

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**THE FUNCTIONAL AND FORMAL ASPECTS OF THE  
COMMUNICATIVE ACT OF REQUEST IN INTERLANGUAGE:  
ENGLISH AND ESTONIAN IN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

Master's Thesis

NATALJA ZAGURA

Supervisors:

Lect. Raili Põldsaar

Prof. Krista Vogelberg

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## ABSTRACT

The present thesis proceeds from the view of language use for communication as practical social activity and studies formal realisation of requests in interlanguage in an institutional setting focusing on learners' success in achieving their goals through talk-in-interaction. The empirical aim of the project is to provide a holistic portrayal of requests by relating linguistic forms to the functions that they are designed to perform as well as speakers' purposes for applying them. Moreover, interlanguage is considered not as a deficient version of the target language but as a system in its own right.

In the introduction talk is presented as systematically organised and deeply ordered activity. Distinction is drawn between 'ordinary' and institutional talk and characteristic features of the latter are outlined with reference to perspectives of Jurgen Habermas (1984) and analytic approach of conversation analysis. The notion of interlanguage is also discussed and its applicability suggested.

The theoretical aim of the present project is to develop a descriptive model that would make it possible to provide comprehensive analysis of requests realised in interlanguage in an institutional setting. Therefore, the second chapter critically approaches the qualitative-descriptive method of conversation analysis, outlining its major principles and distinctive methodological perspectives. The third chapter provides a theoretical basis for the interpretive-analytical part of the study by discussing the notion of a speech act, presenting and supplementing Anna Trosborg's (1995) categorisation of strategies for realisation of the communicative act of request and discussing it within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Finally, methodological issues related to research on request realisation in interlanguage are critically examined.

In the empirical part a corpus of authentic naturally-occurring requests in English and Estonian collected for the present study is interpreted and analysed. It is shown that despite linguistic and pragmalinguistic difficulties that occur due to requesters' imperfect command of the target language, interlanguage talk can be best described through cooperation rather than misunderstanding. If native speaker norm and approach to interlanguage as a deficient version of the target language are abandoned, it can be observed in the conversations composing the corpus that cooperation and orderliness are present on several levels of interaction: the level of content, interpersonal orientation and organisation of talk-in-interaction.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CA – conversation analysis

FTA – face-threatening act

IL – interlanguage

TCU – turn-construction unit

TRP – transition-relevance place

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Talk has been an integral part of people's everyday life for ages. Nevertheless, the process of people talking together, a conversation, became a subject of scientific investigation relatively recently – in the early 1960s (ten Have 1999: 3). This topic was certainly not completely ignored before but the approach to it was mainly normative: the focus was on the way people should speak, not how they actually do it (ibid.). The predominant assumption was and, probably, to a certain extent still is that conversation is a “mundane, local event that is more random than ordered” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 22). In the field of linguistics, the focus was on language system in isolation and formal features of language exclusively; Noam Chomsky (1965), for instance, was arguing that ordinary talk could not be an object of study as it is too disordered being a distorted reflection of linguistic competence. Mainstream sociology also viewed everyday interpersonal interaction as deeply trivial and arbitrary treating it exclusively as a tool for interviewing and, thus, a means for investigating such larger-scale social phenomena as, for example, class, gender or deviancy (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 21-27).

With the emergence of recording devices it became possible to study everyday talk in detail. Studies initiated at the University of California by Harvey Sacks, who was later joined by other scholars (initially, E. Schegloff, G. Jefferson), revealed that there exists a certain order in conversation or, to be more precise, “a multiplicity of ‘orders’ ” (ten Have 1999: 3). In other words, types of utterances in conversations follow one another in a systematic and logical way and these systems of the organisation of utterances can be traced in a variety of conversations.

In the following excerpt, for example, A and B address A's problem with a room in a hostel – he shares it with a student who does not speak English and, therefore, the room-mates cannot communicate. After discussing some other issues B wants to know whether the problem with accommodation has been solved (line 1).

*Extract 1.1*<sup>1</sup> [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: switching rooms in a hostel)

- 1 B: and are other things ok  
 2 A: a:u::  
 3 B: student (.) student (.) village  
 4 A: yeah yeah it it [it's it's]  
 5 B: [as I remember]  
 6 A: yes ye:s they were able to change it

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<sup>1</sup> For transcription conventions see Appendix 1. Data originate from a personal corpus (see 4.1 and Appendix3) unless indicated otherwise.

As the issue that B is interested in is not stated explicitly and it has not been mentioned before in this conversation, A signals confusion in response (line 2). B understands that her question has been ambiguous and identifies the topic she was thinking about (line 3). This time A understands the question and gives a positive response (line 4). B, however, is not completely sure whether she remembers it correctly that it is A who had this problem. Therefore, B does not know whether A's answer (line 4) was positive because the problem has been solved or because there was no problem in the first place. This doubt is signalled in line 5. A, in response, confirms that the question is relevant and expands on the positive answer given before by saying that he has moved to another room.

To characterise this extract in more general terms, it can be seen that interlocutors' utterances alternate. In line 2 A reacts to B's question even though he has not understood it. Having not received an answer to her question, B concludes that it was not explicit enough because, otherwise, A would have answered it. To indicate what she wanted to know, B states the topic and, eventually, A can provide a response. Thus, utterances of participants follow one another, there is little overlapping talk and a question receives an answer. As a result, B obtains the information that she needed.

In *Extract 1.2* the same issue is discussed but this time A does not answer questions but describes to C how the problem has been solved and how he feels about it. After each A's utterance C signals not only her understanding but also her own attitude to the progress in the situation: she does so verbally (e.g., "that's nice to hear", "yeah") as well as by adopting A's humorous attitude to the situation (line 4):

*Extract 1.2* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: switching rooms in a hostel)

- 1 A: a:nd then yeah (.) she changed my room [to his room]  
 2 C: [ok (.) that's] nice to hear  
 3 A: (it's really) happy because uh [huhu \$ yeah \$] \$ yeah \$  
 4 C: [ok \$ yeah \$]  
 5 A: that (.) that's a (.) that's all ok  
 6 C: ok (.) it's nice to hear because (.) it's really (0.5) complicated situation

The utterances of A and C do overlap partly but it has to be noted that C starts to talk when a certain message in A's utterance is completed and C has understood it. So, again, utterances of A and C alternate and the next utterance is produced when the message of the previous one has been understood. As it can also be observed, in addition to information being conveyed, this time also feelings are expressed and mutual understanding achieved.

As the examples above illustrate, there is an identifiable order and logic in the organisation of interaction or, as Emanuel Schegloff has termed it, “talk-in-interaction” (ten Have 1999: 4). For instance, a participant produces his or her message having understood the previous message, which was conveyed by the interlocutor; questions are followed by answers, statements – by reactions to them. In each case the sequential organisation of utterances contributes to performance of certain action and achievement of a result (e.g., communication of information, expression of happiness for the interlocutor, achievement of mutual understanding etc.).

There can also be noticed a certain difference in the two extracts. In the first one, the main aim of interaction is to obtain/provide information. In fact, this excerpt is taken from an encounter between a student (A) and a student advisor (B) who wants to know whether student’s problem has been solved or she, as a student advisor still has to undertake some action to do so. In the second conversation, however, interactants are primarily oriented towards achievement of mutual understanding and rapport while the process of conveying information moves to the background. It seems possible to claim, then, that the first extract represents institutional talk while the second one – ordinary, everyday or ‘mundane’ talk, as it is referred to in related studies.

Distinction is often drawn between mundane and institutional talk, although it is still considered problematic to define them and there is a considerable amount of disagreement on this issue. In fact, even the notion of ‘institution’ is a phenomenon that social scientists explain and describe in a variety of ways, mainly broadly identifying it as a relatively permanent social structure governing behaviour of more than one individual. In the present paper, however, the modifier ‘institutional’ is distinguished from the conventional sociological concept of ‘social institution’, which traditionally embraces such phenomena as, for example, the school, the church, the nation-state as well as the family. Here, ‘institution’ is more narrowly associated with organisations and institutionality of context is determined on the basis of a set of characteristics that are discussed below.

‘Institutional talk’ is usually identified as something different from what can be experienced in non-institutional or ‘conversational’ interaction. Thus, Jurgen Habermas (1984, quoted in Thornborrow 2002: 2) defined institutional talk as an instance of ‘strategic discourse’, which should be distinguished from another form of talk – ‘communicative discourse’. In Habermas’ view, strategic discourse involves power differential and is goal-oriented while communicative discourse is, in its ideal form, a site of interlocutors’ symmetrical cooperation in achieving mutual understanding.

It must be noted that Habermas' definition is somewhat misleading. First, it does not reflect the situation as it is in reality – in the actual life communication is in the majority of cases power laden (Harris 1995: 121). Furthermore, this characterisation implies a somewhat negative undertone and presents institutional talk as a less desirable form of interaction than the idealised type of communication. Nevertheless, the distinction in terms of goal-orientedness and achievement of mutual understanding seems to be justified and it has been later reflected in characterisation of institutional interaction in a number of other approaches to the study of language in use.

Extensive research on talk in institutional settings has been conducted in the field of conversation analysis (CA), an analytic approach focusing on sequential organisation of talk-in-interaction as a form of social action. Within the tradition of CA, in a seminal paper dealing with institutional interaction (Drew and Heritage 1992: 19) it is stated that “ordinary conversation is the predominant medium of interaction in the social world” whereas institutional interaction can be described in terms of “systematic variation and restriction of activities and their design relative to ordinary conversation”. That is, institutional interaction is seen as a systematically restricted form of mundane talk.

On the basis on extensive empirical study of naturally-occurring talk-in-interaction, Drew and Heritage (1992: 21-25) conclude that there are three features that are typical of institutional talk. First, speakers orient to particular institutionally-relevant tasks or goals such as, for example, getting an emergency service provided or obtaining information about applicants at a job interview. Second, such interaction often involves “special and particular constraints” on “allowable contributions to the business at hand” (ibid.: 22) in terms of both form and content. That is, certain contributions to interaction are preferred while others are dispreferred or even prohibited (e.g., a patient answering doctor's questions vs. a witness examining a judge in a courtroom, correspondingly). Finally, there are context-specific inferential frameworks and procedures typical of particular institutions. In other words, special interpretive frames account both for standard and unconventional behaviour in a certain institutional context (e.g., questions asked by doctors, teachers and magistrates are received and interpreted differently in corresponding settings).

However, CA criticises the widespread perception of a context as a ‘container’ that people enter in their interaction and that determines their behaviour. This argument is in line with modern works in sociology like, for example, those by Anthony Giddens (e.g. 1984; Giddens et al. 2006) and his theory of structuration suggesting that human agency



and social structure are in a reflexive relationship with each other. CA, similarly, views participants in social interaction as knowledgeable social agents who actively display their orientation to the relevance of a certain context. Thus, the fact that talk-in-interaction takes place in the setting of a certain institution does not yet guarantee that it is institutional talk. The determining factor is recognition of this context by the participants and their active orientation to the specific features of institutional talk.

The following extract, for example, is taken from a conversation between a student and a student advisor at the International Student Office at a university, which means that it is likely to be institutional talk.

*Extract 1.3* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: switching rooms in a hostel)

- 1 B: and are other things ok
- 2 A: a:u:::
- 3 B: student (.) student (.) village
- 4 A: yeah yeah it it [it's it's]
- 5 B: [as I remember]
- 6 A: yes ye:s they were able to change it
- 7 B: yes?
- 8 A: I (.) the:: the- there was a: woman (.) at the the: the: lecture what's her name
- 9 (0.5) from the student village,
- 10 B: uh huh uh huh
- 11 A: and I asked her and then she said oh I just this afternoon heard that the
- 12 Pakistani guy will come one month late (.) he's got visas problems
- 13 B: uh huh
- 14 A: a:nd then yeah (.) she changed my room [to his room]
- 15 B: [ok (.) that's] nice to hear
- 16 A: (it's really) happy because uh [huhu \$ yeah \$] \$ yeah \$
- 17 B: [ok \$ yeah \$]
- 18 A: that (.) that's a (.) that's all ok
- 19 B: ok (.) it's nice to hear because (.) it's really (0.5) complicated situation

Indeed, conversation starts with the exchange (lines 1-6) that has already been presented and discussed above (*Extract 1.1*). This excerpt can be considered institutional by nature as interactants orient to obtaining/providing information with the aim that the advisor would know whether she has to deal with the problem or not. In terms of the character of participants' contributions, the conversation is institutional as well because B asks for and A provides the kind of information and the amount of it that is relevant for the institutional tasks that B has to perform. Moreover, A demonstrates interpretation of B's question "and are other things ok" in an institutionally-relevant way: he understood that it refers to some issue related to his studies, not his personal life and, therefore, did not provide any general

answer. As initially he did not manage to infer which aspect of his experience as a student B refers to, A signalled need for clarification.

The flow of the conversation changes, however, in line 7 when B indicates interest in details of the matter. A, in response, provides an account of events (lines 8, 9, 11, 12, 14) and B signals understanding (lines 10, 13). In line 15 B expresses her personal attitude to the situation (“that’s nice to hear”) and A, as a result, also refers to his satisfaction with the outcome (line 16). From line 15 on, the conversation, thus, ceases to be institutional as it is primarily oriented towards mutual rapport rather than mere performance of actions related to participants’ institutional roles.

As it can be seen, the two extracts (1.2 and 2.2<sup>2</sup>) that were presented above to illustrate institutional and mundane talk, in fact, originate from the same conversation, which took place in an institutional setting. The participants, nevertheless, in the course of interaction changed their orientation to the context and through their contributions to the conversation, first, talked the institutional context into being and, subsequently, cooperatively talked it out of being (and later in the conversation, again, assumed institutional roles). This example illustrates that despite the fact that institutional setting provides certain framework for communication, interactants, nevertheless, have liberty to determine its relevance and locally produce the context of interaction as well as their roles in it. It proves that talk is a potent tool that modifies social reality.

In modern society people spend a considerable amount of time in contexts that can be broadly defined as institutional or organisational, such as educational establishments, service contexts (e.g., shops, entertainment establishments, medical settings) or workplaces. In all these settings talk is a central activity: institutional tasks are carried out through the management of talk-in-interaction (Arminen 2005: xii) or, as Holmes and Stubbe (2003: 178) have put it, “[t]alk is a very important way of ‘doing work’”. As social spaces like the ones mentioned above form part of people’s everyday routine, it can be seen that the importance of the ability to adequately interpret and skilfully manage talk cannot be overestimated.

It seems that orderliness of interaction as well as the ability to express one’s orientation to a certain context in a linguistic form are to a great degree based on people’s tacit knowledge acquired together with the language system itself. Therefore, the system

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<sup>2</sup> The letter ‘C’ was used to refer to ‘B’ in the second extract in order to avoid possible preconceptions that would result from establishing a link with the first excerpt.

that can be identified in conversations is a result of participants' unconscious automatic choices.

It is interesting, therefore, whether the system is identical in different languages and whether a person who interacts in a non-native language is as successful in orienting within orderliness of talk-in-interaction and maintaining it, as he or she is when communicating in a native language. This question is especially relevant nowadays when members of divergent societies are increasingly involved in interactional situations, both publicly and privately, where participants do not share linguistic resources. As the importance of verbal interaction in creation of a communicative situation and participants' roles seems to be significant and the mere fact of entering a certain context does not guarantee interaction that would be appropriate to that context, a question emerges how potential difficulties resulting from non-native command of a language are overcome and whether the system of interaction corresponding to participants' aims and contributing to their achievement is eventually created.

The language that non-native speakers use for communication can be called an interlanguage (IL). As phrased by Ellis (1985: 42), IL refers to "the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the L2 system he [sic!] is trying to learn". In other words, it is learner's language system that is structurally neither that of his or her mother tongue nor that of the second language but, nevertheless, contains elements of them both. The term 'interlanguage' was first introduced by Selinker (1972), although similar phenomena were mentioned in works of Nemser (1971) and Corder (1971) who referred to them as "approximative systems" and "idiosyncratic dialects"/ "transitional competence" correspondingly.

The notion of IL is based on the assumption that there is a certain route in the development of a learner's language and this route is only marginally influenced by such factors as learner's first language, age, cultural background, context of language learning and so on. Therefore, it is suggested that this developmental route is uniform. That is, in the process of language learning people progress along the same interlanguage continuum composed by a series of interlocking systems, which at different stages function as a system of a person's IL. It implies that learner's IL is constantly changing, moving closer to the target language. Nevertheless, at every point it is systematic and based on a certain set of rules.

The claim that IL continuum is a universal and systematic developmental route makes it possible to assume that study of IL interaction as it is realised by different learners

would make it possible to identify IL system that guides communication in a non-native language at different developmental stages. Moreover, such study would also enable an analyst to gain better understanding of the logic behind peculiarities of IL interaction as well as evaluate learners' success in achieving their communicative goals.

Due to the constantly increasing frequency of use of non-native language in institutional contexts and the importance of talk in achieving institutionally relevant goals, it has been decided to examine interlanguage communication in an institutional context. One of the most common goals in such settings is obtaining some service. Therefore, the present paper studies formal realisation of requests in IL in authentic face-to-face conversations paying attention to learners' success in achieving their goals through talk-in-interaction. The empirical aim is to provide a holistic portrayal of requests by relating linguistic forms to the functions that they are designed to perform as well as learners' purposes for selecting them. Most importantly, interlanguage is considered not as a deficient version of the target language but as a system in its own right.

The present study belongs to the linguistic tradition of pragmatics as language is considered in relation to its users and the functions performed by it in real-life interaction. Pragmatics is viewed in the paper not in a narrow sense, as a component of linguistics, but in broader terms – as a perspective on language (e.g., Verschueren 1995). Thus, different levels of language and communication are considered – from syntax to conversational organisation – from a pragmatic perspective with the aim of identifying the functions and purposes for which speakers use them. As the focus is on non-native speaker performance, the paper draws on interlanguage pragmatics, the study of how non-native speakers produce and understand linguistic action (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3).

In order to provide comprehensive analysis of functional as well as formal aspects of requests realised in interlanguage, a special descriptive model incorporating several linguistic theories and perspectives has been developed, which was also a theoretical aim of the project. Empirical data is primarily considered within the qualitative-descriptive framework of conversation analysis. The major principles and distinctive methodological perspectives of conversation analysis as well as its strengths and weaknesses are discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3, in turn, provides a basis for interpretive-analytical part of the study by presenting the notion of a speech act, outlining categorisation of strategies for realisation of the communicative act of request (Trosborg 1995) and considering these strategies within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The

modified model of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts developed by Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) is discussed as a tool for assessing effectiveness of requests. In Chapter 4 a corpus of authentic requests collected for the present study is described and analysed from the perspective of the theories presented and discussed before. Finally, conclusions concerning distinctive formal and functional characteristics of requests expressed in interlanguage in an institutional context are drawn.

## 2 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Origins and development

Conversation analysis (CA) as an analytic approach was developed in the early 1960s at the University of California when Harvey Sacks initiated research into the structural organisation of social interaction. This innovative research programme sought to explore the levels of social order traceable in the everyday practice of talking. Sacks embarked on exploring audio-recorded naturally occurring talk in order to examine the hypothesis that ordinary conversation is systematically organised and deeply ordered. This was a radical idea at that period as the dominant linguistic view was the Chomskyan one that ordinary talk, which is just a primitive realisation of linguistic competence (i.e., tacit knowledge of syntactic structures), is too disordered (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 22).

In fact, the primary interest of Sacks in interaction was sociological rather than linguistic one. Although talk is the verbal instantiation of language, CA is only marginally interested in language as such. Language use is not seen in structural or semantic terms but as a practical social activity, a sequence of actions negotiated in the course of talk such as, for instance, proposals, requests and accusations. Thus, the object of study of CA is the “interactional organisation of social activities” (ibid.: 14). In this sense, the approach developed by Sacks is comparable with the well-known speech act theory by John Austin (1962), who claimed that all utterances perform actions rather than just describe the world. This perspective was applied by John Searle (1965) in an attempt to define rules and conditions (the “felicity conditions”) for the recognition of the act of promising as such. Searle, however, approached this task by decontextualising this speech act (i.e., outlining just a typical speech situation) and deriving the rules intuitively rather than relying on any empirical data. Sacks, on the contrary, emphasised the necessity of viewing utterances as actions produced within specific interactional and sequential context. Most importantly, he insisted on the analysis of actual utterances in actual contexts. This concern with situated analysis of naturally occurring data became one of the key methodological features of CA.

It should be noted that Sacks, as a sociologist, developed CA in an attempt to reform sociology and eliminate numerous methodological pitfalls he observed in it. For example, he criticised such standard sociological methods as in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires, which were at that time considered to be the most effective tools for studying the unobservable phenomena like, for example, attitudes or affiliation to certain classes, which were believed to determine people’s actions and thus were of primary

interest to scholars (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 25). Sacks (1992: 28) claimed that statistical analysis of the “unobservables” should not be prioritised because, in fact, “social activities are observable; you can see them all around you, and you can write them down” and it enables more naturalistic study. In his papers Sacks, quite radically, attempted to prove that it is possible to approach facts of everyday social life in a purely observational mode, thus moving closer to the way natural sciences like biology produce and report their findings. For this reason, CA was developed as a sociological “naturalistic observational discipline that could deal with the details of social action rigorously, empirically and formally” (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 289-290).

Sacks’ innovative view of sociology was mainly based on two contemporary perspectives: Erving Goffman’s (1959; 1983) model of “interaction order” of face-to-face communication and the field of ethnomethodology developed by Harold Garfinkel (1967) to study the principles on which people base their everyday social actions. At the centre of Goffman’s work developed in the 1950s was the ritual nature of face-to-face interaction. Goffman believed that people “perform” their social selves, managing their activities so as to influence orientation of others towards them (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 27). Therefore, everyday interpersonal interaction was considered to be the site of social order and hence worth sociological investigation. Goffman was primarily interested in “interaction order” (Goffman 1983) – the ritual procedures (e.g., politeness, “ceremonial” aspects of interaction, turn-taking) that determine the orderly conduct of everyday life. In terms of methodology, he mainly used multifarious data (e.g., segments of his own fieldwork, snippets of overheard conversations, extracts from novels or TV shows etc.) illustratively to forward his theoretical points. Sacks gained from Goffman’s approach to studying the orderliness of everyday interaction mainly through adopting *different* views in terms of both theory and methodology (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 29). Thus, he proceeded from the sequential order of conversation in itself (rather than the principles informing it) and emphasised that theory should be derived from the data rather than merely supported by it.

The major force that inspired the emergence of CA was, however, ethnomethodology – the sociological approach and “research policy” (ten Have 1999: 6) that focused on the study of commonsense reasoning underlying people’s everyday activities. Ethnomethodology was developed by Harold Garfinkel (1967) as an alternative to the mainstream sociological paradigm of that time – functionalism, which claimed that people internalise the values and norms of a society through socialisation and thus it was

interested in examining how norms are internalised so that people either reproduce or deviate from them (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 30-31). Garfinkel, on the contrary, criticised the view that social structures determine social reality for individuals and claimed that members of a society are not “cultural dopes” – they are able to rationally account for their own actions and those of others. He suggested that social order is created in and through the conduct of society’s members and, therefore, what should be studied are “ethno-methods” – the procedures and strategies that people themselves use when they are making sense of their own everyday world and their actions and interactions within it. Thus, Garfinkel moved away from the macro level, eliminated *a priori* theorising about norms and used investigation instead, taking a local approach focusing on the ordinary and mundane.

CA adopted ethnomethodological interest in what people actually say and do. The only difference is that while ethnomethodology studies the principles guiding people’s social actions in general, CA concentrates more narrowly on the principles used in interaction by means of language. Therefore, it involves micro-analysis of naturally occurring conversations aiming at uncovering the implicit models and ideas that interactants use for producing, recognising and interpreting their own communicative actions as well as those of others (Pomerantz 1988: 361).

Such departure from macro to micro level can be understood as rejection of an ‘etic’ or external analyst’s perspective in favour of an ‘emic’, participant’s perspective. This distinction originates in linguistics; drawing on difference between phonetics and phonemics Pike (1967: 37) introduced it in social sciences suggesting that “[t]he etic viewpoint studies behaviour as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system.” Thus, it became an aim of both ethnomethodology and CA to provide an “internal” view on human conduct and reveal the principles it relies on.

The methodological problem that ethnomethodology faced while exploring people’s commonsense knowledge was the issue of gaining access to their automatised, “seen-but-unnoticed” accounting practices (Seedhouse 2004: 5). For this purpose, Garfinkel (1967) devised “breaching experiments” where taken-for-granted everyday routines (e.g., the conventional answer like “Fine.” to the question “How are you?”) were intentionally disrupted so that it would be possible to see how people deal with unexpected situations and thus shed more light on conventional structures. These experiments did provide valuable theoretical insights; however, they were extremely difficult to accomplish



as subjects constantly made adjustments in their interpretation of the situation and managed to account for the “strange” behaviour of interlocutors in a “rational” way within the framework of “taken-for-granted” principles (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 32). Moreover, the information gained from breaching experiments was essentially limited as it concerned just these artificially constructed situations and the strategies used to repair the “breakdowns” in interaction. Thus, little could be learnt about the actual commonsense methods used in ordinary interaction. Neither did other, more conventional methods like participant observation and interviewing prove reliable as in that case analysis was based on subjects’ and researchers’ own accounts rather than situated actions.

In CA it was decided to focus on audio-recorded conversations and, therefore, the abovementioned methodological pitfalls were avoided. Recordings provided authentic contextualised conversations where participants’ achievement and maintenance of understanding could be observed in the original state. Moreover, such data could be stored and studied repeatedly, which reduced the subjectivity resulting from coding and interpretive procedures.

It became an established practice, however, that tape-recorded talk is transcribed and a special system for it was devised by Gail Jefferson. Transcripts certainly reflect the primary data in an incomplete way as numerous characteristics of verbal interaction inevitably get lost in the process of its “translation” into a version of standardised language (ten Have 1999: 76). Nevertheless, transcripts are indispensable for the analyst as well as readers to conduct intensive analysis of recorded interaction. Moreover, data transcription can be considered a distinctive step in the process of analysis itself (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 73). It is stressed, nevertheless, that for CA transcripts are not ‘the data’ but rather a convenient way of presenting the primary data – tape recordings of naturally occurring interaction – in written form (ten Have 1999: 77). The system of analysing talk on the basis of both verbal and written form is certainly a strength of CA that increases depth of resulting insights and reliability of findings. Moreover, the availability of complete data in different versions makes the process of review and re-examination possible for other researchers and readers as well.

## **2.2 Definition and aims**

Conversation analysis can be defined as a systematic analysis of talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction – “talk-in-interaction” (Drew and Heritage 1992: 4). The term ‘talk-in-interaction’ is generally preferred to ‘conversation’ in the context of CA as

researchers study not only everyday conversations but also other forms of verbal interaction such as institutional communication, for example. As it was pointed out above, naturally occurring interaction is normally tape-recorded and transcribed. Therefore, CA is “the study of *recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction*” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 14; original emphasis).

According to Psathas (1995: 2, 45), CA studies the organisation and order of social action in interaction. The aim of a researcher is to develop an emic perspective: to describe the systematic organisation of production and interpretation of talk-in-interaction as oriented to by the participants themselves. The principal interest is in uncovering the organisation of talk-in-interaction in its own right, as “machinery” (Sacks 1992, vol. 2: 169, quoted in Seedhouse 2004: 13) that makes it possible for interactants to achieve this organisation and order. Thus, the main aim of CA is to characterise the emic logic underlying the organisation of interaction independently of individual speakers. In this endeavour it departs from micro level and attempts to shed light on interactional organisation on a larger scale. Nevertheless, it also attempts to discern how interactants analyse and interpret each other’s actions and achieve intersubjectivity or, in other words, common understanding of the course of interaction. Moreover, CA seeks to discover how participants understand and respond to one another while taking turns at talk and how, as a result, “sequences of actions are generated” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 14).

### **2.3 Principles and concepts**

The principles of CA originate from ethnomethodology but they have been adapted for human interaction conducted solely by means of language. Paul Seedhouse (2004: 13-16) outlines four major principles that may be applied to human actions manifested through talk. First, ordinary conversation is a deeply ordered, structurally organised phenomenon or, to use the wording of Sacks (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 17), there is “order at all points” in interaction. Second, contributions to interaction are context-shaped and context-renewing. That is, new utterances are understood within the context of the sequential environment in which they are produced while they, in turn, also become part of the sequential environment for following utterances. The third principle stems from the previous two suggesting that every detail of interaction should be approached as relevant and orderly. Finally, analysis in CA is bottom-up and data driven. That is, it should not be constrained by prior analytical assumptions and also the ‘fixed givens’ like social status, race, gender, power or any other factor should be involved in the analysis only if it can be

observed that participants in interaction are orienting to them. In brief, every element of interaction should be considered as a part of general orderly structure and analysis should be based on close consideration of the interaction itself.

Different scholars also present their versions of fundamental CA questions. Thus, Hutchby and Wooffitt (2004: 99) suggest two core analytic questions: “What interactional business is being mediated or accomplished through the use of a sequential pattern?” and “How do participants demonstrate their active orientation to this business?”. Seedhouse (2005: 251), however, relies on language as such more explicitly stating that CA is interested in “how social acts are packaged and delivered in linguistic terms” and he formulated the central question as “Why this, in this way, right now?”. Thus, while Hutchby and Wooffitt pay special attention to the overall orientation of participants to certain action as displayed in interaction, Seedhouse explicitly refers to linguistic forms. Both the sets of questions, nevertheless, emphasise the importance of focus on the accomplishment of social acts through a sequence of contributions made by participants in interaction.

As it has already been emphasised, CA views talk as structurally organised and sequential order of talk is its main concern. A series of studies by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson identified four analytically distinguished but, nevertheless, interrelated types on interactional organisation: sequence organisation, preference organisation, turn-taking organisation and organisation of conversational repair. Although these four “units of analysis” cannot be structurally defined in strict linguistic terms due to their origin in emic perspective, they form part of the tacit context-free “machinery” that interactants use both as an action template for the production of their social actions as well as a “point of reference” for the interpretation of the actions of others (Seedhouse 2004: 17). Therefore, these types of organisation can also be successfully employed by analysts in the study of interaction.

### **2.3.1 Adjacency pairs**

One of the core ideas in CA is that utterances in interactional talk are sequentially ordered, that is, they are linked together into definite sequences where “one thing can lead to another” (ten Have 1999: 113). The most prevalent manifestation of the concept of linked actions in a sequence is the adjacency pair. Adjacency pairs are paired utterances which are ordered, that is, first pair parts require production of particular second pair parts like, for instance, questions and answers or invitations and acceptances/declinations. Thus, when

the first pair part is produced, the second part becomes conditionally relevant. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the second part has to be produced immediately in the next turn because talk is characterised as a sequence, not a series of turns. Thus, other turns may be inserted, for example, in the sequence of a request (R1) and an answer/refusal (A1) without any disruption being caused:

*Example 2.1* [ing\_004\_v]

(Topic: getting a certificate signed)

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1 A: → I need a (.) signature for my. (1.8) a certificate of arrival. | <b>R 1</b> |
| 2 (0.5)   |            |
| 3 B: you are <u>Erasmus</u> student,                                  | Ins 1 (Q2) |
| 4 A: yeah.  | Ins 2 (A2) |
| 5 (1.2)   |            |
| 6 B: → unfortunately. our Erasmus coordinator (0.5) is out of office. | <b>A 1</b> |

As it can be observed, there is the second adjacency pair of a question (Q2) and an answer (A2) inserted within the first one, which provides A with information necessary for responding to a request (R1). Interaction, nevertheless, is not disrupted in any way.

As interaction is always a sequence of actions, adjacency pairs perform an important role in achieving intersubjectivity, that is, accomplishing and displaying mutual understanding in talk. As Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 296, quoted in Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 41) put it:

[...] by an adjacently positioned second [utterance], a speaker can show that he understood what a prior aimed at, and that he is willing to go along with that. Also, by virtue of the occurrence of an adjacency produced second, the doer of the first can see that what he intended was indeed understood, and that it was or was not accepted.

Adjacency pairs, then, function not solely as a template for action but also for interpretation. Hence, it is also an invaluable tool for an analyst in studying talk-in-interaction from an emic perspective. This practice of relying on the next turn as a proof criterion for analysis of the previous turn was termed by Sacks et al. (1974: 729) as next-turn proof procedure and is now an integral component of analysis in CA.

It should also be noted that due to the principle of conditional relevance the non-appearance of the second pair part after the first part having been uttered is in itself a “noticeable absence” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 42) and conveys a certain message to the speaker of the first part. For all the abovementioned reasons, adjacency pairs are considered an important framework for the assessment of interlocutors’ actions and attitudes by producers of first pair parts. This fact illustrates that talk-in-interaction does not involve exclusively a practice of taking turns but also performance of actions.

### **2.3.2 Preference organisation**

The notion of preference is related to the organisation of the adjacency pair. Certain first pair parts may entail alternative actions as relevant in second position; requests, for example, can be granted or declined, assessments may be agreed or disagreed with. Research has indicated that these alternatives are not equivalent in the sense that refusals and disagreements, for example, are systematically produced differently from their positive counterparts (Pomerantz 1984). This difference in design is accounted for in terms of preference organisation.

Agreement is generally labelled preferred action and disagreement – dispreferred action. Preferred actions are normally delivered straightforwardly and without delay while dispreferred actions are accompanied by hesitation, delay and mitigation in the form of downgraders, explanations or positive comments (Seedhouse 2004: 23-24, Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 44-45). Nevertheless, it has to be noted here that the concept of preference in CA is not related to psychological motives of individuals or any moral values but, rather, to structural features of turns which signal the “default” responses to particular activities. The preferred response is the one that meets the established norms and leads to reciprocity of interlocutors’ perspectives while the dispreferred response does the opposite; both the structures, therefore, influence the level of social solidarity achieved as a result.

### **2.3.3 Turn-taking**

The view of turn-taking as an organised activity is another core idea of CA. The model of turn-taking was suggested by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) and, according to it, turns in conversation are resources systematically distributed among speakers. The three basic characteristics of a conversation are that (1) turn-taking occurs; (2) normally one speaker talks at a time and (3) there is as little gap or overlap between turns as possible.

Turns at talk are composed of turn-construction units (TCUs), which linguistically can be expressed as sentences, clauses, phrases or single words, although they can also be performed non-verbally (ten Have 1999: 112). Nevertheless, as derived by means of an emic approach, a TCU cannot be defined in linguistic terms and is, rather, conceived of as a “single social action performed in a turn or sequence” (Seedhouse 2004: 30). A projectable end of a TCU is a transition-relevance place (TRP).

At a TRP change of a speaker may occur and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have also developed a set of rules to describe how turns are allocated in such cases (see Appendix 2). This set of rules was tested and assessed in several later papers, which

proved their robustness but it was emphasised by several scholars (e.g., Schegloff (1992), Button (1990), Searle (1986)) that the word ‘rules’ is misleading: these rules do not impose any constraints on participants but, rather, are oriented to in accomplishing orderly turn-taking, they are descriptions of the practices that are displayed in actual interaction. Thus, in CA “[t]he rule does not *precede* the action. Rather, the rule is discoverable *in* the action” (Button 1990: 79, quoted in Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 51, original emphasis). Hence, the aim of CA is description and analysis of situated practices of the application of rules in actual contexts of interaction, not prescription of them.

The rules of turn-taking were also considered in relation to overlapping and apparently interruptive talk (e.g., Jefferson 1986). It was revealed that overlap occurred in close proximity of possible TRPs. Hence, such apparent violations, in fact, display how closely participants in interaction orient to the rules and these “violations” can be considered an outcome of such orientation.

### **2.3.4 Repair**

The term ‘repair’ is used in CA in generic sense to embrace treatment of a wide range of “trouble” in interactive use of language, from seeming errors in turn-taking to slips of the tongue, mishearing or misunderstanding. Trouble is thus anything that participants *consider* to interfere with smooth communication, although, in reality, it does not necessarily have to do so. Overall, repair operations are motivated either by orientation to factual and/or formal correctness or by interactional and interpersonal considerations (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 60). An important function of repair system is, therefore, maintenance of mutual orientation to common topics, fields of orientation and perception of context in talk-in-interaction.

Having analysed numerous instances of repair in naturally occurring conversations Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) identified four varieties of repair distinguished on the basis of the following factors: who initiated the repair by pointing to something as a source of trouble, who produced the trouble source and who carried out the repair. Thus, four types of repair are possible in conversations: self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair and other-initiated other-repair (i.e. correction) (for details and examples see e.g. Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 61-69). Empirical research has also proved that from the perspective of ‘preference’ as it is understood in CA (see 2.3.2), self-repair is preferred over other-repair. That is, the unmarked situation is when the speaker of the trouble source carries out the repair him- or herself. Other-repair, however,

may undermine harmony or accord in an exchange and, therefore, it is normally mitigated by a variety of devices like, for example, pauses, uncertainty markers, questioning intonation or humour. Thus, the system of repair contributes to achievement of intersubjectivity or, in other words, to smooth progress of the social process of interaction through talk on both content-related and interpersonal level.

## **2.4 Methodological perspectives**

As it could be seen from the discussion above, CA, first and foremost, is based on a “distinct sociological vision, a way of seeing the world and of approaching data” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 8). Indeed, CA is to a great extent different from many social scientific perspectives in terms of its methodology, the way of approaching and understanding the social world and in its social scientific applications. To understand better the strengths and weaknesses of CA it seems necessary, therefore, to take a closer look at the aspects that make it a distinct approach when compared with established social-scientific practice.

As it has already been mentioned before, in CA the focus is on the study of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. That is, the data should be “non-experimental”, not produced for the purpose of study, which means that interaction would have occurred, and it would have done so in exactly the same way, regardless of the researcher deciding to observe it (ten Have 1999: 48; Psathas 1995: 45). Nevertheless, it should be admitted that in certain cases this requirement cannot be met and although interaction is non-experimental, participants are, nevertheless, aware of themselves being recorded. This drawback can only be alleviated by making recording activities as unobtrusive as possible and hoping that the subjects will soon forget about the dictaphone/ tape recorder, which normally happens, indeed.

The first step in analysing data in CA is so-called ‘unmotivated looking’ which is, again, problematic as already the fact that a researcher approaches the data in order to study it makes looking motivated (Psathas 1995: 24-25). Nevertheless, what most CA practitioners mean by this requirement is that it is necessary to adopt bottom-up approach and be open to discovering new phenomena rather than study the data with the aim of confirming hypotheses.

Once an intriguing phenomenon has been discovered, other instances of it are identified in the corpus. All these single instances are then described and analysed in order to explicate the emic logic that generated the phenomenon, that is, to establish regularities in the occurrences of it and illustrate that these patterns are consistently produced and

oriented to by the participants. Deviant cases are considered to be especially illuminating as, like breaching experiments in Garfinkel's research (see 2.1), they demonstrate what constitutes "the normal". Finally, more generalised account is developed and the phenomenon in question is related to the broader sequential context of interaction.

It should be noted, however, that what is considered a 'phenomenon' in CA is primarily an example of social action, not a linguistic phenomenon. Nevertheless, it may have a fixed linguistic form like, for example, German question words *warum* and *wieso* (Egbert and Vöge 2006) or a syntactical construction such as the pattern "you say x" (Steensig and Larsen 2006). Moreover, social actions may also be identified by their sequential placement, for example, reactions to particular questions or statements.

The issue of sampling is also approached in a distinct way in CA. In many types of social research it is considered obligatory to draw on a representative sample of cases from a much larger set of possible cases. Such "maximum variation strategy" may be used in CA if an analyst is interested in a particular 'local practice' as such like, for example, story-telling (ten Have 1999: 51). Nevertheless, in so-called 'applied CA', which considers 'local practices' as embedded in 'larger structures' like, for example, obligations or institutional rules, a set of instances is often deliberately restricted as an analyst is interested in "specific kinds of category- or context-bound activities" (ibid.: 51, 189). Thus, in CA sampling procedures vary depending on the aim of a certain study.

The issue of context is also an important one in CA. As Seedhouse (2005: 261) has put it, CA has "a dynamic, complex and highly empirical perspective on context." That is, it seeks to determine which elements of context are relevant to the participants themselves at different points in interaction. Such an approach certainly originates in the aim of establishing an emic perspective. Moreover, CA proceeds from the principle that contributions to interaction are context-shaped and context-renewing (see 2.3 above) and, consequently, "participants talk a context into being" (Seedhouse 2004: 42), that is, their utterances form the sequential context for interaction.

Proceeding from this dynamic perspective on context, CA views the underlying 'machinery' that generates interaction as both context-free and context-sensitive. That is, structural organisations (e.g., turn-taking or preference system) can be considered context-free resources while their application and realisation in a particular conversation by particular interactants is context-sensitive. The aim of CA is, hence, "to explicate the structural organisation of talk-in-interaction at this interface between context-free resources and their context-sensitive applications" (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 35-36). As



a result of studying local application of context-free resources, the underlying ‘machinery’ of interaction can be revealed.

The treatment of context is, nevertheless, also one of the most controversial issues within CA. Views of researchers differ greatly in relation to the extent to which additional data can be used as background information to supplement recordings. Several scholars (e.g., Heritage 1997, ten Have 1999) go even so far as to distinguish between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ CA where the former examines “the institution *of* interaction” ignoring even the general setting where recordings were made while the latter studies “the management of social institutions *in* interaction” (Heritage 1997: 162, emphasis original) considering a certain amount of context-related information relevant.

Furthermore, non-practitioners often see the use of such ‘restricted’ database as “a severe limitation of the validity of CA findings” (ten Have 1999: 54). It is often criticised, for example, that data concerning participants is missing: standard macro-sociological variables (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic status), institutional position or any other relevant personal details. Other critics point out that reluctance to take into account the institutional context of talk-in-interaction undermines the depth on analysis. A further weakness is considered to be that analysts neglect such potential sources like interviews with participants, their comments on recordings or interpretations suggested by panels of specialists.

Proponents of CA argue, at the same time, that it is not methodologically beneficial to rely on any ‘fixed’ givens like social or institutional identities, functions or relationships before their relevance is identified in the data itself as being oriented to by the participants. Indeed, there are an infinite number of potentially relevant factors involved in every interaction and an analyst cannot claim that any particular aspect had a determining role. Moreover, CA practitioners believe that subsequent interviews with participants cannot be relied on either because context-free resources are applied locally, in a particular context and it is impossible to be sure that the interpretations suggested by interactants afterwards, in a different setting would be identical to the original ones. It should be also kept in mind that CA does not seek to identify any hidden meanings and intentions but the ones that are produced and observed in actual interaction. Therefore, it is considered more reliable to derive the emic logic from the interaction itself and the orientations and interpretations of participants as signalled in the course of actual interaction. After all, it is this underlying ‘machinery’ that researchers are interested in. (ten Have 1999: 54-55; Seedhouse 2005: 253)

It seems to be justified that the logic generating actions in interaction should be subsequently derived from the sequence of actions itself rather than imposed etically afterwards. Nevertheless, additional information concerning both the physical setting and participants seems to be beneficial as well because it would enable informed analysis and, probably, provide the analyst with the facts that participants were aware of and orienting to during interaction. After all, it is considerably more challenging for a researcher to discern interactants' orientation to certain factors if he or she does not know what at least some of the factors involved are. Hence, if additional information can be obtained without undermining the recordings and research design, it should certainly be done so and, afterwards, an analyst can decide whether it is relevant for supporting the analysis or not. Thus, it seems that additional information does not necessarily have to be ignored and the choice should be made on the basis of scholar's outlook and the focus of the study.

When considering possible distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' CA, it can be said that such an approach would generate more confusion than clarity. 'Applied' research is often seen as derived from 'pure' research and, inevitably, modified and somewhat inferior. In CA, however, the fact that data is collected in a particular setting and the findings are relevant to practice in this setting does not mean that the method of analysing the data is fundamentally different; in fact, it is as empirical and rigorous as analysis in CA normally is. The only difference is thus in the phenomena studied and the applicability of findings in the real life. Taking it into account that CA in itself is "a method of inquiry" (Schegloff et al. 2002: 4), an analytic perspective rather than a theory, it seems unnecessary to introduce different terms if the methodology itself remains the same.

Questions concerning applicability of CA findings are also posed often. As it has already been pointed out above, CA is devoted to rigorous case-by-case analysis of a limited and not necessarily representative corpus where each case is considered separately. Normally, there is no quantification and statistics and only a generalised account of the 'devices' and 'patterns' identified in the corpus is finally suggested. It is argued, therefore, that 'mere details' of interaction provided by CA do not contribute in any significant way to the exploration of issues addressed by social sciences and CA has no practical relevance beyond scholarly research (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 8).

The qualitative approach adopted by CA seems, nevertheless, justified. As CA seeks to discover the orderliness of talk from participants' perspective, it is inevitable that single cases are studied closely in order to identify how context-free resources are locally applied and to trace patterns in their use. However, the study is not limited to mere

description of single cases. Researchers do develop categories for classifying data; nevertheless, these categories are not etically imposed but derived from the data itself. In fact, it is often the case in CA that close description of one instance of a certain phenomenon grows into characterisation able to cover an entire collection of cases. It can be seen, therefore, that findings of CA are generalisable: general concepts (context-free resources) are used to analyse particular instances of their context-sensitive application and then general formulations of 'organisations' or 'systematics' are generated. Moreover, application of these context-free resources across different contexts can be further compared and contrasted and systematic patterns existing on a larger scale can thus be revealed.

It should be emphasised, nevertheless, that for CA each case still remains ultimately unique and it cannot be treated as a mere statistical variable. As Schegloff (1993: 114, quoted in ten Have 1999: 147) has put it, "quantification is not substitute for analysis" and, therefore, quantification is often of peripheral interest to CA practitioners aiming at qualitative analysis. It can be observed, at the same time, that even the analysts who claim to be focused exclusively on uncovering the emic logic guiding talk-in-interaction, if they systematically examine larger collections of instances, inevitably resort to quantifying expressions like 'regularly', 'frequently', 'often' or 'comparatively rarely'. It may be suggested, therefore, that instead of hazy terms numbers should be presented as researchers, anyway, orient to a certain amount of quantification. Indeed, there is a growing tendency in CA to combine qualitative approach with sensible use of statistics when it contributes to the quality of findings (e.g., study of large collections is required or a phenomenon is linked to particular social or psychological categories; for details see Heritage 1995: 404). It is necessary to be cautious, nevertheless, that coding procedures and quantification do not distort the actual picture. Thus, analysts in CA have now more freedom in respect to quantification and it is used as a *supplement* to detailed case-be-case analysis if it seems relevant.

The critique of the limited practical relevance of CA findings seems to result partly from the inadequate presentation of objectives and systematic conclusions in some papers drawing on CA. Lack of explicitness in terms of objectives and results may create an impression in the reader that the aim of a study is merely interpretation of the meaning of utterances to participants in interaction. In fact, such interpretation is just a means to an end, which is analysis of conversational organisation. Analysis implies working with interpretations in order to isolate mechanisms and procedures that are common to a range

of cases. Thus, CA can be defined as analysis of interpretations in interaction (ten Have n.d.).

When distinctive features of CA are considered, it can be seen that, outwardly, criticism of it holds true. Most research reports in the field of CA lack extensive theoretical and methodological discussion: there is little reference to literature, practically no hypotheses are suggested in advance, hardly any details about research situations and subjects studied, no descriptions of sampling and coding procedures and no statistics. What is presented instead is detailed discussion of transcribed versions of recorded data focusing on specific phenomena and leading to suggestion of a set of devices and ‘organisations’ oriented to by the participants. Nevertheless, as the above discussion has illustrated, these unconventional practices of CA are justified when it is taken into account that CA seeks to adopt an emic perspective in explicating the tacit context-free ‘machinery’ that interactants orient to in locally producing their social actions and interpreting actions of others. CA can generally be criticised for relying on a highly limited data base: the sample is often not representative, ‘proper’ quantification is neglected and possible sources of additional information (e.g., information about participants and setting, subsequent interviews, discussion of recordings etc.) are ignored. Nevertheless, CA generates objective findings based on rigorous analysis of authentic sequentially contextualised data. Moreover, the fact that analysis relies on context-free concepts, makes generalisation and comparison across different settings possible.

## **2.5 Application of CA**

CA is “a method of inquiry” (Schegloff et al. 2002: 4) or, in other words, a research programme that is aimed at describing the system of ordinary communication by means of talk-in-interaction (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 36). It is a generative method as it can be applied for the study of a wide range of phenomena in talk-in-interaction and thus provide new insights into organisation of social actions.

The distinctive feature of CA is that, as a research programme, it is essentially interdisciplinary. As Schegloff (1991: 46, quoted in Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 36-37) has pointed out, “CA is a point where linguistics and sociology (and several other disciplines, anthropology and psychology among them) meet.” For example, CA views language as an orderly system for the production of meaning, which corresponds to the perspective of linguistics. At the same time, language is for CA primarily a means for communicative interaction, which links it to pragmatics. It also shares with recent trends in

sociology (e.g., Giddens 1984) the view that communication and interaction are social processes, which produce and maintain social identities as well as social institutions (see p. 7), such as the family, the church or the nation-state, for instance.

The incorporation of views originating in a number of different disciplines enables CA to generate a deep analysis of interaction as well as makes it relevant for a wide range of fields of research. Thus, due to its interdisciplinary nature combined with endogenous perspective on context, CA provides a “holistic portrayal” of verbal interaction revealing interrelation between the form, function, sequence and social identity as well as social or institutional context (Seedhouse 2005: 263). That is, it illustrates that although the organisation of talk-in-interaction results from social goals and orientations of participants, at the same time, every contribution to interaction determines the development of distinct context of interaction as well as ascribes certain roles to interactants.

Because of its distinctive features, CA has by now ceased to be a programme for studying social organisation of just ‘ordinary’ conversation, the interaction in which people engage on a daily basis. Practitioners now use it also to study specialised forms of talk and, through it, the nature of a great variety of institutions and organisations, the properties of mass communication as well as single issues like, for example, power or importance of gender differences. It can be concluded that CA is, indeed, a unique method of inquiry as it has wide applicability but at the same time can provide every single study with highly relevant insights.

### 3 COMMUNICATIVE ACT OF REQUESTING

#### 3.1 Request as a speech act

From the perspective of CA talk – the use of language for interaction – is in itself social action, a way of doing. Therefore, at the centre of the enquiry of CA are the activities negotiated in talk such as, for instance, complaints, apologies, proposals, requests and so on. As mentioned above (2.1), this approach ties in to the theory of illocutionary acts introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1965). CA opposes the normative and universal nature of the theory as well as its decontextualised treatment of speech acts and, instead, views utterances as situated within specific interactional and sequential contexts. Nevertheless, both perspectives emphasise the constitutive role of language and the notion of a speech act in itself seems to be beneficial as the basis for the descriptive framework of the present study as it gives the function priority over the form (this principle also determined the order of terms in the title of the present thesis).

Austin and Searle argue that “speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle 1969: 11, quoted by Trosborg 1995: 14) and, contrary to the Chomskian concept of language as a set of sentences, they view language as a series of verbal acts. A speech act is a minimal unit of discourse and it is conceived of as a result of a person producing an utterance. It should be noted that an utterance is seen here as a pragmatic unit of communication and can linguistically be expressed in a variety of ways: as a set of sentences, one sentence or just a phrase. The focus on utterance rather than a sentence (a grammatical unit) is a subsequent modification to the original theory by Searle.

Every speech act is said to involve simultaneous performance of three interdependent sub-acts: (a) an utterance act (production of certain speech sounds, words and sentences), (b) a propositional act (reference to some phenomenon and statement of its properties) and (c) an illocutionary act (supplying the utterance with a communicative force of offer, permission, statement of fact and so on). On the basis of the speaker’s communicative intention – the illocutionary purpose of a speech act – illocutionary acts are divided into five major categories: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives and declarations (for details see Searle 1976). A speech act of request, for instance, belongs to the class of directives and its purpose is to involve the hearer in some future course of action that entails benefit for the speaker and is likely to imply some costs to the hearer.

To be successfully performed, an illocutionary act has to be understood by the hearer, that is, he or she has to realise what the propositional content and speaker's intention are. An utterance can subsequently have an effect on the feelings, thoughts or actions of the hearer, which is referred to as a perlocutionary act. For example, the utterance "Close the window, please." involves (a) a sentence being pronounced, (b) a reference to the open window made and (c) a request to close it; if a hearer understands the utterance as a request for him/her to close the window, she/he may do it.

The problematic aspect of this model is the fact that it does not reflect the situation when the hearer has understood the illocutionary act but failed/refused to produce the expected response (in the abovementioned example, to close the window). The theory of perlocutions as elaborated on by Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) seems to be valuable in this respect as it draws important distinction between communicative and interactional aspects of language (Trosborg 1995: 21). A complete speech act is presented as comprising both an illocutionary and a perlocutionary act, with the former relating to the communicative (achievement of understanding) and the latter – interactional (achievement of acceptance) aspect of language. Moreover, Eemeren and Grootendorst further develop this model subdividing the communicative aspects into "illocution" (speaker's (S) communicative intention) and "illocutionary effect" (hearer's (H) understanding of it) and presenting interactive aspects as a combination of "perlocution" (acceptance of action called for by the speech act), "inherent perlocutionary effect" (acceptance of the speech act as calling for certain action to be performed by H) and "consecutive perlocutionary consequences" (performance of intended action). Within this framework the speech act of request can be presented in the following way:

*Table 3.1.* Communicative and interactive aspects of requesting (S= speaker, H=hearer) (adapted from Trosborg 1995: 23)

Speech act	Communicative aspects		Interactional aspects		
	illocution	illocutionary effect	perlocution	inherent perlocutionary effect	consecutive perlocutionary consequences
requesting	S makes a request	H understands the request	S persuades H	H accepts the request	H carries out the desired act

Thus, the utterance of "Close the window, please." is expected to entail at least the initial steps from among the following: a request to close the window is made → H understands that S wants the window to be closed → H accepts that the window has to be closed → H

accepts that he/she is expected to close the window → H closes the window. The advantage of this framework is that it makes it possible to differentiate between several levels of a certain speech act and evaluate the degree of its success even when the desired effect (i.e. consecutive perlocutionary consequences) has not been achieved. In the case of the request to close a window, for example, it is possible to account for the situation when the hearer understood that the speaker wants her/him to close the window but for some reason she/he could not perform this action.

### **3.2 Request strategies**

A request can be defined 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” (Trosborg 1995: 187). The subject of a request may be a non-verbal phenomenon, such as some action, service or an object; however, a request may also involve asking for some verbal goods or services, like information, for instance. In any case, the requested act entails positive consequences for the speaker while generally necessitating certain costs to the hearer. So, a request is an impositive speech act as it is aimed at influencing “the intentional behaviour of the hearer in order to get the latter to perform, primarily for the benefit of the speaker, the action directly specified or indirectly suggested by the proposition” (Haverkate 1984:107 quoted by Trosborg 1995: 188). A request is thus an attempt to exercise control over the behaviour of another person and as such it poses a threat to their freedom of action.

The functioning of a request can be better understood within the framework of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness model. At the centre of it is the notion of “face” derived from Goffman (1967) and linked to the English term of “losing face”, meaning being embarrassed or humiliated. Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define the face as “the public self-image” that a person desires others to recognise. Building on Durkheim’s (1915) distinction between negative and positive rites they suggest two aspects of face – negative and positive, where neither of the terms is meant to be understood literally as evaluation. The negative face stands for the person’s “freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61) while the positive one – the desire to be approved of and included in a group (*ibid.*).

In the course of interaction a person’s “face” can be threatened by “face-threatening acts” (FTAs) (*ibid.*: 60). For the self-image to be maintained an appropriate degree of politeness should be used. Authors point out five major strategies for doing FTAs: going



bald on record (i.e. expressing intention without redressive action – directly and unambiguously), positive politeness, negative politeness, going off record (i.e. with redressive action, e.g. hinting) or not doing the FTA (the strategies will be discussed below under 3.2.5). The choice of the appropriate type of politeness and the strategies depends on the person's estimation of the risk of face loss and the seriousness, or weight (W), of imposition. The weight of FTA is determined by three variables: the relative power relationship between the speaker and the hearer (P), the social distance between them (D) and the individual ranking of the particular imposition in a certain social context (R) (ibid: 81). Politeness then involves assessment of the three basic variables, awareness of the self-images of both the hearer and the speaker and desire to choose the strategies that protect them both. Mutual maintaining of participants' faces ensures smooth communication.

In the light of the abovementioned model it can be seen that a request is in essence a face-threatening act. The requester aims at directing the hearer's intentional behaviour and thus threatens his or her negative face – the freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The face of the requester, however, is also in danger of being lost as the requestee may refuse to comply with the expressed wish.

For the purpose of maintaining the faces of the parties in the speech act of requesting a number of request strategies can be used. The present study draws upon the categorisation by Anna Trosborg (1995) built on her own research as well as that of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1976), Brown and Levinson (1987) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). Trosborg distinguishes between four major categories (Cat.) of request strategies which, in turn, comprise eight sub-strategies (Str.). The strategies are outlined in *Table 3.2*, each of them is discussed below and supplemented with examples which do not originate from empirical data but, nevertheless, an attempt was made to make them sound realistic. Finally, the strategies are considered in terms on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model as it seems to contribute to better understanding of the interpersonal functions performed by different forms of requests.

*Table 3.2.* Request strategies (Trosborg 1995: 205)

<b>Request strategies</b> (presented at levels of increasing directness)		
Situation:		Speaker requests to borrow Hearer's car.
Cat. I	Indirect request Str. 1 Hints	(mild) (strong) I have to be at the airport in half an hour. My car has broken down. Will you be using your car tonight?

Cat. II	Conventionally indirect (hearer-oriented conditions)	
Str. 2	Ability	Could you lend me your car?
	Willingness	Would you lend me your car?
	Permission	May I borrow your car?
Str. 3	Suggestory formulae	How about lending me your car?
Cat. III	Conventionally indirect (speaker-based conditions)	
Str. 4	Wishes	I would like to borrow your car.
Str. 5	Desires/ needs	I want/ need to borrow your car.
Cat. IV	Direct requests	
Str. 6	Obligation	You must/ have to lend me your car.
Str. 7	Performatives (hedged)	I would like to ask you to lend me your car.
	(unhedged)	I ask/require you to lend me your car.
Str. 8	Imperatives	Lend me your car.
	Elliptical phrases	Your car (please).

### 3.2.1 Indirect requests – Cat. I

#### 3.2.1.1 Hints – Str. 1

Hinting strategies can be used when the speaker does not want to express his or her impositive intent explicitly. The wish can instead be implied to the hearer, for example, by means of a statement referring to the undesired situation or through asking a question (see *Example 3.1*). The desired action may be partially mentioned (strong hint) (1) or omitted (mild hint) (2), (3).

#### *Example 3.1*

- (1) The room has to be cleaned. [the particular problem(s) to be eliminated is/are not specified]
- (2) It's cold in here.
- (3) Will you be using the laptop tomorrow?

Such utterances are opaque in terms of the propositional content and the illocutionary force of requests as the desired action is not specified and the hearer is not specified as the one to perform it. The hearer is thus left to infer both the points. It should be noted, however, that such utterances are vague on purpose – they are designed by the speaker so that in addition to the transparent meaning there would be the intended meaning below the surface (the reasons are discussed under 3.2.5).

To interpret a hint it is certainly necessary to make some effort and rely on relevant background and situational knowledge. Nevertheless, despite lack of propositional and/or illocutionary transparency, hints are a natural part of conversational routine. This fact suggests that, while interpreting a hint, in addition to specific knowledge of the interlocutor

and situation a person also draws upon certain predictable features of statements and questions functioning as hinting strategies. Anna Trosborg (1995: 194-196) suggests that on the illocutionary level hints involve conditions of reasonableness, availability and obviousness.

Firstly, it is possible to indicate the reason for making a request without explicitly stating its illocutionary point. In general, the statement of the reason for a request contributes to its successful performance as it justifies the demand and motivates the requestee. For the justifying utterance (2), for example, the direct request could be the following:

*Example 3.2*

- (4) Close the window, please. It's cold in here.

Here, the second sentence supports the request. When the first part (direct request) is omitted, however, the speaker initially just seems to attempt to ascertain whether the hearer accepts the reason for the projected request.

The second option is to give a hint through questioning some condition that might prevent the desired action from being fulfilled – the so-called “availability condition” (ibid.: 195). The structures in the first column, for example, could serve as such hints for the requests like the ones in the second column:

*Example 3.3*

- |                                      |   |                            |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| (5) Have you finished with the book? | → | Can I have my book back?   |
| (6) Is Mr Lawson in?                 | → | Could I talk to Mr Lawson? |

A request can be complied with only if the desired state of affairs has not been achieved yet. Therefore, the third option is to query this pre-condition and thus indicate that a certain action/situation is desired and it has to be performed/achieved if it has not been yet. The hints referring to the so-called “obviousness pre-condition” (ibid.: 196) could look as follows:

*Example 3.4*

- (7) Has the room been cleaned (already)?  
 (8) Has she signed the certificate?

An important factor for a hint to be interpreted appropriately as a request is the frequency of its use in a particular group or context and participants' familiarity with it. Trosborg (1995: 197) mentions the use of availability questions in shop encounters as an example of an indirect formulation having become a transparent request form. Indeed, in

the context of an institution where purchases are made the question like “Have you got X?” would be interpreted by the assistant as a request to supply the product.

### 3.2.2 Conventionally indirect requests: hearer-oriented conditions – Cat. II

One of the most frequently used strategies for formulating requests is reference to the hearer’s ability and willingness to act according to the wish of the speaker. The “hearer-oriented” requests imply that it is the hearer who decides whether to comply with the request or not. That is the reason why “hearer-oriented” requests are generally considered to be more polite than those formulated on “speaker-based” conditions (see 3.2.3). Hearer-based conditions “ability” and “willingness” seem to be among the most frequently used ones because through inquiring about these pre-conditions the requester protects the requestee’s negative face signalling that compliance is not taken for granted and at the same time the speaker reduces the risk of losing the face him- or herself if the reply were to be negative.

#### 3.2.2.1 Questioning hearer’s ability, willingness, permission – Str. 2

In requests with hearer-based pre-condition the desired act is stated and the hearer is specified as the agent. The hearer is only left to infer that the question about her or his ability/willingness to perform certain action has in fact requestive illocutionary force and is an attempt to make him or her do so.

Anna Trosborg (1995: 198) distinguishes between two types of questions concerning the hearer’s ability to carry out the desired act: the ones referring to the “inherent capacities of the requestee” (9), physical as well as mental, and to the external circumstances (10) such as place, time etc. which may serve as obstacles to performing certain action.

#### Example 3.5

- (9) Can you help me with the form? [mental capacity]
- (10) Could you lend me 100 euros? [financial capacity]

It is remarkable that some requests may contain a banal ability pre-condition (11) which could be questioned solely in exceptional cases; in request (11), for example, if the requestee is physically handicapped. Such cases prove that ability questions have become a routine form of request.

#### Example 3.6

- (11) Can you pass me the bread, please?

The pre-condition of willingness is questioned in a request in order to signal to the hearer that compliance is not taken for granted (12). The degree of negative politeness of a request can also be increased through addition of expressions of speaker's hope, appreciation and the like (13) or through lexical marking intensifying the pre-condition (14).

*Example 3.7*

- (12) Will you lend me your camera?
- (13) I'd be grateful if you lent me your camera.
- (14) Would you mind lending me your camera?

A request for permission can also be used to enquire about the hearer's willingness to do something. In this case, a shift of focus occurs: the requestee is no longer explicitly presented as the agent of the desired action but, instead, the requester figures as the beneficiary (15).

*Example 3.8*

- (15) Can/May I borrow your camera?

Several studies (e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1976, Trosborg 1985) have indicated that permission requests tend to be directed to a person with a higher rank and auxiliary 'may' when compared to 'can' is considered to further convey formality and/or subordination (Trosborg 1995: 200).

### 3.2.2.2 Suggestory formulae – Str. 3

Suggestory formulae (16) are yet another, although not that common, form of hearer-oriented requests. In this case, however, no particular hearer-based condition is questioned; a query is put concerning the requestee's cooperativeness. A suggestory formula tends to make a request more tentative and the speaker's benefit from an act in question is less pronounced.

*Example 3.9*

- (16) How about lending me your camera?

## 3.2.3 Conventionally indirect requests: speaker-based conditions – Cat. III

### 3.2.3.1 Statements of speaker's wishes – Str. 4

Instead of enquiring about hearer-oriented conditions a person making a request may focus on his or her own desires. As a result, a request becomes more explicit. Within the

category of speaker-based conditions it is possible to choose a form where a request is formulated as a wish.

*Example 3.10*

- (17) I would like to get a certificate for residence permit.
- (18) I would prefer you to come tomorrow.

### 3.2.3.2 Statements of speaker's needs and desires – Str. 5

Statements of needs and desires are generally considered less polite than those of wishes because they are more direct and sound as demands (*Example 3.11*). If requests with 'want' are left unmodified with some mitigating device (e.g. 'just', 'kind of', 'you see'), they are normally considered impolite (20).

*Example 3.11*

- (19) I need some more paper.
- (20) I want you to sign it for me.

### 3.2.4 Direct requests – Cat. IV

In direct requests the illocutionary content is made unambiguous. A performative statement or an imperative are signalling that an order is being made. A modal verb expressing obligation or necessity, however, reduces the strength of an order.

#### 3.2.4.1 Statements of obligation and necessity – Str. 6

In a statement of obligation or necessity the source of a request can be not only the speaker but also some other authority such as, for example, an institution, convention or another person. Requests in *Example 3.12* are presented in the order of increasing authority. The modal verbs 'ought to' and 'should' signal moral obligation (21), 'have to' implies that the speaker is not the source of obligation (22) whereas 'must' is more likely to express the obligation stemming from the speaker (23).

*Example 3.12*

- (21) You ought to/ should contact her first.
- (22) You have to fill in the application form.
- (23) You must return it tomorrow.

#### 3.2.4.2 Performatives – Str. 7

A number of performative verbs like 'ask', 'request' or 'demand' make it explicit that an utterance is meant to be an order. Such statements are highly direct and often authoritative;

as such, outside specific contexts they are generally considered impolite. Nevertheless, the level of politeness may vary with the performative verb used. In *Example 3.13*, for instance, utterance (24) seems to be more polite than (25).

*Example 3.13*

- (24) I ask you to sit down.
- (25) I order you to sit down.
- (26) I would like to/ must ask you to sit down.

Performative statements can also be mitigated by means of hedging of their illocutionary force. In utterance (26) the elements ‘I would like to’ and ‘I must’ clearly make the request more polite.

### 3.2.4.3 Imperatives – Str. 8

Probably the most obvious tool for an order is such grammatical form as imperative. When left unmodified, it is certainly highly authoritative and presupposes obedience (27). However, similarly to performative statements, imperatives can be mitigated. It can be done by inserting tags and /or the politeness marker ‘please’ (28).

*Example 3.14*

- (27) Sit down at once.
- (28) Sit down, will you.
- (29) Two coffees, please.

In service encounters where goods are sold or distributed, elliptical phrases are often used. Such requests lack the verb and just name the desired object (29).

It should be noted at this point that it is difficult to create a classification for natural phenomena that would embrace and account for every possible item in the system under consideration. The present scale certainly has several weaknesses too and there are requests that while formally belonging to one category can actually be considered as belonging to another. The ‘want’- statements like “I want some coffee.”, for example, can be claimed to be hints (e.g. Garvey 1975: 47, quoted by Trosborg 1995: 208) rather than requests conveying speaker-based pre-conditions. Furthermore, the ‘need’-statements can sometimes function as orders (e.g. “The dishes need to be done.”) or be ambiguous and allow of several interpretations: the statement “I need a break.”, for instance, can be a hint functioning as an invitation or a reproach or it can also be just an informative statement. It proves that the illocutionary force of an utterance depends on the situational and interactional context and communicative acts cannot be considered out of context.

Another problematic issue is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the requests discussed within the system by Trosborg are related to non-verbal phenomena and there is no place left for provision of information, although there is no reason for it not to be considered verbal service. As it could be seen from the definition of a request as a speech act (p. 32), the subject of a request is performance of “an act which is for the benefit of the speaker” whereas this act may be related to non-verbal goods or services or the verbal ones (Trosborg 1995: 187). Nevertheless, if a person asks a question to get some information, it is virtually impossible to consider it as a request within the framework of request strategies.

The present study proceeds from the premise that the act of asking for information can still be considered a request for verbal service. A question can be classified as a direct request (Cat. 4 in Trosborg’s system) as the requester states his or her query “baldly on record”, without any redressive action. Therefore, the present study distinguishes between two types of requests: the requests for non-verbal and verbal services. The former are discussed within the framework of request strategies suggested by Trosborg (1995) whereas a special categorisation was developed for the latter on the basis of the nature of the data. While requests for non-verbal services are subdivided on the basis of their level of directness, requests for information or, in other words, questions, are discussed in terms of their function: obtaining new information, checking one’s inference/ assumption and checking one’s comprehension. Nevertheless, their directness as well as face-threatening effect are also considered. In addition to it, external modification of question and its functions are discussed.

### **3.2.5 Request strategies in the light of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory**

The system of request strategies presented above considers a request a face-threatening act calling for a certain amount of “face-work” in order to sound polite. Applying the framework of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory it is possible to observe that the options for expressing a request range from pragmatically transparent “on-record” strategies to opaque “off-record” ones.

Maximum explicitness and, frequently, efficiency can be achieved by means of going “baldly on record” – employing no redressive strategies and thus making direct requests. Alternatively, a requester may go “on record” while also applying negative and



positive politeness strategies with the aim of minimising face threat. Negative politeness strategies signal that cooperation/compliance is not taken for granted and thus they address hearer's negative face - the desire to have one's freedom of action not impinged on. Positive politeness strategies, meanwhile, mitigate a request by means of emphasising the requestee's membership in a certain in-group and therefore appealing to her or his positive face. The final option is to go "off record" – to state the request in an ambiguous way so that more than one interpretation would be possible. As a result, the requester does not entirely commit oneself to a certain intent and there is always a way out of a face-threatening situation if need be.

The force of illocution increases together with the level of directness and, consequently, it also becomes more difficult for the hearer to refuse. At the level of a hint (Str.1), the speaker does not state her or his will explicitly and therefore the requestee has freedom to choose the preferred illocutionary point. Thus a request formulated as a statement of a fact can be taken precisely as such while an interrogative can be treated as merely a request for information, not a signal for action. It should be noted here that a hint in the form of a question is generally considered to pose some threat to the face of the hearer as questions normally expect answers to follow (see 2.3.1 on conditional relevance in adjacency pairs) while a statement may be left without a consequent signal of uptake (Trosborg 1995: 206). Overall, hints are generally considered not face-threatening to either of the parties as each of them has an opportunity to implicitly avoid responsibility for the failure in interaction and, in fact, no failure can be observed on the surface at all. For this reason hints are often used in situations where the requester wants to be especially tactful and unassertive or where a refusal seems to be likely.

Requests addressing hearer-based pre-conditions (Str. 2) are recognisable as requests and they usually expect the hearer at least to provide an excuse for non-compliance. Nevertheless, the initial focus on the hearer's ability or willingness serves as a sign that the speaker does not take it for granted that the desired action would be performed. As a result, the hearer is given an opportunity to refuse politely thus protecting one's face if he or she chooses to do so. In the case of a positive answer, the requestee expresses one's willingness to cooperate as if it were his or her own desire to do a favour, not merely a response to a request, and consequently the requestee's positive face is boosted.

"Suggestory formulae" (Str. 3) are tentative as well but, differently from the previous strategy, they do not provide the hearer with a pre-condition that could be

unfulfilled and be thus used as a justification for non-compliance. Instead, overall cooperativeness of the interlocutor is queried. This fact makes the refusal more problematic as the requester's expectations sound somewhat more optimistic and the requestee needs to make an effort to produce a reason for a negative answer.

The requests containing speaker-based conditions (Str. 4 and Str. 5) have a form of statements and do not presuppose an answer as questions normally do. Nevertheless, the wish of the requester is in this case stated explicitly and the requestee who is not willing to comply with it has no choice but to disagree with the interlocutor's desires. Disagreement, in turn, threatens the requestee's positive face, although a negative response to the request formulated as a wish (Str. 4) may be considered slightly less problematic than that to the structure with "stronger" verbs like 'want' or 'need' (Str. 5).

Requests stating an obligation (Str. 6) suggest that some authority has power over the hearer and compliance is the sole appropriate response. The structures with performative verbs (Str. 7) and imperatives (Str. 8) can be immediately recognised as orders and performance of the desired action is highly expected, especially if the speaker is higher in rank. Thus, direct requests (Cat. IV) threaten the requestee's negative face to the greatest extent when compared to other strategies and it is also the most difficult to respond to them negatively.

### **3.2.6 Internal modification of requests**

As the present system of request strategies suggests, there are a variety of ways to formulate a request adopting different degrees of directness and, hence, politeness. Besides the choice of the directness level, it is possible to modify a request either on the internal (syntactic or lexical/phrasal) or external (discourse) level and thus develop a speech act request into a communicative act of requesting. By modulating a request one can soften or intensify the effect of a certain strategy. The devices used for this purpose are called "modality markers"; downgraders are employed to "tone down the impact an utterance is likely to have on the hearer" while upgraders, on the contrary, increase it (Trosborg 1995: 209). In connection with requests, which are in essence face-threatening acts and thus often need to be mitigated, it is certainly downgraders which are particularly useful. The major categories of modality markers are listed below.

### 3.2.6.1 Downgraders

Mitigating devices can function on the syntactic or lexical/phrasal level. The common feature of syntactic downgraders is that they make a request more polite by outwardly reducing the expectations of the requester. Consequently, in the case of a refusal, there is a smaller threat to the faces of both the requester and the requestee.

A question can be considered a syntactic downgrader when compared to a statement (30). Questioning an assumption that someone can or will do something reduces the illocutionary force of a request while the statement that the requestee is able or willing to perform the desired act leaves less freedom for him or her to express voluntary commitment or refusal.

#### Example 3.15

- (30) Can/ Will you help me with the form? vs. You can/will help me with the form.  
 (31) *Couldn't* you help me with the form?  
 (32) I would like some help with the form if you don't mind.

It is also possible to transform a fairly direct request into a tag question and thus mitigate the effect by asking for the hearer's consent. The expectations to the fulfilment of a request can be further toned down by the inclusion of past tense, negation (31) or even a conditional clause (32).

Embedding is a device whereby a request becomes integrated in a clause expressing the speaker's attitude towards this request. Such a clause can express tentativeness (e.g. 'I wonder if...'), appreciation (e.g. 'I'd be so grateful if...', 'I hope...') or subjective opinion (e.g. 'I think /believe...', 'I'm afraid...', 'As far as I know...') (34). The message of the embedding clause can be further emphasised by the continuous aspect (33).

#### Example 3.16

- (33) I *was wondering* if you could help me with the form.  
 (34) I *thought* that you *might* help me with the form.

Finally, tentativeness can also be expressed by means of such syntactic downgraders as modal verbs (34).

There are also a number of lexical/phrasal downgraders that make the speaker's expectations to the efficacy of a request look lower and thus present requestee's possible cooperation as an appreciated favour. The elements of deference like 'please' and 'kindly/be so kind as' are probably among the most common ones. Consulting devices like

‘Would you mind...’ and ‘Do you think/object...’, similarly to question tags, ask for the hearer’s consent and thus also soften a request.

The impositive force of a request can be reduced by downtoners – modal sentence adverbials and modal particles like ‘perhaps’, ‘possibly’, ‘maybe’, ‘simply’ and the like (35). Understatement is also a common device for minimising the imposition (36).

*Example 3.17*

- (35) *Just* call me, okay?
- (36) Would you wait just *a second*?
- (37) Could you *somehow* finish it by tomorrow afternoon?

The proposition of a request can be intentionally made vague by means of hedges – particles, words or phrases signalling partial degree or quality of something (e.g. ‘kind of’, ‘sort of’, ‘more or less’) (37). The requestee, as a result, is given an opportunity to specify the details of the desired act him- or herself.

When the speaker is not sure whether the request would be appropriate or just wants to create such an impression, hesitation signals like ‘er’ or ‘uhm’ are used. For maintaining a friendly relationship with the hearer interpersonal markers are employed. Cajolers like ‘you know’, ‘you see’ or ‘I mean’ appeal to the hearer’s attention and understanding while appealers such as ‘okay?’ or ‘right?’ ask for the requestee’s consent (35). As it can also be seen from examples, syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders do not necessarily exist separately and are, in fact, often combined within a single request.

### 3.2.6.2 Upgraders

Upgraders perform a function opposite to that of downgraders as they increase the illocutionary force or strengthen the propositional content of an utterance. Although upgraders are less common elements of requests than mitigating devices, some of them can still be applied.

Adverbial intensifiers such as ‘so’, ‘very’, ‘quite’, ‘really’, ‘terribly’, ‘absolutely’ and so on can increase the impact on the requestee in terms of both the abovementioned aspects: the illocutionary force (38) and the propositional content, be the content enforced positive or negative (39). Furthermore, the ‘do’-construction can upgrade the illocutionary force (40).

*Example 3.18*

- (38) You *really* must go there.
- (39) I’d be *terribly* grateful/disappointed if you went there.
- (40) Oh, *do* come with us.
- (41) You *surely* wouldn’t mind coming with us.

(42) Get *the hell* out of here.

Commitment upgraders like ‘I’m sure/certain’, ‘obviously’, ‘certainly’ or ‘unfortunately’ emphasise the speaker’s commitment towards the point made (41). The requester’s attitude, again both positive and negative, is signalled by the choice of items for lexical intensification (42).

As it can be seen, upgraders can make requests sound either more or less polite depending on the items they modify. If the requester’s positive attitude towards the compliance to a request is expressed (e.g. ‘I’d be terribly grateful if...’), the level of politeness of the utterance increases. However, if the negative attitude (e.g. ‘I’d be terribly disappointed if...’) or illocutionary force (41, 42) are upgraded, the request becomes more threatening to the hearer’s face and thus also less polite.

### 3.2.7 External modification of requests

A request is an impositive act and the aim of the requester is to convince the requestee that the desired action should be carried out. For this purpose it is necessary to make the request appear to the potential agent plausible and justifiable (Trosborg 1995: 215). Such a task is performed by supporting statements (Faerch and Kasper 1989).

To serve its purpose, a request needs to be well prepared and supported. For expressing politeness “disarmers” and “sweeteners” (flattering statements) can be used (Trosborg 1995: 216). Compliance is also more likely to be gained if the cost to the requestee appears smaller or some kind of a reward is suggested. There are numerous devices available for supporting requests; some of the most frequently used ones are listed below.

In the case of requests for minor favours or when the positive reply is certain to come the request may be presented at once, without any preparation. In other cases it is considered more effective to use “preparators”. To start with, preparation can be made in terms of content so that the context for the request would be presented first and the request would follow logically from it. Then the speaker can signal that a request is going to be made (43). Another option is to check hearer’s availability – to make sure that cooperation or service will not be refused just because of the unfortunate timing of the request. So, some utterance like (44) can be used to pre-face a request. The risk of getting refusal can also be reduced through securing pre-commitment – the agreement to satisfy the request before the actual request being presented (45).

*Example 3.19*

- (43) I need your help.
- (44) May I disturb you for a moment?
- (45) Would you do me a favour?
- (46) I hate bothering you but...
- (47) Your music collection is amazing. [ → Would you mind lending me a couple of CDs?]

Disarming statements like (46) tend to contribute to a more positive attitude towards the requester and his or her wish. A sweetener – a statement flattering the requestee in terms of a relevant quality (47) can also help to gain the hearer's favourable disposition and consequent agreement to perform the desired action.

Supportive reasons may also increase the efficacy of a request. If the speaker presents some explanation or justification for a request, provides additional information or indicates positive consequences, the hearer is more likely to co-operate (48).

*Example 3.20*

- (48) Could you finish it for me? I've got so much to do today.
- (49) May I use your phone for a second? I'll make just one quick call. / I'll pay for it.
- (50) If you finish it tomorrow you'll get a day off next week.

The agreement is also easier to be gained when the costs for the requestee are explicitly minimised (49) or a reward is offered (50). The reward can be specified or just stated in general terms.

It can be concluded that a communicative act of requesting can be analysed on three levels. First, the directness of the strategy chosen can be considered. It can be followed by the study of internal modification – the specifics of the downgraders and/or upgraders employed. Finally, the analysis can be expanded to the discourse level focusing on the supportive moves functioning as external modifiers of the utterance expressing a request.

### **3.3 Research in request realisation in learner's Interlanguage**

Interlanguage pragmatics in general and formal realisation of requests in the learner's interlanguage in particular became the focus of study in second language acquisition relatively recently (Trosborg 1995: 55). Nevertheless, a number of research projects have been conducted in last 25 years, most of them focusing on comparison of the performance of non-native speakers to that of native speakers, for example, Greek and English (Tannen 1981), German and English (House and Kasper 1981), Danish, German and English (House and Kasper 1987), Hebrew and English (Blum-Kulka 1983). Research has focused on the learners' inappropriate speech act realisations and demonstrated that it is

problematic even for fairly advanced learners to appropriately convey and understand the intended illocutionary force or degree of politeness. Studies also suggest that some deviances from native-like performance result from transfer from the first language (L1). The major reasons for pragmatic failures are reported to be overgeneralisation, simplification and reduction of pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic interlanguage knowledge (Trosborg 1995: 55).

The studies mentioned above differed from one another in terms of testing procedures and classification of request strategies. Moreover, the present study is concerned with close qualitative analysis of the corpus rather than focus on the form and quantification. For these reasons, detailed overview of the findings of previous studies does not seem relevant in this case and only results of the study by Anne Trosborg (1995) will be briefly outlined as her classification of request strategies has been adapted for the present project.

In Trosborg's study of realisation of request strategies in English the performance of Danish learners of English was compared with the performance of native speakers of English. It has been found that in half of the cases native speakers of English used conventionally indirect strategies basing their requests mainly on the address of ability/willingness conditions (48.2%). In one fifth of cases (22.8%) they formulated requests as hints and focus on speaker-based conditions was the next choice (16.8%), where the reference to wishes (10.8%) rather than desires/needs was generally preferred. From the category of direct requests, only imperatives were employed (9.6%). The relative distribution of request strategies in three groups of learners with different levels of proficiency varied in most cases but statistically significant deviances could be observed in the use of Str. 1 (hints), Str. 4 (wishes) and Str. 8 (imperatives). Thus, the learners with the lowest level of proficiency in English used as many hints (Str. 1) as the native speakers of English while more advanced ones used twice as few of them. At the same time, the less advanced learners focused on their wishes (Str. 4) two and a half times as often as native speakers did, which resulted in "monotonous and non-nativelike performance" (Trosborg 1995: 239) but it could be observed that the frequency of use of Str. 4 decreased proportionally with the increase in learners' proficiency thus approaching that of the native speakers of English. Finally, no learners in Group I used imperatives but, again, in groups with higher proficiency the frequency of the choice of imperatives rose. As degree of politeness level of a request is determined not only by the level of directness but also internal and external modification, the distribution of these aspects was measured as well.

It was discovered, as a result, that the number of downgraders per request strategy was in the case of learners smaller by approximately one third, a similar result was with the use of upgraders. Moreover, the number of supportive moves per request situation was in the case of native speakers thrice as great as for the learners. It can be seen, then, that the realisation of requests by learners on all the three levels diverged from the performance of native speakers.

The qualitative findings of the study are still more intriguing. It was determined, for instance, that although the proportion of hints employed by the least proficient learners equalled the performance of the native speakers of English, a number of these hints were different from those produced by native speakers in the sense that they were not made less transparent intentionally, to be turned into face-saving devices. Rather, learners hesitated because of difficulties with phrasing a request in a suitable way and quite often just conveyed a state of affairs and left it up to the interlocutor to specify the request. It is also reported that in addition to qualitative differences of the requests produced by learners and native speakers, the non-native speakers also often placed the requests in the contexts and positions in a conversation where it can be considered inappropriate. These insights demonstrate that qualitative approach is indispensable in such research and it can be supplemented by but not substituted with quantitative analysis as bare statistics can prove misleading.

The author also points out that despite several similarities between her findings and those of studies conducted within the CCSARP project (Cross-Cultural Speech act Realization Project), there is a certain amount of discrepancy in them as well. The inconsistency is mainly explained in terms of differences in methodological approach and elicitation procedures. Thus, the subjects' levels of proficiency in different studies were different and the conditions specified in the request situations considered in the studies differed with regard to the values of power (P), distance (D) and imposition (R) involved. Most importantly, however written questionnaires were used in previous projects while Trosborg's study was based on data elicited through role plays. In CCSARP situations the subjects were thus performing in the conditions that were different from actual communication situations: there was no interlocutor present and, as a result, all the related time constraints were missing, which made it possible for subjects to consciously monitor their responses. It can be concluded, then, that in discourse completion tests learners' pragmatic knowledge and intuition rather than their ability to use this knowledge in actual communication was tested. In this sense, contradictions between studies are not surprising



as it has also been noted in earlier studies that there is certain discrepancy between language learners' knowledge and performance in actual situations.

It is the major methodological drawback of most of the studies in interlanguage pragmatics that written questionnaires drawing on limited communicative behaviour are employed. Moreover, in the majority of cases speech acts are treated as isolated utterances taken out of the co-text – the linguistic context in which they are produced, although this factor plays a determining role in producing and interpreting utterances, as the approach of CA also admits. Therefore, the results of studies provide information about the “knowledge component” of communicative competence (Trosborg 1995: 56) but shed little light on the learner's ability to apply this knowledge and organise communication so that the desired communicative goals would be achieved.

The use of role plays is certainly a step forward towards obtaining the data that would make it possible to study the management of interactional process in interlanguage. However, it seems that still more plausible and insightful findings can be obtained through the analysis of naturally occurring conversations rather than those produced for the purpose of study. Although it is certainly technically more challenging and time-consuming to collect authentic data that would contain an adequate number of cases of occurrence of the phenomenon that a researcher is interested in, such a corpus guarantees reliable findings and conclusions that would be applicable in real-life situations. This is also the reason why the popularity of conversation analytic approach is growing in the domain of second language acquisition (SLA) research and the number of studies of learner language based on authentic corpora is constantly increasing.

Furthermore, the relevance of exclusively normative approach towards the study of interlanguage communication can be questioned. As it has already been mentioned above, research in interlanguage pragmatics contrasts native and non-native speech act performance focusing on the learner's inappropriate speech act realisations. Such studies are doubtlessly a valuable tool for identifying learners' problems in mastering a target language and they can guide syllabus design as well as development of communication tasks. A rigid native speaker norm, however, needs to be applied with caution. Firstly, elicitation procedures should guarantee that the data originating from native speakers is authentic and relevant for actual communication in the target language. Even the linguists who gained invaluable insights from CCSARP questionnaires point to the “inadequacy of native speakers' intuition” and the fact that “there is a difference between their perceived speech behaviour and their actual speech function” (Wolson, Marmor and Jones 1989: 181,

quoted by Béal 1998: 6). That is, the responses that subjects provide in questionnaires differ from their actual speech behaviour in respective real-life situations. Thus, the speech acts produced by native speakers, if considered, also have to be naturally-occurring and an opportunity for the subjects to monitor their performance should be eliminated.

Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that a number of languages, English primarily, function as *lingua franca* – a language used instrumentally for communication by people whose first languages are different (House 2002: 250). The number of non-native speakers of English, indeed, is now substantially larger than the number of native speakers, with the ratio of approximately 4 : 1 (ibid.: 244). This fact inevitably results in formal and functional fluidity of the language and local construction of norms for communication. It is not to say, of course, that native-speaker norms are now to be ignored altogether but language learners need to be aware of the fact that they are more likely to use the language for communication with non-native speakers whose competence and performance are different from the “norm”.

On these grounds it can be suggested that in addition to the focus on forms and pragmatically “inappropriate” use of interlanguage linguists should also examine the interaction process itself. Looking more deeply at the procedures and strategies by which communication is realised in linguistically and pragmatically complex situations it is possible to gain better understanding of the specifics of this particular type of interaction. Close analysis of the ways in which learners realise their communicative intentions and interpret and react to the actions of others may shed light on the tacit system guiding learners in “do[ing] interaction” (ten Have 1999) and jointly producing interlanguage pragmatics. Conversation analysis with its unrelenting aim to consider social action in interaction from an emic perspective or, in other words, seeking “to remain faithful to members’ perspectives” (Psathas 1995: 49) seems to be a potent tool for performing this task. The findings can subsequently be used for raising awareness and sensitivity of (potential) participants in interlanguage communication and, hopefully, help interactants understand rather than judge each other.

## 4 EMPIRICAL STUDY

### 4.1 Corpus

As it was mentioned above, studies of requests from the perspective of interlanguage pragmatics have mostly investigated data obtained by means of discourse completion tasks or elicited role-plays. Although these studies provided much valuable information, it seems that analyses carried out on authentic data can complement the existing findings reflecting mostly learners' pragmatic knowledge and intuition with useful insights into their performance in actual communicative situations. Therefore, it was decided to focus on naturally-occurring face-to-face conversations.

The general aim of the present project was to observe how people achieve their communicative goals in a non-native language in an institutional setting. It was also intended to consider their IL primarily as a system in its own right rather than merely a deficient version of the target language. In order to have an opportunity to draw more generalisable conclusions concerning application and formal characteristics of an IL, a decision was made to study conversations in two languages. English and Estonian as target languages of non-native speakers were chosen because in the context of Estonia they seem to be the most widely employed means for communicating with a person differing from an institutional official in terms of the first language.

The University of Tartu was chosen as the context that makes it possible to obtain comparable data in both the languages because there are foreign students who communicate with university officials in either English or Estonian as well as Russian-speaking students who use Estonian for this purpose. After trial of several options of gaining the best possible access to such students (e.g., through student counsellor of the Office of Academic Affairs, Estonian language summer courses, Language Centre of the University of Tartu), it was decided to record conversations at the International Student Office and the Chair of Estonian as a Non-native Language. The process of recording was conducted during the period of two to three weeks in February and August-September 2005 (at the beginning of a spring and autumn semester correspondingly) as this is the period when students have the greatest number of questions concerning their studies and contact a student advisor/ academic affairs specialist most often.

For the purpose of the present project a corpus of conversations in English and Estonian with the total length of 129 minutes was collected. It is constituted by 25 conversations in English involving two student advisors and 27 students (46 minutes) and

22 conversations in Estonian with five university officials (one academic affairs specialist, one student advisor, two secretaries and one lecturer) and 32 students (73 minutes).

#### **4.1.1 Data collection**

The task of collecting an adequate amount of natural data of reasonable quality turned out to be a challenge. It is a generally acknowledged fact that obtaining authentic conversational data is often problematic, partly due to what Labov (1972) calls the observer's paradox: once a researcher decides to observe an authentic situation, it automatically ceases to be such as observation always has an effect on the situation observed.

For conversations to be recorded, informed consent of participants is required. It was decided to obtain the consent of university officials prior to recording while no students' consent was requested. The reason for it was that students were to be the focus of the study and, therefore, their talk had to be natural, which it would not have been if they were aware of the presence of a dictaphone. The consent was not asked after recording either because often there were other students queuing nearby and it would not have been possible to record their natural talk if they had heard about recording being made. Furthermore, the conversations were sometimes quite short (approx. one minute) because a student was in a hurry; it would have taken too much of students' time to explain to them what is requested from them. Therefore, it was decided not to ask for students' permission to use recordings for the study but all personal details mentioned in conversations were changed and thus confidentiality was guaranteed.

As a result of such an approach, university officials were aware of the presence of a dictaphone while students were not. However, this fact does not seem to have undermined the reliability of the data significantly because even though a student advisor and academic affairs specialist were aware of their talk being recorded, the standard procedures of their work have become so routinised for them that they automatically performed them in a regular way even being observed.

For recording conversations several models of digital dictaphones were used and only high-quality stereo models proved to be suitable as the level of noise in the offices was quite high because there were normally two officials talking to students simultaneously. A digital dictaphone was chosen, firstly, as it is discreet and would not be recognised as such by the subjects. Secondly, digital data are more convenient to process afterwards than tape-recorded data.

At the International Student Office it was agreed that the student advisor would operate the dictaphone herself and would record her conversations with students. She was free to erase certain conversations if she wanted to do so. At the Chair of Estonian as a Non-native Language, I was present in the adjacent room and inconspicuously placed an operating dictaphone near the table of the academic affairs specialist or a secretary when students came in. As a result, in some cases initial phrases of dialogues were not recorded or were heard indistinctly. Overall, however, the technical quality of most of the recorded data proved to be adequate for it to be transcribed and analysed.

#### **4.1.2 Data description**

In both offices there were recorded natural spontaneous conversations between a student advisor/academic affairs specialist/secretary and one or two students. The content of the conversations varied slightly across contexts as at the International Student Office students mainly wanted standard certificates to be issued although they also requested information concerning registration for courses and other technical details of their studies. At the Chair of Estonian as a Non-native Language topics of conversations were more varied: some certificates were requested as well but students also wanted to submit applications, register or cancel their registration for courses or even obtain more lengthy counsel concerning technical aspects of their studies. Topics certainly determined the length of conversations: most of the encounters at the International Student Office lasted for about four minutes, although there were also shorter and longer conversations; at the Chair of Estonian as a Non-native Language part of conversations were two to three minutes long while the longer ones lasted for as much as ten minutes or even more. Statistical comparison in terms of the length, however, seems to be problematic as sometimes conversations with different students overlapped or there were longer pauses when a student filled in a form or wrote an application, pauses occurred also when a university official processed documents or searched for requested information. Overall, however, the data seem comparable and suitable for the present study as in both the offices the standard pattern of requesting service or information could be traced.

There is no detailed information concerning participants in the recorded conversations because collection of it would have been technically difficult and it would also undermine the process of recording data. Recordings were made at the time when there were more students than usual coming to both the offices and they mainly did it at the same time— during thirty-minute slots between lectures; therefore, sometimes there were

several students queuing in the office (they would thus have seen that a previous student was asked to fill in the form and it would have affected their conversation with an official) and they did not have time to fill in forms after conversations either.

Moreover, as the aim was to approach the data from the perspective of CA where sequential context and details displayed in the conversation itself are considered the only relevant ones, it seems that lack of background information is justified. It could be determined on the basis of conversations, however, that the students recorded at the Chair of Estonian as a Non-native Language were all Russian-speaking; the international students were mostly Finns but there were also Germans, Russians, Hispanics and other Europeans. It can also be concluded from formal features of conversations that students' general level of proficiency in the target language (Estonian or English) varied from a relatively low one, A<sub>2</sub>, to a higher one, B<sub>2</sub>, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages<sup>3</sup>. All the university officials recorded are native speakers of Estonian.

#### **4.1.3 Transcription**

According to the method of CA, recordings first underwent the process of repeated methodical listening, which is also called “close-hearing”. As the next step, they were transcribed with the help of a close variant of the transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (see Appendix 1). To facilitate work with transcripts, standard orthography was used in both English and Estonian although when deviation from standard pronunciation was very distinct, it was reflected in the transcript as well (e.g., missiz).

For convenience, proper names were capitalised according to the conventions of the languages concerned although, in general, upper case indicates in transcriptions especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk. To guarantee confidentiality, all names mentioned in conversations were changed in the course of transcribing; alternatives were selected so that the rhythm would be retained (e.g. Siiri → Tiina).

Extracts from transcribed conversations are presented and analysed in the empirical part below (4.3). Complete versions of conversations are provided in Appendix 3. Due to spatial constraints, the corpus supplementing the present paper is limited to the conversations containing the extracts discussed in the empirical part and thus providing broader sequential context for interpreting the data.

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed description of the classification within CEF see [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)

## 4.2 Methodology

As the present study draws on authentic conversational data with the aim of complementing findings in IL pragmatics obtained mostly by means of discourse completion tasks or elicited role-plays, it was decided to focus on such aspects of non-native language use for communication that could not be studied in the case of elicited data. Thus, it was considered that learners' pragmatic competence in terms of requesting in IL has received a considerable amount of attention (for examples see 3.3) and their divergence from the native speaker use has been emphasised and documented in the overwhelming majority of cases. Nevertheless, little is known about non-native speakers' overall communicative success in making requests in IL and getting them granted. Moreover, communicative and interactional purposes behind the use of a particular linguistic form have been of peripheral interest so far.

For the abovementioned reasons, the present study seeks to examine formal realisation of requests in IL as well as their effectiveness, that is, success in terms of communicative and interactional aspects: achieving interlocutor's understanding of the illocutionary and propositional content of a request as well as acceptance of a request and performance of the desired act (see 3.1). Focusing on functional aspects on communication, which seem to be primary in task-oriented institutional setting, the present study thus does not address the issue of appropriateness as determined from a native speaker perspective. Neither does it seek to analyse psychological effects (i.e. impressions and attitudes) generated by requests. Nevertheless, in line with CA's perspective, an attempt is made to identify participants' orientations as displayed in the sequential organisation of talk-in-interaction.

As an attempt is made to relate formal realisation of requests to the functions that they are designed to perform and the purposes for which speakers use them, pragmatic perspective on language has been adopted. For this reason, requests expressed by non-native speakers are examined not as separate phenomena but as a part of surrounding conversational context and, therefore, preceding and following utterances of both/all the participants in a conversation are taken into account.

As Mey (1993: 277-278, quoted by Nikula 1996: 66) has rightly pointed out, pragmatic phenomena cannot be captured by certain fixed methods because "[t]he world of pragmatics is not predictable in the same way that morphological or syntactic worlds are." Therefore, the use of certain linguistic forms for expressing requests cannot be explained by strict rules; moreover, their exact functions are often indeterminate and ambiguous.

Hence, the function of and purpose for using a particular linguistic realisation of request often have to be examined in terms of a set of *potential* meanings, functions and purposes rather than the fixed and clearly defined ones.

In order to capture speaker's logic behind the choice of a particular linguistic form in the most insightful mode as well as assess her or his success in achieving the goal (getting the desired service), it was decided to combine several linguistic models with a qualitative-descriptive method. The theory of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is employed to consider the level of effectiveness of a request. Potential functions and purposes of requests for non-verbal service are explored within the framework by Anna Trosborg (1995) while questions, that is, requests for verbal service (mainly information) are studied within the categories that were identified in the course of analysis of the data (see p.40). Language use in both cases is discussed with reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model and formal peculiarities of IL.

With the aim to guarantee reliability of insights into participants' orientations and reasoning, an analytical perspective of CA was applied as it makes it possible to approach talk-in-interaction from an emic, interlocutors' angle. As a result, a number of methodological aspects of CA were adopted. Thus, recorded conversations were transcribed and, subsequently, close case-by-case analysis was conducted on the basis of both the recordings and transcripts. The object of study – a request – was not defined in narrow linguistic terms as a fixed set of expressions; instead, a phenomenon of request is seen in broader terms and a wide range of expressions are examined provided that they have a common illocutionary function: requesting either verbal or non-verbal service.

Utterances identified as requests are discussed and analysed within their sequential context in terms of the context-free 'machinery' or, in other words, four main types of interactional organisation (see 2.3), relevant aspects are emphasised depending on the focus of discussion. The major question addressed throughout the analysis is the one worded by Seedhouse (2005: 251): "Why this, in this way, right now?". Interpretations are made on the basis of the preceding utterances and their validity is examined by means of the next-turn proof procedure, that is, the response of the recipient of the message is considered and, furthermore, the reaction of the speaker to it is taken into account.

Reliance on the analytic method of CA also justifies the nature of the data collected for analysis. In the process of recording and selecting material for the study there were no specific sampling procedures applied and there was no special attempt made to obtain a representative corpus (e.g., balance in terms of subjects' levels of proficiency, gender, first



language etc.), although it is, in fact, representative in terms of the proficiency level and, to a certain extent, the source languages involved. Furthermore, CA does not consider background information about participants, questionnaires and subsequent interviews with them indispensable.

The study is also limited to qualitative analysis; there is no quantification suggested in the paper (although the elements analysed were counted informally) because it is often difficult to assign the phenomena analysed to one or another fixed category and, therefore, statistical data would inevitably be misleading. Moreover, taking into account the aim of the present study, it seems that rigorous analysis and subsequent generalisation of the trends observed is an adequate approach. It must be admitted that sometimes reference to the frequency of occurrence of certain features is made in the form of quantifying expressions like ‘regularly’, ‘often’ or ‘rarely’ and impreciseness of such devices is recognised; nevertheless, as they are used just to provide supplementary information and the quality of analysis itself is not affected by this fact, a decision was made to limit quantification to the use of general terms.

It should also be noted that although the only basis for analysis is recorded data and no additional information about the subjects and their interpretation of conversations was collected, there are also a number of factors that contributed to achieving higher level of reliability in interpreting participants’ perspectives. First, analysis is informed by previous experience of communicating as a student in both the contexts observed with almost all the officials involved. Secondly, personal familiarity with the procedures related to studying at a university as a local and international student contributed to better understanding of participants’ wishes and concerns. Finally, regular use of both English and Estonian as an IL for institutional communication made it possible to interpret recorded talk-in-interaction taking into account the orientations, difficulties and strategies that are typical of such communication. It seems that the abovementioned methodological choices in combination with certain background knowledge provide an adequate analytical framework for achieving the aims of the study.

### **4.3 Request Strategies**

#### **4.3.1 Requests for non-verbal services**

The type of request that is often considered the request as such and, in fact, the only possible one is the utterance expressing expectation of some (non-verbal) action or service. Below, some of the requests for service found in the corpus are characterised and analysed

in detail. For the sake of convenience they are subdivided into categories according to the framework by Anna Trosborg (1995: 187-219). It should be emphasised, however, that such an approach should not be considered as imposition of external structure and etic analytical perspective on the data. Each example is considered separately and an attempt is made to examine the conversation from members' perspective relying on next-turn proof procedure. As it seems more convenient to start analysis with more explicit statements and gradually move towards more implicit ones, the original order of the categories has been reversed and the analysis proceeds from direct to indirect request strategies.

#### 4.3.1.1 Direct requests

As noted above, direct requests are normally made when compliance is expected either because the requester is of higher rank when compared to the requestee and thus exerts certain power over him or her or because the rate of imposition is low and, therefore, the request does not threaten the requestee's face considerably. In the data collected for the present study only one case of direct request can be found and it has the form of an imperative. The subjects generally avoided direct requests probably because they seemed to be impolite for addressing a student advisor/ academic affairs specialist – a stranger and a person of higher institutional rank.

#### *Str. 8: Imperatives*

In *Extract 4.1*, at the final stage of a conversation a student of a requalification programme (A) is asking an academic affairs specialist (B) to issue a certificate for the school where she works proving that she has been at the university on that particular day. Issue of various certificates is one of the responsibilities of B. As it can be seen, initially the requester selects a conventionally indirect strategy formed on the basis of hearer-oriented condition (ability) (line 1). Nevertheless, she immediately produces an imperative conveying the same illocution but in a more forceful way.

#### *Extract 4.1* [ee\_019\_ek]

(Topic: a certificate for the workplace)

- 1 A: → kas saate tōendit veel teha. kirjutage mulle tōendit.  
 2 B: jah. jah.  
 3 A: °( )° ((explains what kind of a certificate is needed))  
 4 B: kellele see läheb.

On the basis of the grammatical features of *this* utterance (use of wrong case) and also the longer stretch of the dialogue it can be seen that the requester's level of proficiency in

Estonian is not high and it can be assumed that the reason for the repair – formulation of a request in a more direct way – is the fact that she is not sure whether the request was initially phrased in a way that makes her wish transparent enough. Therefore, she decides to reformulate it in order to ensure understanding, which along with increasing the level of directness also makes the request considerably less polite.

B did not signal understanding at the first transition relevance place (TRP) – immediately after the first version of the request – either because the response was made through the initiation of the requested action (i.e. issue of a certificate) or the pause was not long enough<sup>4</sup>. However, after the repair, in line 2 she signals that the request has been understood and accepted. As a result, A provides an explanation what kind of a certificate she needs. The requestee this time signals uptake through further enquiry about the specific features of the certificate requested.

As it can be seen, there was no reaction to the increased directness level of the request, which suggests that the goal (issue of a certificate) rather than interaction gains primary importance in this extract and B is ready to ignore infelicitous forms. The desired result is, indeed, eventually achieved, although this extract demonstrates just the initial stages of the request up to reaching the inherent perlocutionary effect – acceptance of the request. So, the parties in this extract indicated orientation to effective achievement of the desired result and cooperated in this endeavour despite the potential negative influence of B's imperfect command of the target language.

#### *4.3.1.2 Conventionally indirect requests: speaker-based conditions*

The extract analysed above is an exception to the general tendency in the selection of request strategies in the corpus because the study has demonstrated that normally students asking a university official for some service use indirect strategies. Nevertheless, this “exception” in fact serves as a proof to the overall readiness of participants in interlanguage conversations to cooperate in order to make communication work, which will also be demonstrated below.

The conventionally indirect strategies in which requesters express their wishes and desires were employed by several subjects in both the languages.

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<sup>4</sup> Here, difference in the interpretation of a pause may be a result of difference between speakers' first languages: it has been reported that pauses between turns in Russian are shorter than those in Estonian.

*Str. 4: Wishes*

The request presented in *Extract 4.2* is produced at the beginning of a conversation. A student (A) who came to ask for certificates, first of, all greets an Estonian student advisor (B) in Estonian (to which B replies with the same greeting – the second part of the adjacency pair) in order to appeal to her positive face and establish some common ground. After that A has to switch to English probably because she does not feel competent enough to continue the conversation in Estonian.

*Extract 4.2* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: a request for certificates)

- 1 A: tere.  
 2 B: tere.  
 3 A: → I'd like to apply for the: (1.5) paper to Kela<sup>5</sup> and  
 4 (.)  
 5 B: huh  
 6 A: and >also for the residence permit<  
 7 B: ok. well.  
 8 (5.0) ((papers rearranged))  
 9 B: please sit (.)

The request is stated explicitly in line 3 with a commonly used form of expressing wish “I'd like to” used. A pauses before naming the document; the most probable reason for it is difficulty in finding the appropriate term and eventually she resigns herself to the general term ‘paper’. After that she pauses again and B interprets this pause as signal for a TRP: she submits a continuer ‘huh’ to signal understanding of both the propositional and illocutionary content. Then A, having received the message that the request has been understood and also having gained time to formulate the term for the second item of the request, finishes the utterance in line 6. By responding ‘ok’ B signals acceptance of the request and starts the procedures leading to the consecutive perlocutionary consequences – the issue of the certificates. So, the requester succeeded in phrasing and mitigating the request (by greeting B in her mother tongue) and despite some lexical difficulties the request is understood and granted.

In *Extract 4.3* the request is realised as speaker's wish as well. However, A uses the verb ‘have’, which proves ambiguous in this context as certificates are requested first and

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<sup>5</sup> KELA is the Finnish acronym for the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. The mission of this institution is to provide basic subsistence security for all persons resident in Finland. Due to it, full-time students are eligible for a Study Grant, a Housing Supplement and a government guarantee for a student loan. The first two are payable to financially needy students only. (<http://www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf>)

they are collected later. Indeed, B misinterprets it as ‘receive’ and instead of taking her turn signals understanding by starting to look for the certificate in a pile. A, who meant to apply for the certificate, immediately recognises the misunderstanding and attempts to resolve it as quickly as possible: she indicates that she is just at the first step of this “two-step procedure” – she came for the first time – and she also adapts a more direct strategy (Str. 5) stating her desire once more (line 3). A also attempts to reduce the negative effect provoked by misunderstanding by a chuckle. Further, she creates an impression of having not finished the utterance (‘a:n e-’) and hesitates to see whether B has understood the explanation or further expansion is needed.

*Extract 4.3* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 A: → I would like to have the paper for Kela a:nd=  
 2       (.) ((B reaches for papers))  
 3 A: → =not (.) as- as (.) I have not been here before \$huh huh\$ (.) I wanna have it  
 4       a:n e-  
 5 B:     please write down your name here,  
 6 A:     uh huh

B understands the message and signals it by moving to the next step in the procedure of issuing a certificate – eliciting the person’s name. Again, the request has been understood, accepted and, later, granted despite the initial misinterpretation of the proposition.

A form associated with the same request strategy – ‘*me tahaksime*’ – is used in Estonian (*Extract 4.4*). Initially, B greets the two students (one of them remained silent throughout this short conversation) in English as most of the students coming to the International Student Office choose to communicate in English. A, however, responds by greeting in Estonian and then proceeds with the request. She uses numerous pauses and a hesitator ‘e:’, lengthens ‘ja:’ (line 2) and inserts a hedge ‘nagu’ twice (line 3).

*Extract 4.4* [ee\_015\_v]

(Topic: taking an elective as a visiting student)

- 1 B:     yes (.) how can I help you,  
 2 A: → tere (0.5) e: me oleme (.) õpime (.) Eesti Põllumajandusülikoolis. (0.5) ja:  
 3       tahaksime (.) õppida seda nagu võõrkeelt. (0.5) nagu valikainena.  
 4 B:     Tartu Ülikoolist.  
 5 A:     jah.  
 6       (2.2)  
 7 B:     uh huh (1.2) ja selleks siin (1.0) peate minema üliõpilasnõustaja juurde. ja  
 8       küsima te peate täitma külalisüliõp- üliõpilaseankeedi.

It seems, though, that these lexical downgraders are not used intentionally and in this context they are evidence of linguistic difficulties rather than mitigating devices.

B comprehends the illocutionary point, in line 4 checks her inference in respect to the proposition of the request and then provides her response which instead of service provides information – guidance for further action. So, despite production difficulties, A succeeds in achieving acceptance of the request (inherent perlocutionary effect) and gaining information for further action although it is not clear from her utterance whether she was looking for information or, rather, service – the forms provided and filled in on spot. Therefore, by stating the wish in general terms A also managed to save her face, although it can be the case that she just did not know what procedures can take place in the International Student Office and hence did not specify her expectations.

*Str. 5: Desires/ needs*

Statements of desires and needs are considered to be more direct than statements of wishes. In *Extract 4.5* a student is asking for a certificate necessary for obtaining a residence permit. As it can be seen in line 2, she pauses thrice, uses two hesitators and lengthens the possessive adjective ‘my:’. It seems, however, that similarly to the *Extract 4.4*, here these devices are not consciously used for mitigation but, again, are a result of linguistic difficulties – formulation of a request and the term for the document needed. At the same time, rising intonation is employed at the end of the utterance probably in an attempt to make the request sound like a question, which is a syntactic downgrader. In any case, all these devices do mitigate the otherwise rather explicit request.

*Extract 4.5* [ing\_012\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 B: uh huh (.) yes?  
 2 A: → u:m (.) hello. (.) I need my: confirmation, (.) that umm I’ve arrived here for  
 3 the residence permit?  
 4 B: ok. (.) your official invitation for residence permit (0.5) you haven’t asked it  
 5 yet?  
 6 (.)  
 7 A: no  
 8 B: ok. (1.2) e:m (2.8) you should write down here your name, (0.5) and then  
 9 you can have it on Friday.

B signals perception of the illocutionary message by ‘ok’, rewords the name of the document thus checking one’s comprehension of the proposition and then attempts to resolve the ambiguity created by the verb ‘need’. Like in *Extract 4.3*, it is not completely clear whether the verb ‘need’ stands for asking to type or provide the document. Nevertheless, due to B’s initiative the difficulties are eventually overcome and the request granted.

The statement of need is also used in the corpus in Estonian – ‘*mul on vaja*’. An interesting case is presented in *Extract 4.6* where A omits the verb ‘*vaja*’ (line 3) probably unconsciously as the phrase has been automatised and A does not focus on every single component of it while speaking. A also seems to have difficulties with remembering the right name of the document, which is indicated by a hesitator ‘e’ and, therefore, B cooperatively completes her turn. The assistance is accepted and confirmed through repetition (line 5). After that B accepts the request (line 6). Thus, the request is, again, rather direct and some mitigation is created by pauses and hesitators but these devices are still caused by linguistic difficulties. Having noticed the difficulty B completes A’s turn and so meaning is jointly created in interaction.

*Extract 4.6* [ee\_012\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 A: tere.  
 2 B: tere,  
 3 A: → mul on tõendit et ma olen naasnud. ah (.) jälle siia (0.5) mul on Soome (.) e=  
 4 B: =Ke[lale.]  
 5 A: [Soo]me Kelale.  
 6 B: jah.

In some cases, when experiencing production difficulties, learners employ various strategies to compensate for them. In the following utterance focusing on A’s need, the requester finds it difficult to identify the document in question and in order to still convey the message inserts the Estonian term ‘*elamisluba*’. After that she decides to provide the information related to the established two-step procedure of issuing certificates (application for it and consequent receipt) – the fact that she has not asked to produce it yet. Having discovered that she needs a suitable verb but having failed to find a better option she just uses the verb ‘order’. Nevertheless, by pausing before and after it and then also chuckling A signals that she is aware of the fact that this option is not the appropriate one in this context.

*Extract 4.7* [ing\_016\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 A: → a: I also need (0.5) the papers for (.) *elamisluba* (.) Kela but I haven’t (.)  
 2 ordered. (.) \$them yet huh huh\$  
 3 B: ok. (.) then write down your name please=  
 4 A: =ok,  
 5 B: uh huh

B indicates understanding of both the propositional and illocutionary message (line 3) and suggests the next step in the procedure – providing the name. Thus, the request is smoothly moving towards the desired result. Nevertheless, A’s reference to her identity as a language learner (the focus on and humorous attitude towards the use of verb ‘order’) is ignored. It demonstrates that communication is in this case task-oriented and the identities of a client and service provider are considered relevant. This observation is consistent with the findings of Salla Kurhila (2005) who also reports that in interaction with university secretaries the orientation to grammatical correction on the part of foreign students (non-native speakers of Finnish) is often ignored and so their role as a language learner is denied in that context as irrelevant.

When the level of proficiency of language learners is low but they are still determined to communicate in the target language, the university official seems to be highly supportive but, again, the focus is on the content relevant for the provision of service within the framework of institutional identities with no attention paid to formal characteristics of the interlanguage employed. Thus, in the following extract A states the request (line 3) with certain level of difficulty as signalled by the pause and consequent choice of the simplest possible wording (e.g. the use of frequently employed and illocutionarily transparent verb ‘tahan’).

*Extract 4.8* [ee\_013\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

1 A: Jo:ssis

2 B: jah. kena. °(mis )°

3 A: → >jah jah< (.) ja siis (0.5) ma tahan see kohalolekutoendi

4 B: jah jah jah. ma tean seda.

5 A: jah=

6 B: =jah

B readily ignores the use of inappropriate case and infelicitous pronunciation of the word “*kohalolekutõend*” (transfer from the L1, Finnish, containing no /õ/ sound) and instead actively signals comprehension of the propositional content of the utterance. By saying “I know it” B informs A that she understood which certificate she refers to and no further explanation is needed. A, in turn, signals uptake of B’s comprehension (line 5) and the standard procedures of issuing a certificate follow.

So, the relatively direct Str. 5 with verb ‘tahan’ seems to be selected due to its structural simplicity and it can be suggested that A, in fact, just states the desire/problem because she finds it difficult to formulate a more sophisticated form of request.



Although the ‘want’-structure is generally considered relatively direct, the following extract demonstrates that combining it with several mitigating devices a learner may succeed in increasing politeness of a request considerably. After certain hesitation (‘e-no:w (.) um’) the utterance starts with a preparator – A introduces the context and the reason for the request that is to follow (lines 3-4). He indicates that he was instructed to query about the procedures that had been completed in relation to his learning agreement, that it is not his own initiative. Such external modification has a mitigating effect.

*Extract 4.9*<sup>6</sup> [ing\_012\_v]

(Topic: information about the learning agreement)

- 1 B: =probably (.) ok on [Friday you can have it]  
 2 A: [ok (.) good (0.5) good]  
 3 A: → and e- no:w (.) um missiz Lepik asked us to: to ask about our learning  
 4 agreement, (.) it was sent back to our home university so: (.) I want[ed to=]  
 5 B: [uh huh]  
 6 A: → =ask about that as well  
 7 B: yes yes (.) but (.) this is something that (0.5) you have to ask- you ask from  
 8 Liis (.) because Liis is Erasmus coordinator and she has all your papers

After some more hesitation (‘so: (.)’) the request for details itself follows (lines 4, 6). The proposition, however, is stated indirectly – A does not specify what he wants to know but it is likely that he does so because he himself does not know exactly what he is supposed to ask about. The illocutionary force of the request is also toned down by the use of the past tense in ‘I wanted to ask’ (line 4). So, it can be suggested that the request is mitigated for two reasons: for the sake of politeness but also because of A’s uncertainty about the specifics of the instructions he received.

As far as the effectiveness of the request is concerned, B signals comprehension of the illocutionary content by saying ‘yes yes’ (line 7). The fact whether she understood completely the propositional content is more difficult to determine because B informs A that it is the responsibility of another person to provide the information requested and, therefore, does not do it herself. It can be observed, nevertheless, that in her response B orients to the level of indirectness/politeness established by A: providing a negative (i.e. dispreferred) response to a request she mitigates it by means of hesitating and indicating the way how A can get answers to his questions (instead of saying that she cannot help him) and providing justification why another person rather than she can grant the request

<sup>6</sup> Although in this extract a request for information rather than service is made, this case is discussed under the category of requests for non-verbal services because completion of this request presupposes issue of certain documents in the first place.

(line 7, 8). So, although the desired service is not provided (consecutive perlocutionary consequences are not achieved), the request does get understood and accepted and therefore can be considered effective.

In general, a number of conventionally indirect requests based on speaker-based conditions of wishes and desires/needs can be identified in the data corpus. It seems that they are used to a great extent because of their formal simplicity as well as semantic and illocutionary transparency. University officials eventually understand the content conveyed through such a form and accept and comply with the requests whenever possible.

#### *4.3.1.3 Conventionally indirect requests: hearer-based conditions*

Conventionally indirect requests in which the requester queries hearer-based pre-conditions signal that the hearer is in the position to decide whether or not to comply with the requests and also that compliance is not taken for granted. Reference to the hearer's ability and willingness to act according to the wish of the speaker is considered to be one of the conventionalised strategies for formulating requests.

##### *Str. 2: Ability, willingness, permission*

Although questions concerning hearer's ability and willingness are a routine form of phrasing a request, there is only one instance of such a structure in Estonian-based part of the corpus but, in fact, due to the adaptation of the CA method the data for the present study was not meant and is not claimed to be representative.

The strategy under question could be observed in *Extract 4.1* discussed above. A initially bases a request on the conventional form focused on B's ability to issue a certificate but then repairs it by means of an imperative (line 1). It can be assumed that at first the request was phrased automatically but then A thought about the literal content of it and decided to specify the illocutionary force of the utterance by a more transparent form of imperative.

##### *Extract 4.1 [ee\_019\_ek]*

(Topic: a request for a certificate for the workplace)

1 A: → kas saate tõendit veel teha. kirjutage mulle tõendit.

2 B: jah. jah.

In *Extract 4.10* A starts a request with a preparator introducing the context for the request (line 2) serving as a reason for his doubt whether his request for an invitation mentioning the entire period of his stay in Estonia is realisable. The downtoner 'just' (line

2) further mitigates the request by signalling that A is not sure whether this is a valid request at all.

*Extract 4.10* [ing\_012\_v]

(Topic: the length of stay for the residence permit)

- 1 B: ok. (.) that's ok. (.) \$uh\$ I just thought that maybe you just arrived=  
 2 A: =no- no. no. I arrived three weeks ago. it's ju- just that the letter which you  
 3 sent to me in Germany. (.) it said that I'm only here til the end of January,  
 4 → (.) but (.) maybe you could make in invitation until (.) [the end of Ju:ne.]  
 4 B: [hh ok (.) I just]  
 5 B: e- check them on the internet. how it is  
 6 A: ok

The request itself (line 4) starts with hesitation signalled by pausing and a downtoner 'maybe'; mitigation is further increased by the use of the past tense in 'could'. So, A questions B's ability to help him in such a way that his expectations to the fulfilment of the request are toned down.

The response of B does not signal any difficulty in understanding the propositional and illocutionary content of the utterance and she conveys it to A that she will be able to reply to the request after having checked external circumstances determining availability of the desired service. Therefore, as far as the formulation of the request is concerned, there seem to be no problem.

In the following extract ability pre-condition is addressed as well. A starts with a greeting in Estonian (line 1), which serves as a positive politeness strategy and then continues by formulating his request in English (line 3).

*Extract 4.11* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 A: tere.  
 2 (2.0) ((A is walking towards the table; coordinator finishes copying documents))  
 3 A: → I (.) I was wondering if you could make my invitation for my residence  
 4 permit  
 5 B: uh huh (.) yes but (.) not today?  
 6 A: ok (.) yeah.  
 7 B: I'll write it (.) and your name is?

The request itself is embedded in a conditional clause conveying tentativeness 'I wonder if', the mitigating effect of which is further enforced by the use of the past tense in combination with the continuous aspect ('I was wondering'). The use of the past tense in 'if you could' tones the request down as well.

B signals comprehension of the propositional and illocutionary content by 'uh huh' (line 5) and provides a response to the request. In an attempt to be polite (maybe in

response to the politeness level of the request) she does not present it as a fact that she will not be able to issue the document the same day. Instead, by the use of rising intonation at the end B presents the utterance as a question investigating whether it is an urgent matter for A to receive the document. Thus, A's request is understood, accepted and the response to it is mitigated accordingly.

When a student understands that the request to be made is not justified and does not have to be granted, he or she makes extra effort to mitigate it. In *Extract 4.12* A wants to receive some documents before the agreed date and she uses several mitigating devices to signal that compliance is not taken for granted and to make the possible negative response less threatening to B's face.

A starts the request by preparing the content and stating when she was told the documents would be ready (line 3). It is followed by a supportive reason for the request that is going to be made (lines 3-4). Finally, the request itself is presented in the form of a question addressing the pre-condition of availability (lines 4-5). The request starts with a consultative lexical downgrader 'do you think', then the auxiliary 'will' is used in the past tense and B as an actor is not mentioned – impersonal construction 'it would be possible' is employed instead. These devices mitigate the request and make it look like a request for B's opinion, not service.

*Extract 4.12* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: earlier receipt of certificates)

- 1 A:       hello,  
 2 B:       hello.  
 3 A: →    I was told on Monday that I get those papers, (.) on Friday (.) but (.) I'm  
 4           going home. (.) to Finland tomorrow (.) so. do you think it would be  
 5           possible to (get them right now)  
 6           (.)  
 7 B:       what is your name?  
 8 A:       Kattios

B understands what A wants and volunteers to look for her documents in the pile of the certificates that have already been made. For this purpose she asks A's name. It is discovered, eventually, that the documents are available. It can be concluded that A managed to formulate her request in a way that mitigated the high illocutionary force of it, B accepted the request and could carry out the desired action – provide the documents due to externally determined ability.

While in the previous extract the ability pre-condition is questioned, in extract 4.13 the preparatory conditions of willingness and permission are addressed. In line 2 A queries

whether B is willing to issue for him the confirmation of arrival on the same day. Although B uses a declarative question with the word order that is more typical of statements rather than questions, the intonation signals that it is, in fact, a question. It mitigates the request by indicating that the questioned action is not taken for granted.

*Extract 4.13* [ing\_002\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate to be received later)

- 1 B: ok. could you (just write down your name)  
 2 A: → you will print it today, or,  
 3 (0.5)  
 4 A: → may I (leave it with) my data and a: (.) because a: I'm in a bit in a hurry.  
 5 and I'd like to come back to (the dorm.)  
 6 (0.5)  
 7 B: yes. but you'll have to ask it from Liis.  
 8 A: ok.  
 9 B: she is an Erasmus coordinator. (just just ask. (.) from Liis)

The use of 'or' at the end of the request can be interpreted in two ways. It may be considered an essential element (coordinating conjunction) of an alternative question the second part of which is presented in line 4. Nevertheless, the accent identifiable in the recording suggests that the mother tongue of A is German and if that is taken into account, the use of 'or' (Ger. '*oder*') at the end of an utterance can be interpreted as a transfer from German. This assumption is also confirmed by the pause separating this element from the second part of the request. (The use of 'or' utterance-finally is further discussed under 4.3.2.2)

The pause after A's question in line 2 clearly marks it as a TRP. Nevertheless, B does not take a turn at this point. One reason for it may be the element 'or' suggesting that the second part of an alternative question is yet to come. It can also be assumed, however, that B lingers on purpose: the answer to the question is going to be negative – the dispreferred one – and research has shown that such responses are accompanied by hesitation and delay (Seedhouse 2004: 24; see also 2.3.2 above).

As B fails to take her turn, A continues with his request by suggesting the second option meaning that he comes to collect the certificate later. This option is phrased as a request for permission with the auxiliary 'may' used which, according to Trosborg (1995: 200), implies formality and subordination when compared with 'can'. Finally, A uses external modification – he provides a supportive reason why he would actually prefer to leave at the moment and come to collect the document afterwards. In the light of this explanation the utterance in line 2 can be interpreted as a genuine question, not a request

for the document to be issued immediately. It makes the situation less face-threatening for B and a negative answer to the question in line 2 more acceptable. For A, too, it is a device protecting his face because if he meant or was believed to mean the utterance “You will print it today? Or?” as a request and consequently gets a negative response, he will not lose his face as the supportive reason in lines 4 and 5 implies that it was a genuine question eliciting information.

As a result, B does not have to give a negative answer to the question in line 2 but, instead, gives A a permission to come and pick up the certificate later. So, A succeeded in formulating the circumstances so that agreement is made possible and it is eventually achieved by means of interlocutors’ mutual orientation towards saving each other’s face.

Similar face-work can be seen in the next extract but it is more rigorous as the imposition is greater as well. In this situation a student needs to send by fax a document to a bank in Germany in order to block his bank card and he attempts to find out whether he could use the fax machine in the International Student Office. After having discussed several issues related to his studies A is almost leaving when he suddenly remembers that he needs to query about the use of a fax machine. He starts by preparing a speech act – “I wanted to ask” (line 4) in order to create a context for the request as a dialogue with B has just been finished (lines 1-2). After that, probably for his own convenience and in order to gain time for formulating a proper request A says “the machine” thus identifying the subject of the request. The request is phrased in the form of a question asking for permission (line 4), with mitigating use of the past tense (‘could I use’). Then A encounters a problem with formulating his idea but it is anyway made clear that he is ready to pay for the use of the fax machine (line 5). His next move, signalled by ‘because’, is to provide supportive reasons – to explain why he is asking for this favour. However, he changes his mind in preference to another mitigating device, which seems to be more effective in reducing the imposition and threat to B’s face. So, A suggests a second option – a request for information whether there is another fax machine available for public use (lines 5-6).

*Extract 4.14* [ing\_012\_v]

(Topic: the use of a fax machine)

- 1 A: ok=  
 2 B: =ok. bye  
 3 (2.2)  
 4 A: → au and I wanted to ask- the machine. could I use your fax machine, (against  
 5 the) charge like (0.5) we (.) do something (0.5) because or is there fax  
 6 machine somewhere else in town (.) which [we] can use?=  
 7 B: [u:m]  
 8 B: =if you want to send your learning agreement (then using it) is ok

- 9 A: I have to u:m (.) how I say that (.) u:m (0.8) I lost the card for my bank  
 10 account in Germany and I have to: u::m so that nobody can withdraw  
 11 money,  
 12 B: ok. the one possibility the: (.) fax machine. it is in the post office.

B starts by responding to the first part of the request and stating the condition on which A is allowed to use the machine (line 8). It makes A return to the reason for his request and state it eventually (line 9-11). Once B realises that A's need for the service of a fax machine is not related to studies, she omits the negative answer as a dispreferred option and, instead, responds to the request for information kindly suggested by A before (lines 5-6). So, in the case of a request involving a greater imposition, a considerable number of mitigating devices is used in addition to the employment of a conventionally indirect strategy (Str. 2). Moreover, both the participants continuously do face-work to protect their own face as well as that of their interlocutor.

### *Str. 3: Suggestory formulae*

By means of suggestory formulae the requester checks hearer's general cooperativeness without specifying the condition as well as mitigates the request by playing down his/her own position as a beneficiary of the desired action. Although the study of Trosborg (1995) indicates that suggestory formulae are not a common way of phrasing a request among both native speakers and language learners, one example of this strategy has still been discovered in the limited corpus of data collected for the present study.

*Extract 4.15* is taken from a conversation that occurred when a student came to the International Student Office to ask the student advisor to copy some of the documents he received from there earlier, so that the copies could be sent to the student's home university. In the course of a student (A) selecting from a pile the documents that need to be copied, the following exchange occurred:

### *Extract 4.15 [ing\_017\_v]*

(Topic: copying documents for sending to the home university)

- 1 A: °so: this is the:°  
 2 (10.0)  
 3 A: → and this one. let's copy this one too.  
 4 B: uh huh

Although it is the student advisor who is to be the agent of the desired action – it is her who has to operate the copying machine and produce the copies of the documents, A decides to use the form 'let's' in the request, which implies the action performed by them

both. Such a reference to the pronoun ‘we’ can be considered a positively polite device meant to contribute to the development of the sense of belonging to the same group. Thus, A presents the student advisor and himself as cooperating in order to meet the requirements of another party (A’s home university).

It can be seen in the dialogue (line 4) that B understood A’s utterance as a request, agreed to perform the action (‘uh huh’) and carried it out. Thus, the request reached the final stage – consecutive perlocutionary consequences.

Overall, conventionally indirect requests based on hearer-oriented conditions tend to be employed by more advanced language learners and the greater is the imposition of the request the greater number of mitigating devices are used to soften the request. Interlocutors unite their efforts in making the request effective and productive and cooperate in protecting their faces.

#### *4.3.1.4 Indirect request*

##### *Str. 1: Hints*

Hints are indirect requests in which illocutionary force if not expressed explicitly. This lack of transparency is meant to be a face-saving device and it is produced intentionally. Because of the high level of indirectness this least intrusive strategy is particularly useful in the cases when there is a high risk for the requested action to be denied or when interaction takes place with a stranger or a superior in relation to whom it is inappropriate to formulate the impositive intention explicitly (Trosborg 1995: 277).

As it was mentioned above (p. 48), the study of Anna Trosborg (1995) demonstrated that especially the hints used by language learners of low proficiency are often qualitatively different from the hints employed by native speakers. While native speakers reduce the transparency of requests intentionally, to make them less face-threatening, learners often design them as statements because they find it difficult to phrase a request in a more conventional way. A similar characteristic of learners’ “hints” can be observed in the data of the present study.

In the extract below, a student who came to collect the certificate that she requested earlier formulates the request not as a wish, question concerning the condition of ability or an imperative; instead, she just states the reason for her coming by naming the action that she came to perform (line 2).



*Extract 4.16* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 B: hi.  
 2 A: → hi. (.) I:'m trying to pick up the: thing for Kela. and then the:: (in) the paper.  
 3 B: ok. and your name?  
 4 A: a:: Mari Tikksa,  
 5 (.)  
 6 B: yess,

Although A does not say exactly what the “thing for Kela” is and the form of a request is unconventional as well, B understands both the propositional and the illocutionary content of the utterance. The former is signalled by ‘ok’ in line 3 and the latter by the question about her name, as B needs this information for finding the requested certificate in the pile and giving it to the student.

Sometimes the request may even be worded so that contextual knowledge and inference are necessary for interpreting the proposition and illocutionary force correctly. Below, two extracts are presented from a conversation at the International Student Office with approximately one minute of talk between them omitted. Two students have come to request certificates concerning their studies. After the older student (A) with higher proficiency in Estonian has asked for a certificate of arrival for herself, she attempts to request a certificate for another student, who does not speak Estonian (lines 1-3):

*Extract 4.17* [ee\_013\_v]

(Topic: a request for a certificate)

- 1 A: → samuti kui selle ime liku paberi mis Kela vaja (.) neile. (.) nendele uutele  
 2 (0.5) üliõpilastele see tõend et (0.8) °mis see oli (0.5) mis see tõend mis seal  
 3 vaja oli. (0.5) esimese aasta üliõpilased tooma seda peavad.°  
 [---]  
 4 A: → jah (.) aga (.) kas sa (.) kes see (.) kas sa- teie teate selle et seal peaks olema  
 5 see (.) .h hhe (.) esimese aasta üliõpilased peavad seda tõendit mis ma  
 6 saatsin teile kirjaga. selle (.) .hh meiliaadressi peale. selle .hh kurat mis see  
 7 oli. (.) see tõend kus loeb midagi et .h a: see sisaldub see: .h intensiivkursus  
 8 nende: kogu;  
 9 B: a: (.) kui- kuidas tema nimi on.  
 10 A: Jukka Jokkela.  
 11 (1.8)  
 12 B: ma:  
 13 A: °näita nimi° ((addresses C))  
 14 B: tegin ühe tõendi. selle valmis ma loen ta ette teile

The student advisor, however, does not react to this request. The reason is probably the fact that she is working on the certificate of arrival that A asked for and does not attend to A's

talk considering it to be addressed to another student. After procedures concerning the certificate have been completed, A makes another attempt to ask for the certificate for a friend of hers (lines 4-8). The utterance is again characterised by numerous restarts and pauses and it has a form of a collection of phrases rather than one entity. A asks whether B knows what this certificate is like (line 4) and then engages in providing as many characteristics of it as possible having decided to compensate for production difficulties by the amount of information.

An interesting repair can be observed in line 4 where A initially uses twice the informal T form of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun ('sa') to address the student advisor but then switches to 'teie' – the formal V form. In the Estonian language the V form is preferred to the T form in this context and A's repair is justified. The reason for this struggle over the choice of a form, however, lies in A's mother tongue – Finnish, where the distribution of the T form is considerably wider than in Estonian and the informal 'you' would be considered appropriate in the context at hand. So, what is observed here is A's automatic negative transfer and repair of it resulting from the learner's awareness of the differences in the use of 'you' in Finnish and Estonian.

After A's second attempt to ask for the certificate, B indicates understanding and asks for the name of the student who needs this document. She thus recognised the utterance as a request and comprehended the proposition conveyed. However, what contributed to B's understanding is certainly also the fact that she had received an email message from A earlier where it was explained what exactly the requested certificate should be like.

Besides the indirect requests resulting from imperfect command of the target language, genuine hints can also be found in the corpus. In the following extract, for example, A wants to get a schedule of an approaching session of requalification programme for teachers of Estonian or at least to know the exact dates when she will have to take days off at work. So, she queries the availability condition – whether the schedule has been designed already (line 1). It can also be seen that the request is preceded by an ellipit version of the speech act preparator that would sound like "Ja siis mul on üks küsimus..." ("And I have a question..."). This device is used to separate the coming utterance from the previous discourse and draw B's attention to it.

*Extract 4.18* [ee\_019\_ek]

(Topic: the schedule for the requalification programme)

1 A: → ja (.) siis mul. (0.8) see kas sesside plaanid on juba olemas.

2 B: ei. plaani ei ole veel. aga sess on alles kakskend neli kuni kakskend kaheksa.

- 3 (1.0)  
4 A: ma pean teadma. (minul ju küsivad)

The academic affairs specialist recognises the utterance as a request and explains that the schedule is not ready yet. In addition, she provides the dates of the session. One reason for it may be the aim to provide at least some information in response to the request. However, it seems that this information is mainly provided to justify the absence of the schedule – it is too early for it to be ready – and thus save the face of the requestee.

A provides in response a justification for her request (line 4). It signals that the question was not asked just out of curiosity and she does need this information as some authority requires it. This remark thus attempts to save the face of the requester and also convince the requestee to provide the requested information if there is any chance.

The same technique – signal that a request is made not out of personal wish but because of a requirement stemming from some authority – is used in the following extract. A student (A) has been informed that it will not be possible to get her certificate of arrival signed before Monday due to the absence of the person who co-ordinates that particular student exchange programme. The student advisor (B) phrases this information as a question/suggestion (line 1).

*Extract 4.19* [ing\_004\_v]

(Topic: a signature for the certificate of arrival)

- 1 B: =is it ok if you would come on Monday,  
2 (1.5)  
3 A: → (well)[( )]  
4 B: [(or )]  
5 B: you are [in hurry,]  
6 A: → [(it's kind of)] urgent.  
7 (0.5)  
8 B: .hh  
9 A: → and (0.8) I need (to sign it.)  
10 (17.0) ((B talks to the head of the office))  
11 B: uh huh. (.) (sit down for a moment)

The fact that A's response is going to be negative, the dispreferred one, is signalled by a longer pause (line 2) and the beginning of her turn with the marker 'well'. B understands that the option she suggested does not suit A and she makes an inference (line 4), which partly overlaps with A's utterance. The assumption 'you are in hurry' is confirmed by A in line 6. However, A attempts to mitigate the problem somehow and thus she softens the lexical intensifier (upgrader) 'urgent' with a hedge 'kind of'. As B's reaction is minimal (inhale), A provides one more supportive reason for her request (line 9) probably meaning

“I need to have it signed”. So, she employs a more direct strategy (Str. 5) referring to the speaker-based condition of need. Differently from the previous situation, here the student manages to convince the university official to find a solution to her problem and eventually gets the document signed.

It can be concluded that there are two types of hints used in interlanguage talk – the ones resulting from insufficient command of the target language and the genuine ones, the aim of which is to mitigate the request. When the request expressed by means of a hint is not granted, supportive reasons are provided and more direct strategies used in order to convince the interlocutor provide the requested service.

### **4.3.2 Requests for verbal services/ information – Questions**

Requests for information or, in other words, questions, are discussed below in terms of the specific function that they perform: whether clients use them to obtain new information, check their inference/ assumption or check their comprehension. Questions are discussed in the order of increasing competence and background knowledge that can be signalled through them. Nevertheless, as it was also the case with requests for non-verbal services, their directness as well as the face-threatening effect are also considered.

It proved challenging in some cases to classify utterances as they could, in theory, perform several functions depending on the speaker’s intention. In such cases close attention was paid to the interactional and sequential context in which the question occurred and the best guess was made. Subsequently, although a question figures in a certain category, other possible functions of it are discussed as well.

The following analysis focuses primarily on the functions of the questions found in the data. However, as the present project studies interaction in interlanguage – the language system developed by learners – it seems relevant to consider also the linguistic forms that they employ for performing certain tasks. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the grammatical terminology used in the analysis below.

Distinction should primarily be made between the terms ‘question’ and ‘interrogative’. An ‘interrogative’ is a term referring to a grammatical phenomenon with a definite structure while a question is a broader concept defined primarily in terms of its function rather than the form. Interrogative clauses typically function to ask questions, although some of them can also be used as directives or requests for some service.

Questions in the form of polar interrogatives usually get ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as an answer (yes-no questions) or one of the alternatives suggested in the question (alternative questions). Normal word order in polar interrogatives in English is ‘auxiliary/modal verb – subject – verb – x’, where x is any other element present (e.g. object, complement etc.); the word order in interrogatives with lexical verb ‘be’ is different: ‘verb – subject – x’. Wh-interrogatives are clauses introduced by question-words like ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘which’, ‘who’, ‘why’, ‘how’ and the like. They typically function as questions seeking information – such questions cannot be answered with just ‘yes’ or ‘no’. If the wh-question-word is the subject or forms part of it, the word order is ‘subject – verb – x’; in all other cases interrogative word order is used: ‘question-word – auxiliary/modal verb – subject – verb – x’. In Estonian, however, an interrogative clause can be formed without changing the word order (although other options are available as well); an auxiliary is not inserted and it is only necessary to place a question-word at the beginning of a declarative clause to change it into interrogative thus getting the word order ‘question-word – subject – verb – x’.

Questions can be broadly defined as “utterances which require a verbal response from the addressee” (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 715). A question can have a form of an interrogative, declarative, imperative or a phrase/single word (reduced question). The major classes of questions in English are yes-no questions, wh-questions, alternative questions, tag questions and declarative questions. Declarative questions, which are also called ‘statement-questions’ (Alexander 1988/2004: 258), can be, in fact, considered a subtype of yes-no questions as they presuppose a choice between a positive and a negative answer. The only distinctive feature of such questions is the word order typical of declarative clauses (subject – verb – x) combined with function-specific use of either rising (asking for confirmation) or falling intonation (strongly assuming something). For the sake of convenience the present study proceeds in the analysis from English-based classification of questions and considers questions in Estonian within the same framework instead of introducing a separate one. This approach seems acceptable as the questions in Estonian that figure in the data can be considered within this system with no difficulty and, in fact, the only difference that needs to be taken into account is the word order that does not need to be changed and the lack of additional auxiliaries in questions when compared with declaratives.

#### 4.3.2.1 Information-seeking questions: Wh-interrogatives

In order to obtain information concerning the issues that the speaker is unfamiliar with wh-interrogatives were used. These are clauses introduced by wh-question-words like ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘which’, ‘who(m)’, ‘why’, ‘how’ and the like. As a response to a wh-question some information is normally provided – such questions cannot receive just ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as an answer.

The obvious way to seek information is certainly to pose a wh-question in its conventional complete form. Below, A needs to go to the faculty dean’s office to receive her student card and Study Information System user name. First, she intended to ask for a confirmation to the address known to her (‘so. it’s’, line 1) as she has, in fact, already been to the dean’s office. However, because of the confusion between the locations of the dean’s office and the department, she decides not to ask for confirmation but, rather, for information (line 1).

*Extract 4.20* [ing\_009\_v]

(Topic: the address of the dean’s office)

- 1 A: → ok (.) so. it’s (.) how was- what’s the correct address,  
 2 B: .hh= ((leafs through papers))  
 3 A: → =of the dea[n de]an’s office  
 4 B: [uh huh]  
 5 (8.0)  
 6 B: it (.) is u: (3.0) social science Tiigi (.) Tiigi seventy eight

As it can be seen, A is oriented to grammatical correctness as she makes a repair in the choice of a wh-question-word. B signals the uptake of the question by inhaling but she does not say anything yet as she needs to look for the address in her papers. A, nevertheless, decides to clarify which address she wants to know (line 3), to which B reacts with an overlapping ‘uh huh’ to indicate having understood the question anyway (line 4). Eventually, an answer to the question is provided (line 6).

For the sake of convenience, questions can often be reduced if their precise propositional meaning is clear from the sequential context. In the following extract a student (A) is asking a substitute secretary (B) about the precise location of the office where she can cancel her registration for a course. In line 1 she uses a shortened version of a wh-question in Estonian. As it is clear from the context what office she is talking about and that she wants to know where it is situated, only the unknown aspect is referred to in the question – the precise room (line 1).

*Extract 4.21* [ee\_018\_ek]

(Topic: the location of the office to cancel registration for a course)

- 1 A: → aga mis ruumis.  
 2 B: e: pff (2.0) (ot=ot=ot ot=ot=ot ruumid) kakssada viis kakssada kuus  
 3 kakssada sei-. muidu küsi selle:  
 4 A: jah.  
 5 B: mingi sekretäri. või õppekorralduse spetsialisti.  
 6 A: aitäh.

The secretary understands the question but she is not sure about the answer. So, she at least provides guidelines how A can find the place she is looking for.

A question can be reduced even further but, nevertheless, the context makes it possible for the interlocutor to understand it. In *Extract 4.22*, for example, a student (A) queried about the deadline for registering for courses. As B has provided an answer, A wants to know what he must do after that. Instead of asking something like “And what should I do then?” he just names the keyword for the aspect in which he is interested (line 2).

*Extract 4.22* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: listing courses in the learning agreement)

- 1 B: so I think you have to decide within these two weeks  
 2 A: → and thenn  
 3 B: after that you can send it  
 4 A: ok (.) ok?

It can be seen from the examples discussed above that wh-questions are used in the data to elicit unknown information. A person asking a question may orient to grammatical correctness and attempt to include in a question all the information necessary for an adequate answer to be provided (*Extract 4.20*). Nevertheless, in an actual communicative situation the role of context is important and it makes it unnecessary to state all details explicitly. Therefore, for the sake of saving time and effort, reduced questions can be used and as the above examples indicate, such a characteristic of questions does not interfere with understanding.

It was an unexpected observation that the proportion of purely information-seeking questions in the corpus is relatively small. The majority of the questions contain some inference or assumption and seek confirmation to it. There can certainly be a number of explanations suggested to this finding. One of them can be related to the fact that a question seeking unknown information signals that the person asking a question knows virtually nothing about that issue. The impression of ignorance, however, is not the one

that a person would normally like to create of him- or herself. Therefore, whenever possible, a person asking a question would attempt to incorporate in it some reference to the knowledge that she or he already has and thus indicate certain awareness and present the question as anticipation or double-checking. This assumption can be confirmed by the case of repair in *Extract 4.20* where the first choice of A was a question asking for confirmation and only having considered that she is, in fact, quite confused about the addresses of different offices A decides to pose a wh-question. Another advantage of the questions seeking confirmation is the fact that reference to an assumption or inference can also facilitate the process of answering as the issue of interest or some starting point is thus specified. Thus, effectiveness of communication increases.

#### 4.3.2.2 *Inference/ assumption check: Polar questions*

In the majority of the questions composing the corpus some inference or assumption could be identified and thus questions were used to check or confirm something that the speaker expects or believes to be the case. This function was performed by polar questions, be that yes-no, declarative or alternative questions. Such a relation between the function and the form seems logical as polar questions expect either affirmation or negation of the proposition of a question or choice between two or more alternatives that are suggested in a question.

To check an assumption it is possible to ask a yes-no question formulated as an interrogative. In the example below, a student (A) with a relatively low level of proficiency in Estonian diligently attempts to form such a question. Although the subject, verb and object are omitted, probably because they are obvious due to the sequential context (the full version would be “*Kas ma saan stipendiumi ka selles kuus?*”), the question-word ‘*kas*’ clearly points to an interrogative structure (line 4).

*Extract 4.23* [ee\_011\_v]

(Topic: receipt of the student grant)

- 1 B: ja: (0.8) < te saate stipendiumi (0.5) umbes kahekümnendaks. kuupäevaks.  
 2 (0.5) igal kuul. > (0.8) by the twentieth. each month  
 3 (8.0)  
 4 A: → aga: (.) kas ka: (.) selles kuus.  
 5 B: ja: ka- kahekümnnes september. on see (.) või natuke varem.

The question is effortlessly recognised as such by B and an answer/confirmation is provided. It should also be noted here that short turns, slow production of utterances and numerous pauses signal that B’s level of Estonian is not that high yet. A adapts to such a



situation and attempts to speak slowly (lines 1-2), use simplified forms (line 5) and once switches to English (line 2) in order to make sure that the message will be understood. Communication, nevertheless, almost entirely proceeds in Estonian and B welcomes A's attempt to practice the target language.

Ellipsis seems to be a common phenomenon in yes-no questions in the corpus. While in the previous example the subject, verb and object were omitted as they were obvious to both the speaker and the hearer, it is also a regular practice to form reduced questions without an auxiliary. In *Extract 4.24*, for example, A omits the auxiliary 'do' when asking B whether she should show any other documents in order to get a certificate (line 1).

*Extract 4.24* [ing\_018\_v]

(Topic: documents for issuing a certificate)

- 1 A: → you need the other ones?  
 2       (.)  
 3 B:     e: > no no no < it's it's (.) it's ok.

A question can be reduced even further and consist of just one word, like in the following continuation of *Extract 4.23*. First, A asks whether she will receive a student grant in September (line 4). After having received a positive answer (line 5) she wants to know if it will be transferred to her bank account or there is some other system of receiving the money (line 7).

*Extract 4.25* [ee\_011\_v]

(Topic: receipt of the student grant)

- 4 A:     aga: (.) kas ka: (.) selles kuus.  
 5 B:     ja: ka- kahekümnes september. on see (.) või natuke varem.  
 6       (7.5)  
 7 A: → arvele.  
 8 B:     ja. kui teil nüüd arve number on siis te saate selle kohe arvele. see võib  
 9       juhtuda ka varem. (0.5) aga nüüd sõltub see. (0.5) täitsa võimalik et te saate  
 10       selle ka juba varem. enne kahekümnendat.  
 11 A:     uh huh. uh huh

As it can be seen, there is a pause of 7.5 seconds before the question (line 6). It seems likely that this time was spent on considering information provided in line 5 and deciding whether there is anything else she would like to know. Therefore, in order not to spend any extra time on forming and uttering a complete question A just produces the element that she wants to have confirmed (line 7). The use of falling intonation (.) indicates that it is a strong assumption that is asked to be confirmed. In response, B immediately provides

confirmation supplemented with additional information thus proving that a reduced question can easily be understood if considered in context.

Another option available for checking one's assumption is to use a declarative question, which has a form of a statement and thus requires no extra effort necessary for changing a declarative clause into an interrogative one (especially in English, when compared with Estonian). As the following examples indicate, the person who is expected to provide an answer to a declarative question has no difficulty with interpreting the utterance as a question and answering it.

In *Extract 4.26* a student (A) wants to know whether the first instalment of the student grant that he will receive in September will be transferred to his bank account or it will take time to insert into the system the number that he has just provided:

*Extract 4.26* [ing\_010\_v]

(Topic: receipt of the student grant)

- 1 A: → [yeah] but I get the September's stipend (.) directly. (.) to the ac[cou]nt.=  
 2 B: [yes]  
 3 B: =yes=

Despite the declarative clause used, which is also pronounced with falling intonation, B understands that A wants to have his assumption confirmed and she does so.

In the following extract, there is an inference being made by means of a declarative question but it proves incorrect. It seems interesting to trace how a student advisor (B) understands and reacts to such an inference. At the initial stage of a conversation (not included in the extract below) a student (A) has a question concerning the way she could register for courses. As B, in response, queries whether she has already been to the faculty and received the student card, A infers that she has to go to the faculty to receive a student card and register for the courses (line 3).

*Extract 4.27* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: the receipt of the student card and the Study Information System user name)

- 1 B: e: LOSSI Street (0.5) yes. if you go just around the corner and the pink  
 2 building  
 3 A: → ok. and then I can (.) and then I make it there, (.) make my isic [card] and=  
 4 B: [.hh]  
 5 A: → =th[e:n my] registration.=  
 6 B: [e:m]  
 7 B: =no. you can get your student card from there. (0.8) if you need isic card.  
 8 A: uh huh  
 9 B: it is like e (.) wit- with a student student card you can also have discounts.  
 10 but with isic you have more discounts. [so] you can decide whether to=  
 11 A: [uh huh]

- 12 B: =make it=  
 13 A: =uh huh  
 14 B: isic card. you can make it (.) e: in the student union.  
 15 (.)  
 16 A: uh huh

The first part of the question ('and then I can (.) and then I make it there,') indicates less certainty as rising intonation (.) is used while the extension with falling intonation already signals stronger assumption. As A mixes the ISIC card with the student card, B, who has already recognised the utterance as a question, attempts to take her turn twice (inhale in line 4; 'e:m' in line 6) to resolve the misunderstanding. She gets this chance immediately after A has finished her question (latching talk in lines 5 and 7). First, she explains the difference between the student card and the ISIC card (lines 9-10), where to get the ISIC card (line 14-...) and only then provides information on the system of registering for courses in Study Information System, for which a user name has to be received from the faculty.

It can be seen that while communicating in interlanguage learners attempt to simplify the task of formulating a question. They either reduce an interrogative as the omitted details can be easily derived from the context or employ a declarative structure, which is anyway interpreted as a question by an interlocutor. Thus, although there is certainly no reference to such strategies made in most language classes, learners do discover their existence and effectiveness and, consequently, integrate them in their language use.

Alternative questions give an answerer a choice between two or more items contained in the question which are linked by a coordinating conjunction 'or'. According to Béal (1998: 20), by means of alternative questions speakers show that they are aware of the situation and are not asking out of ignorance. Such a question may project an efficient and competent image. Alternative questions can also be found in the present corpus, although there are few of them. In *Extract 4.28* (continuation of *Extract 4.20*), for example, a student (A) mistakenly thought that the terms 'faculty' and 'dean's office' apply to different offices, having received the address that she recognises as the location of the faculty phrases her assumption in the form of an alternative question thus signalling knowledge of the address of the faculty:

*Extract 4.28* [ing\_009\_v]

(Topic: the address of the dean's office)

- 1 A: → and the (.) dean's office is in the same street like, (.) or it's the same place.  
 2 B: yes it's the same place.

3 (0.8)  
4 A: ok

It was an interesting finding, however, that there was a number of questions in the data that, on the first sight, could be classified as reduced alternative questions as they contained just one alternative followed by ‘or’. It was concluded on closer examination, however, that these were, in fact, yes-no questions. In some cases the insertion of ‘or’ could be recognised as negative transfer from the speaker’s mother tongue – German – where ‘*oder*’ used utterance-finally functions as a question tag. Thus, in the following extract (continuation of *Extract 4.14* above) A’s questions in lines 2 and 5 concerning the possibilities of using a fax machine could be considered equivalent to “It’s public, isn’t it?” and “It’s in the central post office, isn’t it?” correspondingly. (For an additional example see also *Extract 4.13* above.)

*Extract 4.29* [ing\_012\_v]

(Topic: the public fax machine)

1 B: ok. the one possibility the: (.) fax machine. it is in the post office.  
2 A: → and you can use it, it’s public (.) or  
3 B: yes. it’s public (.) I- I don’t know how many kroons you should pay for this  
4 but=  
5 A: → =but it’s it’s the central post office or=  
6 B: =yes. in central (.) post office.  
7 A: oh (.) ok=

However, a similar phenomenon could also be observed in the speech of the learners whose mother tongue was certainly not German. In *Extract 4.30*, for instance, a yes-no question is followed by ‘or’:

*Extract 4.30* [ing\_016\_v]

(Topic: filling in a form)

1 A: → and do I put here my address or.  
2 [---]  
3 B: no. > no no < there’s no need (0.8) just name

A similar structure can also be found in the Estonian part of the corpus. Below, a reduced declarative question (which, in fact, could also be considered a reduced yes-no question) is supplemented with ‘*või kuidas*’ (‘or how’).

*Extract 4.31* [ee\_007\_ek]

(Topic: the system of applying for a non-fee-paying position)

1 A: → ja seal muidu üldse soome-ugri teaduskonnast. või kuidas.  
2 B: ei. [tähen]dab [just sellel erialal.] (.) jah.  
3 A: [just] [täpselt sellel aastal.]

At least the first case (*Extract 4.30*) cannot be considered a tag question as a tag question contains a declarative clause, not an interrogative one. Nevertheless, it seems that the final element ('or' / 'või kuidas') still performs the function of a question tag; the falling intonation (.) in both cases signals high level of certainty still needed to be confirmed. There is also a reference to such a phenomenon in *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Carter and McCarthy 2006) based on the corpus of everyday usage in both written and spoken English. The authors (ibid: 719) note that in informal conversation yes-no questions may end with 'or', which is comparable with question tags in reducing the force of pre-judgement/assumption suggested in the question. Thus, the elements 'or' / 'või kuidas' at the end of yes-no questions can be considered mitigating devices protecting the face of both the speaker and the hearer. Due to the use of such a device, the hearer is less constrained in the choice of an answer and in case of disagreement with an assumption suggested in the question there will be smaller impact on the face of the hearer as the proposition of the question was presented just as an assumption, not a firm belief.

#### 4.3.2.3 *Comprehension check*

The third type of function identified in the questions composing the corpus was getting confirmation from the answerer that the person who asked a question understood the answer correctly. Within the present study questions were qualified as such when the information asked for in the question had been presented earlier in the conversation. It should be noted, however, that in some cases it is impossible to be completely sure that the question classified as a comprehension check is not, in fact, seeking confirmation to an assumption as the answer given earlier had not been heard or understood. To solve this problem, close attention to the sequential context of a conversation was paid and the most likely interpretation made. Overall, the proportion of the questions checking comprehension was not great but at times students did ask them in order to be certain what further action they have to undertake. As it could be expected, polar questions – yes-no and declarative questions – were used for this purpose.

The extract presented below is the case when it is problematic to claim whether the student (A) makes an inference or checks her understanding of the information provided by the student advisor (B). An international student has extended her period of studies at the university and charge should be paid for it. B has informed A that she does not have to pay it herself – it will be paid by the foundation Archimedes. Several turns later, however, A asks the following question:

*Extract 4.32* [ee\_016\_v]

(Topic: the charge for extending the period of studies)

- 1 A: → kas mm Arhime:des mm (.) maksab ise.  
 2 (0.5)  
 3 B: jah. Arhime:des ma[ksab i]se.  
 4 A: [u:h huh]

It seems that the question is asked just to make sure that A does not have to deal with formalities and pay for the extension. Still, no matter whether A is checking an assumption or comprehension, she clearly indicates high degree of certainty by falling intonation.

In the conversation below, an academic affairs specialist (C) while talking to two students has suggested that they could take a certain language course taught at the Language Centre instead of an equivalent course taught at the chair of Estonian as a Foreign Language. At the end of the discussion of this issue after C has provided relevant details one of the students (A) asks a question to make sure they will be able to register for this course in the spring semester and, therefore, can cancel registration for the course taught in the autumn semester (line 1):

*Extract 4.33* [ee\_005\_ek]

(Topic: registration for a course)

- 1 A: → aga meie selle võime kindlasti võtta  
 2 (5.2)  
 3 C: no ma helistasin sinna ja ta ütles et (.) kevadsemestril  
 4 A: uh huh.  
 5 (2.0)  
 6 C: aga noh. kes ütleb et need siis teile sobivad need ajad,  
 7 A: jah. just. jah

The choice of the verb (*võime*) suggests that the purpose of this question might have been to obtain confirmation that students from all faculties have the right to register for that course and so, these students will also be allowed to do so. For C, however, this fact seems to be obvious and she pauses to find a different interpretation. Eventually, she confirms that this course will certainly be taught in the spring semester so it will be possible to register for it. A signals understanding and, probably, acceptance of the answer (line 4). Nevertheless, C does not seem to be sure whether her answer was what A had expected. Therefore, she mentions a factor that, indeed, could serve as an obstacle for taking the course – the unsuitable position in the timetable. A appears to be satisfied with C's answer this time (line 7) and the topic is dropped. Thus, two interpretations of this situation are possible: it may be the case that eventually C provided the information that A requested or



questions are not overused and the degree of certainty conveyed by them is increased either by falling intonation or/and by declarative structure.

#### 4.3.2.4 External modification of questions

The use of ‘or’ as a mitigating device was discussed above. As it is similar in its function to a question tag, it can be considered a syntactic downgrader, an element of internal modification of requests. It could be observed in the data, however, that a greater number and variety of external modifiers was employed to contextualise questions and make it easier for the interlocutor to answer them. Several examples of such modifies are discussed below.

A question can be preceded by a preparator introducing context for asking a question. In *Extract 4.35*, for instance, students (A and B) collaborate in indicating the source (timetable) of the information that they would like to know more about:

*Extract 4.35* [ee\_005\_ek]

(Topic: the course of Latin)

- 1 B: → aga seal on (.) ka kirjuta nud et (.) e: be: rühmadel=  
 2 A: → =ja: la[dina keel]  
 3 B: → [ladina keel] mis kursus see on.  
 4 C: ja: no: tähendab (0.5) ladina keel. see on ikkagi meie põhine asi. meie  
 5 üliõpilastele. kas teie olete ka saksa filoloog vä.  
 6 B: ja:.  
 7 C: no: (0.5) teil peavad olema (.) oma ladina keeled seal. mis on ette nähtud  
 8 saksa filoloogidele

Functionally more useful in respect to the content, however, seem “supplements” providing extra information or conditions that are likely to determine details of an answer. Below, a student who is otherwise aware of the procedures related to the learning agreement wants to know whether any steps should be modified if he wants to change some of the courses selected earlier and listed in the agreement.

*Extract 4.36* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: a list of selected courses in the learning agreement)

- 1 A: → uh huh (.) and am because I’m going to change some courses that I made  
 2 originally? first I should make these the changes?  
 3 B: uh huh  
 4 A: → and then I (.) can ask  
 5 B: can ask signature and in signature [( )]  
 6 A: [and then] ok

The new condition is presented first (lines 1-2). After that, a tentative assumption (with rising intonation) in the form of a declarative question is made. After an affirmative answer



has been provided (line 3), an assumption concerning the next step is made (line 4). B, in turn, signals understanding of the conversation by completing A's utterance (line 5). Thus, the fact that A provided additional information/condition before the question itself, strengthens the guarantee that the information subsequently obtained will be accurate.

Extension to a question can also be provided in order to obtain an affirmative answer. In *Extract 4.37*, first, the subject of the question to follow is stated (line 1). Then, justification for asking a question is presented (line 2). The question itself is not, in fact, even finished but it is, nevertheless, understood due to the justification provided earlier.

*Extract 4.37* [ee\_005\_ek]

(Topic: switching groups)

1 B: → meil on veel ( ) ((names the course))

2 A: → kui mulle (0.5) teise grupi ajad (.) e sobivad parem. kas ma võin (0.5) ma  
3 võin

4 C: see on väga raskendatud sest et=e: (0.5) ikkagi on määratud see et, ühtlase  
5 tasemega inimesed gruppi. [nii=et]

6 A: [uh huh]

As in this case the question is also partly a request for permission to attend a course with the group different from the one where a student (A) was placed, the information about the reason for requesting such a permission seems to be highly relevant as it may convince the hearer that the request is justified and, therefore, a positive answer should be given.

It can be seen that external modifiers are used in the corpus with three main aims: first, for discourse purposes – to provide context for a question (preparators); second, to provide additional information or conditions that may determine some details of the answer; third, to justify the request for information and thus increase the probability of getting a (positive) answer (supportive reasons). As a result of the use of these devices, on the one hand, it is easier to understand the essence of a question and provide an adequate answer; on the other, the person asking a question is more likely to receive the desired (type of) information.

In addition to the relatively general categories discussed above, an intriguing modifying structure was identified in a number of questions. Although this structure is, in fact, a combination of such devices as speech act preparators with content preparators and/or supportive reasons, it deserves separate consideration due to its frequency of use and stable structure in both languages. This combination of modifiers can be termed a question-framing device as it is mainly employed to identify the utterance to follow as a question and to facilitate understanding of it.

An extended question can consist of just two elements: a question-framing device in the form of a speech act preparator and the question itself. This structure can occur at the beginning of a conversation. In *Extract 4.38* an academic affairs specialist (B) indicates her availability and readiness to provide service by asking about student's (A) issue of concern (line 1). In response, A identifies the reason for coming as a question (line 2) and then attempts to phrase the question itself, which eventually gets done with the help of B (lines 4,6).

*Extract 4.38*<sup>7</sup> [ee\_006\_ek]

(Topic: application for a non-fee-paying position)

- 1 B: mis mure teil on.  
 2 A: → mul on niisugune kurb küsimus. kas ma võin (.) kirjutada avaldus et e: (1.5)  
 3 olen riigi eel- (0.5) väline. (0.8) kas katsun see (.) tasuta  
 4 B: a: konkureerida tasuta.=  
 5 A: =jah=  
 6 B: =riigieelarvelisele kohale.  
 7 A: jah=

Such a structure is also common in the middle of a conversation. Its main function seems to be attraction of hearer's attention and distinguishing the question from the preceding discourse. In the example below, a student advisor (B) asks whether a student (A) has paid for the extension of her studies period. The sequential organisation of this dialogue is characterised by B asking questions (lines 1, 3) and A providing answers (lines 2, 4, 8); the only exception is A's question for checking her comprehension (line 6) which, nevertheless, primarily serves the purpose of answering the question in line 1.

*Extract 4.39* [ee\_016\_v]

(Topic: charge for the extension of the study period)

- 1 B: on siin (.) kas te maksite ise kolmkend krooni ise ära.  
 2 A: ei.  
 3 B: ei maksnud.  
 4 A: ei.  
 5 (0.5)  
 6 A: pikenduse eest jah  
 7 B: jah  
 8 A: ei.  
 9 (0.8)  
 10 A: → vot ma tahaksin küsida kas e (.) m- kuhu ja si- millal

In order to change this pattern and emphasise her role as a questioner, A explicitly states it that she is willing to ask a question (line 10) and only then does so.

<sup>7</sup> This extract is further discussed in 4.3.3

A speech act preparator is also used to separate from each other questions concerning different topics. In *Extract 4.40*, having discussed certificates, a student (A) wants to switch to the issue of the tuition fee. For this purpose, first, she signals that she is going to request information (speech act preparator); after that, she identifies the general topic of the question (content preparator) and, finally, poses the question itself (lines 1-2):

*Extract 4.40* [ing\_018\_v]

(Topic: invoice for tuition fee)

- 1 A: → and then I wanted to ask (.) about (.) the tuition fee, (0.5) how do I get the (.)  
 2 invoice.  
 3 (.)  
 4 B: e you are (.) student um (0.5) a:: you are student of Baltic studies.=  
 5 A: =yes.  
 6 B: ok. (.) then you will receive your invoice from the Baltic studies centre.  
 7 A: ok.

Such a structure has several advantages. First, it makes it less challenging for the person asking a question to formulate it as it is considerably easier to produce three phrases instead of one long sentence. Second, it makes it easier for the potential answerer to understand the question as the requester moves from an illocution to the general topic and then the proposition of the utterance. Third, having contributed to the hearer's proper understanding of the question, such a question-framing device also increases the possibility of obtaining relevant answer.

It should also be noted that the abovementioned structure of a question-framing device is not the only possible one. The order as well as nature of elements after the speech act preparator can vary slightly. In the extract below, A first of all identifies the speech act – a request for information. Then she asks the question and, finally, supplements it with a supportive reason – the justification for asking (lines 2-3).

*Extract 4.41* [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: registration for courses in the Study Information System)

- 1 A: → ok. (.) and (.) another question (.) u:m did I have to make again the  
 2 registration for the course because (.) e: teacher said (.) that we should make  
 3 again registration in internet (is it)  
 4 (.)  
 5 B: u:mm (.) have you received your student card already.=

The question-framing device can be extended even further: in the following example it already contains three elements. A starts by informing B that he is going to talk about some more of his problems and, probably, request help (line 1); this utterance serves

as a speech act preparator. Humour is probably here recourse to mitigate the face-threatening direct statement (line 1).

*Extract 4.42* [ing\_008\_v]

(Topic: clarification concerning forms)

- 1 A: → I have some other problems \$ huh \$  
 2 (4.5) ((A shows the forms he has brought))  
 3 A: → a (.) these forms (.) I don't know what to do with them (0.5) do you know  
 4 that? (.) \$ huhuhu \$  
 5 B: uh huh

As the next step, A indicates the forms that he is going to talk about ('these forms', line 3) and identifies the problem: 'I don't know what to do with them'. Only then an indirect request for information concerning the forms is made, followed by a chuckle to reduce the threat to A's face. The combination of the two final elements – the statement of a problem and a question addressing B's ability to help – can be identified as a hint.

As pointed out above, the question-framing device seems to be an effective structure facilitating communication for both the requester of information and the requestee. On the basis of the data analysed as well as personal experience it seems also possible to claim that the use of such a strategy is not typical exclusively of language learners of relatively low language proficiency. Some more advanced learners may employ it too, probably due to its capacity to identify the illocutionary force of the coming utterance and create context for it.

### **4.3.3 Language-based misunderstanding**

As the analysis of requests and responses to them has proved, in service encounters conducted in the language that is not the first language for the requester, parties jointly produce the meaning and cooperate in achieving communicative goals. As a result, surprisingly little misunderstanding resulting from the requester's imperfect linguistic competence could be observed. Below, three cases of such misunderstanding are analysed and considered within the broader explanatory framework provided in the present study.

In the first example a student (A) wants to know whether she has right to receive the ISIC card if she does not study at any university in her home country. However, it seems that she has difficulty with the selection of the appropriate grammatical form to express that. Therefore, she chooses one of the options (which proves to be correct) but instinctively speaks in a low voice so that the problematic form would not be conspicuous (line 1).

## Extract 4.43 [ing\_013\_v]

(Topic: receiving the ISIC card)

- 1 A: → °(e if) I'm not student inn my home country°  
 2 B: what?  
 3 A: → when I'm not student in home country. because I'm not in any university (.)  
 4 in my home country.  
 5 B: it doesn't matter be[cause here you are now registered as a stu]dent so  
 6 A: [not matter. (.) ok uh huh (.) ok]  
 7 B: anyway [they] will give you  
 8 A: [uh huh]

As a result, B fails to hear distinctly what was asked and signals that the question should be repeated (line 2). A, however, interprets the problem as a result of the use of an incorrect subordinating conjunction ('if') and, therefore, substitutes it with 'when'. Nevertheless, to facilitate understanding, she also raises her voice and expands on the condition that initiated the question (lines 3-4). It is, apparently, louder voice that primarily contributes to B's understanding and she answers the question.

The following two cases of misunderstanding result from the use of a form or a word that convey the meaning that is different from that intended by the speaker. The first utterance in the conversation considered below was not, unfortunately, recorded due to technical reasons. Nevertheless, the gist of it can be easily reconstructed from the context: a fee-paying student (A) wants to apply for the right to continue her education on a state-financed basis. However, she experiences a difficulty related to morphology and instead of the adjective '*tasuta*' (non-fee-paying) uses the word '*tasuline*' (fee-paying). The academic affairs specialist (B) is surprised as usually students want to apply for a non-fee-paying position and she asks why A wants to do that, emphasising the problematic word '*tasulisele*' (line 1).

## Extract 4.44 [ee\_008\_ek]

(Topic: application for non-fee-paying education)

- [---]  
 1 B: miks te tasulisele kohale tahate minna.  
 2 A: a:: (.) nii et kas seal on vaba koht.  
 3 (0.8)  
 4 B: tasulisele kohale.  
 5 (0.5)  
 6 A: o:. tasuta.  
 7 B: jah. noh.  
 8 A: \$ jah. täpselt \$  
 9 B: no muidugi saab kirjutada. (1.0) jah. saab küll.

A, however, does not interpret B's surprise as a result of her use of the wrong word but, rather, as a reaction to an inappropriate request. Therefore A asks whether there are any vacancies (line 2). As a result, B pauses and realises what the cause of misunderstanding is. Nevertheless, she decides not to correct the mistake herself but, once again, draws A's attention to the problematic word (line 4). A now realises that there was a wrong word used and corrects the mistake (line 6). B signals acceptance of the repair and A confirms it once again involving also humour to relieve the embarrassment. B, in turn, switches back to the goal of A's visit and replies that it is possible to write an application.

This example illustrates that communication in this case was task-oriented and infelicitous form was the focus of attention only as long as it posed a problem to the progress of the service encounter. As the first choice, the academic affairs specialist attempted to interpret the use of the unexpected word in some logical way; having realised that there is a mistake, however, she did not correct it as she did not want to assume a role of a language teacher. Instead, she provided the student with an opportunity to modify wording so that it would meet the intended proposition of a request.

The focus on the task can also be observed in the following extract where another student (A) wants to apply for a non-fee-paying position. The use of a question-framing device in this conversation was discussed above (*Extract 4.38*) but it seems interesting to consider the focus of the academic affairs specialist on the word 'kurb' (sad) in a speech act preparator '*mul on niisugune kurb küsimus*' (line 2). The level of language proficiency of A is rather low and she has difficulties with explaining what her request is (lines 2-3). B, nevertheless, understands what A wants to do and restates her goal (line 4, 6) to signal understanding and obtain confirmation that the question was understood correctly.

*Extract 4.45* [ee\_006\_ek]

(Topic: application for non-fee-paying education)

- 1 B: mis mure teil on.  
 2 A: → mul on niisugune kurb küsimus. kas ma võin (.) kirjutada avaldus et e: (1.5)  
 3 olen riigi eel- (0.5) väline. (0.8) kas katsun see (.) tasuta  
 4 B: a: konkureerida tasuta.=  
 5 A: =jah=  
 6 B: =riigieelarvelisele kohale.  
 7 A: jah=  
 8 B: → =otse loomulikult. võib ikka. mi- miks see kurb on.  
 9 (1.2)  
 10 A: → kurb.  
 11 B: → te ütlesite et kurb küsimus.  
 12 (.)  
 13 A: ei=eI=eI=eI \$ niisugune küsimus [ma (mõtlesin)] \$  
 14 B: [a:: sellel] ei ole midagi.

- 15 A: \$ ei see huh \$  
 16 B: te võite kirjutada iga kell selle avalduse ainult et me ei tea praegu palju meil  
 17 kohti vabaneb.

After A's confirmation of B's comprehension B answers the question saying that it is possible to apply for a non-fee-paying position (line 8). As it can be seen, she decides to interpret the question in lines 2-3 as a request for information (whether it is possible to apply), not as a request to explain to A what this application should be like (Str. 2 - permission).

Having provided the requested service, however, B focuses on the interactional side of the conversation and expresses interest in A's use of the adjective '*kurv*' in the first utterance (line 8). Although she realises that A's linguistic competence is not high, B assumes that there was a reason for A to say that the question she is about to ask is a sad one. A is obviously surprised by this question and after a pause, having failed to interpret it, signals need for clarification (line 10). B, in turn, explains her reason for asking (line 11) to which A responds that she did not mean it and signals that, probably, it was a slip of the tongue (line 13). Embarrassment is, again, alleviated by humorous approach. B's response in the following line, however, seems to refer not to A's slip of the tongue but to the use of '*kurv*' in the context. She says that it is a normal practice to apply for a non-fee-paying position and everyone is allowed to do so. Thus, again, the service provider focuses on the details of service rather than linguistic issues.

The analysis of the cases of language-based misunderstanding suggests that communication in the context of student counselling is primarily task-oriented and linguistic mistakes are ignored as long as they do not interfere with understanding and successful provision of the service requested. If a linguistic mistake occurs, an interlocutor primarily attempts to find a logical explanation to an unexpected phenomenon. If it becomes clear, nevertheless, that there was a mistake, the emphasis placed on it is minimal and the client is encouraged to correct the mistake him- or herself. Once the proposition of an utterance is clear, the service provider immediately focuses on the content of a conversation again and proceeds with providing the requested service.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The data suggest that requesting service in a non-native language students use language instrumentally as they are primarily oriented to achieving their goal – receiving verbal or non-verbal form of service. The selection of strategies for requesting non-verbal service, mainly issue of various certificates and submission of applications, seems to be mainly

driven by such factors as formal simplicity and illocutionary transparency. That is, requesters attempt to formulate their wish briefly and clearly and to make it easily recognisable as a request. It signals their recognition of the transactional function of language. The preference for relatively simple forms also seems to be a result of learners' unwillingness or/and inability to formulate and use more sophisticated structures as production difficulties indicated by pauses, hesitations, reformulations and self-repair can be observed even in the requests worded rather directly. Learners' preference for more direct modes of conveying pragmatic intent in interlanguage than in both or either first or second language has also been reported in numerous studies of realisation of speech acts in general (for examples see Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 8) and also of requests in particular (e.g., Tanaka 1988; Koike 1989; Fukushima 1990).

The most obvious choice – imperative structure – is, nevertheless, avoided, probably being considered too direct and impolite for the present context. So, for standard requests the students mainly use the strategies falling under the third category, situated higher on the scale of directness levels. That is, conventionally indirect strategies addressing speaker-based conditions are employed, which means that their wishes, desires and needs are referred to thus placing speaker's interests above the hearer's. There does not seem to be any traceable system behind the choice between Str. 4 and 5, which differ in the level of directness expressing requester's wish or demand correspondingly. It can be assumed that the students choose the structures that seem most convenient and customary to them while consideration of the level of politeness remains in the background, if minded at all.

There appears to be a tendency for the students to use strategies based on hearer-oriented conditions (Cat. II) when they recognise the service requested as something deviating from the standard and thus involving higher rate of imposition and calling for more indirect and polite strategies. There are, indeed, also routine requests for certificates expressed as queries about requestee's ability (e.g. *Extract 4.11*), which probably demonstrate the requester's perception of the level of politeness required in relation to such an imposition as well as his or her preference for a certain linguistic structure. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases the request phrased with reference to the hearer's ability, willingness or permission or employing suggestory formulae involves some favour that the university official is not obliged to do, such as issuing a certificate immediately or before the agreed date, indicating a longer period of stay on the invitation necessary for the residence permit, copying documents for a student or allowing him to use a fax machine.



Thus, it seems that in the conversations recorded for the present study students do, either consciously or unconsciously, employ more indirect and, consequently, polite strategies when the rank of imposition increases. Nevertheless, this statement should certainly be treated as just one of possible interpretations because the amount of data in a single conversation is limited and, in fact, it can also be the case that a particular student just prefers the hearer-oriented strategy in general, irrespective of the rate of imposition or even context. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 8) have also pointed out that it has been documented that the choice of strategies by non-native speakers is sometimes less sensitive to contextual factors than that of native speakers.

In relation to the use of hints, the most indirect of request strategies, the finding of Trosborg's (1995) study was confirmed that there are, in fact, two types of hints used in interlanguage talk – the ones resulting from insufficient command of the target language and the genuine ones, the aim of which is to mitigate the request. The data have demonstrated that quite often what appear to be hints are, in fact, learners' attempts to formulate requests in the way that seems the simplest one to them because they avoid or failed to use conventional forms of requests. Thus, the lack of transparency in such requests is not intentional and is not meant to reduce the illocutionary force of utterances. Nevertheless, there are also some cases when a hint can be interpreted as a result of speakers' recognition of the fact that they are not entitled to receive the service immediately and the requested action is likely to be denied. Thus, the reasons behind the use of the strategy termed as a hint can vary in interlanguage talk.

Although preference for more explicit forms of request seems to be primarily determined by the considerations of convenience of production rather than politeness, it can be claimed that learners do recognise, even though unconsciously, differences in the directness level of various request strategies as they tend to resort to more direct strategies if a request phrased indirectly was misunderstood or denied. Such an approach can be observed even in the cases when ambiguity results from lexical choice – a single word just does not convey precise meaning and it would suffice to clarify the intended meaning of that word (e.g. *Extract 4.3*). Thus, learners seem to distinguish between the levels of directness that can be achieved by means of different structures and apply this knowledge in the cases when their message has not been understood or accepted and needs to be expressed more explicitly.

In addition to the choice of request strategies the level of politeness can also be modified by modality markers. In the requests constituting the present corpus mainly the

use of downgraders can be observed while upgraders are rare (e.g. *Extract 4.19*) probably due to the institutionality of the context. In the speech of less proficient learners, the use of such lexical/phrasal downgraders as hesitators and hedges seems to be unintentional, resulting from production difficulties. The requests phrased by more proficient speakers of the target language, especially the ones involving higher rate of imposition and, therefore, based on more indirect strategies (mainly Cat.II), do contain syntactic as well as lexical/phrasal downgraders, although their number is not large. The main types of downgraders observed in the data are questions, past tense, embedding, ing-form, modals, consultative devices, downtoners, hedges and hesitators. It indicates that having reached a certain level of linguistic competence learners start to pay more attention to pragmalinguistic characteristics of their speech, that is, they attempt to convey the intended meaning (including communicative functions, attitudes and propositions) by means of appropriate linguistic forms.

Most of requests for verbal service – questions – cannot be considered within the system developed by Trosborg (1995); therefore, a separate classification was created for them. Nevertheless, it seems that questions, which are, in fact, quite direct requests for information, can in general be assigned to Cat. IV in the classification of request strategies.

Among the requests for verbal service, mainly information, three types of questions can be identified. Requests for unfamiliar information expressed by wh-questions are rare. It can be assumed that it is so due to the fact that they threaten the face of the requester as well as the requestee. Asking an information-seeking question a person inevitably signals one's ignorance while the interlocutor may do so if he or she fails to give an answer. Most of the wh-questions in the corpus are, probably for the sake of saving time and effort, reduced in terms of their structure: only propositionally and contextually most important elements of a sentence (e.g. question-word, subject, verb, adverbial etc.) are included in a question while the hearer is left to derive the rest of the meaning from the context. The analysis of conversations indicates that reduced questions receive relevant answers, which proves that their propositional message is understood and omission of certain elements does not interfere with effective communication.

The proportion of the questions intended to receive confirmation from the answerer that the person who asked a question understood the answer correctly is not large either. One of the reasons can be the fact that if such a question is expressed in a tentative way (i.e. by means of interrogative structure or/and rising intonation) or, even worse, the proposition to be confirmed is wrong, it will signal client's failure to understand the

answer completely and, indirectly, official's failure to provide information clearly enough. Therefore, declarative questions are preferred to yes-no questions with interrogative structure and higher degree of certainty is also expressed by means of falling intonation at the end of an utterance. Moreover, at least in English, questions with declarative structure may be considered to be easier to form as no auxiliaries have to be inserted and word order does not need to be changed in this case either. It can be assumed that for these reasons the students recorded for the present study preferred declarative questions for checking their proper comprehension of the answer of the university official. It was, nevertheless, recognised as a question and an answer was provided in return.

A predominant number of questions composing the corpus contain some inference or assumption and, therefore, can be considered as seeking to check or confirm something that the speaker expects or believes to be the case. It can be suggested that such questions are widely used because their face-threatening effect is the smallest when compared to the other two types of questions discussed above. As the questions of this type express an assumption of the speaker, they signal that she or he has some familiarity with the issue but, at the same time, if the assumption proves to be wrong, the requester does not lose the face because he or she, anyway, indicated some degree of tentativeness already in the question. The answerer, on the other hand, is provided with a statement that can be affirmed or negated, which makes the task of answering a question easier.

The function of checking an inference or assumption is performed by polar questions: yes-no, declarative and alternative questions. Such a relation between the function and the form seems logical as polar questions expect either affirmation or negation of the proposition of a question or choice between two or more alternatives that are suggested there. In the present corpus yes-no and declarative questions are mostly used to check an inference or assumption. It should also be noted, once more, that while communicating in a non-native language learners attempt to simplify the task of formulating a question. They either reduce an interrogative as the omitted details can be easily derived from the context or employ a declarative structure, which is anyway interpreted as a question by an interlocutor. Moreover, the greater or lesser degree of certainty is signalled by falling and rising intonation correspondingly. Thus, although learners are certainly not instructed explicitly in using the abovementioned strategies, they do discover their existence and effectiveness and, consequently, integrate them in their language use.

As it has already been mentioned, there are few alternative questions in the present corpus. The reason for it may be the fact that in the context of student counselling considered in this study, there is a small number of cases when a student is aware of several options available but cannot choose the right/best one. Nevertheless, there have been several cases identified where a student attaches the coordinating conjunction ‘or’ or, in Estonian, a phrase ‘*või kuidas*’ to a yes-no or declarative (in Estonian) question and thus gets a structure similar to an alternative question. Such an element, however, can be considered similar to a question tag and function as a mitigating device protecting the face of both the speaker and the hearer. Due to the use of such a device, the hearer is less constrained in the choice of an answer and in case of disagreement with an assumption suggested in the question there will be smaller impact on the face of the hearer as the proposition of the question was presented just as an assumption, not a firm belief.

As it has been pointed out above, questions are in essence rather direct requests for information. Nevertheless, there are only single instances of the use of internal modifiers to mitigate them. The most widespread one is a hesitator but it seems that, as it was also the case with requests for non-verbal services, learners hesitate because of the production difficulties – not with the aim of mitigating a request.

The effectiveness of a request, however, can also be increased with the help of external modification. In the data analysed above, such modifiers are used in requests for non-verbal as well as verbal services. Their variety is, nevertheless, limited: two general types of preparators are employed, which introduce the general content of the request and the speech act itself, and supportive reasons for a request are provided to explain or justify why the requester has to impose on the requestee. Content preparators may introduce the context that initiated a request or provide additional information or conditions that are likely to determine specific details of a response. Mentioning supportive reasons a requester may achieve greater understanding on the part of the requestee and, hence, compliance becomes more likely.

It has been noticed that in requests for information made in both English and Estonian a specific combination of external modifiers can be identified in a number of cases. This structure is termed a question-framing device as the first element of it – a speech act preparator – draws hearer’s attention to the utterance to follow and identifies it as a question; moreover, the following elements – content preparators or/and supportive reasons – identify the topic of the question or provide context for it, thus facilitating comprehension. It has also been determined that in the conversations analysed, there are

two main reasons for employing a question-framing device: it is used either to distinguish a question from the preceding discourse (especially if the requester had to answer, rather than ask questions right before that) or to separate from each other questions concerning different topics.

The use of external modifiers in general and, as a special case, a question-framing device, entails several positive consequences. First, it makes it less challenging for the person making a request to formulate it as it is considerably easier to produce several phrases instead of one long sentence. Second, it makes it easier for the hearer to understand the request as the requester moves from presenting an illocution to the general topic or context and then to the proposition of the utterance. Third, having contributed to the hearer's proper understanding of the request, external modification also increases chances for getting the request granted or for obtaining relevant information. Thus, external modifiers and a question-framing device facilitate communication for both the requester and the requestee and contribute to the positive outcome of a request.

As the application of the next-turn proof procedure has indicated, all the requests analysed were eventually understood (illocutionary effect) and, if possible, accepted (inherent perlocutionary effect) and granted (consecutive perlocutionary consequences). Indeed, there was surprisingly little misunderstanding and the parties involved cooperated in creating the meaning and achieving the desired goal.

Some learners attempted to orient to linguistic correctness as it could be observed in cases of hesitation and self-repair. If the appropriate form or word had not been found, an alternative was used but speaker's awareness of the problematicity of the form was indicated by a chuckle. Humour was also used to ease an embarrassing situation when a mistake was made that interfered with understanding a request or when client's question indicated failure to comprehend information presented earlier.

The service provider, however, minimally orients to the form of the language used. That is, for her, communication is primarily task-oriented and language is a vehicle for it. As it could be seen in the analysis of the application of request strategies, even when a request seemed to be expressed too directly and, thus, impolitely, the service provider outwardly did not indicate any reaction to that and the incident did not seem to affect the outcome of the service encounter. Closer analysis of the cases of language-based misunderstanding also suggested that in the context of student counselling linguistic mistakes are ignored as long as they do not interfere with understanding and successful provision of the service requested. If a linguistic mistake occurs, a service provider

primarily attempts to find a logical explanation to the use of an unexpected form. If it becomes clear, nevertheless, that there was a mistake, orientation to it is minimal and the client is encouraged to correct the mistake him- or herself. Once the proposition of a request is clear, the service provider immediately focuses on the content of the conversation again and proceeds with providing the requested service. So, a university official adheres to her institutional role and refuses to adapt the role of a language teacher (Kurhila 2005: 156).

Due to the approach to language as a vehicle performing transactional function, conversation proceeds faster and the goal is achieved more quickly. Such refusal to align with orientation to grammatical correctness, however, may make the service provider appear unhelpful and unfriendly to the language learner. It could be seen in the conversations analysed above, for example, that an academic affairs specialist did not adapt humorous attitude in case of students' mistakes although they did so in order to mitigate the face-threatening situation. She, instead, minimised the focus on linguistic problems and chose to remain oriented on the content of conversation. She also did not correct the grammatical mistakes that made proposition unclear but encouraged self-repair on the part of the student. Such an approach, again, may appear unhelpful to some learners although, in fact, in communication self-repair is considered to be preferable to other-repair as it maintains harmony and accord in an exchange allowing a conversation flow in a 'standard' way (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 66); moreover, it saves the face of the speaker. Although no negative reaction to such meaning-orientedness could be observed in the conversations analysed, it is impossible to say how clients felt about such behaviour and whether they realised what was behind it. Therefore, it seems useful to make learners aware of these specifics of institutional interaction. As a result, the official's refusal to orient to the form of utterances would not initiate negative attitude and learners themselves would not be stressed because of the failure to avoid grammatical mistakes.

The fact that institutional communication is task-oriented and minimal attention is paid to linguistic forms does not yet mean that participants do not cooperate in making conversation progress and achieving understanding. Indeed, close analysis of the recorded conversations proves that interaction in a non-native language in this institutional setting is characterised by cooperation and support. To start with, participants orient to achieving the goal. The client tries to express a request briefly and clearly, so that the service provider would understand it easily and quickly. That may also be the cause of requests sounding too direct and, therefore, impolite at times – it is the result of the requester's attempt to

avoid ambiguity and guarantee comprehension. Additional information is provided if it seems relevant. If misunderstanding occurs, a client immediately takes steps to resolve it. The service provider, in turn, focuses on the content of requester's utterances, ignoring infelicitous forms. Language is used primarily for communication of the meaning rather than for interaction; therefore, client's excessive directness is not attended to. Understanding of the message is immediately signalled either verbally or through action while in the case of doubt clarifying questions are asked. If the client seems to have difficulties with comprehension, additional clarifications are provided until understanding is signalled. As a result of interactants' adherence to these implicit principles communication is, indeed, an orderly and cooperative activity effective in achieving the desired goal.

Despite the focus on communication of information rather than feelings and attitudes, participants in the conversations analysed, nevertheless, seem to orient to maintaining their own as well as interlocutor's face. While expressing requests for service and information, requesters attempt to signal certain amount of confidence and background knowledge while also attaching to the message a degree of tentativeness in case the request is refused or assumption challenged. More advanced learners also indicate sensitivity to increase in the rate of imposition by inserting downgraders and external modifiers in order to mitigate the impact on the requestee. The service provider, in turn, ignores incorrect and inappropriate forms while having understood a message immediately signals that. She also avoids giving negative responses and when, nevertheless, has to do so, mitigates them by means of hesitation, impersonalisation and suggestion of explanations or alternative options. Therefore, it can be concluded that the analysed conversations in interlanguage are in the majority of cases characterised by concern for maintaining each other's face.

Finally, from conversation analytic perspective, even when interlanguage is involved, talk-in-interaction still seems to be a deeply ordered phenomenon created by participants intuitively orienting to this orderliness. Indeed, turns in talk are sequentially ordered: they form pairs of utterances like request-response or question-answer, which are called adjacency pairs because the first pair part preconditions the second one. As participants orient to adjacency pairs, they demonstrate to each other understanding and willingness to cooperate in achieving meaningful cooperation (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 41).

Preference organisation can also be observed in a number of cases. As it was mentioned above (2.3.2), adjacency pairs may have alternative actions relevant for the

second position, whereas one of the alternatives is generally preferred to another. Thus, a request may be granted, which is preferred action, or declined – the dispreferred alternative. As Pomerantz (1984) has pointed out, preferred and dispreferred actions are normally performed in different ways: preferred responses are generally delivered straightforwardly and without delay while dispreferred actions are accompanied by hesitation, delay and mitigation in the form of downgraders, explanations or positive comments. The same characteristics could be observed in the corresponding responses of students and, to a somewhat greater extent, university officials; it may be the case that due to the role of a student as a requester, a student advisor/ academic affairs specialist had to provide answers to requests more often than students. Nevertheless, the frequent orientation to preferred responses and markedness of dispreferred actions prove that interactants are willing to achieve cooperation and rapport.

When organisation of turn-taking in general is considered, it also seems that participants succeed in achieving orderly interaction. Turns of interlocutors alternate, normally one person speaks at a time and there is relatively little overlap and minimal gaps between turns. It is noticeable that there is more overlap in conversations in Estonian where a particular academic affairs specialist is involved. It can be suggested that longer turns and overlapping talk result from her personal conversational style rather than the status of a native speaker as conversations conducted in Estonian by a student advisor do not differ significantly from her conversations in English.

When details of overlapping talk are considered closely enough, it appears that interactants still orient to general principles of turn-taking and intervene when they notice possible TRPs, although not necessarily the actual ones, decided upon by the speaker. Thus, in request sequences overlap occurs mostly when the hearer wants to indicate understanding of the ongoing utterance when some part of a proposition is conveyed successfully, although the hearer also realises that the turn-in-progress is not complete. This is signalled by ‘continuers’ (Schegloff 1982: 80, quoted in Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 106) – tokens like ‘uh huh’, ‘huh’, ‘yes’/ ‘yeah’ or ‘jah’/ ‘jaa’, some longer phrases like ‘ok, good’ or repetition of some elements of the utterance. The second type of overlap identified in request sequences seems to be a result of hearer’s recognition and projection of the approaching final part of an utterance. As TRP seems to be close anyway, the hearer either cooperatively finishes the utterance for the speaker or starts with his or her response to it. So, turn-taking system of interlanguage interactions seems deeply ordered and even overlaps serve as evidence of understanding and cooperation.



It can be concluded that the communicative act of request in institutional conversations conducted in a non-native language is characterised by transactional function of language and orientation to the task to be performed through talk. Despite a great number of difficulties that can be expected to occur in such interaction, interlanguage talk can be best described through cooperation rather than misunderstanding. If focus is shifted from native speaker norm and approach to interlanguage as a deficient version of it, it can be observed in the conversations composing the corpus that cooperation and orderliness are present on several levels: the level of content, interpersonal orientation and organisation of talk-in-interaction.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The theoretical aim of the present project was to develop a descriptive model that would make it possible to provide comprehensive analysis of requests realised in interlanguage in an institutional setting, focusing on functional and formal aspects of requests as well as assessing speakers' success in achieving their institutional goals. As a result, in the process of initial analysis of the empirical data, a set of linguistic theories and perspectives was formed that, subsequently, contributed to holistic portrayal of IL use on different levels providing insights into formal realisation, functions and effectiveness of requests while also shedding light on participants' logic guiding choice of certain strategies and linguistic forms.

The unique combination of methods also helped to avoid methodological pitfalls that were identified in previous studies on interlanguage pragmatics. Within this tradition, empirical data were normally obtained by means of discourse completion tasks or, more recently, elicited role-plays and, as a result, mostly examined learners' pragmatic knowledge and intuition, having little to say about their performance in authentic communicative situations. Learners' competence was compared to that of native speakers and numerous mistakes and failures were identified. Such data certainly has rich potential for syllabus design but focus on learners' level of competence and deficiency of their IL provided a somewhat limited portrayal of their operation in real-life situations. Therefore, the present study sought to complement earlier findings by focusing on the application of learners' competence in naturally-occurring conversations and, thus, contextualising speech act realisations by considering them in immediate interactional context.

Rigorousness of the analytical approach of CA enabled examination of minute details of IL as well as identification of overall organisation of talk-in-interaction. Pragmatic perspective made it possible to suggest assumptions about purposes for using specific strategies and linguistic forms and trace the logic guiding linguistic choices. More narrowly, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness informed analysis of participants' interpersonal orientation while IL perspective accounted for formal choices determined by strategic orientation in the use of non-native language. Speech act theory, in line with CA, presented talk as social action and functional effectiveness of such action could be assessed within the framework of the model of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. As a result, a detailed account has been produced of the functioning of IL in

realisation of requests in real-life situations, with special emphasis being made on an emic, participants' perspective.

Analysis of authentic empirical data has proved that requests made within longer conversations in IL (when compared to discourse completion tasks, for instance) are systematically organised. Subjects mostly use language instrumentally as they are primarily oriented to achieving their goal of receiving institutionally-relevant service. Thus, participants' orientation to institutional context of interaction could be observed, with transactional function of language as an outcome. While institutional setting determined the order of talk, the resulting formal characteristics of interaction also locally produced institutional context as well as relevant participant roles. So, reflexive relationship between the context and talk could be traced.

A specific interactional pattern following from the interplay between the setting and participants' goals was observed in both languages, which confirmed the IL hypothesis suggesting the existence of a universal system of the development of learners' language. Moreover, systematic variation in the performance of learners with different levels of proficiency could be traced, which points to the existence of IL continuum. Requests can be overall characterised in terms of formal simplicity and illocutionary transparency. That is, due to production difficulties and desire to express a request briefly and clearly, relatively simple linguistic forms were mainly employed.

For standard requests for non-verbal service (mainly issue of certificates and submission of applications) conventionally indirect strategies addressing speaker-based conditions were employed (Cat. III), which means that requesters placed their wishes, desires and needs above those of the requestee. It seems that selection of these structures was primarily determined by their formal simplicity and common use, while the level of politeness was of peripheral importance.

A tendency could be traced that strategies based on hearer-oriented conditions (Cat. II) referring to requestee's ability, willingness or permission were employed in the cases involving higher degree of imposition than it normally was. It can be suggested, therefore, that in the present corpus subjects, either consciously or unconsciously, drew on more indirect and, consequently, polite strategies when the rank of imposition increased. Nevertheless, it should also be admitted that conversations were limited in length and it is impossible to test whether or not such use was a result of general preference for a particular strategy by a learner. As it has been documented (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 8), interacting in non-native language people are often less responsive to contextual factors

than they are in their mother tongue and, thus, use the same forms across different contexts.

Analysis of the most indirect request strategy, hinting (Cat. I), confirmed the conclusion of Trosborg (1995) that hints in IL can be subdivided into two groups: the ones resulting from insufficient command of the target language and genuine hints, in which transparency is minimised intentionally, in order to mitigate a request. Thus, although both the types of hints sound indirect and, therefore, more negatively polite, the reasons behind their use may vary depending on the proficiency of the speaker.

In general, although it seems reasonable to assume that more direct forms of requests for non-verbal services are preferred because of their relative formal simplicity while politeness is considered only marginally, learners still appear to recognise differences in the directness level of various request strategies. This knowledge is applied when an indirect request has been misunderstood or declined as well as in the cases when the rate of imposition is higher than normal. In these situations learners, in response, resort to more direct and explicit forms of requests.

Requests for verbal service – questions – could not be considered within the system developed by Trosborg (1995) and, therefore, they were classified separately according to their function, thus forming three categories. Questions of the first type - requests for unfamiliar information – were realised by means of wh-interrogatives and were rare. It can be an influence of the context but it is also possible to suggest that these questions are the most face-threatening ones for both the requester and the requestee and, therefore, participants unconsciously avoided them in order not to initiate signals of incompetence. The second group of requests – questions posed by requesters to check their understanding of a message previously conveyed by a requestee – were also infrequent probably due to the face-threatening potential. When they were asked, however, competence of a speaker was usually signalled either by falling intonation in yes-no questions or by use of declarative structures. The least face-threatening questions are considered to be the ones checking inference or assumption, which form the third class. They were realised by polar questions: yes-no, alternative and declarative questions. The smaller or greater degree of certainty, again, was signalled by rising and falling intonation, correspondingly. An intriguing strategy was also use of the coordinating conjunction ‘or’ at the end of yes-no questions with the mitigating function similar to that of a question tag.

In terms of the structure of questions, it could be observed that, in English, declarative questions were preferred due to their less challenging structure. In general,

questions were reduced/shortened to an acceptable minimum in order to save speaker's time an effort. Nevertheless, both declarative and reduced questions were recognised as requests for information and the desired service was provided.

In addition to the selection of a request strategy, the level of politeness can also be modified by means of modality markers. Overall, the number of such devices was greater in requests for non-verbal services, which often involved higher rate of imposition. Due to institutionality of the context, mitigating downgraders were mainly used whereas upgraders, which increase directness, were scarce. Difference in the performance of more and less proficient learners could be traced again. The former supplemented indirect requests with a certain number of syntactic as well as lexical/phrasal downgraders (questions, past tense, embedding, ing-form, modals, consultative devices, downtoners, hedges and hesitators) and thus signalled intention to mitigate imposition. The latter, however, did not seem to pay that much attention to pragmalinguistic characteristics of their speech. Hesitators and hedges that occurred in the speech of less proficient learners seem to be unintentional, resulting from production difficulties rather than orientation to politeness.

External modifiers could equally be found in requests for non-verbal as well as verbal service, although variation was minimal: they introduced the general content of a request, identified the upcoming speech act or provided supportive reasons with the aim to either explain or justify why the requester has to impose on the requestee. In general, external modifiers contributed to better understanding of a message and made compliance more likely.

Interestingly enough, in requests for information made in both English and Estonian a specific combination of external modifiers could be identified in a number of cases, which was termed a question-framing device. This structure was employed for two main reasons: either to distinguish a question from the preceding discourse or to separate from each other questions concerning different topics. As a result, it was easier for the speaker to formulate a question, for the hearer to understand a request and provide adequate information and, as a result, a positive outcome of a request was more likely.

The method of the next-turn proof procedure indicated that all the requests analysed were eventually understood (illocutionary effect) and, if possible, accepted (inherent perlocutionary effect) and granted (consecutive perlocutionary consequences). Misunderstanding was, indeed, rare and participants willingly lead the encounter to the desired goal together. Although some learners oriented to linguistic correctness, as

indicated by hesitation and self-repair, less felicitous alternatives were used when more appropriate forms could not be found quickly enough. Nevertheless, awareness of the problematicity of this choice was signalled through special intonation and humour, the latter also used to ease an embarrassing situation.

For the provider of the service, however, communication was primarily institutional, task-oriented and the most important aspect of talk was content. Because of the transactional function of talk, the forms used were minimally oriented to and grammatical as well as pragmatic difficulties and mistakes were ignored as long as they did not interfere with understanding and successful provision of the service requested. Such an attitude certainly made communication progress more quickly. Nevertheless, there is a danger that in some cases official's uncompromising adherence to her institutional role as opposed to student's orientation to grammatical correctness, may initiate negative feelings on both sides. A student can be viewed as attempting to slow down work in a situation where it is not justified. An official, in turn, can be considered indifferent and unhelpful. Such explicit negative reaction was not noticed in the corpus, indeed; nevertheless, it seems useful to inform both native and non-native speakers about such a possibility for misunderstanding. It would certainly contribute to even more tolerant attitude to interlocutor's behaviour and, moreover, reduce learners' anxiety related to orientation to grammatical correctness.

Despite linguistic and pragmatic difficulties of the participants, the process of dealing with requests in IL in the context studied within the present project, seems to be characterised primarily by cooperation and orientation towards achieving rapport. Three levels of systematic activities contributing to success of requests have been identified. First, in the majority of cases interactants mutually orient to institutionality of the encounter. That is, they both recognise the goal of interaction and make their contributions formally and qualitatively appropriate for the best possible result to be achieved in a minimum of time. Moreover, contributions of co-participants seem to be interpreted within the inferential framework that seems most likely to characterise such a setting; in broad terms, it includes brevity, clarity, relevance of contributions, focus on meaning and cooperation in achieving understanding of each other's messages.

On the second level, despite overall task-orientedness, participants attempt to maintain their own as well as interlocutor's face. Requesters tend to signal in their utterances some confidence and background knowledge but, at the same time, they are marked as tentative when an assumption or a request seems not completely justified and,

therefore, likely to be challenged. With increase in the degree of proficiency, downgraders and external modifiers tend to be used to mitigate a (higher than usual) rate of imposition. It serves to maintain both one's own and interlocutor's face, especially in the case of a negative response. A service provider mainly attempts to protect client's face: minimal attention is paid to incorrect and inappropriate linguistic forms, negative responses are avoided or mitigated while understanding and agreement are signalled abundantly and without delay. However, reluctance to provide negative answers can be considered as concern with one's own face, as well. Overall, there is marked orientation to face-work.

Finally, from the perspective of CA, talk-in-interaction in IL, despite its position between the source and target language, is ordered and systematic. Participants seem to display reliance on the 'machinery' of interaction, all the four main 'organisations' of talk. Thus, turns in talk are sequentially ordered – they form adjacency pairs, preference organisation in terms of positive/negative answers as well as repair can be observed and, in general, turn-taking is orderly, there is relatively little overlap and gaps between turns are minimal. Even the cases of overlap are based on adherence to the implicit rule: overlaps occur near transition-relevance places when some part of a proposition is conveyed successfully. IL talk is systematically organised and participants seem to cooperate in achieving intersubjectivity or, in other words, overall mutual understanding.

The study of the realisation of the communicative act of request in institutional conversations in English and Estonian as non-native languages has indicated that interaction in IL is ordered and systematic. Participants tend to orient to the institutionality of the setting of interaction and cooperatively develop talk that contains features suggested by Drew and Heritage (1992) as typical of institutional talk-in-interaction – goal-orientedness, orientation to allowable contributions and reliance on institution-specific interpretive frames. As a result, they also reflexively produce the institutionality of an encounter and their roles in it, thus talking the context into being.

The specific interactional pattern of the conversations analysed above is characterised by talk modified and reduced in terms of both form and content in order to effectively accomplish tasks at hand while also compensating for imperfect command of the target language. Thus, principles for interaction are developed locally in order to perform social action of requesting and, in response, provide service in an institutional setting.

The present thesis recognises that linguistic and pragmatic competence is important in interaction and a learner should certainly aim at achieving near-native command of the target language. Nevertheless, interaction in interlanguage, irrespective of the stage of its development, should not be considered deficient and deemed to fail. As the study has demonstrated, the role of a language learner is not the only one available to a student in institutional interaction. Moreover, roles of interlocutors are not preinscribed and it is possible to create the desired social context through talk.

The project examined a limited set of data collected in a relatively constrained context of student counselling. Furthermore, although representatives of different cultures were involved, all of them were Europeans and this fact, certainly, also contributed to the surprisingly low level of misunderstanding in the conversations analysed. Nevertheless, it seems to be an intriguing finding that there was order and systematic cooperation on several levels of interaction in both languages, in all conversations. It would be interesting, therefore, to see whether this finding is valid in other institutional contexts. As the next step, it would also be possible to study realisation of requests in non-institutional contexts and examine participants' behaviour in the situations where task-orientedness is not the primary concern.

The account of the realisation of requests provided in the present thesis has proved that low linguistic and pragmalinguistic competence does not hinder interaction in an institutional setting. It seems that awareness of language learners in respect to this fact should be raised and they should be encouraged to approach interaction in IL with smaller amount of anxiety and, instead, more sensitivity. Once a participant expects success rather than failure and attempts to reveal cooperation behind apparent hostility while also exhibiting one's own orientation to cooperation, interaction is likely to contribute to the achievement of the desired communicative goal. Thus, the study has demonstrated that, paraphrasing J. L. Austin (1962), learners can do things with words in interlanguage.



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## Appendix 1

### Transcription Conventions

- (0.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.
- (.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
- = The 'equals' sign indicates 'latching' between utterances.
- [ ] Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.
- .hh A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer in-breath.
- hh An 'h' indicates an outbreath. The more h's, the longer breath.
- (( )) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity or comments.
- A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
- : Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
- ( ) Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
- (guess) The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
- . A full stop indicates a stopping fall of tone.
- , A comma indicates 'continuing' intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
- und Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
- CAP Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
- ° ° Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
- > < 'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
- Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.
- \$ It indicates smiley voice.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Allocation of turns at transition-relevance places**

#### Rule 1

- (a) If the current speaker has identified, or selected, a particular next speaker, then that speaker should take a turn at that place.
- (b) If no such selection has been made, then any next speaker may (but need not) self-select at that point. If self-selection occurs, then first speaker has the right to the turn.
- (c) If no next speaker has been selected, then alternatively the current speaker may, but need not, continue talking with another turn-constructural unit, unless another speaker has self-selected, in which case that speaker gains the right to the turn.

#### Rule 2

Whichever option has operated, then rules 1a-c come into play again for the next transition-relevance place.

(Hutchby and Wooffitt 2004: 49-50)

## Appendix 3 Transcripts

### English

ing\_002\_v

- B: yes. (0.8) confirmation.  
(.)
- A: yeah.  
(0.5)
- B: e: about
- A: that I'm here, that I came here a:nd studying semester. (.) for my (.) for my university.
- B: you are Erasmus student?
- A: yes. (.) yes  
(.)
- B: ok. could you (just write down your name)
- A: → you will print it today, or,  
(0.5)
- A: → may I (leave it with) my data and a: (.) because a: I'm in a bit in a hurry. and I'd like to come back to (the dorm.)  
(0.5)
- B: yes. but you'll have to ask it from Liis.
- A: ok.
- B: she is an Erasmus coordinator. (just just ask. (.) from Liis)  
((A leaves))

ing\_004\_v

- A: → I need a (.) signature for my. (1.8) a certificate of arrival.  
(0.5)
- B: you are Erasmus student,
- A: yeah.  
(1.2)
- B: unfortunately. our Erasmus coordinator (0.5) is out of office.  
(0.8)
- B: (coming) tomor[ow, ]
- A: [°(tomo)rrow=°
- B: =is it ok if you would come on Monday,  
(1.5)
- A: → (well)[( )]
- B: [(or )]
- B: you are [in hurry,]
- A: → [(it's kind of)] urgent.  
(0.5)
- B: .hh
- A: → and (0.8) I need (to sign it.)  
(17.0) ((B talks to the head of the office))
- B: uh huh. (.) (sit down for a moment)  
[---]

ing\_008\_v

- A: tere.  
(2.0) ((A is walking towards the table; coordinator finishes copying documents))
- A: → I (.) I was wondering if you could make my invitation for my residence permit
- B: uh huh (.) yes but (.) not today?
- A: ok (.) yeah.
- B: I'll write it [(.) a]nd your name is?
- A: [yes]



- A: Gus Station (1.5) eheh  
 B: (a wonderful name)  
 A: yes  
 (15.0)  
 B: ok (.) on Friday  
 (.)  
 A: ok  
 (6.0)  
 A: → I have some other problems \$ huh \$  
 (4.5) ((A shows the forms he has brought))  
 A: → a (.) these forms (.) I don't know what to do with them (0.5) do you know that? (.) \$ huhuhu  
 \$  
 B: uh huh (.) learning agreement you have to get signature from Liis. from Erasmus  
 [co]ordinator  
 A: [ok]  
 A: → uh huh (.) and am because I'm going to change some courses that I made originally? first I  
 should make these the changes?  
 B: uh huh  
 A: → and then I (.) can ask  
 B: can ask signature and in signature [( )]  
 A: [and then] ok  
 B: because this is the most important thing for your home university \$ huh \$  
 (.)  
 A: ok  
 B: not here (.) huh  
 A: → and how fast you choose them, were quite fast or,  
 B: it depends on your on your (0.5) university how fast you want your ( )  
 A: ok [probably it's by]  
 B: [because from] our side you have two weeks' (.) time  
 A: ok  
 B: to select your courses,  
 A: ok (.) yeah  
 B: so I think you have to decide within these two weeks  
 A: → and then  
 B: after that you can send it  
 A: ok (.) ok?  
 (1.2)  
 B: and are other things ok  
 A: a:u::  
 B: student (.) student (.) village  
 A: yeah yeah it it [it's it's]  
 B: [as I remember]  
 A: yes ye:s they were able to change it  
 B: yes?  
 A: I (.) the:: the- there was a: woman (.) at the the: the: lecture what's her name (0.5) from the  
 student village,  
 B: uh huh uh huh  
 A: and I asked her and then she said oh I just this afternoon heard that the Pakistani guy will  
 come one month late (.) he's got visas problems  
 B: uh huh  
 A: a.nd then yeah (.) she changed my room [to his room]  
 B: [ok (.) that's] nice to hear  
 A: (it's really) happy because uh [huhu \$ yeah \$] \$ yeah \$  
 B: [ok \$ yeah \$]  
 A: that (.) that's a (.) that's all ok  
 B: ok (.) it's nice to hear because (.) it's really (0.5) complicated situation  
 A: yeah (.) I under[stand]  
 B: [I think they] did it that way because  
 A: yes  
 B: he needs (to talk) and he: can't speak English=  
 A: no  
 B: =only Russian (.) you don't speak Russian

A: no  
 A: no (.) yes that was also also complicated for me yes  
 B: uh huh  
 A: yeah huhu (0.8) yeah it was a (2.2) I'm happy  
 B: \$ ok \$ huhu[hu]  
 A: [hu] \$ yeah \$  
 B: [ok]  
 A: [ok]  
 (0.5)  
 A: thanks a lot. (2.2) I'll see you next time  
 B: see you  
 A: bye bye

ing\_009\_v

A: [---] from here.  
 B: isic card you will receive from student u[nion]  
 A: [üli]kooli ok (.) yeah I was here  
 B: uh [huh]  
 A: [yeah]  
 B: yes  
 A: I just (.) it's SO: much (.) to do (2.5) oke:::y  
 (11.0) ((sound of paper being leafed))  
 B: ok (.) and the student card (.) from the dean's office. (.) the- e: the student card of the  
 University of Tartu (1.0) you can have it also from the: (.) dean's office (.) because e:: the::  
 (.) computer user name (0.5) you did receive it from the faculty.  
 A: e:: (.) yes.  
 A: but [I wa-]  
 B: [e-]  
 A: =wait (0.6) I received it (.) yes (.) from the: faculty (.) wait. (1.0) I just got it today  
 (1.0)  
 B: from Tiigi Street.  
 A: yeah I think so (0.6) I- I mean I've done so much stuff (1.2) no-no-no-no I received it from  
 the: (.) journalism e:: de[department.]  
 B: [department.]  
 A: yes  
 B: ok=  
 A: =I [got it there]  
 B: [but they] did not give you (.) student card yet.  
 A: no=  
 B: =but you asked it?  
 (0.4)  
 A: → no cause they- they said me yea: in Tiigi (.) tha:t I should get the student card there, which I  
 thought it was a bit funny cause I get the user name and password here, (.) bu:t the (.)  
 student card there (0.5) so do you think it would be possible to get that (.) from the  
 journalism (0.5) department  
 (.)  
 B: usually the: faculty's dean's office will (.) will issue it  
 (.)  
 A: but e [but e did] did (.) but e (.) you didn't a:sk it  
 B: [hhhh]  
 A: a:::=  
 B: =at the facu- dean's office.  
 A: umm (.) yea- yes a [but I]  
 B: [you] thought it you can get it from here.  
 A: a:: yes (.) cause I got the password and the [user] name  
 B: [uh huh]  
 A: → ok (.) so. it's (.) how was- what's the correct address,  
 B: .hh= ((leafs through papers))  
 A: → =of the dea[n de]an's office  
 B: [uh huh]

- (8.0)  
 B: it (.) is u: (3.0) social science Tiigi (.) Tiigi seventy eight  
 (3.0)  
 A: → and the (.) dean's office is in the same street like, (.) or it's the same place.  
 B: yes it's the same place.  
 (0.8)  
 A: ok  
 (3.5)  
 A: ok (.) I probably  
 (5.0)  
 A: yeah (.) u:m (.) yeah  
 (.)  
 B: so (.) in the end (0.5) you have to go to the \$ dean's huhu ( ) I was (.) it's actually  
 funny \$ [huh huh huh]  
 A: [yeah I know] cause I've done like you know  
 [pass]port pictures and  
 B: [huh]  
 (0.8)  
 A: and get my user name and today I got my ca- university library card and  
 (.)  
 B: uh huh (.) uh huh (0.4) so if you go now to dean's office (.) then ask a student card.  
 (.)  
 A: yes  
 B: to sign a contract,  
 (.)  
 A: yes  
 B: and e the:n from e: (.) from (0.8) first of September you can get isic card (.) and on Friday  
 you can get invoice from here  
 A: ok (.) ok it's Friday Friday  
 (6.5) ((papers arranged))  
 A: ok (thanks)  
 B: huh huh huh

ing\_010\_v

- [---]  
 B: ok,  
 A: [( uh huh)]  
 B: [and you] I think then you will get your stipend straight (.) to your bank account.  
 A: → ok. so [I wo:n't have to]  
 B: [(they send it the first time)]  
 A: → go to the  
 B: no.  
 (.)  
 A: ok.  
 B: cause you (0.5) cause you brought it already now then (0.5) then it can be (.) but y- but (.)  
 you can't get stipend (.) not before (0.5) not befo:re (.) the middle of September co=  
 A: =ye[ah]  
 B: [around] twentieth  
 A: yeah.  
 B: [or nineteen]  
 A: → [yeah] but I get the September's stipend (.) directly. (.) to the ac[cou]nt=  
 B: [yes]  
 B: =yes=  
 A: → =yeah (0.4) another question is that (.) e:: (.) in that (.) agreement,  
 B: uh huh=  
 A: → =between Tartu University and Tampere University. (.) it's said that. e:: (0.8) the u: (.) r-  
 rent (.) of u: (.) the dormitory [should] be included (.) so it  
 B: [yes]  
 (0.5)  
 B: it will be pa:id straight=

A: =st[raight]  
 B: [so] you don't have to pay this=  
 A: → =ok (.) I only looked that there were (.) u rent was in that (.) agreement it's a  
 (.)  
 B: yes yes=  
 A: =ok  
 B: it will be paid for you=  
 A: =it would be paid=  
 B: =ye[s]  
 A: → [o]k (.) but I opened (.) the internet account (1.5) which is ehhhhhhh with (will be  
 invoiced) (0.8) at the same time then the rent so there comes only the internet account.  
 B: e: (.) ( where ) you mean (0.5) to your to [your account.]  
 A: → [ok (.) they] (.) they will give the money to me and I  
 will (.) pay (.) no=  
 B: =n[o no] they will give you a stipend money  
 A: [no no]  
 A: yes  
 B: but the (.) rent=  
 A: =rent=  
 B: =the room (.) will be paid by: the university (.) straight  
 A: ok=  
 B: =so you don't have to pay it yourself  
 A: ok  
 B: so you don't have to worry at all  
 A: ok  
 B: you [will] you will re[cei]ve the bill and=  
 A: [ok] [ok]  
 A: =yes (.) ok [ok]  
 B: [uh huh]  
 (1.5)  
 A: it's good  
 (4.8) ((papers leafed through; signed))  
 B: and are other things there ok?  
 A: yeah (.) great.  
 (1.5)  
 B: ok. I think you will receive your student card (.) maybe (.) e: if not tomorrow then after  
 tomorrow  
 (.)  
 A: → ok. [from]m the (.) deacan's- dean's office  
 B: [from]  
 B: yes  
 A: ok (.) yeah=  
 B: =and also your computer user name and password  
 A: o[k (.)]  
 B: [as well]  
 A: right  
 B: uh huh  
 A: ok  
 (5.8)  
 A: (here)  
 B: (ah yes)  
 A: bye  
 B: by:e

ing\_012\_v

[---]  
 B: uh huh (.) yes?  
 A: → u:m (.) hello. (.) I need my: confirmation, (.) that umm I've arrived here for the residence  
 permit?  
 B: ok. (.) your official invitation for residence permit (0.5) you haven't asked it yet?  
 (.)

- A: no
- B: ok. (1.2) e:m (2.8) you should write down here your name, (0.5) and then you can have it on Friday.  
(1.2)
- A: → ok (.) u:m (0.5) I have a little a problem with that, because the letter that you sent to me when I was in Germany (.) it said that I am here until the end of January. (.) but actually I am here also until the end of June.  
(0.5)
- B: aha:: for the one academic year.
- A: uh huh (.) I'm here for the whole year
- B: ok (.) please write down your name and I  
(3.8)
- B: you're (.) with the Erasmus programme yes.
- A: uh huh (.) yeah  
(6.0)
- B: ok. this is (it's) [all]
- A: [oh] ok  
(.)
- B: but y- (.) you- you filled in=n (0.5) when did you arrive.  
(1.8)
- A: a:h (.) three weeks ago?
- B: ok. (.) that's ok. (.) \$uh\$ I just thought that maybe you just arrived=
- A: → =no- no. no. I arrived three weeks ago. it's ju- just that the letter which you sent to me in Germany. (.) it said that I'm only here til the end of January, (.) but (.) maybe you could make in invitation until (.) [the end of Ju:ne.]  
[.hh ok (.) I just]
- B: e- check them on the internet. how it is
- A: ok
- B: Hugh ( ) ((says full name))
- A: yes Hugh (.) yeah ( ) ((spells))
- B: how you say your name,
- A: ( )  
(3.2)
- A: in Estonian you would write it ( [ ] ) ((spells))
- B: [yes you] are actually officially you are registered  
also. for the: (.) academic year=  
=for the whole academic year.
- A: =for the whole academic year.
- B: yes
- A: ok. so: it was only spelling mistake,=
- B: =yes
- A: ok=
- B: =probably (.) ok on [Friday you can have it]  
[ok (.) good (0.5) good]
- A: → and e- no:w (.) um missiz Lepik asked us to: to ask about our learning agreement, (.) it was sent back to our home university so: (.) I want[ed to=]  
[uh huh]
- B: [uh huh]
- A: → =ask about that as well
- B: yes yes (.) but (.) this is something that (0.5) you have to ask- you ask from Liis (.) because Liis is Erasmus coordinator and she has all your papers  
(0.5)
- A: she,
- B: yes=
- A: =ok  
(.)
- B: so:  
(.)
- A: so I have to go there,
- B: uh huh
- A: ok=
- B: =ok. bye  
(2.2)

- A: → au and I wanted to ask- the machine. could I use your fax machine, (against the) charge like (0.5) we (.) do something (0.5) because or is there fax machine somewhere else in town (.) which [we] can use?=  
 B: [u:m]  
 B: =if you want to send your learning agreement (then using it) is ok  
 A: → I have to u:m (.) how I say that (.) u:m (0.8) I lost the card for my bank account in Germany and I have to: u::m so that nobody can withdraw money,  
 B: ok. the one possibility the: (.) fax machine. it is in the post office.  
 A: → and you can use it, it's public (.) or  
 B: yes. it's public (.) I- I don't know how many kroons you should pay for this but=  
 A: → =but it's it's the central post office or=  
 B: =yes. in central (.) post office.  
 A: oh (.) ok=  
 B: =ok=  
 A: =thank you

ing\_013\_v [1]

- ((many people in the office, queue))  
 [---]  
 B: so. (.) you haven't got any information yet.  
 (0.5)  
 A: (what,)  
 B: y- you haven't got any information?  
 (2.5)  
 A: (ab=)  
 B: =about (.) thi- these these three months?  
 A: (u:h)  
 B: yes. ok.  
 A: ok  
 (0.5)  
 B: .h you:r ( it's) here.  
 A: uh huh  
 B: it's the invoice,  
 A: uh huh  
 B: and whole sum is (.) fifteen thousand=  
 A: =yes  
 B: for the: (0.5) autumn semester,  
 A: uh huh  
 (.)  
 B: e: the first part (1.8) it was fifth of September but it's [ok if you=]  
 A: [uh huh]  
 B: =make [now no (.)] no: (.) importance if it's (.) some days later  
 A: [uh huh ok]  
 A: uh huh  
 B: so and (.) you can pay the whole sum altogether, or (.) in parts.  
 A: u:m (better) in parts. [\$uh\$]  
 B: [yes.] (.) for the fifteenth of October and fifteenth of November.  
 A: uh huh  
 B: and (.) if you- if you pay this (.) marked vii- viitenumbr th[is is]  
 A: [uh huh]  
 B: reference number.=  
 A: =uh huh (.) ok  
 B: and you can pay by: (.) bank transfer [o:r]  
 A: [ok]  
 B: go to the: financial building, that is behind the main building,  
 A: uh huh  
 B: to pay in cash.  
 A: → ok. (.) and (.) another question (.) u:m did I have to make again the registration for the course because (.) e: teacher said (.) that we should make again registration in internet (is it) (.)  
 B: u:mm (.) have you received your student card already.=

- A: → =no. this (I also) was to do but (.) u:m I'm not sure about this (.) exactly my: e:: (like it happens here=)
- B: =faculty of philosophy  
(0.5)
- A: °faculty of philosophy°
- B: faculty of philosophy. (.) and it is in Lossi Street.
- A: uh huh
- B: just e: (.) the same way as this street.
- A: yeah. ok=
- B: =but [(next street to )]
- A: [( )] where?
- B: e: LOSSI Street (0.5) yes. if you go just around the corner and the pink building
- A: → ok. and then I can (.) and then I make it there, (.) make my isic [card] and=
- B: [hh]
- A: → =th[e:n my] registration.=
- B: [e:m]
- B: =no. you can get your student card from there. (0.8) if you need isic card.
- A: uh huh
- B: it is like e (.) wit- with a student student card you can also have discounts. but with isic you have more discounts. [so] you can decide whether to=
- A: [uh huh]
- B: =make it=
- A: =uh huh
- B: isic card. you can make it (.) e: in the student union.  
(.)
- A: uh huh
- B: and this is you keep go out the main building,
- A: uh huh,
- B: then to the: (.) left hand,=
- A: =[uh huh,]
- B: =[just] beside the: café:.
- A: uh huh=
- B: =ülikooli eighteen be:.
- A: uh huh
- B: .hh a:nd u:m (.) you- you should also take e: photos with you,
- A: uh huh=
- B: =a:nd (.) if you go to the department.
- A: [uh huh]
- B: [to] ask your student card.
- A: uh huh=
- B: =the dean's office. (.) then ask all- al- also you:r (.) computer user name and password.
- A: ok.
- B: so if you have those (then) it's possible that you (.) log into the: (.) study: information database,
- A: uh huh,
- B: and you register for something there
- A: uh huh=
- B: =and if you need help, then you can ask your tutor=
- A: =uh huh
- B: =to help you
- A: → ok. can you just write me down this e:: second address \$huh\$
- B: yes  
(3.5)
- B: this (.) isic,  
(.)
- A: → °(e if) I'm not student inn my home country°
- B: what?
- A: → when I'm not student in home country. because I'm not in any university (.) in my home country.
- B: it doesn't matter be[cause here you are now registered as a stu]dent so
- A: [not matter. (.) ok uh huh (.) ok]

B: anyway [they] will give you  
 A: [uh huh]  
 B: and this is valid until (0.5) the end of next year. (.) [two thousand] six so:  
 A: [uh huh (.) ok]  
 (.)  
 B: a:nd (.) student card (2.2) ((writes the address)) Lossi three  
 A: uh huh  
 B: and i- if you go up (upstairs into) the right hand  
 A: → and this was for the: (.) code? \$huh sorry\$ (.) this was for the code. that I get there. (.) so I  
 can make the registration. [(no this)]  
 B: [from] here. ((writing))  
 A: ok.  
 B: student card. a:nd (.) e: (0.8) computer user name ((writing))  
 A: ok.  
 (0.5)  
 B: uh huh.  
 A: it's ok. so  
 B: ok=  
 A: =so (thank you)

ing\_013\_v [2]

B: hi.  
 A: → hi. (.) I'm trying to pick up the: thing for Kela. and then the:: (in) the paper.  
 B: ok. and your name?  
 A: a:: Mari Tikkso,  
 (.)  
 B: yess, (.) and your name is?  
 C: Mia Toskela  
 B: yes yes.  
 (4.2) ((leafs through papers))  
 B: o:k, I see, (2.5) you live inn (.) dormitory or a  
 (0.5)  
 A: u:m the own apartment.  
 B: own apartment. (0.5) ok. I will ( ) it because (.) I marked here that you live in (.) in  
 dormitory  
 (.)  
 A: a:u  
 B: so I w- I write another one.  
 A: ok.  
 B: have you- have (just a) (.) time.=  
 A: =y[eah]  
 B: [just] a moment.  
 (1.2)  
 B: maybe you shd (.) s- sit down. for a moment.  
 (.)  
 A: just a minute.

ing\_013\_v [3]

A: hello,  
 B: hello.  
 A: → I was told on Monday that I get those papers, (.) on Friday (.) but (.) I'm going home. (.) to  
 Finland tomorrow (.) so. do you think it would be possible to (get them right now)  
 (.)  
 B: what is your name?  
 A: Kattios  
 (3.5)  
 B: and (.) it- it was paper for Kela.  
 A: yess.



B: uh huh  
 (5.0) ((papers leafed))  
 B: yes. it is here  
 A: ok.  
 B: uh [huh]  
 A: [thank you]

ing\_013\_v [4]

A: → I would like to have the paper for Kela a:nd=  
 (.) ((B reaches for papers))  
 A: → =not (.) as- as (.) I have not been here before \$huh huh\$ (.) I wanna have it a:n e-  
 B: please write down your name here,  
 A: uh huh  
 (6.8)  
 A: o:h sorry.  
 (1.0)  
 B: you don't live in (.) e::mm dormitory?  
 A: yeah I do?  
 C: yeah I do.  
 A: aha \$hah\$.  
 B: dormitory? (.) Raatuse twenty two?  
 (2.5)  
 A: thu:h  
 (1.8)  
 B: and your room number?  
 C: a:h (0.5) nelisada kolmkend üheksa  
 (5.8)  
 B: you share the room or?  
 (1.0)  
 C: .h [yeah. I] I share  
 B: [it- it- it]  
 B: good  
 (3.5) ((works with papers))  
 B: o:k.  
 A: that's alright.  
 (.)  
 B: yes. (.) yes. on[ly (write your name)]  
 A: [(for the migration) of]fice and to Kela.  
 A: [only] (to have it)  
 B: [yes.]  
 A: I wrote the names wrong way.  
 B: [o:k (.) I understand \$them huh\$] ok.  
 A: [cause there's is \$my last name\$]  
 (0.5)  
 A: for Friday.  
 B: yes.  
 A: thank you.

ing\_013\_v [5]

[---]  
 A: tere.  
 B: tere.  
 A: → I'd like to apply for the: (1.5) paper to Kela and  
 (.)  
 B: huh  
 A: → and > also for the residence permit<  
 B: ok. well.  
 (5.0) ((papers rearranged))

B: please sit (.) ( )  
(1.0)  
A: → is it possible to get it. tomorrow.  
C: no..  
B: on on Friday only.=  
C: =not (.) before Friday. everything is Friday. you see there are so many. at least two days  
(that is)  
A: → then can I (.) because I'm going to Finland (already) tomorrow so (.) can I come on (.) on  
Monday or Tuesday.  
B: yes. absolutely.  
A: [(Tuesday)] (afternoon)  
B: [uh huh]

ing\_016\_v

A: → a: I also need (0.5) the papers for (.) elamisluba (.) Kela but I haven't (.) ordered. (.) \$them  
yet huh huh\$  
B: ok. (.) then write down your name please=  
A: =ok,  
B: uh huh  
A: ok. (I think)  
B: ok.  
(0.8)  
B: then you:'ll (.) receive them on Monday.  
(.)  
A: °Monday°  
B: Monday [afterno]on  
A: [ok]  
(17.2) ((papers arranged, A fills in the form))  
A: → and do I put here my address or.  
B: e:m (0.8) you need only for (.) Kela or for residence permit.  
A: a: both.  
(.)  
B: you- you need both for residence permit as well?  
(.)  
A: e she needs it. (.) or ( ) residence pe[rmit]  
B: [if you] need it for residence permit then (.) I make a copy of  
your (.) ju- just one. [(.) yes]  
C: [ok]  
(.) [huh huhuhu]  
B: [huh huhuhu]  
(0.5)  
B: but (.) you don't,  
(.)  
B: yes. for kela and migration office.  
A: ok,  
B: uh huh  
(1.2)  
B: you also need to extend it?  
(.)  
A: u:m yes.  
B: yes. (.) I will do it for you.  
(.)  
A: (here)  
B: uh huh  
(37.0) ((B leaves to make copies, A and C talk in Finnish))  
B: and you are all living in your own apartment?  
(.)  
A: u:h [yes]  
C: [yes]  
B: uh huh

- (12.0)  
A: °( address )°  
(5.0)  
A: → do I also put the address at there.  
B: no. > no no < there's no need (0.8) just name  
(23.0)  
A: oh::  
B: ok. I understand.  
(1.2)  
B: it can (.) ° \$ you did it right. \$ ° (.) uh huh  
A: → and e: (0.5) do I get the:: (.) like e:: (1.2) the documents that (.) from the: studies from last  
year from (0.5) e: the dekanaat I'm receiving it.  
B: yes [your (.)] about your=  
A: [last year]  
A: → =but e: if I have them in (.) in two: (.) places. e like e: (.) the language course and then the e  
other studies then (.) do I have to go to all the dekanaats \$o:r, huh\$  
(.)  
B: u:m (.) usually they are a:ll i:n (.) under your (0.5) under your name. (.) all those data so I  
think (.) if you go to them (.) because (.) e: language studies do you have faculty of  
philosophy?  
A: yeah.  
B: and ask them (.) whether y- they can also: (.) put (.) to transcript also (.) your studies inn-  
A: yes. the the other studies  
B: the other studies.  
A: ok.  
B: I think it is possible.  
A: alright  
B: uh huh  
C: thank you. (.) good bye

ing\_017\_v

- A: → I need a: (2.5) a copy of the documents (3.5) e: for my: (0.5) e:: (.) (university)  
B: you need to copy it?  
A: yea (in the end [(there's)] )  
B: [uh huh]  
B: uh huh  
(3.0) ((papers leafed through))  
B: sit down please.  
(12.2) ((papers leafed through))  
B: so.  
A: so. this is diploma,  
B: ok,  
(3.2)  
A: °so: this is the:°  
(10.0)  
A: → and this one. let's copy this one too.  
B: uh huh  
(11.0)  
B: uh huh  
(139.0) ((documents are being copied))  
B: here would you sign.  
A: uh,=  
B: =could you sign it.  
A: um yeah yeah.  
B: uh huh  
(2.0)  
A: ok.  
B: here you are.  
(12.0) ((documents are being arranged and stapled))  
A: thank you.  
B: uh huh

ing\_018\_v

- [---]  
 A: → you need the other ones?  
 (.)  
 B: e: > no no no < it's it's (.) it's ok.  
 (.)  
 A: → and then I wanted to ask (.) about (.) the tuition fee, (0.5) how do I get the (.) invoice.  
 (.)  
 B: e you are (.) student um (0.5) a:: you are student of Baltic studies.=  
 A: =yes.  
 B: ok. (.) then you will receive your invoice from the Baltic studies centre.  
 A: ok.  
 B: you have to go there. in the: (.) it is (.) there already.  
 A: yeah. ok. (.) good  
 (.)  
 C: → I need to send this [---]

## Estonian

ee\_003\_ek [2]

- A: tere  
 (): tere,  
 (): tere  
 (3.5)  
 A: → °e: > te andsite < ühte:°  
 B: [(keda te )]  
 A: → [( mul on üks)] see: (0.5) küsimus siin. (0.5) taotlusele.  
 (.)  
 B: oot=oot=ot. (0.5) ma ei saa midagi aru. (.) mi- mis te räägite.  
 A: → a: ja=jah. (0.5) mul on see (.) taotlus on tehtud et reim[matrikulee-]  
 B: [reimmatrikuleerida. ]  
 A: jah. (0.5) mul on juba tehtud aga:  
 (.)  
 B: .h kuidas teie nimi on=  
 A: =e: ( ) Olga Kapkina,  
 B: a: teie olete Kapkina=  
 A: =jah  
 B: =ja=jaja=jaja:  
 (0.5)  
 A: → ja: (.) siis (see on mul teh tud)  
 B: ja avaldus on teil ka: vist tehtud  
 A: e: (.) ma viisin.  
 B: dekanaati viisite vist.  
 A: jah. jah.  
 (2.2)  
 A: (avalduse ma tõin ja ta:) ta ütles et (.) e: võib-olla:  
 B: a: te käisite Viivi Ranna [a: juures (.)] ta ütles et (.) et on nagu ko[rras] jah.  
 A: [ja=jaja: ja] [ja:]  
 B: ta saatis neid (0.5) neid (.) ülevale ka või [(ta vaatab)] neid  
 A: [h e::]  
 A: vot seda ma küll ei tea=  
 B: =u: uh  
 A: et mi- mõned on nüüd küll praegu e: ( ) tehtud) see mis kolmapäeval ma ütlesin, (.) e:t  
 siin on nagu koopia (kirjanduse) erialale  
 B: aha ja: [=ja: uh huh uh huh]  
 A: → [ja:: ja (.) ja e: s-] kuidas neid siis e: (.) (üle kanda) ja et mõnedel on vaja veel e: et  
 nagu:=  
 B: =no aga teid võetakse praegu ju uue õppekava peale ma saan aru.  
 A: jah (0.5) kolm pluss kaks.

- B: u:h huh (.) u:h huh  
(0.5)
- A: (nii et mul on nagu osa juba kirjutatud)
- B: ja: ja: ja: (.) noh (.) ma vaatan [selle] asja ma süvenen se[llesse] millalgi e:t=  
A: [jah] [jah]
- B: =°vaatan (kui ma jõuan )°  
(0.5)
- B: teil ei ole võib [olla pastakat]
- A: [ei (.) mul on] mingi=  
B: =jah  
(0.5)
- A: et=a:  
B: aga teid muidugi (.) siis peaks siis huvitama et a: [et kus] (.) te peaksite=  
A: [uh huh]
- B: =nagu jätkama mi[da si]is võtma või või teid enam (.) ei ole registreeritud=  
A: [jah]
- B: =(nendele)
- A: e: ma praegu [ei ole registree-]  
B: [kas teid on ametlikult reimmatrikuleeritud juba või
- A: e::  
B: te olete ametlikult juba reimmatrikuleeritud juba.  
A: jah.  
B: aga [( )]  
C: [aga mis] aastale.  
B: kas te tu[lite nüüd uuele aastale või=]  
C: [( e:: teisele aastale )]  
A: =j[a: teisele aastale uus õppekava]  
B: [jah. nelikend punkti] tal oli. juba [( ette)]  
C: [°( )°]  
A: ja mul on need (.) ainepunktid on [(sees juba) ]  
B: [ja:=ja:=ja:]  
A: ja mõned on mul praegu (.) ma ei oska (enam neid kirja panna)  
B: uh huh. ma saan aru [aga ( ) semestrit] on vaja pikemalt nõu pidada [teiega]  
C: [mille pärast ( )]  
A: [jah]
- B: et et kust te peate nüüd neid jätkama. sest see uue (.) õppekava: (0.5) ta on nagu kokku surutud rohkem et [seal] nagu:  
C: [jah]
- A: jah  
(.)
- A: sest mina praegu e:i oska nagu enda valikut ise kontrollida.  
B: ei=e: ma pean ise (.) ei. [no seda veel ( )]  
C: [(seda saab panna )]
- B: see sõltub sellest mis me talle üle saame kanda ja mis siis nagu kus tal nagu pooleli on ja  
A: kas (tõendid ) kaksteist päeva=  
B: =jah. ärge se[llega (praegu muretsege )] see annab ikka=  
C: [(nendega on teil aega ja )]
- B: =teha pärast  
C: a samamoodi nüüd uutele [(pidi )]  
B: [uutele ja on] seda veel ka (pärast me võiksi[me]) rahulikus olukor[ras] seda asja vaadata  
A: [jah] [jah]  
(0.5)
- B: kas te hommikupoole saaksite tulla või  
A: jah.  
(0.5)
- B: siis oleks võib-olla [ikkagi parem]  
A: [(sest siis kui parem aeg)]  
B: sest see on üsna keeruline [nüüd tõesti]  
A: [ja (.) huh]
- B: et me peame nüüd (üksi ) vaatama  
A: uh huh

- B: mis ja kus ja (.) .h (.) huu (äkki tulete siis homme)  
 A: .hh jah. ma tulen hiljem  
 [---]
- ee\_005\_ek
- A: mis ta oli: (0.8) de: rühm oli.  
 B: de:  
 (.)  
 A: → need (.) need (.) ajad (0.5) mis mis on (.) dee grupi jaoks  
 C: oodake aga te- teie peeriala ei ole siis eesti keel ja [kul]tuur muukeelsetele=  
 A: [ei]  
 A: =mul on (.) saksa keel  
 C: jah. aga teie. (0.8) võite tegelikult väga vabalt võtta kevadel. keelekeskuse poolt korraldatava. sellesama kursuse. (0.5) kevadsemestril. ja te üldse ei peagi [selle ( )]  
 A: → [see ei ole siis kohustuslik]  
 [kursus.]  
 C: [see aine] on teile iseenesest kohustuslik. aga seda on  
 (0.8) < kolm varianti >  
 (1.0)  
 C: e::h  
 (3.2)  
 C: e:t tegelikult see ongi niimoodi et see (0.5) siin loetav aine on mõeldud pea miselt ikkagi meie (.) eesti keel ja kultuur muukeelsetele eriala üliõpilastele (0.5) ja noh, me oleme võtnud kui meil rühmad e: väga täis ei lähe, oleme võtnud (0.5) ka saksa filoloog, inglise filoloog, (.) aga põhi mõtteliselt on niimoodi et keelekeskuses loetakse just teile mõeldud (0.5) seda eesti keele suulise ja kirjaliku väljenduse õpetust kevadsemestril. neli ainepunkti, (.) ja selle koodi ma võin kohe teile öelda (7.5) nii et see ei ole nii tehtud et see peaks teile siin sobima aga (0.8) me ei ole üldse arvestatud. saksa filo- loogide tunniplaaniga sest et=te (.)  
 (): ja:=ja:  
 C: see ei ole siin eesmärk.  
 B: → aga seal on (.) ka kirjutanud et (.) e: be: rühmadel=  
 A: → =ja: la[dina keel]  
 B: → [ladina keel] mis kursus see on.  
 C: ja: no: tähendab (0.5) ladina keel. see on ikkagi meie põhine asi. meie üliõpilastele. kas teie olete ka saksa filoloog vä.  
 B: ja:.  
 C: no: (0.5) teil peavad olema (.) oma ladina keeled seal. mis on ette nähtud saksa filoloogidele  
 B: uh [huh]  
 A: [ja:] uh huh  
 A: [(siis)]  
 B: [(selles)] [(mõt-)]  
 C: [ja kui] ei ole teie õppekavas seda siis e: te peate täpsustama. missugune on teie õppekava, sest teil on saksa filoloogia õppetool, (.) kus teile kõik täpselt ära seletatakse. mis on teie õppekavas. ja kui te just tahate, (.) ja teil ei ole ladina keelt, et (.) mis võimalused on teil siis seda õppida.  
 (): °uh huh°  
 C: ja selle kohta ei oska mina kahjuks teile nõu anda. selleks on saksa filoloogia õppetool.  
 A: → meie õppekavas on (.) see (0.5) eesti keele suulise ja kirjaliku väljenduse õpetus. kas see on eestlaste ja[oks.]  
 C: [see] on eestlaste jaoks. vot selle[ga o]n viga.=  
 (): [jah]  
 C: =see on eestlaste jaoks. see on [teile] rasske.  
 (): [jah]  
 B: uh huh=  
 C: teie võiksite võtta keelekeskusest, ma katsun teile koodi leida. (0.8) keelekeskusest (1.8) on=ja (4.8) nii (0.8) näete. siin on on meil traagelduste ühes ja samas moodulis on kolm varianti (0.5) eesti keele suulise ja kirjaliku väljenduse õpetus. üks on (.) see eestlastele mõel[dud null kaks] null=  
 (): [uh huh uh huh]  
 C: =kaks[kend] kolm (0.8) nii (0.5) või (.) teine on nelisada kaks[kend] viis=  
 (): [°(uh huh)°]

- C: =mis on meie erialal,  
 (): [uh huh]  
 C: [siin] võetav (.) või ef el ka e:, (.) null kolm, null null kaks. (.) mis loetakse kevadsemestril keelekeskuses.  
 B: uh huh.  
 (0.5)  
 B: °( )° ((whispers in Russian))  
 A: → (aga meie selle võime kindlasti võtta)  
 (5.2)  
 C: no ma helistasin sinna ja ta ütles et (.) kevadsemestril  
 A: uh huh.  
 (2.0)  
 C: aga noh. kes ütleb et need siis teile sobivad need ajad,  
 A: → jah. just. jah  
 (6.8)  
 C: aga palun. (1.5) kui te otsustate nüüd ümber. kui te otsustate minna kevadel keelekeskuse gruppi. (.) palun teavitage seda õppejõudu.  
 (): uh huh  
 C: kelle juurde te siin olite määratud.  
 A: uh huh  
 B: uh huh  
 C: eks ole. (.) minge ükskord kohale ja öelge. et te olete sellise otsuse teinud ja teie olete saksa filoloog hoopiski. ja keegi ei hoiat teid siin kinni.  
 A: jah  
 B: → meil on veel ( ) ((names the course))  
 A: → kui mulle (0.5) teise grupi ajad (.) e sobivad parem. kas ma võin (0.5) ma võin  
 C: see on väga raskendatud sest et=e: (0.5) ikkagi on määratud see et, ühtlase tasemega inimesed gruppi. [nii=et]  
 A: [uh huh]  
 C: kui, (.) te läheksite nagu: natuke: (0.5) ütlemine kõrgemaks natuke noh keeleoskus juba. (.) no teil on muidugi (0.5) kõigil peaaegu. sarnane. (.) aga nad on siiski jagatud. teil võib raskeks minna lihtsalt.  
 (): uh huh  
 C: või kui te lähete liiga nõrkade inimestega ühte gruppi, siis te ei arene jälle piisavalt. et (0.8) et see on nii mõeldud et see oleks nagu teie tasemele kõige parem  
 (): uh huh  
 (0.5)  
 C: ja kui siin kõik hakkavad nüüd (omal (.) ise ka aegade järgi otsustama ühest grupist teise) siis e (.) noh mõnda gruppi jääb liiga vähe isegi inimesi.  
 A: noh jah  
 B: jah  
 C: et see ajab seda ka väga segaseks.  
 A: [no jah]  
 B: [uh huh]  
 (0.8)  
 (): aitäh=  
 C: palun

ee\_006\_ek

- B: mis mure teil on.  
 A: → mul on niisugune kurb küsimus. kas ma võin (.) kirjutada avaldus et e: (1.5) olen riigi eel- (0.5) väline. (0.8) kas katsun see (.) tasuta  
 B: a: konkureerida tasuta.=  
 A: =jah=  
 B: =riigieelarvelisele kohale.  
 A: jah=  
 B: =otse loomulikult. võib ikka. mi- miks see kurb on.  
 (1.2)  
 A: kurb.  
 B: te ütlesite et kurb küsimus.  
 (.)

- A: ei=ei=ei=ei \$ niisugune küsimus [ma (mõtlesin)] \$  
 B: [a:: sellel] ei ole midagi.  
 A: \$ ei see huh \$  
 B: te võite kirjutada iga kell selle avalduse ainult et me ei tea praegu palju meil kohti vabaneb.  
 A: → a: (.) et ei tea veel [sellest]  
 B: [ja:h] viieteistkümnendaks tehakse üleriigilised eksmatid.  
 (0.5)  
 B: ja siis (.) [(kno-) (.) jah] tehakse eksmatid. teie saate koha omale. juhul kui=  
 A: [üleriigilised]  
 B: =see (.) nii on. (0.5) et=te seal nüüd üks avaldus on juba ees.  
 A: uh huh,  
 B: või isegi mitu. et siis vaadatakse üle, (0.8) et=ä: (1.0) kellel=e: (0.5) on kõige paremad tulemused.  
 A: uh huh [°( )°]  
 B: [ja need siis nagu ees.] jah. (.) aga te võite kirjutada. s- vaadake seda eeskujuga siin ja. (0.8) ja siis. laseme siis=  
 A: → =kas üldse on võimalus niisugune saa[da]  
 B: [on]  
 A: j[ah.]  
 B: [ikka] aeg-ajalt ( ) see sõltub sellest kui palju välja langeb=  
 A: =no ja:=j[a: ( )]  
 B: [jah] sest midagi juurde ei teki ju kuskilt  
 A: uh huh  
 B: (ikka korras) (.) lihtsalt need kohad mis on (1.0) nii (1.2) kirjutage siinsamas.  
 A: [jah]  
 B: [võt]ke see eeskujuks.  
 A: jah  
 B: [pastakat ei ole ka või.]  
 A: [( )]  
 B: võtke pastapliiats.  
 A: uh huh,  
 (0.5)  
 B: jah, (.) siinsamas on . oma andmed siia,  
 [---]

ee\_007\_ek

- B: nii. (.) aga (.) laseme veel õisist teie (0.5) teie (.) tulemused ka veel juurde. (.) jah.  
 A: jah.  
 (0.5)  
 B: seal peavad olema ka tulemused. ma lasen teie (0.8) ma ise panen siis. (.) panen selle kausta. aga et ma ütlen tõesti et te et see. (.) te saate muidugi jälgida neid vabu kohta kohti. (.) ülikooli koduleheküljel vist peaks näha olema kuskil. [mis] erialadel on.  
 A: [uh huh.]  
 (0.5)  
 B: e: ja mis aastatel.  
 A: → a muidu:= e- neid vabu kohti nagu: (.) üldiselt nagu (olla) on eesti keel ja kultuur muukeelsetele.  
 B: jah,  
 A: → ja seal muidu üldse soome-ugri teaduskonnast. või kuidas.  
 B: ei. [tähen]dab [just sellel erialal.] (.) jah.  
 A: [just] [täpselt sellel aastal.]  
 A: (täpselt) [(sellel)] kõik üliõpilased kes on esimesel, teisel, v- ja=  
 B: [kõik]  
 A: =kolmandal aastal. jah,  
 B: jah. kõik on eraldi.  
 A: jah.  
 B: iga aasta kohta on eraldi.  
 A: a: iga aasta eral[di]  
 B: [jah.] jah. (.) et näiteks, (.) e::: teisel aastal=l e (.) näiteks kui kedagi ei eksmatita. siis ei teki kuskile kohta. (.) täpselt samamoodi kolmandal aastal.  
 A: → ja [et kui] need on üks kaks ja kolm (on üks koht siis on =



- B: [et kui]  
 A: =vaja hoopis teisele kohale on vaja)  
 B: ahah. (loobute) riigieelarvelisest. jah,  
 A: jah.  
 B: noh. siis see tehakse see arvestus et=e (0.8) te: id e: kas=se: (1.2) kas on (1.5) sest tõenäoliselt peaks vist tulema. kuigi osa olid reimmatrikuleeritud, aga need on kõik tasulistele eks=ole. nii=et (0.5) jah (0.6) siis on (.) šansse kui teil on muidugi head tulemused ka: siis on,  
 A: °( )° a meil ongi ainult kolm tasulist. (.) kohti.  
 B: =ja[h.]  
 A: [ja] need e (.) kaks on juba akadeemilisel. (.)[puhkustel] nii et  
 B: [uh huh uh huh]  
 B: jah.  
 (0.8)  
 B: nii et ma (1.0) see see nüüd selgub septembri lõpuks kindlasti. et kas te olete juba ära maksnud muidu või.  
 A: ei ole=  
 B: =ei ole. [ärge makske. (.) ärge makske veel]  
 A: [(ei. ei ole raha ei ole veel kontol=)]  
 B: =jah.  
 A: ( küll)[( septemb)]ri lõpus=  
 B: [oodake sellega natuke]  
 B: =et siis muidu läheb jube keeruliseks. siis te ei saa enam kõike seda tagasi mi[da te maksate ja:]  
 A: [seda küll. jah]  
 B: ja [siis nad] annavad ainult osa. ja: (.) jah. et=e oodake sellega natuke.  
 A: [(ja siis)]  
 (7.2)  
 B: aga noh ikka on saanud. jah. te- nagu. (3.5) on üks kui teine on ikka lõpuks saanud selle riigieelarvelise koha.  
 (1.5)  
 B: ma saan teie tulemused siia juurde sisse.  
 (1.2)  
 B: nüüd õppetooli koosolekul siis õppejõud vaatavad kui tekib see koht. (0.8) neid vabu kohti siis nad vaatavad. kes on see kõige parem ja, (0.8) tulemuste järgi ainult nagu objektiivsed näitajad. > °(ega siin muud ei ole)° < jah,  
 (.)  
 B: jah,  
 A: jah. nägemist.

ee\_008\_ek

- [---]  
 B: miks te tasulisele kohale tahate minna.  
 A: a:: (.) nii et kas seal on vaba koht.  
 (0.8)  
 B: tasulisele kohale.  
 (0.5)  
 A: o.: tasuta.  
 B: jah. noh.  
 A: \$ jah. täpselt \$  
 B: no muidugi saab kirjutada. (1.0) jah. saab küll.

ee\_011\_v

- [---]  
 B: ja: (0.8) < te saate stipendiumi (0.5) umbes kahekümnendaks. kuupäevaks. (0.5) igal kuul. > (0.8) by the twentieth. each month  
 (8.0)  
 A: → aga: (.) kas ka: (.) selles kuus.  
 B: ja: ka- kahekümmes september. on see (.) või natuke varem.

- (7.5)  
 A: → arvele.  
 B: ja. kui teil nüüd arve number on siis te saate selle kohe arvele. see võib juhtuda ka yarem. (0.5) aga nüüd sõltub see. (0.5) täitsa võimalik et te saate selle ka juba yarem. enne kahekümnendat.  
 A: uh huh. uh huh  
 B: uh huh  
 A: OK  
 B: uh huh. (.) kõike head. nägemist  
 A: kõike head. °nägemist°

## ee\_012\_v

- A: tere.  
 B: tere,  
 A: → mul on tõendit et ma olen naasnud. ah (.) jälle siia (0.5) mul on Soome (.) e=  
 B: =Ke[lale.]  
 A: [Soo]me Kelale.  
 B: jah.  
 (2.5)  
 B: Lehtso.  
 A: just  
 (6.5)  
 B: kena. (.) siis reedeiks.  
 (.)  
 A: reedeiks ja. (.) ok,  
 B: uh huh  
 A: ai[täh]  
 B: [meil] on praegu hästi  
 A: jaa [jaa]  
 B: [\$ju-\$] \$juhtu[misi huh huh\$]  
 A: [\$ja ma arvan\$] \$küll jah ( )\$  
 B: jah=  
 A: =aitäh teile.  
 B: kõike head. nägemist.

## ee\_013\_v

- A: tere,  
 B: tere.  
 A: → ma vajaksin seda kohalolekutoendit (0.8) Kelale et  
 (0.5)  
 B: jaa. (.) üks [hetk] saate nime [kirja] panna  
 A: [jah] [jah]  
 (3.5)  
 A: → millal neid. võtta, (.) pean võtma.  
 B: e: mitte enne reedet.  
 (0.5)  
 A: ok  
 (3.5)  
 A: → samuti kui selle ime liku paberi mis kela vaja (.) neile. (.) nendele uutele (0.5) üliõpilastele see tõend et (0.8) °mis see oli (0.5) mis see tõend mis seal vaja oli. (0.5) esimese aasta üliõpilased tooma seda peavad.°  
 (1.0)  
 C: °( )°  
 A: °( )° Kris  
 C: ah  
 A: and [your] name  
 C: [oh]  
 (4.5)

- A: Kelli  
(1.5)
- B: uh huh
- A: Jo:ssis
- B: jah. kena. °(mis )°
- A: → >jah jah< (.) ja siis (0.5) ma tahan see kohalolekutoendi
- B: jah jah jah. ma tean seda.
- A: jah=
- B: =jah
- A: → jah (.) aga (.) kas sa (.) kes see (.) kas sa- teie teate selle et seal peaks olema see (.) .h hhe (.) esimese aasta üliõpilased peavad seda tõendit mis ma saatsin teile kirjaga. selle (.) .hh meiliaadressi peale. selle .hh kurat mis see oli. (.) see tõend kus loeb midagi et .h a: see sisaldub see: .h intensiivkursus nende: kogu:,
- B: a:: (.) kui- kuidas tema nimi on.
- A: Jukka Jokkela.  
(1.8)
- B: ma:
- A: °näita nimi°
- B: tegin ühe tõendi. selle valmis ma loen ta ette teile  
(25.0) ((A and C talk in Finnish))
- B: °nii°
- A: jah.
- B: lugege nüüd seda. kas kas s- see on nagu see [nii nagu peab]
- A: [jah ( )]
- A: ( ) ((mumbles while reading))
- A: jah. just selline.  
(0.5)
- B: uh > uh huh uh huh < (.) ja: teile (.) saab tõend selline ett (0.5) e:t  
(0.8)
- A: kas te veel olete=
- B: =he- she has returned to the University of Tartu co- to continue=
- A: =jah
- B: her studies=
- A: =aga ju normaalne. iga aasta vist
- B: jah
- A: (märg-)
- B: jah=
- A: → =aga (.) kas seda Rimi (.) Miskanen (0.5) toend on olemas võ:i=
- B: =ma [vaatan]
- A: → [ta tu]leb hiljem et. (.) ma ei tea mei=
- B: =jaa. ma olen jõu[dnud talle teha]
- A: [ok väga hea] ok.
- B: uh [huh]
- A: [ok.] siis suur tänu selle eest.
- B: jah.

ee\_014\_v

- A: tere.
- B: tere,
- A: → mul on vaja seda: a: Kela jaoks seda. tõendit.
- B: jah.  
(3.2)
- B: kuidas teie nimi on
- A: Doris (.) Postonen  
(0.8)
- B: uh huh  
(1.0)
- B: tugeva pe:ga
- A: yes  
(1.0)

B: nii. (.) niimoodi on õieti  
 A: uhu:  
 (0.4)  
 B: Doris  
 A: uhu  
 B: hästi siiss em (.) reedeks.  
 A: uh huh.  
 B: jah  
 A: aitäh

ee\_015\_v

B: yes (.) how can I help you,  
 A: → tere (0.5) e: me oleme (.) õpime (.) Eesti Põllumajandusülikoolis. (0.5) ja: tahaksime (.)  
 õppida seda nagu võõrkeelt. (0.5) nagu valikainena.  
 B: Tartu Ülikoolist.  
 A: jah.  
 (2.2)  
 B: uh huh (1.2) ja selleks siin (1.0) peate minema üliõpilasnõustaja juurde. ja küsima te peate  
 täitma külalisüliõp- üliõpilaseankeedi.  
 A: ahah  
 B: aga: üliõpilasnõustaja tuleb kella ühest alates. (.) ma näitan teile seda ruumi.  
 A: aha  
 C: jah

ee\_016\_v

[---]  
 A: et ma: (0.5) kirjutasin.  
 B: uh hu:h  
 A: (en[dale.])  
 B: [uh huh]  
 (8.8)  
 B: °uhu°  
 (0.8)  
 A: °( )°  
 (3.5)  
 B: u:hu  
 (13.0) ((B studies papers))  
 B: mul siin selles asi et a: (3.8) ka:s=se (1.5) te ma- te olete oma õppe pikendanud.  
 A: jah.  
 B: on siin (.) kas te maksite ise kolmkend krooni ise ära.  
 A: ei.  
 B: ei maksnud.  
 A: ei.  
 (0.5)  
 A: → pikenduse eest jah  
 B: jah  
 A: ei.  
 (0.8)  
 A: → vot ma tahaksin küsida kas e (.) m- kuhu ja si- millal  
 (0.5)  
 B: aga kas kas te pikendasite selle õppeaja ära selle ik- ikkagi ilma selle rahata. (.) või praegu  
 seda ei ole veel pikendanud.  
 A: .hh u:m mmm õppeinfosüsteemis on kirjutatud et mu:l (.) pikenda[tud] aga=  
 B: [jaa]  
 B: =aga see arve esitati teile või. (0.8) kuidas ei küsitud. mitte midagi  
 (1.8)  
 B: a:. (.) no siis sellisel juhul. (.) jääb lepingusse see punkt=te (.) et sihtasutus Arhime:des.  
 (.)  
 A: uh huh=

- B: =oma (kontolt ) Tartu Ülikooli asja üle.  
(1.5)
- B: lihtsalt meil oli siin juhus et (0.5) et °( ) juurde ja. (.) tema on ise maksnud oma )°
- A: → kas mm Arhime:des mm (.) maksab ise.  
(0.5)
- B: jah.Arhime:des ma[ksab i]se.  
A: [u:h huh]  
(0.8)
- B: ma teen need asjad üle (seal kaks ) eilne kuupäev [(.) ma] teen uued  
A: [uh huh]  
(4.5)
- A: ma mõtlesin et m- mina ise (0.5) ise (0.5) p- pean maksma.  
B: °(pole võimalik (.) see tühi jutt)°  
(.)
- A: uh huh  
(2.5)
- B: °ärge selle ise hakake ise maksma aga (3.2) a- (0.8) ma räägin (võib-olla \$ära\$)°
- A: uh huh  
(35.0) ((B talks to another student))
- B: °nii. (.) täna on (.) üheksas.°  
(26.0)
- B: luge- lugege see.  
(.)
- A: uh [huh]
- B: [veel]kord läbi  
[---]

ee\_018\_ek

- [---]
- A: (ja saime punktid täis.)
- B: uh huh.
- A: aga nüüd me vaatasime mingi (.) mingi veel. (.) mingisuguse teatrianalüüsi mis meil (pukte sai vähe seal)
- B: jah.
- A: → kas ma pean seda võtma nüüd.
- B: e:: (.) noh. põhimõttelt ei pea seda võtma. (.) khh kui sa ei taha. (1.5) aga: (0.5) põhimõttelt on nii [siis sellega (.)]  
[aga see ei ole] ju selle aasta kohustuslik.
- A: ei see [ei ole selle]
- A: [see on järg]mise.
- C: see on järgmise aasta.
- A: → aga ma ei saa selle seal teha. (0.5) kui ma ise sisse lähen siis ma ei saa ennast se=
- B: =ja enam ei saa te nagu registreeringut tühistada sellepärast et=e (.) ( tooma)
- A: → (aga ma panna seda kinni ei saa)
- B: e: kh ja seda seda võtta lihtsalt ei saa.
- A: (ei saa)
- B: jah. (0.5) siis sa pead minema: kirjanduse ja rahvaluule: õp- osakonda. (0.5) ja: ja seal tühistatakse see ära.
- A: → kus see asub. peahoones.  
(41.0)
- B: (see on siit ette.) (.) sa lähed siit välja ja siis seal, (.) seal kõrval on ( )  
(2.5)
- A: [( )]
- C: [( ) täna mul pole täita)] paberit
- B: .h hu:h
- C: → kas pärast kella neljani on avatud veel.
- B: e:m
- A: → sest meil on praegu tund
- B: e: see on lihtsalt. sa võid praegu loengusse minna. aga siis sa ikka homme või ülehomme lähed.
- A: uh huh

- C: → et siin [ei saa seda tühistada.]  
 A: [( oli)] (.) kolmandik (.) \$ et me. pole selle ise valinud.\$  
 B: jah. kõigile. (kõik kes selle kursuses pandi) see (.) seal on kuskil uus töötaja. (.) ta nagu ei tea nüüd päris hästi.  
 A: uh huh.  
 B: (et meil siin. (.) käisid üks päev ka mingisuguse küsisid sellest. (.) aga me käisime ja seal ära tühistasime.)  
 A: huh (.) (et ma küsin nende käest.)  
 B: jah.  
 [---] ((unclear talk))  
 A: → aga mis ruumis.  
 B: e: pff (2.0) (ot=ot=ot ot=ot=ot ruumid) kakssada viis kakssada kuus kakssada sei-. muidu küsi selle:  
 A: jah.  
 B: mingi sekretäri. või õppekorralduse spetsialisti.  
 A: aitäh.  
 C: näge[mist]  
 A: [head] aega

ee\_019\_ek

- [---]  
 A: → kas saate tõendit veel teha. kirjutage mulle tõendit.  
 B: jah. jah.  
 A: ( )° ((needs a certificate that she was at the university that day))  
 B: kellele see läheb. university that day))  
 A: (no mis vahet on.)  
 B: nii. kes tahab tõendit saada.  
 A: ühes kohas.  
 B: < kes tahab seda tõendit saada.> mis asutus.  
 A: mis asut- a: meie kool.  
 (5.0)  
 B: tänaseks. ja.  
 A: uh huh.  
 B: jah.  
 A: → ja (.) siis mul. (0.8) see kas sesside plaanid on juba olemas.  
 B: ei. plaani ei ole veel. aga sess on alles kaks-kend neli kuni kaks-kend kaheksa.  
 (1.0)  
 A: → ma pean teadma. (minul ju küsivad) ((to take days off at school))  
 (0.5)  
 A: → kas on [viis päeva]  
 B: [no: viis] päeva. aga ma ei tea täpselt millised on teie päevad. et me: (.) veel hakkame seda tegema alles.  
 A: → jah. (.) esmaspäevast.  
 (0.1)  
 B: no: tavaliselt on esmaspäevast reedeni. aga: (0.5) aga: me: (.) me veel ei tea mis päevadele. kas=s (.) kas õnnestub nelja päevaga teha teie oma või:  
 A: a:  
 B: või noh. se- [seda mõi]stab  
 A: [uh huh.]  
 B: jah.  
 A: uh huh. °aitäh°

## RESÜMEE

Tartu Ülikool  
Germaani-romaani filoloogia osakond  
Inglise filoloogia õppetool

**Natalja Zagura**

### **Palvete funktsionaalsed ja formaalsed aspektid vahekeeles: inglise ja eesti keel institutsionaalses kontekstis**

#### **The Functional and Formal Aspects of the Communicative Act of Request in Interlanguage: English and Estonian in Institutional Context**

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Käesolevas magistritöös lähtutakse seisukohast, et keeleline suhtlemine on praktiline tegevus, ning seega vaadeldakse selles vahekeele kasutust institutsionaalses kontekstis palvete esitamisel, keskendudes keeleõppijate edule soovitud tulemuste saavutamisel suhtluse kaudu. Eesmärgiks on kirjeldada ja analüüsida palveid, seostades keelelisi vorme funktsioonidega, mida nad täidavad, ning otstarvetega, mille tõttu keelekasutaja neid rakendab. Lisaks vaadeldakse vahekeelt omaette süsteemina, mitte sihtkeele puuduliku variandina.

Tavakõne kui uurimisobjekti vastu hakati huvi tundma 1960ndatel aastatel Ameerikas, kui selle lindistamine ja üksikasjalik analüüs tänu tehnilisele arengule võimalikuks osutus. Autentseid vestlusi analüüsides jõudis Harvey Sacks järeldusele, et kõne on süstemaatilise ülesehitusega korrapärane tegevus. Vesteldes lähtuvad inimesed alateadlikult kindlatest ühishormidest, nn “masinavärgist” (Sacks 1992), mis tagab suhtluse süstemaatilisuse ning soodustab vastastikust arusaamist.

Siiski saab vormilistest ning sisulistest omadustest lähtudes eristada “tavakõnet” ja institutsionaalset kõnet, kusjuures institutsionaalset kõnet defineeritakse tavaliselt seda tavakõnele vastandades. Vestlusanalüüsi traditsiooni kohaselt on institutsionaalne kõne tavakõne süsteemipäraselt piiratud variant ning sellele on omased kolm erijoont: vestluskaaslased keskenduvad teatud institutsionaalse eesmärgi saavutamisele, nendele lubatud panus vestlusesse on piiratud nii vormi kui ka sisu poolest ning nad tõlgendavad üksteise lausungeid/sõnumeid vastavalt tõlgenduste raamistikule, mis on omane just sellele

kindlale institutsioonile (Drew and Heritage 1992: 21-25). Siiski on ekslik arvata, et üksnes asjaolu, et vestlus toimub institutsionaalses kontekstis, määrab selle iseloomu. Vestlusanalüüsi lähenemise kohaselt pole kontekst “mahuti”, kuhu inimesed suhtlemisel sisenevad ning mis määraks nende käitumist. Märgatavalt olulisemaks teguriks on siiski vestluskaaslased ise, kes otsustavad, kas aktsepteerida kontekstist tulenevaid piiranguid või mitte. Seega võib väita, et konteksti ja vestluse vahel on vastastikune suhe: mõlemad avaldavad teineteisele mõju.

Kui vestluskaaslased tunnevad nii vestluse “füüsilist” konteksti kui ka kasutatavat keelt, toimub suhtlus enamasti sujuvalt ja süsteemipäraselt, kuna toimivad teadvustamata ühishormid. Kui aga normid pole kõnelejalte ühised, on suhtluse vool raskendatud ning ka arusaamise saavutamine muutub keeruliseks. Selline olukord on aga muutumas üha sagedasemaks, kuna globaliseerivas maailmas suhtlevad erinevatest ühiskondadest pärit inimesed üha rohkem ja sellist trendi on märgata ka institutsionaalses kontekstis. Huvitav on seega vaadelda olukorda, kus suhtlemine toimub keele vahendusel, mis pole ühele või mõlemale vestlusest osavõtjale emakeeleks, ning seetõttu peavad vestluskaaslased suhtlusolukorra printsiipe kohapeal koostöös looma.

Käesolev töö keskendub üliõpilasnõustamise institutsionaalses kontekstis esitatud autentsete palvete analüüsile, sest institutsionaalses kontekstis toimub sageli teenuse osutamine ning palvetel on selles oluline osa. Palved on antud juhul esitatud inglise ja eesti keeles, mis on kõnelejatele võõrkeelteks. Keeleõppija keelt võib nimetada ka vahekeeleks ehk Ellise (1985) sõnul süstemaatiliseks teadmiseks keelest, mis on sõltumatu nii keeleõppija emakeelest kui ka võõrkeelest, mille poole ta püüdleb. Ühe keeleõppija keeleoskust mingil teatud hetkel peetaksegi vahekeeleks. Oluline on siinjuures aga see, et keel on pidevalt muutumas ja arenemas; seega liigub ühe õppija keel vahekeele kontiinumist mööda üha edasi. Seda arenguskaalat peetakse aga universaalseks süsteemiks, mis on keeleõppija emakeelest, vanusest, kultuurist, keeleõppeolukorrast jne. sõltumatu. Käesoleva töö üheks eesmärgiks ongi vaadelda uurimusest osavõtjate poolt kasutatavaid vahekeele variante vahekeele kontiinumi komponentidena ning nende keelte põhjal kirjeldada antud kontekstis esinenud vahekeele kontiinumit kui süsteemi.

Töö teoreetiliseks eesmärgiks oli kirjeldusmudeli loomine, mis võimaldaks institutsionaalses kontekstis vahekeele kaudu väljendatud palvete üksikasjalikku analüüsi. Selline mudel sai loodud mitmete lingvistiliste teooriate ja mudelite ühendamisel. Vestlusanalüüsi kvalitatiivne kirjeldav meetod võimaldas nii analüüsida vahekeele pisimaid detaile kui ka kindlaks määrata suhtluse üldsüsteemi. Pragmaatiline lähenemine



aitas kaasa kindlate strateegiate ja keelevormide kasutamisele võimalike seletuste leidmisele ning samuti ka üldisema keelelise valiku juhtiva loogika välja selgitamisele. Suhtlussituatsiooni käigus loodavate isikutevaheliste suhete analüüsi suunas Brown ja Levinsoni (1987) viisakusteooria, samas kui vahekeele teooria seletas keelevormide valikut, mis oli seotud võõrkeele strateegilise kasutusega. Kõneaktide teooria võimaldas sarnaselt vestlusanalüüsile käsitleda kõnet ühiskondliku tegevusena ning selle tegevuse edukust hinnati Eemereni ja Grootendorsti (1984) poolt täiendatud illokutiivsete ja perlokutiivsete aktide teooria raames. Selle kompleksse mudeli tulemuseks on üksikasjalik kirjeldus, mis käsitleb vahekeele kasutust palvete väljendamisel institutsionaalses kontekstis, asetades rõhku osavõtjate ehk *emic* lähenemisele.

Ülalmainitud mudelit rakendades analüüsiti korpust, mis koosneb 25 inglisekeelsest vestlusest (46 min.) ning 22 eestikeelsest vestlusest (73 min.), mis lindistati ajavahemikul veebruar-september 2005 Tartu Ülikoolis välisüliõpilasesinduses ning eesti keele (võõrkeelena) õppetoolis. Vestlused toimusid tudengite ja üliõpilasnõustaja/õppekorraldusspetsialisti vahel. Korpuse analüüs näitas, et keelt kasutati antud institutsionaalses kontekstis abivahendina institutsionaalse eesmärgi saavutamisele suunatud suhtluses, seega arvestasid osavõtjad suhtlemisel kontekstiga ning samas ka löid selle taas suhtluse käigus. Mõlema keele puhul oli korpuses selgelt märgata ka kindlat suhtlusmalli, mis varieerus sõltuvalt kõneleja keeletasemest. Seega sai kinnituse vahekeele kontiinumini hüpotees.

Palvete väljendamiseks valitud strateegiate analüüs näitas, et madalama keeletasemega keeleõppijad valisid otsekoheemaid strateegiaid kui kõrgema keeletasemega õppijad, oletatavasti selle tõttu, et keelestruktuurid olid nende puhul lihtsamad nii moodustamise kui ka arusaamise seisukohalt. Kõrgema keeletasemega kõnelejate palvetes oli rohkem strateegiate variatiivsust, kusjuures valik sõltus palve iseloomust; samas pöörasid nad ka viisakusstrateegiatele rohkem tähelepanu kui madalama keeletasemega kõnelejad ning kasutasid ka rohkem vahendeid modaalsuse väljendamiseks (*downgraders, external modifiers*). Üldiselt aga püüdsid keeleõppijad võõrkeelt lihtsustada, mis oli eriti märgatav küsimuste lühendamise puhul. Siiski ei tekkinud üliõpilasnõustajal/õppekorraldusspetsialistil palvetest arusaamisega raskusi ning kõik palved said võimaluse korral ka rahuldatud. Märkimist väärib ka asjaolu, et kuigi mõned keeleõppijad keskendusid kõnelemisel enda grammatilisele korrektsusele ja püüdsid tehtud vigu parandada või õigeid vorme leida, pööras ametnik nii grammatilistele kui ka pragmaatilistele vigadele vähe tähelepanu ning seda vaid siis, kui vea tõttu polnud sõnum

arusaadav. Ülaloodud näited tõestavad, et institutsionaalses suhtluses täidab keel vaid abivahendi rolli suhtluse eesmärgini jõudmiseks.

Üldiselt peab märkima, et vaatamata lingvistilistele ja pragmalingvistilistele raskustele, mis tekivad keeleõppija piiratud keelepädevuse tõttu, on vahekeeles suhtlemise eristavaks jooneks siiski pigem koostöö kui valearusaamine. Loobudes emakeelekõneleja standardist ning vahekeele käsitlest sihtkeele puuduliku variandina, on võimalik korpust moodustavates vestlustes täheldada koostööd ning korrapärasust suhtluse mitmel tasandil. Nendeks tasanditeks on vestluse sisu, suhtluse ülesehitus ning orienteeritus heade isikutevaheliste suhete hoidmisele.

**Märksõnad:** vahekeele pragmaatika, institutsionaalne suhtlus, vestlusanalüüs, palve kui kõneakt