach. There are many other results substantiating this point, for example, for 30% of the respondents it does not really matter whether they are correct when communicating in English. They also do not realise how important the influence of studying English at the university is, or may be, as they do not treat it seriously in terms of factors contributing to their L2 development. Nor do they recognise the value stemming from inter-acting with native speakers or other non-native interactors. Generation Zers partaking in the research communicate mainly through social media and it is this that probably determines the quality of their discourse most. Although the interviewees report communicating in both forms (spoken and written) equally, it seems that the quantity of oral contacts is not really satisfactory, and combined with their own self-declared reluctance to engage in face-to-face communication, may turn out to be very alarming in the long term. A very large proportion of students afflicted by anxiety and communication appre-hension can be perceived as the first outcome of this situation. High frequency of reading, social media, and texting may strengthen written competence but seriously undermine not only soft skills but also general second language oral fluency. One of the most important findings, from the point of view of this study, is the one showing respondents' opinions on the need for learning polite formulae. The fact that almost 70% of these young Poles do not treat it with due respect is disquieting, but, if analysed together with a next strong claim (made by 86%), namely that their pragmatic competence is already well devel-oped, it may be seen to be very confident, not to say conceited. All in all, the respondents seem to be very satisfied with their L2 communication abilities. However, those competences shall be further analysed in the following part concerning the analysis of DCT findings.

5.2 Discourse Completion Task – Analysis

The major aim of this part of our research study was to obtain the data that would enable to assess the development of pragmatic competence that Polish Generation Zers display. As has been presented in the previous part (cf. section 5.1), the respondents think highly of their own L2 communication abilities; moreover, they already believe that their pragmatic competence is well developed and are not really eager to take up learning polite formulae. Thus, in order to juxtapose the previously-quoted self-reported level of pragmatic competence with real abilities, the respondents were provided with three scenarios, requiring from them to produce a request, react to a compliment, and apologise. The major intention of adopting WDCT is to verify respondents' productive pragmatic competence, however, as the DCTs provide a substantial amount of learners' corpus, it is also intended to analyse this discourse from the point of view of linguistic correctness.

5.2.1 Requests

Generation Zers' responses were elicited using the form of an open-ended written discourse completion test (WDCT). The first situation analysed in this research involves a case in which the sociopragmatic variables of social power and degree of imposition are intertwined. The first variable concerns the power of the requester over the requestee (here the respondents, playing the role of a counselor, have more power), where degree of imposition, which refers to the importance or degree of difficulty in the situation, is small (as they should ask for a small favour). As for social distance, which refers to the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors, it follows S>H pattern:

> You are working as a counselor in a Day Camp, you need to write a phone number, but you do not have a pen. An English-speaking child, who is not in your group, is sitting next to you in the playground and has a pen. How would you ask this child for a pen? You say:

The first DCT was adapted from Salgado (2011). The example quoted is nothing new, and the case of borrowing a pen has already been discussed (cf. Chapter 3).[2] The vast majority of subjects in DCT studies are university students, and in most such studies they retain their identity when responding to the scenarios. In my study the students also retained their identity but only in two out of three situations (scenario 2 and 3). Since as Ogiermann (2018, pp. 234–235) holds, students do not often adopt powerful roles and only a few studies actually use scenarios where the described characters are of a lower status than the participants, or perform different roles, I decided to introduce the respondents to such a challenge and assign them a different role than they normally play (the role of a Day Camp counsellor, scenario 1). This context would also grant them a higher status and more power (S>H). All in all, the respondents' task was to respond to a situation requiring them to produce a speech act of requesting and adjust themselves to status, power and context constraints. Moreover, since English native speakers frequently make use of questions, modal auxiliaries, and hypothetical past tense forms of the verb in expressing a polite request (Leech, 2014) it was also assumed that students self-reporting at least C1 level of proficiency and generally evaluating their pragmatic competence highly would employ the above-mentioned norms.

The initial evaluation of the data gathered revealed already-visible trends. It turned out that when performing the act of requesting, Polish speakers of English chose speakers-oriented structures relying on the verb *borrow* (48 instances of 100) rather than hearer-oriented possibilities and the verb *lend* (30 out of 100). Thus the construction *could you?* enabling the speaker to ask for something was less common than *can I?* and *could I?* when the speaker requests permission. Both modal verbs (cf. *can* and *may*) can be used interchangeably, and the latter verb also occurred in the data. In sum, the choice of the modal verbs may be demonstrated in the following way:

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2   Additional description of pen-related situations and their analysis in terms of social status, distance, and intensity of the act (level of imposition) is to be found in Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 43).

Table 5.7. Preferences for the modal verbs

Modal verb	Number
Can I	30
Could I	18
Can you	–
Could you	30
May I	8
Would	3
Would you mind	11
Total	**100**

What is interesting here is the fact that none of the students used the *Can you?* structure, but while using hearer-oriented possibilities they opted for conditional structures, presumably considering them more polite. The respondents also applied lexical downgraders (cf. Chapter 3), and a detailed distribution of their choices is presented in the following table:

Table 5.8. Distribution of lexical downgrading strategies

Lexical downgrading strategies	Polish Generation Zers (N = 100)
Consultative devices	20
Politeness markers (*please*)	12
Adverbial downtoners	4
Diminutives	3
Appealers	2
Total	**41**

As can be seen, only a few internal modification strategies were chosen, and the most frequently applied options were undeniably consultative devices seeking "to involve the hearer directly bidding for co-operation" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 283).

As for external modifications, the respondents introduced more possibilities here, with imposition minimisers as the most common preference (e.g. *Can I borrow this pen just for a moment / minute / a second / a while*).

Table 5.9. Distribution of external modification strategies

External modification strategies	Polish Generation Zers (N = 100)
Grounders	11
Disarmer	9
Preparators	4
Promise	7
Imposition minimiser	37
Apology	3
Total	71

If we compare these results to those obtained by Ogiermann (2009a, cf. Chapter 3), we may note large areas of divergence, for example, in a much higher number of consultative devices, or politeness markers (the word *please*), used by English native speakers, but also the application of particular modal verbs. The corpus gathered by Ogiermann revealed not even one instance of the verb *may*.[3] Nor did it show the application of *would*, or other consultative devices, primarily with *would you mind* being a case in point. What should be remarked at this point is that the respondents seemed to have been ignorant to the status differences and tended to overuse this highly formal structure. However, a situation in which an adult counsellor asks a minor/child for a pen requires neither a high register nor a sophisticated language/vocabulary:

> Request behaviours are subject to situational variation. In communication events in which the level of imposition is high and the speaker is in an inferior social position to the hearer, the speaker tends to use elaborate and/or polite request behaviours. By contrast, direct, plain requests are frequently used in low imposition and close relationship situations.
>
> (Wang, 2011, p. 26)

The said overuse of highly formal structures may be perceived as a tangible proof of insufficiently developed pragmatic competence, or evidence of being exposed to, or learning, a bookish language (as indicated in questionnaire).

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3   This may be attributed to the differences between British and American English and their preferences for using *can* or *may* in requests which has already been described.

The corpus obtained from the analysis of the first DCT also revealed many grammatical mistakes that the students made, for instance:

> *Can i please borrow your pen for a moment.*
> *I'm sorry to bother you, but would you mind borrow me your pen for*
>   *a while?*
> *Can I borrow your pen for a second? I need to write something down real*
>   *quick and you will have it back.*
> *Could you borrow me your pen for a minute?*
> *Could You give me a pen for a minute, please?*

As can be seen, the examples above contain many different erroneous features pertaining not only to accuracy and verb forms, but also including inappropriate use of the *borrow – lend* lexical pair and even potential pragmatic transfer from Polish. In 19 analysed DCTs, the respondents did not capitalise *I*, and in three cases did capitalise *you*. Although such behaviour is a norm from the point of view of Polish politeness, it is extremely awkward in English (Dronia, 2018).

An additional important finding is that of verbosity, which is a specific interlanguage phenomenon. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) found that the learners' requests were generally longer than those of native speakers, and this is also confirmed in this study (e.g. *Hi, I am a camp counselor of the other group here. As I have to write down a phone number, would you mind borrowing me a pen for a second? Because I saw you're holding one in your hand*). Last but not least, House and Kasper (1987) pointed out that non-native speakers not only made longer requests, but their level of directness was also higher than that of native speakers. This finding, however, was not confirmed in the research, and it seems that the respondents introduced way too many too formal strategies.

All students' responses are also rated along four criteria provided by Ishihara (2010), that is:
(1) overall directness, politeness, and formality;
(2) choice of requesting strategies;
(3) overall comprehensibility; and
(4) pragmatic tone.

1. Level of formality	4 3 2 1
2. Requesting strategies	4 3 2 1
3. Word choice	4 3 2 1
4. Tone	4 3 2 1

4 – very appropriate; 3 – somewhat appropriate; 2 – less appropriate; 1 – inappropriate

Both Polish and American teachers were invited to check the content validity. The efforts made in developing the items ensured the authenticity of the situations. Each of the criteria was assigned four points, adding up to the full mark of 16. Following Ishihara (2010), the term *grammar* refers broadly to formal linguistic knowledge that includes not only syntax and morphosyntax, but also lexis and phonology (Canale & Swain, 1980; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Pragmatic tone (recognised by Ochs (1996) as affective stance) defined as "the affect indirectly conveyed by linguistic and/or nonlinguistic means" (Beebe & Waring, 2004, p. 2) includes lexical, syntactic, and semantic devices in addition to phonological tone of voice. "The phonological tone of voice," due to written character of the task (WDCT), is omitted in the rating.

Table 5.10. Evaluation of students' requests by American and Polish academic teachers

Level of formality		Requesting strategies		Word choice		Tone	
Mean	2.7	mean	2.98	mean	3.04	mean	3
Median	3	median	3	median	3	median	3
Mode	2	mode	3	mode	3	mode	3
SD	0.84	SD	4.8	SD	4.5	SD	4.5
CV	31%	CV	16%	CV	15%	CV	15%
Pearson mode skewness	.83	Pearson mode skewness	-.004	Pearson mode skewness	.008	Pearson mode skewness	0

The data presented in Table 5.10 indicate that while performing the speech act of requesting, students have the greatest difficulties with adjusting the level of formality as well as with the choice of appropriate strategies. Far too often do they choose exalted grammatical forms (*Would you mind my taking your pen?*, *Would you mind if I took your pen?*), neither can they appropriately distinguish and assess the context, that is, in terms of the level of imposition (low) and status. All of the respondents recognised the speech act properly in

the context presented, however the requesting strategies they opted for more often than not included too many details and clearly displayed a high level of verbosity, for example, *Hello. My name is XYZ and I'm working here. I've forgot to take my pen with me so maybe you can lend me yours for a minute?* Last but not least, the level of grammatical accuracy was also relatively low, which, bearing in mind the fact that this is the group of English majors, is quite astonishing. The greatest coefficient of variation (31%) refers to the level of formality and supports the claim that the respondents' measure of dispertion is relatively high, that, in turn, indicates a big heterogenity of the group. The final remark that can be made here is that the respondents seem to hold different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour. This, in turn, is strong evidence for sociopragmatic failure on one hand, and on the other a manifestation of reaching the second stage in the development of pragmatic competence, which Bloom-Kulka (1991) would characterise as interlanguage-oriented and potentially systematic.

5.2.2 Compliments

The second situation that was provided to the research participants required them to react to a compliment:

> A Foreign visitor to China says to you: "Your English is excellent!"
> How would you respond to him? You say:

This example, coming from Huang (2007, p. 130), is another classic situation that may easily help to determine whether the Polish learners of English have already adopted an English-like way of accepting compliments, or whether they still retain Polish norms of politeness. As has already been stated in Chapter 3, presumably under the influence of globalisation and the impact of English, the young generation of Poles has shown a growing tendency to accept compliments (Jakubowska, 1999). This tendency is also revealed in the data obtained from this research study. The answers such as *thanks, I'm very flattered* or *Thank you very much, I really appreciate it* or a plain appreciation token *thanks* or *thank you* appeared most commonly in the corpus. A detailed representation of the data obtained is included in the Table 5.11:

Table 5.11. Responses to compliments

Compliment response	Polish Generation Zers (N = 100)
Appreciation token	45
Comment history	12
Reassignment	10
Returning a compliment	3
Scale down	12
Qualification	6
Disagreement	3
No acknowledgment	1
Total	92

In a study conducted by Herbert (1986) on undergraduate students at the State University of New York, it turned out that the general distribution of compliment responses among native speakers is as follows: one third of compliment responses are acceptances, approximately 66% are agreements, and 31% are non-agreements. Juxtaposing those findings with the results of my own study, one may see a very similar pattern, that is, 32% of the corpus tokens (reassignment, return, scale down, qualification, disagreement, and no acknowledgment added together) may be treated as non-agreements, while 57% (appreciation token and comment history) can be perceived as agreements. This result, still being slightly lower than Herbert's, actually demonstrates that Polish Generation Zers are on their way to fully accommodating to Western standards of politeness. Moreover, one may also assume that the notions of self-image and self-confidence have significantly changed because of contact with Western culture, and Poles have given up much of their modesty for the sake of agreeing with others when responding to compliments. What is also worth noting is the fact that some of the respondents decided to use the occasion to fill in the DCT for other purposes, namely to complain how much they are underappreciated and criticised for their English:

> *Thank you. It's good to hear that. At the university they mostly correct my mistakes so at least now I know I'm making some progress.*
> *I appreciate what you're saying. English is my second language, and I've been learning it since primary school. It's nice to see that someone can finally notice my hard work and commitment.*

Such comments, though not very frequent, may unfortunately be understood as the manifestation of vanity on the one hand, but also as a certain form of irritation that students' efforts have not been fully and adequately recognised, for example by their teachers.

Students' responses were also rated according to the same criteria presented before, that is, the level of formality, strategies used, word choice, and tone. As usual, the data is analysed along the native speaker's utterances that would most probably be produced in this situation.

Table 5.12. Evaluation of students' reaction towards compliments by American and Polish academic teachers

Level of formality		Complimenting strategies		Word choice		Tone	
Mean	3.2	mean	3.38	mean	3.86	mean	3.2
Median	4	median	4	median	4	median	4
Mode	4	mode	4	mode	4	mode	3
SD	1.05	SD	0.84	SD	0.33	SD	0.9
CV	32.8%	CV	25%	CV	8.5%	CV	28%
Pearson mode skewness	-.76	Pearson mode skewness	-.73	Pearson mode skewness	-.42	Pearson mode skewness	.22

As can be seen, the highest average mark scored pertains to word choice, whereas the smallest to the level of formality as well as tone. The most essential aspect verified through this WDCT scenario is the sameness to native speaker's language. As has been already demonstrated in the theoretical part, Polish and English differ considerably in terms of their reaction towards compliments as well as the strategies they use while reacting towards them. In Polish disagreement or no acknowledgment are still very popular, if not even expectable (at least by the older members of the society), however, the English language would definitely advocate token of appreciation or, possibly, comment history. Thus not all of the respondents recognised the speech act properly in the presented context. The least statistically significant heterogeneity in the group may be seen in terms of word choice, and such a small number (8.5%) may be interpreted as a lower level of dispersion around the mean and thus a high level of similarity in the group.

5.2.3 Apologies

The third DCT scenario required the respondents to produce a speech act of apology. The responses to the questionnaire are further analysed according to Olshtain's (1983) five semantic formulas for apologies (cf. Chapter 4). The aim of the data analyses is to determine the patterns of apologies in English produced by adult native speakers of Polish, and to see how these patterns reflect the speakers sociopragmatic competence of English.

> You receive an invitation to attend a lunch with the dean of the school, the professors and all the students with the best grades. The invitation says that you need to be there 10 minutes before the hour that is indicated. The day of the lunch, you have a problem and you arrive 50 minutes late. When you arrive, there are no empty places and the event has already started. You see an empty chair, you go and sit down. After a few minutes the dean of the school tells you that that is his place. What would you say to the director why you took his chair? You say:
>
> (Salgado, 2011, p. 240)

As seen above, the presented situation is one of social vulnerability as the level of imposition is relatively high, as is the disproportion of power and social distance (two strangers). However, the respondents did not always acknowledge the asymmetric distribution of power and introduced such inappropriate answers as *Finders keepers, losers weepers!* or *I sincerely apologize for this embarrassing situation, but I would want to suggest the sitting chart to be done the next time.*

A detailed distribution of their responses is displayed in Table 5.13:

Table 5.13. Apologising strategies

Apology strategy	Number
Direct apology	98
Explanation	32
Acceptance of responsibility	3
Offer of repair	10
Promise of forbearance	–
Total	143

The participants of the study introduced many intensified adverbials (*I'm so sorry!*, *I'm terribly sorry*, *I'm really sorry*, *I'm deeply sorry*, *I'm sincerely sorry*), or direct apologies (*Oh, pardon me*, *I beg your pardon*) as well as some different explanations, for instance, *my transport broke down*, *I was not aware that it had been taken since certain unexpected difficulties caused me arrive late*, *I did my best to arrive on time, but due to my personal problem I came later*, *I arrived late by a misfortune* or *I didn't know that this seat was occupied, because I arrived just a few moments ago due to the predicament that I found myself in*).[4] However, the number of those who believed that this situation would require additional explanation was around merely 30%. For the majority it was sufficient just to say *I'm sorry*, or *I didn't know that this seat was taken.*

Kirchhoff et al. (2012, p. 111, cf. Chapter 4) have identified a few additional elements of apologising that are not recognised by Olshtain's taxonomy (1983), for example, conveying emotions. In the corpus gathered here, there were only two indications of emotions: in the first one an interviewee wrote *I will probably go as red as a beetroot*, which may indirectly imply the feeling of embarrassment, and in the second this reaction is directly named *I sincerely apologize for this embarrassing situation and I feel really ashamed.*

In the article written by Suszczyńska (1999, p. 1059), she claims/says that the "choice of *I'm sorry* for English remains in accordance with the general assumption that contemporary English displays features of avoidance-based negative politeness." Thus, in both cases – the language produced by English native speakers as well as Polish students of this language – the overwhelmingly common expressions and the most dominant strategies used are those of regret (the word *sorry* appeared 56 times in the analysed corpus). This, in turn, may imply that students partaking in the research have already demonstrated similar to native-like sociopragmatic competence. Yet, in analysing the remaining data one may question this conclusion. To start with, it is significant to study the length of apologies created by the students. The average sentence created in this corpus would equal 15.98 words.

As Ohbuchi et al. (1989, in Kirchhoff et al., 2012, p. 112) suggest, particularly after more serious offenses, more elaborate apologies may be needed. As the analysed DCT case is an example of a socially vulnerable and face-threatening situation, it is questionable whether the average number of not even 16 words

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4 All examples, including even those grammatically incorrect are quoted verbatim.

would be sufficient to sincerely express regret. Moreover, there were quite a few participants who produced extremely short responses, such as, for instance, *I am sorry for misunderstanding* (5 words), *I'm terribly sorry, I had no idea it was yours* (11 words), or *I'm sorry. I thought this seat is free* (9 words). Hence it is safe to assume that the overall evaluation of the corpus tokens in terms of their sameness to English standards indicates the existence of some pragmatic gaps.

Table 5.14. Evaluation of students' apologies by American and Polish academic teachers

Level of formality		Apologising strategies		Word choice		Tone	
Mean	1.73	mean	2.49	mean	2.6	mean	2.65
Median	2	median	2	median	3	median	3
Mode	2	mode	2	mode	2	mode	2
SD	1.26	SD	0.94	SD	1.01	SD	0.92
CV	72.8%	CV	37.7%	CV	38.8%	CV	34.7%
Pearson mode skewness	-.214	Pearson mode skewness	.52	Pearson mode skewness	.59	Pearson mode skewness	.70

It is true that the learners relied heavily on direct apologies, but only slightly more than 30% of them decided to substantiate their regrets by providing further explanations. When analysing the strategies chosen, we may also look at the combinations of them that the respondents opted for. The number of strategies in addition to the performative is reported in Table 5.13. Among the expressions of apology using *sorry*, more than one third (34%) used the performative alone, nearly 32% used one strategy in addition to the performative, and almost one fifth used two strategies. Fewer than 5% of the apologies used three strategies in addition to the performative. The data gathered for the purpose of this analysis seem to align with the findings described by Kitao and Kitao (2013, p. 10) investigating naturally occurring spoken native speakers' discourse:

> Based on the apologies found in the corpus, "sorry" is by far the most common performative in apologies. It is most frequently used alone or with a statement of the situation or an explanation for how the offense happened (or, less frequently, both).

What should be stressed here, however, is that none of the situations analysed by the quoted authors represents such a high level of imposition, none of them was so face-threatening, and social and power distances were not so significantly different. Thus it seems that the young generation of Poles is not really aware of such divergences and the need to adjust one's language to make it fit a formal context (cf. Table 5.14). For many of them it was sufficient to state that they were late and that was the reason why they took someone else's chair. Providing the reason and excusing themselves for being late was not of utmost importance. All in all, it is difficult to univocally state whether the students have already exercised sufficient (corresponding to C1 level of proficiency as they declared in the questionnaires) level of pragmatic competence. They obviously have acquired the idea how to say *I'm sorry*, but providing such short apologies does not meet any norms of politeness, irrespective of the language examined.

5.3 Written Retrospective Verbal Protocol (WRVP)

The third stage of the research started just before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of tremendous organisational problems mainly caused by transforming contact teaching into online system, the students partaking in the study were more difficult to reach. Due to lack of face-to-face contact granting (at least in my case) bigger options for motivating the respondents to send back the WRVPs, the number of participants slightly dropped, and a particular correlation was observed, that is, any research instrument requiring more time and effort to fill in (a Written Retrospective Verbal Protocol being a case in point) was neglected by participants. Although 100 respondents agreed to fill in WDCTs, the amount of written verbal protocols gathered for the purpose of content and statistical analysis equals only 44 samples. The results of the study on apologies conducted by Beltrán-Palanques (2013) revealed that retrospective verbal reports appeared to be instrumental in gathering information regarding participants' pragmatic production. Hence the major objective of this tool was to collect the data enabling the author to categorise different strategies the respondents used, as well as to identify various themes, patterns, and frequencies appearing in their answers (content analysis). Additional intention was also to analyse the corpus gathered using LIWC 20 and Receptiviti software, which, in turn, enabled further statistical analysis (e.g. analytic thinking, positive vs negative emotions and clout).

The final instrument implemented in this stage of my research was Grammarly application. The reason for introducing this application was the same as in the case of open-ended questions and WDCTs, that is, to verify the corpus in terms of its general grammatical correctness, lexical sophistication and readability level enabling final assessment of the L2 level the students represent.

5.3.1 Statistical Analysis

This part presents the findings computed through the application of LIWC 20 software, Receptiviti, SAILEE, and Grammarly applications.

Requests. As has been already stated, the general objective of introducing WRVP was to examine respondents' thoughts and strategies used so as to understand their way of thinking while formulating a given speech act. WRVPs were provided to the students together with WDCTs and required from them some insight and consideration while explaining the reasons they had behind producing requests in the way they did. Although they were encouraged not to limit themselves to any particular number of words, the most prevailing responses were shorter than 100 words. What should be also remembered here is the fact that only 44 (out of 100 respondents) decided to send back their WRVPs. A detailed distribution of their length is shown below:

Speech Acts: Requests
Number of Samples: 44 responses
Total Word Count: 5,914 words
Average Word Count per Response: ~134 words
Standard Deviaton: ~86 %
Responses < 100 words: 21 responses
Responses ≥ 100 words < 200 words: 14 responses
Responses ≥ 200 words: 9 responses

The corpus collected was later examined using LIWC 20, SALLEE (Syntax-Aware LexicaL Emotion Engine generated by Receptiviti), and Grammarly software. Table 5.15 demonstrates the findings gathered through LIWC 20 program:

Table 5.15. LIWC 20 WRVP requests variables

Variables	LIWC 20 WRVP requests	LIWC 20 mean
I-words (*I, me, my*):	8.70	4.99
Social words	8.69	9.74
Positive emotions	2.57	3.67
Negative emotions	2.12	1.84
Cognitive processes	12.52	10.61
Analytic	44.88	56.34
Clout	37.02	57.95
Authentic	76.01	49.17
Tone	38.60	54.22
WPS	19.66	17.40
Sixltr	18.33	15.60
Dic	88.84	85.18

Similarly to the findings gathered from the interpretation of an open-ended question (cf. section 5.4: Pragmatic Comprehension Questionnaire), the respondents seem to express rather low analytical thinking skills that further manifest themselves in lengthy, narrative-like sentences full of personal opinions. As Pennebaker (2011, p. 368) said, "[t]he analytic thinking factor reflects cognitive complexity. People [...] make higher grades in college, tend to be more honest, and are more open to new experiences. They also read more and have more complex views of themselves than those who are low in analytic thinking." Relative social status, confidence, or leadership that people display through their writing or talking is expressed in clout. A high number of the clout variable may also suggest that the author is speaking from the perspective of high expertise and is confident. In contrast, a low clout number indicates a more tentative, humble, even anxious style (Pennebaker et al., 2015). As can be seen in Table 5.15, the amount of clout is also relatively low and thus may be interpreted as a sign of low confidence. Verbosity, noticed in the case of WDCTs is also visible in LIWC 20 analysis, that is, low analytic thinking skills and wordy sentences (WPS) are cases in point. Additional observation stemming from this analysis concerns the usage of function words, and pronouns specifically. As has been already stated, "[t]he higher anybody is in status the less they use 'I' words; the lower someone is in status, the higher they use 'I' words" (Pennebaker, a TED talk, online). What should be emphasised here is the fact that

students' status in the request scenario was higher than their interlocutor's (a Day Camp counsellor vs a small child). Thus, bearing in mind the context of the situation, they should have adopted more powerful roles and implement more second person pronouns (*you*). A detailed distribution of function words is presented in Table 5.16:

Table 5.16. LIWC 20 function words variables

Variables	WRVP requests	LIWC 20 mean
Functions words	57.73	51.87
Total pronouns	17.02	15.22
Personal pronouns	11.08	9.95
1st person singular	19.01	4.99
1st person plural	0.38	0.72
2nd person	0.99	1.70
3rd person singular	0.63	1.88
3rd person plural	0.79	0.66
Impersonal pronouns	5.21	5.26

Again, a relatively high number of first person personal pronouns in comparison to a low number of second person pronouns may support the previous claim (cf. WDCT finding) that students cannot differentiate between different formality levels and adjust themselves to sociopragmatic requirements.

The final part of WRVP requests analysis was based on Grammarly application with further intention of examining the collected material in terms of linguistic accuracy. The program detected 591 writing issues, 198 of which were "critical", and 393 "advanced". As for the readability level assessed on the basis of Flesch reading-ease test, the text score was 67, and, according to Grammarly, may be described as "a text that is likely to be understood by a reader who has at least an 8th-grade education (age 13–14) and should be fairly easy for most adults to read." With rare words on the level of 13% and unique words on the level of 67%, the corpus cannot be considered lexically sophisticated, and actually, represents below average result. Numerous instances of punctuation mistakes (160 examples) and additionally 49 misspelled words and 53 cases of a wrong use of a determiner (*a/an/the*) indicate serious problems with clarity. Furthermore, 54 errors concerning word choice and 34 relating to inappropriate colloquialisms are categorised by the software as delivery and

engagement-oriented issues. The former (the proper delivery) is supposedly "helpful in making the right impression on the reader," while the latter (being "engagement-oriented") "make(s) one's writing more interesting and effective" (app.grammarly.com), both of which are poorly assessed.

Yet again, the corpus gathered from the analysis of WRVP requests leaves no doubts when it comes to its low level of lexical and grammatical sophistication.

Compliments. The analysis of written retrospective verbal report of compliments (or rather respondents' reaction to receiving them) was based on LIWC 20, SALLEE, and Grammarly applications. All the instruments used enable one to draw some conclusions pertaining to the general characteristics as well as the thinking processes the respondents displayed while producing the given speech act in question.

Speech Acts: Compliments
Number of Samples: 44 responses
Total Word Count: 4,190 words
Average Word Count per Response: ~95 words
Standard Deviaton: ~63 %
Responses < 100 words: 23 responses
Responses ≥ 100 words < 200 words: 13 responses
Responses ≥ 200 words: 8 responses

The corpus gathered in this WRVP was smaller in comparison to the previously discussed speech act and amounts almost to 4,200 words. As seen from the above data, the respondents were not very willing to share their thoughts as the average word count per response was merely around 95 words. Table 5.17 provides more data collected through LIWC 20:

Table 5.17. LIWC 20 WRVP compliments variables

Variables	LIWC 20 WRVP compliments	LIWC 20 mean
I-words (*I*, *me*, *my*)	9.32	4.99
Social words	13.23	9.74
Positive emotions	6.32	3.67
Negative emotions	1.02	1.84

|		
Cognitive processes	19.52	10.61
Analytic	29.76	56.34
Clout	45.08	57.95
Authentic	32.95	49.17
Tone	97.66	54.22
WPS	15.83	17.40
Sixltr	19.88	15.60
Dic	90.35	85.18

The numbers juxtaposed in the table indicate some divergence from LIWC 20 mean. The most noticeable discrepancies include much lower result of analytic, clout, and authentic parameters. However, social words, positive emotions, and cognitive processes seem to outnumber the LIWC average. One of the most visible differences can also be observed in terms of tone result. Although LIWC 20 includes both positive and negative emotion dimensions, the tone variable puts the two dimensions into a single summary variable (Cohn et al., 2004). The algorithm is built so that the higher the number, the more positive the tone. Numbers below 50 suggest a more negative emotional tone. With a tone score of 97.66%, students' writing samples may be categorised as very positive. This can be probably ascribed to the fact that compliments are generally recognised as "positive" speech acts, at least in the Western cultures. However, as has been already stated before, Polish norms of politeness and our reaction to compliments is still undergoing some modifications, and this is apparently visible in other software results shown in Figure 5.16:

Figure 5.16. SALLEE analysis of WRVP compliments
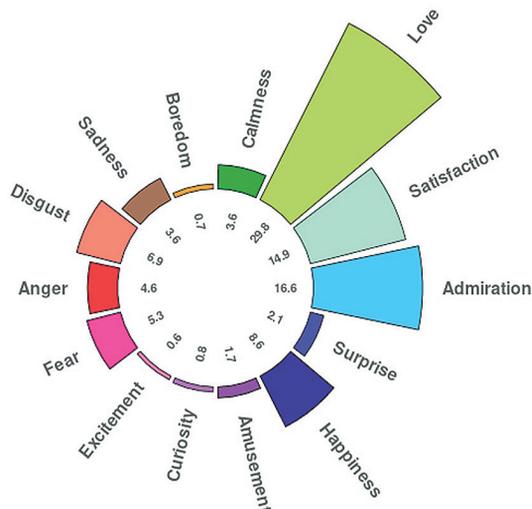
As seen in the diagram, writing about compliments generally evokes positive emotions, such as love (29.8), admiration (16.6) or satisfaction (14.9).

Figure 5.17. Big 5 analysis of all compliments
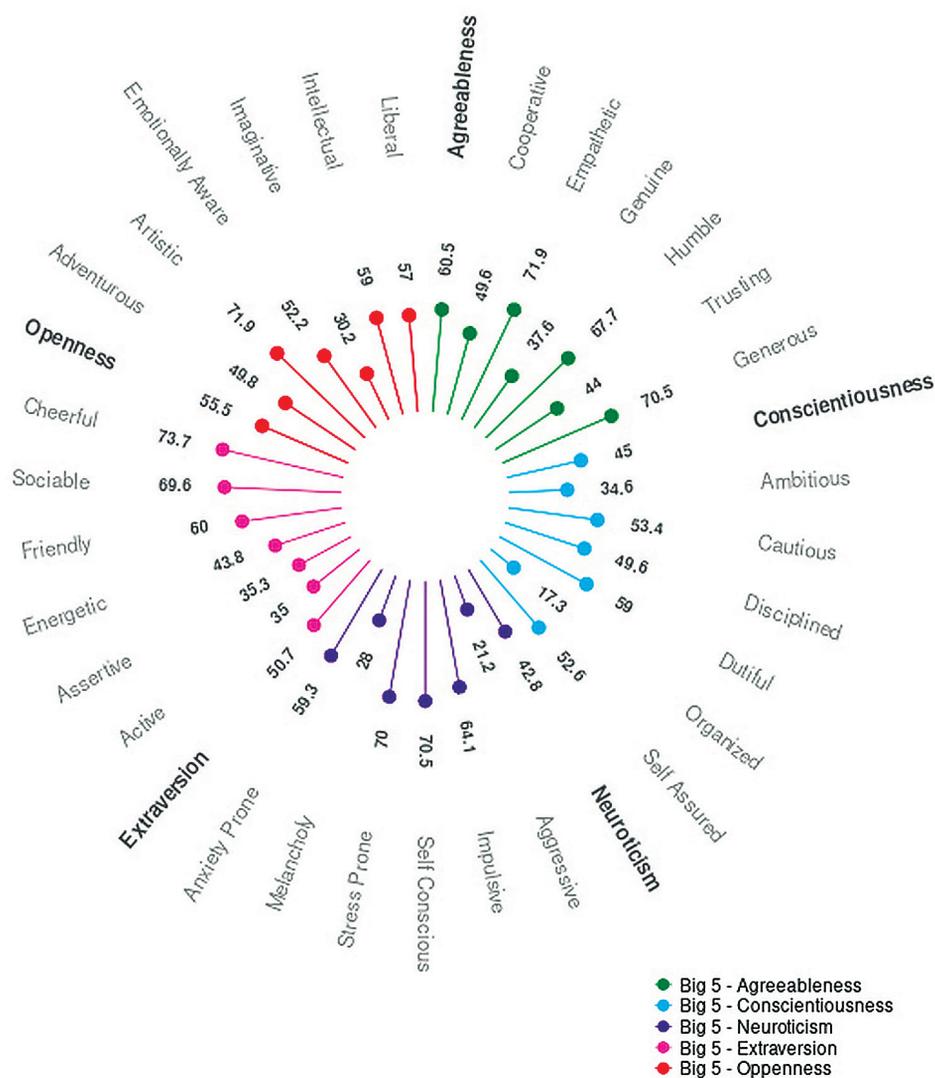
The Big 5 personality traits (also known as OCEAN) represent a continuum that groups individuals by specific features of their personality. The main categories are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and

Neuroticism. Under each of these categories are a number of facet traits that describe finer-grained personality features. High scores in a particular category indicate that an individual is significantly aligned with the trait, while low scores indicate the opposite (Receptiviti, online).

Table 5.18. Personality traits. WRVP compliments results

Traits	BIG 5 results
Openness	55.5
Conscientiousness	45
Neuroticism	42.8
Extraversion	50.7
Agreeableness	60.5

Analysing all the categories together, the following generalisations concerning the participants of this study may be inferred:
The data pertaining to extraversion allows us to classify the respondents as:
- rather more likely to seek out and enjoy social situations,
- rather more friendly and positive when interacting with others,
- rather less assertive and comfortable expressing their ideas and needs,
- rather less likely to need activity and engagement in their life,
- rather less likely to have energy and enthusiasm,
- rather happy and cheerful.

Moreover, while analysing the numbers referring to agreeableness, one may conclude the following:
The participants seem to be:
- rather more likely to enjoy spending their time and money on others,
- rather less trusting of others,
- rather less likely to take into account the needs of others,
- rather more likely to internalise the feelings of others,
- rather less genuine and honest,
- rather more humble and modest.

Neuroticism and the data computed in this category enable one to see the students as:
- rather more likely to act impulsively,
- rather affected by the stress,

- rather affected by the anxiety,
- rather less aggressive or not aggressive at all,
- rather less melancholic or not melancholic at all,
- rather more likely to be embarrassed or anxious about themselves or their skills.

As for openness, it is logical to assume that people producing WRVPs seem to be:

- rather more likely to appreciate and enjoy the arts,
- rather less likely to enjoy and seek out adventure,
- rather more inclined toward intellectual or academic learning,
- rather more socially and ideologically liberal,
- rather less imaginative,
- rather more conscious of and connected with their feelings and emotions.

Last but not least, the participants of this research project can be analysed from the point of view of conscientiousness, and the following observations can be made about them. They seem to be:

- rather confident in themselves,
- rather less likely to follow routines and rules,
- rather less ambitious or less driven by the desire for achievement,
- rather more likely to respect expectations or authority,
- rather disorganised and less orderly,
- rather cautious.

What is crucial in this analysis is the fact that the respondents even while complimenting seem to be affected by stress and anxiety (neuroticism result), less assertive and primarily more likely to be embarrassed or anxious about themselves or their skills. Such a finding may confirm previous assumptions regarding certain form of "pragmatic duality," namely, it seems that Polish students of English have already acquired English-like way of responding to compliments and accepting them, yet, in some cases, it is still against their deeply-rooted Polish standards of politeness urging them either to deny and reject, or at least, downgrade a compliment.

The last observation that may be drawn here pertains to a low result (32.95) of authentic variable. According to the information provided by receptiviti.com, "a high score in this category is associated with communication that is more honest, personal and disclosing. A low score in this category is reflective of language that is more guarded and distanced. This measure is not a lie-detector

on its own but it can be used to understand the degree to which a person may be guarded and avoiding revealing their true self." To conclude, it may be speculated that the respondents were not "fully themselves" while responding in the English-like way to a compliment (the findings derived from the analysis of WDCTs clearly illustrate a high proportion of sameness to English sociopragmatic standards used in complimenting). Nevertheless, "proper" and "expected" reaction towards a compliment apparently still contradicts their mother tongue pragmatic yardsticks.

The final stage of the analysis takes into account the data obtained from the application of Grammarly software. The program detected 454 "writing issues", 159 of them being recognised as "critical", and the remaining 295 as "advanced". It seems that the most problematic aspect concerns the punctuation system (103 cases), misspelled words (44), and determiner use (33). As for lexical richness, the average word length does not exceed 4.3 characters per word, whereas the small proportion of unique words (16%) and rare ones (26%) make it already a "below average" text. Interestingly, the number of words per sentence (15.8) is higher than the average Grammarly result. Juxtaposing it to the previously mentioned analytic thinking number (29.76), one may see high resemblance to LIWC findings, that is, the responses are written in a more storytelling way, as people, when telling stories, tend to make longer, more elaborative sentences. The Flesch reading-ease test score (71) is even higher than in the case of other texts examined. Bearing in mind the fact that higher scores actually indicate the material that is easier to read (and here "the text is likely to be understood by a reader who has at least a 7th-grade education (age 12) and should be easy for most adults to read") such a discourse by no means can indicate a high command of English.

Apologies. The analysis of written retrospective verbal report of apologies was also based on LIWC 20, SALLEE, and Grammarly applications. All the instruments used enable one to draw some conclusions pertaining to the general characteristics as well as the thinking processes the respondents displayed while producing the given speech act in question, focusing not only on "what" people are saying but on "how" they are saying it.

Speech Acts: Apologies
Number of Samples: 44 responses

Total Word Count: 4,725 words
Average Word Count per Response: ~107 words
Standard Deviaton: ~64%

As seen above, only 44 apology-oriented WRVPs were collected and the average length of students' reports was around merely 107 words. Tabble 5.19 provides more data collected through LIWC 20:

Table 5.19. LIWC 20 WRVP apologies variables

Variables	LIWC 20 WRVP apologies	LIWC 20 mean
I-words (*I, me, my*)	11.04	4.99
Social words	10.63	9.74
Positive emotions	1.90	3.67
Negative emotions	3.36	1.84
Cognitive processes	18.96	10.61
Analytic	25.45	56.34
Clout	26.29	57.95
Authentic	67.36	49.17
Tone	8.40	54.22
WPS	20.84	17.40
Sixltr	18.14	15.60
Dic	91.88	85.18

The presented data allow to draw the following conclusions:

1. Analytical thinking: A lower than average result may indicate that the respondents prefer using informal, personal, here-and-now language and narrative thinking when apologising.
2. Clout: Below average result serves as a tangible proof of anxiety and humble approach while apologising.
3. Authentic: Higher than average indication may imply honest and personal approach adopted in the act of apologising.
4. Emotional tone: 8.4% – a really low percentage may suggest that people reveal greater anxiety and sadness when apologising. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010, p. 36), "emotional tone inherent in language use can help identify individual differences."

A very interesting conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the analysis of pronouns (function words) used. "Because they show how individuals are referring to each other, thus they show the quality of their relationship with other person." According to the studies, "high rates of pronoun use have been associated with greater focus on one's self or on one's social world" (Pennebaker et al., 2014, p. 2). The percentage of pronouns used is WRVPs concerning apologies is higher than the average (19.07% vs 15.22%) which may imply that students rated their position as inferior to their interlocutor and correctly assessed the weightiness and level of imposition in the situation described.

As for the application of prepositions and articles, studies indicate that "higher grades were associated with greater article and preposition use, indicating categorical language (i.e., references to complexly organised objects and concepts) preposition and conjunction use has been associated with cognitive complexity" (Pennebaker et al., 2014, p. 1). Prepositions also often signal that the respondent provides more concrete and complex information about a topic (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 35). Finally, the use of articles is associated with concrete and formal writing. In case of this study, the percentage of articles (7.38%) and prepositions (9.56%) is relatively low (LIWC 20 mean is 6.51% and 12.93%, respectively), which may further imply rather informal language and less concrete writing. However, when it comes to, for example, auxiliary verbs, studies show that lower grades are generally associated with greater use of auxiliary verbs and a narrative language style (Pennebaker et al., 2014, p. 1). Since 13.15% is a fairly high result (8.53% LIWC 20 mean), it may be assumed that respondents do not display such characteristics.

Another category that was analysed were cognitive processes. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010, p. 35), "cognitive complexity can be thought of as a richness of two components of reasoning: the extent to which someone differentiates between multiple competing solutions and the extent to which someone integrates among solutions (Tetlock, 1981). A high number of cognitive mechanisms indicates more complex language" (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 35). According to Newman and Pennebaker (2003, p. 666), "increased use of cognitive words (e.g., *think*, *because*) among college students has been linked to higher grades, better health, and improved immune function." As the study results show, cognitive processes percentage is high (18.96%) and thus may be interpreted as a sign of complex language. This observation, however, is not supported by the findings gathered from another software, namely Grammarly

application. The software detected 524 writing problems, whereas 181 are "critical" and 343 are "advanced" issues.

Grammarly divides the report into four main categories. The first category is clarity, in which the software gives particular suggestions on how to make the text easier to understand. The program detected 116 clarity mistakes, including wordy sentences, passive voice misuse, unclear or hard-to-read sentences, and intricate sentences. The second category is engagement, which detects mistakes, such as wrong word choice or monotonous sentences. Interestingly, Grammarly finds students' utterances "a bit bland." The third category is correctness, which generally detects errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The last criterion verified is delivery which corrects mistakes in order to help the author of the text make the right impression on the recipient. Here, the program assessed it as "slightly off."

In terms of readability, the result obtained (69/100) may be interpreted as a text that is easy to read, and likely to be understood by a reader who has at least an 8th-grade education (aged 13–14). The average word length is 4.2 letters which, according to the metrics compared to other Grammarly users, is defined as "average", however, the average sentence length is 17.1 words and is further defined as "above average". Lexical sophistication is measured against two criteria, namely, the amount of rare and unique words. In case of the former, the number of unique words amounted to only 14%, which is defined as "below average" result, while "rare words" understood as those that are not among the 5,000 most common English words constituted merely 25%. Table 5.20 demonstrates more findings:

Table 5.20. Grammarly. WRVP apologies variables

CLARITY (116)	
Wordy sentences	56
Passive voice misuse	27
Unclear sentences	13
Hard-to-read text	16
Intricate text	4
ENGAGEMENT (47)	
Word choice	46
Monotonous sentences	1

CORRECTNESS (334)	
Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	119
Mixed dialects of English	15
Misspelled words	51
Text inconsistencies	3
Wrong or missing prepositions	9
Determiner use (*a/an/the/this*, etc.)	43
Comma misuse within clauses	21
Closing punctuation	6
Confused words	13
Misuse of semicolons, quotation marks, etc.	9
Improper formatting	23
Misplaced words or phrases	6
Incomplete sentences	6
Incorrect verb forms	3
Pronoun use	2
Faulty tense sequence	1
Misuse of modifiers	1
Incorrect noun number	1
Faulty subject-verb agreement	1
Commonly confused words	1
DELIVERY (27)	
Inappropriate colloquialisms	27

The final part of content analysis of WRVPs of apologies was conducted on the basis of SALLEE. In case of this research study, three most prevailing feelings noticed were sadness, fear, and anger.

Figure 5.18. SALLEE WRVP apologies results
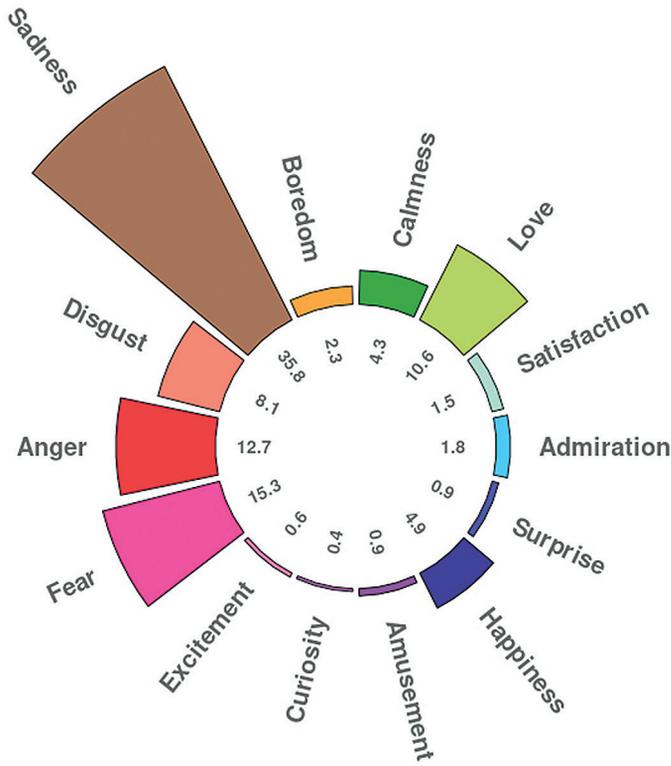
According to the program description (www.receptiviti.com/sallee), there are 14 emotions that the application may detect, including 7 positive emotions, 5 negative, and 2 ambivalent ones. The most outstanding result refers to sadness, fear, and anger, and such emotions are further described in the following way:

> Sadness "includes disappointment, grief, and sorrow or intense feelings of mourning and loss or mild disappointment after everyday losses, such as not finding something you want at the store." Fear, on the other hand, "includes worry, anxiety, and horror or the feeling of being terrified at a scary movie or vague feelings of anxiety about unknown factors such as money or health." Anger "includes annoyance, rage, and frustration or the feeling of irritation at a fly buzzing around your head or the feeling of deep fury after being betrayed by a loved one."
>
> (www.receptiviti.com/sallee)

Bearing in mind the fact that the students were supposed to express their thoughts while producing the speech act of apologising, one may easily understand combination of sadness, fear, and disgust. This would be a probably mixture of feelings experienced in an embarrassing and potentially face-threatening situation. Accepting one's own mistake and facing potential criticism is already humiliating and may evoke the above-mentioned feelings. Nevertheless, a relatively high indication of anger may raise some suspicion and astonishment; after all, it is the dean who could feel this way, but not a student, unless the very act of feeling obligated to apologise (e.g. under the influence of some social pressure and other people presence) may be in itself anger-provoking condition.

5.3.2 Content Analysis

The main analytical step in content and thematic analysis is the coding of reports according to the emergent trends, themes or conceptual categories. This helps the researcher to identify the most characteristic features of the report under study, and consequently, to investigate its content. For clarity, the analysis of the collected material shall be limited to the most frequent themes appearing among the respondents.

Requests. The students partaking in this study were asked to reveal the thoughts they had while performing the speech act of requesting. It has to be remembered that the scenario provided granted them a higher status and a role of a day counsellor. All the respondents complied with the instruction given to them and described their thoughts during their written pragmatic performance. In the material collected for this content analysis, we may differentiate two broad categories influencing their linguistic choices: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic variables.

Sociopragmatic component is related here to implicit social meaning and different assessments of the social aspects of the context, such as age, social distance between the speaker and a receiver or setting. Table 5.21 presents the most common variables identified in this category:

Table 5.21. Sociopragmatic factors[5] influencing the speech act of requesting

Factor	Frequency
Age	19 (43%)
Setting	16 (36%)
Perceived relationship	13 (29.5%)
Authority/power	11 (25%)
Being a stranger to a child and the resulting necessity to create a non-threatening atmosphere	7 (16%)
Politeness	7 (16%)
Formality level	3 (7%)
No argument given	2 (4%)

As seen in the table, the most frequently provided argument influencing the way the respondents produced a speech act of requesting is:

- **the age of the addressee** (43%),
  The response is influenced by the age of the person we ask for a pen.
  It's a kid, so no formal language is needed.
  What influenced on my speech act is the relation (teacher/councellor –
  child), setting (the camp) and the age of interlocutor.
  I think that while creating my question I was governed by the thought
  that this is a kid and I should ask very politely.
  I took into account my interlocutor was a child so I didn't pay attention to
  formal language.

- **general description of the situation – setting** (36%)
  I was influence by description of the situation and in fact nothing else.
  My speech act was influenced by the setting and percieved relationship.
  I was influenced by the setting and situation.

---

5   As one may see, some factors may semantically overlap, i.e. perceived relationship, formality and authority refer to one's status and power. However, the presented data mimics the responses provided in WRVPs and though grammatically incorrect, all the examples are quoted verbatim.

- **perceived relationship** (29.5%)
  I was influenced by the setting, my position and perceived relationship.
  Situation, description of the situation, perceived relationship.

We should also stress here that the respondents seem to display a contradictory attitude towards a correlation between one's age and some respect (formality level) one should or should not deserve:

> [...] *if we are the child's superior, the use of any hedges and polite modal verb forms is unnecessary, if not weird. If the interlocutor were a professor, the situation would be completely different, since we would be a person of lesser authority asking our superior for something.*

> *It's a kid, so no formal language is needed.*

> [...] *my interlocutor was a child, so I do not have to be that formal.*

> *I took into account my interlocutor was a child so I didn't pay attention to formal language.*

> *Considering that my status is higher, I don't need to be too polite.*

However, there were also other statements showing a different viewpoint and recommending using more polite language:

> *I was influenced by the setting, my position and perceived relationship, I thought that I have to ask the student politely because this is kind of a formal situation.*

> *I would rather speak to a child politely and with a smile, too.*

> *I used this form of a question because I want to sound polite, especially becuase I don't know the child personally and don't teach them. It is a semi formal setting and so is the relationship. i also say that in very polite way since I don't want to startle the child who is busy in the playground.*

I would say: I was influenced by the relationship, because the child is not in my group, so I wanted to sound polite but friendly.

I am aware of the fact that this child perceives me as a teacher and I still need to be gentle and polite.

All in all, I think there is not much social distance, and it is okay to speak to children as if we were colleagues. What is more, the level of imposition is miniscule.

It is interesting to observe that 16% of the group paid attention to some additional factor, not related to culture or sociopragmatic constraints, namely, avoiding stressful and dangerous situation when a stranger starts interacting with a child and at the same time risks some potential accusations of molestation.

It is important that the person we are talking to is still a child, so I decided that it is worth introducing myself in order to increase trust in some way and make him not feel threatened.

I was influenced by the fact that the child might not know me, becuse they were from other group, so I introduced myself.

While speaking to a child, I think it's good to firstly draw their attention, and secondly let them know who they are talking to since they are mostly told by their parents not to speak with strangers, and the brief self-introduction makes it feel less like they actually do speak to a stranger.

I would probably say: By formulating the speech act I was influenced by first of all the description of the situation, I did consider the fact that I am just about to ask a child for so called favour. I had to think it through, how to approach the child, who doesn't actually know me, so he or she doesn't get scared by myself.

Being socially sensitive and responsible is one of the features commonly attributed to both Millennials and Generation Z cohort and apparently, such a quality is visible in the corpus gathered.

As for pragmalinguistic aspects displayed in respondents' reports, one should pay attention to some common linguistic dillemas and arguments the students provided. There are two main factors the group concentrated on:

(1) how different their language would be were they speaking to a person representing higher status or a stranger, and

(2) speculations concerning possible differences/similarities were the speech act formulated in Polish.

As for the first argument raised in their reports, vast majority of the respondents agreed on the necessity of changing/modifying the discourse used to make it fit particular context in terms of formality level and taking into account social status and power:

I would change my sentence to more formal in case of a professor and neighbour, however in case of family and friends I would just say 'give me that pen' or 'I need a pen', because asking would be to stiff.

i would try to be non threatening but ask as if im expecting them to agree bc im of a higher position then them. i would be more polite if it was a higher up and casual if it's a peer or family. there is no question here.

If I were still a stranger, I wouldn't change my speech. However, if I were a friend or family of this child, my speech would become more casual.

If it was a professor, I think I would speak similarly but using "sir" or "madam", or "professor", and I don't think there is a need to introduce myself at all.

When I for instance wanted to ask a Professor a favour I would use more formal language and more complicated grammatical structures.

I will consider the age of the child, the setting, and of course I would change the utterance if I talked to an older person or my boss.

This question is polite, but rather informal, in case of adult person I will definitely use more formal and expanded statement.

[...] my interlocutor was a child, so I do not have to be that formal. I would say something similar if the interlocutor was somebody similar but in case of him/her being somebody in a higher position than me, I would be more formal. I would say the same thing but maybe being a little more stressed there's a possibility of messing something up.

However, I think that the way in which we formulate our speech acts depends of our knowledge of a person and whether he or she knows us. The speech act will be slightly different when we talk to mother or professor. It is the result of the perceived relationship in the society and the perceived role of the participants that take part in the speech act. The social and cultural context play important role here and in some way it influence our way of speaking because some norms are acceptable by people and some are considered unacceptable.

What is also thought-provoking is the belief that the level of formality may be changed and adjusted to context with only minor lexical alterations:

I would change the word hi to hello. Depending on the status of the interlocutor.

If it had been an adult unknown for me, I would have change "Hello" for "Excuse me" and sound more formal.

However, a minor per cent of students (14%) did not see any need in altering their language for the purpose of audience requirements:

This would be a natural way of asking for a pen. I think I would say the same if the interlocutor was somebody else as I believe it is a polite way to address anyone.

I think that it doesn't matter who is my interlocutor. the question would be the same.

Sociopragmatic as well as pragmalinguistic errors are also visible in the approach displayed by some of the students seeing no differences between speech act of requesting formulated in English and in Polish:

While speaking to a Polish speaker I would formulate the request in the same way. I think that politeness is very similar in the two languages. The only difference is that I would use 'Pan'/'Pani' in Polish.

While addressing this question to a Polish-speaking child there would be no difference at all in terms of the word usage.

On the contrary, some respondents believe that these two languages differ, however, the areas of divergence they indicated may raise some confusion:

The difference between Polish and English request in this case is that in English I would ask for permission by saying "can I...?" and in Polish I would just state that I will do that without caring if somebody is willing to give it to me especially that borrowing a pen is not a big deal and the speaker is a child- somebody lower in position, younger than me.

In my opinion the language will also influence the lenght of the statement because of the different way of speaking in Polish and English where the longer speech act in Polish will have the positive answer than shorter like in English.

Mogłabym na chwilę pożyczyć długopis? Polish version includes the person in the sentence; it is a result of differences in grammar.

If I was speaking to a Polish speaker, I would say: "Could you lend me your pen, please?" if the social distance was big and "Can you lend me your pen?" if the social distance was small (e.g. family, close friends, etc.).

If I were to use Polish, I would say for example "Can I borrow it?" - in more simple way, with an intonation that would make the Polish sentence a question and a request at the same time. I think in Polish we can

request for something not only using some different grammar, but also by adding to a sentence only intonation, and in this situation I would do so.

The final remark that can be made here refers to purely linguistic dilemmas the respondents had and some speculations concerning the usage of particular modal verbs. Such reflections were not that common and appeared merely in 8 reports (18%):

I would probably say something different to a person with a higher social position, like "Would you might if I borrow your pen for a second, please?"

Meanwhile if the person I talked to was an adult, I'd probably use some more polite expression and explain the sudden need of their pen, and I'd say something like "Excuse me, may I borrow your pen?;

If the interlocutor's role was different, e.g. another counselor or the director of the camp, or professor, I would use the modal verb 'may' instead of 'can' in order to sound more polite and formal. If that were my brother/sister/ mother/friend/neighbour/etc., I would use the same statement as in the situation above.

If my interlocutor was someone who I know, who is close to me I would definitely forgo the honor "excuse me" and change the word "could" into "may", so the question would be: May you borrow me a pen? In the case of for instance professor, I would ask "Excuse me, could you borrow me a pen, please?", to show the respect.

Changing the modal verb form "can" to "could" or even "may" makes a big difference in the level of imposition itself ('could' might be a good idea if we asked a neighbour for something).

To conclude, it seems that majority of the students is aware of the necessity of changing the discourse to make it fit the context, especially while interacting with older interlocutor as well as the one whose social role is higher. However, what prevents them from being fully pragmatically successful is low level of grammar and, unfortunately, still inadequate knowledge of cross-cultural

differences. Another problem clearly visible in the analysis of those reports is very superficial knowledge of the Polish grammatical system.

Compliments. Content analysis of compliments revealed some interesting themes visible in the reports provided. Students task was to provide their insights on the situation described in the WDCT and react towards a compliment. As has already been stated, Polish reaction towards compliments used to be based on rejection and downgrading, however, probably under the influence of Western cultures, it is changing and becoming more open. As a result accepting a compliment in Polish is a norm, especially among younger generation. Nevertheless, the problem of "pragmatic duality" is clearly visible in the collected reports (7, 16%):

In English-speaking countries, a natural and expected reaction to a compliment is at least its acceptance. That's the reason why I would react like that myself - while using English, one should obey English code of politeness. In Polish, I would likely only say "Dziękuję", since the amplification of compliments might be perceived as rude in Poland. It's not easy, however, to assume what I would say in Polish, because I think the more English I use, the more English-like the way I respond to compliments becomes - currently I would never even consider denying a compliment.

Dziękuję, ale jeszcze muszę dużo się nauczyć. The difference is that we negative the level of our knowledge, we diminish it. It is the result of our culture, the way people in poland respond to the compliments.

If I was speaking to a native speaker of English, I would say "Oh, thank you" with a blush, because I would take that as a compliment. I think a native speaker would formulate compliment in that way, because Englishmen formulate compliments more easily than Poles.

I would say: "Oh, thank you. It's nice to hear that." I would formulate my speech act in this way because the person who says that to me is probably not my close friend, so because of the social distance between us. I would probably be a bit ashamed as always when I receive a compliment and would not be able to produce anything apart from token of appreciation

and the comment "It's nice to hear that" so as to somehow appreciate the fact that he noticed it and so to say compliment his complimenting me- I wouldn't like to be impolite by saying he is not right.

Thank you so much. I am still learning though." When producing this response I was influenced by the fact that it's an unfamiliar person, but with good intentions, so obviously I will say "thank you", but I won't stop on that because I am Polish therefore addressing a compliment without saying that I am not perfect, or that there is room for improvement would make me feel like I'm too boastful about myself and too sure of my skills.

A native speaker of the English language would also be thankful for that compliment in contrast to the Poles who would give a mitigated response or even a complete denial (I differ with other Poles in that manner). If I were speaking to a Polish speaker, I would answer the same way.

Furthermore, the culture is crucial here, because the taken into society norms regulate how we behave towards other people. The wrong assessment of the situation may create unpleasant situation and be stain in further relationship between these people.

The vast majority of students is aware of the necessity of accepting the compliments and this attitude is best described in one of the fragments collected:

However, when talking in English, and it doesn't matter who is my interlocutor, I'd simply say 'thank you'. Just as the saying goes, when in Rome acts as Romans do. When talking in English stick to English rules.

The analysis of WRVPs reveals similar results to the ones collected from WDCTs where 32% of the collected sample fall into non-agreements (reassignment, return, scale down, qualification, disagreement, and no acknowledgment added together). In the case of this material however, the proportion was slightly smaller as only 25% (11 reports) downgraded or rejected the compliments:

I would say: Thank you, but I have a lot to learn.
"Ohh, thanks a lot. I think that the pronunciation is something I need to constantly work on."
I would probably say: "thank you, but I think there is a lot more to learn".
"Oh, not really. But thanks anyway."
'Oh, it's not that good, but thanks!'
"Thank you, but I still need to work on it in some weaker aspects."
"I highly doubt that but thank you anyway."

All in all, it seems that the speech act of complimenting is not that problematic for the cohort partaking in this study. Following English norms of politeness and accepting the compliments is natural for the vast majority (75%). Moreover, there were also some reports where the students not only accepted the compliments, but also emphasised their absolute necessity and the fact that they deserve it:

Accepting the compliment is better than denying it since I know I do work on it and spend time learning it, sacrifice the time needed for the skill to grow. And I personally think nobody should apologize for their knowledge of a language being "not good"; "Sorry, my English is not really good". The fact that one put that effort to learn it and can use it to communicate is impressive.

Such opinions, though not that common (present in 7 reports – 16%) may serve as a proof of being overconfident and possessing a distorted self-image, and therefore not recognising one's own limits – another feature typical for Generation Z.

Apologies. Apologies are known to comprise one of the most face-threatening speech acts to perform. This is equally true in English as it is in Polish. The situation described in WDCT intensified the level of imposition: a student was late to a very formal meeting and took a dean's chair by mistake. The respondents asked to express the thoughts they had while performing the speech act of apologising concentrated on some aspects and thus one may differentiate four major themes visible in their reports:

a. Emphasising the level of imposition and face threat:

I would apologize a lot, start to panic. Maybe start talking about my traffic issues and blame others for not telling me the seat was taken. or second scenario, i would say oh sorry, and leave as fast as i can and pretend i was called and run away.

I would feel embarassed and deeply apologized to the person who has such authority as the dean.

I try to be as polite as possible and I take into consideration the position of the interlocutor, the social distance and power, the situation which is rather formal.

In that particular situation I would definitely explain in polite words the fact that I have taken His seat just due to the fact, that I have been late and the emotions that I was feeling at that particular moment I might say "told" me to sit down at a seat that has been left empty not to disturb more the meeting I have arrived late to. I would surely apologise later on, if I had an opportunity to talk to the Dean after the formal part of the meeting finished.

In this situation, that is very serious I would probably start panicking, and I would say that I am truly sorry like a dozen times and explain the reason of why I was late very carefully. After the apology I would go away, and find a new chair elsewhere.

"Oh my God, I am so sorry, please excuse me. Something urgent came up and I came late and this was the only empty seat I saw, I am so sorry". Then I'd run away to the bathroom to hide and probably wouldn't come back to the event unless there was someone there who'd save me a place to sit. In formulating this speech act I was influenced by the fact that the dean is a very important person, higher in hierarchy than me, so the weightiness level is insane. I'd probably be ashamed out of my life.

b. Focusing on the language requirements – how formal and sophisticated it should be to meet the norms of politeness:

This situation would likely be extremely embarrassing*, that's why I think it's a must to use a couple of apology-strategies, as well as state the reason of our mistake and ask for forgiveness, since the person we refer to is of much higher status than we.*

I'm speaking to a dean so I would use polite and formal language not to offend him. My speech is influenced by power distance.

The way I formulated my answer is influenced by the fact that the dean of the school is definitely in a higher position, so the respect and honorific are needed.

I would use official language to show respect to a person who has a higher position than me.

Here definitely *the social distance- the high position of my speaker influenced the form of my act of speech.*

The broader social distance between two interlocutors the harder it is to apologise and the more pressure is on us during the speech acts. It will be difficult to produce speech act when we say it in language that is not our native language. The apology in this language will be more chaotic and it will take us longer to formulate apology. However the main idea in the English and Polish speech act will be similar and the result will be similar that we apologize and we do not offend someone by using language that is not formal.

c. Paying attention to cross-cultural differences:

I think that formulating an apology is connected to the culture, not the language.

It's shorter, because in polish is pretty much used only when you give YOUR chair to someone and not give it back.

If I was speaking to a Polish speaker I would probably extend my speech and would apologise more elaborately.

I'm not sure. It depends on the culture and its level of politeness. I don't see much difference.

While speaking to a Polish speaking person I would say: This sentence differs from the sentence in English, it's more direct towards the person.

The difference in my behaviour towards an English speaker and a Polish speaker is that I would be too timid to say anything to a person speaking another language, while I would feel obliged to say anything in order to apologise to a Polish speaking person.

And if I was speaking in Polish I would probably say: I am really sorry. I was late and could not find any seats. I am changing my seat and I am really sorry once again. I would not feel the need of explaining the reason of my being late. somehow the fact that we are both native speakers of the same language shortens the social distance.

d. No explanation is needed – minimising the effect of imposition:

I think they might just apologise without any explanation.

And we all are human, I am allowed to make mistakes too, but beating myself about it and being embarrassed to the core isn't a way to go, I think. It's better to apologize, explain briefly the situation and find a solution. And is this that big of a deal? I mean the mistaking the chair for a vacant, especially while in a hurry or stressed? Probably something similar to this happens all the time. If I don't make things awkward, they will not feel awkward. Yes, something akin to "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know this seat is already taken. Do you know if there is any vacant one? Or whom I should ask this?" if it was somebody close to my age or with a similar social status

*to mine, social position kind of. I might not feel a need to explain why
I made this mistake because if they are more "in my league" in terms of
status or such, because what is the use of my explanation? Do they need
it? Do they care? I believe they don't. And I believe the dean would, even if
just a little bit.*

*I apologize for my mistake just to sound polite, though it wasn't my fault
because the seats weren't signed. I would ask for a place to sit.*

As seen above, the presented situation is one of social vulnerability as the
level of imposition is relatively high, as is the disproportion of power and so-
cial distance (two strangers). In the vast majority of the reports (41, 93%) the
respondents acknowledge the asymmetric distribution of power. It also seems
that they are aware of the weightiness of the situation and the fact that such
a situation would lead to certain form of embarrassment and face-threat. Many
of them additionally emphasised the differences in the formality level between
apologies directed towards a person with a higher social status (e.g. a dean) and
someone they know well (e.g. a friend or a family member). This may serve as
an argument supporting the growth of their sociopragmatic comprehension.

5.3.3 Students' Perceptions on the Difficulty of Speech Acts

The final part of WRVPs contained one open question where the respondents
were to provide their insights on the easiest and the most difficult speech
acts in English. Additionally they were also asked to justify their answers. In
Tables 5.22 an 5.23 one may find detailed description of the collected answers:

Table 5.22. Respondents' opinions on the easiest speech acts in English (N = 44)

Speech act	n	Reasons/justification	n	%
Request	11 (25%)	– being taught [it] at school	1	2.27
		– familiarity with the grammatical constructions	2	4.54
		– no difficulties due to constant usage	3	6.81
		– common habit	1	2.24
		– easy usage due to limited range of words and phrases	2	4.54
		– no explanation given	2	4.54

Table 5.22 continued

Speech act	n	Reasons/justification	n	%
Apology	12 (27%)	– easy usage due to broad range of words and phrases	2	4.54
		– short form	1	2.27
		– easy usage due to limited range of words and phrases	4	9.09
		– daily usage	1	2.27
		– possibility of self-adjusting the level of formality and explanation	1	2.27
		– no difficulties due to constant usage	1	2.27
		– common habit	4	9.09
		– being consistent with one's character	1	2.27
		– universal in all languages	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	1	2.27
Greetings	15 (34%)	– easy usage due to broad range of words and phrases	3	6.81
		– short form	3	6.81
		– easy usage due to limited range of words and phrases	1	2.27
		– first thing taught in foreign language	1	2.27
		– daily usage	1	2.27
		– being consistent with one's character	1	2.27
		– common habit	4	9.09
		– universal in all languages	1	2.27
		– being taught in childhood	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	2	4.54
Alerting	1 (2.27%)	short form		
Complimenting	1 (2.27%)	being consistent with one's character		
Thanking	1 (2.27%)	being effortless and face saving		
Complaining	2 (4.54%)	– being taught [it] at school	1	2.27
		– being consistent with one's character	1	2.27
Not given	11 (25%)	no explanation given		

As seen in Table 5.22, the easiest speech acts for respondents are greetings, apologies, and requests, but a significant amount of respondents (25%) did not provide the answer to this question. As for the reasons explaining the selection of particular speech acts, some arguments given by participants

are quite predictable. The speech acts are perceived as easy either due to the fact that they comprise not really linguistically demanding lexicon (e.g. greetings, thanking or apologising, but only when it comes to the word "sorry"), or that the respondents are used to using them on a regular basis or have been exposed to them literally from the beginning of their L2 learning so they had been well practiced at school (e.g. greetings). What is striking, however, is that when asked to provide the examples of most difficult speech acts in English, the respondents chose similar answers along with their justifications:

Table 5.23. Respondents opinions on the most difficult speech acts in English (N = 44)

Speech act	n	Reasons/justification	n	%
Apology	11 (25%)	– lack of knowledge on cultural norms in the second language	1	2.27
		– face threatening act	1	2.27
		– require(s) admission of guilt	2	4.54
		– require(s) compensation for mistake	1	2.27
		– require(s) the recognition of the level of formality	2	4.54
		– lack of experience	1	2.27
		– stress impacting fluency of speech	2	4.54
		– related to the social hierarchy	2	4.54
		– involving lots of emotions	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	2	4.54
Commenting	1 (2.27%)	being awkward		
Alerting	2 (4.54%)	– being awkward	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	1	2.27
Request	3 (6.81%)	– being embarrassed while performing it	1	2.27
		– being stressed out due to the uncertainty related to the choice of vocabulary	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	1	2.27
Questions	1 (2.27%)	uncertainty related to the level of formality		
Greetings	2 (4.54%)	– uncertainty related to the level of formality	1	2.27
		– uncertainty related to the choice of vocabulary	1	2.27

Speech act	n	Reasons/justification	n	%
Ordering	1 (2.27%)	being at odds with personality		
Compliment acceptance	1 (2.27%)	being at odds with personality		
Complaining	6 (13.63%)	– lack of knowledge on cultural norms in the second language	1	2.27
		– fear of miscomprehension of the statement	2	4.54
		– lack of proper vocabulary	1	2.27
		– require(s) the recognition of the level of formality	1	2.27
		– face threatening act	1	2.27
		– fear of offending other person	1	2.27
		– perceived as negative	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	1	2.27
Commanding	6 (13.63%)	– require(s) the recognition of the level of formality	1	2.27
		– fear of miscomprehension of the statement	3	6.81
		– face threatening act	1	2.27
		– fear of offending other person	1	2.27
		– perceived as negative	1	2.27
"No problem" [with performing any speech act]	3 (6.81%)	– lack of problem due to life's experience	1	2.27
		– no explanation given	2	4.54
Not given	5 (11.36%)	no explanation given		

It seems that the respondents display mixed feelings as well as opinions on the most difficult speech act to perform in English. As has been already stated, the same acts, that is, apologising or requesting are considered both the easiest and most difficult. It is really astonishing to see almost 7% stating not to have "any problems" with speech acts and additional 27% of the students claiming that apologies are easy to perform. This finding totally contradicts the data gathered from the analysis of WDCTs (cf. section 5.2 Discourse Completion Task – Analysis) indicating many serious problems in adjusting appropriate level of formality, choice of strategies used, poor language, etc. Moreover, the fact that "questions" appeared, as one of the answers proves, significant problems in correct categorisation of speech acts. One should also pay attention to the

repetitive nature of some explanations/justifications provided, for example, that the act is easy if it was introduced to someone during the initial stages of L2 learning, if it complies to L1 sociocultural norms and does not pose any face threat, when it is not linguistically demanding, and finally, consistent with one's character. However, any speech act requiring more careful consideration and adjustment of the formality level is considered difficult. This problem escalates also when combined with poor vocabulary range and lack of knowledge on cross-cultural differences.

All in all, the answers collected from the Polish students of English provided us with an extremely important teaching implications. Firstly, the system of Polish L2 education seems to concentrate only on some speech acts (e.g. greetings, thanking) ignoring others (e.g. apologies, requests). Secondly, there is not sufficient emphasis put on cross-cultural differences and as a result, the level of sociocultural knowledge is affected. Thirdly, lack of such information may contribute to insufficiently developed pragmatic competence that, apparently, is not well established even among advanced users of English.

5.4 Pragmatic Comprehension Questionnaire

The next stage of this research was based on filling in a self-designed mini questionnaire. Seventy-eight participants agreed to partake in this survey. As indicated before, the major intention of introducing this research tool was to assess the development of pragmatic comprehension. To do so, the students were provided with seven short situations (six in the form of closed, and one in the form of an open-ended query) mainly adapted from Cohen (2014). The first scenario concentrated on the speech act of apology and required rating of the level of the husband's apology:

> Wife: *I don't like it, dear, when you criticize our children in front of other people. It made me uncomfortable last evening when you criticized them at the dinner party. I know you were trying to be funny, but people can take it the wrong way, and...*

> Husband: *Really? I don't agree with you. In fact, I think you're overreacting – it's not such a big deal. But if you insist, I'm willing to watch what I say....*

According to Cohen (2014, p. 8), this situation could be implemented to assess the perception of the speech act of apology. The data gathered from the respondents is presented in Figure 5.19:

Figure 5.19. Students' rating of the level of apology (%)
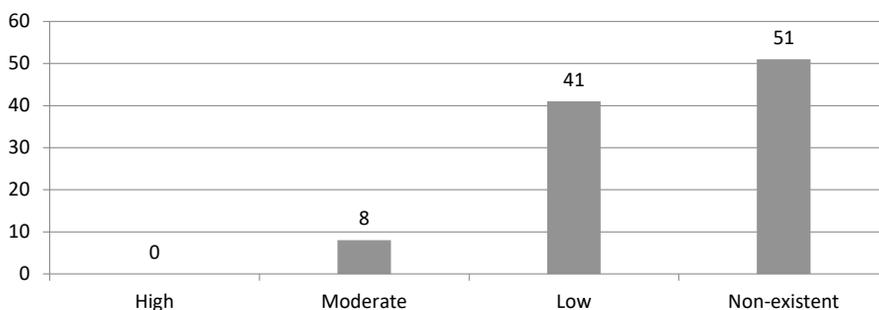
As seen above, the apology produced by the husband is not very convincing and sincere in the students' eyes, that is, over half of them considers it to be non-existent. Both dominant responses were correctly chosen and evaluated in a similar to native-speakers' estimations. Yet, the group does not seem to be really unanimous in this respect (SD = 21.48). It is also surprising to discover that 8% of the polled see the apology as moderately sincere.

The second situation to evaluate comes from the previously-cited source (cf. Cohen, 2014, p. 9):

Read the situation below and indicate how likely (in your opinion) is the stout lady to consider George's response an apology?

George is doing his holiday shopping in Manhattan and has only about 15 minutes before the department store closes. He needs to get across the entire store to the opposite corner to check out the gift specials at the men's accessories counter, but in front of him is a rather obese lady with bags in hand. She is in the midst of a heated conversation on her cell phone and is blocking the aisle. George tries to get around her, but in the process inadvertently knocks over some of her bags, tangles up her cell phone arm, and causes the lady to drop her phone as well.

Lady: *My goodness! What are you doing, young man?*

George: *Very sorry, lady, but you were in my way!*

What should be stressed here is the fact that the intensifier "really" used in an apology would signal regret. However, in the situation presented, George uses a word "very" that would be more a marker of etiquette. Hence, the respondents should have chosen either "somewhat likely" or "very unlikely" as the correct multiple-choice response.

Figure 5.20. Students' perception on George's apology ("How likely (in your opinion) is the stout lady to consider George's response an apology?") (%)
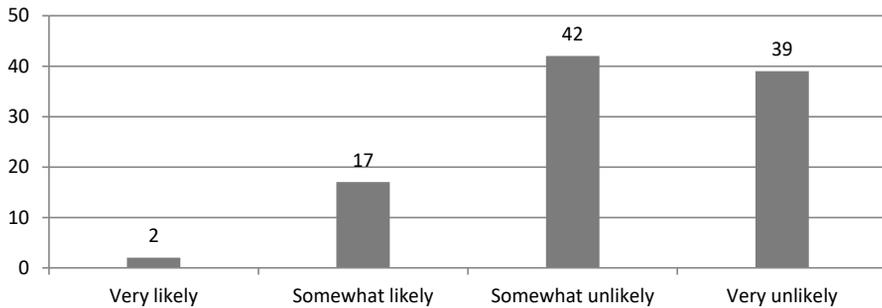
The major intention of this question is to verify the degree of sociopragmatic, but also pragmalinguistic competence, and the strategy of "acknowledging responsibility" is the key concern here. As demonstrated in Figure 5.20, almost 20% of the respondents could not assess it appropriately (SD = 16%). In the next step the respondents' task was also to provide a rationale statement. As Cohen (2014, p. 9) holds, a preferred utterance may look in the following way: "George isn't really taking responsibility for knocking into the lady. He's putting the blame back on her." Out of 78 students filling in this questionnaire, 22 did not display this kind of perspective in their rationale (28%). Some of the justifications presented are quoted below:

The man is blaming her for the accident, yet he still says that he is sorry. "Very sorry" is a good part of the apology.

I think the obese lady won't accept George's apology as she seems to be an ignorant person because of her behaviour. She definitely knows the store is going to close soon but she still blocked the aisle and talked on her phone.

[…] the behaviour of George is impolite (lady dropped the cell phone) but he tried to make that situation a little bit funny.

The man tried to get around the lady and I believe afterwards she realized that she was in his way as she was blocking the aisle with her bags, talking on the phone.

She should consider George's response an apology since he did not say anything bad or rude, she was in his way and he was in a hurry.

Moreover, some of the rationales provided emphasised a different perception and interpretation of the situation, and in some cases, the explanation given did not necessarily pertain to the question asked:

Addressing a stranger as 'lady' is a bit rude, additionally he blames her for the accident ('you were in my way').

People apologizing in these two situations do not feel guilty and they are saying these things without understanding.

It seems to me that these days no one uses "lady" in that context in a respectful manner. It sounds almost derogative – almost like using "paniusiu" in Polish.

Formal language, politeness, being in Manhattan, being in a hurry, emotions.

Given the circumstances this lady should understand that it was unintentional and the man didn't want to hurt her.

It seems that the respondents, though overall able to pick the correct response (a preferred option "c" and "d" was chosen by the vast majority, i.e. 81%), did not find it easy to provide a reasonable rationale statement and could not justify their decisions. The corpus gathered in this section was additionally examined by LIWC software (cf. Chapter 4). Table 5.24 demonstrates the most salient findings:

Table 5.24. LIWC corpus analysis

Traditional LIWC dimension	Data	Average for personal writing
I-words (*I, me, my*)	2.19	8.70
Social Words	21.4	8.69
Positive Emotions	2.3	2.57
Negative emotions	5.1	2.12
Cognitive processes	18.5	12.52
Summary Variables	**Data**	**Average for personal writing**
Analytic	39.74	44.88
Clout	86.97	37.02
Authenticity	3.28	76.01
Emotional tone	1.08	38.6

According to the program description, "The Summary Variables […] are research-based composites that have been converted to 100-point scales where 0 = very low along the dimension and 100 = very high." Analytic refers to analytical or formal thinking, and in this case amounts to 39.74 per cent. Such a number indicates a slightly less formal register in the examined utterances. While the formal register is unquestionably present, responders tend to express their opinions in an approachable language and narrative manner, often reflecting their personal experience. The second summary variable is the clout factor, which stands at a high, 86.97 per cent, suggesting that the responders are confident with their opinions, as high clout indicates the responders' position of the high expertise and capability of objectively analysing the text. Clout points out the writer's self-assurance and certainty of their views (Kacewicz et al., 2013).

The last two summary variables are an authentic factor and an emotional tone, both calculated at a very low score of 3.28 and 1.08%, respectively. High authenticity would usually indicate a more personal and humble approach, therefore, in the case of this research, one may observe the opposite – markedly, responders tended to express distanced and not emotionally charged statements. This observation correlates with the emotional tone variable, as such low result in the said variable explicitly shows a more hostile, critical tone of the utterances. Emotional tone includes both positive and negative emotion dimensions, ergo the lower the score, the more negative and opposing tenor of the utterances (Cohn et al., 2004).

The subsequent part of the analysis shall be the linguistic processes, concerning the number of function words, which LIWC 20 calculates as 60.52%, with a total number of pronouns at 19.08%.[6] Pronouns seem to play a significant part in the analysis, as their usage may suggest the writer's emotions, personal problems and approach to other people. Studies suggest that using first-person pronouns (in the analysed research represented by the low number of 2.19 for "I" and 0 for "we") may indicate egocentrism and attention-drawing, which, however, may be driven by tragic personal experience (Rude et al., 2004). Here, the pronoun "I" was usually used as an indicator of the speaker's point of view and outlook on the situation, as a question requiring an answer taking into consideration the perspective of the disadvantaged person, hence the one receiving an apology. In the analysed text most frequently used pronouns seem to be "he" and "she", as they amount to 8.91%. Such use in all probability stems from the situation which the responders were addressing – said act of apology was depicted in the example of a man and a woman. The pronoun "we" was not detected, whereas the pronoun "they" accounts for only 0.39% of the text, therefore, does not constitute a significant contribution to the analysis. However, the impersonal pronouns variable should be noted, as it is represented by 6.82%. In comparison to the previously enumerated pronoun variables, the given score seems slightly more significant, as the usage of impersonal pronouns may suggest distancing from the personal view and providing more neutral, objective utterance, which does correlate with the previously mentioned analysis of the clout factor and authenticity variable.

The latter part of this study shall be the analysis of the remaining linguistic dimensions, namely articles (accounting for 8.67%), prepositions (11.54%), auxiliary verbs (10.56%), conjunctions (6.96%), and negations (2.97%). A visibly higher percentage of the enumerated grammatical parts is understandable, as they are important constituents of sentences. However, for instance, articles not only introduce the noun in a sentence but also indicate the complexity of the writer's language, just as the use of negations and conjunctions. As a consequence, their high proportion in a text may indicate the extravertism of the respondent, which was already demonstrated by the studies conducted by Pennebaker and King (1999). Nonetheless, the numbers calculated by LIWC 20 in the present study do not imply such a conclusion, as none of the mentioned variables exceeds the 20% threshold.

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6   A detailed representation of all LIWC20 results for this query is provided in the appendix.

A word of caution that should be sounded here is that LIWC 20 has been used in this research in an attempt to analyse both individual and collective emotions of the respondents, as well as to identify patterns of individual and group behaviour. However, there have not been many studies connected with analysing the words in the text without considering the tone of the speech, facial expression, or background. From the LIWC 20 results, one can only arrive at general conclusions about the participants who took part in this survey. Moreover, LIWC 20 does not detect sarcasm, irony, or idioms that are crucial in speech, but it focuses on the functional aspect of the word. Negative emotions used in writing about adverse events and inspirational words allow one to measure the immersion: The higher rate of these words, the more immersion in traumatic events (Holmes et al., 2007). More minor results of the positive emotion words than the negative emotion words combined with a higher rate of anger-related words (2.19) and sadness-related terms (1.27) may indicate generally negative emotions experienced by the respondents. This, in turn, may stem from their empathising with the situation being described and the George's scandalous/inadequate behaviour. Moreover, SALLEE is the emotion engine that recognises not only negative and positive emotion but also neutral. Using SALLEE and a tool known as Big personality (OCEAN) supports the previous claim related to the emotion words. A relatively high stress-prone factor (67.1) in the results of OCEAN analysis indicates that students might be apprehensive trying to find what they assumed to be the "expected" answers. The results are displayed in Figures 5.21 and 5.22. As can be seen, both programs specify the number of other smaller categories:

Figure 5.21. SALLEE (Syntax-Aware Lexical Emotion Engine) results
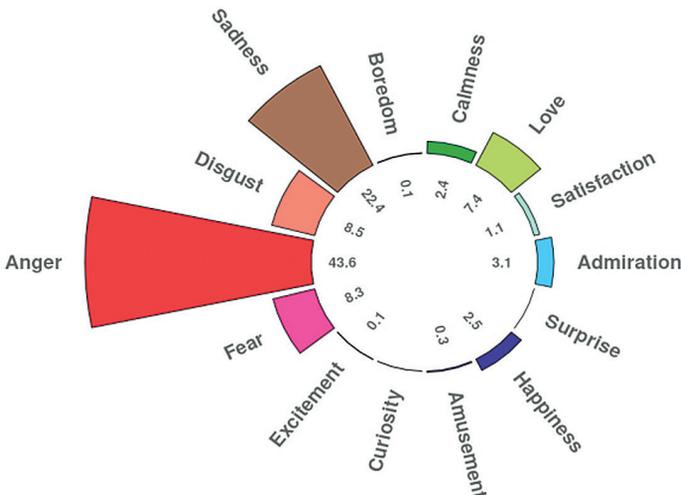
Figure 5.22. The Big 5 (OCEAN) results
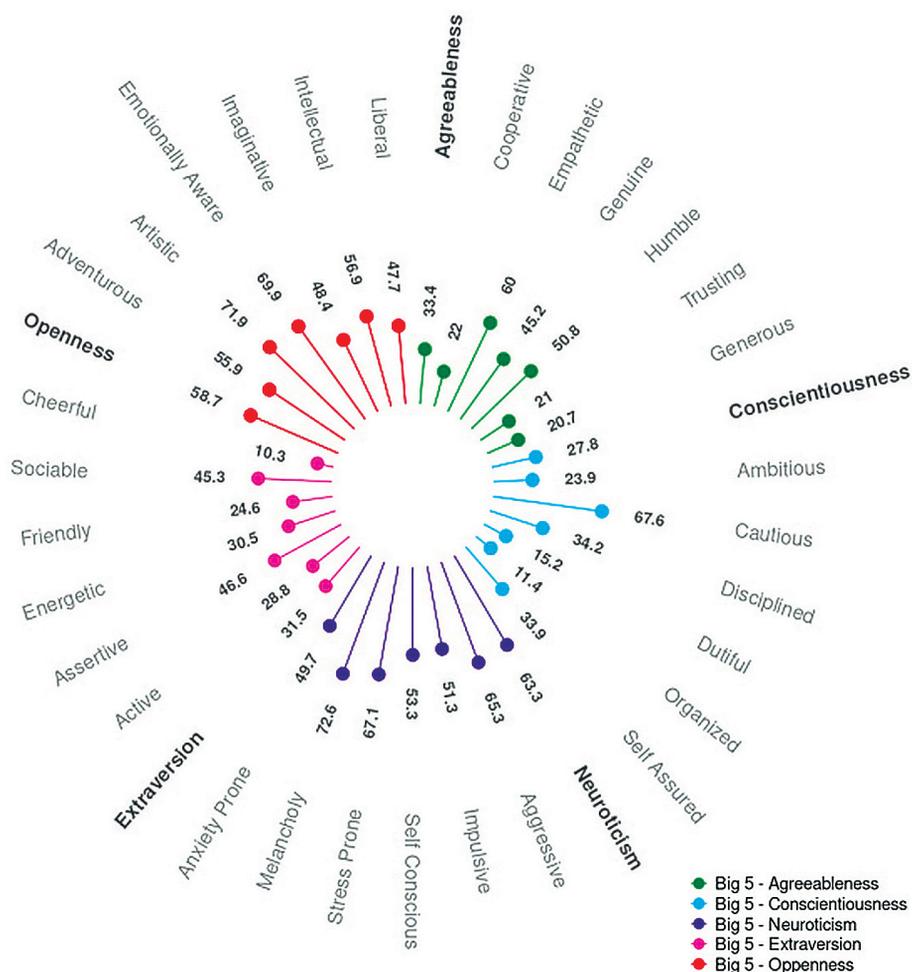
As for the social status and power of the people taking part in this research, LIWC and OCEAN show they are conscious about their emotions, presumably also less confident, reserved, and reflective. This visible uncertainty of the utterances might be related to the fact that English is not their native language, and they still feel unconfident while using it. This finding may support the previous claim concerning a relatively low level of linguistic advancement.

In addition to LIWC 20 assessment, students' corpus was also verified through Grammarly application, not only correcting one's grammatical mistakes but also checking the tone of the discourse. The application can also assess the

readability level of writing by using the Flesch reading-ease test. A detailed distribution of the results is included in Table 5.25:

Table 5.25. Students' overall performance. Grammarly application result

Overall performance	Result
Word count	
characters	11422
words	2056
sentences	108
Reading time	8 min 13 sec
Speaking time	15 min 48 sec
Readability	
Word length	4.2 (average)
Sentence length	19 (above average)
Readability score	67
Vocabulary	
Unique words	19% (below average)
Rare words	31% (below average)
Writing issues	**Result**
Correctness	**158**
Punctuation in compound/complex sentences	62
Faulty subject-verb agreement	1
Closing punctuation	9
Text inconsistencies	1
Comma misuse within clauses	15
Misspelled words	16
Faulty tense sequence	1
Mixed dialects of English	19
Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.)	9
Incorrect verb forms	5
Improper formatting	1
Confused words	4
Wrong or missing prepositions	4
Misuse of semicolons, quotation marks, etc.	5

Table 5.25 continued

Writing issues	Result
Pronoun use	2
Unknown words	1
Incorrect noun number	3
Clarity	**34**
Wordy sentences	26
Passive voice misuse	2
Unclear sentences	4
Word choice	1
Hard-to-read text	1
Delivery	**6**
Inappropriate colloquialisms	4
Tone issues	2
Engagement	**16**
Word choice	16

The data presented in Table 5.25 allows one to draw some conclusions pertaining to the type of discourse students created. First of all, grammatical accuracy as well as lexical sophistication of the writing leave much to be desired, and by no means can they be compared to the C1 or C2 level of advancement the respondents self-declared previously. The program detected 81 critical and 133 advanced mistakes. As for the readability level, it has been described as a text that is likely to be understood by a reader who has at least an 8th-grade education (age 13–14) and should be fairly easy for most adults to read. The number of unique words measuring vocabulary diversity by calculating the percentage of words used only once in the document indicates a below average result.[7] A similar low indication (31%) concerns rare words assessed on the basis of vocabulary depth by identifying lexemes that are not among 5,000 most common English words. All in all, the objective of this query was to assess pragmatic comprehension, which, as the data indicates, is very similar to the norms that would be normally adhered to by English native speakers (Grammarly website). However, the students found it difficult to fully and clearly justify their opinions. Such dilemmas are also visible in

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7   This is the metrics calculated against other Grammarly aplication users.

the Grammarly-based analysis that, though mainly evaluating one's language production from the point of view of the level of accuracy, clearly indicates much doubt, uncertainty and generally a low command of English. Combining this result with the one derived from LIWC 20 analysis, one may see certain disagreement, that is, on the one hand, the text created displays a significant amount of confidence and analytic processes, while on the other, it lacks clarity. Such a result can be accounted for by the fact that students seem to be certain of their convictions and perception of the situation (and thus we may see it as a result of adequately-developed pragmatic comprehension), yet still not fully ready and linguistically advanced enough so as to be able to justify and explain their beliefs.

The intention of the next query was to assess the level of sociocultural factors, such as the relative status of the speaker and hearer (further determining the level of imposition), the level of acquaintance of the speaker and hearer as well as the overall degree of severity, and imposition caused by the speech act situation. Out of three options provided, the respondents were to choose the one that was the most appropriate but also to assess all of them:

> You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with the boss at your new job. An hour later you show up at his office to apologize. The problem is that this is the second time you've forgotten such a meeting in the short time you have been working at this job. Your boss is clearly annoyed when he asks, *What happened to you this time?*

a. *Very sorry, Mr. Iverson. You see...uh...I have sleeping problems and...uh... then I missed the bus. But I can make it up to you.*

b. *Oh, I'm really sorry about that, Mr. Iverson. I've been suffering from chronic sleep disorder and as a result I have trouble getting going in the morning. I can get you a doctor's note about it. And to make matters worse, I got to the bus stop this morning just as the bus was pulling away. I'm really sorry about that. What can I do to make it up to you? I'll work overtime, whatever.*

c. *So sorry I missed the meeting. I had problem at home and then I forgot the meeting and when I remembered it was too late.*

The data gathered is presented in Table 5.26:

Table 5.26. Respondents' opinion on the level of appropriateness of apologies

Response	Most appropriate	Acceptable	Unacceptable
a	–	31%	69%
b	80%	19%	1%
c	9%	63%	28%

As Cohen believes, a non-native speaker of English would probably pick the first answer (option a). Although there are three of the key apology-specific strategies used in this utterance (the strategy of expressing an apology, giving an explanation, and offering repair), yet "it is likely that pragmatically competent speakers of American English would not state the explanation and the offer of repair that way" (Cohen, 2014, pp. 10–11). Instead, an American native speaker would most probably choose the second possibility (option b) as it is a perfect compilation of a detailed explanation of the actual health problem and of what happened with the bus. Additionally, it also includes suggested ways to compensate to the boss by the offer to working overtime. The third answer, as Cohen states, can be also seen as non-native speaker statement, even though it expresses an apology, provides an explanation, and acknowledges responsibility. What is missing here is the fact that the person fails to acknowledge the repetitive character of his/her mistake (this situation has happened before).

Evaluating the responses according to the rationale presented above, one may see that the vast majority of the asked shared the same interpretation of the situation (80%). However, over 30% of the students, would also accept the first (a) option, clearly rejected by Cohen himself.

The perception of sociopragmatic comprehension was also analysed in the following scenario, where the students were asked to indicate which of the following is most likely Bill's response to Andrew in leave taking.

Andrew: Hey, Bill. It's been nice talking with you. Let's get together some time.
Bill:

Figure 5.23. Students' perception on "leaving" situation (%)
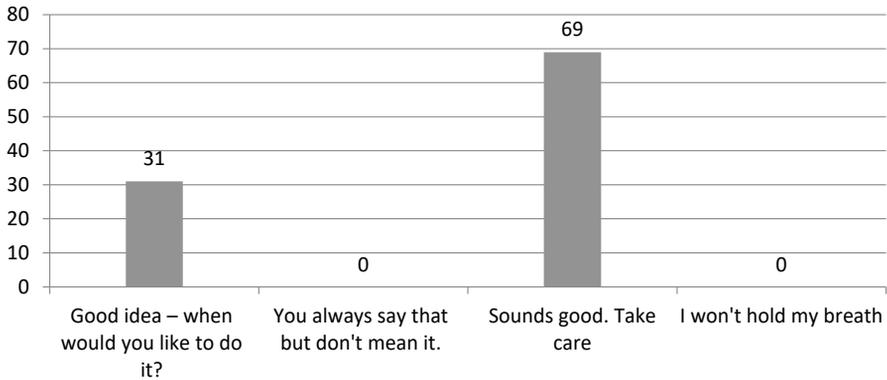
As illustrated by the figure, almost 70% of the respondents would pick the option *Sounds good. Take care*, that is also described by Cohen (2014, pp. 10–11) as the most expected alternative for native speakers of American English. Sadly, over 30% of the students partaking in the study did not seem to distinguish between genuine offers/invitations and those departing from the expected speaking routines for the average speech community. "The vague statement 'Let's get together some time' does not usually constitute an actual invitation" (2014, p. 15). Thus the data collected may be also seen as a tangible proof of cross-cultural misunderstanding and inappropriate interpretation of sociocultural norms.

A sentence completion format has been used in the next part of the questionnaire and aims at verifying pragmalinguistic competence. Students' task was to analyse the situation described below in terms of the most appropriate language that should be used while requesting for a pay rise. Since the scenario presented a situation of status inequality and asymmetric distribution of power, what was also analysed was the ability to choose subtle grammatical as well as lexical nuances between two pairs: simple present vs past continuous tense and a lack of a lexical downtoner "a bit".

> Herman is requesting a raise from his boss. Which of the options provided do you think would be more appropriate / sound more tactful in this situation?
> *I _____ if you _____ consider increasing my pay.*

a. I was wondering if you will consider increasing my pay.
b. I was wondering if you will consider increasing my pay a bit.
c. I wonder if you will consider increasing my pay.
d. I wonder if you will consider increasing my pay a bit.

The respondents decided to choose the versions with the past continuous tense, appropriately estimating them in terms of conveying a higher degree of politeness, a structure especially common with the verb "wonder".

Figure 5.24. Students' responses in sentence completion format
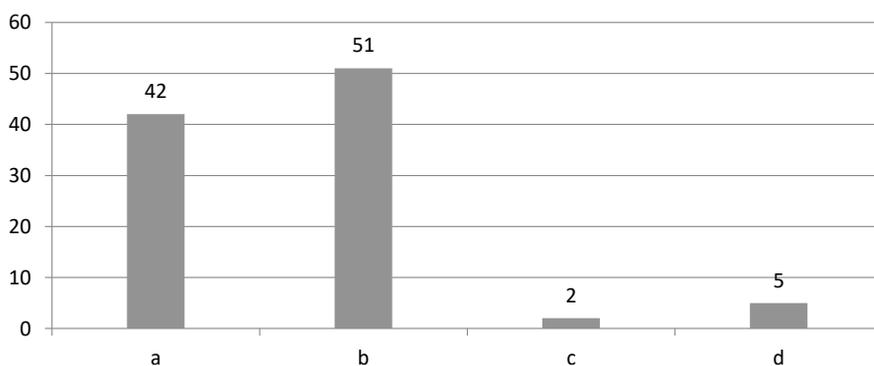
As much as 93% of the polled seem to have control over certain grammatical and lexical forms that are routinely used in order to mitigate or soften their requests.

The last situation appearing in this instrument is a modification of a well-known compliment situation (cited by Huang, 2007) that was already presented to the respondents while filling in WDCTs. However, as this particular speech act still evokes some controversy among Polish speakers of English, I decided to provide the respondents with two additional "distractors": that is, option b, pertaining to the Polish norms of politeness (and rejecting a compliment), and option c that reflects English-like token of appreciation, but also inappropriate comment history in the form of a complaint (again, rather closer to Polish cultural norms). The last option comes from the corpus gathered while analysing WDCTs and had been used by one of the respondents themselves. Hence the scenario presented looks in the following way:

A foreign visitor to Poland (English native speaker) says to you: *Your English is excellent!* How would you respond to him? Assess each response in terms of their sociocultural acceptance.

a. *Thank you.*

b. *Oh no, my English still needs polishing off.*

c. *Thank you. It's good to hear that. At the university they mostly correct my mistakes so at least now I know I'm making some progress.*

Table 5.27. Students' estimation of the compliment and its level of appropriateness

Response	Most appropriate	Acceptable	Unacceptable
a	43%	56%	1%
b	7%	46%	47%
c	45%	39%	16%

What catches immediate attention is the fact that over 50% of English majors consider option a not as the most appropriate, but only acceptable variant. At the same time option c, not fully corresponding to English norms of politeness was assessed as the best option to be used in this context. The interpretation of such a behaviour is at least twofold: the respondents may be still struggling with adapting themselves to English norms of politeness, especially if they stand in certain contradiction to the Polish ones and the level of the development of pragmatic competence has not been fully finished. On the other hand, the Polish norms of politeness and the way we approach compliments is still changing and this approach may be also visible in the way they reacted and the language produced. Nevertheless, the fact that option b is perceived as both acceptable and unacceptable by virtually the same number of students is quite astonishing.

5.5 A Test in Pragmatics

The final step of this research study was a test in pragmatics. The test was implemented to 88 post-graduate students (4th year of studies) who had been taking part in this research for three years. At the beginning of their post-graduate programme (winter semester), the students participated in a course in pragmatics (an introduction to pragmatic studies) encompassing 15 hours of lectures and 15 of workshops. Each of those components finished with a written

form of assessment. The test provided to students was implemented through Moodle platform (at that time all the classes as well as forms of assessment were conducted online) at the beginning of 2021. The aim of this test was to verify the level of theoretical knowledge concerning pragmatics, for example, among others: the scope of interest, understanding of speech acts, cross-cultural differences and their interpretation, conversation theory, presupposition, implicature, and deictic expressions, (im)politeness; the concept of face and face-threatening acts. The test was in the form of 20 closed-ended questions, however, the author decided to introduce a few elicitation techniques, for instance, a multiple-choice, matching or a true/false statements. The full version of the test is presented in the appendix. Below one may find some statistical information concerning its evaluation:

Table 5.28. Results of the participants (N = 88)

Aspects assessed	Results
Mean **(% of correct answers)**	points (79%)
No. of participants with final score between 0–45%	0
No. of participants with final score between 45–50%	2 (0.2%)
No. of participants with final score between 50–55%	0
No. of participants with final score between 55–-60%	3 (0.34%)
No. of participants with final score between 60–65%	6 (0.68%)
No. of participants with final score between 65–70%	4 (0.45%)
No. of participants with final score between 70–75%	10 (11%)
No. of participants with final score between 75–80%	10 (11%)
No. of participants with final score between 80–85%	24 (27%)
No. of participants with final score between 85–90%	15 (17%)
No. of participants with final score between 90–95%	13 (14.7%)
No. of participants with final score between 95–100%	1 (0.11%)

Table 5.29. General test results

Aspects assessed	Results
Mean	79.2%
Median	81.17%
Mode	81.76%

SD	10.66%
Skewness	-0.9663
Kurtosis	0.8407
Cronbach's alpha	54.37%
Error rate	67.55%
Standard error	7.20%

The passing level was estimated at 65%. As seen above, all the students taking the test succeeded. A relatively high number of good (B, B+, A) and very good grades (altogether over 60% of the participants) is very satisfying, yet it may raise some suspicion. As was mentioned before, the exam was conducted online and one may not exclude a theoretical possibility of cheating, for instance, contacting other group mates through various forms of social media, or using some additional references. All in all, judging on the basis of the test results, it seems that the post-graduate students display a satisfactory level of knowledge in pragmatics, or, at least, average knowledge of theoretical pragmatic comprehension. As one of the objectives of the course was to raise their pragmatic awareness by participating in lectures as well as workshops requiring more active engagement (e.g. in brain storming activities, open class discussions, case studies, watching films, and role playing activities) it is believed that the final take-away will bring some favourable outcomes.

5.6 Post-study questionnaire

The questionnaire introduced at the final stage of this longitudinal study was the same that the respondents had used at the initial phase. However, three years later, it was expected that the answers provided would differ from those given before. First of all, students were older and presumably more mature. It was also taken for granted that studying at the English philology department must have had some (positive) impact on the development of their general linguistic awareness. It was believed that at that point the respondents would finally appreciate the value of contact and communication with native speakers more than before and that they would be also more aware of the importance of learning English and its intricacies. Above all, it was also assumed that the pragmatic awareness of this age cohort would have developed under the influence of, for example,the course in pragmatics (encompassing some lectures, workshops

and ending with the exam) as well as the participation in all so-called practical English subjects the students had attended before. Undeniably, respondents' answers could be also influenced by all the modifications introduced in the education system with the onset of Covid-19 pandemic. It was interesting to evaluate the changes happening to L2 (English) communication channels and the frequency of their usage as well as the variables, which, in respondents' opinion, impacted their second language progress.

With the increasing attrition and probably due to some survey-fatigue, only 68 questionnaires were collected from 50 females and 18 males (attending the first year of the post-graduate studies and choosing English as their major) who took part in the final stage of this research. Eighty-eight per cent of the students are between the ages of 22–25 and the rest are 18–21. Figures 5.25 and 5.26 present the data concerning the period of learning English as well as the declared level of second language proficiency:

Figure 5.25. Period of learning English
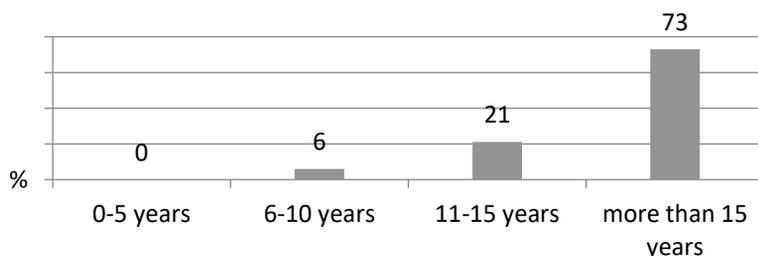
Figure 5.26. Declared level of proficiency
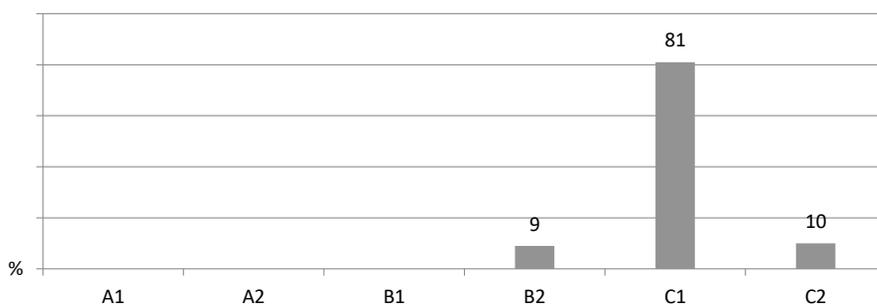
The data obtained clearly indicate very high self-reported level of proficiency that may in turn be accounted for by a long period of learning English – for

the vast majority it is more than 15 years. Interestingly, when comparing this result to the one obtained from the pre-study questionnaire, one may see quite a different distribution of answers, that is, apparently the students have a feeling of making progress – the biggest divergence may be seen while comparing C1 level of advancement – three years prior 60% of students self-declared this level of proficiency in comparison to 81% in the post-study period. As for the knowledge of foreign languages, the respondents provided very similar, to the previous results. The most frequently reported are again German (52%), Japanese (26%), and Spanish (22%, a 12% increase). However, there was also a small increase in the number of respondents choosing French (18.5%) and Korean (7%). The average number of languages the subjects report knowing this time is 1.20 (excluding English) and indicates a slight rise in comparison to the previous data (1.13).

As for the type of motivation they display, there was a tremendous change in the arguments provided. It seems that during the initial stage of the study, the respondents were quite heterogeneous in this respect since 52% responded "When I learn English I want to fully integrate with it, with its culture, norms, traditions, etc." standing for integrative motivation, and 48% were more inclined towards an instrumental motive, represented in the questionnaire as "I treat English as a tool that should help me in the future (e.g. get a good job)." This time, however, 65% declared integrative and 35% more instrumental drives. Such a change in the attitude displayed may indicate that the period of being exposed to so many and so differentiated subjects a university English major has to take, actually resulted in generating more genuine interest in the language in question.

When asked whether the learners like learning English, 97% answered affirmatively and only 3% negatively (almost identical results were reported before). However, there was quite a substantial rise noted in students' opinions on communicating in English, that is, 73% strongly agreed with the statement "I like communicating in English" (a 13% increase), 21% agreed with it (10% drop), 6% reported a neutral attitude towards this statement (3% drop). Such responses may indicate a growing positive trend towards this language. The feeling of being successful was also confirmed in the subsequent query "Do you feel successful while communicating in English?" and a detailed distribution of answers is presented in Figure 5.27:

Figure 5.27. Feeling successful while communicating in English (%)
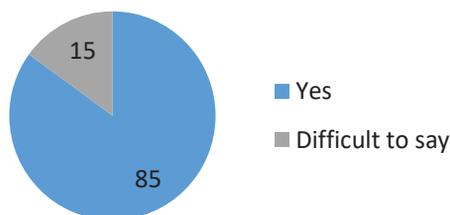
This result may indicate a growing self-confidence the respondents experience, that, in turn, can be accounted for by a significant increase in felt proficiency (a 21% increase in the numbers of respondents indicating their self-assessment as C_1 and a 1% increase in C_2 level).

As for the form in which they communicate most often, having the choice of three options: "I communicate mainly using spoken English", "I communicate mainly using written English", and "I communicate using both ways: speaking and writing equally," the respondents provided the following results:

Figure 5.28. Most popular form of communicating in English (%)
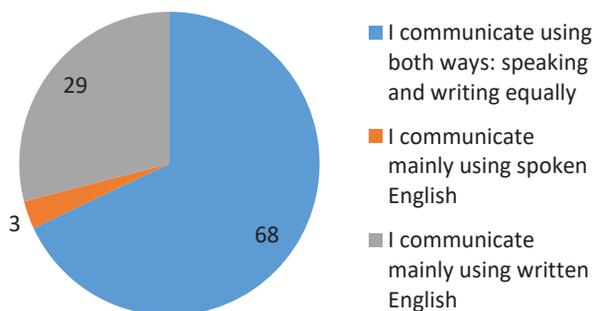
Again, these responses differ from those provided at the beginning of this research. To start with, the number of those who use both spoken and written language for L_2 communication increased from 49% to 68% and written communication decreased from 32% to 29%.

The next question pertaining to the intensity of L_2 contact shows slightly different and even more optimistic data than previously:

Table 5.30. The frequency of communication in English

"How often do you communicate in English?"	%
Always	15
Often	65
Sometimes	15
Seldom	5
Never	0

The biggest differences can be noticed in "always" and "sometimes" responses, that is, in the case of the former it was a 9% increase, and in the latter case a 10% decrease. Such responses indicate that the intensity of contact with English is on the rise. Analysing those two queries together, one cannot help but notice some logical contradiction, namely, it is rational to see the amount of spoken interaction drop bearing in mind the fact that the respondents filled in the post-study questionnaire when the pandemic and social isolation it brought with it had been affecting them already for a year. Nevertheless, claiming that both forms of communication as well as their intensity have increased is difficult to be accounted for in the time of online education and limited travelling possibilities. The second query, pertaining not only to the frequency of communication, but also the channel that they use, yields the data that stand in total opposition to the previous claims:

Table 5.31. The frequency of channels used for L2 communication (%)

Channel	Always	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Face-to-face communication	9	23	35	26	7
Telephone	6	29	9	23	33
Email	9	23	38	12	20
Text messages	55	23	12	4	6
Social media	59	29	6	3	3

The fact that catches immediate attention is that social media together with texting messages still comprise the most frequently used channels for second language communication among the Polish Generation Z cohort. This preference is even more visible than it was at the beginning of this study.

What is really alarming is a decreasing tendency of face-to-face communication – from 50% (indication always and often) in 2018 to merely 32% in 2021. Undeniably, this outcome may have been influenced by the time of pandemic necessitating social isolation and actually preventing the students from face-to-face interactions. However, if this tendency becomes a trend, it may lead to serious problems encountered while speaking.

The next section of the questionnaire aimed at gathering information about students' general approach to fluency and correctness while communicating in English. In the first question, the respondents were to provide their opinion on their attitude towards producing L2. The data collected here bears almost complete resemblance to the numbers gathered three years prior. A detailed distribution is displayed in Figure 5.29:

Figure 5.29. Respondents' attitude towards the way of producing L2 ("Do you pay attention to the way you produce the L2?")
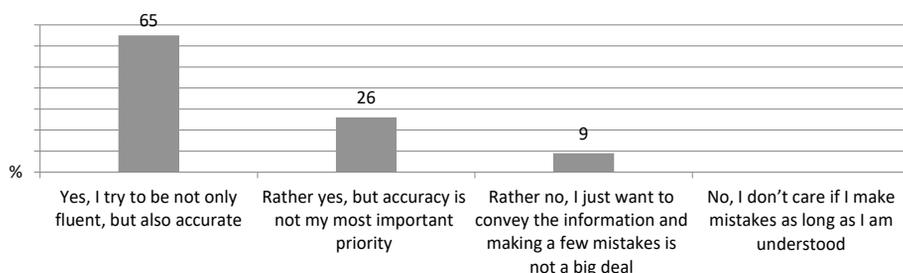
As seen in Figure 5.29, the respondents still show rather a meticulous and careful attitude, as they desire to be not only fluent but also accurate, however for almost 30% of the interviewees what matters most is merely being communicative (a 3% drop). The fact that almost 10% (a 1% increase) shows some form of linguistic negligence is surprising if one takes into account that those students are teachers or translators, just about to graduate from the university and whose productive L2 abilities should be impeccable.

The next query aiming at identifying those communication channels that students consider important to communicate correctly in yielded very similar results to the ones previously gathered:

Table 5.32. Students' opinion on the importance of correctness while using various channels (in %)

Channel	Very important	Important	Quite important	Unimportant	Totally unimportant
Face-to-face communication	26	50	19	3	2
Telephone	15	22	43	18	2
Email	62	23	15	–	–
Text messages	15	20	50	15	–
Social media	40	35	20	3	2

When analysing the two most affirmative answers (very important and important), it seems that correctness is still most significant during face-to-face encounters (76%), but also while writing emails (85%), and using social media (75%). Another written mode, that is, texting messages, according to the respondents, does not require a high level of correctness as merely 35% assert such importance.

The third question revolving around accuracy concerned the opinions on being corrected provided again the data quite similar to those from the pre-study. The teachers' correction, meant at improving one's linguistic production, is appreciated by 80%, of whom 15% "strongly agree" (a 27% decrease) and another 65% "agree" (a 23% increase). The middle category "neutral" was chosen by 21% (a 6% increase) of respondents. "Strongly disagree" did not appear at all. Nevertheless, it seems that the learners still appreciate their teacher's correcting them but, apparently, are not so much convinced of its effectiveness and their opinions are not that strong as they used to be. The question devoted to correction assesses the importance of the teacher in shaping students' language, however, the subsequent part of the questionnaire overlaps similar aspects, that is, it attempts to determine the factors influencing respondents' L2.

Table 5.33. Respondents' opinions on the factors determining their L2 development

Factors	Very strong influence	Strong influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
Studying English at the university	25 (32%)	39 (23%)	24 (38%)	16 (7%)	5 (0%)
Spending time with native speakers ("I improve my English through our interactions")	24 (20%)	25 (18%)	20 (24%)	18 (18%)	13 (20%)
Spending time with non-native speakers of English ("I improve my English through our interactions")	1 (12%)	21 (20%)	42 (35%)	24 (30%)	12 (3%)
Using English on various social media	44 (53%)	26 (35%)	20 (9%)	5 (3%)	5 (0%)
Playing online games in English	39 (35%)	15 (32%)	10 (12%)	13 (9%)	23 (12%)
Reading in English	54 (65%)	24 (24%)	17 (8%)	4 (3%)	1 (0%)
My peers ("the way they speak English provides me with rich lg input")	2 (12%)	14 (18%)	38 (41%)	31 (23%)	15 (6%)
Attending other forms of L2 tuition (lg course, one-to-one teaching)	11 (6%)	18 (15%)	12 (12%)	9 (20%)	50 (47%)

The data presented in Table 5.33 indicate that students' L2 is mainly impacted by reading (65%), social media (53%), and playing online games (35%). As stated previously, the option "reading in English" is actually open to many interpretations and one cannot be certain whether the students actually meant credible and linguistically-rich sources. This assumption may be additionally bolstered if one looks at the low result of university impact (studying English at the philology department, previously assessed as either having very strong and strong influence by 64%, now scoring only 55%). It seems that the students

even after almost four years spent at the university, still do not recognise the value of such studies and the potential influence it may or even should have had on their own linguistic competence. Spending time with native speakers is underappreciated too, and although it is really difficult to believe that students of the English department cannot see any benefit in interacting with target language users, the numbers dropped from 49% (answers "strongly agree" and "agree" counted together) in 2018 to 38% in 2021. The potential value of communicating with non-native speakers or their own peers surprisingly enough is more attractive to their eyes as in both cases we noted an increase (cf. Table 5.30). Holistic analysis of the data shows, unfortunately, a very slow progress in their linguistic and educational awareness that only to some extent can be accounted for by their relatively young age and putative immaturity. It seems that choosing English as their major stands no chance in comparison to the influence social media or online games exert on their perceived L2 development. When asked an additional question aiming at verifying their beliefs on the quality of the language they are picking, namely, whether it is genuine and real or merely bookish, the respondents showed completely reverse opinions than previously, that is, the dominant answer indicates that this time the respondents have a feeling of being provided with a genuine and authentic English (53%), rather than a bookish one (47%). When asked what kind of language they produce themselves and whether it is rather "bookish" and grammatically correct, the respondents were not so sure about it:

Table 5.34. Respondents' opinion on the language they use

"While communicating in English I try to use rather bookish and grammatically correct language"	%
Yes	18/12
No	26/38
Difficult to say	56/50[*]

[*] The numbers represent the data gathered from pre- and post-study questionnaire.

According to the data gathered, the students do not really know what type of discourse they produce as half of them chose the "difficult to say" option. However, 38% denied being sure that they communicate in more real-like language. When comparing these answers to the ones given before, that is, referring to the type of discourse they are taught at the university, one cannot help but

notice a considerable divergence in their answers that was also present in 2018. Although more respondents now have a feeling of being taught and exposed to a genuine language at the university, still half of them find it difficult to provide a univocal answer to the second query. Such a substantial variance in the answers can indicate that even after three years of regular and intense L2 education their linguistic awareness of what is and what is not "native-like" discourse remains relatively low.

Phrasal verbs, idioms, slang and colloquial expressions have been always acknowledged as the essence of genuine and native-like language. Undeniably, comprehending and using such phrases may contribute to the development of pragmatic competence. Thus, in order to test the manner in which students of English communicate, and their attitude towards the language and efforts to imitate real-life communication, it was decided to introduce a set of queries that might help to gather relevant data. Table 5.35 displays the results pertaining to the frequency of adopting phrasal verbs, idioms, and colloquial expressions gathered at the beginning and at the end of this research project.

Table 5.35. The frequency of using slang, colloquial expressions, idioms and phrasal verbs (%): pre- and post-study results

Lg items they use	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Slang and colloquial expressions	11	26	37	44	39	21	10	9	3	0
Idioms	3	6	30	41	48	38	14	12	5	3
Phrasal verbs	11	18	41	53	39	29	3	0	6	0

The data presented in Table 5.35 show considerable variation in students' answers. To start with, it seems that the most frequently applied "particles" of real-life English are phrasal verbs (71% of replies for "always" and "usually" – a 19% increase) and slang and colloquial expressions (70% for "always" and "usually" – a 22% increase). Idiomatic expressions still remained least commonly employed (a 47% and 14% increase, respectively) and this low result may stem from their semantic and syntactic difficulty. In comparison to the

previous outcome, the number of middle answers (in all three aspects analysed) and the choice of "sometimes" (21%, 38%, and 29%, respectively) decreased indicating perhaps more confidence on the part of the respondents. It has to be also mentioned that there is a general rise noted in terms of using slang, colloquial expressions, idioms and phrasal verbs – at least this is the feeling the respondents display. Nevertheless, such results are quite contradictory to the previous findings, that is, when 50% of the cohort questioned does not know what kind of discourse they use and whether it is genuine. Yet again it seems that Generation Z students have mixed opinions and probably even some problems with their own linguistic self-assessment.

The following section of the questionnaire was meant to assess respondents' problematic areas of learning and potential anxieties. The distribution of the data presented in Table 5.36 indicates that the two most challenging subjects for respondents (grammar and phonetics) remained the same.

Table 5.36. Students' opinions on the difficulty of "practical English" subjects (%): pre- and post-study comparison

Subject	Very easy	Easy	Middle level of difficulty	Difficult	Very difficult
Conversations	33/41	40/24	24/26	3/6	-/3
Phonetics	2/6	17/20	45/29	27/27	9/18
Reading comprehension	9/20	31/33	30/29	22/9	8/9
Composition	11/9	26/50	38/32	20/9	5/-
Grammar	3/3	21/26	30/38	34/30	12/3

The juxtaposition of the answers provided before commencing this research study with the ones obtained after its termination clearly indicate that the perception of difficulty of some practical English subjects has changed. Reading comprehension and composition, apparently, have become easier whereas the high return of "difficult" and "very difficult" answers for phonetics and grammar has remained level. Conversations are still considered very easy and easy (41% and 24%, respectively), however, there has been a slight fall in the level of students claiming so. This generally very positive attitude towards the apparent easiness of spoken production does not align with the answers provided to the subsequent queries aiming at verifying the level of second language anxiety

experienced primarily with native speakers. Thus the students partaking in the research were about to indicate those L2 areas where anxiety and stress strike the most. Table 5.37 compares the answers provided during initial and final stage of this longitudinal study:

Table 5.37. Respondents declaring anxiety or stress while using L2 (%): pre- and post-study results

Anxiety type									
Speaking		Listening		Writing		Reading		Never experiencing this problem	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
50	71	11	6	1	9	1	0	30	24

As seen in Table 5.37, the data gathered from this question stand in strong opposition to those presented before. To begin with, the number of Generation Zers considering conversations easy or very easy equals 65%, so seeing that 71% declare themselves to be suffering from anxiety while speaking is confusing. The analysis is open here to at least a few possible interpretations and some of them were provided in section 5.1. Moreover, it has to be remembered, however, that the post-study questionnaire was introduced in March 2021 when the students partaking in the research had already been learning online for one year. It may be hence speculated that the period of social isolation combined with limited spoken interaction with their teachers and other group members must have had a significant deteriorating impact on their oral fluency, positive self-esteem, and communication efficacy. Such arguments seem plausible while explaining a high rate of spoken anxiety, but it is difficult to account for the fact that the same feeling of stress is also higher while writing. On the one hand, composition is reported as one of the easiest practical English subjects, on the other, the level of anxiety accompanying this skill has increased.

To summarise, it is evident that communication in the second language still leads to the appearance of stress as merely 24% of the questioned students declared not to be suffering from its various forms. The next two queries aimed at establishing additional variables triggering the appearance of stress, namely, the presence of a native speaker or other, non-native interactors. The results obtained from the analysis of those two items are presented in Table 5.38:

Table 5.38. Respondents' answers (%) on their level of anxiety while communicating with native and non-native speakers: pre- and post-study results

Do you experience anxiety while communicating?	With a native speaker		With a non-native speaker	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Definitely yes, all the time	7	24	–	3
Rather yes, but it depends on a situation	44	43	23	29
Rather not	31	24	40	47
I don't have this problem at all	18	9	37	21

As seen from the table, the results clearly indicate that 67% (a 16% increase) of respondents admit to being anxious either all the time or in a majority of situations when interacting with native speakers. This result may stem not only from additional problems such as inhibition, or the fact that many of them are introverts, but it might be equally attributed to insufficient contact with the language itself and infrequent encounters with native speakers also caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The level of anxiety involved in contact with non-native English users is much lower (but higher than in 2018), yet still merely 21% of Generation Zers actually deny experiencing it at all. This, in turn, may support the previous assumption, namely that the respondents suffer from a serious communication anxiety.

The final section of the questionnaire contains three queries devoted to the development of pragmatic competence and the students' own perception of how pragmatically aware they are. In order to test their general cross-cultural as well as pragmatic awareness, they were asked to indicate the option they agree with, that is, whether "there is only one perception of polite behaviour", or whether, perhaps, "the perception of polite behaviour may vary depending on cultural or social norms." Similar to the pre-test results, the respondents were very unanimous and 100% chose the first possibility.

The assumption that the students are actually very open-minded and their pragmatic competence developed in the period of conducting this research, unfortunately, cannot be bolstered in light of the results obtained from the subsequent question:

Figure 5.30. Respondents' opinion on learning polite formulae ("While learning English, you: …")
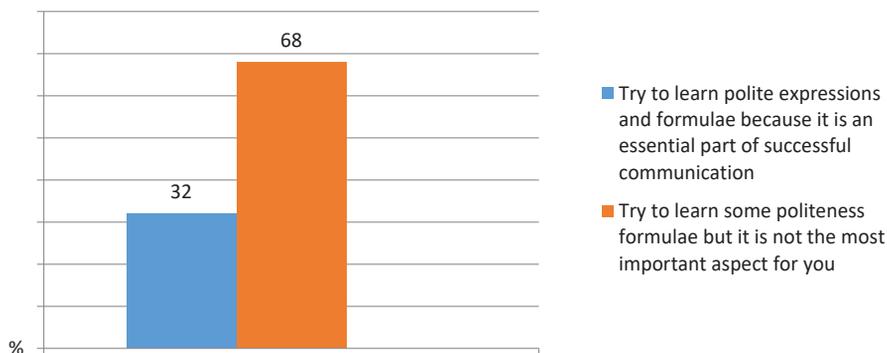
For almost 70% of students, learning politeness-related formulae is still not high on their priority list. Although the answer to the previous question, acknowledging the existence of many possible interpretations of polite behaviour, may indicate that students are aware of the notion of cross-cultural differences, and that what is considered polite in one sociocultural group is not necessarily taken as such in the other, however, it seems that this group does not really attach much importance to their own polite behaviour.

In the last questions the interviewees were asked to state their own self-perception of pragmatic competence: "Do you think you really know how to use English and your pragmatic competence (the knowledge of how the language is really used in a given context) is adequately developed?" and indicate whether they are interested in learning more about pragmatics and developing in this area:

Figure 5.31. Self-reported level of pragmatic competence ("Do you think you really know how to use English and your pragmatic competence … is adequately developed?")
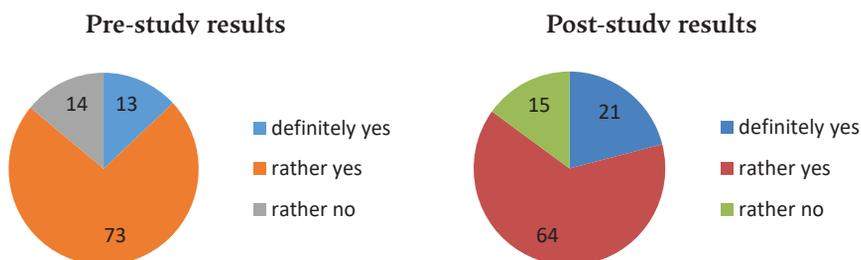
Figure 5.32. Students' willingness to learn more about pragmatics ("Would you be interested in learning more about pragmatics and developing in this area?")
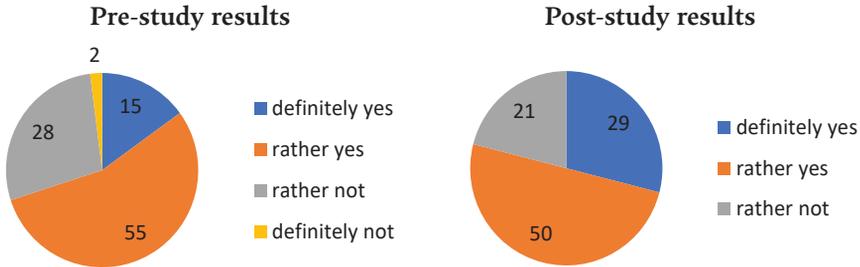
As for their own self-assessment of pragmatic competence, a very high result remained level, that is, in both cases it is about 86% of participants who evaluate themselves as knowledgeable in this field. What is more, the students are interested in developing in this area and a slight rise (9%) has been even noted. Nevertheless, while juxtaposing this finding with the data indicating a strong negative viewpoint on the necessity of learning one of the inseparable components of polite communication (politeness-related formulae), it is difficult to blindly believe in such declarations.

5.7 Recapitulation

The chapter provided content and statistical analysis of the data obtained from three questionnaires (pre- and and post-study questionnaire and the one measuring pragmatic comprehension), three WDCT scenarios, WRVPs and a test in pragmatics. The statistical analysis of the data was conducted on the basis of LIWC 20, SAILEE (receptiviti.com) and Grammarly software. The data collected indicate significant discrepancies between the respondents' self-declarative opinions on their linguistic and pragmatic development and their tangible manifestations in the language produced in WDCTs and WRVPs.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter is of conclusive character as it summarises this research project with the intention of providing answers to the most salient questions and objectives of this longitudinal study: it characterises Polish Generation Z as second language learners, tracks the level of the development of pragmatic competence and provides some insights on the condition of their general linguistic skills.

6.1 Polish Generation Zers as Second Language Users

One of the research objectives is to assess the linguistic condition of contemporary Polish English majors. This major is mainly chosen by people who have always been interested in this language and believe they have a flair for learning it. To be accepted and enrolled as a student, one has to meet various requirements, for instance, pass a secondary school final examination in English (the so-called matura) and prove one's linguistic competence in this way. Naive as it may sound, it is assumed that students choosing English as their major will display integrative motivation and genuine interest in this language, from its sociocultural and pragmatic aspects to the deep analysis of the linguistic properties it possesses.

The data analysis obtained from implemented research tools, that is, a pre- and post-study questionnaire, WDCT scenarios, WRVPs, test in pragmatic comprehension, and a test in the introduction to pragmatics provides the author with much food for thought and, unfortunately, still leaves some doubts. The first observation that can be made pertains to the type of motivation young Poles have for choosing their studies. As has been already reported, Generation Z students no longer seem to be motivated by the beauty of the language itself, nor by their desire to discover new aspects of grammar or vocabulary, but simply by the need to pursue a professional career. However, in time and probably under the influence of the course of their studies, their motivation changed into a more integrative one as 65% of those asked in 2021 admitted

to express a genuine interest in English. Although slightly more than half (52% in 2018 and 65% in 2021) reported integrative motivation, it is difficult to accept this claim fully in light of all the results gathered. A general picture stemming from this research project allows us to describe Generation Z students in the same way as the subjects from Aleksandrowicz-Pędich's research, conducted in 2019:

> Most students speak fluently, function without problems among English-speaking peers, communicate with teachers, participate in some class activities but are not prepared to use English for academic purposes of reading and writing. Their command of English represents "surface fluency" [...]. Such students, speaking English fluently, do not understand texts above those that can be found on the Internet and are unable to write grammatically, control sentence structure, or create texts in a complex way required for an academic degree.
>
> (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, 2019, p. 50)

Moreover, the results of a study conducted by Piechurska-Kuciel and Rusieshvili (2020) showing that Polish students demonstrated significantly lower levels of intercultural sensitivity despite their greater foreign language experience also align with the data gathered in this project.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings gathered from this research concerns the respondents' communication channels and their attitude towards correctness. Among the most popular channels (regardless of the language involved) are social media and texting, whereas face-to-face communication is losing its (supposedly natural?) appeal – from 50% (indication always and often) in 2018 to merely 32% in 2021. Undeniably, this outcome may have been influenced by the time of pandemic necessitating social isolation and limiting the respondents' chances for face-to-face encounters.

A word of caution regards the influence social media have on shaping the language of the young generation. When asked about the factors determining the quality of English, 54% in 2018 and 88% in 2021 declare that it is done through reading. However, using social media undeniably involves reading, so it is difficult to univocally state what kind of reading influences their interlanguage. Correlating this with another discovery, namely that only 25% (and 56% in 2021) of the questioned group sees a very strong correlation between studying English at the university and making progress, enables us to

conclude that the major determinant shaping the language of Generation Z is the language of social media. Nor does interacting with native speakers seem to have much value in their eyes (only 24% in 2018 and 38% in 2021 consider it an essential factor). As seen above, one can see a slight but steady increase in the respondents' "linguistic awareness," that is, in time, they seem to gradually understand the value and positive impact studying a language at university may have on one's development. If analysed together with the data indicating that 80% of students in 2021 appreciate teacher's feedback and correction, this claim can be interpreted as a sign of a positive change. However, we cannot state the same looking at the number of respondents just about to graduate from the university, who claim that their communication priority is not necessarily accurate second language production (35%).

Polish Generation Zers face many learning problems pertaining to the development of speaking and pronunciation and learning grammar. Those are the subjects considered most challenging in 2018, and they also evoked the most second language anxiety. However, the perception of the difficulty of some practical English subjects has changed. Apparently, reading comprehension and composition have become more manageable, whereas the high return of "difficult" and "very difficult" answers for phonetics and grammar has remained level. Conversations are still considered very easy and easy (41% and 24%, respectively); however, there has been a slight drop in the level of students claiming so.

Nevertheless, the answers concerning the difficulty of speaking (having conversation classes at the university) did not show such problems. Moreover, the respondents expressed the opinion that conversation is the easiest amongst all practical English component classes (this opinion has not changed in time). Nevertheless, when asked to evaluate the difficulty of interacting with non-native and native speakers and their communication anxiety, the Generation Z students reported severe problems with the stress accompanying their L2 performance. This, in turn, should also be analysed from the point of view of the amount and quality of language contact they receive. According to the interviewees, they are mainly expected to write, and the language they learn is bookish (53% declared it to be so in 2018).

On the other hand, supposing this result to be credible, learning idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, and slang would definitely add some "colour" to their interlanguage and raise the genuineness level. Yet only small percentages of

the respondents report learning and using them regularly (11% report using slang, phrasal verbs, and colloquial expressions and 3% idiomatic expressions in 2018 and the responses from 2021 indicate only a marginal increase in this respect, namely 26%, 6%, and 18%, respectively). Summing up, it is evident that communication in the second language still leads to the appearance of stress as merely 24% of the questioned students confessed not to be suffering from its various forms. Quite the contrary, it seems that Polish Gen Zers display a relatively relaxed attitude towards learning English. They do not appear to be deeply involved in it, leaving much space and tolerance for potential errors (cf. the finding referring to the importance of being correct while communicating through various channels). As for their L2 development, more than 70% have been learning this language for more than 15 years in 2018 and 73% in 2021; and 60% assess their English language as being on C1 level and 11% even on C2 (in 2021, it is even more – 81% and 10%, respectively). Comparing this finding with the results of WDCT, WRVP, and Grammarly-based evaluation, one may question the validity of such confident self-reported competence. As was already stated in Chapter 5 (cf. sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2), the respondents made many grammatical and pragmatic mistakes. The size of linguistic repertoire (e.g., the choice of modal verbs, that is, *would you mind* instead of *can you / could you?* or a relatively small amount of internal modification strategies) is still limited, so we may doubt the self-reported (C1 or C2) level of proficiency. What should also be mentioned at this point is that all language samples produced by the students for the purpose of WDCTs and WRVPs and analysed by Flesch-Kincaid readability test constantly indicated very similar results, that is, relatively low language level (a text that is easy to read, and likely to be understood by a reader who has at least an 8th-grade education – age 13–14).

Kasper (2000) and Kasper and Rose (2002) emphasise that the dependence of pragmatics on grammar can take various forms. One of them, which is clearly visible in this study, is defined in the following way: "Learners demonstrate knowledge of a particular grammatical structure or element but do not use it to express or modify illocutionary force" (Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Takahashi, 1996, in Rueda, 2006, p. 174). The fact that the respondents do not use particular grammatical structures (e.g., the choice of modal verbs in requests) may be, in turn, accounted for by cognitive or information processing theories postulating that "learners need to be exposed to target-language input in order to notice pragmatic phenomena" (e.g., Schmidt, 1993, 1995). Moreover,

it is assumed that having noticed a given pragmatic phenomenon, learners cannot achieve a more profound understanding without "reflecting upon it and practicing and automatizing it in interaction" (e.g., Bialystok, 1993, in Timpe-Laughlin, 2016, pp. 5–6). The case supporting the belief that students have also been taught bookish language is the fact that in many corpus examples the respondents introduced far too formal language (especially in the case of the first WDCT scenario and requesting situation). However, as the subjects of this study do not reflect much on the language they use, nor are they willing to further develop (e.g., learn new vocabulary such as phrasal verbs, idioms, slang expressions, etc. or politeness-related formulae), it appears that the growth of pragmatic competence is hindered, not only by a lack of input that might afford opportunities for noticing or practicing social interaction (cf. the results of LACE study 2007) during their secondary education but also by their own weak motivation and relaxed attitude towards the learning process. Thus, the final remark that can be made here is that Polish Gen Zers may be portrayed as relatively advanced, yet not very preoccupied with accuracy, learners of English, who still use this language primarily for instrumental purposes.

Moreover, their interlanguage development has probably reached the level of international intelligibility, described by Seidlhofer (2004). However, a word of caution here is that Seidlhofer refers to such features of English as "non-native," yet sufficient in lingua franca settings, but far from the "fine nuances of native speaker language." To conclude, Polish learners of English display features similar to the ELF form of communication. Sufficient as it may be for any second language user, it is doubtful whether translators or would-be teachers could rely on it in their future work. The results of this longitudinal study support the previous claims made by Aleksandrowicz-Pędich already in 2019. English as the *lingua franca* is the fact and the future of communication in internationalised higher education.

Moreover, in both research projects, the students observed seem to have a problem with their self-perception of their own English language competence and the actual ability to handle academic tasks and fulfill social functions and the actual ability to use it (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, 2019). Additionally, as Aleksandrowicz-Pędich (2019, p. 61) states, "[t]he fluency in the use of English for everyday communication may decrease the awareness of the necessity to progress to a higher level in the academic use of English, necessary for effectiveness and success in learning." Although the research conducted among the

students of the University of Silesia did not provide the data that would enable us to make such a strong claim, yet it can be speculated that the findings collected here do not deviate much from those obtained in 2019.

The students commencing their studies in 2017 displayed a very confident outlook on the quality of the language they speak. They boldly self-assessed themselves as proficient English language users, successfully communicating with both native and non-native speakers. The language input they received in the course of their studies and constant feedback provided by their teachers apparently only slightly changed their initial attitude. When asked in 2021 the same queries as three years prior, many of their responses remained the same. Apart from a change in the kind of motivation they are driven by, the language problems they report to be suffering from (e.g., foreign language anxiety) are similar. Considering that this age cohort was exposed to a very intense language programme for three years, such results seem at least surprising. As for the most influential variables affecting their second language development, not much has changed over time, that is, it has always been social media rather than anything else that in their eyes impact their progress most.

6.2 Polish Gen Zers: Self-reported vs Manifested Development of Pragmatic Competence

The major objective of this section is to juxtapose students' own rating of their level of pragmatic development with the data obtained from WDCT scenarios, pragmatic comprehension questionnaire, WRVPs, and a test in pragmatics. To date, only a few studies have traced the development of adult NNSs' pragmatic competence using longitudinal data (cf. Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 151). Two of the most significant pieces of research are those conducted by Schmidt (1993) and Ellis (1992), focusing on the development of directives in their learners' interlanguage. According to them, a recorded developmental pattern apparent for learners' requests for objects would look the following way:

> Me no (blue)
> Give me (a paper)
> Can I have a rubber?
> You got a rubber?

Miss I want (i.e., the stapler)

Tasleem, have you got glue?

Can I take book with me?

Can you pass me my pencil?

Can I borrow your pen sir?

(Ellis, 1992, pp. 16–17, in Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, 151–152)

As can be seen, the last strategy to develop is based on the verb *can* and speaker-oriented structures relying on the verb *borrow*. As Kasper and Schmidt (1996, p. 153) add, "[t]he more polite variety *could* does not show up at all in requests for objects." What has to be explained here is that in the study conducted by Schmidt, he was observing an adult Japanese learner of English (Wes) over a period of three years while Ellis during his research studied two boys: "The Portuguese boy was observed for one year and three months and the Pakistani for two years" (Kasper & Schmidt, p. 152). In both analysed situations, the respondents could formulate, after the period indicated, the *can I borrow* strategy. However, in the corpus gathered from the Polish Generation Z students, 22% of the subjects asked for a pen using either *would*, *would you mind*, or *may* modal verbs. An additional 15% opted for even simpler options, such as *Can I have?*. This finding deviates from the results provided by Schmidt and Kasper.

Moreover, Polish respondents claim to have been learning English for a much more extended time (72% for more than 15 years, 16% for 11–15 years, 11% for 6–10 years, and merely 1% for not more than 5 years). It is not confirmed what type of instruction the Polish students had been provided with, nor do we know whether they acquired English through sustained and expanding communicative interaction in an English-speaking environment. As all of them speak Polish as their mother tongue and have Polish nationality, it may be assumed that the English they have learnt is primarily shaped by formal instruction happening in L2 classrooms. However, it is quite surprising that not a single one of them used the hearer-oriented *can you?* structure, which was much earlier developed in the case of Wes and the other two boys observed by Schmidt and Ellis. On the other hand, at least 18% of Polish students already used the more polite form *could I?* which was absent in the other research.[1]

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1   The *could I?* structure, being more polite, but also more formal, may support the previous assumption holding that young Poles overuse formal style even in situations that do not

What might be concluded is that this Polish Generation Z group does not follow the same developmental pattern displayed by non-native speakers immersed in an English-speaking reality. The differences stemming from the acquisition-learning contrast may to some extent account for those dissimilarities, yet they cannot fully explain why students exposed to the second language for more than 15 years have not acquired more native-like requesting strategies. The answer to this query may be partially supplied by findings from an investigation entitled "Languages and Cultures in Europe (LACE): The intercultural competencies developed in compulsory foreign language education in the European Union" conducted in 2007. The LACE study analysed foreign language curricula at primary and lower secondary levels in 12 European countries in order to discover, among other things, what objectives in the area of intercultural competencies they prescribe and the degree of focus given to them (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 226):

> The study came to the conclusion that, apart from there being important differences between countries and the primary and lower secondary level, the national curricula analysed 'pay most attention to the development of linguistic competencies and communication skills. (Inter)cultural competencies (if included in the curriculum) get considerably less consideration' and that 'intercultural competence as an objective focuses to a large extent on knowledge and attitudes' (LACE study 2007: 22). Using the Byram framework of four types of competence (linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence), the LACE study researchers found that linguistic competence accounted for 50 per cent of the focus of the curricula across the 12 countries investigated, whereas intercultural competence received the least focus with only 15 per cent.
>
> (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 229)

As the Polish core curriculum for foreign language was also analysed in this investigation, it is clear that intercultural competence (interconnected with pragmatic competence) is not sufficiently well developed and paid attention to. Consequently, having just completed this curriculum, freshmen students

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require it, and this consequently may strengthen their belief that they are exposed to "bookish English."

have had no opportunity to expand their pragmatic awareness. The studies conducted by House and Kasper (1987, in Salgado, 2011) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986; in Salgado, 2011) indicate non-native speakers' tendency to use longer requests and a higher level of directness in requests than native speakers. This verbosity, indeed, is quite visible also in this study and seems to constitute a specific interlanguage phenomenon (e.g., *Hello, I'm sorry to bother you, but would you mind borrow me your pen for a while? I'll give it back to you in a moment; Hi, I am a camp counselor of the other group here. As I have to write down a phone number, would you mind borrowing me a pen for a second? Because I saw you're holding one in your hand*).

The second scenario provided in WDCT required reacting to a compliment. As discussed in Chapter 3, compliments elicit various behaviours depending on the nationality and language one uses. In the case of Polish, we used to follow a negative politeness pattern based on rejecting compliments and showing a very modest approach. In time, it seems that the norms have changed (presumably under the influence of English and Western cultures), and it is more and more common to accept compliments in a fully American-like way. The findings gathered from Polish Gen Zers clearly indicate that this group of learners is on their way to fully accommodating English standards of politeness.

Moreover, Poles have given up much of our Polish modesty for the sake of agreeing with others when responding to compliments. The level of acceptance of compliments was almost like that described in the study by Herbert (1986) conducted on American native-speakers. However, as stated in Chapter 1, the outcome of the research conducted on Generation Z (cf. Salleh et al., 2017, online) clearly illustrates their tendency to be overconfident and to have a problem with distorted self-image, which makes it hard for them to recognise their limits. Additional remarks provided by the Polish students concerning inappropriate amounts of praising in contrast with the excessive criticism and correction they supposedly receive from their teachers may serve as a case in point here.

The final WDCT scenario provided the respondents with a highly face-threatening situation which was to be determined by using the speech act of apologising. The corpus gathered from Polish Gen Zers shows that the overwhelming expression and the most dominant strategies used are those of regret. This, in turn, shows some level of similitude to native-speakers' language. The vast majority chose intensified adverbials (*I'm so sorry!, I'm terribly sorry, I'm really sorry*) or direct apologies (*Oh, pardon me, I beg your pardon*) as their

primary means for expressing regret. However, what is thought-provoking is the relatively low frequency of explanation strategies (32%) and average sentence length (15.98 words). For the majority of respondents, "admitting guilt" is mainly expressed by saying "I'm *sorry*" or adding explanations (*I had no idea it* [*chair*] *was yours*), probably believing that these words are self-explanatory and no further excuse is necessary. Thus it may be stated that the social perception of communicative action (sociopragmatics) is not well trained and this, in turn, supports previous observations (cf. Kecskés, 2013). All these findings indicate some directions for future research – one may compare the way Polish Gen Zers would apologise using their mother tongue as it is quite likely that the moderation displayed in the English corpus has nothing to do with the language as such but simply pertains to a general/global "symptom of our times" and changing standards of politeness. Salgado (2011, p. 206) implies that "the increase in the use of internal modifiers of an IFID reflects an increase in linguistic and pragmalinguistic competence."

Moreover, "the ability to use different strategies in the apology is part of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge that learners are acquiring in their L2" (Salgado, 2011, p. 206). She also postulates that the lack of linguistic resources is a limitation that prevents the use of more and varied strategies to construct apologies. In the study conducted on Polish Generation Z advanced learners of English, it turned out that merely 32% of the group used two apologising strategies, and 20% three. The evaluation of WRVPs does not also provide much evidence indicating that students feel the need to use such strategies in the first place. Thus such a small number does not indicate that the group of Gen Zers has already acquired sufficient linguistic and/or pragmatic competence to be able to use and combine more strategies.

In juxtaposing students' self-reported vs manifested level of pragmatic politeness, we should note the opinions presented by the respondents themselves. When asked how they evaluate their level of pragmatic competence, 86% wrote that they either definitely know or know how to use English and that their level of pragmatic competence is adequately developed. Interestingly, the respondents provided the same opinions three years later, indicating a lack of conviction that they are making some "pragmatic progress." However, there is a slight increase in the amount of Gen Zers willing to develop their pragmatic competence and develop in this area (from 70% in 2018 to 79% in 2021). However, merely 33% in 2018 and 32% in 2021 stated that they try to learn polite expressions and

formulae, which are essential parts of successful communication. These results are even more contradictory to each other, especially when comparing them to another finding, that is, showing that 99% (in 2018) and 100% (in 2021) of the group realises that the perception of polite behaviour may vary depending on cultural or social norms.

The findings gathered from the analysis of WDCTs (based on LIWC 20) clearly indicate major drawbacks in respondents' ability to assess the context (sociopragmatic competence) appropriately. As indicated before, students' status in the request scenario was higher than their interlocutor's (a day camp counselor vs a small child). Thus, bearing in mind the context of the situation, they should have adopted more powerful roles and implemented more second-person pronouns (*you*). On the other hand, the speech act of apologising necessitated more complex, more extended, and definitely more formal utterances that, apparently, only a few students could perform. This finding is further confirmed in WRVPs, where the respondents were to provide their insights on the most difficult and the easiest speech act to produce. Surprisingly, the same examples (apologies and requests) were indicated as the most and least problematic at the same time. The analysis of the responses collected from this research tool clearly indicates sociopragmatic dilemmas encountered by the students, especially those deriving from cross-cultural differences (cf. section 5.3). Chen (2007) mentions that the development of pragmatic competence depends on linguistic competence. Thus since the latter is still not well established, it is difficult to expect a proficient level in the former competence. Grammar is considered a set of formal codes or structural building blocks, which, more or less, through their syntactic relationships, contribute to the meaning that is predictable and premised on logic. Pragmatics, on the contrary, is a set of non-logical inferences derived from those codes. Ariel (2008) also believes that grammar is grounded in formal learning and the recognition of patterns in language, which, in theory at least, can be learnt without the need for social contact.

At the same time, however, pragmatics is dependent on social learning and experience, where culture and context come together, providing clues for interpretation. Chen (2007) further states that three factors may contribute to explain the differences of the EFL learners' ILP competence in relation to the level of language proficiency, which is student's motivation, out-of-classroom learning, and the general low language proficiency of the participants. Since the respondents' motivation fluctuated from instrumental in 2018 to only

slightly more integrative in 2021, one cannot thoroughly diagnose the internal drives for learning English these students display, nor can we assess how much time they devote to studying. Secondly, as out-of-classroom learning was not fully verified, the sole variable pertaining to all research participants was choosing English as their major and studying this language for four years at the premises of the University of Silesia in Sosnowiec, Poland. The last years of studies (initiating in March 2020 and still lasting to June 2021) were conducted in the form of online learning, significantly limiting personal contact with both teachers and other students. However, the results from both pre- and post-study questionnaires clearly indicate that the most significant variable impacting students' development was using English while communicating on social media, so the actual quality of other language input the respondents were exposed to remains unknown. Nevertheless, it is logical to presume that the language of the Internet has impacted their ILP. Thirdly, the relatively low language proficiency of the cohort in general was confirmed through the implementation of Grammarly software, Flesch-Kincaid readability test, as well as the assessment of WDCTs made by English native speakers and non-native teachers of English evaluating extracts provided in terms of formality, choice of strategies or overall comprehensibility.

One of the most significant objectives of this research was to assess the development of both pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic production. The former was evaluated on the basis of a questionnaire (cf. Appendix, Questionnaire 2) and WRVPs, and the latter took into account the findings gathered from WDCTs and WRVPs. The final remark that can be made here is that the respondents seem to hold different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour. Moreover, a relatively high number of first-person personal pronouns compared to a low number of second-person pronouns may support the previous claim (cf. WRVPs finding) that students still cannot fully differentiate between different formality levels and adjust themselves to sociopragmatic requirements. This was mainly visible while performing the speech act of requesting and apologizing and when students found it difficult to adjust the level of formality and the choice of appropriate strategies. Although all of the respondents recognised the speech act properly in the context presented, the requesting strategies they opted for more often than not included too many details and clearly displayed a high level of verbosity. This verbosity was also visible in many other corpus extracts created by the students, that is,

the LIWC 20 and Grammarly software revealed many cases of "narrative styles," wordy sentences, and longer than average sentences. At the same time, the act of apologising, being the case of a highly vulnerable social situation causing substantial face-threat, did not yield expected results, that is, the respondents provided very short apologies, mainly confined to mere *I'm sorry* expression and extremely limited repertoire of apologising strategies. This, in turn, may imply that students partaking in the research have not demonstrated similar to native-like sociopragmatic competence yet. Neither are they aware of such divergences and the need to adjust one's language to make it fit a formal context.

The reflections they had while writing the verbal reports indicate some sort of dilemmas they apparently struggle with. In fact, the only speech act that seems least problematic is responding to compliments, yet even in this case, some respondents revealed uneasiness and were not utterly sure which norms (English or Polish) they should rely on. Producing the speech act of requesting is still highly problematic, even when granted a superior position (students were to play the role of a counselor). The findings indicate that the main sociopragmatic variables affecting their linguistic decisions and strategies they opted for were mainly age (43%), general description of the situation-setting (36%), and perceived relationship (29.5%). Interestingly, there still seems to be some disagreement among them concerning age and whether a child shall or shall not be treated with due respect, using polite forms or even formal language. WRVPs devoted to apologies also provided some interesting data to analyse. First of all, four major themes emerged from this corpus, that is, emphasising the level of imposition, the nature of discourse one should use in such a socially vulnerable situation, cross-cultural (Polish vs English) differences, and finally, arguments for minimising the level of imposition. The first three themes were equally common in the reports, and the last one appeared only in three cases (7%). Taking into account the overall results inferred from content analysis of all studied speech acts, we may conclude that majority of the students is aware of the necessity of changing the discourse to make it fit the context and at least has some vague idea of how to do it in English (e.g., know some general differences between modal verbs), especially while interacting with older interlocutor as well as the one whose social role is higher. However, what prevents them from being fully pragmatically successful is a relatively low level of grammar and, unfortunately, still inadequate knowledge of cross-cultural differences. Another problem visible in the analysis of those reports is very superficial

knowledge of the Polish grammatical system. The data obtained from verbal reports also reveal that the social context of the discourse situation affects the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices. Language-related episodes indicate some sort of participants' negotiation of lexical and grammatical elements when planning their request, compliments, and apologising strategies. Regarding retrospective reports, they offered information about participants' language of thought and the difficulties they experienced while assessing the weightiness of the situation as well as adjusting their discourse.

The statistical interpretation of some WRVPs data regarding respondents thinking processes also indicates many areas of divergence from LIWC 20 mean:

Table 6.1. LIWC 20 speech acts comparison

Variables	LIWC 20 requests/mean	LIWC 20 compliments/mean	LIWC 20 apologies/mean
I-words (*I*, *me*, *my*):	8.70/4.99	9.32/4.99	11.04/4.99
Social words	8.69/9.74	13.23/9.74	10.63/9.74
Positive emotions	2.57/3.67	6.32/3.67	1.90/3.67
Negative emotions	2.12/1.84	1.02/1.84	3.36/1.84
Cognitive processes	12.52/10.61	19.52/10.61	18.96/10.61
Analytic	44.88/56.34	29.76/56.34	25.45/56.34
Clout	37.02/57.95	45.08/57.95	26.29/57.95
Authentic	76.01/49.17	32.95/49.17	67.36/49.17
Tone	38.60/54.22	97.66/54.22	8.40/54.22
WPS	19.66/17.40	15.83/17.40	20.84/17.40
Sixltr	18.33/15.60	19.88/15.60	18.14/15.60
Dic	88.84/85.18	90.35/85.18	91.88/85.18

Table 6.1 displays some results computed through the application of LIWC 20 and juxtaposes three speech acts the students were to produce for the purpose of WRVP analysis. As seen, many categories are deviating from the LIWC 20 mean. It seems that the most striking differences regard cognitive processes as well as summary variables, that is, analytic thinking, clout, authentic, and tone. The cognitive process dimension restricts all the constituent words to true markers of cognitive activity. On the one hand, as the numbers in all analysed cases exceed the mean, it may be inferred that the act of creating retrospective verbal reports in English was mentally demanding, if not even challenging for

the respondents. On the other hand, a high number of cognitive mechanisms may also indicate more complex language (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 35). However, as the results of linguistic assessment made by Polish and American academic teachers and Grammarly application were very low and indicated a significant amount of various errors, this hypothesis has to be rejected.

The analysis of analytic thinking provides some interesting results, too. As has been already indicated, low analytical thinking skills may manifest themselves in lengthy, narrative-like sentences full of personal opinions. Analytic language includes the use of articles (e.g., *the*, *a*/*an*) and prepositions (e.g., *above*, *with*) designed to show connections and critical relations among points. Yet, the "informal" style includes more narrative, ideas, actions, and stories. In my study, such results are primarily displayed in the case of compliments and apologies. Hence, this may indicate some pragmalinguistic problems the respondents have while assessing the level of formality required and adjusting themselves to a given social context.

It has already been stated that low clout indicates a more tentative, humble, even anxious style (Pennebaker et al., 2015). As can be seen in Table 6.1, the amount of clout is relatively low (especially in the case of apologising) and thus may be interpreted as a sign of low confidence and perceived relative social status. As mentioned before, in the case of requesting, students were granted higher status, so such a low number may be treated as tangible proof of sociopragmatic but also pragmalinguistic failure. Low results in the case of reacting to a compliment may, in turn, be perceived as a symptom of "pragmatic duality" and some uneasiness that, apparently, Polish users still experience when being complimented.

A very interesting picture stems from the comparison of authentic speech acts, which in two cases, that is, requests and apologies, significantly exceeds the mean. A high score in this category is associated with more honest, personal, and disclosing communication, whereas a low result is characteristic of someone who is reflective of language that, in turn, is more guarded and distanced. Lower than mean result in the speech act of complimenting may be understood as an argument indicating that Generation Z Polish users of English feel "guarded" while receiving compliments and also avoid revealing their true self. The last area of a significant divergence may be seen in the case of tone, where numbers below 50 suggest a more negative emotional tone. This is especially visible in the case of the speech act of apologising and requesting. However, as those

two acts are naturally "predisposed" to trigger embarrassment and face-threat, such results are not surprising.

The overall statistical interpretation of all the WRVPs results analysed through LIWC 20 and SALLEE allows one to make some general conclusions pertaining to students thoughts while performing three speech acts in question:

- The amount of clout calculated while requesting is relatively low and thus may be interpreted as a sign of low confidence.
- The respondents, even while complimenting, seem to be affected by stress and anxiety (neuroticism result), are less assertive, and primarily more likely to be embarrassed or anxious about themselves or their skills.
- A lower than average analytic thinking result may indicate that the respondents prefer using informal, personal, here-and-now language and narrative thinking when requesting and apologising.
- Below average clout result as well as the data collected through the Big Five analysis (in particular: neuroticism), serve as a tangible proof of anxiety, stress, and humble approach while apologising.
- Neuroticism result indicates that the students are somewhat more likely to be embarrassed or anxious about themselves or their skills.
- Analysing the data from the point of view of conscientiousness, one may describe the participants as relatively confident in themselves, less likely to follow routines and rules, rather less ambitious or less driven by the desire for achievement, somewhat more likely to respect expectations or authority, rather disorganised and less orderly, and finally, as somewhat cautious.
- As for the social status and power of the people taking part in this research, LIWC and OCEAN (Receptiviti) show they are conscious about their emotions, presumably also less confident, reserved, and reflective.

Students' perception of the difficulty of speech acts yielded exciting results, that is, it turned out that the same acts (apologising and requesting) are considered both the easiest and most difficult at the same time. Contradictory self-declared opinions concerning the apparent easiness of a given speech act (e.g., apologies) do not align with their further content and statistical analysis. There are many areas indicating serious sociopragmatic dilemmas those Polish users of English are still struggling with. The overall analysis of pragmatic comprehension test also indicates that, on average, students seem to be sure

of their convictions and perception of the situation (and thus we may see it as a result of adequately-developed pragmatic comprehension), yet are still not fully ready and linguistically advanced enough to be able to justify and explain their beliefs. The task aiming at assessing pragmalinguistic competence (cf. Appendix, Questionnaire 2, Question 6) that yielded correct results (but similar language was not used by the respondents themselves in the collected corpus extracts) is a case in point here.

As has been already stated, pragmalinguistic failure may arise from two identifiable sources: "teaching-induced errors" and "pragmalinguistic transfer – the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically and/or syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias,' tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language" (Thomas, 1983, p. 101). Pragmatic failure is not immediately apparent in the surface structure of utterances and can be revealed only by discussing with students what force they intended to convey. The data collected clearly indicate that the Generation Z cohort participating in this research project should continue to develop their metapragmatic ability – the ability to analyse language use in a conscious manner. All in all, in light of all data gathered, one may question whether the development of pragmatic competence really corresponds to C1 or even C2 level, as declared by the respondents. It seems that the students of the English department already think highly of their own, not only linguistic but also pragmatic, abilities, and do not see the need for further improvement. The data pertaining to their opinion on the significance of learning polite formulae, but also colloquial expressions, slang, idioms, and phrasal verbs, seems to support this finding. Last but not least, the opinions expressed on correctness while using various communication channels also align with the previously mentioned assumptions. Approximation to target language norms may be measured not only on the basis of questionnaires and DCTs but also role-plays, recorded conversations, and observations (cf. Schmidt, 1983; Ellis, 1992; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), and these instruments may be additionally used to study the development of pragmatic competence among Polish Gen Zers in future research.

6.3 Polish Gen Zers: Self-reported vs Manifested Development of Linguistic Competence

As has already been stated, the development of pragmatic competence depends heavily on linguistic competence (Chen, 2007). It is also equally true that pragmatic comprehension depends on successful mastery of lower-level skills, from recognising sounds/letters to the assignment of meaning in context. What is more, very often, of course, it is not pragmatic failure that leads non-native speakers to misinterpret or cause to be misinterpreted the intended pragmatic force of an utterance, but an imperfect command of lower-level grammar. Finally, the differences in the EFL learners' ILP competence concerning language proficiency can be accounted for not only by motivation and out-of-classroom learning but also by general low language proficiency (Chen, 2007). We believe that the findings of the present study align with the previous claims.

One of the intentions of this research project was to evaluate the level of linguistic development of Polish Gen Zers, choosing English as their major. This process was based on the implementation of a few research tools, each of which served the purpose of linguistic evaluation. It was intended to introduce the Grammarly program – a software application verifying the text in its grammatical correctness, tone, and readability index. The latter variable determines the grade level one represents. In order to properly assess the linguistic mastery, the group has achieved, samples of writing extracts were collected (WDCTs and WRVPs) and further examined. The principal objective here was to juxtapose students' self-declared L2 level of proficiency in pre- and post-study questionnaires with the detailed linguistic analysis based on Grammarly software and the evaluation of WDCTs made by American and Polish academic teachers of English as well as Flesch-Kincaid test.

The data obtained clearly indicate a very high self-reported level of proficiency that may, in turn, be accounted for by a long period of learning English – for the vast majority, it is more than 15 years. Interestingly, when comparing this result to the one obtained from the pre-study questionnaire, one may see quite a different distribution of answers, that is, apparently, the students have a feeling of making progress – the most considerable divergence may be seen while comparing C1 level of advancement: three years ago 60% of students self-declared this level of proficiency in comparison to 81% in the post-study period. A detailed description of advanced users of English

(C1 and C2 level) was already presented in Chapter 1. Firstly, such a learner should be close to the native-like command of a language, including not only general mastery of the language (which may be compared to the development of purely linguistic competence), but also the ability to react to various social situations requiring from them to adjust the language, use an appropriate register and follow context-specific sociocultural conventions. Secondly, the study conducted by Ji-Young Kim (2014) also showed that "more proficient L2 writers produced longer texts, used more diverse vocabulary, and showed the ability to write more words per sentence and more complex nominalizations than less proficient learners did" (Kim, 2014). Thirdly, Leśniewska (2006) describes advanced language as characterised by syntactic complexity, longer utterances, and lexical richness. Referring to the arguments mentioned above, it has to be stated that students' discourse analysed for the purpose of this study reveals only one attribute of advanced level, namely longer than the average length of sentences. Such a finding was calculated based on Grammarly software; however, even this result was not that common. Wordy sentences and some sort of verbosity were especially visible in the analysis of requests; nevertheless, in this particular case, the speech act students created should have been shorter.

On the other hand, when producing apologies, and when it was expected to combine some strategies and create longer utterances, the respondents relied on relatively short sentences. As for lexical richness, this parameter was assessed through LIWC 20 and Grammarly software, but also while verifying content validity (specifically word choice) and assessing WDCTs by American and Polish academic teachers. It has to be reminded that the software more often than not indicated a very low per cent of unique and rare words used in the analysed corpus. The analysis of WRVPs does not allow to categorise this discourse as lexically sophisticated, either.

The language examined in this research study can by no means represent C1 or C2 level, not only due to lexical constraints but, above all, to numerous and cardinal grammatical violations visible in its surface structure. Figure 6.2 presents only some statistical data (Grammarly analysis) pertaining to the assessment of WDCTs and WRVPs[2]:

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2   A detailed description of the results in presented in Chapter 5.

Table 6.2. Comparison of speech acts (WDCTs) on the basis of Grammarly results

Aspects assessed	Requests	Compliments	Apologies
Corpus size	1121	662	1943
Writing issues	24	143	413
Critical	14	5	32
Advanced	10	138	381
Flesch-Kincaid readability level	94	99	84
Rare words	13%	28%	22%
Unique words	10%	17%	25%

Table 6.3. Comparison of speech acts (WRVPs) on the basis of Grammarly results

Aspects assessed	Requests	Compliments	Apologies
Corpus size	5914	4190	4725
Writing issues	591	454	524
Critical	198	159	181
Advanced	393	295	343
Flesch-Kincaid readability level	67	71	69
Rare words	13%	26%	14%
Unique words	67%	16%	25%

The word of caution that should be sounded here is that the extracts analysed by Grammarly devoted to WDCTs analysis were shorter (3,726 words), as the students reacted to given scenarios and produced shorter language samples. However, in the case of WRVPs, the corpus collected was larger and encompassed 14,829 words. In both cases, it is visible that the language produced is rated as very easy and simple to read. It has to be reminded that in the Flesch-Kincaid reading-ease test, higher scores indicate the material that is easier to read. Moreover, the extracts analysed were assessed as not higher than a text that could be understood by someone with at least an 8th-grade education (age 13–14). The test indeed calculates the results for English native speakers, but even if one considers this argument, the discourse produced is still elementary to comprehend. Above all, however, it contains numerous

mistakes, such as, among others, wrong punctuation, commas misuse within clauses, wrong determiner use, misspelled words, incorrect verb forms, wrong or missing prepositions, misuse of modifiers, passive voice and tense misuse, and unclear sentences. All the language samples derived from the corpus used in this study and provided in this book as examples were not edited in any way to support this claim.

The juxtaposition of three visible findings stemming from this project leads to very interesting but also quite surprising observations. On the one hand, the students in both cases (while filling in pre- and post-study questionnaires) assessed themselves as very proficient L2 language users but, at the same time, openly admitted to having some problems with grammar. This, however, does not prevent them from calling themselves successful in terms of L2 communication. On the other hand, a visible clash between self-declared and tangible manifestations of fairly advanced yet far from proficient linguistic competence is confirmed by all the instruments used in this research and, as such, cannot be questioned. Moreover, the opinions on teacher's corrective feedback varied as some respondents appreciated its educational value; nevertheless, others did not see much worth in "constant and overwhelming error correction." Moreover, the respondents also reported suffering from various forms of second language anxiety (primarily oral) visible mainly while interacting with native speakers, yet, rather than choosing a face-to-face form of communication, they prefer written channels. The final conclusion that can be made here is that apart from lacking metapragmatic awareness necessary to express oneself as they choose, the young generation of Polish users of English apparently also needs to develop linguistic awareness and the ability to assess their skills properly. An additional piece of research may also be taken up on the type of motivation they display, how they sustain it, and what kind of learning strategies they employ.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

As has already been stated, verbal reports are extremely precious tools for revealing mental processes underlining pragmatic performance. Moreover, they reveal otherwise concealed knowledge and help illuminate the process of acquiring it and learning to use it. As the objective of this longitudinal study was to measure pragmatic production and comprehension, the application of retrospective verbal reports succeeded in providing some evidence necessary to

assess the level of pragmatic competence of advanced Polish users of English. Nevertheless, the study is not free from various limitations. To start with, the respondents were asked to react to three DCT situations (requests, reacting to a compliment, and apologising), and then their mental processes were examined using retrospective verbal reports. Only some respondents revealed pieces of knowledge concerning those particular speech acts. What is more, relatively little evidence emerged about acquiring pragmatic knowledge or ability. One reason for this limitation is that the learners were not supervised in any way while filling in the tasks – as was already mentioned, the reports were sent online due to Covid-19 outbreak and transforming traditional learning into the online form. This problem affected not only the number of WRVPs received but, apparently, it may have also impacted students' interpretation of the task itself. Secondly, as there was no face-to-face contact immediately available with the researcher, some respondents focused more on reasons or explanations for their behaviour rather than reporting their actual thoughts. Thirdly, one cannot be sure how much time the respondents had waited after completing DCTs before they decided to reveal their thoughts about them in reports. Thus we safely assume that, at least in some cases, the students may have forgotten their thoughts during the WRVP task. Moreover, the written form of DCT deprived the respondents of authentic and genuine context (providing necessary details and enhancing the process of productive comprehension), otherwise available should the communication act take place in oral form. Finally, it should also be remembered that academic teachers may intimidate their students due to their asymmetric position regarding their age, social distance, and power. Thus, having learned that their responses would be later read and further assessed by their academic teacher, the students might have acted differently than they would usually have had.

Another limitation concerning the organisation of this study may pertain to the choice of DCT scenarios. To assess their general pragmatic competence, the students were asked to react to three different speech acts varying in terms of difficulty level, that is, different levels of imposition, social power, and distance. However, one may claim that assessing pragmatic competence and knowledge of a given speech act based on the analysis derived merely from one DCT is hardly sufficient. Thus, future studies ought to focus on more detailed investigation, and individual speech acts may be ranked by applying a more considerable number of scenarios. At the same time, however, the content analysis of requesting

DCTs concentrated mainly on the distribution of lexical downgrading strategies and external modification strategies. However, it may have also focused on direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies (e.g., propositional and illocutionary scales). As for the analysis of apologies, the responses to the DCTs were further scrutinised according to Olshtain's (1983) five semantic formulas for apologies (cf. Chapter 4). Yet, again, one may adopt a more comprehensive and extensive approach by looking at the data through the typology offered by Kirchhoff et al. (2012).

The results gathered from pre- and post-study questionnaires revealed some differences concerning respondents' motivation to study English. This aspect is also of significant importance and deserves closer investigation as it may contribute to one's overall willingness to develop pragmatic competence. At the beginning of this longitudinal study, we reported more instrumental drives characterising respondents' attitudes, whereas three years later, the data indicated rather an integrative inclination. Thus an additional piece of research may also be taken up on the type of motivation Polish Gen Zers display, how they sustain it, and what kind of learning strategies they employ. Moreover, in both cases analysed the statistical analysis focused mainly on finding the most dominant tendencies (mode), and it would be advisable to conduct a more thorough quantitative analysis (e.g., calculating standard deviation, coefficient of variance, t-test, etc.) to be able to draw more reliable and statistically significant conclusions.

Approximation to target language norms may be measured not only based on questionnaires and DCTs but also role-plays, recorded conversations, and observations (cf. Schmidt, 1983; Ellis, 1992; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), and these instruments may be additionally used to study the development of pragmatic competence among Polish Gen Zers in future research.

6.5 Recapitulation

The chapter attempts to answer research questions formulated before and finally characterise the group of respondents in terms of second language users they are. Particular attention is placed on the description of the development of pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic production, but also assessment of linguistic competence the respondents demonstrate. The findings gathered through the implementation of all research tools implemented during the

period of three years do not allow us to describe the group taking part in this longitudinal study as linguistically advanced (representing C2 level, as the respondents self-declared in pre- and post-study questionnaires) nor pragmatically fully competent to perform various speech acts in English. It turned out that the group investigated struggles not only with the sociopragmatic interpretation of the context, but also with the implementation of suitable and relevant in a given situation pragmalinguistic strategies.

Appendix

Questionnaire 1 (Pre- and Post-study Questionnaire)

Generation Z – L2 Communication

Dear Respondent,
The questionnaire below aims at assessing the current state of your communication patterns employed while using English. While filling in the form please bear in mind that all the questions posed relate only to English, and this language will be often referred to here as your L2. Thank you for taking your time to take this questionnaire. All the data gathered from here will be kept anonymous and used for scientific purposes only.

1. Sex:
    a. Female
    b. Male
2. Age:
    a. 18–21
    b. 22–25
    c. above 25
3. Nationality: . . . .
4. How long have you been learning English:
    a. 0–5 years
    b. 6–10 years
    c. 11–15 years
    d. More than 15 years
5. How would you assess your current L2 (English) level?
    a. A1
    b. A2
    c. B1

d. B2

e. C1

f. C2

6. Do you speak any other foreign language (apart from English)? Indicate the one that you can also communicate in:

a. German

b. French

c. Spanish

d. Chinese

e. Japanese

f. Italian

g. Korean

h. Other

7. Do you feel successful while communicating in English?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Difficult to say

8. How often do you communicate in English?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Seldom

e. Never

9. Indicate the channels you use while communicating in English:

Channel	Frequency of using it				
Face-to-face communication	Always	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Telephone conversation					
Email communication					
Text message					
Social media					

10. Indicate the form in which you communicate in English most:
    a. I communicate mainly using spoken English;
    b. I communicate mainly using written English;
    c. I communicate using both ways: speaking and writing equally.

11. Do you pay attention to the way you produce the L2?
    a. Yes, I try to be not only fluent, but also accurate;
    b. Rather yes, but accuracy is not my most important priority;
    c. Rather no, I just want to convey the information and making a few mistakes is not a big deal;
    d. No, I don't care if I make mistakes as long as I am understood.

12. Indicate the channel that you consider it important to communicate correctly:

Channel	Very important	Important	Quite important	Unimportant	Totally unimportant
Face-to-face communication					
Telephone					
Email					
Text messages					
Social media					

13. Does using the second language evoke any stress or tension? Indicate as many answers as apply.
    a. Yes, it is especially visible while speaking;
    b. Yes, it is especially visible while listening;
    c. Yes, it is especially visible while writing;
    d. Yes, it is especially visible while reading:
    e. No, I don't have this problem.

14. Are you anxious while communicating with English native speakers?
    a. Definitely yes, all the time;
    b. Rather yes, but it depends on a situation;
    c. Rather no;
    d. I don't have this problem at all.

15. Are you anxious while communicating in English with non-native speakers?
    a. Definitely yes, all the time;
    b. Rather yes, but it depends on a situation;
    c. Rather no;
    d. I don't have this problem at all.

16. Who/what influences the development of your English level? Indicate the factors that impact this development:

Factors	Very strong influence	Strong influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
Studying English at the university					
Spending time with native speakers ("I improve my English through our interactions")					
Spending time with non-native speakers of English ("I improve my English through our interactions")					
Using English on various social media					
Playing online games in English					
Reading in English					
My peers ("the way they speak English provides me with rich lg input")					
Attending other forms of L2 tuition (lg course, one-to-one teaching)					

17. Indicate the degree of difficulty that you encounter while learning the following subjects at the university:

Subject	Very easy	Easy	Middle level of difficulty	Difficult	Very difficult
Conversations					
Phonetics					
Reading comprehension					
Composition					
Grammar					

18. Which of the following statements characterises best your general approach to learning or communicating in English?
    a. When I learn English I want to fully integrate with it, with its culture, norms, traditions, etc.;
    b. I treat English as a tool that should help me in the future (e.g. get a good job).

19. Indicate the statement you agree with most:
    a. When I learn English I am mainly interested in mastering my spoken performance;
    b. When I learn English I am mainly interested in mastering my written performance.

20. I like learning English:
    a. Yes
    b. No

21. I like communicating in English:
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

22. While learning English, you:
    a. Try to learn polite expressions and formulae because it is an essential part of successful communication;
    b. Try to learn some politeness formulae but it is not the most important aspect for you;
    c. You don't really care about politeness-related phrases.

23. Tick the statement you agree with most:
    a. There is only one perception of polite behaviour;
    b. The perception of polite behaviour may vary depending on cultural or social norms.

24. While communicating in English I want to be corrected so that I can improve:
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

25. While communicating in English I try to use slang and colloquial expressions:
    a. Always
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
    d. Seldom
    e. Never

26. While communicating in English I try to use idioms:
    a. Always
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
    d. Seldom
    e. Never

27. While communicating in English I try to use phrasal verbs:
    a. Always
    b. Often
    c. Sometimes
    d. Seldom
    e. Never

28. Tick the statement you agree with most:
    a. I believe I'm not learning real, authentic language, but rather a bookish one;
    b. I believe I am learning a genuine and authentic English.

29. While communicating in English I try to use rather "bookish" and grammatically correct language:
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Difficult to say

30. Do you think you really know how to use English and your pragmatic competence (the knowledge of how the language is really used in a given context) is adequately developed:
    a. Definitely yes
    b. Rather yes
    c. Rather no
    d. Definitely no

31. Would you like to learn more about pragmatics and develop your knowledge in this area?
    a. Definitely yes
    b. Rather yes
    c. Rather no
    d. Definitely no

Thank you for taking your time!

Questionnaire 2

Assessing Pragmatic Comprehension

1. Read the situation below and indicate how you would rate the level of the husband's apology:

   Wife: *I don't like it, dear, when you criticize our children in front of other people. It made me uncomfortable last evening when you criticized them at the dinner party. I know you were trying to be funny, but people can take it the wrong way, and...*
   Husband: *Really? I don't agree with you. In fact, I think you're overreacting – it's not such a big deal. But if you insist, I'm willing to watch what I say....*
   a. High
   b. Moderate
   c. Low
   d. Non-existent

2. Read the situation below and indicate how likely (in your opinion) is the stout lady to consider George's response an apology?

   George is doing his holiday shopping in Manhattan and has only about 15 minutes before the department store closes. He needs to get across the entire store to the opposite corner to check out the gift specials at the men's accessories counter, but in front of him is a rather obese lady with bags in hand. She is in the midst of a heated conversation on her cell phone and is blocking the aisle. George tries to get around her, but in the process inadvertently knocks over some of her bags, tangles up her cell phone arm, and causes the lady to drop her phone as well.

   Lady: *My goodness! What are you doing, young man?*
   George: *Very sorry, lady, but you were in my way!*
   a. Very likely
   b. Somewhat likely
   c. Somewhat unlikely
   d. Very unlikely

3. What is your rationale for your choice? (explain your decision from the previous question):

. . . .

. . . .

4. Which of the answers do you think would be most appropriate in this situation? Assess each of them.

You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with the boss at your new job. An hour later you show up at his office to apologize. The problem is that this is the second time you've forgotten such a meeting in the short time you have been working at this job. Your boss is clearly annoyed when he asks, *What happened to you this time?*

Answers	Most appropriate answer	Acceptable answer	Unacceptable answer
a. Very sorry, Mr. Iverson. You see… uh…I have sleeping problems and…uh… then I missed the bus. But I can make it up to you.			
b. Oh, I'm really sorry about that, Mr. Iverson. I've been suffering from chronic sleep disorder and as a result I have trouble getting going in the morning. I can get you a doctor's note about it. And to make matters worse, I got to the bus stop this morning just as the bus was pulling away. I'm really sorry about that. What can I do to make it up to you? I'll work overtime, whatever.			
c. So sorry I missed the meeting. I had problem at home and then I forgot the meeting and when I remembered it was too late.			

5. Indicate which of the following is most likely Bill's response to Andrew in leave taking. Andrew: *Hey, Bill. It's been nice talking with you. Let's get together some time.*
   Bill:
   a. *Good idea – when would you like to do it?*
   b. *You always say that but don't mean it.*
   c. *Sounds good. Take care.*
   d. *I won't hold my breath.*

6. Herman is requesting a raise from his boss. Which of the options provided do you think would be more appropriate/ sound more tactful in this situation?
   I _____ if you _____ consider increasing my pay.
   a. *I was wondering if you will consider increasing my pay.*
   b. *I was wondering if you will consider increasing my pay a bit.*
   c. *I wonder if you will consider increasing my pay.*
   d. *I wonder if you will consider increasing my pay a bit.*

7. A foreign visitor to Poland (English native speaker) says to you: *Your English is excellent!* How would you respond to him? Assess each response in terms of their sociocultural acceptance.

Answer	Most appropriate answer	Acceptable answer	Unacceptable answer
Thank you.			
Oh no, my English still needs polishing off.			
Thank you. It's good to hear that. At the university they mostly correct my mistakes so at least now I know I'm making some progress.			

Discourse Completion Task

Dear Student,

Please take your time to respond to the following situations and provide the answers you would produce in the scenarios described below (what would you say?).

I.

You are working as a counselor in a Day Camp, you need to write a phone number, but you do not have a pen. An English-speaking child, who is not in your group, is sitting next to you in the playground and has a pen. How would you ask this child for a pen? You say:

. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .

II.

A Foreign visitor to Poland says to you: "Your English is excellent!". How would you respond to him? You say:

. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .

III.

You receive an invitation to attend a lunch with the dean of the school, the professors and all the students with the best grades. The invitation says that you need to be there 10 minutes before the hour that is indicated. The day of the lunch, you have a problem and you arrive 50 minutes late. When you arrive, there are no empty places and the event has already started. You see an

empty chair, you go and sit down. After a few minutes the dean of the school tells you that that is his place. What would you say to the director why you took his chair?

You say:

· ·
· ·
· ·
· ·
· ·
· ·

Written Retrospective Verbal Report

I.

I would like you to ponder over your choices and the answers you provided in the previous DCT section. What were you thinking about while formulating your speech acts? The questions below are to help you frame your reports.

1. What were you influenced by when formulating your speech act? (setting, description of the situation, perceived relationship, perceived power / social distance / degree of imposition / offence, classroom environment, pressure of being taped, your interlocutor's behavior, what you thought you were expected to say etc.)
2. Would you say the same if your interlocutor's role was different (professor/friend/neighbor/mother/brother/sister)? What would you say in that case? Why?
3. Do you think if you were speaking to a native speaker of English you would say something different? Why?
4. Do you think a native speaker would formulate their request in the same way? How would it be different? Why would s/he formulate it that way?
5. What would you say if you were speaking to a Polish speaker? How different is it from what you said to an English speaker? What is the difference a result of?

II.

Which speech act do you consider the easiest, and which is most difficult to produce?
What is your rationale for your choice?

Test: Introduction to Pragmatics

1. Which of the following represents the best description of pragmatics?
    a. How sounds and their meanings are produced by language users.
    b. The study of the brain and how it generates thoughts through language.
    c. People communicate and interpret intentions, and react to them, in a context of language use.
    d. The structure of sentences and how they are related to the way people think.
2. Which of the following errors made by a non-native English speaker would be most likely to cause misunderstanding and offense?
    a. "Yes, I'll be there. You can count with me, don't worry!"
    b. "She has the hair brown".
    c. "You can let me use your cell phone to make a call".
    d. "I cannot say 'it is' I say 'eat ease'. I hab a problem wit my bowels".
3. Choose the correct answer. More than one option may be correct. Requesting perspectives may include:
    a. Speaker-oriented structures.
    b. Speaker- and hearer-oriented structures.
    c. Hearer-oriented structures.
    d. Impersonal structures.
4. Match the terms with their definitions:

Definitions	Terms
Wanting the other person to like and respect you, and desire what you desire	Pragmatic transfer
The desire to be autonomous and not "infringe" on others	Pragmatic competence
The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself/herself	Positive politeness
The ability to use language for different purposes.	Face
The influence exerted by learner's pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information	Negative politeness

5. "You did a good job!" and "You are such a wonderful writer" are the examples of:
   a. Compliments reinforcing desired behavior.
   b. Compliments on the addressee's personality traits.
   c. Compliments softening face-threatening acts.
   d. Examples of compliments on performance/skills/abilities.

6. Match the following speech acts with their descriptions:
   a. Making a repair   Request
   b. Maintaining solidarity   Apology
   c. Being face-threatening to both parties   Compliment

7. Match the examples with the requesting perspective.
   Speaker- and hearer-oriented   *Could you clean up the kitchen, please?*
   Speaker-oriented   *Can I borrow your notes from yesterday?*
   Hearer-oriented   *So, could we tidy up the kitchen soon?*

8. Which of the following options would probably NOT be a good context in which to practice pragmatic expression and interpretation?
   a. Contextualized language practice in situations.
   b. Practice in constructing dialogues with a partner.
   c. Discussions in which the students and teacher focus on pragmatic elements in the talk or text.
   d. Class lectures by the instructor on the nature of speech acts.

9. What is NOT true about sociocultural norms:
   a. They can lead to great misunderstandings by speakers of different cultures.
   b. They are easy to change.
   c. They are intricately tied to pragmatics.
   d. They are the rules that a society uses to guide appropriate behavior in the community.

10. Match the type of a compliment with appropriate strategy:
    It really knitted itself   reassignment
    Thanks, Thank you   scale down
    It's really quite old   appreciation token
    I brought it from my country   comment history
    It's alright, but Len's is nicer qualification

11. What guides pragmatic behavior?
    a. The effect of role plays as they are carried out.
    b. Sociocultural norms of the particular group or society.
    c. Face-threatening acts and how to avoid them.
    d. Speech acts in a conversation.
12. Choose the correct answer. More than one option can be correct. The determiners of the external context are:
    a. power,
    b. Face-threat,
    c. imposition,
    d. social status.
13. Which of the following is NOT a strategy for making an apology?
    a. Acknowledgement of responsibility.
    b. A promise of non-return.
    c. A promise of non-recurrence.
    d. An offer of repair.
14. Syntactic downgraders. Tick the statement that is incorrect:
    a. never make use of tag questions,
    b. provide certain forms of justification and explanation, referred to as supportive reasons,
    c. minimize costs,
    d. take the form of conditional clauses.
15. Match the following statements with appropriate strategies:

The bus was late	An explanation or account
How can I make it up to you – why don't I buy you lunch on Friday?	Acknowledgment of responsibility
I was sure I had given you the right directions.	An offer of repair

16. Along with an awareness of the sociocultural norms of a target society and language, of what other aspect of communication must the L2 speaker be keenly aware?
    a. The appropriateness of what is said.
    b. The grammatical perfection of what is said.

    c. The relevance of what is said to what is happening in the context.

    d. The humor that is conveyed.

17. What is a face-threatening act?

    a. Something said that always conveys a threat to one's life and safety.

    b. An action that one can do "in the face" of another.

    c. A speech act that is never heard in everyday speech.

    d. Something said to a listener that could cause him/her to be embarrassed or ashamed.

18. What are speech acts?

    a. Acts of politeness when people are speaking, like saying 'please'.

    b. Any act that does not pose a threat to someone's face.

    c. Acts of communication that are intended to convey a given intention.

    d. The language that people use when they do role plays.

19. Compliment Response Strategies DO NOT include:

    a. Appreciation Token.

    b. Comment Acceptance.

    c. Praise Upgrade.

    d. Explanation of Purpose.

20. What is normally the basis of cross-cultural problems in communication?

    a. Differences in sociocultural norms.

    b. The overuse of "chunks" of language.

    c. The predominance of face-threatening acts in a culture.

    d. Sociolinguistic appropriateness.

LIWC 20 Report

Pragmatic Comprehension Test
Open question data

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Linguistic Processes		
Segment		1
Word Count	WC	5858
Analytical thinking	Analytic	45.26
Clout	Clout	46.38
Authentic	Authentic	33.25
Emotional Tone	Tone	61.71
Words/sentence	WPS	19.66
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	18.33
Dictionary words	Dic	88.84
Total function words	Funct	57.73
Total pronouns	Pronoun	17.02
Personal pronouns	Ppron	11.80
1st pers singular	I	9.01
1st pers plural	We	0.38
2nd person	You	0.99
3rd pers singular	Shehe	0.63
3rd pers plural	They	0.79
Impersonal pronouns	Ipron	5.21
Articles	Article	8.69
Prepositions	Prep	10.94
Auxiliary verbs	Auxverb	11.23
Common Adverb	Adverb	4.39
Conjunction	Conj	7.49
Negation	Negate	2.12
Other Grammar		
Common verbs	Verb	18.95
Common adjectives	Adj	6.01
Comparisons	Compare	4.69

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Other Grammar		
Interrogatives	Interrog	1.18
Numbers	Number	0.34
Quantifiers	Quant	1.79
Psychological Processes		
Affective processes	Affect	2.90
Positive emotion	Posemo	2.32
Negative emotion	Negemo	0.43
Anxiety	Anx	0.20
Anger	Anger	0.12
Sadness	Sad	0.03
Social processes	Social	14.29
Family	Family	0.56
Friends	Friend	0.44
Female references	Female	0.53
Male references	Male	0.60
Cognitive processes	Cogproc	19.17
Insight	Insight	2.97
Causation	Cause	2.75
Discrepancy	Discrept	5.84
Tentative	Tentant	5.50
Certainty	Certain	1.28
Differentiation	Differ	5.43
Perceptual processes	Percept	4.59
See	See	0.26
Hear	Hear	3.98
Feel	Feel	0.15
Biological processes	Bio	0.17
Body	Body	0.07
Health	Health	0.07
Sexual	Sexual	0.00
Ingestion	Ingest	0.03
Drives	Drives	6.67

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Affiliation	Affiliation	1.86
Achievement	Achieve	0.48
Power	Power	3.94
Reward	Reward	0.53
Risk	Risk	0.14
Past focus	Focuspast	2.13
Present focus	Focuspresent	11.25
Future focus	Focusfuture	0.77
Relativity	Relativ	7.46
Motion	Motion	0.58
Space	Space	4.83
Time	Time	2.10
Work	Work	2.05
Leisure	Leisure	0.29
Home	Home	0.36
Money	Money	0.72
Religion	Relig	0.02
Death	Death	0.02
Informal language	Informal	0.39
Swear words	Swear	0.00
Netspeak	Netspeak	0.09
Assent	Assent	0.17
Nonfluencies	Nonflu	0.05
Fillers	Filler	0.00
Punctuation		
Total Punctuation	AllPunc	16.75
Periods	Period	4.75
Commas	Comma	4.75
Colons	Colon	0.34
Semicolons	SemiC	0.10
Question marks	QMark	0.82
Exclamation marks	Exclam	0.00

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Punctuation		
Dashes	Dash	0.31
Quotation marks	Quote	2.00
Apostrophes	Apostro	2.49
Parentheses	Parenth	0.48
Other punctuation	OtherP	0.72

WRVP. Requests

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Linguistic Processes		
Segment		1
Word Count	WC	5858
Analytical thinking	Analytic	45.26
Clout	Clout	46.38
Authentic	Authentic	33.25
Emotional Tone	Tone	61.71
Words/sentence	WPS	19.66
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	18.33
Dictionary words	Dic	88.84
Total function words	Funct	57.73
Total pronouns	Pronoun	17.02
Personal pronouns	Ppron	11.80
1st pers singular	I	9.01
1st pers plural	We	0.38
2nd person	You	0.99
3rd pers singular	Shehe	0.63
3rd pers plural	They	0.79
Impersonal pronouns	Ipron	5.21
Articles	Article	8.69
Prepositions	Prep	10.94
Auxiliary verbs	Auxverb	11.23
Common Adverb	Adverb	4.39
Conjunction	Conj	7.49
Negation	Negate	2.12
Other Grammar		
Common verbs	Verb	18.95
Common adjectives	Adj	6.01
Comparisons	Compare	4.69
Interrogatives	Interrog	1.18
Numbers	Number	0.34

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Other Grammar		
Quantifiers	Quant	1.79
Psychological Processes		
Affective processes	Affect	2.90
Positive emotion	Posemo	2.32
Negative emotion	Negemo	0.43
Anxiety	Anx	0.20
Anger	Anger	0.12
Sadness	Sad	0.03
Social processes	Social	14.29
Family	Family	0.56
Friends	Friend	0.44
Female references	Female	0.53
Male references	Male	0.60
Cognitive processes	Cogproc	19.17
Insight	Insight	2.97
Causation	Cause	2.75
Discrepancy	Discrept	5.84
Tentative	Tentant	5.50
Certainty	Certain	1.28
Differentiation	Differ	5.43
Perceptual processes	Percept	4.59
See	See	0.26
Hear	Hear	3.98
Feel	Feel	0.15
Biological processes	Bio	0.17
Body	Body	0.07
Health	Health	0.07
Sexual	Sexual	0.00
Ingestion	Ingest	0.03
Drives	Drives	6.67
Affiliation	Affiliation	1.86
Achievement	Achieve	0.48

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Power	Power	3.94
Reward	Reward	0.53
Risk	Risk	0.14
Past focus	Focuspast	2.13
Present focus	Focuspresent	11.25
Future focus	Focusfuture	0.77
Relativity	Relativ	7.46
Motion	Motion	0.58
Space	Space	4.83
Time	Time	2.10
Work	Work	2.05
Leisure	Leisure	0.29
Home	Home	0.36
Money	Money	0.72
Religion	Relig	0.02
Death	Death	0.02
Informal language	Informal	0.39
Swear words	Swear	0.00
Netspeak	Netspeak	0.09
Assent	Assent	0.17
Nonfluencies	Nonflu	0.05
Fillers	Filler	0.00
Punctuation		
Total Punctuation	AllPunc	16.75
Periods	Period	4.75
Commas	Comma	4.75
Colons	Colon	0.34
Semicolons	SemiC	0.10
Question marks	QMark	0.82
Exclamation marks	Exclam	0.00
Dashes	Dash	0.31
Quotation marks	Quote	2.00
Apostrophes	Apostro	2.49

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Punctuation		
Parentheses	Parenth	0.48
Other punctuation	OtherP	0.72

WRVP. Compliments

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Linguistic Processes		
Segment		1
Word Count	WC	4196
Analytical thinking	Analytic	29.76
Clout	Clout	45.08
Authentic	Authentic	32.95
Emotional Tone	Tone	97.66
Words/sentence	WPS	15.83
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	19.88
Dictionary words	Dic	90.35
Total function words	Funct	58.56
Total pronouns	Pronoun	19.16
Personal pronouns	Ppron	12.63
1st pers singular	I	9.32
1st pers plural	We	0.48
2nd person	You	1.74
3rd pers singular	Shehe	0.41
3rd pers plural	They	0.71
Impersonal pronouns	Ipron	6.53
Articles	Article	7.48
Prepositions	Prep	9.82
Auxiliary verbs	Auxverb	11.39
Common Adverb	Adverb	5.79
Conjunction	Conj	7.41
Negation	Negate	1.93
Other Grammar		
Common verbs	Verb	21.50
Common adjectives	Adj	5.65
Comparisons	Compare	4.31
Interrogatives	Interrog	1.12
Numbers	Number	0.29
Quantifiers	Quant	2.19

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Affective processes	Affect	7.36
Positive emotion	Posemo	6.32
Negative emotion	Negemo	1.02
Anxiety	Anx	0.26
Anger	Anger	0.19
Sadness	Sad	0.14
Social processes	Social	13.23
Family	Family	0.41
Friends	Friend	0.26
Female references	Female	0.26
Male references	Male	0.36
Cognitive processes	Cogproc	19.52
Insight	Insight	3.24
Causation	Cause	2.76
Discrepancy	Discrept	5.79
Tentative	Tentant	5.10
Certainty	Certain	0.95
Differentiation	Differ	5.41
Perceptual processes	Percept	5.79
See	See	0.05
Hear	Hear	5.39
Feel	Feel	0.14
Biological processes	Bio	0.24
Body	Body	0.00
Health	Health	0.14
Sexual	Sexual	0.02
Ingestion	Ingest	0.07
Drives	Drives	6.63
Affiliation	Affiliation	2.69
Achievement	Achieve	1.45
Power	Power	1.64
Reward	Reward	1.02
Risk	Risk	0.24

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Past focus	Focuspast	2.31
Present focus	Focuspresent	12.89
Future focus	Focusfuture	0.81
Relativity	Relativ	6.58
Motion	Motion	0.36
Space	Space	4.08
Time	Time	2.12
Work	Work	1.31
Leisure	Leisure	0.26
Home	Home	0.24
Money	Money	0.07
Religion	Relig	0.02
Death	Death	0.00
Informal language	Informal	0.95
Swear words	Swear	0.02
Netspeak	Netspeak	0.19
Assent	Assent	0.24
Nonfluencies	Nonflu	0.43
Fillers	Filler	0.05
Punctuation		
Total Punctuation	AllPunc	18.45
Periods	Period	6.27
Commas	Comma	4.79
Colons	Colon	0.29
Semicolons	SemiC	0.24
Question marks	QMark	0.17
Exclamation marks	Exclam	0.41
Dashes	Dash	0.41
Quotation marks	Quote	2.26
Apostrophes	Apostro	3.03
Parentheses	Parenth	0.29
Other punctuation	OtherP	0.31

WRVP. Apologies

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Linguistic Processes		
Segment	Segment	1
Word Count	WC	4730
Analytical thinking	Analytic	25.45
Clout	Clout	26.29
Authentic	Authentic	67.36
Emotional Tone	Tone	8.40
Words/sentence	WPS	20.84
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	18.14
Dictionary words	Dic	91.88
Total function words	function	59.34
Total pronouns	pronoun	19.07
Personal pronouns	ppron	12.90
1st pers singular	i	11.04
1st pers plural	we	0.36
2nd person	you	0.63
3rd pers singular	shehe	0.42
3rd pers plural	they	0.44
Impersonal pronouns	ipron	6.15
Articles	article	7.38
Prepositions	prep	9.56
Auxiliary verbs	auxverb	13.15
Common Adverb	adverb	5.67
Conjunction	conj	7.21
Negation	negate	2.03
Other Grammar		
Common verbs	verb	21.84
Common adjectives	adje	7.59
Comparisons	compare	4.14
Interrogatives	interrog	0.85
Numbers	number	0.49
Quantifiers	quant	1.90

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Affective processes	affect	5.35
Positive emotion	posemo	1.90
Negative emotion	negemo	3.36
Anxiety	anx	0.55
Anger	anger	0.23
Sadness	sad	1.75
Social processes	social	10.63
Family	family	0.40
Friends	friend	0.32
Female references	female	0.21
Male references	male	0.53
Cognitive processes	cogproc	18.96
Insight	insight	3.70
Causation	cause	2.43
Discrepancy	discrep	5.64
Tentative	tentat	4.33
Certainty	certain	1.06
Differentiation	differ	4.90
Perceptual processes	percept	4.23
See	see	0.17
Hear	hear	3.42
Feel	feel	0.44
Biological processes	bio	0.17
Body	body	0.04
Health	health	0.04
Sexual	sexual	0.00
Ingestion	ingest	0.08
Drives	drives	7.21
Affiliation	affiliation	1.65
Achievement	achieve	0.78
Power	power	3.68
Reward	reward	0.99

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Risk	risk	0.32
Past focus	focuspast	4.86
Present focus	focuspresent	11.16
Future focus	focusfuture	0.85
Relativity	relativ	10.13
Motion	motion	1.01
Space	space	5.84
Time	time	3.42
Work	work	0.95
Leisure	leisure	0.32
Home	home	0.23
Money	money	0.11
Religion	relig	0.02
Death	death	0.00
Informal language	informal	0.47
Swear words	swear	0.00
Netspeak	netspeak	0.04
Assent	assent	0.17
Nonfluencies	nonflu	0.25
Fillers	filler	0.00
Punctuation		
Total Punctuation	AllPunc	16.79
Periods	Period	6.11
Commas	Comma	4.48
Colons	Colon	0.25
Semicolons	SemiC	0.21
Question marks	QMark	0.25
Exclamation marks	Exclam	0.06
Dashes	Dash	0.15
Quotation marks	Quote	1.46
Apostrophes	Apostro	3.09
Parentheses	Parenth	0.25
Other punctuation	OtherP	0.47

WRVP. Difficult and Easy Speech Act

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Linguistic Processes		
Segment	Segment	1
Word Count	WC	2360
Analytical thinking	Analytic	44.89
Clout	Clout	51.36
Authentic	Authentic	42.27
Emotional Tone	Tone	13.68
Words/sentence	WPS	22.48
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	23.90
Dictionary words	Dic	92.12
Total function words	function	57.80
Total pronouns	pronoun	15.38
Personal pronouns	ppron	9.07
1st pers singular	i	6.95
1st pers plural	we	1.06
2nd person	you	0.59
3rd pers singular	shehe	0.00
3rd pers plural	they	0.47
Impersonal pronouns	ipron	6.31
Articles	article	7.20
Prepositions	prep	12.71
Auxiliary verbs	auxverb	11.23
Common Adverb	adverb	5.21
Conjunction	conj	8.77
Negation	negate	2.08
Other Grammar		
Common verbs	verb	17.46
Common adjectives	adj	9.07
Comparisons	compare	5.21
Interrogatives	interrog	1.44
Numbers	number	0.47
Quantifiers	quant	3.35

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Affective processes	affect	8.35
Positive emotion	posemo	3.69
Negative emotion	negemo	4.58
Anxiety	anx	0.68
Anger	anger	0.55
Sadness	sad	0.34
Social processes	social	11.61
Family	family	0.17
Friends	friend	0.13
Female references	female	0.08
Male references	male	0.04
Cognitive processes	cogproc	20.55
Insight	insight	3.77
Causation	cause	4.92
Discrepancy	discrep	2.63
Tentative	tentat	5.85
Certainty	certain	1.44
Differentiation	differ	3.90
Perceptual processes	percept	2.92
See	see	0.08
Hear	hear	1.95
Feel	feel	0.72
Biological processes	bio	0.55
Body	body	0.21
Health	health	0.13
Sexual	sexual	0.00
Ingestion	ingest	0.21
Drives	drives	10.38
Affiliation	affiliation	2.80
Achievement	achieve	0.68
Power	power	3.98
Reward	reward	0.68
Risk	risk	2.54

Category	Abbrev	Pragmatic
Psychological Processes		
Past focus	focuspast	0.81
Present focus	focuspresent	13.60
Future focus	focusfuture	0.68
Relativity	relativ	7.84
Motion	motion	0.51
Space	space	4.41
Time	time	2.80
Work	work	2.16
Leisure	leisure	0.17
Home	home	0.00
Money	money	0.21
Religion	relig	0.00
Death	death	0.00
Informal language	informal	0.25
Swear words	swear	0.00
Netspeak	netspeak	0.08
Assent	assent	0.04
Nonfluencies	nonflu	0.13
Fillers	filler	0.00
Punctuation		
Total Punctuation	AllPunc	13.90
Periods	Period	4.83
Commas	Comma	4.03
Colons	Colon	0.08
Semicolons	SemiC	0.13
Question marks	QMark	0.08
Exclamation marks	Exclam	0.00
Dashes	Dash	0.68
Quotation marks	Quote	1.31
Apostrophes	Apostro	2.08
Parentheses	Parenth	0.47
Other punctuation	OtherP	0.21

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Author Index

Iwona Dronia

Communicating with Generation Z
The Development of Pragmatic Competence of Advanced Polish Users of English

S u m m a r y

The intention of this book is to shed some light on the problem of second language communication from both cross-cultural and cross-generational angles and to diagnose communication patterns, opinions, and beliefs on the nature of L2 learning visible among the Generation Z group that is youngest, and which therefore has not yet been well researched. Generation Z is the generation now entering universities and therefore the author's intention is to describe them as second language users of English. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of pragmatic competence (pragmatic production and pragmatic comprehension), as it seems that this ability is not sufficiently developed, and may even be increasingly neglected. In order to assess the ILP development, which, undeniably, contributes to general communication efficacy, it has been decided not only to assess the respondents language level (that is primarily done on the basis of WDCT and WRVPs results and the way they responded to three situations requiring from them a diversified style of discourse), but also their problems in communication. The author of this book is therefore primarily focused on assessing Generation Z's pragmatic awareness, discovering what exactly shapes this perception and drives their learning and communicating mechanisms.

To do so, a three-year research project (longitudinal study) was carried out among the students of the English department of the University of Silesia. The study was divided into stages, each of which served different objectives. The number of tools used at particular phases of the research project was deliberate and aimed at enhancing its reliability by collecting data by means of different research instruments, that is, two self-designed questionnaires, three Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) scenarios, written retrospective verbal protocol (WRVP), and a test in pragmatics. The study was carried out from June 2018 to March 2021 and included eight stages. The general objectives of this project are twofold:

1. To assess the development of pragmatic competence of Polish students belonging to the age cohort Generation Z ("Generation Zers").

2. To describe this group of students as L2 learners of English.

The book is divided into theoretical (the first three chapters) and empirical (chapter four to six) part. The intention of the first chapter is to briefly characterise the specifics pertaining to second language communication as well as to describe some factors that have a substantial impact on the development of communication efficacy. Secondly, this part also discusses various components of communicative competence together with the features and skills that an advanced second language user will display. The second chapter provides most salient characterisitcs typically ascribed to given generational cohort. Special attention is paid to the description of Generation Z as this group has been chosen to take part in the longitudinal study presented in

the empirical part of this book. Additionally, the chapter discusses most typical communication channels that particular age group favours most.

The objective of the third chapter is to briefly discuss sociopragmatic variables that may significantly contribute to effective second language communication. The chapter starts with some suggestions concernining the future of communication preferences in the time when English has already become a lingua franca. It then moves on to intercultural communication and various barriers that may impact its effectiveness. It primarily focuses on the concept of pragmatic competence and lastly on cross-cultural differences (Polish and English) visible in some speech acts. It introduces a review of the literature, that is, presents some of the most significant findings pertaining to the speech acts of requesting, complimenting (and especially reacting to compliments) and apologies, and analyses them in terms of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences (primarily Polish-English areas of divergence).

The fourth chapter initiates the empirical part of this book. It starts off with specifying research objectives and then moves on to describing research tools used in this longitudinal study, that is, pre- and post-study questionnaires, WDCT scenarios, WRVP, a test in pragmatics and a pragmatic comprehension questionnaire. It describes the participants of this research project – a group of Generation Z advanced users of English choosing this language as their major and studying at the University of Silesia, Poland. The next section of this book provides the data computed for the needs of both content and statistical analysis. The findings come from five research tools implemented in this research project, that is, pre- and post-study questionnaire, WDCT scenarios, WRVPs, a questionnaire measuring one's pragmatic comprehension and a test in pragmatics. The last chapter is of conclusive character as it summarises this research project with the intention of providing answers to the most salient questions and objectives of this longitudinal study: it characterises Polish Gen Zers as second language learners, tracks the level of the development of pragmatic competence and provides some insights on the condition of their general linguistic skills.

Keywords: pragmatic competence, Generation Z, cross-cultural communication, speech act of requesting, complimenting and apologising

Iwona Dronia

Komunikacja z pokoleniem Z
Rozwój kompetencji pragmatycznej polskich zaawansowanych użytkowników języka angielskiego

Streszczenie

Niniejsza publikacja ma na celu przybliżenie aspektów związanych z komunikacją międzykulturową i międzypokoleniową. Szczególna uwaga poświęcona jest jednak generacji Z i to ona została uwzględniona w przeprowadzonym badaniu, opisanym w części praktycznej.

Celem rozdziału pierwszego jest przybliżenie wiadomości na temat procesu komunikacji i czynników mających bezpośredni wpływ na przesyłanie i odbiór wiadomości. Komunikacja omówiona jest tutaj również z punktu widzenia interakcji w języku obcym, często w zróżnicowanych kontekstach socjokulturowych i pojawiających się dodatkowych utrudnień istotnie ograniczających efektywny dialog. Kolejno omówione są kwestie dotyczące różnic poziomów w opanowaniu języka obcego oceniane w odniesieniu do Europejskiego Systemu Kształcenia Językowego, w szczególności dwa ostatnie poziomy (C1 i C2) i kompetencje, które użytkownik języka obcego powinien opanować, reprezentując ten właśnie stopień zaawansowania językowego.

Rozdział drugi przybliża charakterystykę różnych grup pokoleniowych, szczegółowo omawiając pokolenie *baby boomers*, generację X i pokolenie Y (tzw. millenialsów). Szczególna uwaga poświęcona jest jednak najmłodszemu z pokoleń, jeszcze studiującemu, ale również już obecnemu na rynku pracy – pokoleniu Z. Autorka omawia nie tylko atrybuty, zalety i wady poszczególnych grup wiekowych, lecz przede wszystkim skupia się na sposobie, w jaki dane pokolenie komunikuje się ze światem. Komunikacja omówiona jest tutaj zarówno pod kątem ulubionych i często wybieranych przez daną grupę kanałów komunikacyjnych, jak również pewnych ograniczeń z tym związanych; narastających, szczególnie w najmłodszych grupach problemów z komunikacją interpersonalną itp.

Rozdział trzeci skupia się na czynnikach socjokulturowych determinujących efektywną komunikację. Rozdział rozpoczyna się krótkim omówieniem obecnych opinii dotyczących przyszłości komunikacji w języku angielskim, pełniącego obecnie rolę *lingua franca*. Następnie omówione zostaje zagadnienie kompetencji komunikacyjnej i pragmatycznej, oraz etapów rozwoju i możliwości oceny tej ostatniej u osób posługujących się językiem angielskim jako językiem drugim. Podsumowaniem tej części jest krótkie zestawienie różnic pragmatycznych pomiędzy językiem polskim i angielskim, przedstawiające się w realizacji trzech aktów mowy – proszenia, komplementowania i przepraszania.

Część praktyczna niniejszej publikacji rozpoczyna się od rozdziału czwartego. Rozdział definiuje cele badawcze, a także charakteryzuje zastosowane narzędzia, jak również sposób organizacji badania, jego przebieg oraz sposób zbierania i analizowania danych. Głównym celem badania było zebranie informacji umożliwiających ocenę sposobu komunikowania się pokolenia Z w języku angielskim i czynników na to wpływających. Ocena efektywności komunikacyjnej

oparta jest tu przede wszystkim na stopniu rozwoju kompetencji pragmatycznej i językowej respondentów – 100 osób studiujących filologię angielską na Uniwersytecie Śląskim należących do pokolenia Z. Grupa ta wzięła udział w badaniu podłużnym (*longitudinal study*) trwającym od 2018 do 2021 roku i mającym na celu weryfikację stopnia opanowania kompetencji pragmatycznej studentów – zarówno kompetencji związanej z rozumieniem (*pragmatic comprehension*), jak również produkcją (*pragmatic production*). Materiał zgromadzony podczas badania pozwolił na ocenę rozwoju tej kompetencji i wyciągnięcie wniosków dotyczących omawianej grupy i ich charakterystykę jako użytkowników języka angielskiego.

W badaniu zastosowano pięć narzędzi badawczych – dwa kwestionariusze rozprowadzone wśród uczestników przed rozpoczęciem i po jego zamknięciu (*pre- i post-study questionnaire*), kwestionariusz mierzący poziom rozumienia pragmatycznego, trzy scenariusze scenek sytuacyjnych (WDCT), protokół retrospekcyjny (WRVP) i test z wprowadzenia do pragmatyki. Dodatkowo korpus uzyskany z WDCT i WRVP posłużył do oceny poziomu zaawansowania językowego badanej grupy, przy jednoczesnym wykorzystaniu go w analizie statystycznej z zastosowaniem oprogramowania LIWC 20, Receptiviti i aplikacji Grammarly.

Analiza odpowiedzi uzyskanych z kwestionariusza rozpoczynającego i kończącego badanie miała na celu ustalenie najczęściej wybieranych kanałów komunikacyjnych, problemów związanych z nauką języka angielskiego, a także opinii studentów na temat procesu uczenia się tego języka. Dodatkowo Autorka chciała również ocenić poziom rozwoju kompetencji pragmatycznej uczestników badania (stan wiedzy deklarowanej), ich podejście do poprawności językowej, a także sprawdzić, czy w okresie trzech lat studiów ich podejście i świadomość językowo-pragmatyczna się zmieniła.

Kolejnym istotnym narzędziem badawczym był WDCT (*discourse completion task*) wymagający od respondentów reakcji na trzy sytuacje, z którymi byli konfrontowani: poproszenia o pożyczenie długopisu, reakcji na komplement i przeproszenia za spóźnienie. Analiza uzyskanych odpowiedzi miała na celu oszacowanie faktycznego poziomu rozwinięcia kompetencji pragmatycznej (w szczególności pragmalingwistycznej) studentów deklarujących nie niższy niż C1 poziom biegłości językowej. Protokół retrospekcyjny pozwolił zaś nie tylko na zebranie korpusu umożliwiającego kolejną analizę oceny poziomu językowego badanych, lecz przede wszystkim procesów myślowych, strategii i problemów, na które napotykali respondenci, formułując opisane już wcześniej trzy akty mowy. Kwestionariusz rozumienia sytuacji pragmatycznych pozwolił na ocenę umiejętności socjopragmatycznych studentów, a test z wprowadzenia do pragmatyki stanowił swoiste podsumowanie całego badania i kolejną możliwość weryfikacji ich wiedzy z zakresu pragmatyki. Ostatni rozdział niniejszej publikacji to wnioski płynące z badań.

Słowa klucze: kompetencja pragmatyczna, pokolenie Z, komunikacja międzykulturowa, akty mowy – proszenie, reakcja na komplement i przepraszanie

This book intends to shed some light on the problem of second language communication from both cross-cultural and cross-generational angles and to diagnose communication patterns, opinions, and beliefs on the nature of L2 learning visible among the Generation Z group. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of pragmatic competence (pragmatic production and pragmatic comprehension). In order to assess the Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) development, it has been decided not only to evaluate the respondents' language level but also their problems in communication. Diagnosing sociopragmatic competence as well as pragmalinguistic strategies implemented while performing three speech acts, that is, requesting, reacting to a compliment, and apologising, allows one to indicate problematic areas and suggest some teaching implications, that in turn, will enable to introduce necessary changes and forms of work on the further development of English.