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Realisation of requests in intercultural negotiations
On pragmatic method

1.   Introduction

In this paper I shall propose a method to describe requests in the 'language of negotiation'[1], based on pragmatic criteria. I am working under the assumption that Norwegian interlanguage speakers of German have a requesting behaviour that differs from the behaviour practised by their German interlocutors. The following examples are requests from negotiations in my material[2]:

Example 1: German:	*machen Sie das Ihren Herren ganz klar* 'do make this clear to your management'
Example 2: Norwegian:	*können wir eh Herr <Name> vielleicht erzählen bißchen über Ihre Qualitäts- programm ...* 'could you Mr N tell us about your quality programme'
Example 3: German:	*Sie schicken mir s bitte zu* 'send it over to us please'
Example 4: Norwegian:	*dann kann Sie direkt mit mir Kontakt nehmen* 'then you can contact me direct- ly'

In order to make my point, I shall first argue that 'speech act' performance and the realisation of 'speech acts' is an important issue for the 'language of negotiation' (2). My main concern is to find a method to isolate and describe requests. I shall therefore discuss current 'speech act' research (3), and the special relevance this might have for

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[1] cf. Mulholland 1991.

[2] My material consists of around 100 examples from authentic and simulated negotiations and authentic negotiation talk on the telephone.

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the analysis of 'natural' material at my disposal (4). I shall then propose a pragmatic check list to be applied on such material and show some findings.

2. Why study 'speech act' performance in the 'language of negotiation'?

I claimed in the introduction that requests are an important issue in the 'language of negotiation'. Let us first look at the negotiator as a **professional** businessman or businesswoman, acting on behalf of their company. We call this 'institutional' communication (cf Wodak 1988, 801). With Lewicki/Litterer we can speak of the 'representative role' of the negotiator (Lewicki/Litterer 1985, 10). One of the main issues in the many definitions of negotiations is that negotiators have conflicting interests or goals to achieve (Fisher/Ury 1981, 42; Lampi 1986, 9; Lewicki/Litterer 1985, 4; Stalpers 1993, 9; Wagner/Petersen 1988). A business negotiation is a job that has to be done. Doing business implies planning your activities carefully (Lewicki/Litterer 1985, 47), forming and applying strategies (Lampi 1986), giving clear messages and being efficient (Lewicki/Litterer 1985, 176). Business strategies may involve exercising power, trying to persuade the other party and arguing for one's causes (ibid., 239f). Asking the other party to do something for you, directing or requesting, is also a way to achieve your goal (cf Mulholland 1991, 171, on 'directing').

The emphasis on efficiency and strategy implies that the negotiator uses his language repertoire differently in business interaction than he does in social talk. Stalpers demonstrates "that the rules of conduct for business talk differ from the rules of conduct for casual conversation" (Stalpers 1992, 219).

Now let us look at the negotiator's performance as a **linguistic** activity. In recent years the lack of pragmatic approaches in the teaching and evaluation of foreign languages has been deplored by scholars and educationalists (Stevenson 1988, 1061; Trosborg 1991, 97). The 'language of negotiation' is a field where pragmatics comes in naturally. Dimensions like the professional or institutional background, the strategic use of language, 'speech acts' and relational[3] phenomena are on the agenda. In my view this is the secret behind the popularity of

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3   Concerning the relationship between negotiators.

negotiation classes in foreign language training. Learning by simulating negotiations allows students to take an active part in situations relevant for their careers.

One might argue that focusing on 'speech act' performance is not the best way to go pragmatic. This depends on how one applies the method. Awareness of cultural differences in linguistic behaviour is essential in order to avoid misunderstanding when conducting negotiations internationally. Having grown up and lived in different cultural surroundings, I have myself experienced misunderstanding requestive hints and I have often heard Norwegian managers puzzled by German 'directness'. In several interviews Norwegian managers claimed that this is one of the main reasons they seek linguistic advice and ask to be trained.

Pilbeam (1993) describes a very workable model for negotiation training. In his article he starts out by looking at negotiation as the professional situation. The different stages in a 'basic model' negotiation are discussed. They are:

> *Relationship building, agreeing procedure, exchanging information, questioning, checking and clarifying, generating and evaluating options, bidding, bargaining, settling and concluding (ibid, 7).*

He then suggests building up skills by practising relevant language phenomena. Pilbeam focuses on relational factors and "strategies" and their linguistic realisations:

> *using fewer irritators, fewer counterproposals and defence/attack spirals, and asking more questions etc.*

These strategies are preferred to "an older model", with speech-act-type strategies and their realisations:

> *"insisting, persuading, hedging and stalling, making concessions, attacking, threatening, rejecting and agreeing"* (ibid., 8).

I take it that 'requesting' would be seen as belonging to the 'older model'. Focusing on the relational side of negotiation is in line with modern negotiation theory of the Fisher/Ury school. I agree that 'positive' cooperative strategies should be focused on, as Pilbeam advises, but I still find it problematic to leave out some of the 'older model'-strategies, as real-life negotiations offer a lot of them and learners want to know what to expect from native speakers.

To sum up, I think that the realisation of requests is a very topical phenomenon to investigate in intercultural negotiations, as they have professional, pragmatic and linguistic relevance.

3.   Current methods in 'speech act' research

Research into cross-cultural pragmatics has lead to divergent conclusions as to whether the same basic 'speech act' strategies exist in different cultures and that they are simply realized differently, or whether there are ethnic differences between cultures (Brown-Levinson 1978; Wierzbicka 1985; Blum-Kulka et.al. 1989; Svanes 1991; Trosborg 1991).

3.1. The CCSARP-project

Very interesting work has been done in recent years on pragmatic and linguistic variation of 'speech acts'. In 1989 Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper (eds.) published the results of a large cross-cultural project, the CCSARP-project (The Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project) on requests and apologies.

Native speakers and foreign language speakers of seven European languages, among them German and Danish, but not Norwegian, were asked to produce requests in a number of carefully scripted situations. One example of such a situation is a policeman telling a driver to move his parked car, another a student asking a room-mate to clean up after herself. The scenarios for the situations varied in **sociopragmatic** dimensions as expressed by Blum-Kulka/House (1989, 149f):

- the degree of the addressee's obligation to carry out the act
- the speaker's right to demand compliance
- the level of the speaker's dominance over the hearer
- the estimated likelihood for compliance
- the estimated difficulty inherent in making the request.

These dimensions are assumed to influence the request **strategy** used. As the relative importance of these dimensions can be different in different cultures, one assumes that the realisation of requests varies. The results support this hypothesis, but on the whole there is little variation in requesting behaviour. This is explained by the existence of shared conventions in the western cultures.

In the analysis of the samples the following features were studied:

Request sequences.

The following request sequence includes four phases:

> *Judith (*'alerter')
>
> *I missed the class yesterday (*'preposed supportive move')
>
> *do you think I could borrow your notes? (*the request proper, or 'head act')
>
> *I promise to return them by tomorrow (*'postposed supportive move')

Strategy types (along a scale from 'direct' to 'indirect')

1. *Clean up that mess (*mood derivable)
2. *I am asking you to clean up the mess (*performatives)
3. *I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled (*hedged performative)
4. *You'll have to move that car (*obligation statements)
5. *I really wish you'd stop bothering me (*want statements)
6. *How about cleaning up? (*suggestory formulae)
7. *Would you mind moving your car? (*query preparatory)
8. *You have left the kitchen in a right mess (*strong hints)
9. *'I am a nun' (*mild hints)

1-5 are 'direct strategies', 6-7 are 'conventionally indirect strategies' and 8-9 are 'nonconventionally indirect strategies'.

Perspective

> *Can I have it? (*speaker oriented)
>
> *Can you do it? (*hearer oriented)
>
> *Can we start cleaning now? (*inclusive)
>
> *It needs to be cleaned (*impersonal)

Internal modification

Upgraders and downgraders (lexical, phrasal and syntactic)

> *a bit, disgusting, can/could etc.*

3.2. Norwegian as native and foreign language

Svanes has filled the gap that remained for the Norwegian language (1989, 1991, 1992). She started with the CCSARP-method, first

comparing three populations of Norwegian secondary school students with the variables **urban/countryside** and **type of dialect** (1990). Her second study concerned the Norwegian interlanguage of foreign students at the University of Bergen (1991), and finally she studied whether there is any change in the realisation of requests among learners over a period of three years' time (1992). Her results show variation due to differences in social distance in the culture of the respondents, but the most apparent difference in the early stages of interlanguage Norwegian lies in linguistic variation of internal lexical modification.

3.3. The didactic approach

Trosborg (1991) takes a didactic approach. Her focus is on differences in requesting behaviour between Danish learners of English at three proficiency levels, native speakers of English and Native speakers of Danish. She explains differences in her data with interference from the Danish mother tongue and the learner status. An essential finding is that Danish learners of English keep their Danish requesting behaviour even though they have reached the advanced level linguistically. This supports her claim for greater focus on sociopragmatic and discourse competence in language teaching.

4.   Research on natural material

My own **'natural'**[4] material, **authentic** and **simulated** negotiations and business talk on the telephone shows variation in request patterns in the German produced by native speakers and foreign language speakers at first sight. I am going to discuss a method to be used on this sort of material and show some preliminary findings.

The scholars behind the CCSARP-project have done important work applying 'speech act' theory in empirical study and for didactic use. Trying to apply the method on natural dialogues however, poses problems. The most important are:

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[4] 'Natural' here means that the speakers speak as they would in other similar situations, speaking their mother tongue or a foreign language. Their focus has been on the negotiation itself. Restrictions speakers may have felt during simulations, would concern the negotiation itself or the macro structure of the text, rather than the realisation of requests and other acts on the micro level of the text.

1. Finding an operational pragmatic definition of requests, in order to identify them in the dialogue.

2. Finding pragmatic criteria for the description of requests in negotiation dialogue.

I shall now discuss these issues, contrasting the CCSARP-method to a method to be used on natural material.

4.1. Definition of requests

4.1.1. Comparing the CCSARP-method and a natural data method

The CCSARP-project worked with **respondents,** i.e. people who were asked to perform in somebody else's place, in a given situation. Every sample is a request. This 'laboratory' method allows you to collect and process a large amount of data. A quantitative method is possible.

Natural data of negotiations, on the other hand, have the disadvantage of being scarce if not inaccessible. The requests are concealed in long texts and their illocution is often ambiguous to the observer. There are few speakers producing a lot of text. This has consequences for the workload of the researcher and the reliability of the conclusions. The advantage of natural data lies in the fact that people produce requests spontaneously. Provided there are valid comparable texts, we may learn more about the function and frequency of requests in different cultures and about the place of requests in the context as a whole.[5] The choice of a qualitative method seems obvious, but results can be confirmed and supported by quantitative data on for example frequency and distribution of requests with different negotiators.

In the CCSARP-project all the situations were scripted in a way so as to elicit 'requests', or rather a specific type of request, defined by the scenario for the situation (Blum-Kulka/House/Kasper 1989, 17). The method in itself is an ingenious way of solving the definition problem, which is a problem in 'speech act' theory, where requests are one group in the heterogeneous group of 'directives'. By introducing situational variation the request 'range' is neatly defined for the investigation. A closer definition in terms like *order*, *demand, ask* or *beg* becomes less necessary.

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5 Lack of wider context was a point of criticism against the CCSARP-project(Sbisà 1992).

In natural data requests are difficult to isolate from the surrounding text. Questions can be requests or not and statements can be requestive hints or not. An operational definition is needed. Not only are requests difficult to identify, but they are also very heterogeneous, varying in illocutionary force from *order somebody to do something* to *ask somebody for information*. For different illocutionary force there is a variety of overlapping linguistic realizations. The category is thus a fuzzy one. But scholars of 'speech act' pragmatics have looked further into the reality behind language. Real-life factors can be identified and used directly for data sampling. Request thus stays a working term, being quantified by real life data. Looking at the literature on requests or 'Aufforderungen', the following 'real-life' or pragmatic factors reoccur in the description of requests: (Hindelang 1978, Berens 1978, Hellberg 1990)

- the speaker
- the hearer
- the relationship between the two, based on situational and social variables
- the type of action asked for
- the easiness or difficulty of uttering the request
- the easiness or difficulty of complying with the request
- the result of the request

For the purpose of negotiation dialogue I add the 'institutional' factor. This is in accord with Stalper's (1992) claim that business talk differs from casual conversation (above, 2). Berens (1978) made an institutional study of requests in 'academic advisory talk between professors and students', describing types of requests characteristic for such institutional situations. In the following I shall propose a pragmatic definition of requests for negotiations (4.1.2) and then I shall propose a list of pragmatic criteria for their description (4.2).

4.1.2. A pragmatic definition of requests in negotiations

In negotiations, and in business talk generally, language is produced for institutional purposes. If the speaker and hearer are negotiators, the communication between them, the type of action asked for and the resulting action will be in line with business conventions. The

negotiator acts in his professional role or as a representative of his company, and he adapts his language usage to the rules governing business transactions. We can align the 'real-life factors' characterising requests in 4.1.1 with rules governing business transactions. Accordingly a request can be said to satisfy the following criteria: A negotiator asks another negotiator, in spoken language, to do something for him or his own company or to arrange for something to be done in the hearer's company (a). The utterance clearly signals the illocutionary force 'request' and the type of action required (b). The listener acknowledges the request (c).

a.   A negotiator asks another negotiator, in spoken language, to do something for him or his own company or to arrange for something to be done in the hearer's company.

This is in line with the professional role of the negotiator and with business goals generally (above, 2).

b.   The utterance clearly signals the illocutionary force 'request' and the type of action required

For the researcher it is important to be sure he has identified a request and nothing else. There are linguistic criteria that characterise requests. In the examples 1,3 and 4 above, we can identify several linguistic indicators of requests: The imperative *machen Sie (*example 1), the special statement form of the imperative and the modal 'bitte' in *Sie schicken mirs bitte zu (*example 3), the modal verb + infinitive *dann kann (sic!) Sie ... nehmen (*example 4).[6] Negotiators, on the other hand, not only have to consider efficiency and rational behaviour, but also relational factors, as Pilbeam's training programme shows us (above, 2). In critical situations negotiators may choose not to be clear, or rather, choose a suitable 'pragmalinguistic' strategy. Example 2 has the linguistic realization of a question and it is ambiguous[7] to the observer. Other linguistic strategies that can make 'request' utterances ambiguous, in addition to questions, are requestive hints and requestive conditional clauses, e.g. 'if you make us a good offer' in example 6. Let us look at an interesting example from a trade fair in Germany:

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[6]   Prosodic features and context are disregarded here.

[7]   Weizmann(1989) uses the term 'opaque' in connection with requestive hints. I choose 'ambiguous', in order to restrict the discussion to 'one of two' possible meanings, 'question' or 'request', 'condition' or 'request' etc.

Example 5

German:	*darf ich mal ne Frage stellen + + dieser dieser (Produkt) der Sie den sie macht da + können Sie mir da mal ne Preisvorstellung sagen* 'may I ask ... could you give me a price'
Norwegian:	*ja das kann ich schon ... sind Sie Händler/* 'yes I can ... are you a wholesale dealer'
German:	*ja*
Norwegian:	*eh + der kost so sechsundvierzig Mark sechzig ...* 'it is 46.60 Marks'
German:	*dankeschön*

If our recording had stopped after *ja das kann ich schon*, we would have understood the utterance literally, as a proper question only. The utterance is 'explicit performative', i.e. the German even states that this is a question, and the Norwegian's reaction is an answer to a question. According to conventional use in many cultures, however, questions are an 'indirect' way of putting a request. This means they can represent either of the two: 'question' or 'request'. This ambiguity makes it a very flexible communicative device for both the speaker and the hearer. It gives them scope for what I call 'relational' and 'tactical' manoeuvring. **Relational manoeuvring** can be explained with politeness theory (Brown/Levinson, 1986). Weizman in her chapter on 'requestive hints', puts it like this: "... how does one try to cause an action to happen, and at the same time avoid assuming responsibility for it? As concerns requests, the best way to have one's cake and eat it too is to choose the most indirect and nonconventional request strategy" (1989, 71f.).

I would like to place it in a business context, as a **tactical manoeuvre**. The Norwegian understood both illocutions and he exploits this strategically in order to put in the extra question *sind Sie Händler* 'are you a wholesale dealer'. Only after the answer is given, does he comply with the request, quoting a price. Thereby he has clearly indicated to the hearer - and to the researcher - that he has understood the utterance as a request. The tactical use of language has given him a business advantage. He was given the opportunity to quote a competitive price to a trader. A one-time client might have been offered a higher price.

There is also the possibility of misunderstanding the intended illocutionary force on purpose, in order to gain tactical points. This can be an advantage for a poor foreign language speaker, a sort of linguistic 'handicap'. In a simulated negotiation the Norwegian failed to 'understand' a request for a price several times, at least it seemed so to the observer at first sight (requests and acknowledgement are underlined):

Example 6

German:	*und eh ich wäre mal interessiert an Ihrem Ange-bot (*I would be interested in your offer'
Norwegian:	*ja*
German:	*und*
Norwegian:	*ja*
German:	*eh ich wollte noch betonen also wenn Sie uns eh ein gutes Angebot machen können dann würden wir ein längeres + eine längere Beziehung ins Auge fassen + 'I would like to underline that if you make us a good offer we would consider further cooperation'*
Norwegian:	*hm*
German:	*zwischen Ihrer Firma und der meinen 'between our firms'*
Norwegian:	*hm + ja das eh das ist sehr interessant eh ich habe das auch gehört eh von Volvo in Goten-burg...* 'that sounds very interesting ...' (there are two additional repetitions of the same request, before there is compliance)

Negotiation manuals advise negotiators not to quote a price straight away, but first to increase the value of the product in the hearer's mind (Wage 1991, 195f). With that in mind we understand why the Norwegian does not seem to react. He first wants to discuss further cooperation, before he quotes a price. In an everyday conversation the failure to react would seem impolite. Such examples indicate that there are special rules for requests in business talk and negotiations.

c.   The listener acknowledges the request

The request itself is only the speaker's intention. It has no function without the listener reacting to it, regardless of whether the reaction is positive, negative or puzzling. The outcome of a negotiation depends

on the interaction between the parties, according to the laws of interdependence (see Lewicki/Litterer 1986, 21ff). I therefore include the acknowledgement of requests in the definition.

Failure to acknowledge a request can be due to pragmatic or linguistic deficiency or to strategic or tactical behaviour, but there are formulas like *mach's gut* 'get on well', *Moment mal* 'just a moment', *verbleiben wir so* 'let us agree on that' that often lack acknowledgement and even backchanneling like *hm*, probably because of their special function as conventionalised formulas in the interaction. Where there is acknowledgement, it materializes in different ways:

(1) **by feedback** that can be interpreted as 'I heard your request'. In cases of mere 'backchannelling', i.e. merely signalling attention (cf. Neumann 1994), we cannot be sure whether the request has been understood. This is the case with feedback like *ja, hm, eh in example 6 and in the following examples:*

Example 7

Norwegian:	*eh + ich brauche Preise für - eh - vier (Produkt)* 'I need prices for four products'
German:	*ja*

Example 8

German:	*willst du die auch haben* 'would you like those too'
Norwegian:	*hm*

(2) **by compliance**

Example 9

German:	*jetzt sag mir mal die Abmessung und die Stück* 'do tell me the measurements and number'
Norwegian:	*ja + Abmessung ein Stück ... innen 18 hm ... außen 41* 'yes measurement for one piece 18 inside and 41 outside'

Example 10

German (calling from the station, a few days earlier than expected): *ich bin hier ja 'I am here yes'*

Norwegian (surprised, trying to conceal his irritation): *+ ja ich komme sofort 'yes I'll be there straight away'*

(3) **by objection or denial**

Example 11

German: *ja wir brauchen aber ne Range von ...* ' yes but we need a range of ...'

Norwegian: *haben wir nicht + haben wir nicht* 'we don't have any'

Example 12

German: *eh vielleicht kann man da auf eh der Basis daß Sie sorgen vielleicht ein zwei Stunden und eh das müssen wir mal sehen* 'perhaps one might on the basis that you might take a couple of hours and we would have to see'

Norwegian: *ja ja ich glaube es ist eh es sind mehrere Details wir diskutieren müssen*
'yes I think there are several details we would have to discuss'

Example 10 is interesting, as the observer does not understand the German's request until the compliance is made. In addition to sociopragmatic factors, for example that it is common in our society to collect people from the station, we must take the institutional context: the Norwegian is eager to meet the German, as he has been offered exclusive rights to sell a product in Norway.

4.2. Pragmatic description of requests

In 4.1 we defined requests in pragmatic terms, in order to identify them in the surrounding text. In this chapter I am going to discuss pragmatic features that may be of importance for the description of requests, in order to get a typology of pragmatic and linguistic features. The pragmatic features will be put together in a coding checklist (fig. 1) that will be used on transcriptions of natural negotiations. This paper is based on findings in a pilot study.

4.2.1. Comparing the CCSARP-method and a natural data method

The CCSARP-project assessed sociopragmatic and cultural dimensions in speech act realization. This was possible as the scenarios for the situations presupposed certain combinations of sociopragmatic features

(cf. 3.1). For negotiations there are few data available for such assessment. One exception is example 10, where an earlier telephone call at my disposal gave the clue. Questionnaires and interviews after a recording of a negotiation are sometimes possible.

The strategy types along a scale 'direct' to 'indirect', as shown in 3.1, pose a problem. They try to combine linguistic realization with pragmatic dimensions, either along the scale coerciveness - politeness or clear - ambiguous. According to Blum-Kulka (1987) we have reason to doubt that there is correlation between the scales. Her study shows that conventions in different cultures vary as to what 'directness level' is more or less coercive. For the purpose of natural negotiation data the distinctions must necessarily be more crude than the 9-graded directness-scale. We can distinguish between clear and ambiguous requests as discussed above (4.1.2 b.) and we can rely on more objective pragmatic dimensions. A selection of pragmatic dimensions, relevant for negotiations, follows in 4.2.2.

4.2.2. Pragmatic dimensions for the description of requests in negotiations

4.2.2.1. The speaker

The individual speaker is, of course, an important 'dimension' in the language of negotiations. He plays a role according to his place in the sociocultural and institutional settings, and he has his own personal style.

4.2.2.2. Macro function

Requests sometimes introduce a new phase in the negotiation or they introduce a new topic. These requests are very often preceded by an explicit performative or a metacommunicative expression, as in example 13. A **phase change** or **topic change** is a sign of a strategy being applied, and according to Stalpers (1993), topic changes are more common in business talk than in ordinary conversation.[8]

> Example 13:   *ja da würd ich vorschlagen gehn wir mal die einzelnen Artikelgruppen durch wie immer 'I would suggest that we go through the products'*

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[8] Mulholland mentions "control of topic"(1991, 65f).

4.2.2.3. Request sequence

The request proper or 'head act' is often part of a 'request sequence' (see above, 3.1). This sequence can be a long argumentative or persuasive chain of preposed or postposed supportive moves, metacommunicative expressions or explicit performatives. The head act is the utterance that clearly indicates to the hearer what is required of him or her. Let us adapt one of the examples found in speech act literature, for example in Weizman's article on requestive hints (1989): (the head act is underlined)

Example 14	A:	*It is cold here, isn't it?*
	B:	(shuts the window)
Example 15	A:	*it is cold here, isn't it?*
	B:	*yes (*nothing happens)
	A:	*shut the window, please*
	B:	(shuts the window)

The utterance *it is cold here*, may be clear enough to some hearers and end in the required action as in example 14. In that case nothing else needs to be said, *it is cold here* is the 'head act', said as a requestive hint, i.e. the request is made by implication. To other hearers the hint may just be taken as an informative statement or as a preposed move to the head act *shut the window, please*. Example 15 is a request sequence. The way of building up such argumentative request sequences differs with different speakers. In our checklist (fig. 1) requests will be marked for possible **alerters, metacommunicative expressions** and **preposed** and **postposed moves**.

4.2.2.4. Illocution

We register whether a request is **clear** or **ambiguous**. All ambiguous requests will also be tested for **alternative illocutions**, such as questions, conditions, threats etc. Önnerfors (1992) mentions a Swedish type that looks like a pure statement. Some negotiators make a habit of threatening their interlocutors, trying to intimidate them into carrying out an action. This is the case with one German negotiator in my material. He threatens and he lets the Norwegian seller imagine the day when his firm will be gone because he has not complied with his request.

Example 16:

German:	*es kann folgendes passieren + <Firma des Norwegers> geht kaputt + + ...* 'the following may happen + your firm goes bust ...'
Norwegian:	*durchaus möglich* 'quite possible'

Given the context, this example answers our pragmatic definition for a request on points a. and b. (see 4.1.2 above), but the reaction *durchaus möglich* is no acknowledgement of a request (ibid., c.). Only later, after more argumentation, does the Norwegian comply: *ja, ja gut ... ich schick Ihnen das zu* 'OK I'll send it to you'.

4.2.2.5. The effect wanted

The request can be for an action in the **procedure** of business, which is comparatively easy to utter and to comply with, like *please, sit down* or *could you hand me the list*. Requests for procedural action are very often expressed very clearly with the imperative form or a form with the modal verb *müssen* 'must'. Examples from my material: *sagt mal bitte 'tell me'. bleib mal kurz in der Leitung* 'hold the line', *da mußt mir sagen'you must tell me'*. A funny example is about the need to speak German because of the ongoing recording: *für die Aufzeichnung hier müssen wir uns in Deutsch unterhalten* 'for this recording we have to speak German'. Requests concerning the **business act** itself are more difficult to perform, they require more tactical manoeuvre. In my material such requests are more often expressed with ambiguous illocutionary force: *also wenn Sie uns ein gutes Angebot machen könnten* 'well, if you could give us a good quote' or *können Sie den Liefertermin ändern* 'could you change the delivery date'. Also differences between **business acts now** (during the negotiation) and **business acts later**, after the talk, will be registered, as we expect differences in linguistic realisation. Business acts now are often of informative character, like the request for a price quote.

4.2.2.6. Modificators

For the registration of modificators I have adopted the CCSARP-term '**upgraders**' and '**downgraders**'. Upgraders make a request more clear or more coercive, and downgraders play down the intention. In the case of German we know that 'Modalpartikeln' have a wider function than

in other comparable languages. House (1989) studied the function of the 'politeness markers' *bitte* and *please* and found that they can be very face-threatening. A particular interest has to be shown to the German '*mal, nochmal*' (examples 5,6,9,12). In order to cover such specialities, the checklist (fig. 1) has an extra slot for 'special markers'.

4.2.2.7. Perspective

Perspective has strategic potential. The opposition **speaker based** request: *ich wollte mit dir fragen um man etwas mit die Preise hier ...* 'I wanted to ask you if one (could do) something about the prices' and **hearer oriented** request: *warum geht ihr nicht + massiv auch für <Produkt> ...* 'Why don't you buy ...' can be significant for more or less coercive styles. Then we have the German distinction between the formal and institutional *Sie* and the informal *Du*. This distinction is difficult to handle for many Norwegians. In my material I can see some instances of overcompensation, where the Norwegian is formal and the German informal. This and other deviations are registered on the checklist (fig. 1), as they may give us clues about intercultural, inter-language or power-related processes. Another interesting pronoun is the *we*. The **inclusive *we*** can underline mutual interests and joint decisions as Fisher/Ury (1981) prescribe, but *we* '= I and my company' can also disclose hierarchical structure. A negotiator in a hierarchical system can try to exercise power in an 'ambiguous' request like the following:

Example 17:   *ich habe die eh definitiv die eh Maßgabe + von unserem Einkauf aus <Stadt> ... daß wir + gene-rell + eh sie auffordern müssen dieses zu tun + und zwar ...* 'I definitely have the instruction from our buying department in <town> that we have to request you to do this ...'

The *we* in this example can be interpreted as a face-saving pronoun instead of I. This also applies to an **impersonal** *man (*see example 12) or the passive voice.

4.2.2.8. Acknowledgement

According to what was said above in 4.1.2 c., we register whether there is just **feedback** or **objection** or **compliance.** We also register acknowledgement or **reaction to other illocutions**, like the reaction to

the question in example 5: *ja das kann ich schon.* This reaction will have to be tested against ambiguous or alternative illocutions (see 4.2.2.4).

5.   Summing up

Inspired by recent work on cross-cultural and pragmalinguistic variaion in the realization of requests, I am suggesting a method to be used on **natural negotiation data**. The speakers in a pilot study are Norwegians and Germans speaking German.

There are two important differences between the CCSARP-data and my own. First, the CCSARP-data are elicited requests and mine are long texts containing requests that **have to be isolated** from the surrounding speech. Second, there is a difference in social environment. Business negotiations are produced in **'institutional'** situations, making their analysis a chapter in LSP[9], whereas the CCSARP-situations are scripted for everyday discourse. Differences in distribution, frequency and realisation of requests in the two types of discourse are expected.

A **definition** of requests in 'the language of negotiation' is proposed. A very important dimension is the hearer's **acknowledgement** of the request. For the description of requests I have tried to find special 'institutional' conditions underlying business negotiations. Institutional criteria are for example the **strategic use** of **topic change** and **perspective** (4.2.2.2 and 4.2.2.7), the strategy of 'misunderstanding' ambiguous illocutions in **tactical** or **relational manoeuvring** (4.1.2 b.) or the **wanted business act** (4.2.2.5). All these criteria have been put together in a checklist (fig. 1) to be used on natural data.

The 9-stage **directness scale** is problematic with natural material, as sociopragmatic data are scarce (4.2.1). I therefore suggest the cruder opposition **clear/ambiguous** as a pragmatic distinction. After the checklist has been applied to the text material, we will get differences in linguistic realisation, such as the imperative, forms with 'must' etc. under point 4.2.2.4 and different pronouns under point 4.2.2.5. A crosscheck against the different speakers may give us clues about cultural and interlanguage characteristics. The findings can be compared with

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9   LSP = Language for Special Purposes.

earlier results of studies on everyday written or spoken language, e.g. Hindelang (1978).

The checklist will also be tried on negotiations in other languages. There may be realisations of requests or oppositions in those languages we did not find or expect to find in German and Norwegian requesting behaviour.

Pragmatic coding of requests - checklist

		1	2	3	4	5
1 Speaker						
2 Macro function:	2.1 phase change 2.2 topic change					
3 Request sequence:	3.1 alerter					
	3.2 metacommunicative expression					
	3.3 preposed supportive move					
	3.4 postposed supportive move					
4 Illocution:	4.1 clear request					
	4.2 explicit performative					
	4.3 ambiguous request/ alternative illocutions					
5 Effect wanted:	5.1 procedure					
	5.2 business act now					
	5.3 business act later					
6 Modification:	6.1 upgrader					
	6.2 downgrader					
	6.3 special marker					
7 Perspective:	7.1 speaker based					
	7.2 hearer oriented *du, ihr*					
	7.3 hearer oriented Sie, Sie					
	7.4 *we* (I and my company)					
	7.5 inclusive *we* (you and me)					
	7.6 impersonal					
8 Acknowledgement	8.1 feedback or backchanneling					
	8.2 objection					
	8.3 compliance					
	8.4 reaction to other illocutions					

Figure 1

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