

**REQUESTS IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE:  
NEW THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES  
IN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS**

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**This thesis is submitted for the award of the title  
Doctor of Philosophy**

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## **Abstract**

**This doctoral thesis is a theoretical and methodological exploration in the study of the development of pragmatic abilities in Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. It sets out to make a new contribution to this still developing field in second language acquisition studies. It reviews the relevant literature in the fields of second language acquisition studies and interlanguage pragmatics and proposes a three-dimensional theoretical framework inspired by Schmidt's 'Noticing Hypothesis', Bialystok's concepts of 'control' and 'attention', and, most significantly, some of the key premises of Relevance Theory. This integrated theoretical account in turn informs a synthesis of complementary methodological approaches in data elicitation such as the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka) but also discourse and speech-act-based accounts (Trosborg, Koike, Held). Three interactive requestive situations are analysed and contrasted against a control group of native speakers, allowing for the examination of the way in which these requests are negotiated. This data analysis is enriched by retrospective verbal reports. Findings suggest that even advanced learners have difficulty in producing conventionalised pragmatic material in the target language. This pragmatic phenomenon is analysed by means of an integrated theoretical and methodological account which considers questions of perception of input and processing mechanisms where particular attention is paid to the dynamics of ongoing interactions across contexts.**

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 General outline**

This doctoral thesis focuses on the development of the acquisition of requests in Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. This doctoral thesis is a theoretical and methodological exploration in the study of the development of pragmatic abilities in Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. It sets out to make a contribution to this still developing field in second language acquisition studies. It reviews the relevant literature in the fields of second language acquisition studies and interlanguage pragmatics and proposes a three-dimensional theoretical framework inspired by Schmidt's 'Noticing Hypothesis', Bialystok's concepts of 'control' and 'attention', and, most significantly, some of the key premises of Relevance Theory. This integrated theoretical account in turn informs a synthesis of complementary methodological approaches in data elicitation such as the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka) but also discourse and speech-act-based accounts (Trosborg, Koike, Held).

It sets out to make a contribution to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) pragmatics by proposing a new theoretical and methodological framework, bringing together cognitive, cultural and communicative accounts rarely – if ever – discussed in the same context. This forms the core focus of the current study.

### **1.1 Pragmatics in SLA research: the main issues**

Studies in SLA in the 1970s were mainly concerned with the exploration of syntactic and morphological knowledge and its relations with linguistic competence. Here, Chomsky's works (1965, 1975) exerted a major influence, especially his well-known distinction between competence and performance, where, in simple terms, competence is understood as the knowledge of language, while performance is concerned with its use. It is only in the 1980s that interlanguage studies<sup>1</sup> (influenced by Hymes, 1972) started to incorporate a learner's pragmatic and discourse knowledge as part of

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<sup>1</sup> Studies of learner's language as a structured system.



communicative *competence* (cf. Canale & Swain, 1980), in what was called interlanguage pragmatics (cf. Blum-Kulka et.al., 1989: 9).

## **1.2 Situating the problem: the learning of pragmatic abilities in SLA**

Research on pragmatics in SLA has been essentially modelled on cross-cultural pragmatics. Most studies have therefore focused on comparative rather than on acquisitional aspects, for instance, how specific speech acts are performed in different languages, taking into account sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects. Research on the acquisition and development of pragmatics in SLA has tended to lag behind, maybe due to the great impact of sociolinguistics, with its emphasis on social-cultural aspects, with the consequence that psychological or cognitive theories have been largely ignored in the field. In that sense, this thesis echoes Foster-Cohen's (2000a) contention about the need for a strong theoretical foundation in the study of developmental pragmatics.

Prior to the 'pragmatic breakthrough of the 1980s, the historical tendency to concentrate on performance or use, could be seen as stemming from an increasing awareness of the importance of the social and situational context in which learners are embedded in the process of learning a second language. In other words, the context of learning is increasingly foregrounded. This also represents an attempt to shift the orientation away from an "internal" perspective on SLA (e.g. the focus on form, syntax or grammar) to a more interactionist perspective (e.g. negotiation of meaning, pragmatic interaction), where internal factors would interact with external ones.

Social interaction, according to the interactionist view, plays a crucial role in acquisition (cf. Gass, S., Madden, C., Preston, D. and Selinker, L. (eds.), 1989). In addition, and more specifically, variation arises as a central issue within an interactionist perspective. By virtue of the dominance of the Chomskian paradigm in SLA research, variation tended to be seen initially as a counter-argument to the claim that the interlanguage (IL) is a natural language with its systematicity and homogeneity.

Although systematic variability has since been recognized as an important feature of natural languages, it is still considered to be problematic for areas such as grammar and phonology. For example, Gass *et al.* differentiated between external and

internal variation, where research on external variation examines external variables such as “status, purpose of interaction, native language background of one’s interlocutor, proficiency level of one’s interlocutor, and topic of conversation” (Gass, S., Madden, C., Preston, D. and Selinker, L. (eds.), 1989: 4).

Studies investigating ILP would tend to follow the same lines, concentrating on the investigation of the external variables. The question remains as to what extent the interactionist perspective, while showing the importance of sociolinguistics and its emphasis on social contexts to SLA, has been able to bring the contextualised perspective together with psychological internal factors such as attention or cognitive control or processing, or if both are being seen as exclusive in relation to their application. Indeed, this is the very question this study sets out to address. In other words, it could be argued that an internal psychological research perspective would be adopted by studies on the acquisition of, for instance, morphosyntactic aspects of a second language, whereas an external socially oriented perspective would be adopted by studies on the acquisition of aspects of language arguably considered to be more sensitive to situational and social contexts. Such a polarization could be the reason for the existence of very few studies attempting to explain the acquisition of pragmatics taking into consideration cognitive aspects as well as sociolinguistic ones. This thesis undertakes to occupy this gap.

As noted above, only recently has the study of the acquisition of pragmatic abilities in a second language considered questions which have been traditionally confined to studies of interlanguage grammar and vocabulary. That is to say that ILP studies have mainly adopted a comparative and cross-cultural as opposed to acquisitional approach (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 149 and Kasper and Rose, 1999: 81). Thus, they have been concerned with, for instance, how contextual variation differs cross-culturally and whether speech act strategies are universally available. Although there has been a shift in the ILP research agenda (cf. Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), with more studies focusing on development, it can still be argued that interlanguage issues have been addressed rather descriptively, lacking an adequate theoretical framework in terms of cognitive aspects which could offer an explanatory level for changes in development.

While the relationship between different types of input (e.g. recasts, modified input) and the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary has been a much investigated interlanguage issue, there are very few studies on the relationship between input and the acquisition of pragmatic abilities (cf. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993).

Given this background, it seems that research in interlanguage pragmatics not only needs to address acquisitional issues (e.g. role of input), in order to align itself with research in the acquisition of other interlanguage areas, but it needs additionally to consider cognitive aspects as part of a theory of acquisition.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

In general terms, this study pursues five aims. These are:

1. To identify the semantic formulae of the communicative act of requests in Brazilian Portuguese as a native and as a second language with regard to: realisation strategies, use of internal modifications and supportive moves and the appropriateness of strategies to sociopragmatic aspects of dominance, social distance and degree of imposition or expectations of the interaction (cf. also Trosborg, 1995: 134-135 for Danish and English).
2. To identify interactional patterns in the requestive communicative act in native speakers' and learners' contributions, in terms of regularities in the structure of their participation.
3. To identify and characterise the nature of the input available to learners in encounters with NSs in relation to requests. Here the focus will rest on attempting to show if there is availability of negative feedback (implicit or explicit) in respect of realisation strategies for requests.
4. To investigate the above across different levels of proficiency and suggest developmental patterns.
5. To attempt to go beyond a descriptive level by offering an integrated explanatory account of the patterns identified in the data in terms of linguistic, social and cognitive aspects.



## **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This chapter proposes a new theoretical framework for the examination of the pragmatics of interactions in a specific communication context, namely second language interactions. The focus is therefore placed on conversational interactions between native speakers (NSs) and learners of a second language (or non-native speakers – NNSs). The intention is to propose an integrated interdisciplinary account of such communications, that is to say, one which comprises both cognition- and communication-theoretical approaches.

Although more studies in ILP have focused on developmental issues (cf. Kasper and Rose, 1999 for a review), it could be argued that there is still a tendency to offer descriptive accounts, lacking an explanatory level (cf. Foster-Cohen, 2002). This can only be achieved by a critical discussion of theoretical perspectives for the understanding of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

Adopting such an integrated cognition-communication-theoretical approach, this chapter seeks firstly to define the specific character of pragmatics in the interlanguage domain. This first part will focus on speech act theory in interlanguage pragmatics and the impact of input on the acquisition of pragmatic abilities. For the purposes of this study, input can be defined broadly as the linguistic environment available to learners. Secondly, it will consider developmental accounts of pragmatic acquisition in learners of second languages. Here, two significant approaches will be considered: the two-dimensional model of Ellen Bialystok and the ‘Noticing Hypothesis’ of Richard Schmidt. Both approaches share a view on the development of pragmatics which is concerned with information processing hypothesis rather than communicative interaction. In this sense, both attempt to explain developmental processes in cognitive terms. This chapter will examine to what extent the theoretical proposals of Bialystok and Schmidt are compatible with a view on pragmatic development in terms of the integration of cognition *and* communication. Thirdly, this chapter will evaluate the extent to which concepts in Relevance Theory such as cognitive context and manifestness (Sperber and Wilson, 2001) offer a plausible account for characteristics of pragmatic interactions in atypical (that is, second language acquisition) communication contexts.

In order to provide an explanatory framework for the development of requests in Brazilian Portuguese this thesis proposes an innovative approach to the theory and methodology of the development of pragmatic abilities in SLA by integrating three different research areas:

1. input in SLA, where input is construed as cognitive representations as opposed to something external to the learner;
2. pragmatics in SLA, where pragmatics is defined as part of a communicative competence, that is, dynamic, interactional knowledge. Pragmatics is also seen here as acting by means of language, i.e. doing things with words (cf. Kasper, 1989: 39), where the notion of speech acts is central;
3. Relevance Theory in SLA. Here, the concept of *relevance*, a relative notion in proportion to contextual effect and processing effort (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 2001), can offer an explanatory framework for the relationship between input and its perception, in the sense that detection of forms and functions is guided by the search of relevance (cf. Carroll, 2001).

## **1.5 Methodology**

Since the main goal of this research project lies in the exploration of an explanatory theoretical framework, data will tend to serve the purpose of illustrating theoretical and methodological reflections. In this sense, an exploratory experiment was conducted, with data being collected from learners of three different levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced) in a course of Portuguese for foreigners in a major university in Rio de Janeiro. This pilot study adopts an *exploratory* cross-sectional approach to the development of requests in Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. An exploratory experiment was conducted, with data collected from learners of three different levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced) in a course of Portuguese for foreigners in a major Brazilian university (Pontificia Universidade Católica) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

A *cross-sectional design*, comprising the collection and comparison of data from learners at different proficiency levels, can offer an insight into developmental aspects which would not be acquired by the comparison of NSs and learners only. Such a

design, however, does not yield a full developmental picture, which would only be revealed by longitudinal studies which are, due to the amount of resources involved, still limited in number in ILP (cf. also Warga, 2002: 239 and for longitudinal studies cf. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993 and 1996). It is nevertheless to be hoped that such studies will increase in the future (cf. for an example Achiba, 2003).

This exploratory study adopts a combined approach (qualitative and quantitative) to data analysis, examining data for trends according to a coding method to capture those trends. Given that this study is not concerned with a large corpus, a qualitative analysis will be the main instrument of evaluation, however with some frequency analyses. Learners will be given a task (three different requestive situations), which will involve interaction with three native speakers in different social relationships with the learners.

## **1.6 Data Analysis**

The Data Analysis chapter comprises a combined quantitative and qualitative treatment of various tasks performed by NNSs and NSs. In keeping with the theoretical framework, the core focus will tend to be placed on qualitative analysis.

In general, the data analysis will consist of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis will play a less central role in the overall analysis of the data than the qualitative analysis (see justification in the methodological discussion chapter, Introductory Remarks section). Nevertheless, frequencies will provide important supporting evidence in the identification of patterns in second language learners' performance of the requests.

The first part of this chapter will provide an analysis of the interactional patterns in the three requestive situations. This analysis will be concerned with discourse moves and acts, following Trosborg's model of data analysis. In order to set a context in which data will be analysed, Trosborg's model of analysis will be introduced by a consideration of working expectations of learners' performance of discourse moves and acts (5.2.1).



Unlike Trosborg's data analysis (Trosborg, 1995: 178-185), the data analysis in this study will offer not only a comparison between learners and native speakers but will also look at interactional patterns within and across proficiency levels. This should enable the investigation of developmental patterns in the acquisition of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

The analysis will first offer a profile of each proficiency level, taking into account the interaction as a whole, that is, the participation of both native speaker and learners of a particular level. Further analysis will provide a comparison of the profiles across different levels of proficiency. Finally, learners' performance in terms of frequencies of discourse moves and acts will be compared to the native speakers' performance of the requestive acts and interactions. This comparison will be carried out in two different ways: first, learners' performance will be compared to native speakers' within the interaction itself, enabling a profile of the participation of the learners in the interaction with native speakers. Second, the learners' profile will be compared to the native speakers' profile in the control group. In the latter case, learners and native speakers will be playing the same role in the role play, namely that of requester.

The second part of the data analysis chapter will provide an analysis of the requestive situations in terms of *request strategies* (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989 and the methodological discussion chapter). Here, requests will be analysed in terms of types of request strategies, internal and external modifications of requestive acts.

## **1.7 Discussion**

The concluding Discussion chapter revisits the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 3 in the light of the varied data findings of Chapter 5. This chapter is concerned with a critical analysis of the patterns which emerged in the data analysis informed by the modified taxonomies of Trosborg and Blum-Kulka. However, while this analysis provided a description of frequencies of features in the data, the current chapter follows two aims: on the one hand, it sets out to offer an explanation for the patterns in the data by discussing them on the light of concepts proposed by the theories critically examined in the theoretical framework chapter of this thesis (Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, Bialystok's control of processing and Sperber and Wilson's concept of relevance). Too often in the past in ILP studies, such integrative theoretical

accounts have eluded data analyses. This chapter establishes some conclusions as a contribution to a theory of pragmatic development in SLA and issues some pointers for future research projects.

This concluding chapter investigates some patterns in the data which have only partially been captured by the data analysis by means of a thoroughgoing discussion based on a complex and yet fundamentally coherent theoretical framework. For example, while the data analysis provides the number of frequencies of discourse moves and acts, it does not focus on the sequence or distribution of these moves and acts in the interaction. The instruments of data analysis are indeed well designed to capture discrete manifestations of pragmatic interaction but less well designed to capture the less discrete, overlapping and contextually rich texture of interactions over time and in time and place. Thus, the second aim of this concluding chapter is to discuss frequencies of moves and acts in terms of their function in the negotiation of the requestive goal. This is a necessary contextual account of pragmatic development. For this purpose, reference will be made to the “negotiation of meaning” account presented in the methodological discussion. Without this second aim, the analysis of data might appear plausible as an account of discrete forms but insensitive to pragmatics as interactional transaction.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.0 The Field and Subfields of Pragmatics

In his classic account of pragmatics, Stephen Levinson defines the field broadly as the ability of speakers to derive inferences about the assumptions made by participants (Levinson, 2000: 53). Levinson defines pragmatics as the study of those relations between language and context that are **grammaticalized**, or encoded in the structure of a language (2000: 9; emphasis in original). Leech further notes that one can speak of a general pragmatics subdivided into *pragmalinguistics* that deals with the choice of grammatical forms, and *socio-pragmatics* that deals with sociology, or the local conditions of language usage (1983: 10-11). Pragmalinguistics is defined, according to Leech (1983: 11) as “the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” and sociopragmatics investigates “the ways in which pragmatic performance is subjected to specific social conditions”.

Pragmatic knowledge is conceived for the purposes of this project as a component of communicative competence in the sense of Hymes (1972), as a kind of communicative competence combined with sociocultural knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge, following Wittgenstein’s notion of language games, Austin’s (1956) and Searle’s (1971) speech act theory and Habermas’ universal pragmatics (1981) is construed here as the study of acting by means of language, of doing things with words. Given this demarcation, it follows that the notion of speech acts is central to pragmatic theory.

Suffice it to say that the recurring references for pragmatic analysis appear to be *context*, *use* and *intentionality*. These notions will be fed forward into a more precise and detailed discussion of pragmatics in Second Language Acquisition Studies.



## **2.1 Pragmatics in SLA studies**

### *2.1.1 Introduction*

Research on pragmatics in SLA has been essentially modelled on cross-cultural pragmatics. Most studies have therefore focused on comparative rather than on acquisitional aspects, for instance, how specific speech acts are performed in different languages, taking into account sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects. Research on the acquisition and development of pragmatics in SLA has tended to lag behind, maybe due to the great impact of sociolinguistics, with its emphasis on social-cultural aspects, with the consequence that psychological or cognitive theories have been largely ignored in the field. In that sense, this thesis echoes Foster-Cohen's (2000b) contention about the need for a strong theoretical foundation in the study of developmental pragmatics.

Pragmatics in SLA has been largely dominated by studies focusing on performance or use, rather than on acquisition/development (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 149 and also Kasper and Rose, 1999: 81). The particular influence of cross-cultural pragmatics has led to studies contrasting native speakers' (NSs) and non-native speakers' (NNSs) performance of pragmatic aspects (cf. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., and Kasper, J. (eds.), 1989). In this sense, the issues that arise from studies in pragmatics in SLA are concerned, for instance, with realization strategies of speech acts, their universality, constraining contextual factors and cross-cultural contextual variation. As Kasper and Schmidt argue, they are broadly the same issues as those which have been investigated in cross-cultural pragmatics (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 150).

The perspective on communicative competence as sociocultural, with little consideration of cognitive aspects involved in the development of a communicative competence in a second language, seems to be paradigmatic of most studies in pragmatics in SLA. Kasper and Schmidt observe that processing perspectives should be focused in parallel to focus on changes in learners' sociocultural perceptions, since "[i]t would be a mistake to view developmental issues in ILP in purely cognitive terms [...]" (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 165). While there seems to be no doubt that contextual and cultural elements are central to studies of pragmatics, the apparent

reluctance to offer an account of how cognitive issues play a role in the development of communicative knowledge in a broader sense, and in particular in the learning of pragmatics, seems not to be justifiable, in view of the types of studies that have been carried out so far.

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper argue that studies on cross-cultural pragmatics seek to show the cultural specificity of speech act behaviour. These studies aim to provide an understanding of speech act realizations across cultures and languages by showing how different speech acts are performed by NNSs with a variety of language backgrounds and target languages. Furthermore, they discuss orientations or traditions which underpin cross-cultural pragmatics: some studies (e.g. Wolfson, 1981 and Tannen, 1981), influenced by Gumperz (e.g. 1977, 1978), are based fundamentally on Hymes and his ethnographic research (e.g. 1972, 1974) where the emphasis is placed on interactional styles in intercultural and interethnic communication.

Another line of research in pragmatics in SLA research is contrastive pragmatics (e.g. Faerch and Kasper, 1983), and is “based on attempts to extend the scope of traditional contrastive linguistic procedures beyond the levels of phonology, syntax, and semantics to embrace discourse levels of language use” (Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., and Kasper, J., 1989:6). Here, two particular issues arise, namely politeness in speech act (SA) realization and the universality of politeness phenomena across language and cultures, where Brown and Levinson (1978) are a salient influence. A further issue within this research area is the level of directness in SA realization.

The third kind of research area in cross-cultural pragmatic studies is interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) defined as “the study of non-native speakers’ use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge” (Kasper and Rose, 1999:81). By examining pragmatic failure, these studies seek to show the kind of pragmatic knowledge the learner attains *at a particular time* (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1982). Some of the studies within this third research orientation attempt to give an explanation of the phenomena investigated in psycholinguistic terms: pragmatic failure can be explained as a result of transfer, overgeneralization, simplification or reduction of sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic interlanguage knowledge (e.g. Kasper, 1979). Studies stemming from this tradition attempt to extend interlanguage research in order to include pragmatic and discourse knowledge. Although there has been an increasing number of studies in

developmental terms (e.g. House, 1996, Warga, 2002, Achiba, 2003), still they are outnumbered by studies with a focus on performance only (cf. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., and Kasper, G., 1989).

Specific traditions informing cross-cultural studies (outlined above) converge in an investigation of variation in cross-cultural pragmatics. Beebe and Takahashi (1989) compare American and Japanese ESL performance of two face-threatening speech acts in English with unequal status; the theoretical framework is based on Brown and Levinson (1978). Beebe and Takahashi conclude that Americans are not always more direct and explicit than Japanese, that Japanese do not always avoid disagreement and finally, that Americans use more positive remarks more frequently than Japanese. They try to explain the unexpected results arguing that directness might be due to one or more following factors: low proficiency level, transfer (sociolinguistic or transfer of training<sup>1</sup>), psychological convergence (an attempt to converge to the stereotype), or overgeneralization in the target language and culture.

Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), also working within the framework of Brown and Levinson (1978), explore cross-cultural differences in interactional styles taking into account the receptive (rather than the productive) aspect of communication. NNSs' reaction to NSs' speech act behaviour might indicate their degree of acculturation to the target speech community, where "there seems to be an increasing approximation of native response patterns, as a function of the nonnatives' length of stay in the target speech community" (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985: 303).

While the results of this study contradict previous ones (e.g. House and Kasper, 1981 and Blum-Kulka, 1982), which indicate that even advanced learners (at a high linguistic level) still show deviation from NS speech act realization patterns, two particular aspects have to be considered in order to offer a possible explanation for their results. First, the study focuses on reception; and second, it is related to length of stay in the country where the target language is spoken, so that acceptability patterns of native speech act behaviour might be attained irrespective of the linguistic level, but as a function of the length of stay in the target community. They argue that it might be that

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<sup>1</sup> Transfer of training is discussed in the literature as originating in misapplication of information provided in teaching contexts (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996).



there is a significant difference between productive and receptive speech act behaviour and that the linguistic level and the social-cultural level of competence do not necessarily relate.

### *2.1.2 Definitions of Pragmatics and its role in ILP research*

As observed above, Hymes (1972) is one of the major influences within pragmatics in SLA when it comes to defining pragmatic knowledge. Here, pragmatic knowledge is construed as being a component of what he termed 'communicative competence'<sup>2</sup>, interacting with sociocultural knowledge and other types of knowledge, so that the task of a language user in her performance of verbal action "is to select and combine elements from these areas in accordance with her illocutionary, propositional and modal (or 'social', 'politeness') goals" (cf. Kasper, 1989: 39). Fraser, Lintell and Walters (1980) also adopt Hymes' approach, placing pragmatic competence within the broader kind of knowledge called communicative competence which also comprises, in terms of methodology, conversational analysis, conversational interaction and ethnomethodological studies.

In order to distinguish pragmatic competence from the more comprehensive notion of communicative competence (which extends to conversational analysis, conversational interaction and ethnomethodological studies), Fraser, *et al.*, mirroring Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance, claim that pragmatic competence is "the knowledge required to determine what [...] sentences mean when spoken in a certain way in a particular context" (Fraser, Lintell and Walters, 1980: 77). By contrast, pragmatic performance is concerned with the use of language in social contexts, that is, with the performance of speech acts. While pragmatic competence "consists of a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assigns an interpretation to utterances" (Fraser, Lintell and Walters, 1980: 76), pragmatic performance is subject to language processing constraints and to perception and understanding of social contexts. Furthermore, pragmatic abilities are construed in their approach as a sociolinguistic ability or competence.

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<sup>2</sup> Here, Hymes distances himself from a Chomskian notion of competence. It is worth noting that Chomsky does not deny the existence of pragmatic competence (cf. *Rules and Representations*, 1980 and the introduction of this thesis).

It seems that, despite adopting Hymes' notion of communicative competence, Kasper and Fraser *et al.* present significantly different views of pragmatic knowledge. While Fraser *et al.* reproduce what could be termed a more conventional view, placing pragmatic knowledge within the realm of sociolinguistics (although they do not specify the character of the rules that make up pragmatic competence and how they are acquired), Kasper challenges that conventional view, arguing that to account for the acquisition or development of pragmatic abilities "pragmatics needs to relate (product) description not only to social processes but also to the psychological processes of speech production/reception, as well as to language learning and acquisition" (Faerch and Kasper, 1985: 214). This view is shared in this thesis.

It is in this context that Kasper adopts a perspective on pragmatics which stems from Wittgenstein's notion of language games, the speech act theory of Austin and Searle and Habermas' universal pragmatics. According to this perspective, pragmatics is concerned with construing language as action; therefore pragmatics is redefined as "the study of acting by means of language" (Kasper, 1989: 39). It seems that Kasper seeks to extend the understanding of pragmatics, in order to go beyond the conventional views relating pragmatics to use and context and to include the development of the user's pragmatic knowledge on the one hand, and on the other hand to relate the study of pragmatics to disciplines such as philosophy of language, linguistics, developmental psychology and second language research (cf. Kasper, 1989: 39). The above is foundational for the study of pragmatics in general and in particular for the study of speech acts.

Faerch and Kasper (1985) consider three different views of pragmatic knowledge. According to the first view pragmatic knowledge consists of rules (e.g. Labov and Fanshell; also Schegloff and Sacks in their ethnomethodological studies in Faerch and Kasper, 1985); the second perspective presents pragmatic knowledge as procedures or 'strategies', in the sense of problem-solving in order to achieve a goal (Brown and Levinson, 1978). The third approach assumes that both rules and procedures are part of pragmatic knowledge (e.g. Widdowson, Edmondson, in Faerch and Kasper 1985). Faerch and Kasper contend that the latter more inclusive perspective offers the "most differentiated description of pragmatic knowledge" (Faerch and Kasper, 1985: 214). Following the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, Faerch and Kasper redefine, for their purposes, declarative knowledge as

“taxonomic”, “static” and procedural knowledge as “process-oriented” and “dynamic” (cf. Faerch and Kasper, 1985: 215), instead of adopting the usual distinction in terms of automatization and consciousness. They further propose a distinction between declarative pragmatic knowledge and procedural pragmatic knowledge: the former would be represented by pragmatic rules, the latter by pragmatic procedures.

For Faerch and Kasper, pragmatically relevant declarative knowledge consists of linguistic knowledge, speech act knowledge, discourse knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge, context knowledge and knowledge of the world. Pragmatic procedures within procedural knowledge (speech processing according to Clark and Clark’s model, in Faerch and Kasper 1985) would involve goal formulation and context analysis; verbal planning and monitoring execution (cf. Faerch and Kasper, 1985: 215-217). The authors claim that such a “cognitive-pragmatic approach” would mean for the learning and teaching of a second language the fact that procedural aspects of pragmatic knowledge would have to be incorporated as well as its interaction with declarative knowledge in interlanguage studies.

Kasper and Rose (1999) identify two roles played by pragmatic knowledge in second language acquisition: pragmatics acts as a constraint on the acquisition of linguistic forms and as a kind of communicative knowledge on a par with other kinds of knowledge such as morphosyntax, lexis and so forth. As will be discussed below, there has traditionally been very little research which investigates the first role, that is pragmatics as a constraint on the acquisition of linguistic forms; the bulk of the ILP studies focuses on the role of pragmatics as a kind of knowledge in its own right.

Thomas (1995) sets out to redefine pragmatics in order to account for the notion of the construction of meaning. In this context, she highlights the importance of the concept of ambivalence as described by Leech (1980) and Levinson (1983), where the illocutionary force is unclear, although the illocutionary goal is not. This leads to Thomas’ (1995: 196) second claim about the collaborative nature of speech acts: “it is almost always the case that the hearer has a contribution to make in determining the successfulness (or otherwise) of a speech act.” In Thomas’ (1995: 198) view, a speaker’s utterance has only the *potential* to be carrying a specific illocutionary force (e.g. a question or a request: ‘Do you serve coffee here?’), where the hearer plays, to some extent, a role in assigning illocutionary force to the speaker’s utterances.



Rejecting the idea that meaning is given and determined solely by the speaker, Thomas contends that meaning is negotiated, in the sense that it is dependent on the participants. She draws on the above discussed notions of pragmatic ambivalence, the collaborative nature of speech acts, the negotiability of force and the role of successive utterances in situated discourse to show how meaning is constructed by participants and how context, by the same token, cannot be construed as something given, "imposed from outside".

Speakers' and hearers' utterances contribute to make and change the context (Thomas, 1995: 194; on context cf. also Sperber and Wilson, 1995 and below). It could be argued that the role of ambivalence and the necessary construction of meaning, rather than the idea of meaning as given, is of even more relevance in the case of communication between NSs and NNSs, where assumptions made by both parts can be seen as having even less of a guarantee of matching. In this way, Thomas' notion of negotiation of meaning will be central for the analysis of the requestive act performed by learners and NSs in interactions as part of the empirical discussion of this thesis.

### *2.1.3 Speech Acts in ILP research*

#### *2.1.3.1 Speech Acts*

Speech acts can be seen as the minimal functional or interactional units of human communication, the performance of acts (requesting, stating, apologizing, etc.) and can be defined as direct or indirect. The definition of indirectness is extremely controversial and theorists tend to underdefine it.

In their study of the contribution of speech act theory to the understanding of second language learning, Schmidt and Richards (Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 129) argue that an account of speech acts in second language learning must include "knowledge of the rules of use and communicatively appropriate performance", that is the development of a communicative competence. Speech act theory should thus contribute to a better understanding of environmental (or 'input') factors, in terms of speech settings and events and discourse structures, and learning factors, such as inference, transfer and generalization. Their study constitutes one of the first steps in broadening the scope of second language acquisition research from the sentence level to the discourse level (cf. also Hatch, 1978).

A major theoretical issue discussed by Schmidt and Richards concerns the putative universality of speech acts. Speech act strategies as well as conversational postulates (Gordon and Lakoff, in Schmidt and Richards 1980) are claimed to be universal (Brown and Levinson, 1978). For instance, according to Brown and Levinson's model which has been acknowledged as a theoretical framework in empirical SLA studies, "interactional systematics [e.g. face-threatening acts], the basis for linguistic realizations are based largely on universal principles" (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 139). By contrast, Goffman (1976) differentiates between 'system constraints' and 'ritual constraints': while the former holds cross-culturally, the latter is expected to vary across cultures. In Goffman's terms, "[...] although system constraints might be conceived of as pancultural, ritual concerns are patently dependent on cultural definition and can be expected to vary quite markedly from society to society." (Goffman, 1981: 17). Also, deviation from Grice's conversational postulates (quality, quantity, relation, manner) have also been found (Ochs-Keenan, 1976). Thus, the universality of strategies for speech acts can perhaps only be claimed if described in general terms.

In the context of the studies investigating speech acts in cross-cultural pragmatics, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (eds., 1989) prefer to adopt Leech's (1983) culturally more sensitive notion of pragmatic regularities as opposed to pragmatic universals. Kasper and Schmidt (1996), in the context of ILP, assume as universals the existence of speech acts as well as speech act strategies, pointing out, however, that particular strategies are tied more closely to culture-specific pragmalinguistic conventions. So, on the one hand, they accept the existence of universal pragmatic strategies, such as conveying pragmatic intentions and the use of routine formulae, and also contextual variables (Brown and Levinson's concepts of social power, social distance and degree of imposition) as universal constraints on linguistic action, but on the other hand they relativize it, arguing that the specificity of universal contextual variables is subject to contextual and cultural aspects.

Kasper and Rose (1999: 98) distinguish between "socio-cognitively constrained strategies of communicative action" which they construe as universal and "performance issues", such as linguistic realization, conditions that constrain the speaker's use of strategies and the performance of the act itself, contextual appropriateness and cultural

values attached to the act and to the strategies by a specific community. Performance issues are considered to be ethnolinguistic issues, and therefore not universal.

Whether and to what extent speech act strategies are considered to be universal has several implications for the learning of speech acts in a second language. Searle (1975), for instance, argues that strategies for speech acts are general, but “certain standard forms tend to become conventionally established as the standard idiomatic forms” (in: Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 140). This means that learners of a second language would have to learn the conventionalized forms in the new language, as well as particularities of interactional styles and appropriateness of second language speech acts in contexts. Misunderstanding in communication can be seen as the result of interethnic and intercultural variation at the level of performance, but also of intercultural, social or individual differences in communicative competence rules (cf. Schmidt and Richards, 1980). To date, little research has been done in the development of realization strategies of speech acts in a second language taking into consideration not only intercultural and social differences but also cognitive aspects, such as perception of input and inference. If pragmatic knowledge is interactional knowledge, then an account of the development of such knowledge must integrate all these aspects.

Studies of non-native speakers performance of speech acts constitute a major research area within ILP. According to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) speech acts have been studied from different perspectives, namely philosophical (e.g. Searle, Austin, Habermas in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989), linguistic (e.g. Sadock, in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989) and cultural-anthropological (e.g. Hymes, Gumperz, in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989) amongst others.

Searle (1975) claims that conventionality is the key link between certain kinds of indirectness and certain forms of language. Indirectness is also discussed by Sperber and Wilson (1995), who see general pragmatic principles (e.g. Relevance) accounting for the process by which indirectness is contextually encoded and decoded. Searle’s theory of speech acts (and his taxonomy) is broadly acknowledged and applied within ILP research.

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper’s (1989) cross-cultural investigation of speech acts is mainly empirically oriented, in the sense that it aims at complementing



theoretical research with empirical studies of speech acts produced by native speakers in context. Their approach focuses on language use (or performance), rather than on learning or development. Both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics underlie their empirical contextual investigations. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper draw on different sociopragmatic approaches which in turn try to determine the aspects of social relations that play a role in the variation of speech acts – e.g. ethnographic approaches, Brown and Levinson's power and familiarity approach. Here, emphasis is placed, in keeping with Labov's approach, upon "interrelating the ways language is used to perform certain speech acts with the social and situational variables that potentially affect their use" (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989: 5).

There is much controversy about the adequacy of speech acts as a category in theoretical terms. It has been argued that there is always going to be ambiguity in the identification of speaker meaning (cf. Levinson, Thomas, and Candlin in Kasper, 1989). However, Kasper (1989) contends that speech acts should be maintained as an analytical category, while bearing in mind the co-existence of illocutionary multifunctionality (speech acts with multiple functions) and monofunctionality (speech acts with predominantly one function) in the occurrence of speech acts.

As far as theoretical questions in ILP are concerned, Schmidt and Richards discuss four different issues: 1. units and categories of speech acts, 2. their performance, 3. the relationship between illocutionary force, meaning and form, and finally 4. the issue of the universality of speech acts. For the discussion of (1) units and categories of speech acts, it is acknowledged, following Searle (cf. in Schmidt and Richards, 1980), that speech acts are neither sentences nor utterances, they are acts. Searle's taxonomy of categories of speech acts, based on a speaker's illocutionary point, groups speech acts into representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.

Other categories have been proposed by Austin (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980) and Fraser (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980), for instance, according to different emphasis on the understanding of speech acts. In relation to the analysis of (2) the conditions for the performance of illocutionary acts, both Searle's inferential strategies and Grice's 'general principles of co-operative behaviour' (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980) are brought in as framework for the understanding of the assignment of appropriate illocutionary force to a speech act by speakers and hearers.

Another major theoretical issue discussed by Schmidt and Richards is (3) the relationship between illocutionary point, meaning and sentence, in the sense that it is a matter of controversy “whether illocutionary point is part of the ‘meaning’ of a sentence and whether that aspect of meaning ought to be represented in the grammar of a language, in the deep structure” (Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 136). In this regard, they offer three different perspectives: the performative analysis (Ross, in Schmidt and Richards, 1980) attempts to recover the relationship between sentence type and illocutionary point. Declarative sentences, for instance, would derive from a performative (I say, state to you X) represented in the deep structure. Schmidt and Richards point out that this kind of analysis does not go very far and has been severely criticised.

Another view of this relationship between sentence type and illocutionary point is represented by Gordon and Lakoff’s (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980) conversational postulates (following Grice), according to which sentences may convey more than their literal meaning. Speakers and hearers interpret indirect speech acts by reference to conversational postulates. The third attempt to explain whether and how illocutionary point relates to meaning and form of a sentence suggests that surface structures and contexts are the sources for explanation. In this context, Ervin-Tripp claims that in the case of directives, social factors (e.g. age, status, familiarity, territorial location) are determinant in the choice of directive type. She also contends that “directives do not require inference from literal interpretations; [w]here knowledge of obligations and prohibitions is shared, simple interpretation rules allow prompt understanding” (in Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 138).

For the purpose of learning a second language each of the above views would have different implications. From Gordon and Lakoff’s deep model it follows that grammatical and communicative competence are acquired in the same way, where Ervin-Tripp’s “shallow” model would imply that the acquisition of pragmatic abilities, in the sense of learning how to match linguistic forms to appropriate social contexts, would be distinct from grammar acquisition (cf. Schmidt and Richards, 1980: 138). It

could also be argued that the notion of shared knowledge<sup>3</sup>, especially when related to contextual knowledge, would be of special consideration with regard to SLA contexts.

## **2.2 Developmental Studies in ILP – general findings**

Studies of the development of pragmatic abilities tend to offer a classification of levels of directness and modifications without providing explanations. However, some studies do attempt to explain choices of directness in terms of low proficiency level, transfer, psychological convergence and overgeneralization in the target language and culture. In general, studies show a mismatch between linguistic level and social-cultural level of competence. In other words, linguistic forms seem to appear before the learning of their appropriate use.

Developmental studies have focused in the main on either cross-sectional or longitudinal types. Kasper and Rose (1999) offer a review of both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies with a focus on development as well as of studies which examine the relationship between proficiency and pragmatic performance.

Most of the cross-sectional studies focus on the production of speech act realization strategies by learners at different proficiency levels and make use of elicited data. Results show that learners make use of the same speech act strategies (or the convention of means, according to Clark, 1979) as native speakers, irrespective of proficiency level. However, both learners' ways of using strategies linguistically, that is choosing the conventions of form (Clark, 1979), as well as the appropriateness of the conventions of means and forms to social and discoursal contexts, differ from native speakers. While there seems to be no variation in relation to the convention of means, conventions of forms vary qualitatively and quantitatively, according to proficiency level. Scarcella (1979) claims that in her study of beginners and advanced ESL learners' politeness strategies forms appeared before the learning of their appropriate use (cf. Scarcella, 1979 in Kasper and Rose, 1999).

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<sup>3</sup> This notion will be discussed in the next chapter (cf. Sperber and Wilson (2001) idea of shared cognitive contexts instead of mutual knowledge).



Also investigating the relationship between pragmatic ability and proficiency level, Trosborg (1987 in Kasper and Rose, 1999) found that the use of modality markers increased with proficiency, indicating a developmental pattern rather than transfer. Although both Scarcella and Trosborg claim that linguistic means for speech act realisation increase with proficiency, it is not clear whether the expansion of linguistic means reflects an expansion of vocabulary and syntactic resources or whether it reflects an increase in terms of pragmatic knowledge (increase of the knowledge of function of forms, cf. Kasper and Rose, 1999).

Longitudinal studies are typically (although not necessarily) broader in scope having as their object of study not only speech acts but also discourse markers, pragmatic fluency and conversational ability amongst other things. Unlike cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies include the investigation of learners in the beginning stages and collect data in authentic settings of language use. Moreover, both SL classroom studies and studies of the effect of instruction on pragmatic learning were carried out longitudinally. Schmidt and Frota (1986), in their investigation of the acquisition of grammatical morphemes and conversational abilities, argued that early pragmatic and morphosyntactic development interact (cf. also Foster-Cohen, 1994 in the context of child language acquisition), although more studies would be necessary for the building of hypotheses in this research area. Some longitudinal studies relate learners' difficulty with pragmalinguistic knowledge to the paucity or lack of input (cf. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993 and Ohta, 1994 in Kasper and Rose, 1999).

### *2.2.1 Transfer in ILP developmental studies*

In studies of pragmatic development language transfer arises as a major issue and has been therefore often investigated in ILP (cf. Takahashi, 1996). Takahashi and Beebe (1987) suggest that L2 proficiency is positively correlated with pragmatic transfer. That is to say, learners' limited L2 knowledge prevents them from transferring complex L1 conventions of means and form (cf. also Blum-Kulka, 1982, and Olshtain and Cohen, 1989). However, evidence is not sufficient. Maeshiba, et al. (in Kasper and Rose, 1999) found that intermediate Japanese ESL learners transferred more apology strategies than advanced learners. However, Hill (1997 in Kasper and Rose, 1999) found negative



pragmalinguistic transfer (in the sense of interference) by advanced learners<sup>4</sup> which was not found by lower proficiency learners in request strategies. Kasper and Rose argue that the different findings might reflect differences in grammatical complexity between apologies and requests in English and Japanese. Instead of relating transfer to language proficiency *per se*, length of residence has been suggested as an explanation for decrease in transfer (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986). Again, conflicting results have been found by, for instance, Kondo (in Kasper and Rose, 1999), whose findings show an increase of negative transfer by Japanese learners of English after a year of residence in the US. Takahashi's interlanguage pragmatic study of transferability (1996), where Japanese learners of English perceived several indirect request strategies not equally transferable, found that transferability interacts with the degree of imposition implied by the requestive goal. This study represents one of the few attempts to document not only pragmatic transfer, but also its conditions and its interaction with other factors (cf. Takahashi in Kasper and Rose, 1999: 95).

Positive and negative pragmatic transfer has been found at the levels of the learners' assessment of the social-contextual variables, of their assessment of appropriateness of speech acts and realization strategies (convention of means), of linguistic forms to implement speech acts, as well as whether social and contextual aspects match with strategy choice. It is, however, not yet clear under what conditions transfer occurs (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996).

### 2.2.2 *Interlanguage studies of requests*

In ILP research requests are defined as *directives*. Directives with different degrees of imposition and different rights and obligations for the interlocutors are subsumed under the term "request" (cf. House and Kasper, 1987: 1252). However, the term has not been used consistently in the literature, with directives and requests being used interchangeably (cf. Achiba, 2003: 5-6).

Kasper's study (Kasper, 1989) into interlanguage speech act realization aims to explain variability in interlanguage speech act realization by analysing information

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this concept relates to transfer of L1 knowledge as a higher cognitive process.

about NNSs' systematic variation of requestive speech acts provided by cross-cultural and IL pragmatic data. In a sense, her study can be considered paradigmatic in the field of ILP, as far as data collection procedures and parameters for data analysis are concerned. Kasper's study sets out to test hypotheses about the principles underlying observed contextual variation in terms of directness levels. For the purpose of the analysis, "it is assumed the requestive force can be modified on three major dimensions: (1) by choosing a particular directness level; (2) by modifying the request internally, through the addition of mitigating or aggravating modality markers [...] (3) by modifying the request externally by means of supportive moves [...]" (Kasper, 1989: 45). Syntactic or lexical mitigating or aggravating *modality markers* can be used to modify the requestive act internally, that is part of the Head Act, or the request proper (cf. Kasper, 1989: 45). Aggravating moves are part of supportive (external) moves added to the context of the request which upgrade its force. Mitigating moves are also supportive moves which downgrade the force of the request such as grounders, imposition minimizers, precommitment, promise or reward (cf. Kasper, 1989: 52).

Kasper also adopts Blum-Kulka and House's (1989) classification of degrees of directness (direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect requests), depending on the degree of transparency between the locution and the illocution. The method for data collection is written discourse completion tests (DCT)<sup>5</sup>. For the data assessment, two types of metapragmatic judgments were employed: contextual data (politeness value and weight of contextual external and internal factors) and textual data (modification procedures), since variation can only be investigated if both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge are considered.

Kasper argues that it might be that learners have a different perception of the impositional force of requests, which would be seen as being more face-threatening by NNSs than by NSs. Consequently, NNSs would opt for propositional explicitness, violating (according to Gricean maxims) the quantity maximum. However, she highlights two important aspects for the interpretation of the results: that her study was conducted with advanced learners, and that the assessment of NNSs' and NSs' communicative behaviour with the same conversational principles might be inadequate. The first aspect relates to the fact that most of the studies in ILP, in contrast to studies in

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Discussion of data collection elicitation techniques in chapter 4.

the area of syntax and morphology for instance, have been conducted with advanced learners. The second point relates to the notions of deficiency and difference, when comparing learners' and NSs' performance of speech acts. The notion of difference would be a more appropriate measure for assessing NNSs' pragmatic abilities<sup>6</sup>.

Hassal (2001), examining modifications in requests by second language learners of Indonesian, claims that learners underuse internal modifiers (e.g. mitigating or aggravating pragmatic markers), but frequently use supportive moves where such moves take the form of ancillary requestive acts. The lack of internal modifiers (also confirmed by Trosborg, 1995) in learners' requests might be due to the fact that their use represents an "increase in the complexity of the pragmalinguistic structure" (Hassal, 2001: 271). Both Hassal and Hill (in Kasper and Rose, 1999) alert us to the danger of conflating learners' micro-strategies with target-like macro-strategies, that is, the use of requesting strategies by more advanced learners (e.g. conventionally indirect requests). Although these in principle appear to show approximation to native speakers' use, they are in fact achieved by the overuse of micro-strategies in the implementation of the requesting strategies (e.g. want and willingness), hardly used by native speakers. Hassal offers as an example the fact that while NSs frequently used the imperative in their direct requests, only the more advanced learners did so, despite the availability of the imperative form for the beginners. Furthermore, Hill suggests that beginners' preference for directness in the form of 'want' statements and statement hints (non-conventional indirectness) might be due to the lack of conventional requesting strategies, so they would not be reflecting a genuine choice of strategy.

Rose's study of requests, apologies and compliment responses (2000) amongst second language learners confirmed an increase of conventional indirectness but little change of situational variation, that is there was an increase of pragmalinguistic knowledge rather than of sociopragmatic aspects. Although he points out that there might be a precedence of pragmalinguistic over sociopragmatic abilities in the early stages of the acquisition of a second language, such results might also be explained by

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chapter 4 on methodology for a further discussion of this issue.



differences between EFL and ESL contexts<sup>7</sup>, where EFL contexts would arguably provide limited opportunities for the learning of socio-cultural conventions.

Ellis (in Kasper and Rose, 1999) examined the development of requesting ability in a classroom setting in children (10 and 11 years old). He identified three development stages: 1. highly context-dependent; minimalist realizations; no conventional or social goals; 2. unanalysed routines; lexical cues indicating illocutionary force 3. slight increase of politeness markers (relational goal). His study suggests an important role for formulaic speech in beginners' interlanguage and limited input opportunities in classroom settings (cf. Ellis, 1997 in Kasper and Rose, 1999). Takahashi and Dufon (1989 in Kasper and Rose, 1999) found that requests of Japanese learners of ESL moved with increasing proficiency from indirectness to directness, showing an approximation to target-like conventions, despite claims that indirectness is acquired late both in the L1 (Ervin-Tripp, for English L1 in Kasper and Rose, 1999) and L2 (Preston, in Kasper and Rose, 1999).

In general, it could be argued that learners' main difficulties in the performance of requesting speech acts lies in the choice of linguistic means to implement requesting strategies rather than in the choice of the strategies themselves which seem to become more target-like with increasing proficiency.

Difficulty with internal modality markers, rather than with the implementation of request strategies was also reported in Warga's (2002) study of requests in French as a second language by native speakers of German. Warga set out to critically examine the state of the art in Interlanguage Pragmatics with a special focus on methods by carrying out an empirical study to identify developmental stages in interlanguage pragmatics. For this purpose, she considered the production of requests in different social and situational contexts by learners of French as a second language at different proficiency levels. Warga's study is a cross-sectional developmental study of the requestive speech act in a second language. She used the Discourse Completion task (cf. methodological

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<sup>7</sup> EFL (English as a foreign language) could be described, in simple terms, as learners of English in a non-English spoken environment, whereas ESL (English as a Second Language) is English learned in environments where English is the main spoken language (e.g learners learning English in Britain or America).



discussion) and closed role plays as data collection tools and employed the CCSARP coding taxonomy (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) in combination with Trosborg's categories (1995) to classify her data. In addition, Warga also used Held's (1995) external contextual variables for the coding of the speech acts.

While Warga's study bears some similarities with the present study, it is also different in a range of significant aspects. First, both studies share the choice of the requestive speech act as the object of study. Requests are regarded as inherently face-threatening acts with their performance being linguistically very complex. Also, studies have shown different realizations of requests across cultures (cf. Warga, 2002: 6-7). Second, Warga's empirical study overlaps in part with the present study. Both studies analyse speech act behaviour in a second language by means of the CCSARP coding taxonomy in conjunction with Trosborg's categories. In addition, Warga and the present study classify the requestive situation, in terms of its level of imposition (see methodological discussion) with the employment of Held's categories.

And yet, as far as data collection tools are concerned, this study places a particular emphasis on oral *interactive* data (open role plays), whereas Warga uses written data (the DCT) in combination with closed role plays. As a consequence of the data employed, Warga's study (2002: 72) is not concerned with discourse, but only with pragmatic behaviour in the context of the (discrete) speech act. By contrast, the present study looks at pragmatic linguistic behaviour in the context of speech acts, but goes beyond this, by using both speech act analytical categories (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), and also a discourse analytical approach (see the methodological discussion of this thesis). This approach is better suited to capture the complexity of pragmatic behaviour, which is essentially interactional behaviour.

However, it could be argued that the most significant difference between the present study and Warga's lies in how results are accounted for (see the theoretical framework chapter and the concluding discussion of this thesis). One of the objectives of the present study, and possibly one of its major contributions to the field of interlanguage pragmatics, is to engage in a theoretical discussion of second language and pragmatics accounts which can shed light on results of the data analysis in cognitive, communicative and cultural terms.

Results reported in Warga's study are concerned with alerters, choice of request strategies, internal and external modifications of the request (see methodological discussion, data analysis and the concluding discussion of this thesis). In the context of alerters, address forms and attention getters are underrepresented at beginners level, but over-represented by more advanced learners. However, the most advanced learners reach a target-like use of alerters (2002: 230). While internal modifications increase with proficiency, external modifications (supportive moves) are over-represented even by beginners. In this context, Warga (2002: 233) argues that the overuse of supportive moves affects the "efficiency" of the request, rather than politeness. One of the objectives of the present study is to ask what it actually means when we say that the overproduction of supportive moves adversely affects the efficiency of the request. This question can only be answered with the consideration of issues of cognitive processing and with regard to cognitive and communicative theories.

Warga's study also reports that learners tend to follow their L1 pragmatic norms rather than pragmatic norms in the target language. She explains this transfer as a result of learners' lack of awareness of differences between the L1 and L2 pragmatic norms, which in turn, reflects their lack of familiarity with the L2 culture. These are very important claims which would need to be addressed within a robust theoretical framework. This will be explored below.

Another important reference study for the present study is Achiba's developmental study of requests by children. Achiba's (2003: xi) study of "learning to request in a second language" consists of an investigation of child interlanguage pragmatics. It consists of an examination of the acquisition of requests in English by a Japanese child in a longitudinal study. Data was collected during the child's natural interactions with different kinds of interlocutors, namely a peer, a teenager and an adult. Achiba (2003: xi) describes the aims of her study as follows:

The principal purpose of the study has been to determine what strategies and linguistic devices a child second-language learner uses in order to make requests in English and what developmental path the learning process follows.

In order to achieve these aims, Achiba employs Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) classification of requests, with some modifications, comparing the classification of her data across periods. Achiba's study (2003: 172-173) shows that there were significant changes in the child's requests over time. Whereas in the beginning the child's requests relied on formulaic and routinised forms, in the final phase a significant number of indirect strategies and mitigation forms could be identified. The child's use of modifiers also showed developmental patterns: in the initial phase she could only modify her requests with *reiterations* (repetitions). At the end of the experiment, however, these *reiterations* decreased, whereas lexical/phrasal modifiers doubled as the number of supportive moves also increased. More importantly, Achiba's findings point to developmental patterns varying according to the requestive goal. In this context, she found that in the case of requests for goods and for action there were significant changes. When requesting goods, the child initially employed mostly direct strategies, with conventionally indirect strategies progressively becoming dominant. In the case of requests for action, there was a proportional decrease of direct and conventionally indirect strategies, with no significant difference between the two at the final phase. Given this variation of developmental patterns according to requestive goals, Achiba (2003: 189 *my italics*) argues for requests being construed as a "*differentiated system*", which makes its acquisition a complex task for learners.

Although Achiba's study constitutes an important contribution to ILP research, as one of the few studies of child's L2 developmental interlanguage pragmatics (e.g. Walters, Rose, and Ellis, in Achiba, 2003) and even fewer adopting a longitudinal approach, it presents some problems which are worth addressing: firstly, it is a rather descriptive study, lacking a theoretical discussion which could illuminate the developmental findings. In the context of an approach to development, the study makes reference to a particular acquisitional framework (Schmidt, 1993 in Achiba, 2003: 42), without clarifying concepts such as 'noticing'. Instead, it provides as evidence for noticing the fact that some features, which had not previously been used, are incorporated in the child's production of requests. In this context, Achiba (2003: 42) further refers to the "notion of contextualised emergence" as in Pienemann (in Achiba, 2003) and Nicholas (in Achiba, 2003). Again, no definition of the concepts is presented. In fact, Achiba (2003: 42) argues that her study attempts to "discover and characterise the developmental patterns and sequences of one child's request realisation". In view of this, it seems that the focus of Achiba's study is indeed a



*description* of the patterns in the data. The allusion, then, to a theoretical acquisitional framework seems to remain detached and unexplored when it comes to the discussion of the findings.

At the same time, Achiba (2003: 42-43) justifies her approach by the need to avoid the imposition of “pre-determined categories” to the analysis of the data. It could be argued that it is here where the second problem arises: Achiba does employ pre-determined categories in her analysis of the requests, since she makes use of a pre-determined taxonomy (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) with categories which will be imposed to the data. The use of pre-determined (a priori) categories of speech acts has methodological implications and have been disputed in the literature along with the whole issue of what constitutes a ‘scientific study’ and the role of data (cf. the discussion of methodology of this study for a discussion of this issue).

### *2.2.3 Grammar and Pragmatics: perspectives and salient findings*

In terms of salient bodies of research, two quite different perspectives arise in the context of the development of a second language:

- elements of grammar appear before the ability to use them to convey pragmatic intentions, or, in contrast to this,
- pragmatic knowledge precedes grammatical competence.

In the context of the first perspective, where knowledge of grammar appears before pragmatic knowledge, three different views arise: the first view assumes that elements of grammatical structure appear before the pragmalinguistic knowledge about them. In other words, learners have the forms but do not use them to modify illocutionary force. The second view claims that learners use the forms in a nonconventionalized way, and the third contends that learners have the forms, they know their pragmalinguistic functions, but still they use them in a non target-like manner, since they lack of contextual sociopragmatic knowledge. According to the views outlined above, grammar acquisition precedes the acquisition of L2 pragmatic abilities (cf. Kasper, 2001).

The opposite perspective, that pragmatic knowledge precedes grammatical competence, has been advanced in studies (cf. Schmidt, Koike, and Eisenstein and Bodman in Kasper, 2001) which show that even low-proficiency learners are not



prevented from expressing their pragmatic intents. Since in some of the cases described by such studies, learners' development of their pragmatic abilities was not followed by similar progress in their acquisition of grammar, it is argued that "restricted interlanguage grammar does not necessarily impose constraints on pragmatic and interactional competence [...]" (Kasper, 2001: 7). In other words, grammatical competence is construed here as dissociated from pragmatic abilities. Unfortunately, there are not many studies, and even fewer in theoretical terms, exploring the interface between pragmatic and grammatical competence. This led Bardovi-Harlig (in Kasper, 2001) to recommend as a research path the investigation of particular pragmalinguistic features in relation to their particular grammatical knowledge implicated in their use. It could also be argued that this kind of research cannot be carried out without adopting a theoretical perspective in terms of the development of both grammatical and pragmatic knowledge.

Some studies claim that pragmatic knowledge increases with linguistic proficiency. On the other hand, there is also research claiming that learners can convey pragmatic intentions with very little linguistic knowledge, and maybe more importantly, that learners with highly advanced linguistic knowledge do not use this knowledge to, for instance, mitigate speech acts. In order to shed light on this discussion, it is important to look at possible constraints which could be affecting the relationship between pragmatic and grammatical knowledge, such as processing issues.

## **2.3 Input in SLA studies**

### ***2.3.1 Introduction to Input in SLA studies***

Although it has been considered a central construct of SLA theory and research, and despite attempts to define its nature and role in acquisition, the concept of input has remained subject to much controversy. Broadly, input has been defined as the linguistic environment available to learners. It can be assumed that its nature and role can only be assessed in the context of a language learning theory. In this sense, for instance, if one assumes that Universal Grammar (UG) plays a role in the acquisition of at least syntax and morphology, then input as an external factor will be confined to supplying positive evidence with sufficient context to allow the learner to infer meaning while processing of that input is an internal operation. If, on the other hand, one assumes that

conversational interaction between learners and NSs is necessary and maybe sufficient for acquisition, then input will play a much greater role in the process of acquiring a second language.

In general terms, input in SLA has been construed as positive and negative data, or positive and negative evidence. There is a debate about whether primary linguistic data alone, in terms of positive evidence, could possibly be responsible for the achievement of the grammar in a finite amount of time unless negative evidence were made available to the learner. In her definition of the notion of negative evidence, Schachter, using the term “corrective feedback” and/or “negative feedback”, sees it as negative data provided by an expert to someone with less expertise. She also claims that a large number of studies have pointed to an expansion of the notion of negative data: confirmation checks, clarification requests, expanded and corrected repetitions and indications of communication breakdown (silence, laughter or ‘Huh?’ ‘What?’ questions) could be counted as negative data (cf. Schachter, 1991: 90).

The role of negative data in language learning is extremely controversial. Hatch (1978) argued that a shift in the view of the nature of the linguistic environment, from small units to larger units (discourse), could also effect a shift in the linguistic environment’s function. That is, the linguistic environment seen as discourse, and not as discrete sentences or parts of sentences, would assume an important role in the explanation of the order of the acquisition of not only form but also its relationship with function. Moreover, it is not enough to show that negative evidence is available, but also to show how it affects the learning process, i.e. showing also if learners attend to, correctly identify and utilize this kind of information. That is to say, mediation factors which are supposed to link negative data to acquisition, as well as cognitive processes as part of a learning theory, have to be taken into account. Sharwood-Smith (1991: 118) discussed the processes through which input can be perceived by learners:

The process by which language input becomes salient to the learner is termed ‘input enhancement’. This process can come about as a result of deliberate manipulation, or it can be the natural outcome of some internal learning strategy. [...] Externally induced salience may not necessarily be registered by the learner and even when it is registered, it may not affect the learning mechanisms per se.

In order to investigate the processes described by Sharwood-Smith further, input and its perception have to be placed in the context of a theory of mental representation and a theory of language learning. It is in this context that Carroll argues that saliency, or perception of the input is therefore not to be sought (or found) externally, but “results from the contents of our cognitive representations” (Carroll, 1999: 361). According to this perspective, input is redefined as mental representations. An account of learning and cognitive representation remains attentive to environmental influence and cognitive processing.

As noted above, studies of the relationship between input and acquisition have concentrated on the acquisition of grammar, and some have focused on one particular type of input, for instance, recasts as part of negative data.

### *2.3.2 Input and the learning of grammar in a Second Language*

This section provides an outline of two basic views on input (as negative evidence) and its role in the learning of grammar in SLA: the first view assigns a very restricted role to negative evidence and the second claims a much more important role for negative data as provided, for instance, in encounters between NSs and NNSs.

Schwartz (1993: 147) discusses the role of negative data in the context of Universal Grammar and grammar building. In this context, she assumes, from a Chomskian perspective, that there is a faculty of language, where knowledge of language is represented. Although for Chomsky competence is the knowledge not only of syntax, but also of phonetics, phonology, semantics, morphology and partly of the lexicon, Schwartz focuses her discussion of negative data “effecting and affecting competence and linguistic behaviour” on the knowledge of syntax. Consequently, two kinds of *modularity* (that is to say modules in the brain, as specialized organs) are hypothesised: the modularity of the brain, with one module being domain-specific for the knowledge of language and the modularity of the language module itself, for the knowledge of syntax (cf. Schwartz, 1993: 150). The distinction adopted between linguistic knowledge (competence) and linguistic behaviour (performance) is of crucial importance here. It is important to note in passing that the question of the role of negative evidence is treated here in relation to a part of L2 acquisition. To date, no study has claimed *as part of a pragmatic account* that negative evidence plays a role.



Another distinction is made in her discussion, namely that there is another kind of knowledge, “learned linguistic knowledge” which would relate to another kind of linguistic behaviour: “learned linguistic behaviour”. This refers to Krashen’s (in Long, 1996) distinction between learned and acquired knowledge, whereby acquired knowledge is the result of exposure to meaningful input, whereas learned knowledge is the result of instruction. One knowledge does not contribute to the development of the other. In other words, LLK does not affect LK.

It is in the context of these hypothesised kinds of knowledge that the question is posed as to whether negative data could force UG<sup>8</sup> to reorganize the grammar (syntax) in the interlanguage. Using the principles and parameters approach (cf. Chomsky, 1981) to syntactic theory, Schwartz concludes that negative data cannot activate UG in grammar building, only positive data or primary linguistic data can act as a trigger (see White, 1992 for a contrary argument). What negative data can change is what she calls learned linguistic knowledge (which would explain White’s findings), which does not interact with the language module.

The lack of interaction between learned linguistic knowledge and the content of the language module happens as a result of independent factors: according to Fodor’s *Modularity of Mind* and his concept of “*information encapsulation*”, negative data, and the kind of information it comprises, cannot feed the language module, but only the “*central processing systems*”. In opposition to the ‘domain-specific modules’, which are encapsulated, mandatory, fast, and autonomous, ‘central cognitive processing’ is unencapsulated, non-mandatory, controlled and often conscious (in Karmiloff-Smith, 1992: 2-4)

In order for negative data to be able to trigger UG, a translation device would be necessary – a notion Fodor does not accept<sup>9</sup>. Instead, Fodor argues that negative data feeding central processing systems are subject to memory capacity and other constraints (cf. Schwartz, 1993: 153ff.). Schwartz’s research on negative data is very well delimited, thus she is able to point to specific language aspects, which might not be affected, or less affected than others by negative data. On the other hand, it is not only a description, but rather an explanatory study. The level of explanation is achieved

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<sup>8</sup> Schwartz proceeds from the assumption that UG is available to L2 learners.

<sup>9</sup> See Karmiloff-Smith (1992) and Jackendoff (1997) for an alternative position.



insofar as linguistic experience, in this case specifically of negative data, is discussed with an explicit consideration of models of cognition. However, it could be argued that Schwartz deals with a very limited view of negative data (knowledge about language), neglecting research which shows that negative data can be construed in a more inclusive way (cf. Schachter above).

The second perspective on input and its role in the learning of grammar is the so-called 'interactionist perspective' (cf. Long, 1996). Here, input has been classified as modified. Modified input can arguably provide both positive and negative data, that is, offering evidence of what is allowed and of what is not allowed in the L2. Modified input is the result of negotiated interaction as discourse by NSs addressed to NNSs and well formed, though a modified version of the target language. This kind of interaction between NSs and NNSs, where input is modified is called *Negotiation of meaning*. *Negotiation of meaning* provides learners with "opportunities to attend to L2 form and to relationships of form and meaning" (Pica, 1994: 520), in that it makes forms and functions salient to learners. Responding to criticisms that this perspective on input focuses on factors exterior to the learner, Long offers a reformulation of his 'Interaction Hypothesis', modifying his claims about the nature and function of the linguistic environment in terms of the acquisition of language in order to consider not only its availability, but also its perception and usability (cf. Long, 1996: 441). The identification of saliency in cognition and communication terms is the process of everyday linguistic socialisation in broadly monocontextual (that is, first language) environments. In a second language case, the linguistic environment is always at least bicontextual. In this context, saliency becomes more difficult to detect.

Long shows that small studies have found the availability and usability of negative feedback, specifically in the form of recasts. However, he also points to the difficulties of finding much evidence of use, which could explain why researchers prefer to advocate a facilitating effect for negative data (Long, 1996).<sup>10</sup> The Input and Interaction perspective has been criticised for its tendency to isolate linguistic forms. In addition, although seeking to go beyond formal approaches which remain attached to

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<sup>10</sup> White has claimed, however, that logical learnability grounds justify the necessity of negative evidence (cf. in Long, 1996: 445).

the sentence level, negotiation of meaning fails to achieve a well defined discourse-oriented analysis of interactions.

Braidi (1995), criticising the 'Interaction Hypothesis' emphasis on functional aspects of the interactional conversations and the lack of a more focused approach in terms of aspects of grammar, examines the grammatical nature of interaction from the universal grammar triggers. She uses the criteria of relevance, availability, accessibility, and effect to investigate how interaction affects grammatical development. She concludes that Long's hypothesis provides a great body of information on the nature of the interaction, but does not specify the effects of those interactions on the development of grammar, nor it takes into account the relation between grammatical and interactional structures (cf. Braidi, 1995: 164). In other words, if it is argued, as it seems to be by Hatch and Long, that negotiation of meaning, as a kind of interaction, can be construed as "a basis for examining the linguistic and cognitive features of the L2 learning process, not just the social ones" (Pica, 1994: 495), then there must be a more detailed account of the linguistic and cognitive features being affected and how. It seems that what is lacking in the interactional perspective is a positioning in terms of both a theory of language (including here the issue of modularity) and a theory of acquisition or internal mechanisms (including here the issue of mediation), and an attempt to couple surface phenomena (saliency) with deep phenomena (markedness).

### *2.3.3 Input and the learning of pragmatics*

There have been very few studies in ILP which make direct reference to the relationship between input and the learning of pragmatics<sup>11</sup>. Bardovi-Harlig (1999) argues that because ILP has been essentially modelled on cross-cultural pragmatics, interlanguage issues, such as the role of input in acquisition, have been neglected in ILP. Nevertheless, there have been some studies in ILP which make direct reference to the relationship between input and the learning of pragmatics.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) conducted a study on the development of suggestions and rejections by non-native speakers of English in academic advising

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<sup>11</sup> Studies of the effects of instruction in ILP will not be considered here, since it constitutes a specific setting with specific conditions of interactions.

sessions, where learners received feedback (equated here with negative feedback) on the appropriateness of speech acts but not on realization strategies (e.g. levels of directness). The persisting inappropriateness of the use of forms (e.g. politeness markers as mitigators) in learners' realization strategies led Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford to conclude that the development of speech act strategies (especially pragmalinguistic knowledge) towards native speaker norms is dependent on access to feedback and input. Their study suggests that socio-pragmatic knowledge (in this case, the fact that suggestions, rather than rejections are expected) is easier to acquire than pragmalinguistic knowledge (that is the use of forms as politeness markers). Since the learners did not receive feedback on realization strategies (e.g. levels of directness) and forms, the persisting inappropriateness of conventions of forms, in the sense that learners employed very few mitigators as politeness markers and even some aggravators, could be explained by the lack of input, equated here with negative feedback. This led Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford to conclude that the development of speech act strategies (especially conventions of forms) towards native speaker norms is dependent on access to feedback and input.

It seems that, although ILP studies have been catching up with acquisitional issues, such as the impact of input, studies have tended, on the one hand, to present input as an external factor and on the other to establish a direct relationship between its availability and its acquisition and use (cf. input and the acquisition of grammar above). In other words, if specific pragmatic features are available in learners' interactions with native speakers, then they are going to be learned. Is it the case that the learning of pragmatic abilities in a second language can be seen as more dependent on the availability of input? Or is it that input to pragmatics is subject to the same conditions above discussed in the context of learning grammar? It will be argued here that input provided in interactions between NSs and NNSs and its role in the acquisition of pragmatics in a second language can only be assessed as part of not only a communicative but also a cognitive environment. That is to say that the discussion of the impact of input in ILP cannot proceed without the integration of a theory of acquisition or internal learning mechanisms and the connection of surface phenomena (e.g. formal salience) with deep phenomena (e.g. functional markedness).

It is important to point out that while some studies in ILP do make reference to the role of the input for the learning of, for instance, conventions of forms, there seems



to be no discussion as to *how* input would affect the learning of those features, and *why*, when there is input, those features are not learned.

The task in the next chapter is to build on these varied theories and elaborate a theoretical model adequate to the task of a discussion of the acquisition of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Towards a Three-Dimensional Theoretical Framework: Cognition, Communication and Development**

This chapter proposes a new theoretical framework for the examination of the pragmatics of interactions in a specific communication context, namely second language interactions. The focus is therefore placed on conversational interactions between native speakers (NSs) and learners of a second language (or non-native speakers – NNSs). The intention is to propose an integrated interdisciplinary account of such communications, that is to say, one which comprises both cognition- and communication-theoretical approaches.

Although more studies in ILP have focused on developmental issues (cf. Kasper and Rose, 1999 for a review), it could be argued that there is still a tendency to offer descriptive accounts, lacking an explanatory level (cf. Foster-Cohen, 2000a). This can only be achieved by a critical discussion of theoretical perspectives for the understanding of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

Adopting such an integrated cognition-communication-theoretical approach, this chapter seeks firstly to define the specific character of pragmatics in the interlanguage domain. This first part will focus on speech act theory in interlanguage pragmatics and the impact of input on the acquisition of pragmatic abilities. For the purposes of this study, input can be defined broadly as the linguistic environment available to learners. Secondly, it will consider developmental accounts of pragmatic acquisition in learners of second languages. Here, two significant approaches will be considered: the two-dimensional model of Ellen Bialystok and the 'Noticing Hypothesis' of Richard Schmidt. Both approaches share a view on the development of pragmatics which is concerned with information processing hypothesis rather than communicative interaction. In this sense, both attempt to explain developmental processes in cognitive terms. This chapter will examine to what extent the theoretical proposals of Bialystok and Schmidt are compatible with a view on pragmatic development in terms of the integration of cognition *and* communication. Thirdly, this chapter will evaluate the extent to which concepts in Relevance Theory such as cognitive context and

manifestness (Sperber and Wilson, 2001) offer a plausible account for characteristics of pragmatic interactions in atypical (that is, second language acquisition) communication contexts.

Here, it will be argued that concepts such as *manifestness* and *relevance* offer a significant potential for the explanation of the development of pragmatic abilities if communicative aspects are to be properly addressed. For if meaning is indeed mediated by complex social codification, then cognitive accounts can at best explain internal mechanisms but at the price of ignoring the environment and the nature of the coupling between internal processing and external environment – even if the perception of the latter depends on the former. If the development of pragmatic abilities were purely internal, then linguistic *socialisation* would, potentially at least, become irrelevant.

In the specific case of second language pragmatics Kasper and Rose (1999) identify two roles played by pragmatic knowledge: 1. pragmatics acts as a constraint on the acquisition of linguistic forms, as shown by functionalist and interactionist perspectives of SLA (e.g. Long, 1996); 2. in its second role, pragmatics is construed as a kind of knowledge on a par with other kinds of knowledge such as morphosyntax, lexis and so forth. This theoretical framework focuses on the role of pragmatics as a kind of knowledge in its own right. In this context, studies of speech acts in a second language constitute a major area of research in ILP.

### **3.0 Development of pragmatic abilities in a second language: theories and hypotheses**

In order to go beyond a descriptive level, acquisitional patterns in pragmatics need to be connected to a theoretically adequate framework which takes account of three factors: cognitive processing, communication context and development. Although studies in ILP tend to be of a descriptive nature, as discussed in the preceding chapter, there have been some studies which relate acquisitional patterns to an explanatory framework (cf., for example, Hill and Hassal in Kasper and Rose, 1999). This explanatory level has been achieved by the employment of theoretical perspectives from the fields of child language acquisition and grammatical development in SLA. Some of these perspectives originating from grammatical development in SLA are concerned with 'information processing hypotheses' (cf. Kasper, 2001: 503). As Möhle and Raupach (1987) argue,



most trends in SLA within this kind of information processing framework employ conceptual contrasted pairs such as implicit vs. explicit knowledge, analyzed vs. non-analyzed representation of knowledge, knowledge vs. control, declarative vs. procedural knowledge etc., as presented in the preceding chapter.

The understanding of second language acquisition in terms of information processing has been proposed for different areas of language, including pragmatics. Two different theoretical approaches have been often related to empirical studies: Bialystok's two dimensional model of L2 proficiency development and Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (cf. Bialystok and Schmidt in Kasper, G. and Blum-Kulka, S. (eds.), 1993). The following sections reconstruct and discuss their possible contributions to an integrated account for the development of pragmatic abilities in the learning of a second language.

### **3.1 Bialystok's two dimensional model**

Bialystok (1978) has argued that different types of linguistic information are stored in different ways: as 'other knowledge', as 'explicit linguistic knowledge' and 'implicit linguistic knowledge'. She defines 'explicit linguistic knowledge' as "all the conscious facts the learner has about the language and the criterion for admission to this category is the ability to articulate those facts", while 'implicit linguistic knowledge' "is the intuitive information upon which the language learner operates in order to produce responses (comprehension or production) in the target language. Information which is automatic and is used spontaneously in language tasks is represented in 'implicit linguistic knowledge'" (Bialystok, 1978: 72). Furthermore, 'explicit linguistic knowledge' is a kind of knowledge which can be manipulated, examined and articulated. It is analyzed knowledge in the form of propositional mental representation. Its elaboration consists of the addition of new information and/or explication of previous unconscious information. By contrast, 'implicit linguistic knowledge' contains unanalyzed information about language and can be expanded by unconscious acquisition and/or through *automatizing* of explicit linguistic knowledge by practice (cf. Möhle and Raupach, 1987: 1159)<sup>1</sup>. The proposed interaction between the knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Bialystok acknowledges the parallel between her distinction between implicit/explicit knowledge and Krashen's learned/acquired knowledge (1981) as a conscious/intuitive

sources carries important consequences for the learning and teaching of a second language. In this context, the notion of automaticity plays a central role. It is the practice which brings about the automatization of explicit linguistic knowledge which can then be stored as implicit linguistic knowledge.

In subsequent formulations, Bialystok (1982, 1984) puts forward a different version of the two kinds of knowledge in terms of the contrast between analyzed and unanalyzed knowledge. Analyzed mental representation of linguistic knowledge is knowledge where the relationship between meaning and form is apparent to the learner and can be thus manipulated. By contrast, unanalyzed representations of linguistic knowledge do not enable the learner to have access to form-meaning relationships; in Bialystok's words, learners are not aware of the structure of this kind of knowledge. In this more recent formulation, control depends on the nature of the task the learner is performing, rather than on the degree of analysis (cf. Möhle and Raupach, 1987: 1161).

Bialystok argues for a model of language processing as a framework for research on both language acquisition and use. Central here is the conception of language proficiency as "the *fit* between the processing abilities of the learner and the task demands imposed by a specific language use situation" (Bialystok in Kasper and Blum-Kulka (eds.), 1993: 47). Such a model describes both learners' competence and task demands on the basis of two cognitive components of language processing: analysis of knowledge and control of processing, which develop with experience on its own course.

*Analysis of knowledge* is defined as the process of making implicit knowledge explicit. Consequently, mental representations of a domain of knowledge become more organized and explicit and can be used for functions not supported by implicit representations.

*Control of processing* is construed as the process of controlling attention to relevant and appropriate information, of choosing what is relevant for carrying out a specific task. It does not stand in hierarchy to other schemes, rather it stays at the same level as equivalent aspects of processing.

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dichotomy. However, unlike Krashen's proposal, Bialystok model allows for an interface between both knowledge sources.

In order to make Bialystok's model operational for a three-dimensional theoretical account of pragmatic development it is necessary both to determine how changes in the representations of language occur to accommodate pragmatic functions and how attentional strategies develop to use language appropriately in *discourse contexts*. Bialystok divides mental representations into conceptual, formal and symbolic representations. Conceptual representations are organized around meanings, formal representations are coded in terms of the structure of the language and refer to metalinguistic knowledge, and finally the concept of symbolic representations expresses the way in which language refers, coding between form and a referent. In Bialystok's view, pragmatic competence depends to a greater extent on symbolic representations and to a lesser extent on formal representations. However, Bialystok (1982, 1984) argues that the mapping is not between form and meaning, but rather between form and social context. Meaning does not vary across intentions within a certain social context. This contention is particularly relevant in the current study in view of the guiding approach that cognitive and communicative factors in the learning of pragmatics are also socially constructed.

Adult second language learners construct their pragmatic knowledge by building a symbolic representation level, that is relating form to context, from an already existent (also constructed) level of formal representations. In order to learn culturally specific (conventionalized) forms and rules for pragmatic language use, learners need to analyse existing knowledge by creating new explicit categories and learning new forms. Bialystok argues that children's and adults' acquisition of pragmatic competence are quite distinct: adults' acquisition of pragmatic competence in a second language depends basically on the development of "control strategies to attend to the intended interpretations in contexts and to select the forms [...] that satisfy the social and contextual needs of the communicative situation" (Bialystok in Kasper and Blum-Kulka (eds.), 1993: 54). In other words, while children's socialization and acquisition of pragmatic abilities occur at the same time, adults' main task is the control over already existent knowledge representations of speech acts sets. The current study focuses on adult learners (see the methodological discussion after this chapter). For this claim to hold speech act markers have to be universal and not realizations which depend on cultures and languages (cf. Wierzbicka, 1985 and the preceding chapter).



For Bialystok then, the development of pragmatic competence undergoes the same processing mechanisms as other aspects of language: “knowledge for rules of use must be learned, represented, and transformed in the same way as the knowledge that controls other, more formal, aspects of the linguistic system” (Bialystok, 1993: 44). Even if adult learners arguably rely on universal and first language pragmatic knowledge in their development of pragmatic competence as they might do in the case of the development of grammar, the question as to whether and to what extent communicative interactions play a role in the development of communicative competence seems to be at least as pressing as it is in the development of grammar. Is it the case that communicative interactions contribute more (or less) to changes in, for instance, symbolic representations, that is the mapping of forms and contexts?

It is contended here that not only does Bialystok’s model not address this question, but it could not answer it, since the model does not offer an account of how the processing components (analysis of knowledge and control) develop. In this context, Schmidt (1992) argues that it is not enough to claim that control develops with experience in its own course, rather, control has to be explained in terms of learning mechanisms. Most importantly, in the case of the learning of pragmatic abilities, what is missing in Bialystok’s model is an account of *inferencing processes*. In this sense, control as a cognitive component would have to be subject to communicative constraints as well. The development of control cannot be seen in a linear and cumulative way, as Bialystok seems to argue (1994: 161). In other words, if control depends on the language task required in a specific situation, then control has to be construed as a much more context-sensitive notion.

It could be argued that since control is conceptualized by Bialystok as a cognitive processing component, it cannot fully account for communicative encounters, since concepts (such as automatization – cf. Bialystok, 1994) which underlie the notion of control, remain confined to a learner’s cognitive environment. Selective attention in order to choose, for instance, the best interpretation of an utterance, can be said to be constrained both by learners’ cognitive and communicative abilities. These are context-dependent. Here, the question arises as to what would change if a communicative instance such as the principle of relevance were to be added. Although Bialystok’s model has not been explicitly tested within ILP, her two main predictions, namely that adults mainly rely on already existent representations and that their primary task is the

control of attention according to intentional goals, have been supported by findings according to which adult learners rely on universal and L1 pragmatic knowledge (cf. Kasper, 2001) and by findings which relate learners' difficulties with speech production and conversational skills (cf. Hassal, 1997 in Kasper and Schmidt, 1996 and House, 1996).

In Bialystok's conception, pragmatic error is the consequence of a wrong choice in terms of lack of ability to control attentional resources. Kasper and Schmidt, however, argue that pragmatic failure is the consequence of a wrong choice, which is not seen to be in terms of lack of control to attention, but due to *under-developed sociopragmatic knowledge*, which in their view is a matter of knowledge representation (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). Furthermore, Schmidt criticises Bialystok's model for not being able to account for the development of control, that is, it is not enough to claim that it develops with experience in its own way, rather it has to be explained in terms of learning mechanisms (cf. Schmidt, 1992). Control is discussed by Bialystok as a matter of a cognitive process (cf. also the discussion of control for the acquisition of strategies for requests by Hassal, 2001: 271).

Unlike the concept of attention (that is, the allocation of resources), which seems to be confined to the cognitive environment of an individual, relevance, as a function of contextual effects, considers communication, too. Thus, the concept of relevance has greater potential to explain the choices of interpretations of the utterances learners make in their communicative interactions with non-native speakers. Attention will return to Relevance Theory following further discussion of the theoretical contribution of Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis.

### **3.2. Schmidt's 'Noticing Hypothesis'**

Schmidt's *Noticing Hypothesis* (see Schmidt, 1990) starts from the significant premise that pragmatic knowledge is not always used in an automatic and unreflective way, but rather seems to be partly conscious. Furthermore, the kind of knowledge which relies on automatic processing might have been established through conscious understanding at the time of learning. However, Schmidt introduces a distinction between understanding and noticing: the concept of *noticing* refers to linguistic material stored in memory, presupposing allocation of attention to some stimulus; the concept of

*understanding* involves recognition of rules, principles and patterns. Understanding is the process in which linguistic material is organized into a linguistic system. In this context, Schmidt argues that, in the case of the learning of pragmatics in a second language, noticing is necessary whereas understanding is helpful.

While attention is a necessary condition for noticing, it refers not to input in general, but to linguistic forms, functional meanings and relevant contextual features (cf. Schmidt in Kasper and Blum-Kulka (eds.), 1993). Even if the input to be attended is not general, it can still be considered to be too broad, so that learners would necessarily have to be able to select material or, in alternative terms, determine levels of relevance. Consequently, this selection process must also be explained either in terms of the salient features of the input itself (where salience is perceived in negotiation by the communicator), or in terms of internal cognitive mechanisms, or more plausibly in terms of an interaction of both. The Noticing Hypothesis acts as a bridge between Bialystok's account and Relevance Theory.

In the reformulation of his 'Interaction Hypothesis' (introduced above), Long modified his claims about the nature and function of the linguistic environment on acquisition of language in order to consider not only its availability, but also its perception and usability (cf. Long, 1996: 441). Perception could be viewed as factors, such as attention, awareness and consciousness raising<sup>2</sup>, which mediate between linguistic input and learners' cognitive systems. Schmidt (1990) discusses 'conscious awareness', 'noticing' 'understanding' and 'unconscious abstraction' in the context of three different kinds of learning: subliminal, incidental and implicit learning. In the context of "the role of consciousness in input processing", Schmidt (1990: 129) raises three questions:

whether conscious awareness at the level of 'noticing' is necessary for language learning (the subliminal learning issue); whether it is necessary to consciously 'pay attention' in order to learn (the incidental learning issue);

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<sup>2</sup> There is much confusion amongst the notions of attention: definitions range from awareness and consciousness with them assuming different definitions: e.g. attention as selection and as detection, noticing as a conscious process and as awareness, to awareness as rule understanding.



and whether learner hypotheses based on input are the result of conscious insight and understanding or an unconscious process of abstraction (the implicit learning issue).

While he denies the existence of subliminal learning, both incidental and implicit learning would arguably have attention as facilitative factors. Schmidt also contends that 'noticing' is necessary and sufficient for acquisition to take place, when he seems to tie attention to the concept of 'noticing'. He makes the distinction between three senses of 'consciousness': consciousness as awareness (in different degrees), consciousness as intention and consciousness as knowledge. Consciousness as awareness involves 'noticing', which is defined as a kind of focal awareness and something which is available for verbal report, and 'understanding', which he relates to questions of problem solving and meta-cognitions.

By investigating the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge and how they are internalised Schmidt seems to be arguing for a stronger role of explicit knowledge in learning, as a facilitator for internalisation. 'Noticing', acting as a constraint for learning, is also subject to certain constraints: innate universals and expectancies act as unconscious contextual constraints. Frequency in input, perceptual salience, skill level (which is related to automaticity of processing) and task demands also constitute constraints for learning. As for frequency, Schmidt claims that forms that were not present in the input available to the learner, were not present in the learner's speech either. However, it is not the presence in the input which is sufficient for 'intake', rather it is the fact that they are noticed. After being noticed, forms start being used. Here, Schmidt establishes a strong connection between noticing and production (cf. Schmidt, 1990).

Although mediating constraints (e.g. processing mechanisms) are arguably necessarily involved in the learning process, it seems that a number of problems arises from Schmidt's 'Noticing Hypothesis', of which three will be the focus of attention. Firstly, 'noticing', defined as conscious perception, seems difficult to reconcile with the notion of implicit knowledge where the connection with conscious perception is not made. The question here is whether and to what extent implicit knowledge allows for any degree of awareness (cf. Truscott, 1998). Secondly, Schmidt seems to use the notion of 'intake' to mean storage in memory, which is only part of the acquisition

process.<sup>3</sup> Finally, it could be argued that some aspects of language might be more amenable to 'noticing' as a condition for their acquisition than others. Schmidt does not admit of this.

Attempting to address the first problem, that is, that a certain level of awareness is arguably necessary for any kind of learning, Tomlin and Villa (in Long, 1996: 426) concentrate on attention with its components, alertness, orientation, and detection. Schmidt's notion of 'noticing' appears here as detection within selective attention, which does not require awareness. Nevertheless, Tomlin and Villa also acknowledge a role for awareness in 'detection': "Awareness plays a potential support role for detection, helping set up the circumstances for detection but it does not directly lead to detection itself" (Tomlin and Villa, 1993: 14 in Long, 1996). Because of the vagueness of their claims, it is difficult to know if their alternative to the 'Noticing Hypothesis' could help to solve its problems.

In addition, the effects and the necessity of mediating processes (be they externally or internally initiated, cf. Sharwood Smith, 1991: 118) are still extremely controversial in second language acquisition research. Contrary to Schmidt's view, for instance, Krashen (in Long, 1996: 427) and van Patten (in Long, 1996: 427) propose that subconscious and implicit learning can occur with learners attending only to meaning. Attention to and noticing of forms is neither necessary nor beneficial. However, studies on fossilisation show that despite much exposure to the L2, some learners fail to acquire target-like forms (cf. Swain in Long, 1996: 427). In the integrated approach adopted here, form and meaning need to be combined to present a more comprehensive account of the interrelationship between cognitive, communicative and developmental dimensions.

A further criticism of the Noticing Hypothesis comes in a more comprehensive form: Carroll (1999: 380) claims that the standard view on selection of input to intake is "pre-theoretical", since it does not place input and its perception in the context of a theory of mental representation, theories of speech perception and a theory of language learning:

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<sup>3</sup> Acquisition is itself also a complex term: in the sense that it can be equated with intake, it can refer either to process or product.

while signal processing and learning mechanisms must somehow be connected, there is no reason to equate input to signal processing mechanism with input to learning.

In her view, attention as noticing or attention as awareness cannot account for an explanation of learning within the framework of parse representations. Saliency is therefore not to be searched (or found) externally, but “results from the contents of our cognitive representations” (Carroll, 1999: 361).

Robinson (2003), responding to Carroll’s criticism, argues that the Noticing Hypothesis was not proposed as a comprehensive theory. He sets out to put Schmidt’s notion of ‘noticing’ within a cognitive framework<sup>4</sup>, discussing attention in its relation to memory at the cognitive level, i.e. considering the information-processing operations and stages which act as mediators between the input and the output. Accordingly, in this context the notion of attention is not restricted to its relation to the input (encoding), but is expanded to the level of the output (retrieving). Attention then has to be seen as being structured and constrained by memory as part of the cognitive process.

The relation between attention and memory implies, in turn, that research on attention needs to take into account individual differences, such as memory capacity, age and language aptitude. According to Robinson, attention operates at the following stages: 1. “auditory and visual information intake and processing”, 2. “central control and decision making functions, such as allocation of attention to competing tasks demands, and automatization” and 3. “response execution via sustained attention” (Robinson, 2003: 633). Attention then is defined as “selection”, “capacity” and “effort” (cf. Robinson, 2003: 633).

Research on attention in SLA as a mediating factor between input and intake has investigated how much attention is needed to select input to be processed (e.g. Carroll, 1999; Gass, 1988; Tomlin and Villa, 1994), how facilitative interventions are in switching the learner’s attention from the meaning to the form of the input, making

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<sup>4</sup> Schmidt claims that his ‘Noticing Hypothesis’ is not only equally applicable to all aspects of language, but it can also be incorporated into different second language acquisition theories (cf. Schmidt, 1990: 149).



switching the learner's attention from the meaning to the form of the input, making some features salient (e.g. Long, 1996) and the role of awareness in intake (e.g. Schmidt, 1990; Sharwood Smith, 1991). The view of attention as selection changed from "a functional capacity of limited attentional capacity" to the recognition that selection can occur late, is based "on full semantic features, not partial feature analysis" and "takes place in working memory after stimuli have been fully analysed." (cf. Robinson, 2003: 636). Selection happens, then, not due to a limited capacity, but rather due to "control functions during central processing (allocation policy, time constraints...), and interference [...] to task demands which central processing responds to" (Robinson, 2003: 645).

Given the difficulties of the measurement of noticing and awareness, Robinson concludes with Schmidt (1995) that "the necessity of noticing and awareness is more controversial than the necessity of attention for SLA" (Robinson, 2003: 653). However, a number of findings would confirm Schmidt's hypothesis (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 1987). Furthermore, even if 'noticing' is considered not to be necessary for acquisition, it might contribute to learning<sup>5</sup>, which is shown by studies on issues which arise from the discussion on attention and noticing: input enhancement (cf. Sharwood Smith, 1991) and saliency through focus on form (e.g. Long, 1991).

The question then arises as to whether and most importantly *how* Schmidt's 'noticing' or according to Robinson, attention, might contribute to all aspects of learning. In this context, Schmidt (1993) applies his Noticing Hypothesis to the learning of pragmatics in a second language.

Empirical studies concerned with the learning of pragmatics found evidence for Schmidt's noticing hypothesis and its partial dependence on salient features (cf. Dufon and Errington in Kasper, 2001). However, it seems that both in theoretical and empirical terms, the difference between noticing and understanding in relation to learning is not clear.

Schmidt differentiates between two types of learning: implicit and explicit. Implicit learning stands for the non-conscious generalisations from examples. Instead of unconscious induction of rules abstracted from experience, it is explained from a

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<sup>5</sup> Following Krashen's distinction (1981).

connectionist perspective (e.g. Rumelhart and McClelland, 1986), that is the strengthening and weakening of connections as the result of experience. Schmidt argues that aspects of pragmatic knowledge which appear to be unconscious (implicitly learned) might be better accounted for by connectionist models, since principles of pragmatics and discourse are better represented in terms of associative networks, rather than by propositional rules. Moreover, in terms of methods, connectionism is compatible with all approaches, for instance, with an ethnomethodological approach, where the notion of rule as described in formal logic cannot account for social action.

The flow-chart model (in Schmidt, 1993), which presupposes decision points taken in the form of serially ordered binary selectors, could also be restructured within connectionism, where choice of address forms could be explained by unordered connections between features of social context and linguistic outputs. Other kinds of pragmatic knowledge, such as the patterns of co-variation among features of social context and the linguistic realisations of speech acts, could be similarly represented.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical framework of pragmatic realisations constrained by three basic contextual features, namely social distance, power and culture-specific evaluations of face threats, could also be explained in terms of probabilistic influences of co-operating or conflicting constraints. In order to explain how associative networks are established, Schmidt argues that while learners do not need to consciously count the frequency of occurrence of contextual and pragmatic features, they might have to notice specific relevant pragmalinguistic or contextual features, for the encoding to be triggered.

Again, the selection of features seems to play a significant role, nevertheless Schmidt does not explain the criteria for a specific feature to be considered relevant. Although implicit learning is considered to be self-organising, in the sense that understanding of co-occurring linguistic and social context features would, in principle, not need to be necessary for the establishment of the connections, Schmidt contends that conscious awareness does help with learning. The claim that implicit learning is superior to conscious problem-solving (Krashen, 1981) can only hold for specific learning tasks. Explicit learning is defined as conscious problem-solving, forming mental representations, and involves the search for related knowledge in memory (following Johnson-Laird, in Schmidt, 1993). Both models have their particular

strengths, and discovering general principles of the organisation of language, or the pragmatics of language involves both, in the sense that it is in the interaction of implicit and explicit learning that learning is faster and more effective. It seems that implicit learning requires noticing (and it is therefore helped by understanding), whereas explicit learning is concerned with understanding.

Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis has not yet been explicitly tested in the context of the learning of pragmatics in SLA. The learning of pragmatics has been not fully investigated and most of the studies of pragmatics in a second language focus on performance, in the sense of contrastive studies, not concerned with developmental stages. Consequently, very little has been said about how learners acquiring a second language develop pragmatic abilities. Furthermore, studies on the performance of pragmatics are highly informed by cross-cultural pragmatics. In this context, research on pragmatics in a second language has tended to be based on comparative studies of aspects of pragmatics in different languages, comparing native speakers' performance with non-native speakers'. In this, developmental patterns and an integrated theory for their emergence tend to be neglected.

Similarly, studies with a focus on development – that is, concerned with the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge – explain developmental patterns mostly in terms of external (social, contextual, situational, cultural) factors. While acknowledging that pragmatic development cannot be explained only in terms of cognitive factors (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996), it seems that the opposite cannot be true, either. If this dichotomy arguably holds for the explanation of interlanguage grammar, for instance, in terms of internal aspects, or for the explanation of social variables, in terms of external aspects, it seems that it is unsustainable if the acquisition of pragmatic abilities is to be explained in terms of both social and cognitive factors. If the acquisition of complex communication performance (i.e. pragmatics) is a question of selecting relevant information amidst an input of grammatical, textual, discoursal and social factors, then an account of pragmatic interaction must comprise an adequate theoretical account of both cognition and communication.

So far, research on interlanguage pragmatics has not addressed issues specifically related to investigations of interlanguage (e.g. the role of universals in ILP, L1 and L2 pragmatic development, the role of input, the relationship between



comprehension and production, the existence of a natural route of development or acquisition orders or stages of development – cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996 and Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), with the exception of the issue of transfer. These issues require theoretical and methodological exploration.

### **3.3. The explanatory potential of Relevance Theory**

#### *3.3.1 Introductory Remarks*

As noted above, Relevance Theory aims at explaining human communication while being an approach “grounded in a general view of human cognition” (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: vii); it is primarily concerned with how speakers understand their native languages. In view of this definition, the main aim here is not a straightforward application of Relevance Theory to the exploration of the learning of pragmatics in a second language, but rather an exploration of the possibility that Relevance Theory might offer an explanation for what has been neglected in ILP studies, namely *internal psychological mechanisms in communication and cognition contexts*. Here, the assumption is that Relevance Theory, although concerned with native languages, could also contribute to the understanding of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language by overcoming some of the one-sidedness of existing ILP accounts.

The assumption made here is that Relevance Theory<sup>6</sup> can provide an operational<sup>6</sup> theoretical framework for the explanation of the acquisition of pragmatics in a second language (cf. also Sroda, 2000) in terms of communication and cognition. Indeed, as Foster-Cohen has argued, by redefining *context* as psychological, cognitive context, and preferring the notion of *manifestness* to *mutual knowledge*, and *effort-effect* to *rule violation*, Relevance Theory represents a challenge to both cognition-based and socio-cultural approaches of pragmatics in SLA. The intention is not to claim that Relevance Theory could account for the whole of the process of the learning of pragmatic abilities in a second language, since pragmatic competence is not a unitary competence. In other words, the principle of relevance is just one aspect of pragmatic competence, interacting with other aspects. Sperber and Wilson argue that aspects of conversation, especially

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<sup>6</sup> Relevance Theory should not be mechanically applied. Instead, it can be made operational by testing some of its constructs, concepts and even idealizations.

those covered by the co-operative principle are best understood by the principle of relevance “and the processing resulting from speakers’ and hearers’ inevitable obedience to this innate principle” (Foster-Cohen, 1994: 238). Thus all speakers innately seek an appropriate economy of effort and effect in their communications.

Before proceeding to a discussion of Relevance Theoretical contributions to the study of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language, the core concepts of Relevance Theory will be presented with a view to illustrating how such concepts could be more productive for the explanation of the development of pragmatic abilities in a complex linguistic environment, given that they are concerned with inferencing processes on both cognitive and communicative levels.

### 3.3.2. *The core concepts of Relevance Theory*<sup>7</sup>

Relevance Theory can be seen as a reaction against the “probabilistic nature of Gricean implicature” (Grundy, 2000: 101), in the sense that it seeks to go beyond the normative level of Gricean theory, adding a level where meaning can be *negotiated*. Relevance Theory is not concerned with truth claims. Instead of entailments (what is said) and implicatures (what is implied), what is conveyed is what is *relevant*. So, instead of the four Gricean maxims guiding conversation, Relevance Theory proposes just one principle, the principle of *relevance*. This in turn suggests a shift from a normative to a functional perspective. The set of assumptions the hearer brings to the interpretation of any ostensive communication furnishes the hearer’s *cognitive context*. Assumptions in turn inform inferences that have been formed on the basis of perception, of linguistic decoding, from encyclopaedic memory or as a result of prior deductive process and are used as premises in the deduction of new assumptions.

Unlike the Gricean notion of implicature, on the Relevance Theoretical account, not only implicatures but also explicatures are recovered as pragmatic inferences, given the underdeterminations of language. In this sense, an underdetermined form has to be enriched by inferences to a full propositional form, or *explicatures* (“an explicitly communicated assumption” – cf. Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 182). Inferences about the propositional attitude of the speaker to her utterance, or about the speech act description, yield a *higher level explicature* (cf. Grundy, 2000: 102). A third kind of

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<sup>7</sup> See also Foster-Cohen, 2000a.

inference is proposed by Sperber and Wilson. Implicatures are inferences which yield a different logical form from the one of the original utterance, in that its interpretation depends entirely on inferential processes. It provides the most relevant interpretation of the utterance. Although every act of communication yields *explicatures*, *higher level of explicatures* and *implicatures*, in order to understand what is being communicated it is the most salient meaning – an explicature, higher level of explicature or implicature – that has to be recovered.

Speech acts are thus seen by Sperber and Wilson not as actions, but as attitudes to propositions (cf. Grundy, 2000). This re-interpretation of speech acts is significant in the sense that it signals a departure from discrete syntactical forms (e.g. directives) towards communication connections among speakers where attitudes to propositions are built and negotiated between producers and receivers who constantly alternate in their roles.

### *Manifestness*

The notion of manifestness accounts for what a speaker/hearer is *capable* of inferring or perceiving (even when she/he is not paying attention): “a fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is *capable* at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true”. (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 39 – emphasis added). In this way, Manifestness is a weaker notion than what is known or assumed and so has the potential advantage of being sensitive to context and cognition. There are degrees of manifestness: assumptions are more manifest to an individual at a given moment as a function of his physical environment on the one hand and his cognitive abilities on the other. The set of all facts that are ‘manifest’ to both speaker and hearer is called shared cognitive environments. According to the concept of manifestness the detection of forms is guided by search of relevance.

The utility of this concept stems from a better descriptive potential of cognitive abilities, including those of a second language learner. Moreover, these cognitive abilities – the capability of mental representation – are placed not in macro-contexts of social or cultural norms of discourse and interaction, but in micro-contexts of communication. In this way, *Manifestness* can help to avoid the excessive claims of



socio-cultural studies and forms part of a theoretical account which remains sensitive to individual language development by taking underdeterminations more seriously.

### *Context*

The concept of *Context* means psychological context. It does involve perception of place or other people, but only as viewed from the inside of the individual (cf. *Manifestness*, above), where such a context is manifest. It is important to make the distinction between given, pre-determined context and the notion of context-formation in Relevance Theory, since the latter is open to choices throughout the interpretation process itself, where extensions take place when they appear to be needed and only then (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 141). The initial context is the set of assumptions in the memory of the deductive device at the start of a deductive process. Different sets of assumptions from different sources (e.g. long-term or short-term memory, perception) are selected to be combined with new information forming the context. Selection is not arbitrary, rather it is constrained by the encyclopaedic memory of an individual and the mental activity he or she is engaged in: “[S]election of a particular context is determined by the search for relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 141). The context is therefore variable and can be extended in three different directions:

1. adding assumptions used or derived from in previous assumptions;
2. adding chunks of information, for instance from encyclopaedic entries;
3. adding input information about the perceptual environment.

The search for the context which would provide the most relevant interpretation of an utterance is further constrained by two different kinds of encoding: procedural and conceptual coding. Procedural encoding has the function of limiting the interpretation of conceptual information. This type of encoding can be triggered by adverbs (e.g. clearly, fortunately), which provide the addressee with information about the speaker’s propositional attitude, discourse particles (e.g. therefore, so) which reveal how different propositions are interrelated in the discourse, adverbial particles (e.g. even, only) and conjunctions (e.g. but), which constrain the interpretation of propositions (cf. Blakemore, in Grundy, 2000: 108). This distinction between conceptual and procedural encoding has also been seen in terms of a distinction between “information about the

representations to be manipulated [conceptual encoding], and information about how to manipulate them [procedural encoding]" (Wilson and Sperber, in Grundy, 2000: 108).

Sharing contexts is a prerequisite for communication, but this does not imply sharing knowledge. Instead of the idea of mutual knowledge, Relevance Theory proposes the concept of mutual cognitive environments or mutually manifest environments (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 45). A cognitive environment is construed in terms of a function of an individual's physical environment and his cognitive abilities. Contextual effects and processing effort are non-representational dimensions of mental processes, i.e. they exist even the individual does not consciously assess them, or even if they are not conceptually represented (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 131). The lack of contextual effect is defined in terms of the following criteria:

1. The assumption is utterly unrelated to the context;
2. The assumption is already present in the context and its strength is unaffected by the newly presented information;
3. The assumption is inconsistent with the context and too weak to change the context.

On the other hand, greater contextual effect is achieved if the utterance builds on previous assumptions by:

1. adding new and related information;
2. confirming a weakly manifest assumption currently in the hearer's cognitive environment;
3. contradicting an assumption currently in the hearer's cognitive environment.

Further defining their understanding of context, Sperber and Wilson (2001: 132) argue that:

In much of the literature, it is explicitly or implicitly assumed that the context for the comprehension of a given utterance is not a matter of choice; at any given point in a verbal exchange, the context is seen as uniquely determined, as given. Moreover, it is generally assumed that the context is given in advance of the comprehension process.

This rather conventional account of context-formation would mean an increase in processing effort and therefore loss of relevance. By contrast, according to the Relevance Theoretical account (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 141), context formation is open to choices and revisions throughout the comprehension process:

[D]etermination of the context is [...] a matter of choice and [...] part of the interpretation process itself, [...] extensions take place when they appear to be needed and only then.

Extension of the context also takes place with information about the immediately observable environment (for example, deixis and anaphora and environmental information).

To recapitulate: a relevance-theoretic account of context includes a set of assumptions in the memory of the deductive device at the start of a deductive process and can be partitioned in two subsets, each acting as the context in which the other subset is processed. The less accessible the context, the more effort to access it. Where contextual effect is weak it either means:

1. the assumption is utterly unrelated to the context or
2. the assumption is already present in the context and its strength is unaffected by the newly presented information or
3. the assumption is inconsistent with the context and too weak to change the context.

### *Relevance*

*Relevance* is a relative notion in respect of two factors: its contextual effects and the effort required to derive the contextual effects. *Relevance* is a non-representational property of mental processes (i.e. they exist even the individual does not consciously assess them, or even if they are not conceptually represented – Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 131). The principle of relevance completes the propositional representation of utterances in context. Individuals aim for relevance by selecting the best possible context in which to process an assumption – the context which enables the best possible



balance of effort against effect to be achieved. The achievement of this balance means the optimal processing of the assumption. An assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the contextual effects achieved when it is optimally processed are large and the effort required to process it optimally is small (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 145). This represents a psychological dimension of communication, which is missing in, for instance, Grice's Cooperative Principle. As Grundy (Grundy, 2000: 107) puts it:

This principle [of relevance] reflects a psychological reality with which we are all familiar, that of not being able to get the point, or at least not being able to get the point in the time available.

In their reformulation of *optimal relevance* Sperber and Wilson refer to a second condition, which will be of most importance in the discussion of the development of directives strategies in a second language: optimal relevance is achieved if "the ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it" and "the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences" (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 270).

To recapitulate, for Sperber and Wilson, human communication is non-demonstrative and is susceptible to failure. They further adopt a (modified) Fodorian account of linguistic modularity by contending that the output of the linguistic system is usually a set of indications of a message, with much to be filled in by the partner in communication. Unlike socio-cultural analyses RT does not make shared knowledge a prerequisite for communication: mutually manifest assumptions do not need to be made by the individuals (unlike mutual assumptions). Shared cognitive environments – not mental states – are the set of all facts that are 'manifest' to both speaker and hearer: "A cognitive environment is merely a set of assumptions which the individuals *is capable* of mentally representing and accepting as true" (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 46 – my emphasis).

Attention will now turn to the exploration of connections between Relevance theoretical insights and Bialystok's model and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (see also de Paiva, 2002).

### 3.3.3. Hypothesis

The aim will be to use relevance theoretical concepts in an operational way. In other words, the process of operationalisation (the formulation of a methodology and hypothesis) is not concerned with strong claims, of, for example, the truth of RT insights. Rather, it is concerned with weak claims of, for example, conceptual approaches which, even counterfactually, can shed light on the area of research, namely ILP research. Against this background, some hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

1. Development of some aspects of the realization strategies of directives (internal modifications in the sense of pragmalinguistic knowledge) is independent of negative evidence.
2. Cognition ('noticing' and 'control') and communication (pragmatic abilities) operate at different speeds.
3. Processing effort is a constant despite varying levels of pragmatic competence.

Foster-Cohen has argued (1994, 2000a, 2000b) that Relevance Theory could contribute to a better understanding of developmental pragmatics both in first and second language acquisition. On the one hand, Relevance Theory, redefining context as cognitive context, and preferring the notion of *manifestness* to *mutual knowledge*, and *effort-effect* to *rule violating*, represents a challenge to socio-cultural approaches of pragmatics in SLA. Moreover, Relevance Theory could also complement ideas in both Schmidt's and Bialystok's approaches: Schmidt's noticing hypothesis could be explained in terms of relevance, that is, something is noticed (becomes conscious to some degree) because it is relevant. This seems to offer a possible answer to the problem of selection mentioned in section 4, namely what are the criteria for the allocation of attentional resources? It is not clear, however, whether and to what extent, the connectionist approach defended by Schmidt is compatible with Relevance Theory. Thus, for the purpose of the development of a theoretical framework for this study, the discussion of Schmidt's hypothesis will focus on his main concept, namely the idea of *noticing*.

Whether Relevance Theory is compatible with Bialystok's model is also a question for further research. Since as a model it is more comprehensive than Schmidt's hypothesis, which operates mainly at the input level, its integration with RT needs to take care not to distort its main tenets. More importantly, Bialystok's claim

that children and adults face different learning tasks in pragmatics would be difficult to reconcile with Relevance Theory, since for RT both children and adults follow the same principle of Relevance in the process of communication. Given that in this study all subjects are adults, learning differences between children and adults will necessarily fall outside the scope of this thesis.

#### *3.3.4. A three-dimensional Account of Cognition and Communication in SLA pragmatics: Relevance Theory*

The following section explores a number of points at which Relevance Theory makes a useful contribution to second language theoretical models, specifically those of Bialystok and Schmidt and their respective notions of 'analysis', 'control' and 'noticing'. It is suggested that the inferential mechanisms of Relevance Theory can account for the contingencies of communicative interaction without which pragmatic negotiations do not make sense, and thus can complement such information-processing accounts through the notions of 'manifestness' and the balance between 'effort' and 'effect'. Further research is called for into the integration of information-processing concepts and Relevance Theoretical insights as part of a complex theoretical architecture capable of capturing the rich diversity of pragmatic development in second language acquisition.

It is acknowledged in the literature that Relevance Theory makes no special claims relating to second language acquisition. If it is to be imported into SLA studies it needs to be integrated with ILP studies which have brought significant gains in the comparative understanding of pragmatic performance. By proposing a three-dimensional theoretical account, this chapter connects RT with theories and methodologies in ILP studies and cognition studies. It is contended here that RT opens up space for a theoretical reflection over and beyond descriptive accounts of second language pragmatics. The significant concept of context is central to this proposal. RT is innovative in opening up context in a manner not explored in most SLA studies. This open approach to context in turn paves the way for the three-dimensional approach adopted here. The three dimensions cover communication, culture and cognition and are reflected in the literature by such ILP studies, information-processing studies and SLA studies. In this way, they also cover three dimensions of context: internal context, the



local pragmatic context of communication and the culturally encoded context of situation and setting.

As noted above, Bialystok's (1993) two-dimensional model of second language proficiency development and Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (1993) are important contributions in this theoretical framework. For Bialystok, pragmatic development involves three types of representation: conceptual, formal and symbolic mental representations. Conceptual representations relate to meanings, formal representations relate to language structure and symbolic representations capture the referential function of language. In Bialystok's view, pragmatic competence depends to a great extent on symbolic representations (1993).

Bialystok tends to see context in the socio-cultural sense of a context external to the learner. By contrast, Relevance Theory makes a useful distinction between external context and cognitive context. Thus, whereas Bialystok "steps out of her cognitive account in order to account for pragmatics, Relevance Theory maintains the cognitive stance, incorporating external notions of context such as place, situation, etc., but, crucially, through an internal context (de Paiva and Foster-Cohen, 2004: 283)", Relevance Theory makes stronger cognitive claims for pragmatics. This means a shift from a view where social and cultural aspects of interactions represent central constraints to a more agent-based perspective with a clear emphasis on the individual's internal context.

While RT does make a useful distinction between internal and external contexts, its definition of the latter tends not to address the third dimension of the current theoretical proposal. This third dimension relates to settings and circumstances or institutional and culturally encoded contexts. It is the extension to this third dimension that makes RT relevant for a theoretical exploration of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language. This exploration necessarily involves a discussion of cognition, communication and setting as the three dimensions of context.

While Relevance Theory is not centrally concerned with this socio-cultural context so crucial to SLA studies, Bialystok's account in turn does not fully explore the connection between control and the dynamic development of new pragmatic skills. Control of processing involves the search for relevance as the relation between effort

and effect. The concept of noticing, derived from Schmidt, can also be made useful in completing the three-dimensional model. However, as Carroll (2001) has argued, it is important to go beyond the conception of noticing as attention to discrete form. One open question is how the effort/effect calculation interacts with attention to form. Similarly, Schmidt's hypothesis opens up the question of the noticing of relevant contextual meanings. However, it requires conscious attention where RT argues that relevance occurs without conscious attention.

It is also worth noting that there is a significant relationship between inferencing and background assumptions. Here, cognitive and 'cultural' contexts enrich each other. If, as Bialystok argues, control depends on the language task in a specific situation, then it is context- and interaction-sensitive.

The concept of relevance, explored above, also extends and expands the theories of Schmidt and Bialystok, taking 'analysis' and 'control' outside the cognitive context of the speaker into a mutually manifest cognitive context where cultural encoding plays a major role. A typical example in second language pragmatics might be the transfer of L1 politeness or other formality conventions into L2. A learner who recognises that part of an utterance he does not understand is relevant to understanding the whole utterance can invest the effort to search more carefully for explicit knowledge. There is an interesting balance between control effort and effect here.

A learner's willingness to invest greater inferencing effort might be driven by a desire for the most explicit possible communication since the highest degree of explicitness tends to reduce the high levels of uncertainties in intercultural exchanges. The distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' communication in Relevance Theory is significant here. Strong communication aims at conveying specific assumptions, while weak communication aims to guide a hearer's attention while remaining underdetermined.

Non-native speakers may not only weakly interpret both the weakly and strongly communicative utterances of others, but may also deliberately exploit the distinction in order to give preference to pragmatic appropriateness at the expense of linguistic precision. Thus a non-native speaker might prioritize the quest for maximum effect and minimum effort by violating discoursal norms and undermining pragmatic conventions.

Alternatively, he or she may prioritize certain pragmatic conventions, such as being explicit, thus losing effect and increasing effort. The result would be that there is more information to be processed and much of it would be pragmatically unnecessary from a native-speaker point of view.

Whereas information-processing concepts of 'analysis', 'control' and 'noticing' are held to offer plausible insights into learning, they reach their limitations when it comes to a discussion of the process-like contingencies of communicative interaction without which pragmatic negotiations do not make sense. Here, a Relevance Theoretical framework can complement information-processing accounts by offering a plausible theory of cognition and communication which operates with a notion of internal context (manifestness and the effort/effect balance) where inferencing processes are central. This approach to context, however, still needs to employ the dynamic notions of 'noticing' and 'analysis' in order to shed light on the ways in which learners develop and use assumptions on-line in pragmatic contexts which are by definition displaced.

Manifestness could be connected to Bialystok's notion of control or selective attention. As a concept, it is more applicable to the complex process of cognitive processing and communicative interactions, since although it also depends on the individual's physical environment and his cognitive abilities, which in Bialystok's terms could correspond to the task the learner is engaged in and his cognitive capacity to select attention, it adds the idea of a shared cognitive environment. This environment is not simply a mute input, but already selected as a function of processing of effort and effect.

Sperber and Wilson posit the 'informative intention' as making "manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions I" (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 58). The communication of manifestness means that a communicator intends not to modify the thoughts of his audience, but to bring about a modification in the cognitive environment of that audience. Cognitive environments are contingent. Whereas in Sperber and Wilson's terms, 'strong communication' seeks the greatest possible precision in the communicator's expectations, in 'weak communication', often more frequently observed in human interaction, the communicator "can merely expect to steer the thoughts of the audience in a certain direction." One hypothesis deriving from this



distinction and the focus on cognitive environments as opposed to cognitive processes is that non-native speakers in interaction with native speakers, that is in a situation of pragmatic asymmetry, could deliberately opt for weak communication with a higher degree of vagueness in order to reduce the risk of a communication which may be precise, but inappropriate. Weak communication, with its appeal to the audience, reduces precision, but operates with imprecise appropriateness. This in turn can increase processing effort. Alternatively, speakers can opt for greater clarity and neglect politeness.

The principle of *relevance* can also offer insights into the relationship between input (linguistic environment) and second language learning. Carroll (2001: 371-392) investigates second language learners' interpretation of feedback (repetitions, clarification requests) provided by native speakers in relation to contextual effects and processing effort. Here, she argues that the interpretation of feedback is constrained by the principle of *relevance*. Carroll (2001: 375) claims that feedback, in order to be interpreted as feedback, has to violate the principle of *relevance*. The interpretation of linguistic feedback as a correction "represent[s] a rupture in the discourse". In other words, the interpretation of feedback as feedback requires that the learner rejects the first and optimally relevant interpretation of the native speaker's utterance in favour of attributing to it a corrective intention, resorting, in this way, to a metalinguistic interpretation. To say that the interpretation of feedback as feedback depends on it being *Irrelevant* means that it requires from learners more processing effort with no guarantee that learners will draw the necessary inferences. Although Carroll's problematizes the *usability* of feedback in the context of learning grammar, the same issues need to be addressed in investigations of the role of input in the learning of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

Also of great importance in the discussion of the development of pragmatic strategies in a second language is Sperber and Wilson's reformulation of *optimum relevance*. Here, Sperber and Wilson add a second condition, which is: optimal relevance is achieved if "the ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it" and "the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences" (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 270). The expectation of optimum relevance as defined by an effect/effort calculation may hold in communication settings in which, *prima facie*, maximum effect

is computed with minimum processing effort. The same expectation may obtain and inform interactions in special forms of asymmetrical communication such as communication between native and non-native speakers<sup>8</sup>.

While both communicators – in this study, NSs and NNSs – may proceed in cognitive terms from expectations of relevance as defined by Sperber and Wilson, in communication terms (from lexis to syntax to pragmatics to social norms) the effect/effort ratio often does not fit with such expectations. More often than not, effect is dissipated or arrested by vague, inappropriate or infelicitous expression which in turn demands greater processing effort. Pragmatic interactions between native and non-native speakers can thus be described as multi-speed. In a schematic sense, two hypotheses can be formulated at this point:

1. Hypothesis A: the non-native speaker prioritises the quest for maximum effect and minimum effort by violating discursal norms and undermining pragmatic conventions;
2. Hypothesis B is that the non-native speaker prioritises complex pragmatic conventions thus losing effect and increasing effort.

In such a difficult communication environment the concept of manifestness (based on the capacity to represent mentally) which is central to Relevance Theory becomes problematic:

One of the advantages of verbal communication is that it gives rise to the strongest possible form of communication; it enables the hearer to pin down the speaker's intentions about the explicit content of her utterance to a single, strongly manifest candidate, with no alternative worth considering at all. (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 60)

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<sup>8</sup> In such interactions, contingencies are considerably heightened. It should be recalled that Sperber and Wilson criticise conventional pragmatic and semiotic accounts for their failure to address vagueness in communication (Sperber and Wilson, 2001: 57).

Where cognitive effort is often accentuated by unexpected communicative effect and relevance is thus 'reduced' in terms of the above, manifestness also becomes problematic. To operate with an absolute concept of relevance (and it is, after all, seen as a cognitive universal) is to consign such mis-communications, pragmatic breakdowns etc. to irrelevance. However, such a conclusion confers strong claims on Relevance Theory. In the case of second-language pragmatic interactions, weak claims, where relevance is considered as a counterfactual, might be more plausible and useful in highlighting the gap between information and communication intentions and communication realisations. To account for acquisitional issues, pragmatics needs to be redefined: contexts are not only social or cross-cultural contexts, but cognitive contexts, too.

The notion of shared cognitive environments, as that which is manifest to both speaker and hearer, and that which is a function of the individual's physical environment and his/her cognitive abilities, could offer a new perspective in terms of an explanation of the perception of input, redefined, as mentioned earlier, as the result of cognitive representations, rather than as "something out there". Furthermore, the notion of relevance, a relative notion in proportion of contextual effect and effort can be construed as a mediating factor between input and its noticing, so that detection of forms and functions are guided by the search of relevance. The deployment of Relevance Theory represents an attempt to explain how for instance negative evidence is interpreted by learners, in the case that it is available as shown by many studies of the acquisition of grammar and by few in the acquisition of pragmatics. In other words Relevance Theory, as a theory of inferencing, can explain how learners derive information from negative data (cf. Carroll 2001: 6).

This interpretation has been claimed, in the context of learning grammar, to be constrained by a number of factors: 1. Firstly, negative data (implicit or explicit) arguably violates the principle of relevance, since it has to be interpreted as metalinguistic information, which in most contexts, is the less likely interpretation (cf. Carroll, 2001: 381).

In order to be interpreted as metalinguistic information, negative feedback has to be interpreted as obeying the Cooperative Principle, but violating the principle of relevance. Consequently, because it involves more effort, learners' move to a



metalinguistic interpretation will be of last resort. There is no guarantee that negative information will be interpreted as such. It depends foremost on the learners' inferencing capacities. 2. Secondly, if the information is not new, for instance, if the learner already knows the information, it is also irrelevant. Thus, some conclude, in relation to grammar, that negative data play a minor role in development, in the sense that negative data cannot replace universals of linguistic cognition. It should be argued that replacement might not be the only option. Both universals and negative data provided in interactions would play a role in acquisition of pragmatic abilities, although with varying influence. It is precisely the understanding of this influence, which is missing in the case of the learning of pragmatics in a second language (e.g. Carroll, 2001: 382 for a study of requests in German).

Relevance Theoretical analyses focus on the perspective of the hearer, whereas acquiring pragmatic abilities in a second language involves language production as well as interpretation. In this way it can be said that the goals of the speaker account for his linguistic choices, which could clash with speech community norms in respect to linguistic behaviour (e.g. intentional rudeness). Stimulus and manifestness: from all stimuli which can be manifest to an individual, which ones are going to be relevant, or does the degree of salience as an environmental (external) factor make a difference?

The reconstruction and discussion of the foregoing should indicate the explanatory potential of Relevance Theory as part of an integrated theoretical framework comprising Bialystok's cognitive approach to control and Schmidt's 'Noticing Hypothesis'. At the same time, it is important to avoid creating the impression that this treatment of relevance theory is somehow apologetic. Blakemore (1992: 47 in Sroda, 2000: 77) provides a timely reminder of the limitations of Relevance Theory in terms of its commitment to an explanation of "the very possibility of communication between human beings" rather than language used to communicate assumptions about social relationships. Nevertheless, an account of the development of pragmatic abilities can benefit from the micro-contextual descriptive contribution to the explanation of micro-contexts without recourse to socio-cultural norms.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodological Discussion**

#### **4.1 Aims of this study and implications for methodology**

##### *4.1.1 Introductory remarks*

In this chapter a pilot study will be presented with the aim of illustrating the theoretical concerns discussed in the Literature Review of this thesis.

This pilot study adopts an *exploratory* cross-sectional approach to the development of requests in Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. An exploratory experiment was conducted, with data collected from learners of three different levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced) in a course of Portuguese for foreigners in a major Brazilian university (Pontificia Universidade Católica) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

A *cross-sectional design*, comprising the collection and comparison of data from learners at different proficiency levels, can offer an insight into developmental aspects which would not be acquired by the comparison of NSs and learners only. Such a design, however, does not yield a full developmental picture, which would only be revealed by longitudinal studies which are, due to the amount of resources involved, still limited in number in ILP (cf. also Warga, 2002: 239 and for longitudinal studies cf. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993 and 1996). It is nevertheless to be hoped that such studies will increase in the future (cf. for an example Achiba, 2003).

This exploratory study adopts mainly a *qualitative approach* to data analysis, examining data for trends according to a coding method to capture those trends. Given that this study is not concerned with a large corpus, an in-depth qualitative analysis will be the main instrument of evaluation, however with some frequency analyses. This approach is based on House's (1996: 235) study of routines and metapragmatic awareness (cf. the review of studies on requests in the literature review), who justifies this methodological choice in the following terms:

[P]henomena such as discourse strategic use of language obviously do not permit easy quantitative analysis as, by definition, different types of strategies fulfil different



interpersonal and content-structuring discourse functions (in the Hallidayan sense).

As in this study an investigation of discursive features (e.g. types of exchange moves, use of new/old information) will also be part of the analysis of the requestive act in interactions between learners and NSs (see below), it was assumed that a qualitative analysis would be more justifiable, in terms of capturing patterns in the data.

Moreover, since this study is of an exploratory nature, no specific hypotheses are formulated; rather, research questions (see below) guided the study (cf. for a similar approach Rose, 2000: 35). In the same way, the present study follows House's (1996: 235) observations on the fit between the methodological design and analytical approach (qualitative/quantitative analysis), when she writes:

I regard my study as a primarily exploratory one that requires close phenomenological inspection of interesting, but not necessarily numerically frequent observations.

That is not to say that the frequency analyses will play a minor role. On the contrary, they will give substantial support to the analysis of the data, but will require validation of analyses based on larger samples of data (cf. also House, 1996).

The developmental patterns identified in the data will be accounted for within the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter. In the context of analysis of development in ILP studies, it has been argued (cf. Kasper, 1989) that the measurement of development of learners' pragmatic abilities by a comparison of NS's abilities in the same situations presents some problems, in the sense that this kind of analysis presupposes that NS norms have to be aimed at by learners. Any difference in, for instance, the performance of the requests, would indicate a deficit<sup>1</sup>.

It has been shown, however, that learners sometimes opt for a optimal rather than for a total convergence to the target norms (cf. Siegal, 1994). Pointing out differences seems not to be enough either, since it does not make explicit which of the differences are acceptable alternatives and are not going to put the communicative act at



risk, causing a communication breakdown. This state of affairs has led Kasper and Schmidt (1996: 155) to argue that the lack of a developmental focus in ILP studies could be due to “the lack of any common metric by which development can be measured”.

Despite the growing number of ILP developmental studies since Kasper and Schmidt’s statement was made, it can still be argued that the issue of norms or parameters for measuring development has hardly been addressed in ILP research. Faced with the difficulty of using NSs performance as a normative model, this study seeks to attempt to analyse the interactions looking at the particularities of these interactions. In other words, patterns in learners’ performance will be construed in terms of regularities of behaviours.

The analysis of developmental patterns in requests will, in this study, be subjected to two different constraints: on the one hand, a cross-sectional design, as mentioned above, will always impose limitations on developmental claims. One should recall Kasper and Schmidt’s methodological considerations above and the need to look at the learning of pragmatic aspects in the context of particular interactions, that is, as highly contextualized and dependent on the specific group of participants as well as on factors (e.g. psychological, social, cultural) which might have heavily influenced learners’ communicative behaviour (cf. Grundy, 2003). In view of this, developmental hypotheses yielded by this study will only allow for generalisations within the scope of the methodological design adopted here.

This methodology chapter will comprise, in pursuit of the aims and research questions stated below, three main sections: the present one will deal with 1. The aims of this study and implications for methodology; the second section (2. Data collection procedures) is concerned with the discussion and evaluation of different data collection procedures within ILP studies. Furthermore, a rationale will be offered for the procedures adopted for the data collection of the present study. The data and the subjects will also be presented. The third main section (3. Methods for coding the data) will discuss and evaluate different taxonomies for the coding of the data. Following on from some introductory remarks as part of a critical review, the second sub-section (the CCSARP coding manual) will be concerned with an evaluation of the Cross-Cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Bley Vroman’s “Interlanguage Fallacy” (1983).

Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The coding parameters developed for the CCSARP are paradigmatic of studies of speech acts in ILP. Also in this sub-section, modifications and some alternative accounts of the CCSARP coding parameters (e.g. especially Trosborg, 1995 and Held, 1995) will be incorporated. Moreover, in the third sub-section of (3), Koike's (1992) classification of Brazilian Portuguese request strategies will be added to this sub-section as a basic comparative resource for this part of the analysis.

Still as part of the third main section of this chapter, the fourth sub-section (An interactional approach for the analysis of the requestive communicative act – a framework for coding) will discuss taxonomies for coding the data in order to address the second and third aims stated above, that is the coding of the data in terms of interactional features. Here, three methods will be considered: 1. the coding parameters used in research in the area of Input and Interaction in SLA (e.g. Mackey, 1999), and 2. Trosborg's (1995) adapted discourse analysis taxonomy.

After a critical analysis of these taxonomies, the final sub-section of the main section 3, (Coding methods and parameters for data analysis: a summary) will go on to outline the taxonomies chosen as methods for the coding of the data for the present pilot study.

#### *4.1.2 Aims of this study*

The aims of this study can be stated in the following broad terms:

1. To identify the semantic formulae of the communicative act of requests in Brazilian Portuguese as a native and as a second language with regard to: realisation strategies, use of internal modifications and supportive moves and the appropriateness of strategies to sociopragmatic aspects of dominance, social distance and degree of imposition or expectations of the interaction (cf. also Trosborg, 1995: 134-135 for Danish and English).
2. To identify interactional patterns in the requestive communicative act in native speakers' and learners' contributions, in terms of regularities in the structure of their participation.



3. To identify and characterise the nature of the input available to learners in encounters with NSs in relation to requests. Here the focus will rest on attempting to show if there is availability of negative feedback (implicit or explicit) in respect of realisation strategies for requests.
4. To investigate the above across different levels of proficiency and suggest developmental patterns.
5. To attempt to go beyond a descriptive level by offering an integrated explanatory account whose theoretical premises are discussed above of the patterns identified in the data in terms of linguistic, social and cognitive aspects.

#### ***4.1.3 Research Questions***

Given the above aims, the research questions which guide this study can be formulated as follows:

1. What is the nature of the development of the requestive communicative act in Brazilian Portuguese in relation to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects?
2. How do learners and NSs of Brazilian Portuguese negotiate their communicative act of request in terms of subsequent discourse (e.g. choice of request strategies over the whole interaction, how speakers' assumptions about hearers' beliefs and strategies operate across the interaction)? In other words, what is the nature of their participation? How do both learners and NSs react to their interlocutor's contribution? What is the role of the immediate environment?
3. In the interactions between NSs and learners, what is the nature of the input available to learners in the three communicative situations in terms of pragmatic aspects of the requests? Is there any kind of (implicit or explicit) negative feedback? That is, do NSs correct learners, for instance, by recasting their request using a different strategy? If so, do learners incorporate this kind of feedback in subsequent performance in the task, do they recognize it as feedback in the first place?
4. What could be an appropriate explanation for developmental patterns in learners' production of the communicative act of request in relation to the kind of negotiation and feedback present in the interactions?



These questions are guided by the need for an integrated account of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

## **4.2 Data collection procedures**

This section is concerned with data collection procedures employed by ILP studies of speech acts. The first sub-section will be a critical review of different methods as well as the findings arrived at by studies using such methods. Methods reviewed will comprise: Discourse Completion Questionnaires or Tests ('the DCT'), (closed and open) role plays, authentic data, and combined methods using metapragmatic assessments. The second sub-section here will comprise a review of existing studies with the specific aim of comparing methods of data collection, assessing their advantages and disadvantages. After weighing the pros and cons of different methods the third sub-section will develop a rationale for the methods adopted by this thesis. In the final sub-section the data elicitation instruments and the subjects will be presented.

### ***4.2.1 Data collection procedures in ILP studies: a critical review***

This sub-section will be concerned with a critical review of data collection procedures in ILP. This review will focus on studies concerned with the collection of production data in studies of speech acts only. Studies of comprehension using reception data will be mentioned here only for comparative purposes as appropriate.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Discourse Completion Tests ('the DCT')***

Although 'the DCT' is not a method adopted in this thesis, a review of studies using 'the DCT' is justified on the grounds that it has been a frequent and most influential method of data elicitation in studies of speech acts in ILP.

Studies of cross-cultural pragmatics, which have been very influential in ILP research, have used 'the DCT' to elicit data. The 'DCT' consists of scripted dialogues which are preceded by a written description of the social situation, the setting and social

distance between the participants followed by a blank space where the participants are supposed to complete the dialogue providing (in writing) the specific speech act under study (cf. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989). Here, it has been claimed that written elicitation techniques enable the elicitation of more stereotyped responses needed for cross-cultural comparisons (cf. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (eds.), 1989). In this way, 'the DCT' is considered to be especially effective for the comparison of strategies used by native speakers and learners of the same language in the study of many languages.

Studies in ILP eliciting data by means of 'the DCT' have tended to investigate the performance of different speech acts in different L2s. The requestive speech act has been one of the most investigated speech acts (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986; House and Kasper, 1987; Faerch and Kasper, 1989, Kasper and Dahl, 1991), with studies indicating that NNSs have the same range of realization strategies as NSs, although diverging in terms of their contextual distribution. In other words, despite having the same range of realization strategies for requests, learners use them in different contexts, when compared with NSs.

In the investigation of requests and length of utterance in Hebrew as a L1 and L2 (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986), it was found that high intermediate learners use longer realizations (a phenomenon identified as verbosity) compared to NSs. Beginners might have been prevented from verbosity by their low level of linguistic resources, whereas advanced learners' lack of verbosity can be explained as convergence to NSs' norms. Also important is the finding in House and Kasper (1987) and Faerch and Kasper (1989) that learners showed contextual sensitivity when choosing levels of directness, but they presented difficulties with pragmalinguistic knowledge, that is choice of syntactic and lexical mitigators.

Other speech acts have also been studied with the employment of 'the DCT', for instance, refusals by Japanese learners of English (Beebe et al., 1990 and Taskahashi and Beebe, 1987 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991). These studies showed transfer in semantic formulae, where transfer is understood as uses which are different from L2 and similar to uses in L1.



Whereas all studies using 'the DCT' make use of L2 controls (native speakers of the target language performing the same task), only some of them offer L1 controls (native speakers of the subject's first language performing the same task) as well. Kasper and Dahl (1991: 225) contend that L1 controls are desirable (and feasible in the case of 'the DCT'), given that most studies using L1 controls point to some kind of transfer which can only be investigated in their presence.

Suggestions by Chinese and Malay learners of English have also been investigated by means of 'DCT', in a study (Banerjee and Carrel, 1988 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991:224) where contextual internal (e.g. degree of imposition) and contextual external (e.g. rights and obligations of interlocutors) variables were systematically controlled, showing that 'the DCT' can yield a systematic variation of variables involved in a communicative situation. A more detailed evaluation of 'the DCT' will follow below.

#### *4.2.1.2 (Closed and Open) Role Plays*

Another data collection instrument largely employed by ILP studies of speech acts is the *role play*. It consists of the learner being given a task (orally or in the written mode) by the researcher, which in turn consists of a situation the learner will have to enact. Closed role plays resemble 'the DCT' methods in the sense that learners are given the description of the situation with an empty slot where they have to provide the speech act aimed at. The difference between 'the DCT' and closed role plays lies in the use of the oral instead of the written mode of language. One problem is the contrived character of closed role plays, given the absence of an interlocutor. There are of course many ways of attenuating the artificiality of a closed role play (e.g. use of videos or slides to simulate a real communicative situation cf. Warga, 2002), but, as with 'the DCT', subjects have to perform the speech act in one turn only. The non-interactive character of 'the DCT' and closed role plays will be discussed below.

Open role plays also consist of a learner being given a task such as description of the situation, the interlocutor's status or social distance, and the communicative goal. However, they differ fundamentally from closed role plays in that they involve the interaction with a NNS and allow for the development of a full conversation over several turns. No conversational outcomes are prescribed, so that they have to be



negotiated during the interaction (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 228). Despite the increase in resources needed for their execution, open role plays have recently been increasingly employed in ILP studies, because of the qualities they share with authentic discourse as mentioned above. Studies using open role plays include Scarcella, 1979 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Kasper, 1981 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Trosborg, 1987; Tanaka, 1988 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Trosborg, 1995; Houck and Gass, 1996; Hassal, 2001. As with 'the DCT', such studies have investigated several different speech acts in different languages. Most of the studies make use of L2 controls and some (e.g. Trosborg, 1995 and Kasper, 1981) offer both L1 and L2 controls.

The findings the above researchers arrive at differ from studies employing DCT in that they involve the consideration of interpersonal aspects: on the one hand, results show that learners have difficulties with interpersonal goals, failing to make use of politeness strategies. In some cases (cf. Kasper, 1981), this is associated with the fact the learners were outside the target linguistic environment (e.g. EFL learners). The lack of minimizing strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts, that is the use of higher levels of directness than NSs, has also been explained in terms of linguistic difficulties. The implementation of politeness strategies demands 'more' linguistically than the compliance with the Cooperative Principle as discussed in the Literature Review above. Also, learners failed to vary their performance according to the social distance of their interlocutors. This was attributed to learners' misperceptions of interactions in the target culture (cf. Tanaka, 1988).

In another important and divergent finding, since it was concerned with indirectness rather than with direct strategies, it has been suggested that the use of indirectness is due to lack of conventional routines in the L2 (cf. Hassal, 2001). On the other hand, findings point to an approximation of native-like strategies as a function of increased proficiency (cf. Trosborg, 1995 and Hassal, 2001). Although open role plays provide richer interactional and discourse data, their analyses have tended to follow parameters developed for the analysis of DCT (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), in that they tend to concentrate on the sentence level, disregarding discourse units (cf. Trosborg, 1995 for an alternative model). The consequences of this approach will be discussed below and also in the next section which deals with the coding and analysis of data.

#### ***4.2.1.3 Authentic Data***

From the literature it emerges that the deployment of authentic conversational data is underrepresented in ILP studies of speech acts. Only two distinct studies of speech acts have been reported as having employed the observation of authentic speech.

Wolfson (1989 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 229) investigated compliments and compliment responses in everyday interactions in different situations including NSs and NNSs in North America. Although the study offers some observations about NNSs' failure to appreciate the function of a specific speech act, not enough information is provided about the situations or NNSs' proficiency level or background, and yet without such crucial information it is difficult to make sense of the findings.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990), investigating status congruent and incongruent acts in academic advising sessions, provided a more controlled experiment, in the sense that NNSs interacted with the same NS interlocutors in the same situations, making the data situationally comparable. It emerged that NNSs failed both in their choice of status-congruent speech acts (e.g. suggestions and rejections of advice) and in their performance, which lacked mitigators.

Despite the limitations of Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's study, in relation to cross-cultural comparability (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 231), it does provide information about, for instance, the choices of speech acts in specific situations, which elicited data cannot offer. It should be said then that the observation of authentic speech is desirable in ILP studies in order to provide access to interactional, discourse features present in authentic conversations. However, authentic data are not only difficult to collect, their coding is equally complex.

#### ***4.2.1.4 Combined Methods***

One way to attenuate the limitations of or to complement a specific data collection procedure is an integrated methodological approach where different methods of data collection are combined. One way of combining methods is adopting one method for the elicitation of the primary data and a second to shed light on the interpretation of the primary data. Alternatively, different methods of data collection can have equal status



but different purposes in a study. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991: 232), primary data concerned with production can be interpreted with the help of metapragmatic assessments, which can be either of contextual factors affecting the perception of the situation or of the learner's choice of level of directness in his performance of the speech act. Metapragmatic assessment can be carried out by means of a written (rating) questionnaire or by (playback) interviews. Takahashi and Dufon (1989 in Kasper and Dahl, 1991), in their study of requests by Japanese learners of English, used play back interviews to identify indirect requests and speakers' intentions. The interviews also showed different perceptions of request strategies by NNSs and NSs, showing that they can help with the interpretation of different aspects involved in NNSs' performance.

#### *4.2.1.5 Role Plays and Retrospective Interviews*

As one component of a combined method, retrospective interviews (a kind of verbal report) are construed as an introspective method. Introspective methods are defined by Cohen (in Faerch and Kasper 1987: 84) as procedures of self-report, self-observation and self-revelment. They are considered to be located in the middle of the scale of structuredness of elicitation procedures, with only the object of the verbalization being restricted by the researcher's questions, but not the specific content or form (cf. Faerch and Kasper, 1987). In this sense, because retrospective interviews are not subject to the same constraints role plays are, they offer the potential to provide information on the cognitive motivation for learners' choices of realization strategies of speech acts.

Cohen (1996) provided a stimulating and comprehensive review of some studies which employed the verbal report as a way of investigating the underlying processes involved in the production of speech acts by NNSs. Motti's study of apologies by Brazilians learners of English (in Cohen, 1996) used the retrospective verbal report to identify how learners planned their speech act performance, whether in their L1 or L2. Grammatical correctness and the status of their interlocutor were also part of the learners' concerns when filling the DCTs. Robinson (in Cohen, 1996) investigated refusals by Japanese learners of English using a DCT and a think aloud introspective method. Play back interviews were also used to clarify the think aloud protocols, which helped to identify sociocultural problems with the refusal speech act.



Another study of apologies conducted by Frescura (1993 in Cohen, 1996) employed role plays and the retrospective verbal report in the form of play back interviews. Some of the interview questions in Frescura study have been used in a modified version for the present study (cf. rationale and description of the data collection procedures below).

Cohen and Olshtain's study of apologies, complaints and requests (1993 in Cohen, 1996) investigated the planning and execution of speech act utterances in elicited role plays. Similarly to Motti, the sources of transfer, here meant to be associated with thinking either in the L1 or L2, constituted a second issue of investigation. The findings of Cohen and Olshtain's study will be in part corroborated by the findings of this study, as will be shown in the discussion chapter of this thesis. It suffices to point out for the time being that in Cohen and Olshtain, the subjects in general did not plan out the vocabulary and grammar of their utterances. During their performances, several strategies were used for the retrieval of language forms and subjects reported having thought in their first languages when searching for an appropriate utterance (cf. Cohen and Olshtain, 1993 in Cohen, 1996: 265).

Whereas many studies using verbal reports as a way of complementing primary data have been reviewed (e.g. Cohen, 1996), very little has been said about the parameters for the analysis of the verbal reports themselves. In Cohen's review, for instance, despite very accurate descriptions of how the verbal reports have been carried out in the different studies, only Frescura's taxonomy for the analysis of the data is described, which in turn refers only to the analysis of the role plays. The result is that it is not clear how the verbal reports were interpreted and in which way they helped with the interpretation of the primary data. It could be argued that in order to ensure the validity of verbal reports, understood here as their adequacy with reference to the research question, the criteria for their interpretation and analysis as a secondary (subsidiary) source of data have to be made more explicit and subjected to further scrutiny.

#### *4.2.2 The validity of data collection procedures*

The concept of validity will be construed here in terms of the evaluation of the *adequacy* of research methods with respect to specific research aims (cf. Kasper and

Dahl, 1991). One of the most researched methodological issues in ILP is concerned with data collection procedures. This does not mean however that the validation of methods of data collection in ILP studies has been fully addressed. Rather, there have been a lack of studies with a focus on the validity of methods, especially of combined methods as defined above. Nevertheless, some studies have compared the variability induced by different instruments of data collection (e.g. Rintell and Mitchell, 1989, Blum-Kulka, 1989, Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993, Beebe and Takahashi, 1989, Kasper and Dahl, 1991, Beebe and Cummings, 1996), discussing their pros and cons.

'The DCT' has shown to be a productive method, when the aim is comparing a large number of languages, for it allows for an initial classification of semantic formulae which can be expected to appear in authentic conversations (cf. Beebe and Cummings, 1996: 73). Another advantage is the large quantity of data that can be elicited in little time by means of written data. As shown above, 'the DCT' also seems to control the contextual variables effectively at the cost, however, of imposing on the subjects an over-long questionnaire, which could, in turn, affect their performance (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 225). Although 'the DCT' elicits written language, the resulting data do not truly reflect written modality, and in this sense 'the DCT' provides elicitation of representation of spoken language (spoken language is not always "spoken" according to Rintell and Mitchell, 1989).

However, it has been claimed that the collection of written data is sensitive to overall proficiency effects, that is absolute beginners might feel unable to fill in a questionnaire and been therefore excluded from studies using 'the DCT' (cf. Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 151)<sup>2</sup>. 'The DCT' displays some other disadvantages: the length of response is constrained and written language seems to be seen as more formal by subjects. Also, it seems that the directness level of the performance of the speech act is affected: when comparing 'the DCT' with role play it was found that more direct level is preferred for some situations of requests when using 'the DCT' than with role play indicating that face-to-face interactions affect the directness level (cf. Rintell and Mitchell, 1989). In sum, 'the DCT' precludes face-to-face encounters which seem to

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<sup>2</sup> Kasper and Schmidt extend their criticism of methods of data elicitation having excluded beginners from role plays. This study shows that absolute beginners can also engage in the interactions proposed by the role plays.



play an important role especially for NNSs. It could indeed be argued that the widespread employment of 'the DCT' in studies of speech acts in ILP have contributed to a tendency in construing the analysis of speech acts at the sentence level.

*Closed role plays* are considered to provide very similar data to 'the DCT'. Despite the difference in the modality of the language used (oral and written respectively), the fact that both types of data elicitation are non-interactive seems to have a decisive impact on the research question (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991). The focus of the investigation of the performance of speech acts is necessarily on the speaker in a much more atomistic approach to communication, where variables of context and addressee are neglected.

*Open role play*, given its interactive nature, allows the examination of speech act performance in its full discourse context (turn taking, negotiation of meaning, impromptu planning decisions contingent on interlocutor input, cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 228). Most importantly in pragmatic terms, open role plays show not only that meaning is negotiated, but rather communicative goals are also negotiated in interactions (cf. Eisenstein and Bodmann's (1993) study showing how 'thanking' is collaboratively enacted). Furthermore, a crucial pragmatic aspect of the performance of speech acts in interaction is the negotiation of pragmatic force (cf. Thomas, 1995 and the section on data analysis in this thesis), which reveals itself in face-to-face encounters.

In relation to authentic discourse, open role plays have the advantage of being replicable, and of allowing for the comparison of NNSs and L1 and L2 NSs controls. This is important for the investigation of issues of transfer. Moreover, studies which have adopted the role play data elicitation as an instrument have shown that "linguistic responses proved sensitive to the contextual variables under investigation" (Rintell and Mitchell, 1989: 251).

Possible disadvantages of the role play have already been pointed out: first, as with 'the DCT', learners are not engaged in situations in real life and it is therefore impossible to know if the interactions are representative of what they would be in naturalistic encounters. Second, the coding of open role play is more difficult (there is less control than with 'the DCT'), since in real interactions the speech act is performed



in several turns, involving repetitions and strategies which depend on both participants. It is, for instance, in the case of the requestive speech act more difficult, to discern when the request itself is being performed or when the speaker is offering grounders (reasons), preparing the interlocutor for his/her request.

Natural data has the obvious advantage of presenting authentic discourse. Also, it has been argued that only with the employment of natural data will researchers have full access to (absolute) beginners, since the use of elicited data might prevent their participation, given their low level of linguistic resources (cf. Kasper and Rose, 1999: 87). Of course this does not prevent them from engaging in real communicative situations especially if they live in an L2 environment. However, Beebe and Takahashi (1989:120) point to some drawbacks of natural data:

[Natural data] are (...) biased in favour of short exchanges, because long ones are impossible to get down word for word in a notebook. And they are biased to ones that the researcher finds especially typical, especially atypical, or especially non-native sounding. (...). Moreover, natural data give us lot of examples that are not at all comparable in terms of speakers, hearers and social situations, unless one or two situation are selected, and this poses other limitations.

If the researcher needs to observe many instances of a speech act in the same situational and interpersonal context, it is necessary to ensure that the contextual variables such as social distance and degree of imposition can be controlled. Another disadvantage of ethnographic procedures of data collection such as adopted in Wolfson (1989) is that either the researcher has to rely on memory to record the data with accuracy, or she has to tape-record long stretches of conversation, hoping that the particular object of research will emerge during the interaction (cf. Rintell and Mitchell, 1989: 250).<sup>3</sup>

As noted above, given the advantages and disadvantages of data collection techniques it has been claimed that a way of attenuating the disadvantages of a

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<sup>3</sup> Another drawback of ethnographic procedures is the difficulty to get information about the participants. However, see section 4.10 for a further discussion of the use of natural data.

particular method of data collection is to combine different techniques. More specifically, in this context, it has been argued that the triangulation of different methods, that is the use of different measures of the same phenomena, could compensate for possible drawbacks (cf. Cohen and Olshtain, 1993). For example, the lack of comparability with NNSs' L1 pragmatic behaviour (in the case that they have different L1s) in culture-specific speech events can be compensated by retrospective interviews (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991:232). Unfortunately, there has been very little research on the validity of combined methods in ILP studies. Studies which set out to explicitly test the validity of methods of data collection, comparing different procedures, have so far not included combined collection methods.

### **4.3 Rationale for the selection of data elicitation procedures**

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of data collection, role plays appear to be the most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. Role plays offer learners the opportunity of face to face interaction with native speakers and most importantly, allow the examination of speech act performance in its full discourse context (e.g. the interaction of strategy choices by learners and NSs responses). The importance of these two factors ruled out the adoption of written data for this thesis, while the use of naturally occurring data was discarded given that it would provide too many variables to be controlled for. It can also be argued that open role plays, as is the case with natural data, will show the use of a much wider range of strategies than non-interactive data (cf. Beebe and Cumming's comparison of natural data and 'the DCT', 1996). Even considering that a possible drawback of role plays is the difference between enacting a situation and experiencing a situation in real life, data elicited from role plays yield relevant material for the aim of this research task. They allow for the emergence of interpersonal, interactional patterns and trends in the development of realization strategies of directives, the identification and explanation of which is the main aim here.

Besides the employment of open role plays as a data elicitation method for this study, a second, subsidiary method was adopted. Despite the relative lack of research on the validity of combined methods, some studies (e.g. Bergmann and Kasper, 1993 above) show that a second source of data can shed light on the primary data, helping with their interpretation. As Kasper and Dahl (1991: 238) argue:



The combination of production and metapragmatic assessment data provides an empirical basis for explaining observed patterns of speech act realization and politeness in terms of perceived contextual constraints, and of the pragmatic force and politeness value language users attribute to different linguistic means and strategies. Metapragmatic assessments of contextual factors can provide an important corrective, or confirmation, of the values and weights of contextual factors built into the instrument by the researcher.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, a second method of data collection has been adopted for this study: retrospective interviews were conducted after the role plays with the aim of providing an insight into learners' activation of their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in terms of their cognitive planning. The introspective verbal method is claimed to provide a process-oriented perspective (as opposed to a focus on the product only) to L2 production. In this sense, the interviews focused, on the one hand, on the perception of external and internal contextual factors, such as how learners perceived request strategies (levels of directness) made by Brazilian NSs, and how learners perceived the role play situations in terms of distance, imposition and dominance. Furthermore, learners were asked about the perception of their choice of request strategies.

In addition, the interviews aimed to identify internal cognitive constraints which might have contributed to learners' performance. Here, learners were asked to report about the planning of their response to the situation, what they took into consideration, if they performed according to their planning, or whether they would like to rephrase something. Being aware that access to cognitive behaviour is extremely problematic, the interviews did not aim at *determining* underlying language processes<sup>5</sup> in communicative performances, but rather to arrive at possible explanations for learners' pragmatic and linguistic choices.

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<sup>4</sup> As for the validity and need of a combination of methods in ILP see also Faerch and Kasper, 1987: 19.

<sup>5</sup> Although Taguchi (2002) adopts the position that, under certain circumstances, verbal reports can operate on an unconscious level, I would rather adopt a more cautious approach given their aforementioned limitations (cf. Faerch and Kasper, 1987).



Instead of focusing on the continuous process of the learners' performance, which is the case of simultaneous think aloud protocols, specific aspects of task performance were elucidated through direct questioning after the role plays, that is through immediately consecutive introspection. This was preferred to delayed retrospection, since traces of the learners' cognitive activity for the performance of the tasks could still be present in what could be described for current purposes as short term memory. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted individually after all role plays had been enacted by the learners, rather than after each of the situations. This made it possible to prevent any influence of the performance of the subsequent role play.

The first questions of the interviews were designed to be as open as possible, in order to avoid the problem of 'inferencing', that is when learners start to rely less on their memory, and instead fabricate what they infer they should have done cognitively during the performance of the tasks.

As has been argued above, there has been significant research pointing to the validity of introspective methods for the analysis of second language data (cf. Fearch and Kasper, 1987). However, it is important to point out that retrospective interviews as an introspective method have limitations, in the sense that they only provide information about those cognitive processes of which learners are conscious (cf. Cohen, 1987). Specifically in SLA, Cohen (1987: 88) argues that "much of the language learning takes place at an unconscious level and is, therefore, inaccessible to mental probes". Although this certainly represents an important constraint as a research tool, the adoption of an introspective method can be justified on the grounds that it promotes the *exploration* of cognitive processes (cf. Hayes and Flower in Cohen, 1987).

#### *4.3.1 Data Elicitation Instruments*

The role plays were conceived to be as real as possible. Learners were asked to interact with native speakers whose status (social distance) corresponded to the native speakers they would interact with in real life encounters in the same situations as the ones offered by the tasks<sup>6</sup>: in different situations the subjects were asked to interact with a university student, a cleaning lady and an employee at the finance department of the university. The interaction with the cleaning lady was designed to offer the highest social distance,

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<sup>6</sup> With the exception of the student who was supposed to be a friend.

whereas the interaction with a friend should be perceived as carrying the lowest social distance.

The three different interactions for the role plays aim at identifying developmental patterns within situations carrying different degrees of impositions for the realization of directives. Despite a certain degree of variation, the role play situations of this study were conceived as to involve a high degree of imposition, requiring therefore the negotiation of the requests in the interactions, in order to gain compliance while not threatening the interlocutor's face (cf. for similar aims Trosborg, 1995: 149).

The situation with the cleaning lady was conceived to present a high-imposition directive, whereas the situation with the employee at the finance department should present the lowest-imposition directive. All three situations were conceived according to the degree of familiarity to the subjects. Because the data was elicited at one single location, the role play situations were chosen according to their suitability to that particular location. In other words, the directive situations had to be ones which would sound 'real' to the subjects, or as "performing a role that is part of one's normal life or personality" (Trosborg, 1995: 144).

In addition to the role plays, it was decided that three different instruments of data elicitation would yield a more differentiated set of data which would help to capture the complexity of discourse (cf. comments above on the combination of data). The different elicitation techniques have thus been conceived to complement each other in such a way as to help with the interpretation of the primary data: aspects of production data (e.g. perception of the speech event). In the case of this study, open role plays will be assessed with the help of retrospective interviews.

#### **4.4 The data and the subjects**

##### ***4.4.1 A Background Information Questionnaire***

This questionnaire aimed to find out about the exposure of the learner to the target language. On a general level, assumptions can be made as to whether the learner is more or less exposed to Portuguese if, for instance he lives with Brazilians or if, in



contrast, he tends to be confined to an environment where his first language is predominantly spoken, and Portuguese is therefore only available in rare interactions with native speakers. In other words, the background information questionnaire can help to indicate the types of interactions in which learners are engaged. Length of stay in Brazil is additional information here which will have implications in terms of the exposure to input to the extent that if learners have long exposure to Portuguese in Brazil, the failure to acquire certain pragmatic features of the language becomes especially significant.

#### ***4.4.2 Interactive Oral Role Plays***

In the Interactive Role Plays learners from different proficiency levels have to perform requestive acts in interactions with native speakers:

**Dyads: Learners – NSs (NSs: a university student; a cleaning lady and a senior employee at the finance department of the university)**

**Situation 1: the learner is moving home. His goal is to get his friend to lend him his car to transport some objects.**

**Situation 2: the learner finds the classroom in a mess. His goal is to get the cleaning lady to clean the room before his class.**

**Situation 3: the learner wants to do a Portuguese course (either as a continuing or beginner student), but he does not have enough money. His goal is to get the person in the finance department to give him a grant or some kind of discount.**

#### ***4.4.3 A Retrospective Verbal Report***

The Retrospective Verbal Report aims to shed light on learners' planning and choices in their performance of the role plays. More specifically, learners were asked to think retrospectively about their choices of linguistic features (e.g. term of address, verb form) in their realizations of the requestive act. They were also asked whether they considered politeness issues in the planning of their performance and how they



perceived the interactions in terms of politeness. In this context, learners could make explicit their levels of awareness of the appropriateness of the levels of directness chosen by them in their interactions with the three different native speakers. In addition, learners were asked whether they receive explicit negative feedback in terms of corrections (of grammar and also of pragmatics) from native speakers<sup>7</sup>.

The subjects were learners of Portuguese as a foreign language with diverse language backgrounds: (absolute) beginners (13 subjects), intermediate (5) and advanced (6). Learners were adults between 20 and 45 years old. A control group (native speakers of Portuguese) was also employed (14).

#### **4.5 Methods for the coding of the data**

This section is concerned with a critical discussion of methods for the coding of the data employed by ILP studies of speech acts, more specifically by ILP studies of requests. For this purpose, methods for the coding of the data will be reviewed. The second sub-section (the CCSARP coding manual) will offer an evaluation of the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), which has been most influential in ILP studies of speech acts. Here, there will also be a discussion of modifications and alternative accounts of the CCSARP coding taxonomy (e.g. Trosborg, 1995 and Held, 1995), with the aim of incorporating them in this study.

Furthermore, the third sub-section will be concerned with Koike's (1992) classification of Brazilian Portuguese request strategies. Koike's model will be evaluated as it will be employed in the present study for comparative purposes.

The fourth sub-section (an interactional approach for the analysis of the requestive communicative act – a framework for coding) of section 4.5 Methods for the coding of the data will discuss taxonomies put forward for the analysis of discourse in interaction. Here, the research area in SLA known as Input and Interaction (cf. Long, 1996) will be critically discussed. Moreover, Trosborg's (1995) influential discourse analysis model will be considered for the analysis of interactional features of the

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<sup>7</sup> Feedback received in the classroom will not be considered here, since it is supposed to be of a particular nature and to be perceived by learners differently given the specificity of the interaction.

requestive communicative acts of this study. The aim here, as stated above, is to develop a rationale of a taxonomy which can take account of features of the interaction between NSs and learners in the performance of the requestive act.

#### *4.5.1 Methods for the coding of the data: a critical review*

As has been mentioned above, there have been few attempts to discuss methodological issues in ILP in relation to the validity (in the sense of adequacy) of data collection procedures. The picture looks significantly worse when it comes to the coding and analysing of data, where there has been a dearth of discussion not only in theoretical, but also in empirical terms. One possible reason for this could be the priority given by researchers to issues of data collection. As Kasper and Dahl (1991: 216), for instance, argued:

Methods of analysis such as the analytical model, units of analysis, individual categories, and statistical treatment have been shown to determine research outcomes (Slethei, 1990). However, in more than one sense, data collection is primary in relation to analysis: not only because it comes prior to analysis in the sequential organization of the research process, but also because it is a more powerful determinant of the final product. Problems with coding and quantification can, in principle, be remedied upon detection; however, if raw data are flawed because the instrument or observation procedure is inadequate, repair is often not feasible, and the value of the study is questionable.

It could be argued that this view is paradigmatic of most studies of speech acts in ILP: while taking stock of data collection procedures, the description and justification of the parameters adopted for the coding of the data have been virtually neglected. This is illustrated by the few lines dedicated to this issue by a large number of studies<sup>8</sup> (e.g. Rose, 2000: 39, Hassal, 2001: 262, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993: 283, Beebe and Takahashi, 1989: 107).

Another possible explanation for the absence of thorough discussion of coding methods has been put forward by Kasper when she claims that problems with

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<sup>8</sup> For a similar view see Warga, M. (2002: 30).



developing parameters for coding schemes can be attributed to the ambiguous and multifunctional character of communicative acts and pragmatic functions. In Kasper's words (1993: 53 cited in Warga, 2002: 30 my translation):

[...] Empirical pragmatists also experience the fact that linguistic material often eschews categorical classification according to pragmalinguistic analytical categories. This need not necessarily lie in the lack of development of the systems of categories themselves, but rather in the systematic ambiguity and multifunctionality which characterizes the relation of utterances and pragmatic function.

It can be argued that priority is given to data collection procedures or it is assumed that due to "fuzzy, multifunctional communicative illocutionary values" (Kasper, 1989: 41) data concerned with speech acts can hardly be subjected to an unambiguous pragmalinguistic classification. The consequence is a lack of debate and criticism of existing methods for coding data in ILP studies of speech acts. A further consequence is the fact that parameters for coding data tend to be developed *ad hoc*, according to the particular needs of a study<sup>9</sup>. In this context, Warga (2002: 30) criticises the fact that *ad hoc* modifications, rather than constituting a critical adaptation of existing coding schemes, tend to constitute oversimplifications of a specific method of coding data. Here, she illustrates her point with Rose's (2000) attempt to solve the problem concerned with the identification of the head act and supportive moves (as defined in the literature review above) in his study of requests and apologies, where he decided to code learners' first utterance as the head act, defined as the request proper.

The lack of a critical reflection of data coding methods has led to the adoption of, basically, one single method by ILP studies of speech acts, which, following the research trend described above, has been modified according to its suitability to the data in question. In this way, most studies of speech acts in ILP have employed the coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) as a basic method for the classification of their data, modifying it when necessary (e.g. Rose, 2000: 39, Hassal, 2001: 262; Achiba, 2003: 35-37).

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Warga, M. (2002: 30) for a similar criticism.



Since in most cases little space is given to the justification or even description of such modifications, it is difficult to make them useful for other studies. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993: 283), for instance, adopt a different coding scheme in their studies of suggestions and rejections by learners of English. However, since they do not devote more than a paragraph to describe it, readers do not have access to the parameters employed other than in a very general way (cf. also for the same problem Beebe and Takahashi, 1989: 107). More importantly, without knowing how issues of coding have been dealt with, it is impossible to know how matters of coding could have affected findings. If, as Kasper argues above, particular data collection procedures impose specific constraints on subjects' performance, in terms of variation dependent on task demands, then it could be argued that while data elicitation tasks interact with learners' performance, the coding of data interacts with researchers' choices. As a result, the same applies to the parameters developed for data coding and subsequent analysis. In this sense, the fact that studies do not explicate their choices of parameters and rationale for employing them not only makes it difficult for other researchers to replicate and compare them, but also has consequences for the reliability of the findings of such studies.

In this sense, some interactions in Situation 3 ('the bursary request') can illustrate the difficulty of coding pragmatic, and in particular, interactive data, as the example show:

**Situation 3**  
**Level 4**

**E= student**

**F= native speaker**

**E 21 –**

**E:** Boa tarde. (Good afternoon)

**F:** Boa tarde. (Good afternoon)

**E:** Uma pergunta estrangeiros para fazer o curso de Portugues eles poderiam tambem ganhar uma bolsa? (One question foreigners to do the Portuguese course could they also receive a grant?)

The learner in this situation does not include herself or the hearer in the request. This avoidance could suggest that the request should be coded as avoiding the request. That would be the case if the native speaker interlocutor had simply replied with a yes or no. Then probably, the learner would have had to reformulate his request, maybe using a

more direct request strategy or changing the request perspective to a hearer or speaker based. However, the native speaker interlocutor answers the question as if the learner had asked for a grant for herself, as the continuation of the interaction shows:

*F: A PUC dispõe de algumas bolsas que ela concede aos alunos mais carentes.*

(PUC offers some grants to students who really need them)

*Então pra que você se habilite a uma bolsa você deve apresentar documentos ...*

(so in order for you to apply for grant you need to submit an application form...)

The sequence of the interaction suggested that the learner's request strategy should be coded as query preparatory. It could then be argued that pragmatic data, as interactive data, cannot be coded in an atomistic way, but rather the cotextual information needs to be considered.

#### **4.6 The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project Coding Manual**

This sub-section is concerned with a description and evaluation of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) coding manual. The necessity of such an evaluation can be justified on two grounds: firstly, the CCSARP coding manual has been highly influential in ILP studies of speech acts, of which parameters are adopted at least as a basic reference (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986; Kasper, 1989, Fearch and Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995; Rose, 2000; Hassal, 2001); secondly, the CCSARP coding frame will also be an important reference for the coding of the data in the present study.

The parameters on which the CCSARP coding manual is based were first developed by House and Kasper (1981). It was then modified and used in its more definitive version by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) in their study of realization strategies for requests and apologies, in terms of their acceptability by NSs and NNSs. Its best known version, however, is the one presented in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) study of requests and apologies. In this study, as they put it "[they] have attempted to compare the realization modes of two specific speech acts in seven different languages and language varieties" (1989: 8). The languages involved were English (Australian, American, and British), French (Canadian), Danish, German and Hebrew for the NSs.



The NNSs were learners of English, German and Hebrew. The data was elicited by means of 'the DCT' (for a definition see data collection procedures above).

Blum-Kulka et al.'s study consists of an investigation of how different types of speech acts are performed by NNSs with a variety of language backgrounds and target languages. It aims to understand speech act realizations across cultures and languages, investigating, given the same social constraints<sup>10</sup>, cross-cultural (e.g. realization patterns in different languages and countries) and interlanguage variation (e.g. realization patterns of NNSs and NSs), and sociopragmatic variation (e.g. social power and social distance) as defined by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 12-13).

The CCSARP coding manual proposes frames for the coding of requests and apologies. Since this study is concerned with requests only, the coding of apologies will not be discussed here. The coding scheme developed for the requestive speech act is, according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 16), "based on frames of primary features expected to be manifested in the realization or requests (...)". The selection of primary features proposed in their coding scheme are not in any explicit way followed by a theoretical justification as to why certain features are expected to be manifested and not others. The lack of any theoretically elaborated rationale might be explained by the emphasis of the CCSARP on construing itself as an empirically oriented project. Despite acknowledging all theoretical contributions to the study of speech acts (such as Austin, Grice, Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch, cited in Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 2), the CCSARP project adopts a strongly empirical perspective on the study of speech acts, as stated by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 3):

We contend that there is a strong need to complement theoretical studies of speech acts, based primarily on intuited data of isolated utterances, with empirical studies, based on speech acts produced by native speakers in context. It is only through the study of situated speech that we can hope to construe a theory interconnecting communicative functions with the contexts in which they are embedded.

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<sup>10</sup> Such 'sameness' can be disputed on the basis that the degree of imposition, for instance, of each request situation will vary amongst individuals.



This view, which gives priority to the data (situated speech), has been highly influential in studies of speech acts in ILP (cf. the Literature Review of this study). According to this view, the CCSARP project developed a classification for requests based on previous empirical research (Ervin-Trip, 1976; House and Kasper, 1981 and Blum-Kulka, 1982 quoted in Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 17) where features which emerged in the data formed the basis for the categories proposed by the coding scheme. The data-based character of the CCSARP coding scheme makes its transferability difficult, which is well illustrated by the number of modifications to which it has been subjected (e.g. Trosborg, 1995; Fukushima, 1996; Warga, 2002)<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, it has contributed to a tendency in ILP studies of speech acts to adopt a descriptive approach, with the danger of a dissociation of theoretical and empirical modes of research (see also the literature review of this thesis).

The difficulty for other studies in adopting the CCSARP coding scheme lies not only in its data-based character, but also in the particular method of data elicitation it was originally conceived for. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) employed 'the DCT' as a data elicitation procedure in their cross-cultural study of speech acts. This means that written, non-interactive data was elicited. For studies of speech acts using oral, interactive data this distinction poses two significant problems: first, if for studies using 'the DCT', the identification of the head act (the request proper in the case of requests) does not constitute an easy task, the employment of oral, interactive data makes it even more difficult (see also Rose, 2000 above). In the context of interactive, open role plays, where the requestive act is performed over several turns, criteria have to be established for the identification of the requestive features (e.g. head act and supportive moves), which take into account the interactive character of the data. In this context, Kasper and Dahl (1991: 229) add to yet another particularity of the coding of role plays, when they claim that:

Coding role play data is more difficult than coding data from more tightly controlled tasks, since illocutionary force and the precise function of conversational markers often cannot be unambiguously determined, facts making interrater reliability harder to achieve.

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<sup>11</sup> For a similar view see Warga, 2002: 31-32.

In this way, studies using interactive data have had necessarily to modify the CCSARP coding manual, in order to solve the problems mentioned above (e.g. Trosborg, 1995 whose modified coding categories will be discussed in more detail below). It should be noted that some studies employing interactive data which adopted the CCSARP coding manual do not mention how they adapted a coding scheme conceived for the performance of speech acts in one turn only, to data of a very different nature (e.g. Hassal, 2001).

Another potential problem for the adoption of the CCSARP coding scheme is posed in developmental studies of speech acts in ILP. The CCSARP coding manual does not have an explicit developmental focus. While acknowledging this potential limitation, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 11) offer the following counterargument:

Most of the interlanguage studies included in the present volume are nondevelopmental. However, they allow for generating hypothesis about the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge which may later be tested in developmental studies. Likewise, as demonstrated by the only CCSARP study that did look at the developmental aspect (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986), methods of data analysis employed in the CCSARP project are clearly suitable for investigating the development of learner's speech act competence and performance.

Since this statement was made, several other studies with a focus on development have employed the CCSARP coding scheme (e.g. Rose, 2000; Hassal, 2001). Although this shows that this method can be made operational for developmental studies, it reveals clear limitations as discussed above. In the specific case of studies investigating the development of speech act strategies, the researcher needs to be aware that, for instance, because the classification of features of speech acts provided in the CCSARP is not theoretically motivated, the end result will be of a very descriptive character.

In order to achieve an explanatory level for developmental patterns, a theory of development has to be brought into the discussion (cf. literature review of this thesis and also Hassal, 2001). Ultimately, whether a particular method for coding data is suitable for developmental studies depends foremost on the research question of a



specific study. Before justifying and presenting the coding methods adopted for the present study, CCSARP coding features will be presented in more detail.

#### **4.7 CCSARP Coding Features**

In CCSARP, the constraints introduced by the method of data collection ('the DCT') determined to a great extent the delimitation of the unit of analysis. Since there was only one slot to be completed in the questionnaire (discourse filler), the unit of analysis consists of the utterances provided by the subject in the 'the DCT'. In interactive data, provided by elicitation instruments such as open role plays, the identification of the unit to be analysed needs to be subjected to different criteria. Since the aim of this thesis is not only to explore developmental patterns in realization strategies of requests by learners of Brazilian Portuguese, but also to investigate the possible role of the input present in the interaction with NSs (cf. literature review of this thesis), the unit of analysis will consist of the whole interaction present in the role plays. For this purpose, additional features, such as how NSs' responses influenced learners' next turn (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 229 on the potential of open role play), which are not provided by the CCSARP coding scheme will be necessary.

The proposed primary features for the coding of the requestive speech acts involve alerters (attention getters), supportive moves (e.g. grounders, promises) and the head act<sup>12</sup> as internal contextual features. The head act can vary according to the strategy type and the perspective. The strategy types are mutually exclusive and comprise nine strategies on a scale of indirectness (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 278-280). Indirectness refers here to "the length of the inferential process needed for identifying the utterance as a request (...)" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 18). Although recognising that there could be differences in particular strategy types across languages, the distinctive three levels of directness (direct, conventionally indirect and indirect strategies) are claimed to hold across languages (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 18).

As for the perspective, the performance of a request can be speaker- or hearer-oriented. It can also be inclusive with the use of 'we' or impersonal, when neither the speaker nor the hearer is mentioned. Variation related to choice of perspective is said to affect the level of imposition of a requestive act, mitigating or aggravating it. Blum-



Kulka et al. (1989: 19), for instance, argue that “avoidance to name the hearer as actor can reduce the form’s level of coerciveness”. This cannot be assessed in a vacuum: only in the context of a specific culture (and conventions) and interaction can the weight of linguistic choices be determined.

The coding of the supportive moves can raise several questions. As Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 17) acknowledge, “some supportive moves, like grounders, can serve as requests [head act] by themselves”. As the example they give makes clear, the reaction of the interlocutor, “designed to signal illocutionary uptake” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 14), is essential in determining in the process of coding if it is the request proper or a mere supportive move: “ ‘I must have left my pencil somewhere’ responded to by ‘here, take mine’ in Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 17).

However, since the CCSARP did not employ interactional data, it can be assumed that they had to rely on different criteria to make decisions about coding issues which were not clear-cut: on the one hand, the requestive act in their data was performed in one turn only, where this constraint represented a decisive coding criterion. Since the opportunity to negotiate the request was not given, it is easier to distinguish between supportive moves and the request proper as the head act (cf. Kasper on the coding of open role plays above). On the other hand, to have the speaker’s part of the request only means that the coding of the request has necessarily to depend on the speaker’s intentions and beliefs. Without denying that the speaker’s intentions and beliefs play an important role in the interpretation of communicative acts, the view adopted here is that they constitute only one aspect of the communication. Since communicative goals are expected to be negotiated in real interactions, the analysis of how and whether subjects achieved their requestive goal will depend on the coding of the data also reflecting this position. In this context, Trosborg’s (1995) modifications of the CCSARP coding scheme introduced in order to adapt it for data elicited by means of oral, open role plays will be examined.

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<sup>12</sup> For definition of these terms see the literature review of this thesis.

#### **4.8 Trosborg's (1995) coding categories**

Trosborg's (1995: 192) categories for the coding of the data in her study of interlanguage requests<sup>13</sup> was influenced by previous classifications (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; House and Kasper, 1981) and modified according to the particularities of her findings. In this sense, as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 15) in the CCSARP, Trosborg classifies the requestive situations according to the participants' role relationship, that is in terms of dominance (social power) and social distance (familiarity). She also adopts a coding method which draws on levels of increasing directness. Again, in the same way as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Trosborg (1995: 205) codes the head act or request proper for strategy types.

Whereas in the CCSARP coding manual head acts are also classified for perspective (see above), Trosborg considers the perspective of the realization strategy within directness levels. In this context, she develops four major categories of data classification (Indirect, Conventionally indirect-hearer oriented, Conventionally indirect-speaker oriented and Direct requests, cf. Trosborg, 1995: 205) which encompass eight levels of directness. While Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 18) proposes three levels of directness only, namely direct, conventionally indirect and nonconventionally indirect strategies, Trosborg (1995: 205) maintains the category of direct strategies, changing however the other two categories. As for the category of nonconventionally indirect strategies, she prefers to suppress the attribute to (non)conventionality, naming those strategies as indirect<sup>14</sup> requests, defined as "utterances which meet the essential condition of requests, i.e. they count as 'as attempt on the part of S to get H to do A' (Searle, 1969: 66), but which nevertheless omit mention (or specification) of the desired act and avoid mentioning the hearer as the intended agent" (Trosborg, 1995: 192)<sup>15</sup>. According to Trosborg (1995: 193), indirect requests (hints) can be interpreted as such despite their opacity in terms of their

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<sup>13</sup> Trosborg also investigates complaints and apologies which fall outside the scope of the present study.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the notion of indirectness in speech act theory see the literature review of this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> For a more detailed discussion of indirectness in speech act realizations see the literature review of this thesis.



illocutionary force and/or propositional content. This kind of interpretation can be achieved since, as Trosborg (1995: 193) argues:

Despite the lack of transparency (illocutionary and/ or propositional), hints are part of conversational routine and the necessary work of interpretation is a normal part of cooperative conversation which is generally taken for granted by participants in everyday interactions. (...) [I]n addition to those which do require very intimate and/ or specific knowledge of the other person for their interpretation, there is, in fact, a certain predictability as to the “nature” of statements/ questions functioning as hinting strategies.

In Trosborg’s view, indirect requests, although having no explicit requestive illocutionary force, also comply with expectations, in the sense that they have become routinized. In this sense, as Trosborg (1995: 196) further argues, a decisive factor for the interpretation of indirect requests will be “the extent to which it has become routinized by experience in a particular social group, or between two or more individuals, and thus has an obvious interpretation despite the apparent lack of propositional explicitness”.

In illocutionary terms, indirect requests or hinting strategies are claimed to involve the conditions of *reasonableness*, *availability*, and *obviousness* (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 194).

*Reasons*, which can be often given as a support (cf. supportive moves above), in order to achieve compliance, consist, in the case of hinting strategies, of the request proper, when the speaker does not express, in an explicit way, the illocutionary point.

*Availability* concerns the questioning of an impediment to compliance as a way of hinting a request. For instance, in service encounters, questions concerning the availability of goods in stock (e.g. have you got small suitcases?), because already routinized, are immediately interpreted as request forms (cf. Ervin-Tripp, 1976 in Trosborg, 1995: 195).

*Obviousness* relates to whether the object of the request (defined as “desired state of affairs” by Trosborg, 1995: 195) still holds at the time of the performance of the



requestive act, a decisive condition for the goal of the act to be achieved (e.g. have you cleaned the room?).

Besides the issue of nonconventionality, Trosborg's classification of indirect requests differs further from the one proposed by the CCSARP (cf. Weizman, 1989). Where Trosborg proposes the condition of availability (see above), Weizman suggests the condition of questioning feasibility. Since Trosborg sees availability in a broad sense (comprising utterances such as "Are you going directly home?" in the case of a request for a lift), she acknowledges that feasibility could be a better term (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 196).

Another category proposed by Weizman concerns "questioning hearer's commitment" (e.g. "Are you going to do something for me?" and "Are you going to give us a hand?" Weizman, 1989: 83-84 in Trosborg, 1995: 196). Trosborg classifies such utterances either as supportive moves ("pre-requests") or as a request proper, depending on the "specificity of the content". For instance, she sees the former example as being probably a pre-commitment (supportive move), whereas the later example she considers being likely to be a request proper (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 196). To the criterion relating to the specific content of the utterance (propositional slot), Trosborg adds that for the latter example, for instance, to be understood as a request proper the communicative situation would have to disambiguate the propositional slot (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 196).

It seems that Trosborg employed two different criteria for the classification of her data: in deciding whether a particular utterance can be coded as a supportive move or as a request proper, she considered, on the one hand, the propositional content of the utterance, and on the other hand, the illocutionary force. How can illocutionary force be coded? In the case of the CCSARP coding manual, the coding of a request strategy according to its directness level is related to the degree "to which the *speaker's illocutionary intent* is apparent from the illocution" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 278 my emphasis). In addition to this criterion, Trosborg (1995: 209) contends that:

[I]t is important to keep in mind that the illocutionary force of an utterance is subject to negotiation in the interactional processes itself, and an utterance may acquire a particular illocutionary force due to its location in the discourse.

How illocutionary force is negotiated over turns within the performance of the requestive act is also going to be part of the coding of the data in the present study. In this way, the request strategy types, which are considered to be mutually exclusive in the CCSARP coding scheme, will, in the present classification be investigated for their co-occurrence: Trosborg (1995: 241), for instance, reports the shift of strategies by subjects (in this case native speakers) in the same requestive act as a function of expectation of compliance. That is subjects shifted from a less direct strategy to a more direct one (e.g. mood derivable) when the degree of imposition became lower and there was guarantee of compliance. In this context, the observation of the sequential organization of the performance of the requestive speech act, in terms of strategies choices and subsequent investment of politeness (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 229), will be also a parameter for the classification and analysis of the data in this study.

A further contribution of Trosborg's classification for the present study is her differentiation of the conventionally indirect strategies for requests. In the CCSARP coding scheme conventionally indirect strategies comprise suggestory formulae (e.g. "How about cleaning up?") and query preparatory (e.g. "Could you clear up the kitchen, please ?") as conventionalized in any particular language (cf. examples taken from Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 18). Trosborg (1995: 197-202) divides the conventionally indirect requests according to the two different perspectives, which in the CCSARP can apply to all request realization strategies (see the CCSARP coding categories above): hearer-oriented and speaker-based. According to Trosborg (1995: 197-200), questioning hearer's ability (e.g. "Can you open the window for me, please"), willingness (e.g. "Would you lend me a copy of your book?") and permission (e.g. "Can I have the butter, please?")<sup>16</sup> constitute highly routinized forms of request, in that for the speaker, compliance is not guaranteed, and in this way, the hearer is given full option to comply or not. Also, for the speaker, questioning hearer-oriented conditions is a way of not risking his/her face (cf. literature review for a discussion of issues of politeness and face-threatening acts).

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<sup>16</sup> Asking for permission is seen by Trosborg as questioning willingness. Although the requester is mentioned explicitly, the requester is considered to be questioning a hearer-oriented condition (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 199).



Another hearer-oriented request strategy is suggestory formulae (e.g. “What about lending me some of your records?”)<sup>17</sup>. Here, as Trosborg (1995: 201) contends, the speaker is questioning “the hearer’s cooperativeness in general”. These two hearer-oriented strategies, namely the questioning of hearer’s ability and willingness and suggestory formula in Trosborg’s classification correspond to the conventionally indirect strategies in the CCSARP coding manual. The difference between the two classifications lies in the perspective: whereas in the CCSARP classification the perspective is coded separately from the strategies themselves, Trosborg opts to expand the category of conventional indirect strategies. In this way, ‘want statements’ (e.g. “I really wish you would stop bothering me”), which are coded in the CCSARP as direct strategies (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 18), are classified by Trosborg (1995: 205) as comprising two distinct conventionally indirect strategies: wishes (e.g. “I would like to borrow your car”) and desires or needs (e.g. “I want/need to borrow your car”). So, in Trosborg’s classification of request strategies, the difference in level of directness between the two above commented strategies, questioning ability or willingness and suggestory formulae on the one hand, and wishes and desires or needs on the other hand, is to be found in the perspective. While the former ones are hearer-oriented, the latter constitute strategies which focus on speaker-based conditions (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 201-202). In addition, speaker-based strategies are statements, not explicitly asking for a response.

There are therefore implications for the model adopted and developed here. Two issues need then to be considered here: the first one is concerned with Trosborg’s deviation from the CCSARP in respect to conventionality. According to Trosborg’s classification request strategies realized in the form of wishes and desires or needs, although more direct since questioning speaker-based conditions, are also conventional. This certainly has consequences for the analysis, since conventions, as tied to particular languages in specific cultural groups, offer constraints, such as availability of input to be learned.

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<sup>17</sup> Structures such as “Would you be so kind as to...” which are coded as suggestory formulae by House and Kasper (1987 in Trosborg, 1995: 209) are classified by Trosborg as hearer-oriented preparatory questioning the hearer’s willingness to carry out the request.



The second consideration refers to the internal coding of the request strategy. The two in Trosborg's classification separately coded conventionally indirect strategies 'wishes' and 'desires or needs' are in the CCSARP collapsed in a single direct strategy 'want statements'. This means that differences in realizations, such as "I would like to borrow your car" and "I want to borrow your car" have to be coded as internal modifications (see literature review for a definition). Again, this will affect the findings of the analysis, in that studies adopting the CCSARP coding scheme will report a greater number of internal modifications made by the subjects.

#### **4.9 Held's (1995) coding parameters**

In her study of thanks and requests, Held (1995: 237-249; see also the literature review) developed a taxonomy for the coding of the utterances which comprised 1. a structural dimension or level of the action ("Handlungsebene") and 2. a formal dimension or level of the utterance ("Ausdrucksebene"). On the structural dimension the taxonomy comprises the external modifications and the request proper. At the structural dimension, Held further divides the acts into a preparatory, a central and a postpreparatory ("nachbereitende") phase. The preparatory phase corresponds to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989a) 'alerters'; the central phase, which Held designates as "FOKUS", coincides with 'head act' in the CCSARP (cf. above) coding scheme; finally, the postpreparatory phase, denominated by Held as SUPPs overlaps with the category of supportive moves in the CCSARP. The formal dimension is concerned with internal modifications at the level of the lexicon, syntax and morphology. Categories in this dimension are responsible for conveying modality as well as the choice of strategies.

Held's coding scheme is very similar to the one developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989a) for CCSARP. Despite being very influential in the context of romance languages (cf. Warga 2002: 33), the view taken here is that the CCSARP coding scheme covers almost all the categories presented in Held's taxonomy. Furthermore, the CCSARP coding scheme is more advantageous in terms of comparability, given its spread employment in ILP studies of speech acts in different languages (cf. Warga, 2002 looking at the interlanguage French, Hassal, 2001 investigating learners of Bahasa Indonesian; Koike, 1992 studying learners of Spanish).

However, Held (1995: 210-213) developed very detailed analytical categories for the coding of the contextual external factors of the requestive situations. These categories allow for a much more precise analysis of how external contextual factors can interact with choices of strategies and internal modifications. If the interactive (requestive) situations are construed as formulated by Held (1995: 189 my translation) as “a flexible product formed by external, social (pre)givens and internal expectations”, a thorough analysis of the communicative participants’ assessment of these external factors is central in order to offer a more complete picture of the learners’ production of requests in interaction with NSs. Since the CCSARP coding scheme parameters for the coding of external contextual factors can be regarded as not specific enough (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a: 15), this study adopts Held’s categories which are outlined below.

As for the reliability of the categorization of the situational variables and their subsequent assessment, Held (1995: 210) points out that the incorporation of situational variability, in order to show whether and how the production of the requests change in function of the variables, consists of an attempt to make the “situational complexity operational”. This attempt is of course constrained by the fact that the categorization has been conceived a priori by the researcher.

In Held’s study (1995: 215), the assessment of the external contextual variables of each situation is carried out in the first instance by her own hypotheses about the situations against the background of a theoretical definition of degree of imposition (cf. below). These hypotheses are then compared with an assessment test conducted with a group of informants who had previously taken part in the experiment with ‘the DCT’. In the present study, there will be as in Held a hypothetical assessment of the situational variables of each situation (cf. also for a similar manipulation of external contextual variables Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a: 274, Trosborg, 1995: 219-220 and Koike, 1992a: 36). The difference will lie in the second part of the assessment: the researcher’s hypotheses will be compared with an assessment of the situations as indicated by textual data. In other words, for the assessment of contextual external variables, this study will rely on emergent features (politeness features as well as the employment of mitigators) in the requests performed by the two groups of subjects involved in the production of the role plays, namely the Brazilian native speakers and the Brazilian Portuguese learners according to their proficiency levels.



A second source of evidence for the assessment of the external contextual features of the situations will be the individual retrospective interviews, where learners were asked to comment on the difficulties of performing the requests in each situation and to explain what the difficulties were.

#### **4.10 Koike's (1992) classification of request strategies**

In his study of a pragmatic hierarchy of politeness in directives in Brazilian Portuguese, Koike (1992, 1992a) develops a classification of the directive utterances according to a ranking of illocutionary forms. Accordingly, he proposes (1992: 37) six categories of classification, ranging from more to less illocutionary force: *orders, assertions, requests, suggestions, hints* and *avoidance* of giving the directive.

Since Koike's classification is based on data elicited in Brazilian Portuguese, his study is relevant for the present one, since it deals with pragmatic material (e.g. routine formulae) in Brazilian Portuguese. However, the adoption of Koike's taxonomy by this study is questionable, given two factors: firstly, it could create confusion in terms of terminology. Koike, unlike other researchers in ILP, uses the term 'directives'<sup>18</sup> instead of the more common term in the literature 'requests'. In his classification, as described above, requests appear as one type of realization strategy for directives.

Secondly, despite also drawing on levels of directness (cf. Koike, 1992a: 122), according to which requestive strategies are more or less transparent in terms of their illocutionary force, Koike's classification, when compared to the coding scheme presented by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Trosborg's (1995) modified version of it (cf. above), seems to be not explicit and detailed enough. For instance, while Koike indicates the most frequent linguistic devices employed in different request strategies

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<sup>18</sup> It seems that the term 'directives' is more frequent in the literature concerned with pragmatics in the first language which is the case of Koike's study of Brazilian Portuguese. ILP studies have mainly adopted the term 'requests' (for a definition see literature review). This might explain why Koike (1992: 116) abandons the term 'directives' and adopts the term 'requests' when discussing their acquisition by learners of Spanish as a foreign language.

(1992: 54), he does not specify how strategies can be internally modified in order to mitigate or aggravate their force.

Moreover, his classification of elements of the directives by the form of the directive (e.g. orders, assertions, suggestions etc, cf. Koike, 1992: 54-55) conflates elements which are part of the head act (e.g. formal elements such as tense and mood as in present indicative or imperfect subjunctive) and other elements which characterize supportive moves (e.g. functional elements such as explanations and asking not to be offended). This is not to say that Koike does not differentiate head acts and supportive moves, but rather he does not classify them separately as in the CCSARP coding scheme (see above).

Using Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984 in Koike, 1992: 62) term 'adjunct' rather than supportive move, Koike (1992: 62-64) suggests a structure of the directive speech act in Brazilian Portuguese according to three different kinds of register (caretaker, peer and formal) in terms of the head act and prehead and posthead adjuncts. Koike's diagrams of the structure of the requestive speech act show that, depending on the register, that is on social variation, the positioning of the head act in relation to the surrounding adjuncts will vary accordingly. In this context, Koike (1992: 64) argues that:

One might say that where politeness is very important, there are more prehead adjuncts to establish the relationship and rapport with the listener before actually issuing the directive. Where politeness is not an issue or where there is more intimacy between parties, speakers express their desires and follow the directive with posthead adjuncts, mainly to soften the force of the directive and maintain good will and cooperation with the listener. In this way, the variable of register is clearly shown to be reflected in the actual structure of the speech act and in differences in other elements, such as verb tense and the syntactic form of the head directive itself.

Although Koike's classification takes into account the distinction between head acts and supportive moves, which he calls adjuncts, they are not themselves coded in respect to their function as mitigating or aggravating the request proper. Rather, his classification shows the frequency of specific adjuncts in relation to particular directives strategies



and, as he argues above, the function of the *position* of adjuncts (prehead or posthead) in mitigating the requestive act according to different kinds of register.

In comparing Koike's classification of directives with the CCSARP coding scheme for requests and apologies, one could say that the differences in their coding categories are reflected by the differences of their research investigation. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) investigate the performance of different speech acts in different languages and cultures. For this purpose, they devise a coding scheme which enables them to compare realization strategies across languages and cultures.

Despite all the limitations of this classification, it provides a very detailed level of segmentation of the requestive speech act, which is of interest here, in terms of coding categories, including not only a description of strategies, but also of downgraders and upgraders (for a definition see literature review) of the head act and supportive moves, which can account for the analysis of learners' (across different levels) and native speakers' manipulation of pragmatic parameters (cf. Thomas, 1995: 191). This level of detailed description of formal and functional linguistic elements are also supposed to facilitate comparison across languages.

Koike's study focuses on a hierarchy of politeness in Brazilian Portuguese. In this sense, it is concerned with an investigation of social relationships and how they are reflected on the use of language by native speakers. For this purpose, Koike describes variation in the form of directives according to different kinds of register.

#### **4.11 An interactional approach for the analysis of the requestive communicative act – a framework for coding**

##### ***4.11.1 Introductory Remarks***

This section is concerned with another aspect of the coding of the data. Here, coding parameters will be developed which could account for aspects of the interaction between learners and native speakers. In this context, pragmatic aspects and communicative goals of the requestive act have to be construed as a matter of negotiation between both participants.

Thomas (1995: 183 emphasis in the original), discussing possible definitions of pragmatics, contends that “[p]ragmatics is not about meaning; it is about *making meaning*, about meaning potential, showing how people negotiate meaning in interaction”. Following Thomas, in order to examine how meaning and force are negotiated over interactions, the data provided in the role plays have to be coded in a way which reveals learner’s and native speaker’s communicative contributions towards the requestive goal. In this sense, the analysis of subsequent discourse is crucial in identifying the effect of pragmatic force over successive utterances.

In order to achieve an analysis of speech acts which goes beyond the analysis of isolated utterances, speech acts will be construed in this study as communicative acts, comprising both the speech act and also including social relationships between subjects, psychological aspects as well as features of the context which are all part of the communicative action (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 145-146, Fetzer, 2002: 403 and Geis: 1995: 12-13).

#### *4.11.2 Input and Interaction: negotiation of meaning*

The ‘Input and Interaction’ or negotiation of meaning approach to learning a second language (cf. Pica, 1992, Mackey, 2000, 2003 and also literature review chapter) provides a framework for the analysis of how learners modify their language in terms of linguistic and conversational adjustments as a function of NSs reactions. In this context, a typology for such modifications has been developed (cf. Long, 1983, 1996), where interactional modifications are classified under the categories of negotiation of meaning (or negotiation moves such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, requests for repetitions) and recasts (the production by a NS of a more target-like version, though with the same semantic content, of the learner’s utterance, cf. Mackey et al., 2000: 477)<sup>19</sup>.

Negotiation moves and recasts have been construed as interactional feedback which might have an impact on a learner’s second language acquisition. Research on

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<sup>19</sup> Mackey et al. (2003: 39) acknowledge that the categorization of interactional moves into negotiation moves and recasts can be problematic since negotiation moves can also contain recasts.



negotiation traditionally focuses on the learning of grammar and vocabulary (cf. literature review), where a learner's perception of interactional feedback, its subsequent incorporation and its effects on development are investigated in task-based interaction. The aim is to show whether interactional feedback, in terms of morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological forms is available and how they might affect development in general terms or more specifically, comprehension (cf. Gass and Varonis, 1994; Iwashita, 2003; Mackey et al., 2000).

One of the aims of this thesis is to investigate the availability and perception of negative feedback (implicit or explicit) in the interactions between NSs and learners. However, despite the fact that these aims are shared by the present study with those of negotiation of meaning, some methodological and conceptual differences between the approaches need to be discussed.

Firstly, as far as methodological issues are concerned, most research in the area known as Input and Interaction in SLA adopts a classic hypothesis-testing design with a pre-test-post-test design with experimental groups receiving different treatments (e.g. modified input group and unmodified input group, cf. Gass and Varonis, 1994: 290). Such studies focus on the effects of negotiation moves on the immediate, subsequent and delayed task performance, that is on short-term grammatical development. In the present exploratory study a method has been adopted which is not geared to the testing of specific hypotheses but rather aimed at the identification of patterns of regularities of behaviours. In this sense, the present study consists of a less tightly controlled experiment with no treatment differences.

Secondly, the negotiation of meaning means, according to the Input and Interaction perspective, something different from the idea of meaning in interaction proposed by Thomas (1995). Negotiation of meaning, as stated above, is construed as conversational and linguistic modifications (e.g. Gass and Varonis, 1994), but it seems that the stress is on isolated linguistic units. Interactional feedback for linguistic units is claimed to be available in conversations between NSs and NNSs and to facilitate the acquisition of those units. Mackey (1999: 558) defines this process of negotiation as follows:

As linguistic units are rephrased, repeated, and reorganized to aid comprehension, learners may have opportunities to notice features of the target language.

For the purposes of the present study on the learning of pragmatic abilities, the exploration of the availability of interactional feedback (implicit and explicit negative feedback) in terms of forms will be adopted, but placed in a different context. This means that the negotiation of linguistic units will be understood not only as the negotiation of tools to achieve a communicative goal (as it is in the Input and Interaction perspective), but rather as constitutive elements of communicative acts. In this way, interactional feedback with regard to linguistic units will be seen as feedback in terms of pragmalinguistic aspects (cf. literature review and also Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993). Accordingly, interactional feedback focusing on linguistic features will not be seen in isolation, but rather in the context of the requestive communicative act.

Furthermore, the concept of negotiation needs to be modified in two directions: on the one hand, the categories proposed (cf. Long, 193, 1996) for the analysis of negotiation of meaning (e.g. clarification requests) are too broad and vague. They will be useful in terms of looking at macro structures of the interaction, but more specific categories will be needed to look at the interactions in more detail.

In addition, the notion of negotiation of meaning has to be modified in order to encompass the idea of pragmatic negotiation, that is the negotiation of communicative goals and of illocutionary force. A number of criticisms concerning the notion of negotiation in the Input and Interaction framework have been put forward: Yule and Tarone (1991: 166), for instance, arguing from the perspective of research on strategies of interlanguage communication, criticise the fact that input and interaction analyses concentrate on the NS, with the analysis of the devices which prompt the negotiation (e.g. clarification requests). By contrast, they offer no analysis of the “negotiation per se”. Although the present methodological approach will not consider the taxonomy developed for communication strategies (e.g. Faerch and Kasper, 1983), Yule and Tarone’s (1991: 169-70) suggestion will find resonance here:

[A]nalysts interested in the influence of input upon the process of second-language acquisition might benefit (...) [from] making use of an analytic



framework which encourages the analyst to look at both sides of the conversational exchange, and enables the analyst to better identify key moves made by both participants in the negotiation and resolution of communication problems (...)

This view on input, where input is dependent on both native speakers and learners as both sides of the interaction, will be part of a perspective for the development of a coding system and further data analysis for the present study.

The need to consider the requestive act as a communicative act which is performed in multiturn interactions demands a coding system which goes beyond the association of speech acts with individual utterances (cf. Geis, 1995). This poses a methodological problem, since it has been claimed that speech act theory, given its “constitutive rules” cannot account for the analysis of conversations (cf. Levinson, 1983:289 and Searle, 1992:7 in Geis, 1995: 2). In her analysis of rejections in Anglo-American and German sociocultural contexts, Fetzer (2002: 403) also recognizes the need to construe speech acts from a discursal perspective and the difficulty in doing that within the framework of speech act theory when she claims that:

[N]atural-language communication is both speaker- and hearer oriented and therefore cannot be restricted to the exchange of single speech acts. That is to say, speakers generally not only produce speech acts, but they also request their hearers in a more or less implicit manner to ratify their communicative contributions by accepting or rejecting them. They thus initiate a process of negotiating the communicative status of their utterances. But how is this communicative status negotiated and, more specifically, how is it calculated? (...) In order to be able to account for these questions, further discursive and conversation-analytic concepts (...) have to be accounted for. And since this is not possible in the framework of Speech Act Theory, the analysis of intracultural and intercultural communication requires an extension of frame, namely a context-oriented, discursive setting.

Of relevance for the methodology of the present thesis is Fetzer’s argument for the need of an extension of frame, namely a discourse oriented perspective in order to account

for negotiation in communicative acts. The employment of a conversational-analytic framework in the analysis of speech acts has been subjected to some criticisms. Conversation analysts (cf. Schegloff et al., 2002: 16) are sceptical about the possible contribution of conversation analysis to the analysis of speech acts in ILP, since ILP researchers begin with an a priori established “linguistic pragmatic inventory of speech acts”, whereas conversation analysts carry out an a *posteriori* analysis of naturally occurring talk. Still, the question remains as to the need to account for the negotiation of the communicative act. And since this is not possible within the framework of speech act theory and also not accounted for in Input and Interaction research, a model for analysis of speech acts in terms of communicative acts, which allows for a discourse oriented analysis has to be incorporated in the coding parameters for the analysis of the present study.

Fetzer (see above), facing the same methodological limitations for the analysis of the process of negotiation in communicative acts, proposed a model based on Habermas’ theory of communicative action (1987 in Fetzer, 2002). Fetzer’s model could potentially be adopted for the analysis of the data of this study, since it is concerned with the analysis of interactions “in a discursive framework from both speaker- and hearer-oriented perspectives” (Fetzer, 2002: 401).

However, two objections come into play: firstly, Fetzer investigates rejections from a sociocultural perspective, where the concept of intercultural is central. Although sociocultural aspects will also be part of the analysis of the requestive act, for the present study, it would be more appropriate to adopt a model for analysis which could also take into account cognitive aspects involved in the production of the requests, such as inferencing and perception of feedback (cf. theoretical framework chapter).

The second objection to Fetzer’s model is concerned with the fact that the categories proposed by her model (e.g. *minus-validity claim*, its constitutive systems and subsystems, cf. Fetzer, 2002: 401) are arguably not specific enough for the analysis of the sequential organization of the requestive act<sup>20</sup> (cf. also above for a similar claim in

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<sup>20</sup> Fetzer does include an interactional subsystem in her model which is determined by sequential organization. However, it does not provide explicit categories with which to



relation to analysis carried out on negotiation of meaning). Given these two objections, Fetzer's model will give support for some considerations of the analysis of this study, but a more explicitly discourse-oriented framework will be employed for the coding of the data of the present study.

#### **4.12 Trosborg's discourse analysis model**

Trosborg (1995), in her study of requests, complaints and apologies by Danish learners of English employed two different analytical frameworks in her analyses of the above communicative acts. One of the models employed has already been discussed in the context of Blum-Kulka et al.'s taxonomy. In addition to an analysis of the realization strategies and levels of directness using the taxonomy of Blum-Kulka et al., Trosborg carries out an analysis of the communicative acts from a discourse-oriented perspective. For this purpose, Trosborg (1995: 161) adapts a discourse analytical model originally developed by Sinclair and Coulthard<sup>21</sup> (1975 in Trosborg, 1995) to account for classroom (teacher-pupil) interactions. Modifications were made in order to make the model operational for non-educational discourse. Also, Trosborg (1995: 161) claims that "their original model also lacks the flexibility and complexity which is required, for example, for an analysis of negotiation and argumentation."

In terms of topic structure, the discourse model (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 33-36) is divided into interaction (defined as the highest unit of discourse), transactions (which coincide with topics and consists of several sequences), and sequences (several exchanges with the same topic). At the interactive level, the model presents the categories of exchange (minimal interactive units), moves (contributions by one participant, not necessarily identical to turn) and acts (minimal units of discourse, defined by their function).

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capture participants' contributions in turns. It is based on Levinson (1983 in Fetzer, 2002: 406) and can be seen as speaker-centred (cf. also above Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Trosborg's adapted model draws not only on Sinclair and Coulthard, but also on Coulthard (1983), Coulthard, Montgomery and Brazil (1981), Coulthard and Brazil (1981), Burton (1980, 1981) and on Stubbs (1981).

Focusing on the interactional level of discourse, Trosborg (1995: 162) adds two categories to the original three-part exchange structure: at the interactional level, she proposes the incorporation of R/I (Response/Initiation) and F/I (Follow up/Initiation) to the original I (Initiation) – R (Response) – F (Follow-up). These interactional moves are defined in terms of  $\pm$  predicted,  $\pm$  predicting,  $\pm$  initial.

I (Initiation) moves are further divided into I (Initiations) and Inf (Informatives). Whereas the former, being + predicting, forms the expectation of another move (R or R/I), the latter does not do so. I-moves and R-moves are interdependent, R- moves fulfilling the expectations set by I- moves. F-moves stand in connection with a preceding move. They can be neither predicting nor predicted, or alternatively, as in the case of F/I-moves, they can offer feedback for the previous move and form expectations of a further move.

In addition, Trosborg adds another F-move, namely a F/Com (Follow-up/Comment), which allows for realizations containing agreement/disagreement and/or additional information. F/Com-moves can be distinguished from Inf-moves by their length, whereby Inf-moves are longer, involving more than a short comment. All moves, with the exception of I- and Inf-moves, which are initial and signal a new exchange, are recursive.

In order to achieve a differentiated analysis of communicative acts, Trosborg (1995: 165-171) further classifies moves into acts. Accordingly, I-moves can be classified into topic carrying acts (which are directive, informative, and can inquire, propose, accuse) and non-topic carrying acts (marker, attention-getter, excuse, summons, close).

Non-topic carrying acts are further divided into acts which frame and focus a following move (marker, attention-getter) and acts which have a ritual function (excuse, summons, close).

R-moves involve the following acts according to their functions: react, reply, confirm, accept, reject, qualify, excuse and justify. R/I-moves which only provide a reply after seeking some clarification are seen in terms of return (high key repetition, control question) and loop (seeks repetition of the preceding move, e.g. pardon, sorry).



R/I-moves which also initiate, but are a response to I-moves can be categorised into R/I- inquire, propose and accuse.

F-moves, which follow I- and R-moves, can assume the following functions: acknowledge, agree, disagree, qualify, evaluate, reformulate, repeat and comment. As stated above, the criteria for distinguishing between the moves I-Inf and F-Com are length and newness, whereby I-Inf-moves are longer and “newer”.

F/I-moves are seen as offering feedback to a preceding move and at the same time eliciting a further move. In this way, they can be conflated with R/I-moves.

Trosborg (1995: 177) employs this discourse model in order to measure NSs’ and learners’ participation in the performance of communicative acts. For this purpose, she analyses their production (quantitatively) in terms of number of moves and (qualitatively) diversity of move structure to make a distinction between predominantly active and passive roles. In this context, Trosborg (1995: 178) found that learners used all discourse moves presented by the model and that their participation cannot be regarded as predominantly passive, although not symmetrical either in relation to NSs’ participation. A further analysis of individual acts revealed that NSs used a higher number of markers, I-propose, I-inquire and I-Informative. Learners presented the majority of R-moves. With regard to F-moves, learners used more F-acknowledge than NSs. However, when analysing particular communicative acts, results changed slightly: in the case of requests, for instance, learners provided more I-Informatives than NSs and in relation to F-moves, NSs produced only slightly more than learners. This led Trosborg (1995: 181) to suggest that learners profit from the distribution of specific roles, increasing their participation quantitatively and qualitatively.

However, in argumentative situations, NSs initiated interactions more frequently than learners and provided more suggestions. More importantly, NSs are said to contribute more to negotiation of a solution than learners and at the same time to the structuring of the conversation by providing more markers and I-inquire and I-propose moves.

Trosborg’s main focus was to investigate how learners behave in interactions with NSs in non-educational settings when learners are given specific roles and goals. In this context, she linked her analysis to Input and Interaction research in SLA, where

she specifically discusses the effect of content knowledge in conversation participation. That is, it has been claimed that the participant with content knowledge, the expert, is likely to have a dominant participation in the conversation (Zuengler and Bent, 1991 in Trosborg, 1995: 185).

However, despite mentioning research in SLA which points to the fact that interactions between learners and NSs are influenced by NSs' feedback and the nature of the task, Trosborg (1995: 185) does not set out to conduct an analysis which could reveal learner's participation in interactions with NSs' moves and acts. That is to say that Trosborg's analysis tends not to focus on the performance of the communicative acts in terms of sequential discourse. Also, the two different kinds of analyses carried out in her study (realization strategies based on the taxonomy developed by Blum-Kulka et al., 1989 and discourse analysis, cf. above) do not seem to be brought together. Trosborg discusses the findings of the two analyses as discreet steps. The task here is to build on her sensitive classification framework and bring these levels together.

In the present study an exploration of these two opportunities for the further development of Trosborg's analyses will be offered and her adapted discourse model will be employed with the following aims: firstly, to examine the interactions in terms of subsequent discourse. Here, the following questions will be central: what are the discourse strategies adopted by learners in the three different requestive situations? What kinds of exchange structures (sequence of moves and acts) appear in the different interactions? What kinds of NSs' moves elicit which moves from learners in the three situations? The answer to these questions is going to provide a more differentiated analysis of the availability of feedback and its incorporation in terms of discourse strategies by learners.

#### **4.13 Coding Methods and Parameters for Data Analysis: A Summary**

This section will outline the taxonomies selected for the coding of the data in the present study and summarize the criteria for their selection.

##### **4.13.1 The CCSARP Coding Parameters**

Despite all the limitations discussed above in relation to the CCSARP coding manual, this study adopts its taxonomy and coding parameters (an adapted version according to



Trosborg (1995) and Held (1995), cf. above) for the first part of the analysis of the data. The central reason for adopting this method of coding is to ensure the *replicability* and *comparability* of this study.

As the overwhelming majority of studies of requests in ILP in several languages (e.g. Trosborg, 1995, Hill, 1997, Rose, 2000) employs the CCSARP coding manual (*mutatis mutandis*), it makes sense to add not only a study on a different language (to my knowledge there has been no study of this kind with Brazilian Portuguese as a second language), but also to offer the possibility of comparison in terms of another study using open role plays as interactive data. The employment of the taxonomy developed for the CCSARP can be further justified on the grounds that an analysis based on its parameters yields patterns of realizations and semantic formulae as one of the first studies of this kind in Brazilian Portuguese.

In addition, levels of directness in speech act realization constitute a recurring theme in ILP studies (cf. Blum-Kula et al, 1989: 7). This method also allows for a classification of speech events in terms of participant expectations in relation to (1) specific requestive situations, (2) levels of negotiation and (3) perceptions of imposition in the pursuit of their communicative goals (cf. Edmondson and House, 1981: 49). In the context of a more detailed classification of speech events, a further differentiation of requests into verbal goods/non-verbal goods is required where the latter can be seen as requests for information (Edmondson and House, 1981: 97-99). This differentiation will in turn allow for an analysis of different degrees of imposition.

#### ***4.13.2 The Interactional approach to analysis of the requestive communicative act***

In adopting such an approach under the influence of Trosborg this study aims to do justice to the data collection procedure and the kind of data it provides, namely specifically interactive data. In addition, it seeks (1) to allow for an analysis which takes advantage of the potential of open role plays data (cf. Kasper and Dahl, 1991: 229); (2) to act as a corrective of a perspective in pragmatics centred on the speaker's intentions and beliefs and (3) to align methods of analysis in ILP more closely with IL studies of other areas.

The two methods for coding the data developed in this section, namely the one based on the CCSARP coding manual and the second one based on Trosborg's discourse analysis model, are not going to be synthesised. That is, the two models will illuminate the data from different perspectives and will be kept separate for heuristic reasons. The aim here is to develop a 'multi-perspectival' analysis of the data. In this sense, both models of analysis – one looking at realization strategies and levels of directness and the other investigating learners' contributions in interaction with NSs – can be seen as staying in a 'loose coupling' relation with each other. In discussion, evaluation of appropriateness is inevitable. In this sense, the employment of both methods of analyses constitute a way towards a comparative methodological framework for the analysis of data in ILP research.

#### **4.13.3 *The analysis of the interviews***

The interviews will have supportive contextual information in the analysis of the role plays. They will be used as additional information for the interpretation of the role plays.

Achiba (2003: 189), who used diary data as complementary data, argues that the difference which arises between the findings of the diary data and the recorded naturalistic encounters "strongly suggests that any extensive study using just one kind of data will be inadequate for a full description of the process by which a child acquires a second language". This claim, which has also been made in relation to investigations of adults in ILP studies (see section Data Collection Procedures of this chapter), justifies the employment of the interviews as complementary data in the present study.

The individual, retrospective interviews will, then, provide information on subjects' perceptions of contextual external factors, such as for instance *degree of imposition, legitimacy and likelihood of compliance* (cf. Held's taxonomy below). They will also, in the case of learners' subjects, yield information on the presence of negative feedback by NSs.



#### **4.13.4 Situational variation (external contextual variables)**

Held's (1995: 210-213) variable categories<sup>22</sup> are divided into two types.

*Variable Categories I* are these are concerned with the interrelation between the participants.

- a. **Power (DOMinance):** difference in status considering social role or function and membership (e.g. boss, fellow students, etc).
- b. **Social DISTance:** degree of familiarity and also sympathy. Here, Held (1995: 188) considers also the notions of public vs. private sphere, where situations in the context of the public sphere would be institutionalized and standardized as opposed to situations considered to be part of the private sphere.
- c. **AGE difference:** this category interacts with the two above, in the sense that age can increase dominance, but at the same time age difference can be neutralized by familiarity.

*Variable Categories II* relate to the *perception* of participants' rights and obligations in the context of the interrelations above and in the context of the objects of the requests.

From the speakers' perspective:

- d. **LEGitimation** of the request.
- e. **URGency** of the request.

From the hearers' perspective:

- f. **ABIlity** to comply.
- g. **WILLingness** to comply.
- h. **OBLIgation** to comply.

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<sup>22</sup> Held's categories are translated from the German by the author.

**Variable Categories III:** are categories where parameters related to the assessment of the importance of the (desired and ongoing) communicative action (cf. Held, 1995: 212).

- i. **COST** of the request to the communicative partner.
- j. **AWKwardness** caused by the request to the communicative partner.

According to Held's (1995: 214) theoretical definition of the degree of imposition of a request, its level of imposition is high when **DOM, DIST, AGE** as well as **COST** and **AWK** are scored positive, whereas **LEG, URG, ABI, WILL,** and **OBLI** are scored negative.

#### **4.13.5 Request strategies: Blum-Kulka et al.'s (model with some of Trosborg's modifications)**

Levels of directness of strategies are concerned with the relative transparency of the illocution from the locution, as well as with the length of the inferencing process needed to identify the utterance as a request. The length of inferencing is supposed to increase the less direct a strategy is.

- a. **mood derivable:** the grammatical mood of the locution signals its illocutionary force, with the imperative as prototypical form.

*e.g. Limpa um pouco essa carteira (Give this seat a quick clean)*<sup>23</sup>.

- b. **Performatives (hedged/ unhedged):** the illocutionary intent is expressed by a illocutionary verb, which can be modified by modal verbs with an intention.

*e.g. Eu queria pedir uma bolsa de estudo para o próximo semestre (I would like to ask for a grant for the next term).*

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<sup>23</sup> Literal glosses will be presented here. Examples will be further contextualized with the presentation of examples of the interactions in full in the concluding chapter.



**c. Obligation (locution derivable):** the illocution is directly derived from the semantic meaning of the locution.

e.g. *Eu acho que é necessário pra limpar antes da aula* (I think it is necessary to clean [it]<sup>24</sup> before the class).

**Conventionally Indirect Strategies:** the interpretation of the utterance as a request relies on conventional usage.

**Speaker based:**

**d. Wishes/Desires**

e.g. *Eu gostaria muito que você fizesse esse quarto* (I would like very much that you do this bedroom).

**e. Demands/Needs**

e.g. *Precisa uma pessoa pra limpar a sala* (It needs someone to clean the room).

**Hearer based:**

**f. Suggestory formulae**

e.g. *eu estou pensando que você talvez você pode ajudar a gente limpar um pouco* (I was wondering you can maybe help us to clean it a bit).

**g. (Query) Preparatory: ability, willingness, permission**

e.g. *Você pode me emprestar seu carro por favor?* (Can you lend me your car please?)

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<sup>24</sup> The information in brackets is added to the English translation.

## Indirect Strategies

### h. Hints

e.g. *Você está livre amanhã?* (Are you free tomorrow?)

The expression “are you free tomorrow?” has been in many contexts considered to be a supportive move, but in the context of my data, it functions as the request proper, as the interaction below shows:

Situation 1 – ‘car loan request’

E= Learner

S= native speaker

Level 1

E2: *Oi Gabriel tudo bem? Hi Gabriel everything allright?*

S: *Oi tudo bom? Hi everything allright?*

E: *Gabriel, ahn amanhã ahn vou precisar mudar ahn ahn meu ahn ahn computador ahn tomorrow ahn I will need to move ah ahn my ahn ahn computer*

*eh ahn acho que você tem um carro eh ahn I think that you have a car*

*eh você ahn ahn está livre amanhã? Eh are you ahn ahn free tomorrow?*

S: *Que horas você precisa? At what time do you need it?*

#### 4.13.6 Coding of the internal modifications according to strategies

##### Mitigators/ Downgraders:

##### Syntactic and Morphological

- a. **Interrogative:** an interrogative is not coded as a mitigator in conventionally indirect strategies (preparatory), since they constitute the unmarked form. They are, however, considered to act as mitigators as for instance in mood derivable or locution derivable strategies.

e.g. *Você me deu o carro ahn por me ajudar por ahn mudar meus coisas?* (You gave me the car to help move my things?)



- b. **Negation:** negations have a mitigating function in, for instance, preparatory strategies.

e.g. *Não dava pra você dar uma limpadinha lá pra gente antes de começar?*  
(Wouldn't it be possible for you to clean [it] there for us before [the class] starts?)

- c. **Subjunctive:** the subjunctive is coded as a mitigator in contexts where the indicative is acceptable.

e.g. *Se você pudesse me emprestar seu carro* (If you could lend me your car).

- d. **Tense:** Past tense forms with present tense reference can function as mitigators.

e.g. *Não dava pra você dar uma limpadinha lá pra gente antes de começar?*  
(Wouldn't it be possible for you to clean [it] there for us before [the class] starts?)

- e. **Conditional:** conditionals can function as mitigating devices where the indicative is acceptable.

e.g. *Você poderia limpar o quarto antes da aula?* (Could you clean the bedroom before the class?)

- f. **Aspect:** durative aspect can mitigate the request if the simple form is acceptable.

e.g. *Eu estava pensando que talvez você me pode dar um jeito me dar seu carro*  
(I was wondering that you can perhaps make it to give me your car).

- g. **Conditional Clause:**

e.g. *Eu queria saber se você pode me emprestar seu carro.*

- h. **Type of Modal:** modal verbs, or expressions used as modals will be classified only as for their marked or unmarked forms (cf. Koike, 1992a).

e.g. *Tem como você arrumar lá pra mim?* Unmarked modal verb (Is it possible for you to tidy [it] up there for me?)

- i. **Embedding:** the requester can convey his/her attitude to the request by embedding it in a (“pre-face”) clause, often in combination with a conditional clause. His/her attitude can be expressed as:

**Embedding + Conditional Clause:**

e.g. *eu queria saber se você teria como me emprestar o seu carro pra eu levar essas coisas nele* (I wanted to know if you could lend me your car in order for me to take these things in it)

**Embedding + “será que”:**

e.g. *Será que você poderia dar um jeito de arranjar as coisas pra gente?* (would it be possible for you to find a way to help us out?)

**Embedding + Subjunctive:**

e.g. *eu queria que você me emprestasse seu carro pra eu poder levar* (I would like you to lend me your car in order for me to take [them]).

### **Lexical/ Phrasal modality markers**

- a. **Politeness marker:** *Por favor você me deu o carro ahn por me ajudar por ahn mudar meus coisas?* (Please you gave me the car to help move my things?)
- b. **Understater:** Diminutives as in *Será que não dava pra você dar uma limpadinha lá?* (Would it be possible for you to clean [it]there a bit?)
- c. **Hedge:** *Tem como pelo menos então se quiser só pra dar uma limpada rápida assim* (Is it possible kind of you know if you are up to only to clean this briefly you know).
- d. **Downtoner:** *Talvez você pode me emprestar o carro* (Perhaps you can lend me the car).



- e. **Appealer:** *eu queria que você me emprestasse, tem como?* (I would like you to lend me your car, is this all right?)
- f. **Cajoler:** *Tem como dar uma limpada rápida assim?* (Is it possible to clean it briefly you know?)

#### 4.13.7 Coding of the external modifications of the requestive act

##### **Supportive moves (adjuncts)**

- a. **Preparator:** without giving away the content of the request, the speaker prepares the hearer for his/her request, for instance, checking availability or getting a pre-commitment.

**A1: Preparing the content:** speaker introduces the content of the conversation, for instance, saying he/she is going to move house.

*e.g. Gabriel eu tô / se lembra da mudança que eu comentei contigo que eu ia ter que fazer* (Gabriel I'm / do you remember the house move that I told you that I would have to do)

**A2: Preparing the speech act:** the speaker lets the hearer know that a request will be made.

*e.g. Eu tenho um favor grande pra pedir* (I have a great favour to ask).

**A3: Checking availability:** the speaker checks if it is the right moment to make the request, in the case he/she is asking for immediate action (e.g. asking to clean the classroom).

*e.g. Se você não tiver nada pra fazer agora e tiver com um pouco de tempo* (If you have nothing to do now and have a little time).

A4. Getting a pre-commitment: an attempt to increase the likelihood of compliance.

e.g. *Num dá pra tu fazer uma força não cara?* (Couldn't you give me a hand pal?).

b. **Grounder:** the speaker gives supportive reasons for the request (explanations, justifications).

e.g. *Porque eu tô me mudando eu precisava pra transportar minhas coisas* (Because I'm moving house I needed [it] to transport my things).

c. **Disarmer:** the speaker tries to anticipate potential objections by the hearer.

e.g. *Aí cara* (hi mate)

*lembra aquela vez que eu te emprestei, te emprestei aquele, aquele aquele caderno cara.* (do you remember that time when I lent you that that notebook mate)

d. **Offer of a retreat** (Rückzugsangebot, cf. Warga, 2002: 262)

e.g. *Se você não puder você avisa* (If you can't you tell me).

e. **Sweeteners:** in order to get the hearer to comply with the request, the speaker can praise the hearer's abilities or skills related to the content of the request.

e.g. *Acho você melhor pessoa para ajudar-me* (I find you the best person to help me).

f. **Imposition minimizer:** the speaker attempts to minimize the cost of the request, pointing to factors which make the request appear straight forward.

e.g. *Eu tentaria devolver assim antes da noite porque geralmente pra sair assim* (I would try to return [it] before evening because usually to go out).



g. **Promise of a reward:** the speaker offers the hearer something in return of his/her compliance.

e.g. *E se você faz isso pra mim eu ahn posso ajudar você com qualquer coisa*  
(And if you do this for me I can help you with anything).

**Alerters:** opening elements which precede the actual request (head act).

h. **Form of address:** the use of the hearer's name, for instance, can function as a mitigator in that it personalizes the request (cf. Koike, 1992a: 52).

A1. Vocatives (name only): Gabriel

A2. Pronouns: *a Senhora, você, cara.*

a. **Form of greeting:** *Bom dia, Boa tarde* (Good afternoon); *Oi* (hi), *Como vai?*  
(How are you?), *Tudo bom? Tudo bem?* (Everything ok?).

b. **Introducing himself/herself:** *Eu me chamo...* (My name is...), *Eu sou aluno de...* (I am a student in ....).

c. **Attention getters:** *Olha, Olha só* (Look).

#### 4.13.8 Structures of the requestive act

According to Blum-Kulka, et. al. (1989: 276) the directive speech act can assume the following structures in relation to the head act and adjuncts (supportive moves) to the head act.

a. the head act only

e.g. *você pode me emprestar seu carro por favor que eu tô me mudando?* (can you lend me your car please because I am moving?)

b. post-posed: head act + supportive move(s)

e.g. *tô aqui pedindo, encarecidamente se você pode olhar uma proposta pra mim, que eu tô precisando de uma bolsa pro próximo semestre,* (I am here asking if it

would not be too much trouble for you to have a look at a proposal for me I need a grant for next semester)

*queria que você pudesse ver isso pra mim com carinho.* (I would like you to have a look at this for me with care)

c. pre-posed: supportive move(s) + head act

e.g. *Eu estudei Português aqui eh eu tenho o nível 1 e agora eu quero estudar o próximo nível, mais é mais caro,* (I studied Portuguese here eh I have level 1 and now I want to study the next level but it is more expensive)

*é possível, eh, posso ter um desconto?* (is it possible eh can I have a discount?)

d. multiple heads

e.g. *pô tem como você chamar alguém pra fazer uma faxina porque você sozinha não vai conseguir fazer tudo isso.* (is there any way you could call someone to clean this because you alone won't make it)

[...]

*Pô, então então faz um favorzinho aqui pra mim, limpa um pouco essa carteira, pelo menos a minha pra eu ficar confortável, entendeu nessa aula* (so do me a small favour clean this desk a bit at least my desk in order for me to feel comfortable you know in this class)

To the possible structures above proposed by Blum-Kulka et. al, Koike's (1992: 63-64) proposal of structure for the directive act in Brazilian Portuguese will be added, as following:

e. In between posed: adjuncts + head act + adjuncts (cf. also Fukushima, 1996: 673).

e.g. *eu estou precisando muito que você faça um favor pra mim.* ( I desperately need you to do me a favour)

*você já sabe que eu estou mudando, né?* (you know I am moving don't you?)

[...]

*Também você sabe que eu não tenho carro* (you also know I don't have a car)



*e se você pudesse me emprestar seu carro* (and if you could lend me your car – head act)

*eu estou precisando muito eu tenho que mudar todas minhas coisas você já sabe tantas coisa eu tenho, muitas muitas coisas e ahn ...*(I need it really badly I have to move all my things and I have so may things many many things)

**4.13.9 Coding the requestive acts for their exchange structure: discourse strategies in interaction (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 162-186 and above for an explanation of the categories)**

**a. Interactional moves**

<b>I – Initiation</b>	<b>+initial</b>	<b>+predicting</b>	<b>-predicted</b>
<b>Inf – Inform</b>	<b>+initial</b>	<b>-predicting</b>	<b>-predicted</b>
<b>R – Response</b>	<b>-initial</b>	<b>-predicting</b>	<b>+predicted</b>
<b>R/I – Resp/Init.</b>	<b>-initial</b>	<b>-predicting</b>	<b>+predicted</b>
<b>F – Follow up</b>	<b>-initial</b>	<b>-predicting</b>	<b>-predicted</b>
<b>F/Comm – Follow</b>	<b>-initial</b>	<b>-predicting</b>	<b>-predicted</b>
<b>Up/Comment</b>			
<b>F/I – Follow up/</b>	<b>-initial</b>	<b>+predicted</b>	<b>-predicted</b>
<b>Initiation</b>			

**b. Classification of moves into acts.**

<b>I – moves :</b>	<b>Topic carrying Acts</b>	<b>Non-Topic carrying Acts</b>
	<b>propose</b>	<b>marker</b>
	<b>informative</b>	<b>attention getter</b>
	<b>inquire</b>	<b>excuse</b>
		<b>summon</b>
		<b>close</b>

**R – moves:** react (non-linguistically); reply; confirm; accept; reject; qualify; excuse; justify.

**R/I – moves:** return; loop (inquire; propose; accuse)

F – moves: acknowledge; agree; qualify; evaluate; reformulate; repeat; comment.

**4.13.10 Illustration of the coding taxonomy for the exchange structure: Data from the control group (Brazilians B1)**

Situation 1: 'car loan request' (the subject B is moving home. His goal is to get his friend (S) to lend him his car to transport some objects).

B1: Gabriel, eu tô, se lembra da mudança que eu comentei contigo, que eu ia ter que fazer... (*Gabriel, do you remember the house move that I told you that I would have to do*)

(*I-inquire*)

S: Lembro. (*I remember*)

(*R-confirm*)

B1: Pô, tem algumas coisas assim, que eu tô com medo de botar no caminhão, por causa que pode quebrar, que eu dou assim muito valor também, ganhei, foi presente, e outras coisas assim, tipo o meu som, então eu queria saber se você teria como me emprestar o seu carro pra eu levar essas coisas nele. (*You know, there are some things you know that I'm afraid of putting in the van because [they] can brake, you know I value [them] a lot, [I] got [them], [they] were a gift and some other things, you know such as my sound system so I wanted to know if you could lend me your car in order for me to take these things in it*)

(*I-Inf + I-inquire*)

S: Quando você precisa do carro? (*When do you need the car?*)

(*R/I - inquire*)

B1: Pô, final de semana assim seria melhor mas eu tentaria devolver assim antes da noite, porque geralmente pra sair assim. (*you know [in the] weekend would be better but I would try to return [it] you know before evening because usually to go out you know [you would need the car]*)

(*R-reply + R - qualify*)

S: Final de semana inteiro? (*the whole weekend?*)

(*R/I - accuse*)



B1: Não só só eu vou tentar ser o mais rápido possível assim de preferência sábado assim, eu eu pego contigo sábado de manhã pra devolver pra você sábado a tarde assim. (*No, only, only I will try to be as fast as possible you know preferably on Saturday you know I I take [it] with you on Saturday morning in order to return [it] to you Saturday afternoon you know*)

(*R – qualify*)

S: Tá ótimo, a gente pode dar um jeito. (*It's fine, we can arrange it*)

(*R – accept*)

B1: Tá bom. (*Fine*)

(*F – acknowledge*)

#### **4.14 Summary of the analytical tools employed by the present study**

1. **Retrospective Interviews:** complementary data providing information about subjects' perceptions of contextual external factors.
2. **Held's external contextual variables:** providing information about situational variation.
  - **DOMinance**
  - **Social DIStance**
  - **AGE difference**
  - **LEGitimation**
  - **URGency**
  - **ABIlity**
  - **WILLingness**
  - **OBLIgation**
  - **COST**
  - **AWKwardness**
3. **Request strategies:** providing information about levels of directness.
  - **Mod derivable**
  - **Performatives (hedged/unhedged)**

- **Obligation (locution derivable)**
- **Wishes/desires**
- **Demands/needs**
- **Suggestory formulae**
- **(query) preparatory**
- **hints**

#### **4. Internal modifications of the request proper (head act):**

##### **Syntactic/morphological mitigators**

- **Interrogative**
- **Negation**
- **Subjunctive**
- **Tense**
- **Conditional**
- **Aspect**
- **Modal**
- **Embedding + “será que”**
- **Embedding + conditional clause**
- **Embedding + subjunctive**

##### **Lexical/Phrasal mitigators**

- **Politeness marker**
- **Understater**
- **Hedge**
- **Downtoner**
- **Appealer**
- **Cajoler**

#### **5. External modifications of the request proper: Supportive moves (adjuncts)**

- **Preparatory**



- **Grounder**
- **Disarmer**
- **Reward**
- **Retreat**
- **Imposition minimiser**
- **Sweetner**

**Alerters: providing information about opening elements which precede the request proper**

- **Vocative**
- **Greeting**
- **Attention Getters**
- **Introducing herself**
- **Vocative + Greeting**
- **Vocative + attention getter**
- **Greeting + attention getter**
- **Greeting + Introduction**
- **Vocative + greeting + attention getter**
- **Vocative + greeting + introduction**

**6. Structure of the request: providing information about the number and position of the supportive moves in relation to the head act.**

- **Head act only**
- **Post-posed**
- **Pre-posed**
- **Multiple heads**
- **In between-posed**

**7. Interactional moves and acts: providing information about the exchange structure of the request.**

**Interactional moves**

- I-initiation
- Inf- Inform
- R- Response
- R/I- Response/Initiation
- F-Follow up
- F/Com – Follow up/Coment
- F/I – Follow up/Initiation

### **Interactional Acts**

- **I –Initiation**
  - Topic carrying: Informative acts
  - Non-topic carrying: marker; attention getter; summon; close.
- **R- Response**
  - Accept
  - Reply
  - Confirm
  - Reject
  - Qualify
  - Justify
- **R/I – Response/Initiation**
  - Summons
  - Return
  - Loop
  - Inquire
  - Propose
  - Qualify
- **F – Follow up**



- Acknowledge
- Agree
- Qualify
- Evaluate
- Reformulate
- Repeat
- Close

- **F/I – Follow up/Initiate**

- Inquire
- Propose
- Return
- Loop
- Repeat
- Reformulate
- Qualify
- Close

## **Chapter Five**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **5.1 Introductory Remarks**

In general, the data analysis will consist of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis will play a less central role in the overall analysis of the data than the qualitative analysis (see justification in the methodological discussion chapter, Introductory Remarks section). Nevertheless, frequencies will provide important supporting evidence in the identification of patterns in second language learners' performance of the requests.

The first part of this chapter will provide an analysis of the interactional patterns in the three requestive situations. This analysis will be concerned with discourse moves and acts, following Trosborg's model of data analysis. In order to set a context in which data will be analysed, Trosborg's model of analysis will be introduced by a consideration of working expectations of learners' performance of discourse moves and acts (5.2.1).

Unlike Trosborg's data analysis (Trosborg, 1995: 178-185), the data analysis in this pilot study will offer not only a comparison between learners and native speakers but will also look at interactional patterns within and across proficiency levels. This should enable the investigation of developmental patterns in the acquisition of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

The analysis will first offer a profile of each proficiency level, taking into account the interaction as a whole, that is, the participation of both native speaker and learners of a particular level (5.2.2.1)<sup>1</sup>. Further analysis will provide a comparison of

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<sup>1</sup> This comparison does not fall prey to Bley Vroman's IL fallacy, in that it is not carried out against notions of "obligatory context" or "error" when comparing pragmatic features in learners' interlanguage and in the target language. (cf. J.D. Purdy, 2005). The idea here is to look at *differences* and not *deficiencies* between learners' interlanguage and the target language (cf. the methodological discussion of this thesis), providing explanations for these differences.



the profiles across different levels of proficiency (5.2.2.2). Finally, learners' performance in terms of frequencies of discourse moves and acts will be compared to the native speakers' performance of the requestive acts and interactions. This comparison will be carried out in two different ways: first, learners' performance will be compared to native speakers' within the interaction itself, enabling a profile of the participation of the learners in the interaction with native speakers (5.2.2.3). Second, the learners' profile will be compared to the native speakers' profile in the control group (5.2.2.4). In the latter case, learners and native speakers will be playing the same role in the role play, namely that of requester.

The analysis based on a modified approach adopted from Trosborg (1995) will also be concerned with analysis on two levels: macro (institutional, setting) and micro (interactional, speaker-based) contexts. In this sense, it will consider the diversity of move structure, the sequence of discourse and the setting for the role plays.

The second part of this chapter (5.3) will be concerned with an analysis (5.3.2) of the requestive situations in terms of *request strategies* (cf. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989 and the methodological discussion chapter). Here, requests will be analysed in terms of types of request strategies, internal and external modifications of requestive acts.

## **5.2. Analysis of Interactional Patterns (Trosborg's model of analysis)**

### ***5.2.1 Working expectations of learners' performance of discourse moves and acts***

#### ***5.2.1.1 Expectations regarding language proficiency levels***

First, discourse moves and acts will be discussed in terms of expected levels of the complexity of pragmatic tasks<sup>2</sup>. This means that particular moves and acts could be seen as posing a higher or lower level of difficulty to learners and this would have an impact on their performance across proficiency levels. Second, there will be an assessment of each requestive situation concerning expectations of learners' performance of discourse moves and acts.

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<sup>2</sup> There is of course a need to distinguish between perceptions of difficulty in the learner and native speaker.

According to Trosborg's analysis (Trosborg, 1995: 177-178), the most demanding discourse moves for learners are the ones which require more interactive skills, namely Initiation (I) moves and Follow-up (F) moves. I-moves are demanding since they introduce something new in the conversation; F-moves are supposed to demand much effort from learners given that they play a central role in the direction of the conversation. In contrast, Response (R) moves are considered to be less demanding, since they are content-bound and more predictable since they tend to conform to the foregoing act.

In requestive situations, where the learner is given instructions to request something, I-moves, especially at the beginning of the interactions, are expected to be less demanding than F-moves, since, on the one hand, learners could draw the content of their I-moves from the instructions supplied in the role play descriptions. On the other hand, I-moves can be predicted by the specific requestive situation, since they are part of the role assigned to learners as requesters. However, the performance of I-moves by learners becomes much more demanding as the conversation progresses, where I-moves introduce new topics, not necessarily predicted by the description of the role-play situation. This difference in the performance of I-moves can only be captured and be properly analysed by a discussion of the sequence of the interaction (see also conclusion below).

In terms of discourse acts (for a definition, see the methodological discussion chapter, above), *I-Propose* and *I-Informative* acts could also have their content drawn from the background information supplied in role play instructions. As with I-moves in general, a distinction will have to be made considering their distribution in the interactions. *I-Inquire* could be considered less predicted by the situation than *I-Propose*, therefore more effortful for learners.

Another very important distinction has to be made concerning I-moves which are topic-carrying and the ones which are not topic-carrying (framing and focusing and ritual acts, cf. methodological discussion chapter). It could be hypothesised that topic-carrying acts would be less demanding for learners than the non-topic-carrying ones, given that the function of the latter is not always transparent from the situation and is culturally encoded. In other words, non-topic-carrying acts could be seen as playing a less vital role for the achievement of the communicative goal than topic-carrying acts,



less vital role for the achievement of the communicative goal than topic-carrying acts, which convey the 'information'. As a result, learners would invest more effort in topic-carrying acts. Amongst non-topic-carrying acts, it could be further hypothesised that non-topic-carrying acts with a ritual function (e.g. summons as part of greetings or closes) would require less effort from learners than the framing and focusing acts.

Amongst *R-moves*, the performance of *R-Reply*, *R-Qualify* and *R-Justify*, because they involve more than a simply yes/no answer, can be considered to be more effortful for learners in terms of linguistic skills.

F- moves, as stated above, are very demanding in terms of interactive skills, for, according to Trosborg (1995: 170), they could be optional (but see Trosborg, 1995: 165 and also the concluding chapter of this thesis). This means they are neither predicted by a preceding move nor do they predict the next move. However, within the category of F-moves, F-Acknowledge and F-Repeat, when compared to F-Agree/Disagree, F-Qualify, F-Evaluate and F-Comment, require less in terms of linguistic skills.

Response/Initiation (R/I) moves, unlike Follow-up/Initiation (F/I) moves tend to disrupt the flow of the conversation, since, before giving a response, the interlocutor asks for a clarification of some kind. This kind of breakdown in the communication, when a previous predicting move (*I-move*) does not have its expectations fulfilled, is best represented by *R/I-Return*, *Loop* and *R/I-Repeat*. *R/I- moves*, especially *Return* and *Repeat* are, therefore, expected to be more frequent in the beginners level and to decrease as proficiency levels increase.

#### *5.2.1.2 Expectations concerning requestive situations*

Each requestive situation is expected to present a different interaction profile regarding the performance of discourse moves and acts (cf. the assessment of the requestive situations in the context of request strategies in this chapter).

Situation 1 ('car loan request') should involve more negotiation, reflected in the number of exchanges, R/I, F/I- and F-moves than Situations 2 and 3. Two factors could contribute to this: first, the interlocutor as a friend means the social distance is low, leaving potentially more room for rejections and qualifications. Second, the degree

of imposition is increased by the object of the request (a car), creating the need for more clarifications of conditions. It is expected, therefore, that this requestive situation would demand from learners more interactive skills (e.g. more R- or F-justify, F-Agree/Disagree and F-Comment discourse acts) than situations 2 and 3. Situation 2 ('cleaning request') is expected to involve the least amount of negotiation since there is an expectation of straightforward compliance. Whereas the employee in the finance office is entitled not to accede to a request, the cleaning lady's job is to clean.

Although presenting the highest level of imposition on the learners' interlocutor and also the highest level of social distance (as confirmed in the interview and by the fact that this was the only situation in which one learner actually opted out of participation), the action requested does not require much clarification for its execution, except for the time when it should be carried out. Also, it could be argued that the high level of social distance constrains the freedom to negotiate the request. As a result, there should be fewer exchanges as well as fewer *F-* and *F/I moves*.

Situation 3 ('bursary request') could be perceived as being either a request for information (how to obtain the grant) or a request for action (asking for the grant itself, cf. analysis of the situations considering request strategies in this chapter). If perceived as a request for action, learners would have to negotiate more, thus implying the production of longer and a greater number of exchanges, as well as of *I-* and *F-moves*. In the case where learners perceive the requestive situation as a request for information, it can be expected that in comparison to their interlocutor (the finance member of staff), there would be less diversity of moves and acts in the interactions, with more *I-* and *R-moves* and learners would have to perform fewer *F-moves*.

### ***5.2.2 Analysis of discourse moves and acts***

This analysis will first present the frequencies for each requestive situation separately. The presentation of frequencies will provide an interactional profile of the conversations in terms of moves and acts by proficiency level (vertically). In addition, there will be a comparison of frequencies of moves and acts across proficiency levels (horizontally). In addition to this general profile of the interactions as a whole, where frequencies of moves and acts will not be differentiated between native speakers and learners, a more discrete picture of the learners' performance will follow with a presentation of

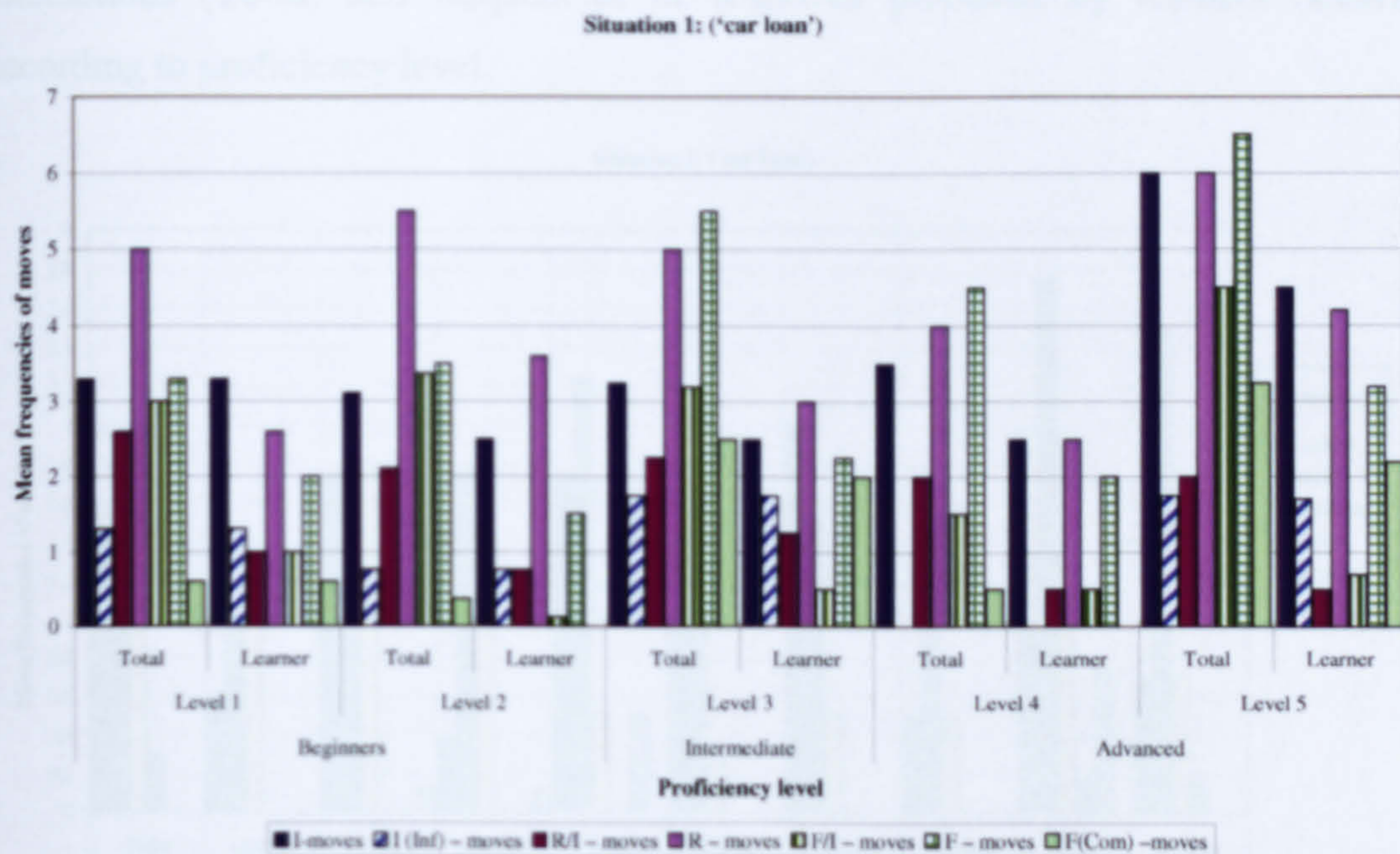


frequencies of moves and acts performed by learners at each proficiency level and across levels of proficiency. Finally, a comparison will be drawn between learners' and native speakers' performance, considering frequencies of moves and acts. In learner-NS interactions, in order to compare learners' with native speakers' production of moves and acts a comparison needs to be made between the total frequencies and learners' frequencies. That is, native speakers' frequencies will be the result of the total frequencies minus learners' frequencies.

5.2.2.1 Interaction profile of the conversations: moves and acts by proficiency level (learners only)

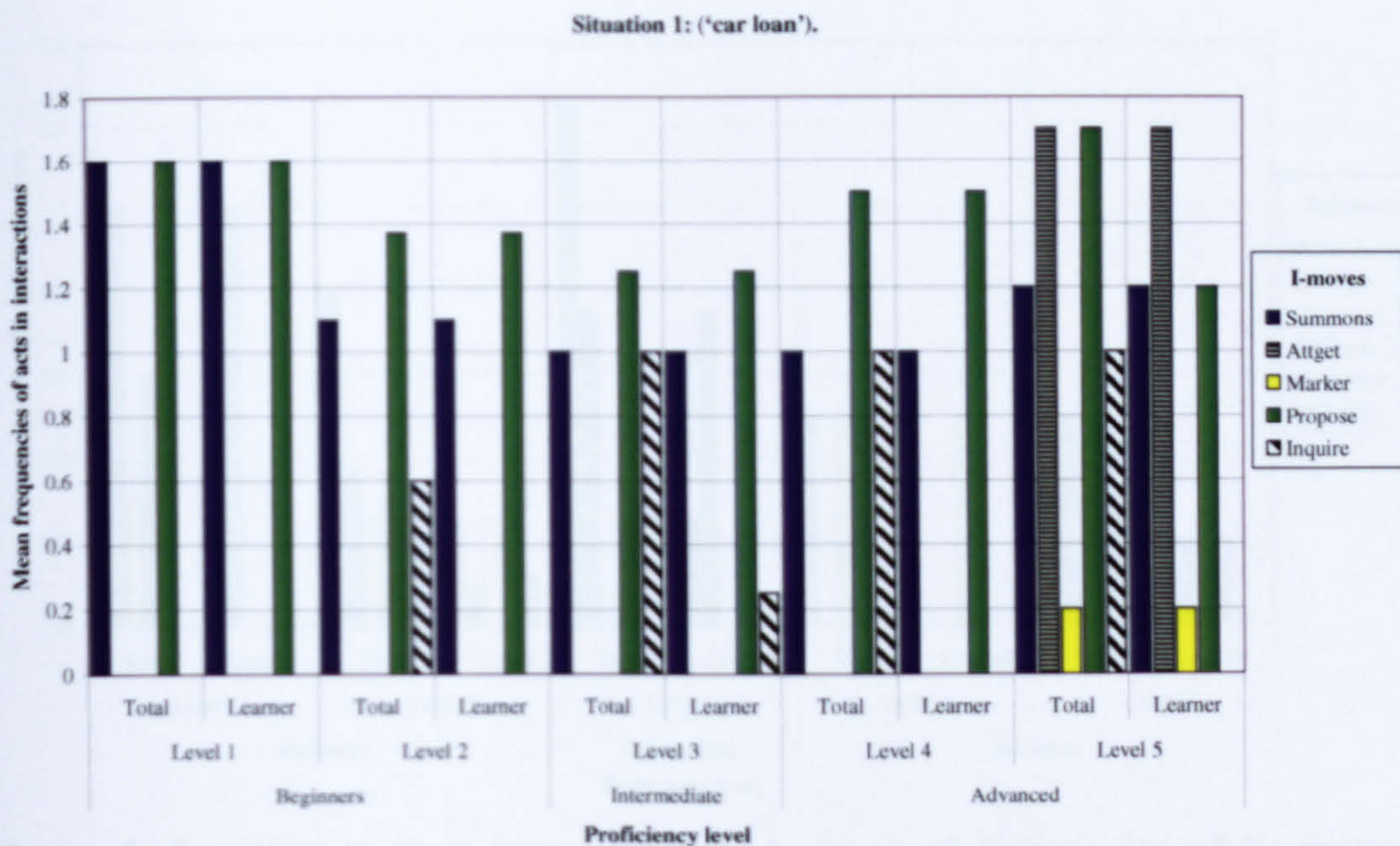
**Situation 1** ('car loan request' – Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8): Learners are borrowing a car from a friend to move home

**Figure 1.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

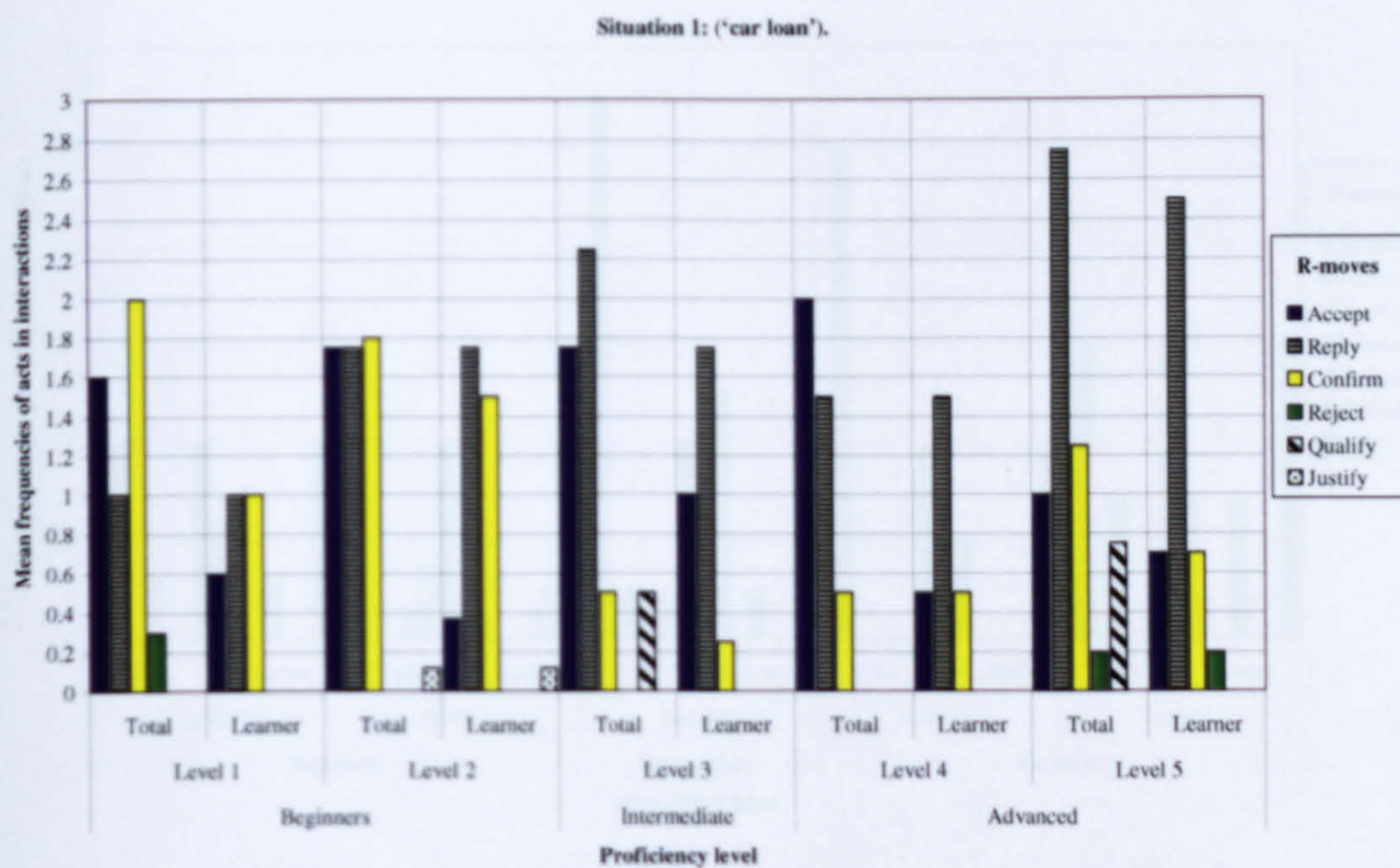




**Figure 2.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of I -moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

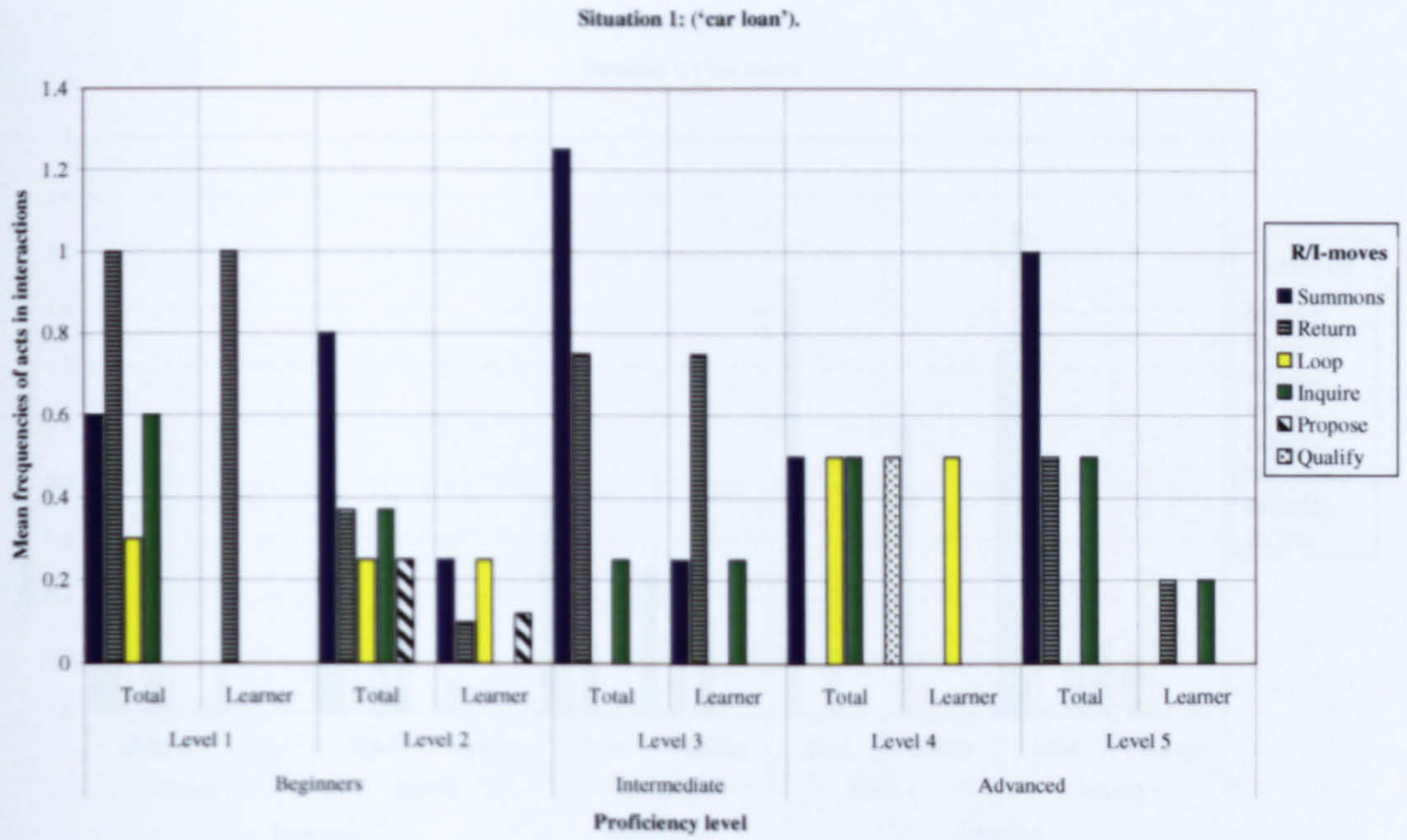


**Figure 3.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of R -moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

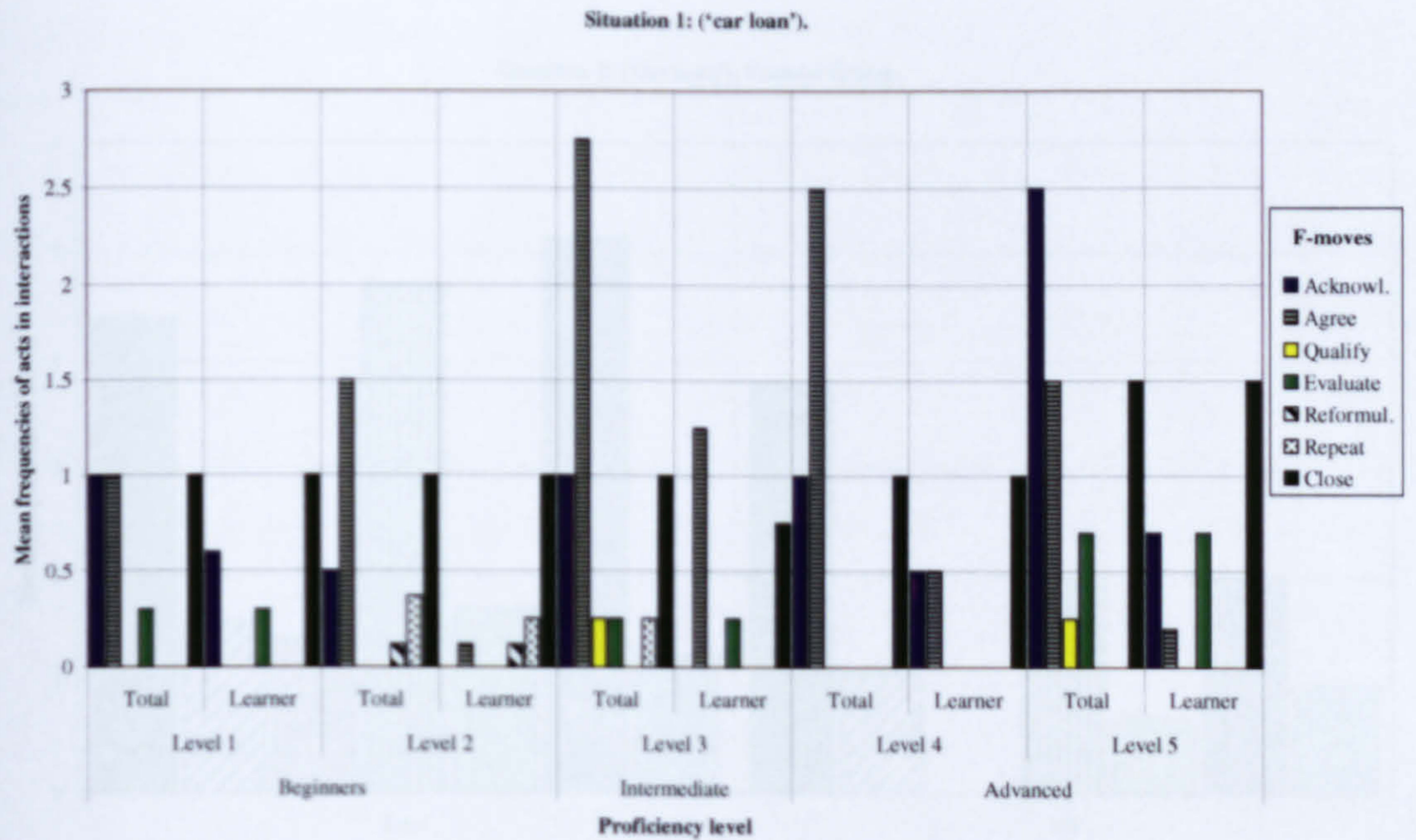




**Figure 4.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of R/I -moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

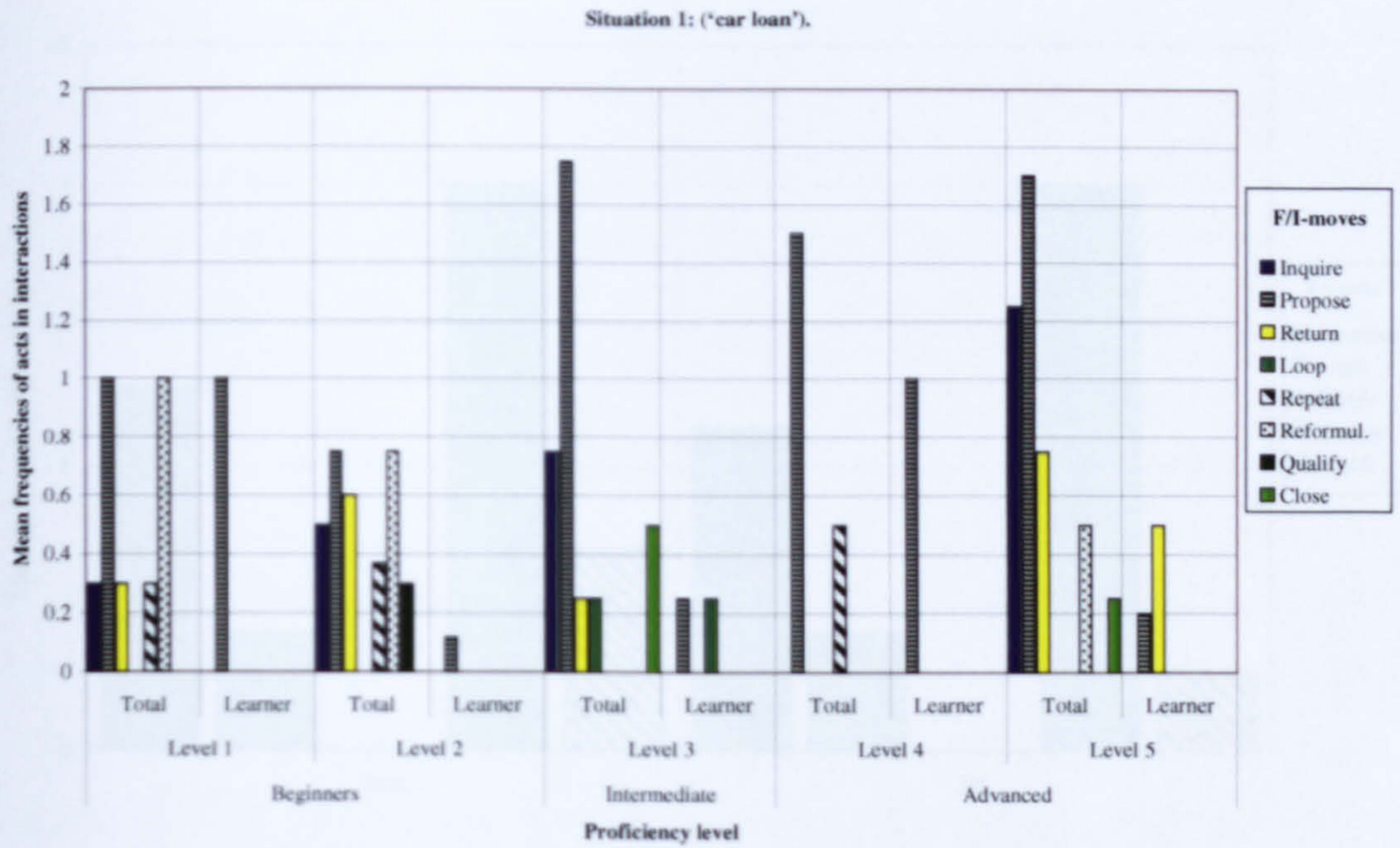


**Figure 5.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of F -moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

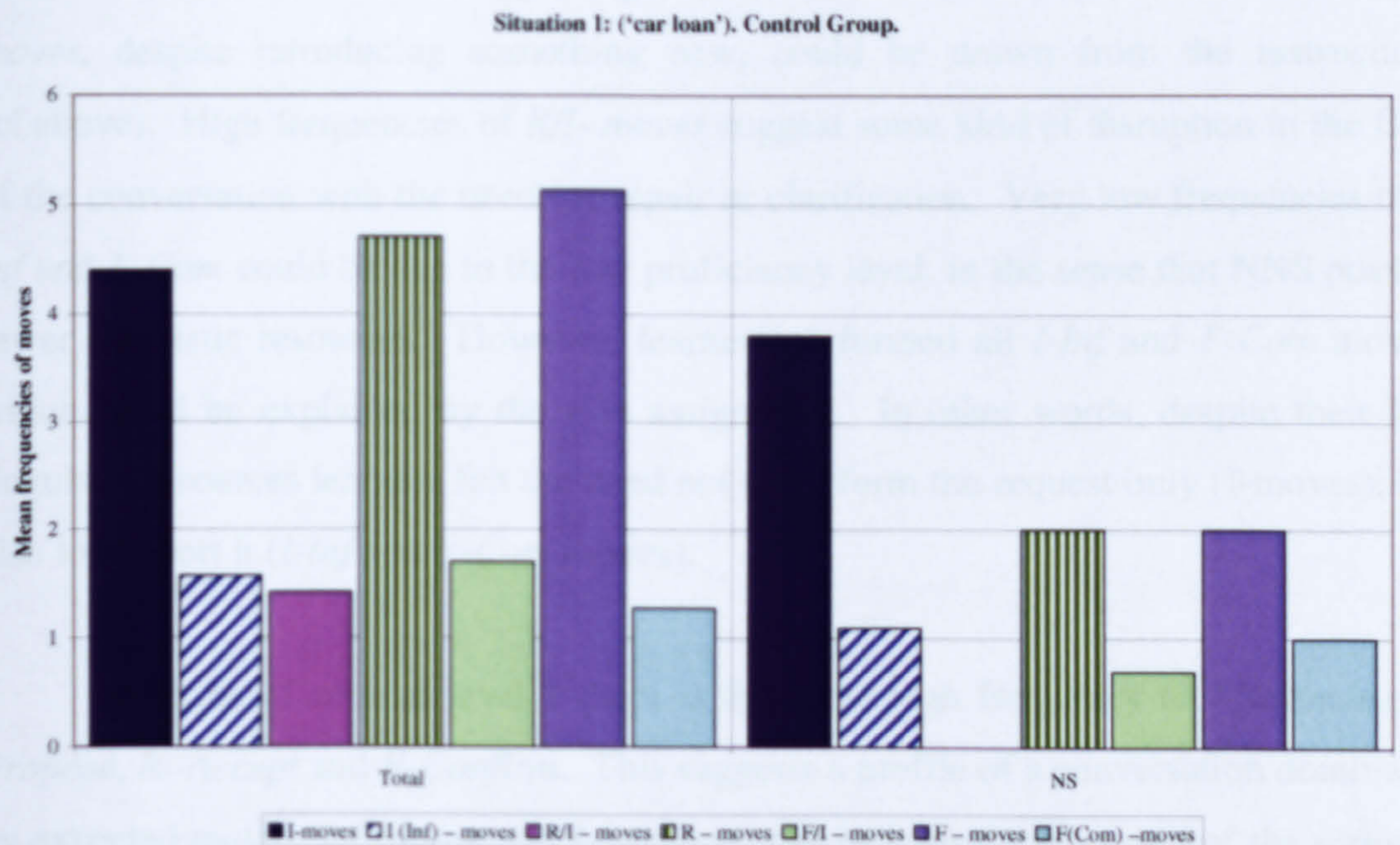




**Figure 6.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Average of frequencies of F/I -moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

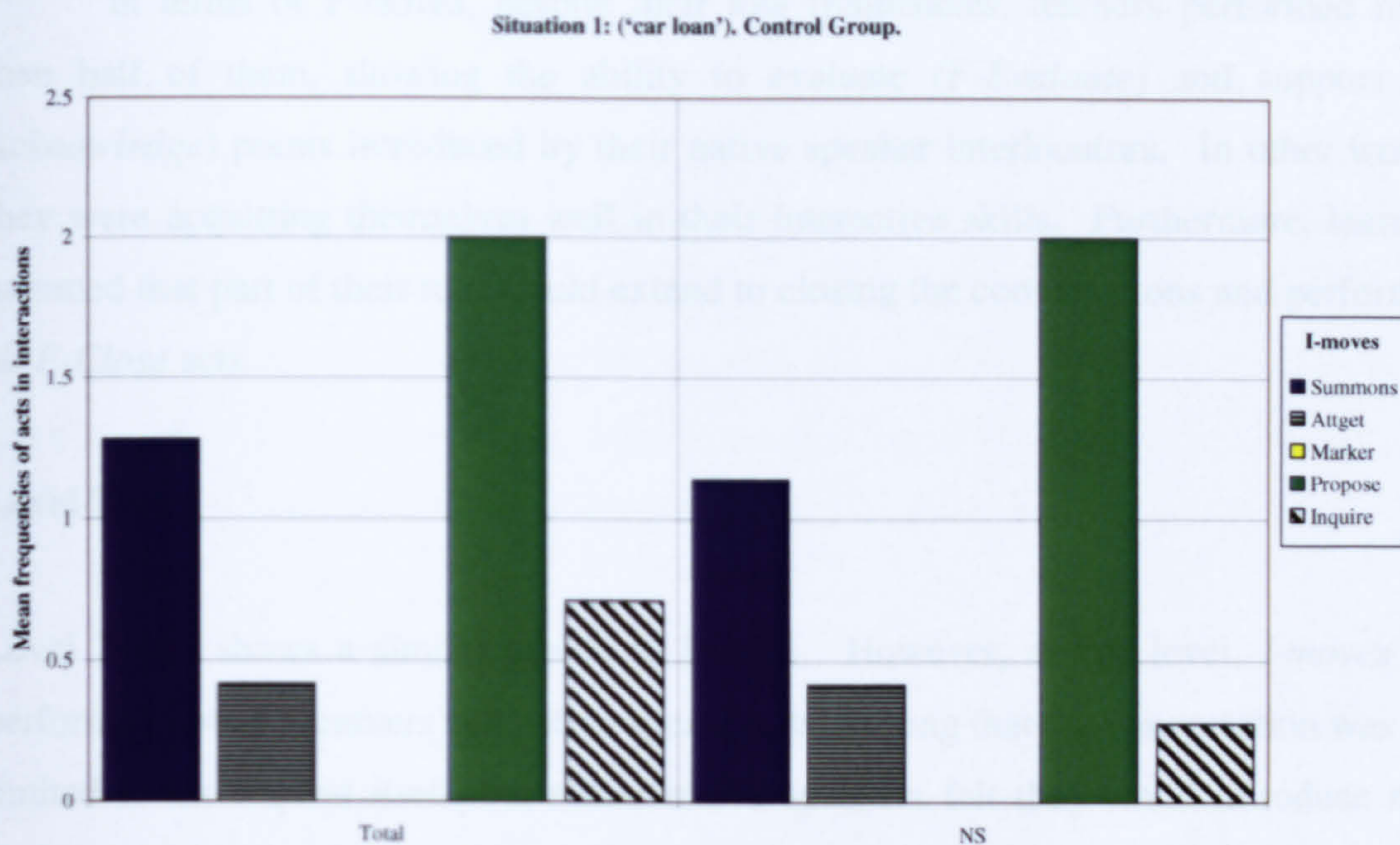


**Figure 7.** Situation 1: ('car loan request'). Control Group. Total (**T**) frequency of moves and frequency of moves performed by native speakers (**NS**) in the same role as learners (requesters).





**Figure 8.** Situation 1: ('car loan'). Control Group. Total (T) frequency of I- moves acts and frequency of I-moves acts performed by native speakers (NS) in the same role as learners (requesters).



### Level One

The profile of Level 1, regarding the total (T) frequencies of moves shows a predominance of *R-moves*, suggesting a predominance of more predicted moves. *I-moves*, despite introducing something new, could be drawn from the instructions (cf.above). High frequencies of *R/I- moves* suggest some kind of disruption in the flow of the conversation with the need for repair or clarification. Very low frequencies of *I-Inf* and *F-Com* could be due to the low proficiency level, in the sense that NNS possess fewer linguistic resources. However, learners performed all *I-Inf* and *F-Com* moves, which could be explained by the role assignment. In other words, despite their low linguistic resources learners felt the need not to perform the request only (*I-moves*), but also to support it (*I-Inf* and *F-Com* moves).

In terms of acts, at level 1 there is the same high frequency of *I-Summons*, *I-Propose*, *R- Accept* and *R-Confirm*. This suggests a profile of a conversation dominated by expected moves. *I-Propose* and *I-Summons* can be considered as part of the script of the interaction, where summons represent a ritual act of greeting, also functioning as openings. Amongst the predicted *R-moves*, lower frequencies of *R-Reply* can be



explained by it being more linguistically demanding than for instance *R-Confirm* or *Accept*.

In terms of *F-moves*, despite their low frequencies, learners performed more than half of them, showing the ability to evaluate (*F-Evaluate*) and support (*F-Acknowledge*) points introduced by their native speaker interlocutors. In other words, they were acquitting themselves well in their interactive skills. Furthermore, learners assumed that part of their role would extend to closing the conversations and performed all *F-Close* acts.

## **Level Two**

Level 2 also shows a similar profile to level 1. However, at this level, *I-moves* are performed both by learners and native speakers suggesting that the conversation was not limited to the request itself, but rather native speakers felt they could introduce new topics. In this level, *F-Com moves* were performed by native speakers, whereas *F-Repeat* and *Reformulate* were mainly performed by learners. *F/I-moves*, on the other hand, were mainly performed by native speakers. These frequencies suggest that the requestive interactions at level 2 show a more diversified profile with the presence of, for instance, *R-Justify* and *R/I- Propose* acts. However, frequencies also indicate that native speakers played a greater role in the development of the interaction, with learners adopting a more passive role (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 178 on passive roles).

## **Level Three**

Similarly to Level 2, at level 3 the frequencies of *F-moves* outnumber the frequencies of *I-moves* indicating that fewer predicting moves and new topics were part of the interactions. As at the other levels (except for Level 1), learners performed slightly fewer than half of *F-moves*. This suggests that NSs contributed marginally more to the conversation when interacting with non *ab initio* learners.

Similarly to level 2, the general profile of the conversation at Level 3 appears to be more diversified than Level 1 with *R-*, *F-Qualify* and *F-Evaluate* moves. Although native speakers have a more active role in this diversification, performing all *R-* and *F-qualify moves*, learners performed acts such as *F-Evaluate* and *I-Inquire* which are



demanding both in terms of linguistic and interactive skills (cf. expectations of discourse moves and acts above). In addition, unlike at Level 2, learners perform most *F-Com* moves.

#### **Level Four**

Some salient features of the profile of level 4 are concerned with the lack of *I-Inf* moves and very low frequencies of *F-Com* moves, none of which was performed by learners. Also, despite the predominance of *F-moves*, less than a half of them were performed by learners. This suggests a profile where learners, despite their advanced linguistic proficiency level, did not provide support for their requests.

While it is difficult to be conclusive about this pattern, since it could be attributed to sample size, there is also a discernible gap between pragmatic skills and linguistic skills more generally. Indeed, this pattern will repeat itself throughout frequencies at Level 4, meaning there is a consistency in the gap observed. In general, the profile of Level 4 shows less diversification with fewer *R-* and *F-acts* than the previous Levels 2 and 3.

#### **Level Five**

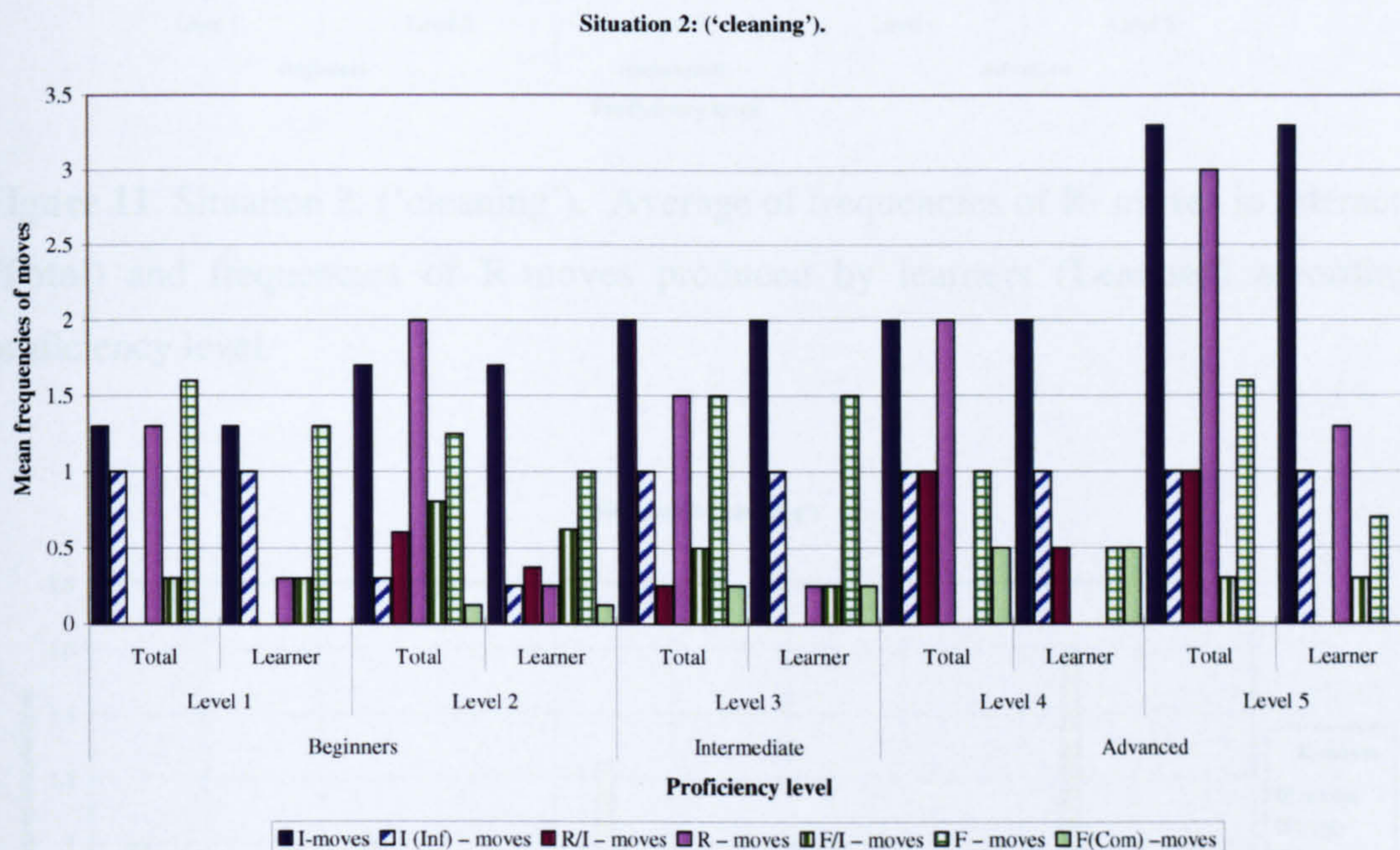
Similarly to all other levels, the profile of Level 5 shows a predominance of *F-moves*, half of which were performed by learners. In contrast to Level 4, there is at Level 5 a significant frequency of *I-Inf* moves, all performed by learners. *F-Com* moves were also present and performed both by learners and NSs. Likewise, *I-moves* display a significant frequency performed by NSs. This suggests a more balanced interaction, where both parts (requester and requestee) introduce topics and control the development of the conversation. Despite the similarity in general of Level 5 to other proficiency levels in terms of frequencies of moves, when it comes to the distribution of acts, the profile of Level 5 acquires particular features: there is a significant frequency of *I-Attention-getter* acts, all of which performed by learners. *I-Marker* appears for the first time in the interactions. *R-Reject* and *F-Evaluate* were also performed by learners. The presence of *I-Attention-getter* and *Marker* indicates that learners were aware of their function in the negotiation of the request.



**Situation 2** (cf. Figures 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16): Asking the cleaning lady to clean the classroom ('cleaning request')

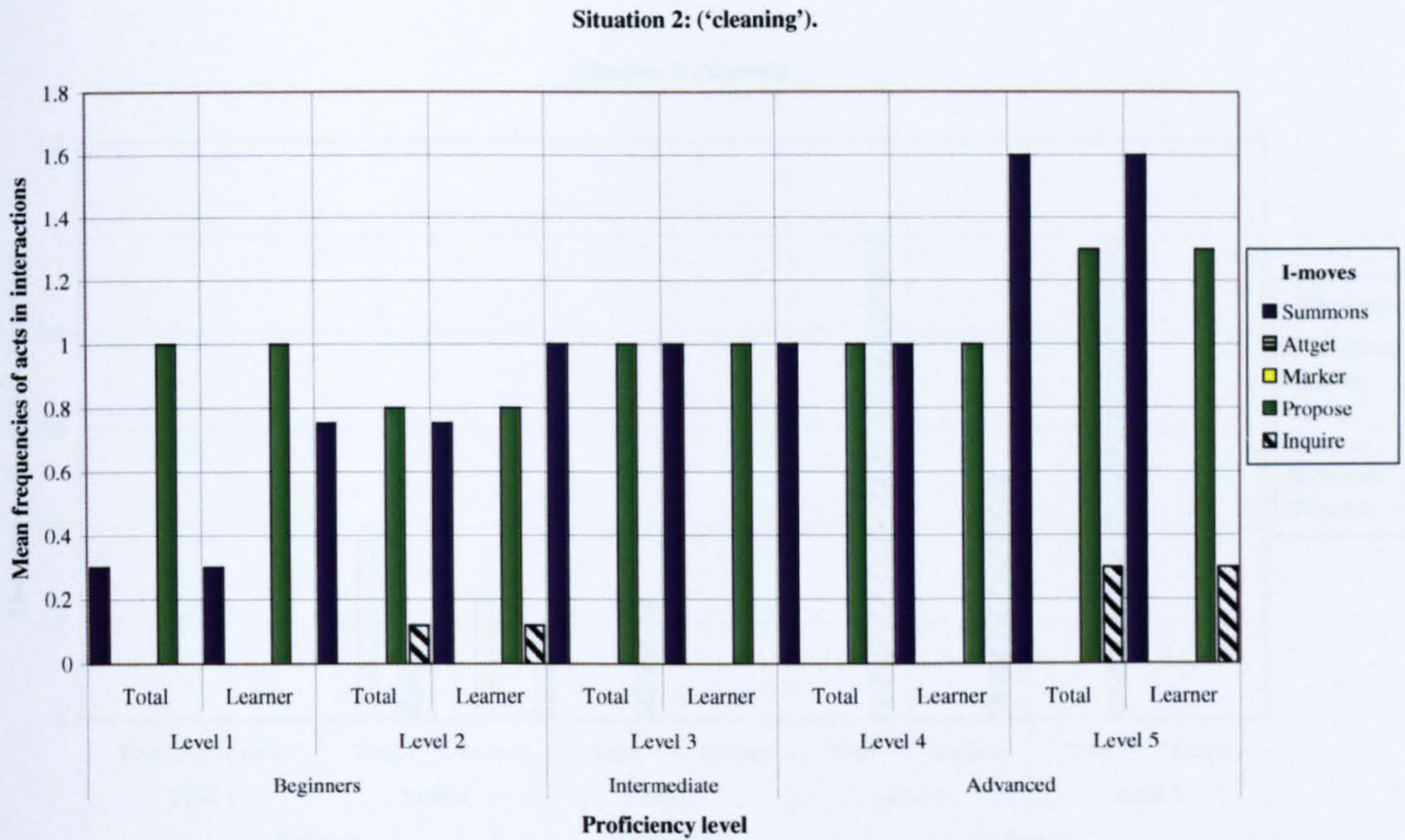
Figures 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 provide a profile of the interactions with learners in terms of moves and acts for Situation 2. In terms of number of exchanges, there are fewer exchanges in the requestive Situation 2 than in Situation 1 which is in accordance with expectations for this situation (see above). Also, this is the only situation where a subject opted out.

**Figure 9.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

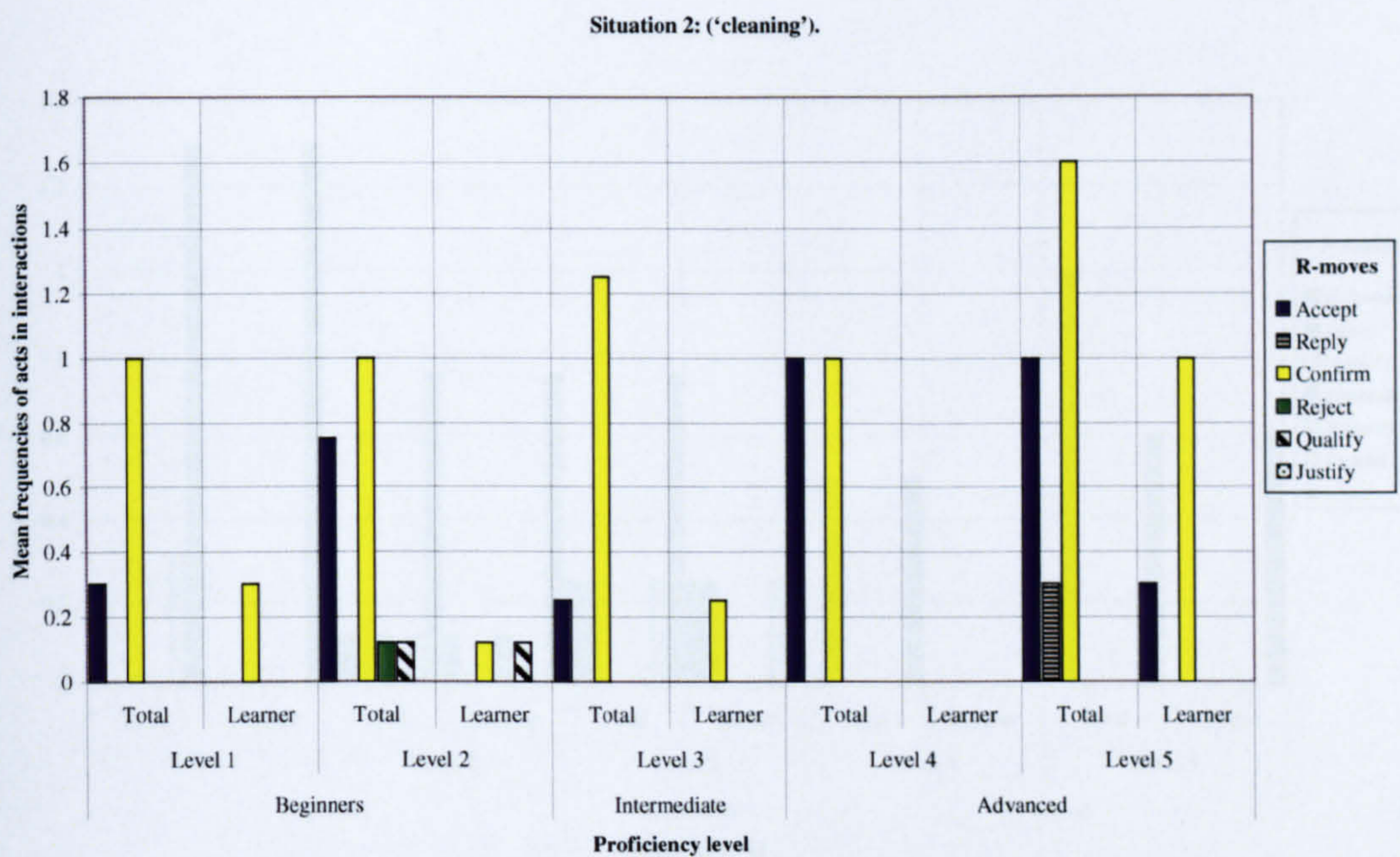




**Figure 10.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of I- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

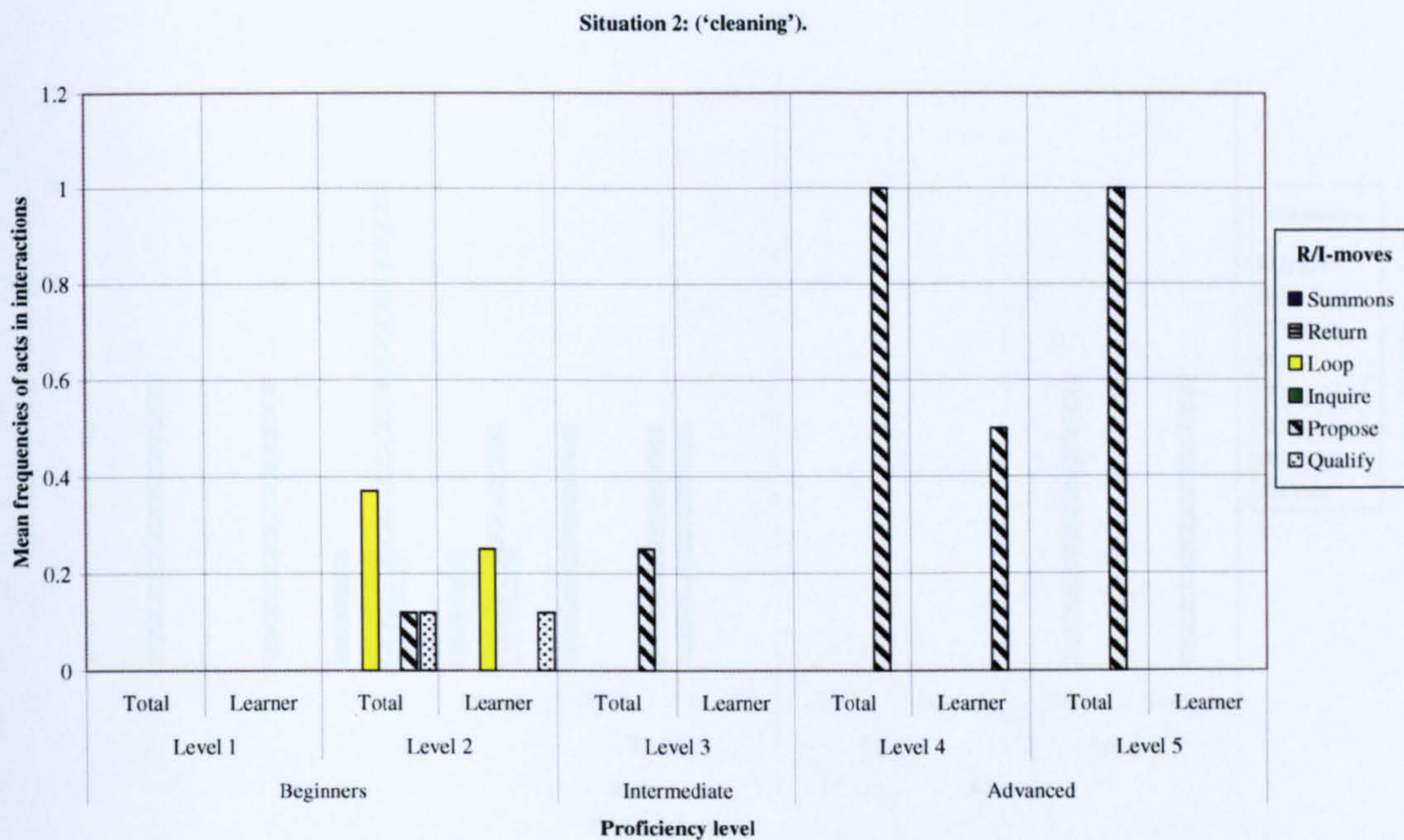


**Figure 11.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of R- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

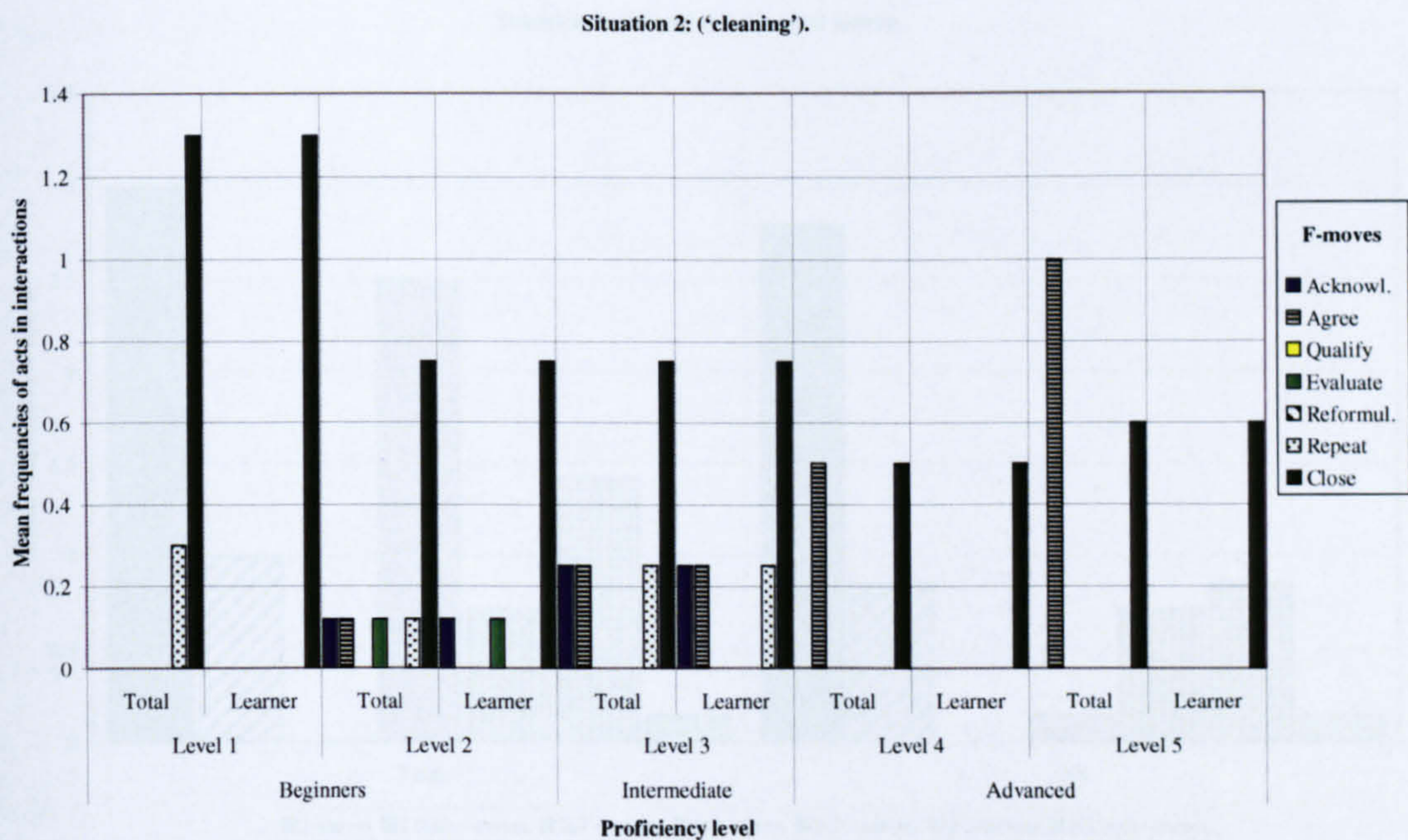




**Figure 12.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of R/I- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

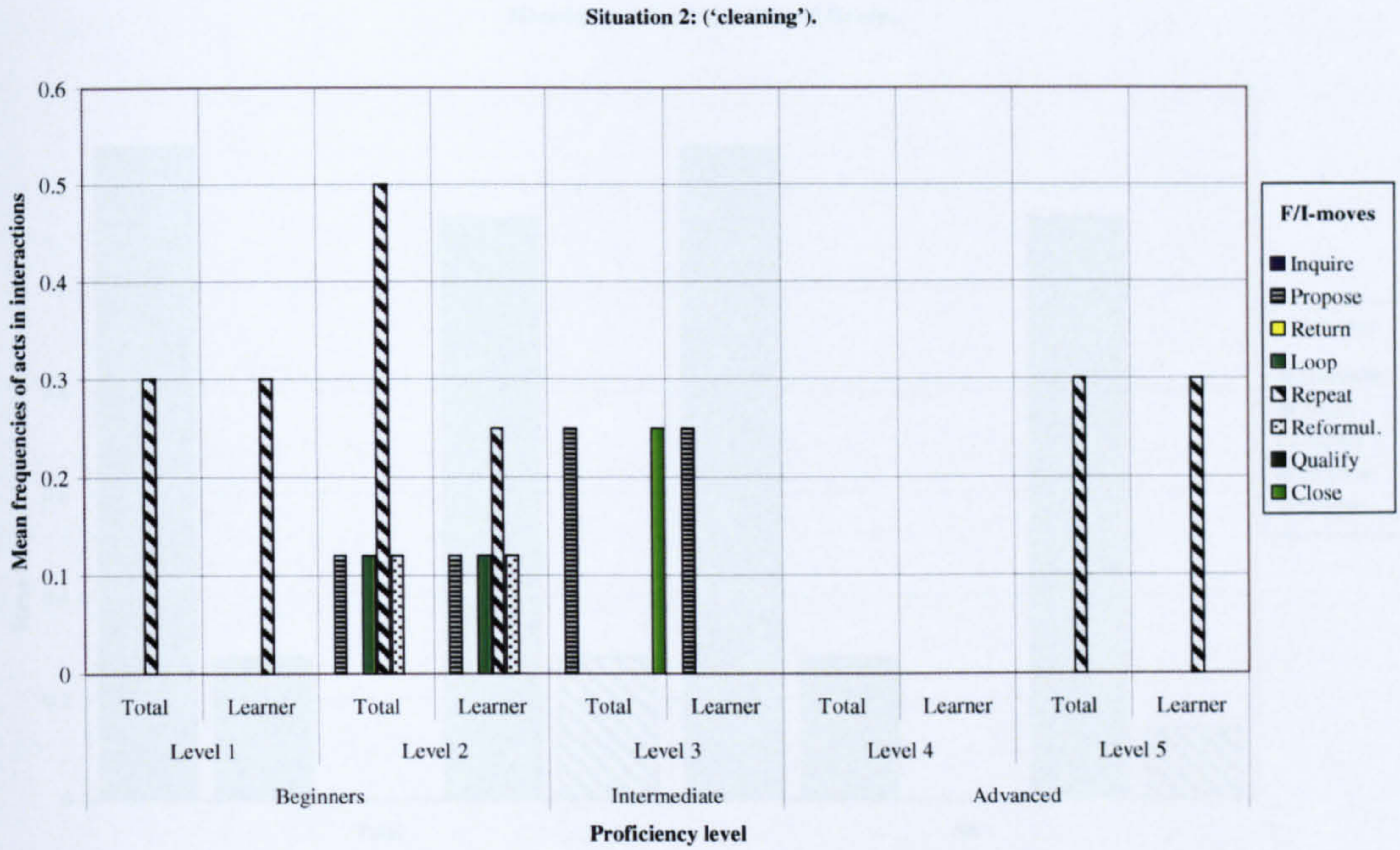


**Figure 13.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of F- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

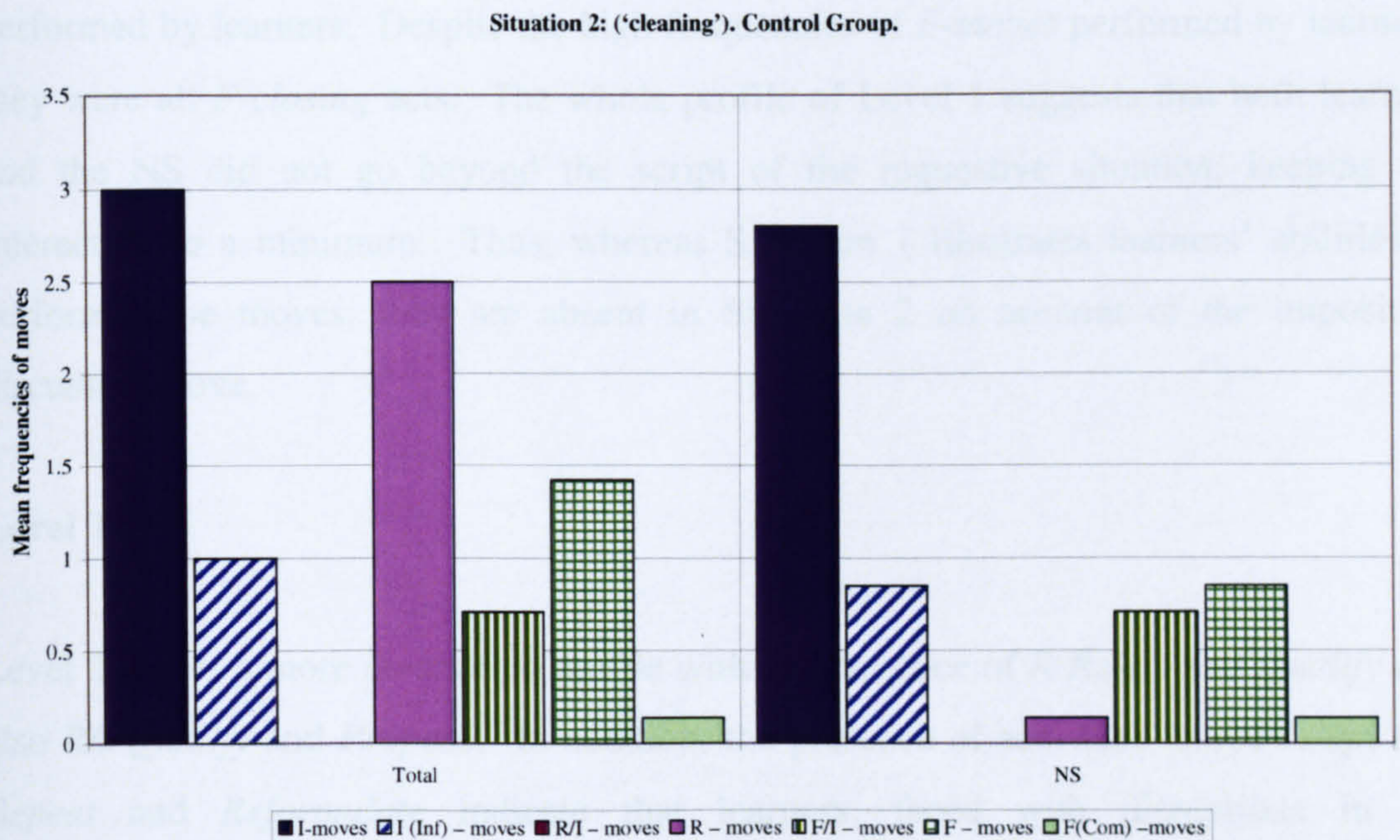




**Figure 14.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Average of frequencies of F/I- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

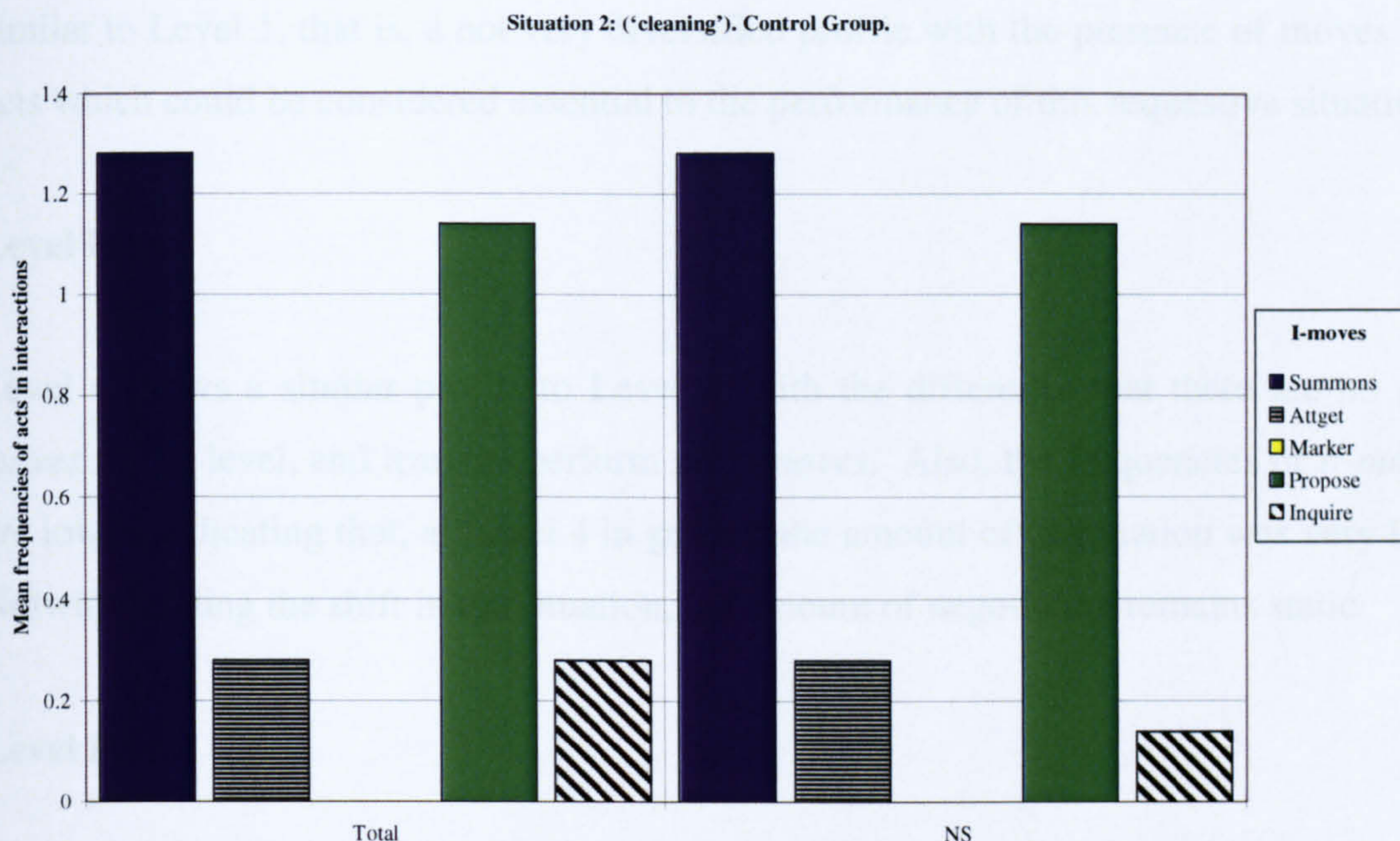


**Figure 15.** Situation 2: ('cleaning').Control Group. Total (**T**) frequency of moves and frequency of moves performed by native speakers (**NS**) in the same role as learners (requesters).





**Figure 16.** Situation 2: ('cleaning'). Control Group. Total (T) frequency of I-moves acts and frequency of I-moves acts performed by native speakers (NS) in the same role as learners (requesters).



### Level One

The profile of Level 1 differs from Situation 1 in that *R/I-* and *F-Com* moves are not present in the interactions. The frequencies of *F/I* moves are very low and were all performed by learners. Despite the high frequencies of *F-moves* performed by learners, they were all *F-closing* acts. The whole profile of Level 1 suggests that both learners and the NS did not go beyond the script of the requestive situation, keeping the interaction to a minimum. Thus, whereas Situation 1 illustrates learners' abilities to perform these moves, they are absent in Situation 2 on account of the imposition discussed above.

### Level Two

Level 2 shows a more diversified profile with the presence of *R-Reject* and *Qualify* and also *R/I-Qualify* and *Propose*. In addition, the presence of acts such as *R/I-Loop*, *F/I-Repeat* and *Reformulate* indicate that learners, faced with disruptions in the communication, invested more effort in the negotiation of the request.



### **Level Three**

Level 3, despite showing higher frequencies of exchanges and *I-moves*, shows a profile similar to Level 1, that is, a not very diversified profile with the presence of moves and acts which could be considered essential to the performance of this requestive situation.

### **Level Four**

Level 4 shows a similar profile to Level 3, with the difference that there are no *F/I-moves* at this level, and learners perform no *R-moves*. Also, the frequencies of *F-moves* are lower, indicating that, at Level 4 in general the amount of negotiation was very low. Notwithstanding the shift in the situation, the amount of negotiation remains static.

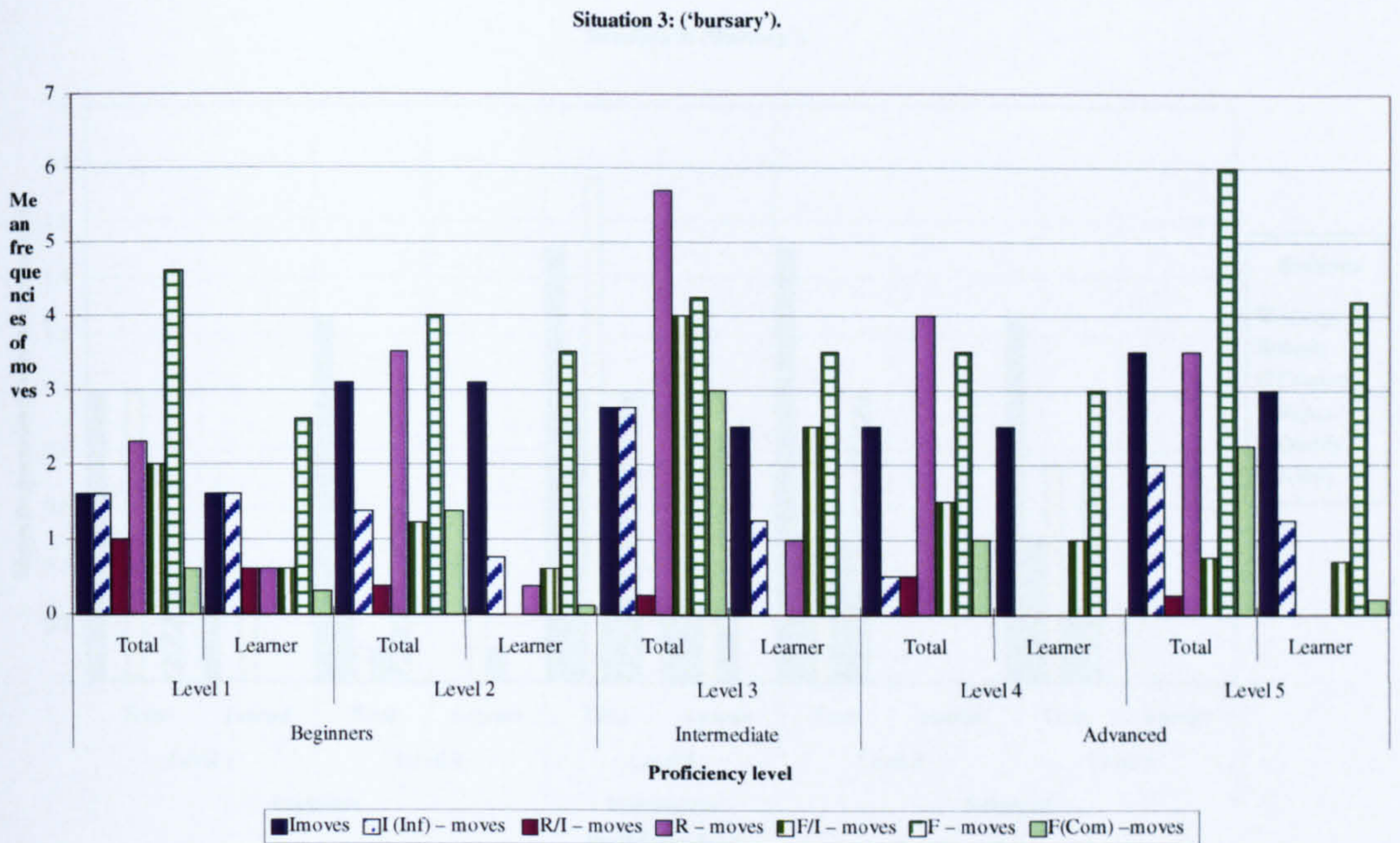
### **Level Five**

The profile of level 5 shows a much higher number of exchanges, reflecting the frequencies of *I-moves*, which at this level, outnumber the frequencies of all other moves. Also, all *I-moves* were performed by learners, indicating that learners introduced more new topics rather than developed old ones. Since Level 5 learners were capable of significant frequencies of *F-moves* in Situation 1, showing that they possessed interactive skills required to direct the conversation, it seems that the presence at Situation 2 of higher frequencies of *I-moves* (new information) than *F-moves* reflects more a pragmatic choice rather than lack of interactive skills. This incidence increases the processing difficulty for the interlocutor and could be explained by the attempt of learners to impose a form of 'interaction management' on the situation. It appears that the greater the social distance, the more formulaic the interaction tends to become. The appropriateness (or otherwise) of these frequencies will be discussed below in the comparison with the Control Group.

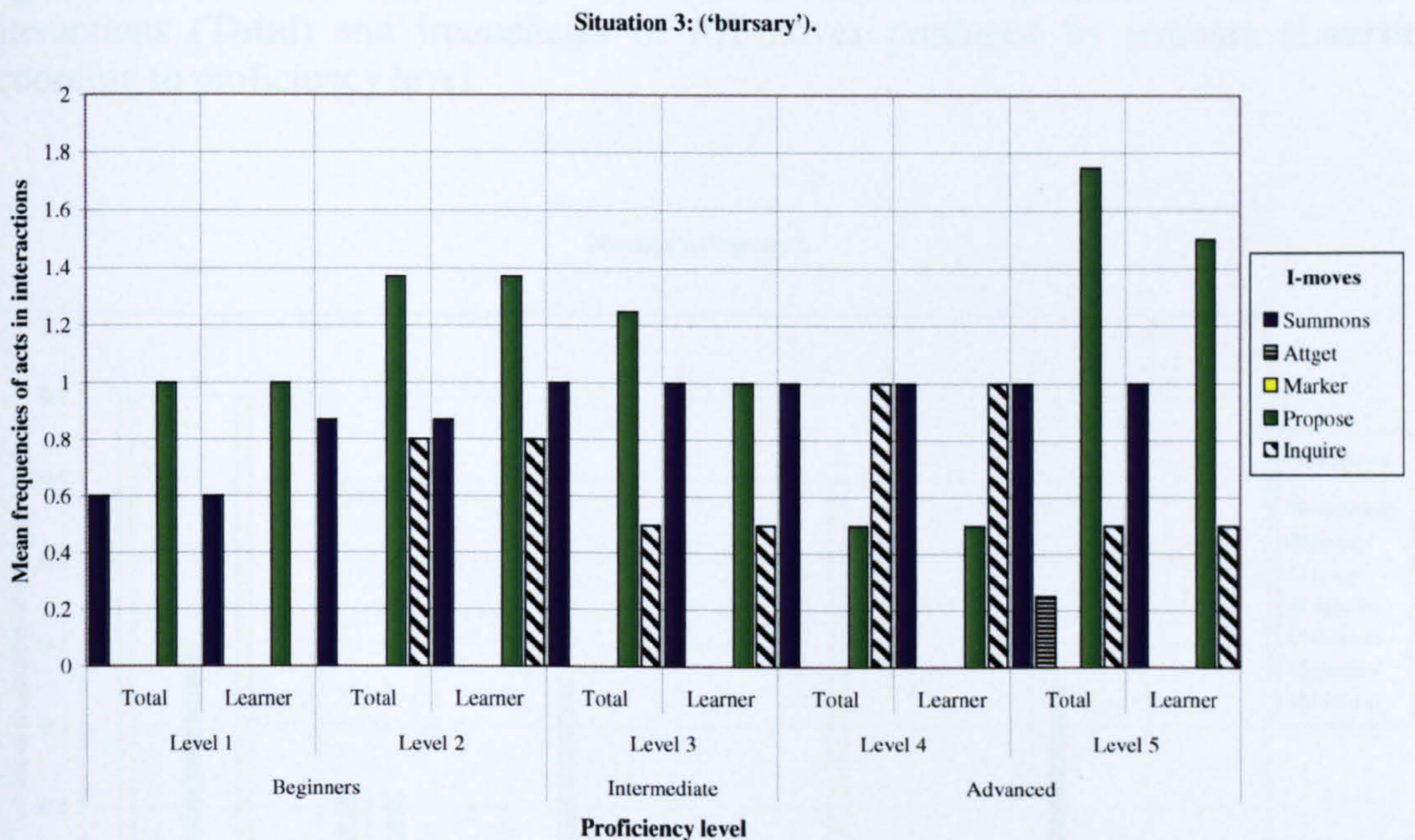
**Situation 3** (Figures 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24): learners are asking the finance administrator at the university for a grant ('bursary grant').



**Figure 17.** Situation 3: ('bursary'). Average of frequencies of moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

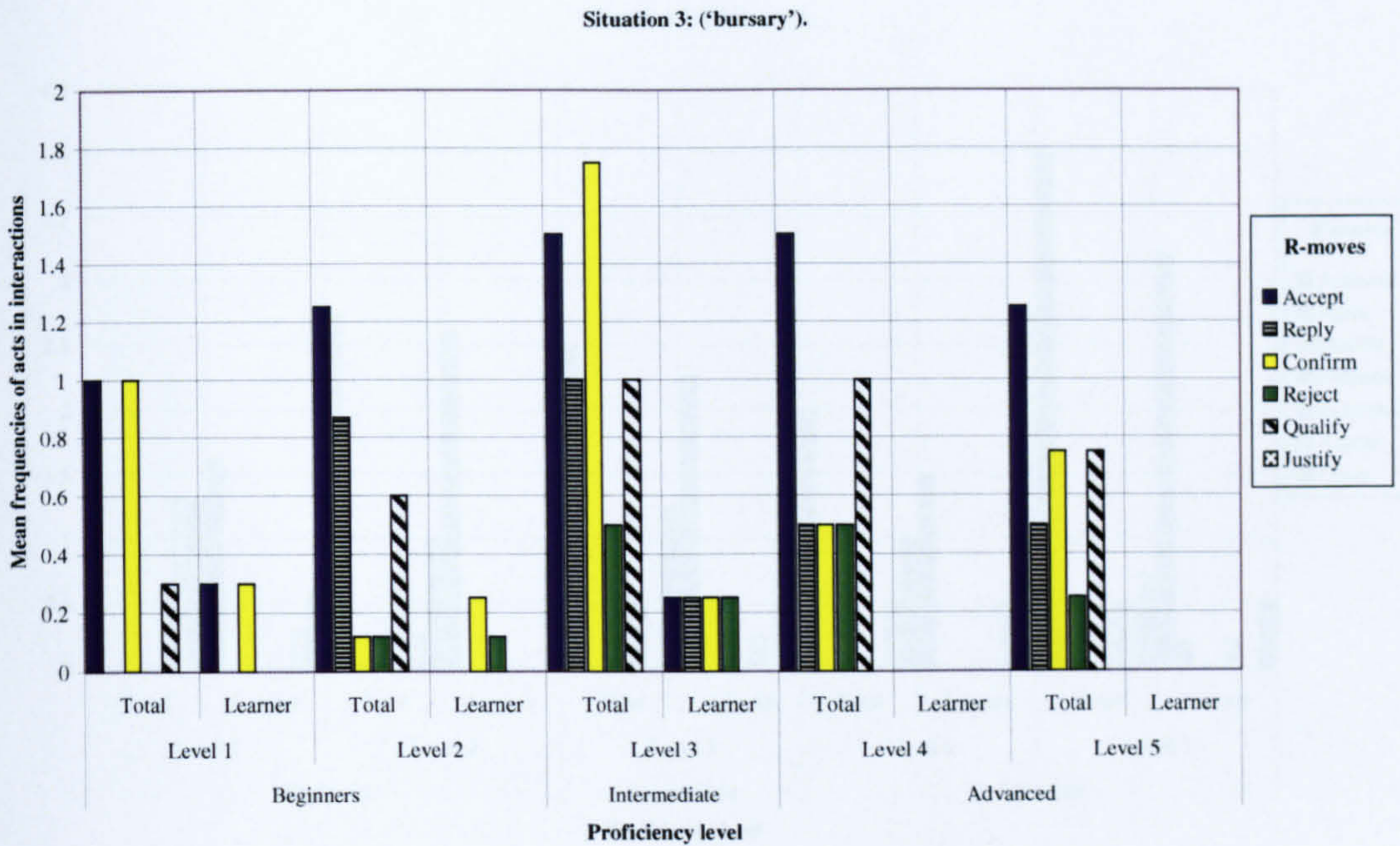


**Figure 18.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Average of frequencies of I- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

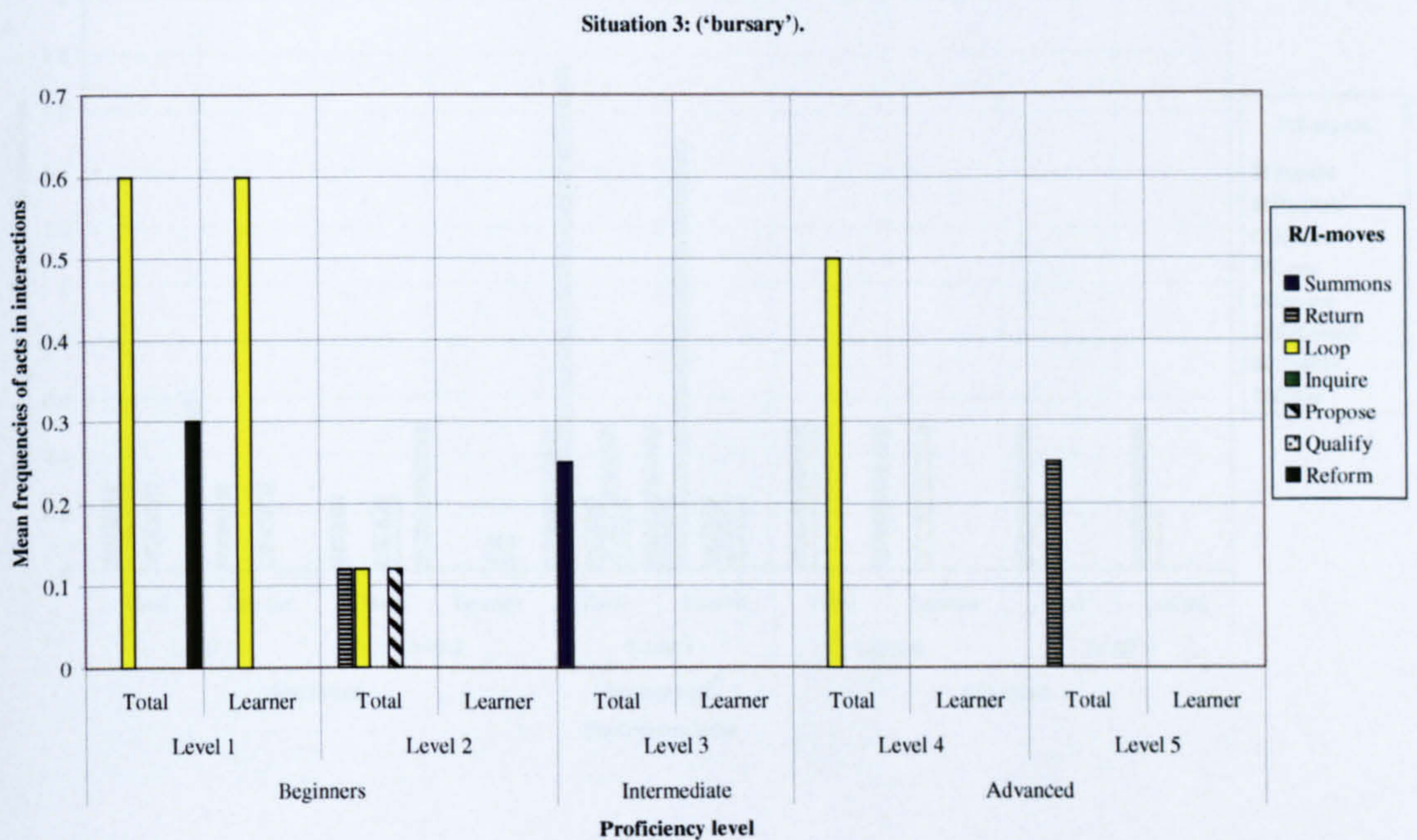




**Figure 19.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Average of frequencies of R- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

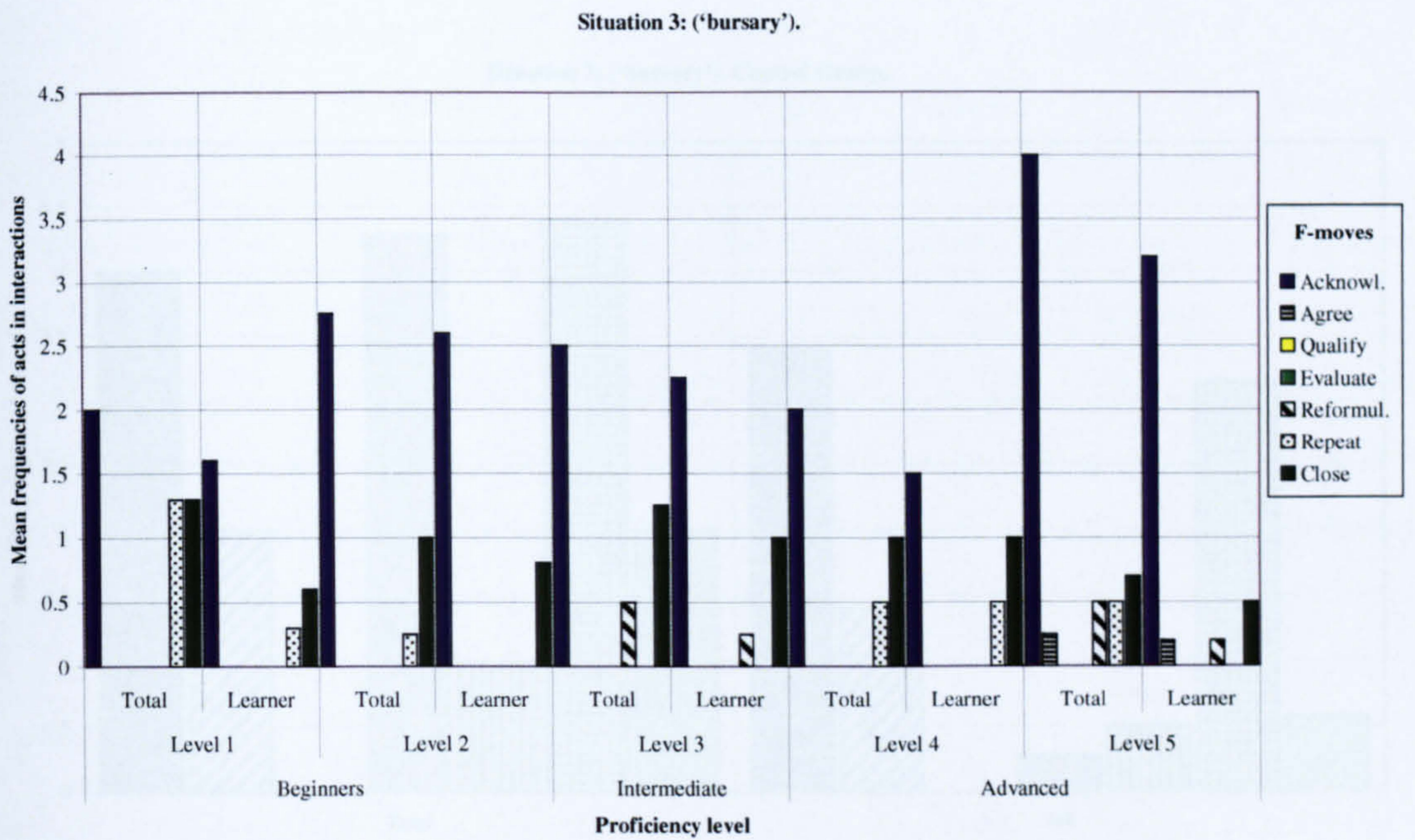


**Figure 20.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Average of frequencies of R/I-moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of R/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

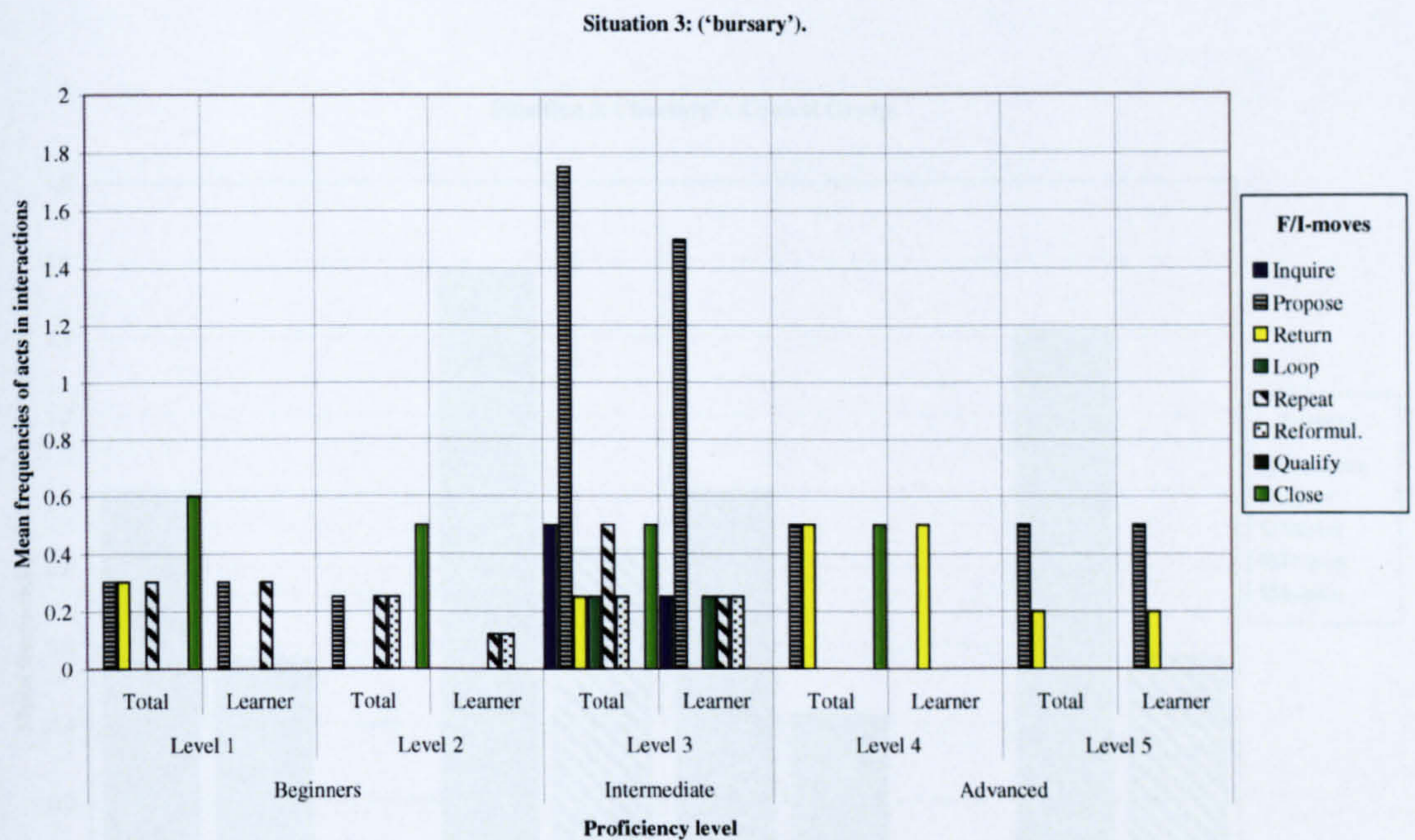




**Figure 21.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Average of frequencies of F- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

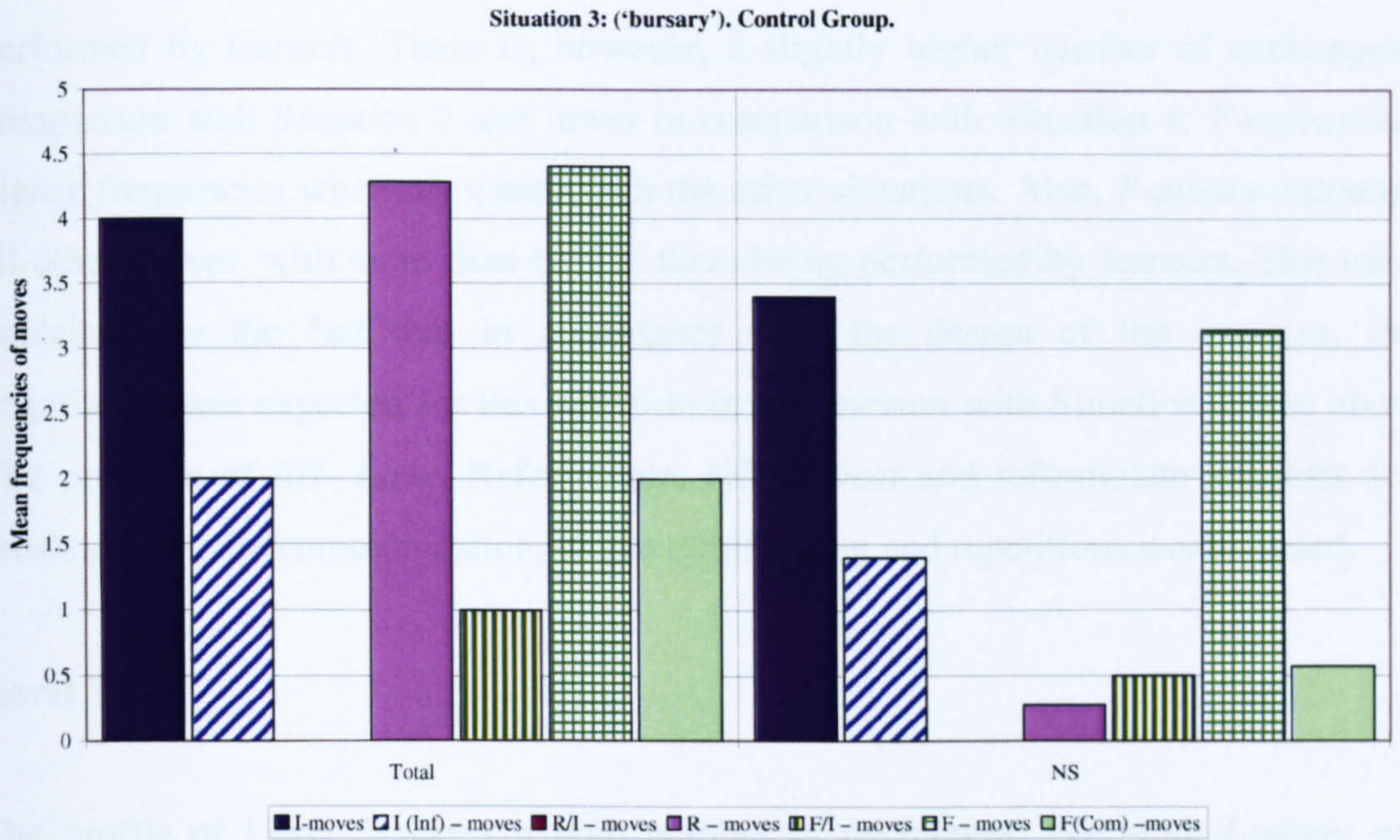


**Figure 22.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Average of frequencies of F/I- moves in interactions (**Total**) and frequencies of F/I-moves produced by learners (**Learner**) according to proficiency level.

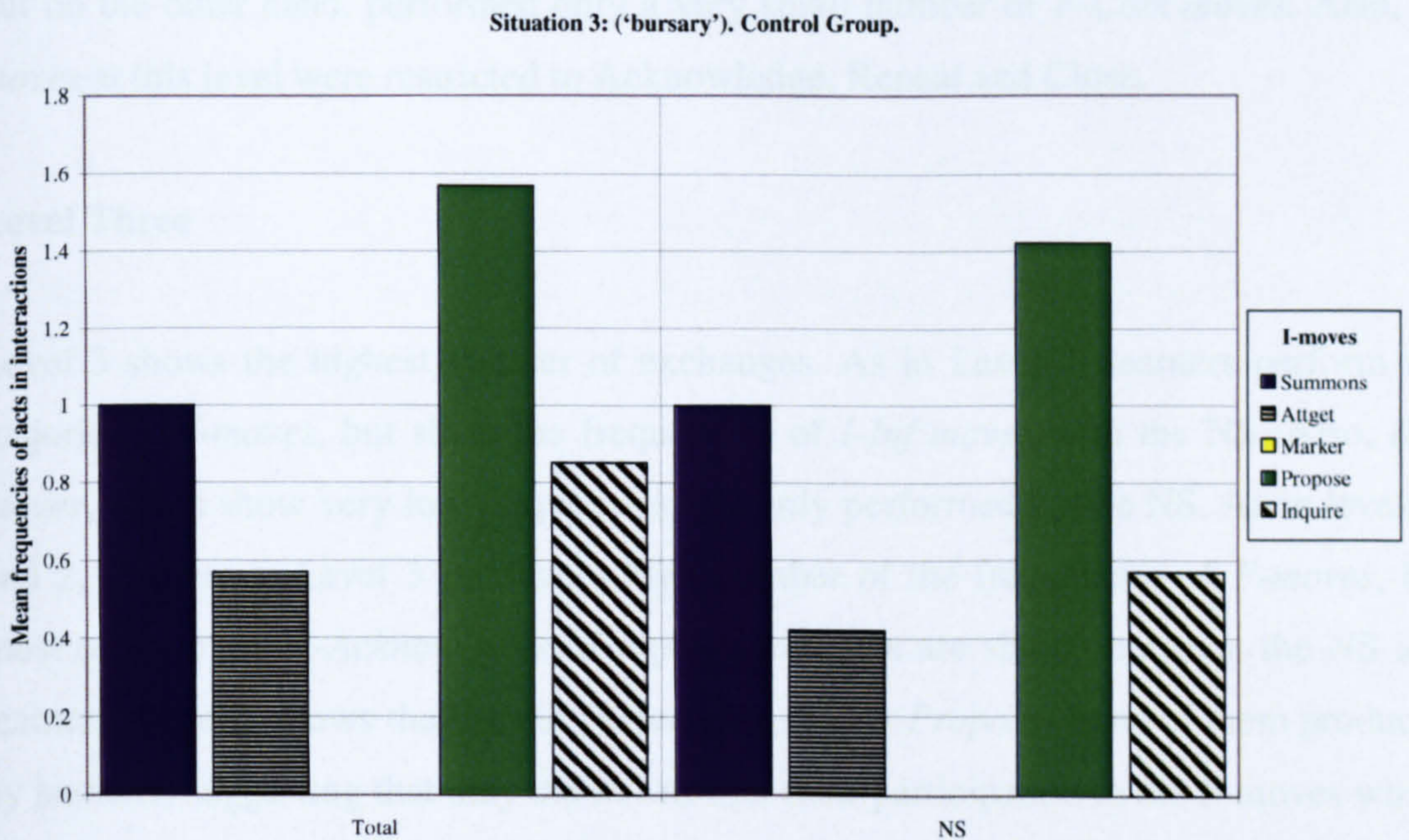




**Figure 23.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Control Group. Total (T) frequency of moves and frequency of moves performed by native speakers (NS) in the same role as learners (requesters).



**Figure 24.** Situation 3: ('bursary request'). Control Group. Total (T) frequency of I-moves acts and frequency of I-moves acts performed by native speakers (NS) in the same role as learners (requesters).





## **Level One**

The profile of Level 1 reveals a similar pattern to the other two situations, in the sense that there are the same number of frequencies of *I-* and *I-Inf moves*, all of them being performed by learners. There is, however, a slightly higher number of exchanges in comparison with Situation 2 and lower in comparison with Situation 1. *F-moves* show higher frequencies when compared with the other situations. Also, *F-moves* outnumber all other moves, with more than half of them being performed by learners. This can be explained by the fact that in accordance with the design of the exercise, more negotiation was expected for this situation in comparison with Situation 2 (see above). The presence of *R/I- Loop*, *Reformulate*, *F/I- Repeat* and *reformulate* suggests some breakdown in the communication, where clarification and repetitions were needed.

## **Level Two**

The profile of Level 2 shows a high number of exchanges. While all *I-moves* were performed by learners, half of the frequencies of *I-Inf moves* were performed by the NS. In the context of *I-moves*, learners at Level 2 performed a high number of *I-Inquire* acts which are considered more demanding linguistically and interactionally than *I-Propose* (cf. above 5.2.1.1). *R/I-moves* were performed only by the NS, who also performed the majority of *F/I-moves*. Learners performed a high number of the *F-moves* frequencies, but on the other hand, performed only a very small number of *F-Com moves*. Also, *F-moves* at this level were restricted to *Acknowledge*, *Repeat* and *Close*.

## **Level Three**

Level 3 shows the highest number of exchanges. As in Level 2, learners perform the majority of *I-moves*, but share the frequencies of *I-Inf moves* with the NS. Also, *R/I-moves*, which show very low frequencies, are only performed by the NS. As in levels 1 and 2, learners at Level 3 produce a high number of the frequencies of *F-moves*, but most of them are *F-Acknowledge*. *F-Reformulate* acts are shared between the NS and learners. Level 3 shows the highest frequencies of *F/I- Propose*, most of them produced by learners, suggesting that they did not restrict their participation to the *F-moves* which are considered to be less demanding both in interactional as in linguistic terms (see



above 5.2.1.1). In term of acts, Levels 2 and 3 show higher frequencies of R-Reject performed by learners. Also, Levels 3 and 4 show the highest frequencies of R-Qualify.

#### **Level Four**

The profile of Level 4 differs from the others (cf. also Situations 1 and 2) in relation to the performance of *I-Inf* and *F-Com* moves which appear in very low frequencies and were performed by the NS only. This could indicate that learners did not offer support for their requests. On the other hand, at this level learners produced all *F-moves*. Figure 17 also shows the lowest number of exchanges at Level 4. In conclusion, learners tended to leave the direction of the interaction to be determined by NSs.

#### **Level Five**

The profile of Level 5 shows that learners did not produce all *I-moves* and *I-Inf* moves, which were also performed by the NS although in lower frequencies. Only at this level *I-Attention-Getter* acts were performed by the NS. Their absence at less advanced levels could be a reflection of NSs adjusting their speech to learners' proficiency level.

#### **5.2.2.2 Frequency of moves and acts in interactions across proficiency levels**

*Situation 1: ('car loan request').*

When considering frequencies of moves and acts across proficiency levels, the most salient feature concerns F-moves and their significant increase as proficiency level increases. Because F-moves are neither predicted nor predicting, they are considered to be more demanding for learners both linguistically (if F-moves are not restricted to F-Acknowledge) and in interactional terms. F- moves were present in the interactions at all proficiency levels, with learners producing approximately half of the total of frequencies. This indicates that learners, even the beginners, perceived follow-up moves as being pragmatically indispensable in the interactions.

The fact that the frequencies of F-moves increase with proficiency level suggests that the more linguistic resources, the more learners used F-moves to take co-ownership

of the interaction, showing additional attention to pragmatic features. At Level 5, for instance, the frequency of F-Evaluate acts produced by learners increases significantly. The act I-Attention-Getter was only produced by learners at the most advanced proficiency level. Although linguistically not particularly demanding, pragmatically, the use of Attention-getters places speakers at the centre of the stage in the interaction for that move. Advanced learners were prepared to take this risk, to go beyond the *pragmatic minimum*.

This could be explained by advanced learners' willingness to demonstrate explicit communicative competence and to compensate for their "foreignness". High linguistic resources could be seen as enabling learners to be pragmatically more adventurous, since, although attention-getters themselves do not require high linguistic skills, their function is to create a focus for the subsequent move.

Situation 2 ('cleaning request'):

Figure 9 shows a slight increase of R/I- moves across proficiency levels. F- and F-Com moves show approximately the same frequencies at Levels 1 and 5, indicating that the decision to perform Follow up moves was not determined by language proficiency.

Regarding moves, learners provided almost all I- and I-Inf moves present in the interactions. Very low frequencies of R/I- and F-Com moves can be observed at all proficiency levels, and they are actually absent at level 1. F/I-moves show also low frequencies (except for Level 2), which suggest that either not much negotiation was needed for this requestive situation or learners felt negotiation should be kept to a minimum due to the high degree of imposition and social distance presented by this requestive situation.

Figure 10 shows the absence of framing acts and very low frequencies of I-Inquire at all levels, with I-moves being basically restricted to I-Propose. Figure 12 also shows frequencies of R/I-Loop and Reformulate performed by learners which could suggest that even in this situation some request for clarification or repetition was needed. Although learners at all levels provided all F-moves, they consisted of closing acts. Closing acts tend to be pragmatically formulaic or *ritual acts*.



In general, figures of moves and acts for situation 2 show that the profile of the interactions does not vary substantially, despite differences in language proficiency. Levels 3 and 5 show the highest frequencies of R/I-moves, which could suggest that either some clarification was required or a qualification was made before the request was agreed. The latter could be the case of Level 5, where the frequencies of R-moves were shared between the NS and learners (see concluding discussion chapter).

### Situation 3 ('bursary request'):

Figure 17 shows frequencies of moves across levels, whereby the most salient feature is the increase of the performance of F/I- moves by learners. This suggests that learners at more advanced language proficiency levels were able to introduce new information based on their interlocutor's previous move instead of on the role play instructions (description of the situation). Also, F/I-Loop, Repeat and Reformulate are absent at Levels 4 and 5. R/I-moves, with exception of Level 1, are only performed by the NS.

Although the frequencies of F-Com moves increase with proficiency, learners' production of their frequencies remains very low across proficiency levels. F- moves also increase with proficiency, as well as I-moves, although not in a linear way. This lack of linearity is mostly illustrated by decreasing frequencies at Level 4 although it is not confined to this group (cf. Level 2). For a discussion of such non-linear progression in the learning of pragmatics in a second language, see the literature review chapter. Within F-moves, F-Acknowledge and Agree have their highest frequencies at Level 5. These moves are redundant in terms of the information they convey, but are highly significant in pragmatic terms.

#### *5.2.2.3 Comparison of frequencies of moves and acts performed by learners and NSs in L-NS interactions*

##### Situation 1: ('car loan request')

In terms of moves, learners performed most of the I- and I-Inf moves. This result is in line with the role assigned to learners as requesters. However, learners also performed a great number of R-moves, except for learners at Level 1. R/I and F/I moves were mainly performed by learners. Learners at Levels 1, 3 and 5 performed more F-Com moves

than native speakers. At all levels learners performed F-moves almost on a par with native speakers.

As for the performance of acts, learners performed all I-Summons. I-Attention-Getter acts appear almost exclusively at Level 5 and are performed by learners only. I-Prop acts were also performed mainly by learners as expected given their role in the interaction. However, native speakers performed almost all I-Inquire acts, whereas learners performed the absolute majority of R-reply acts at all levels. The R-Qualify act was only performed by native speakers, while R-accept and R-confirm show a less polarised spread of frequencies.

Native speakers' performances show the highest frequencies of R/I-Summons, which fulfils the expectations of their roles as requestees. Learners at Levels 1 and 3 performed all R/I-Return acts, while R/I-Inquire acts at Levels 1 and 2 were performed only by native speakers.

F-Agree acts were mainly performed by native speakers which again confirm the expectations set by their roles in the interaction design. Likewise, the performance of F-Close by learners only is in accordance with the expectations of their roles. Native speakers perform the majority of all F/I acts, especially F/I- Inquire and F/I- Reformulate.

#### **Situation 2 ('cleaning request')**

Figures of moves and acts by proficiency level provide a comparison of the frequencies of moves and acts performed by learners (L) and by NSs. Of relevance is the fact that I- and I-Inf moves were mainly performed by learners, whereas R-moves were performed by NS only at almost all levels, with exception of level 5. This could suggest that neither the NS nor learners in this situation invested much negotiation effort. The few F/I- moves were performed mainly by the NS in interactions with learners of all proficiency levels.

#### **Situation 3 ('bursary request')**



As in other situations, the production of F/I- moves by learners increase with proficiency in Situation 3. At Level 5, for instance, learners' production of F/I- moves is on a par with native speakers'. As far as F-moves are concerned, NSs produce more F-moves than learners at all proficiency levels. However, a significant number of frequencies of F-moves are produced by learners at all levels, suggesting that despite the greater social distance of this Situation (compared to Situation 1), learners recognized the importance of F- moves for the achievement of the communicative goal. Attention getters are only produced by NSs in interaction with advanced learners, showing a more target-like interaction pattern.

To summarize, learners at all proficiency levels performed moves and acts concerned with their role as requester, but had difficulties with the subsequent negotiation of the request, which was more in the hands of NSs, as suggested by the high frequencies of F- and F/I- moves performed by NSs.

#### *5.2.2.4 Comparison of performance by Learners against the control group (NS-NS)*

##### **Situation 1 ('car loan request')**

The comparison of Figures 1 and 7 provides the number of frequencies of moves present in the interactions between learners and native speakers (Figure 1) and between native speakers only (control group, Figure 7) performing the same situational role play. Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 provide frequencies of acts in interaction learner-native speaker (2 to 6) and NS-NS (control group, Figures 7 and 8).

Comparing the frequencies of moves performed by learners (Figure 1) and by native speakers in the control group (Figure 7), it can be observed that, in the case of I-moves, advanced learners (Level 5) show higher frequencies to the control group, with learners performing more I- moves than NSs. This could be seen as part of what has been called in the literature as waffling phenomenon (cf. Edmonson and House, 1991). I-Inf moves show a similar pattern, with advanced learners (Level 5) performing higher frequencies than NSs. I-Inf moves can be considered to be more demanding in interactional terms, since they are not predicted, nor predicting. Still, they play an important role in the support of the requests. Another important feature regarding the comparison of I-Inf moves is the fact that in the control group they are performed by

both requester and requestee, whereas in learner-Ns interactions, only learners perform them.

As far as R/I moves are concerned, there are higher frequencies in learner-NS interactions. Although learners' performance of R/I-moves decreases as proficiency increases, still learners at Level 5 perform more R/I moves than NSs in the control group. The same can be observed in relation to F- and F-Com moves.

In the comparison of acts, advanced learners produced much higher frequencies of I-Attention Getter than NSs. This "overuse" of Attention Getter acts could suggest that learners have pragmatic awareness of the function of Attention Getters, but do not know how they are distributed along the interaction.

R-Reply acts were performed in learner-NS interaction mainly by learners, whereas in the control group both requester and requestee performed them. This shows that the task for inquiring in the interaction learner-NS was taken by NSs. R/I- Return and Loop acts appear in insignificant numbers in the control group.

#### Situation 2 ('cleaning request')

The comparison of Figures 9 and 15 shows that there are more exchanges in the control group than in the interactions with learners, even than with learners at advanced level. However, both in the control group and in NS-learner interactions, requesters provide almost all frequencies of I-moves and the number of frequencies is similar to the frequencies provided by advanced learners (Level 5). The frequencies of I-Inf moves are very similar to the ones provided by learners at almost all proficiency levels. The number of frequencies of R-moves in the control group is similar to the ones at the advanced level. However, in the control group, they were produced mainly by the requestee. This can be explained by the fact that in the control group F/I-moves were all performed by the requester. It seems that in this situation, both in the control group and to some extent in the interactions with learners, the requester was responsible for the development of the interaction, introducing Follow-Up Initiator moves. However, the frequencies of F-moves were approximately half produced by requester and requestee in the control group and in the interactions with learners at advanced levels, showing that requestees also played a role in the direction of the interaction.



Figures 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 provide a comparison of acts performed by learners in interactions with NS (Figures 10 to 14) and acts performed by the control group (Figure 16). In the context of I-moves, I-Attention-Getter can only be seen in the control group, being performed by the requester. Although linguistically not demanding, Attention-Getter acts are more demanding in terms of interactional skills. It could be the case that learners considered the high degree of imposition of this situation as well as difference of status a constraint for the use of Attention-Getters. I-Inquire acts show similar frequencies in the control group and in Level 5, however they were produced by both requester and requestee in the control group. The presence of I-Inquire implied the presence of R-Reply acts, which are only present in interactions with advanced learners.

The analysis above of the frequencies of F- and I-moves and their respective acts shows that in the control group and in the advanced level (Level 5) requesters and requestee present a more balanced participation in the interaction. However, F/I-Propose acts in the control group were only performed by requesters, indicating that in this situation, when compared to Situation 1, negotiation, although kept to a minimum, was mainly carried out by the requester. Also, in the context of F/I-moves, it can be observed that in NS-learner interactions there is a more diversified picture with the presence of F/I-Loop, Repeat and Reformulate, which are not present in the control group. This could indicate difficulties in the communication with both the NS and learners having to invest more effort. The absence of R/I- moves in the control group also offers support to this hypothesis. It could also be claimed that despite the constraints offered by this requestive situation (cf. above 5.2.1.2) learners did not abandon their goal.

### Situation 3 ('bursary request')

The comparison of Figures 17 and 23 shows that the number of exchanges in the control group is closer to the number found in interactions with learners at Levels 3 and 5. The number of frequencies of I-moves in the control group is higher than that at Level 5. Similarly, frequencies of I-Inf moves in the control group are in the same number as at Level 5. Unlike in the interactions with learners at all levels, there are no R/I-moves in the control group.

Also of relevance is the comparison of number of frequencies of F/I and F-moves, since the frequencies of F-moves found in the control group are similar to the ones present at Levels 1 and 3. Interactions with advanced learners (Level 5) show much higher frequencies of F-moves. On the one hand, learners could have failed to notice the F-close acts offered by their native speaker interlocutor. On the other hand, learners could also have produced more frequencies of F-moves in an attempt to reach their goal, namely to ensure that they would receive the grant. These possible explanations will be further examined as part of the discussion chapter.

Figures 17 and 23 also reveal that the frequencies of F/I- and F-Com moves in the control group are similar to those present in interactions with learners at Level 5. In terms of acts (Figures 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24), there are approximately as many frequencies of I-Attention-Getter in the control group as at Level 5, the difference being that in the control group they are mainly performed by the requester, whereas in NS-learner interaction, they are produced by the requestee only (the NS). Since learners at level 5 perform a high number of frequencies of I-Attention-Getter in Situation 1 (see Figure 2), the option not to perform them in this situation cannot be attributed to lack of linguistic resources but rather it seems to be a pragmatically motivated decision.

As in Situation 2, R/I- moves are also absent in the control group in Situation 3, suggesting that there was no breakdown in the communication, with no need for clarifications. Frequencies of F-Repeat are however present in the control group in similar number to Level 5. While in the control group they are performed by both requester and requestee, in the interactions with advanced learners they are performed by the NS only. This suggests that F-Repeat acts could have different functions, they could namely act as a confirmation of a previous move in the control group, whereas in Level 5 they could function as a clarification of a misunderstanding (cf. concluding chapter below).

### **5.3 Analysis of request strategies**

This section of the data analysis will be concerned with analysis of the requestive acts based on the taxonomy developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (cf. methodological discussion chapter). The first part of this section will deal with extralinguistic factors, analysing the



three different requestive situations in terms of external contextual variables (see Held's coding parameters above).

Since the analysis of the contextual variables will rely on hypothetical assessment of the situational variables of each situation, as well as on the analysis of the individual retrospective interviews, it was thought that for this part a qualitative analysis would be more appropriate. Textual data will also offer support for the classification of contextual variables.

The subsequent sub-section, following Blum-Kulka et al.'s and Koike's model (cf. methodological discussion chapter) will be concerned with the analysis of linguistic factors. Here, there will be first an analysis of the structure of the requestive speech act in each situation. This will be followed by the analysis of the types of request strategies, their internal and external modifications.

### *5.3.1 Extralinguistic factors: external contextual variables (Held's taxonomy (1995))*

The aim of this sub-section is to identify extralinguistic factors influencing the choice of request strategy, such as legitimacy and likelihood of compliance. In other words, the identification of the perception of the degree of imposition of each directive situation and goal: the likelihood for the addressee to comply with the directive and the difficulty for the learner to perform it (perception of interlocutor's rights and obligations) (cf. Kasper, 1989: 50 and Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 155).

#### **a. Legitimacy of the requestive role play situations**

According to the retrospective interviews, all Brazilians (control group) perceived the role play situations as if they were "real life" situations. They reacted as if the role play situations mirrored situations they are familiar with in their daily lives in a particular location (university). Although the native speaker subject was clearly not a friend of theirs, they seemed to believe that the other native speakers' occupation (cleaning lady and finance department employee) were their real ones. The learner subjects also perceived two of the situations (borrowing a car from a friend and asking the finance department employee for a grant) to be enacted as perfectly plausible, as situations which could be part of their real lives. Situation 2 ('cleaning request') was perceived

differently by native speakers (Control Group) and learners in terms of its plausibility. In the retrospective interviews, some learners acknowledged having felt ill at ease with regard to this role play situation (one student opted out), suggesting that it would not be plausible in their own cultures. Native speakers, on the other hand, perceived Situation 2 as perfectly plausible, that is to say part of their daily lives.

**b. Assessment of the degree of imposition: perception of interlocutor's rights and obligations**

External contextual variables affecting the performance of the role play situations will be assessed following Held's categories, which have been examined in the methodological discussion.

**Extra linguistic factors**

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
DOM	-	+	+
DIST	-	+	+
AGE	-	-	+
LEG	+	+	+
URG	+	+	+
ABI	+	+	+
WILL	+	-	-
OBLI	-	+	-
COST	+	+	-
AWK	+	+	-

**Situation 1: the learner is moving home. His goal is to get his friend to lend him his car to transport some objects ('car loan request').**

This requestive situation can be viewed as a request for action, which creates a higher degree of imposition (cf. Sifianou, 1992: 121-122 in Fukushima, 1996: 672). It has been argued that request for goods, in contrast to request for help, attenuates the imposition. However, in this situation, where the learner is asking for a car, the degree of imposition



is much higher, in terms of awkwardness, than if she were asking for someone to pass her the salt (example given by Fukushima, 1996).

It seems that the interpersonal aspect of the situation, asking a friend, outweighs the difficulty created by the object of the request. On the other hand, because the learner's interlocutor is a friend, the perception is that he feels under no obligation to comply with the request. As a result, requesters might perceive this Situation as one where they would need to negotiate their requestive goal more. At the same time, because of the low social distance, more negotiation is allowed. The example below shows the great amount of negotiation (high number of exchanges, moves and acts) even at a very low proficiency level:

Situation 1

E= learner

S= native speaker

Level 1

E2: Oi Gabriel tudo bem? *Hi Gabriel everything alright?* [Initiation move – ritual act (summons)]

S: Oi tudo bom? *Hi everything alright?* [Response/Initiation move – ritual act (summons)]

E: Gabriel, [Initiation move – Summons]

ahn amanhã ahn vou precisar mudar ahn ahn meu ahn ahn computador *ahn tomorrow ahn I will need to move ah ahn my ahn ahn computer* [I-Inf]

eh ahn acho que você tem um carro *eh ahn I think that you have a car* [Follow up (Comment)]

eh você ahn ahn está livre amanhã? *Eh are you ahn ahn free tomorrow?* [F/I (Prop)]

S: Que horas você precisa? *At what time do you need it?* [R/I (inquire)]

E: Ah que hora? *At what time?* [R/I (Return)]

Ahn doisi três da tarde. *Ahn two three in the afternoon* [R (reply)]

S: Pode ser, posso te emprestar sim *Fine, I can lend it to you* [Follow up (Agree)]

E: Ok, *ok* [F (Acknowledge)]

ahn, ahn ,ahn, pode, ahn ahn vai comigo? Com, ehn meu computador? *Ahn ahn ahn can you ahn ahn go with me? With ehn my computer?* [I (Prop)]

S: Posso sim. *Yes I can* [R (Accept)]

E: Muito, muito obrigado. *Many many thanks* [Follow up Close]

S: De nada. *Not at all* [R (accept)]

E: Tchau. *Bye* [F- Close]

Regarding other variables, whereas cost and awkwardness score positive, dominance, social distance and age score negative. In addition, legitimacy, urgency and ability also score positive. Consequently, this situation is perceived as carrying a medium-low degree of imposition on the addressee and as presenting the lowest degree of social distance.

**Situation 2: the learner finds the classroom in a mess. His goal is to get the cleaning lady to clean the room before his class ('cleaning request').**

This situation, also a request for action, can be said to carry the highest degree of imposition on the addressee, calling for attenuating strategies with the use of downgraders or mitigators. At the same time, cleaning the classroom is part of the cleaning lady's job, and therefore the interlocutor's obligation. Although some of the learners (subjects) felt that giving this kind of directive to the cleaning lady could not be seen as part of the learner's rights, Brazilian students at a private university, on the other hand, felt that it is their right, since they pay a considerable amount of fees, to have classes in relatively clean rooms. Since it was part of the description of the situation (task's instruction) that the room was really messy and dirty, this could have created the perception that, despite not being the cleaning lady's superior, the request was legitimate, with the category urgency scoring positive. This could explain the absence of Brazilians opting out. As far as the group of learners is concerned, one advanced learner opted out and others reported during the interviews not having felt comfortable performing that specific request. The learner who opted out offered as an explanation the fact that she would not perform such a requestive act in her native language/culture. This situation presents the highest level of social distance, while ability and willingness score negative. Cost, awkwardness and obligation scores positive. It follows from this profile that this situation presents the highest level of imposition. The example below with an advanced learner illustrates the low amount of negotiation (few exchanges, moves and acts), and also shows the use of mitigators (e.g. a bit, the conditionals 'could' and 'would')

**Situation 2**

**E=learner**

**C=cleaning lady**

**E14 –**

**E: Desculpa, Sorry, (I- Excuse/summons)**



a minha sala eu tenho aula agora e a minha sala está um pouco suja. *My classroom I have a class now and my classroom is a bit dirty* (I- Inf)

Você poderia limpar o quarto antes da aula? *Could you clean the bedroom before the class?* (I- Propose)

C: Tem que ser agora? *Does it have to be now?* (R/I- Propose)

E: Seria bom porque já vai começar a aula. *It would be good because the class is going to start very soon* (R- Confirm)

C: Eu vou dar um jeitinho. *I will sort this out* (F- Agree)

E: Tá obrigada. *Ok thank you* (F- Close)

The imposition concerning the time when the action needs to be carried out, despite the high level of cost and awkwardness could be justified by the fact that obligation scores positive in this Situation.

Situation 3: the learner wants to do a Portuguese course (continue, do another level), but he does not have enough money. His task is to get the person in the finance department to give him a grant or some kind of discount.

Although this situation was conceived as being concerned with a request for action, some subjects perceived it as being a request for information, as the example below shows:

Situation 3

E= learner

F= native speaker

Level 2

**E7 –**

E: Boa tarde. Good afternoon (I-Summons)

F: Boa tarde. Good afternoon (I-Summons)

E: Eu gostaria de conhecer informação acerca de bolsas. Eu quero estudar o nível 3, mas eu não tenho dinheiro. I would like to get some information about grants. I want to study the level 3 but I don't have money (I- Inf)

Você pode informar-me? Can you give me some information? (I- Propose)

F: ahn, pois não. Ahn yes no problem (R- Confirm)

In this sense, this situation is regarded as carrying a low degree of imposition on the interlocutor. This can also be confirmed by the constant reference made by the finance

department employee to her superiors, when forced to give more specific information about decisions of awarding grants as the example below shows:

Situation 3

E= learner

F= native speaker

Level 3

F: São poucas bolsas *There are few grants* (F – Comment)

E: Quantas são poucas? *How many are few?* (F/I Inquire)

F: Aí não aí eu não sei né? *Well I really don't know* (R- Reply)

E: Tem uma [percentagem]? *Is there a percentage?* (F/I –propose)

F: [É] Aí é a direção que estabelece os critérios eu recebo a documentação e passo pra eles aí eles vão analisar tá [seu caso] *Well it's the directors of the university who establish the criteria I receive the documentation and pass on to them and the they will analyse ok your case* (R- Qualify)

In this way, she removes the authority, or the power to concede grants by herself, adopting a mediating position between the registry of the university and the students. In comparison with the first situation (borrowing a car from a friend), it could be argued that although this situation presents a greater social distance, which of course will act as a constraint for both the choice of the request strategy and modifications in the performance of the act itself, it presents a similar force of imposition on the addressee and also similar level of legitimacy. Both native speakers and learners found that it was legitimate to perform the request in these two role play situations. On the other hand, in terms of the likelihood of compliance, this situation demands more negotiation on the part of the speaker, since, contrary to asking a cleaning lady to clean a room, here compliance is not as likely.

To sum up, urgency, ability, willingness and obligation score negatively. So do cost and awkwardness and social distance. On the other hand, age and legitimacy score positively.

### *5.3.2 Analysis of linguistic factors*

#### 1. Structures of the requestive speech act



According to Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989: 276) the directive speech act can assume the following structures in relation to the head act and adjuncts to the head act (supportive moves as “a unit external to the request, which modifies its impact by either aggravating or mitigating its force” (Blum-Kulka et.al., 1989: 275-276)).

- a) the head act only
- b) post-posed: head act + adjunct(s)
- c) pre-posed: adjunct(s) + head act
- d) multiple heads (on their own or with adjuncts)<sup>3</sup>

To the possible structures above proposed by Blum-Kulka et.al, Koike’s (1992: 63-64) proposal of structure for the directive act in Brazilian Portuguese will be added, as following:

- e) In between posed: adjuncts + head act + adjuncts (cf. also Fukushima, 1996: 673).

Situation 1: the learner is moving home. His goal is to get his friend to lend him his car to transport some objects.

**Figure 25.** Situation 1. Averages of frequencies of adjuncts and their position in the control group and across proficiency levels.

Structure	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	Control group (CG)
Head Act only	0	0	0	0	0	0.14
Post-posed N° Adjuncts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-posed N° Adjuncts	1 2.3	0.8 2.14	0.5 2	1 1.5	0.5 1.5	0.57 4.25
Multiple heads	0	0	0	0	0	0
In between-posed N° Adjuncts	0	0.1 2	0.25 3.5	0	0.5 4.5	0.28 4.5

In this situation, a preponderance of the structure of the requestive act as pre-posed (adjuncts + head act) can be observed. The number of adjuncts (supportive moves) would be expected to increase with proficiency level due to the “waffle phenomenon” (cf. Edmondson and House, 1991) claimed to be present in interactions with students with more linguistic resources. However, Level 5 learners produced fewer supportive moves for their requests than Level 3 learners. Advanced learners also score less than the control group. This result contradicts a general finding in the literature (e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993 and Kasper and Dahl, 1991) which shows learners’ (especially at intermediate level) tendency to verbosity, violating Grice’s principle of quantity.

Another feature which emerges from Figure 25 is the fact that advanced learners provided the same number of frequencies of pre-posed and In between-posed requests. Also, with regard to In-between posed requests they provided the same number of adjuncts as native speakers. It could be argued that In-between posed requests are, on the one hand, more demanding in terms of their production and on the other hand they could also be seen as having more mitigating force than the other kinds of structure of the requestive act.

**Situation 2: the learner finds the classroom in a mess. His goal is to get the cleaning lady to clean the room before his class.**

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<sup>3</sup> See examples in the methodological discussion chapter.



**Figure 26.** Situation 2. Averages of frequencies of adjuncts and their position in the control group and across proficiency levels.

Structure	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	Control group (CG)
Head Act only	0	2	0	0	0	0
Post-posed N° Adjuncts	0.3 2	0.12 1	0	0	0	0
Pre-posed N° Adjuncts	0.6 2.5	0.37 1	2 1.5	1 2	1 2	0.71 2.2
Multiple heads N° Adjuncts	0	0	0	0	0	0.14 4
In between-posed N° Adjuncts	0	0	2 2	0	0	0.28 3

Although this situation was supposed to involve more mitigation of the requestive act, due to its high level of imposition, Figure 26 shows frequencies of the post-posed structure of the requestive act at the beginners level. In addition, the structure head act only, which does not appear amongst learners in Situation 1, can be found in this situation at level 2. This “lack” of mitigation amongst beginners suggests a lack of sensitivity to situational variations.

In his study of hierarchy of politeness in Brazilian Portuguese, Koike shows that, depending on the register, that is on social variation, the positioning of the head act in relation to the surrounding adjuncts will vary accordingly. In this context, Koike (1992: 64 and literature review) argues that in requests where the force of imposition is very high, the structure of the request will play a central role.

Pre-posed adjuncts will establish the relationship with the interlocutor preparing the ground for the request. In this way, pre-posed adjuncts pre-empt possible resistance from the requestee, as an attempt to guarantee compliance. Post-posed adjuncts, in

contrast, are part of requestive situations with low level of imposition and mainly care for the maintenance of cooperation by the interlocutor. In this situation, therefore, the use of post-posed adjuncts by beginners can be considered pragmatically infelicitous.

Notwithstanding the profile of beginners in this situation, a similar pattern of the structure of the act has been found in the two above situations, namely a preference for a pre-posed structure. In contrast, the structure In between posed (adjuncts + head act + adjuncts) has only been observed in the intermediate group and could not be found at the beginners level. It might be worth pointing out, that in the control group (Brazilians) the In between- posed structure did not appear very often either.

### Situation 3: 'bursary'

**Figure 27.** Situation 3. Averages of frequencies of adjuncts and their position in the control group and across proficiency levels.

Structure	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	Control group (CG)
Head Act only	0	0.12	0	0	0	0.14
Post-posed N° Adjuncts	0	0.12 1	0.25 1	0	0	0.14 1
Pre-posed N° Adjuncts	1 1	0.62 1.4	2 2	0.5 1	0.5 1.5	0.42 2.3
Multiple heads	0	0	0	0	0	0
In between-posed N° Adjuncts	0	0.12 2	0.25 3	0.5 2	0.5 3	0.28 3

Figure 27 shows a more diversified profile for the structure of the requestive act for Situation 3. Both learners and native speakers produce all possible positions for the head act, except for multiple heads. However, despite the preference for the pre-posed position, showing a preparation for the request proper, the In between-posed structure scores at all levels except for the absolute beginners. This distribution suggests that



learners were prepared to invest in a more complex (see above for In between-posed acts) structure for the request in this situation in order to achieve their goal.

2. Identifying the request strategy type (e.g. mood derivable, query preparatory, hint etc cf. Blum-Kulka et.al., 1989 and Trosborg, 1995)

Situation 1: the learner is moving home. His goal is to get his friend to lend him his car to transport some objects.

The conventional indirect strategy in the form of query preparatory was the most employed strategy in this situation (see Figure 28). However, while it did not appear at the beginner's level, it constituted the strategy chosen by all subjects in the intermediate and advanced groups. It might be that this pattern lends support to studies showing that beginners choose more direct or more indirect strategies such as hints because they lack the conventional routines in the target language (cf. Hassal, 1997 and Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993 in the literature review chapter). However, beginners produced conventional strategies in Situations 2 and 3 (see below), showing that they had the linguistic means to implement such strategies. In spite of this, it seems that absolute beginners lacked key lexical items for the implementation of preparatory strategies in this particular situation. As the example below shows, absolute beginners did not have the verb to borrow or to lend as part of their lexical repertoire.

Example (level 1)

**E = learner (beginner) S = Student native speaker**

E1: Oi Gabriel *Hi Gabriel*

S: Oi tudo bom? *Hi Everything all right?*

E: Tudo, *Yes*

eu quero pergunta se você pode me ajuda ahn esta quinta, *I want to ask if you can help me this Thursday*

eu vou pro meu apartamento, não consigo pagar meu computador e outros móveis *I am going to my flat I cannot 'pay' my computer and other pieces of furniture*

eu acho que você tem um carro? *I think you have a car?*

S: Tenho. *I do*

E: Você me ajuda na quinta feira por mais ou menos uma hora? *You help me on Thursday for about an hour?*

S: Você quer o carro emprestado? *Do you want to borrow the car?*

E: (laughs showing incomprehension)

S: Você quer o carro, você quer o carro, pra fazer a mudança? Emprestado? Você quer pegar meu carro? *Do you want the car do you want the car to do the house move? Borrow it? Do you want to get my car?*

E: Sim. *Yes*

S: Te empresto. *I will lend it to you*

E: Obrigada. *Thank you*

The lack of the lexical item 'emprestar' (to borrow) seems to have constrained the use of a preparatory strategy, which learners chose to implement their requests in the two other situations. Thus, absolute beginners' use of hints did not seem to reflect a genuine choice of strategy, which would confirm findings in the literature (see above).

**Figure 28.** Situation 1. Average frequencies of request strategies by proficiency level and in the control group (CG).

Request strategy	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	CG
Mood derivable		0.12				
Performative						
Hedged Performative						
Obligation						
Wishes/Desires						0.14
Demands/Needs		0.12		1		
Suggestory formulae			0.25			
Preparatory		0.75	0.75	1	0.75	0.85
Hint	1				0.25	

Situation 2 'cleaning request':



Similarly to Situation 1 a clear preference for preparatory strategies can be observed in this situation (see Figure 29), a pattern which has been identified in several studies of different target languages (cf. Fearch and Kasper, 1989, Warga, 2002). Hints have, like as in Situation 1, been found only in the beginners group (proficiency Level 2). It is worth pointing out that all native speakers in the Control Group chose preparatory strategies. The presence of mood derivable in Figure 29 is due to the use of multiple heads, where the first request was made with a preparatory strategy and the second with a mood derivable.

Example from the control group:

**B2:** Oh Lourdes tudo bem como é que tá? *Hi Lourdes, how are you?*

**C:** Tudo bem. *Fine*

**B2:** Bom dia. *Good morning*

**C:** Bom dia. *Good morning*

**B2:** Pô tá uma bagunça a sala hein? *It's very messy the room isn't it?*

**C:** É. *True*

**B2:** Pô deixaram / quem é que fez isso? A outra turma é? *They left, who did this? The other group?*

**Pô** Lourdes não pude nem sentar nessa cadeira cara *Lourdes, I couldn't even sit on this chair*

pô tem como você chamar alguém pra fazer uma faxina porque você sozinha não vai conseguir fazer tudo isso. *Can you call somebody to clean this because on your own you won't be able to do all this*

**C:** Consigo sim. *yes I will*

**B2:** Consegue? *Will you?*

Pô, então então faz um favorzinho aqui pra mim, limpa um pouco essa carteira, pelo menos a minha pra eu ficar confortável, entendeu nessa aula *So, do me a favour, clean this chair a bit in order for me to be comfortable you know in this class*

brigado Lourdes. *Thanks Lourdes*

Absolute beginners also chose only preparatory strategies in this situation. Taking into account that in Situation 1 the use of hints did not really reflect a choice of strategy and also the fact that absolute beginners also chose only preparatory strategies in Situation 3 (see below and Figure 29), it could be argued that the choice of request strategies by

absolute beginners confirm some findings in the literature concerned with little change of situational variation (cf. Rose, 2000 in the literature review).

Little change of situational variation could be explained by length of residence. As revealed in the background questionnaire, absolute beginners not only had spent little time in Brazil before enrolling in the Portuguese course, but they also had very little contact with native speakers. It has been argued in the literature (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, see also literature review) that sociopragmatic perceptions are linked with length of residence rather than with language proficiency. Most importantly, sociopragmatic knowledge is said to be dependent on exposure to input (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993 in the literature review). The role of input and its perception as possible constraints for the selection of request strategies by learners will be investigated below.

**Figure 29.** Situation 2. Average of frequencies of request strategies by proficiency level and in the Control Group (CG).

Request strategy	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	CG
Mood derivable						0.14
Performative						
Hedged Performative						
Obligation						
Wishes/desires					0.3	
Demands/Needs		0.12	0.25			
Suggestory formulae			0.25			
Preparatory	1	0.87	0.5	1	0.6	1
Hint		0.12				



### Situation 3 'bursary request':

In this Situation (cf. Figure 30), learners at all proficiency levels (except for Level 1, see above) tend to implement their requests with either preparatory strategies or more indirect strategies (hints). In contrast to this, native speakers (see Control Group) use, besides preparatory, more direct strategies, such as hedged performative and wishes and desires.

Hints performed by learners were concerned with questioning availability (cf. Trosborg in the methodological discussion chapter), as in the examples below of the requestive head acts below:

#### **Level 2**

**E8 –**

E: oi

ahn eu quisesse saber pra o próximo semestre se tem bolsas pra os estudantes estrangeiros? *Hi I would like to know if there are grants for foreign students?*

#### **Level 5**

**E12 –**

E: eu gostaria de saber se há a possibilidade de uma bolsa. *I would like to know if there is the possibility of a grant.*

#### **Control Group**

**B3:** Olha só,

tô aqui pedindo, encarecidamente se você pode olhar uma proposta pra mim *Look, I am here kindly asking if you could have a look at a proposal [for a grant] for me*

Both beginners and advanced learners avoid asking for a grant in a more direct way, preferring to question availability. While questioning availability can be a conventional indirect request strategy (see Trosborg, 1995), it does not figure in the Control Group (see Figure 30 and examples below). A possible explanation for the choice of a non target-like strategy even by advanced learners could lie in the lack of sensitivity to the choice of directness levels, that is learners have different perceptions of L2 sociopragmatic norms. Different, non-native perceptions could be the result of negative transfer of sociopragmatic norms from L1 to L2 or purposeful loyalty to L1 cultural patterns (cf. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993 in the literature review).

**Figure 30.** Situation 3. Average of frequencies of request strategies by proficiency level and in the Control Group (CG).

Request strategy	Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	CG
Mood Derivable						
Performative						
Hedged Performative						0.28
Obligation						
Wishes/desires		0.12				0.28
Suggestory formulae			0.25			
Preparatory	1	0.75	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.42
Hint		0.12	0.25	0.5	0.75	

3. Identifying the types of adjuncts (supportive moves) to the head act (the request proper). External modifications of the head act can function as for instance preparators for the speech act or they can offer a justification for the request (cf. summary of coding categories in the methodological discussion chapter).

#### Situation 1. 'Car Loan request'

Figure 31 shows that the number of adjuncts increases with proficiency (except for level 4). Still, learners at all levels produce fewer adjuncts than the Control Group, suggesting that the perception by learners of the need for negotiation in this situation was different from native speakers'. Other (processing) constraints will be discussed in the next section.

Findings in the literature tend to show an opposite pattern, that is higher frequencies of adjuncts amongst learners than native speakers (cf. Warga, 2002 and literature review). The most widely used adjunct, both by learners and native speakers, was the preparator, followed by the grounder. Despite the predominance of the preparatory and the grounder, a diversification of types of adjuncts can be observed in the Control Group. Amongst learners, this diversification can only be observed in the advanced level.



**Figure 31.** Situation 1. Averages of frequencies of adjuncts (supportive moves) by proficiency level and in the Control Group (CG).

Prof. Levels	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Ctrl Group
Adjunct						
Preparator	2	1.25	1.5	1	1.25	1.5
Grounder	0.3	0.5	1	0.5	0.75	1.14
Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0	0.14
Reward	0	0	0	0	0.25	0
Retreat	0	0.25	0	0	0.25	0.14
Imp Minimi	0	0	0.25	0	0.25	0.42
Sweetner	0	0.12	0	0	0.25	0.14
Total	2.3	2.12	2.75	1.5	3	3.5

#### Situation 2. 'Cleaning request'

In comparison with Situation 1, the number of adjuncts in Situation 2 is lower both in the Control Group and amongst learners. Levels 1 and 4 show higher frequencies of adjuncts than the other levels and in the Control Group. Again, a clear preference for preparators and grounders can be observed. However, unlike Situation 1, much less diversification of adjuncts can be seen in this situation, both in the Control Group and amongst learners. This lack of diversification suggests that the requestive act in this situation followed a heavily routinized 'script', with little variation. This was a situation designed to carry a high degree of imposition (cf. discussion expectations of degrees of imposition, above), but on the other hand, given the social distance, compliance was expected. Above all, it seems that social distance limited the amount of resistance from the part of the requestee (the cleaning lady), who seemed to accept the request as part of her job with no need of further support for the request, as the example shows:

Example:

#### Level 4

E 21 –

E: Boa tarde senhora Lourdes. *Good afternoon, 'senhora' Lourdes*

C: Boa tarde. *Good afternoon*

E: Aqui na sala nós temos uma problema um problema porque não podemos trabalhar lá porque tem muito sujo ehm e seria ótimo se você poderia fazer uma limpeza.

Você pode arrumar isso um pouquinho para gente? *Here in this room we have a problem a problem because there is much dirty ehm and it would be great if you could tidy it up. Can you tidy this a bit for us?*

C: Posso. *Yes*

E: Ah tá legal então vamos esperar até você vai terminar. *Ah it's great so we will wait until you finish*

C: Tudo bem. *Fine*

Higher frequencies of supportive moves in interactions between participants with the same status than with different status have also been reported by Warga (2002) and Hill (1997). Warga refers to Wolfson (1989: 129ff in Warga, 2002: 217) to explain this unexpected pragmatic behaviour. Wolfson argues that when the social distance is high, there is a greater clarity about expectations from both participants involved in the conversation. More unstable relationships, by contrast, arise in interactions with participants with equal status, but who are not really close to each other. This could explain the presence of fewer frequencies of adjuncts in situation 2 when compared to situation 1, where participants were of equal status (colleagues) but not intimate friends.

**Figure 32.** Situation 2. Average of frequencies of adjuncts (supportive moves) by proficiency level and in the Control Group (CG).

Adjunct	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Ctrl Group
Preparator	1.6	0.3	1.25	1.5	0.75	1.42
Grounder	0.3	0.12	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.28
Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0.25	0
Reward	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retreat	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imp Minimi	0	0	0	0	0.25	0.14
Sweetner	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0.5	1.75	2	1.5	1.8



### Situation 3. 'Bursary request'

In general, fewer adjuncts can be observed in this situation than in Situation 1, but there are higher frequencies in comparison with situation 2. Learners at the advanced Level score slightly higher than the Control Group. They also use more types of adjuncts than the Control Group, a pattern which can also be observed in Situation 2. A more target-like profile is exhibited by learners at the intermediate Level (Level 3). However, it is important to point out that in general, in this Situation and in Situations 1 and 2 as well (cf. Figures 31, 32, 33), more similarities than differences can be found between the profile of learners' and native speakers' in the use of adjuncts.

**Figure 33.** Situation 3. Averages of frequencies of adjuncts (supportive moves) by proficiency level and in the Control Group (CG).

Adjunct	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Ctrl Group
Preparator	1	1	1.5	1	1.75	1.42
Grounder	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.57
Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0.25	0
Reward	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retreat	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imp Minimi	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweetner	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1.25	2	1.5	2.25	2

### 3. Identifying the internal modifications

Internal modifications are "elements within the request utterance proper (linked to the Head Act), the presence of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request" (Blum-Kulka et.al. 1989: 19) within a specific type of strategy (cf. Hassal, 2001 and Faerch and Kasper, 1989: 222). They extend to forms of address, verb tense and mood, structure, such as the use of impersonal expressions which can be described as syntactic or lexical mitigating (also downgraders) *modality markers*.

### Situation 1 'Car loan'

Figure 34 shows much higher frequencies of internal modifiers in the Control Group in Situation 1. Also, a preference for syntactic mitigators, rather than lexical, can be observed here. Moreover, the native speakers' profiles show more variation of mitigators than learners' profiles. Amongst learners, absolute beginners' profiles show

total absence of modality markers (zero marking). Since absolute beginners produce modality markers in Situation 2, their absence in this situation cannot be attributed to a lack of linguistic resources. Either their assessment of the force of imposition of this requestive situation differs from that of native speakers (cf. external contextual variables above), or the lack of mitigating modality markers at Level 1 can be put down to processing issues, which will be discussed below.

The fact that absolute beginners in this situation chose hints as realization strategies might also have played a role in the lack of modality markers. Level 2 shows some use of mitigators, but unlike the Control Group, learners at this Level show a preference for lexical mitigators. The zero marking present at Level 4 can be attributed to problems with the sample, which was rather small at this level and might not be representative.

The profile of Level 5 shows considerably fewer mitigating markers than the control group. However, a more target-like pattern appears when we consider the types of markers used: advanced learners, like native speakers, concentrate on syntactic mitigating markers.

Also at the advanced level it is important to point out that there is a lack of conventionalised, more routinized forms, such as the unmarked modal and embedding expressions such as 'será que', as the examples show:

### **Control Group**

**B1:** então eu queria saber se você **teria como** me emprestar o seu carro pra eu levar essas coisas nele. *so I wanted to know if you could lend me your car in order for me to take these things in it*

**B2:** **Será que** você pode me emprestar? *Would it be possible for you to lend me [your car]?*

Instead of the the heavily routinized forms 'ter como' (which functions as an unmarked modal verb, cf. Koike in the methodological discussion chapter) and 'será que' in query preparatory strategies, advanced learners produce more marked but semantically equivalent expressions, as in the example below:

### **Level 5**



**E15:** Seria possível você me emprestar? *Would it be possible for you to lend me [your car]?*

These findings are in line with results reported in the literature about learners' use of non-routinized material compensating for the lack of routinized material (cf. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993 and literature review). Further discussion about the absence of target language-specific pragmalinguistic conventions can be found below.

**Figure 34.** Situation 1. Averages of frequencies of internal modifications of the head act by proficiency level and in the Control Group.

	Proficiency levels					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Int. Modif						
Plt. Mrker		0.12	0	0	0	0.14
Understr		0.12	0	0	0	0.14
Downtoner		0.12	0.25	0	0	0
Cajoler		0	0.25	0	0	0
Hedge		0	0	0	0	0
Un Modal		0	0	0	0	0.28
Tense		0	0.25	0	0	0.28
Conditio		0.12	0.25	0	0.75	0.28
Emb+sq		0	0	0	0	0.28
Emb+ccl		0.12	0	0	0.5	0.28
Emb+sub		0	0	0	0.25	0.14
Aspect		0	0.25	0	0	0.14
Negation		0	0	0	0	0.14
Appealer		0	0	0	0	0.14
Interrogat		0.12	0	0	0	0
0 mking	1	0.37	0.75	1	0	0
Total	0	0.75	1.25	0	1.5	2.28

Int.Modif= Internal modifications

Plt. Mrker= politeness marker

Understr= Understater

Un modal= unmarked modal

Emb+sq= Embedding + será que

Emb+ccl= Embedding+ conditional

clause Emb+sub= Embedding+subjunctive

Interrogat= Interrogative

0 mking= zero marking

### Situation 2: 'cleaning request'

Figure 35 shows a less diversified profile in the Control Group in Situation 2 in comparison with Situation 1. Also in contrast with Situation 1, native speakers in this situation use more lexical than syntactic mitigators. Situation 2 is the situation with the highest frequencies of mitigating modality markers in the Control Group. Amongst these modality markers, there is, in this situation, a high predominance of heavily

routinized requestive forms, with frequent use of understaters (diminutives) and unmarked modal verbs, as the example from the Control Group shows:

**B3:** Lourdes, olha só, *Lourdes look*

nossa sala tá imunda e a gente tem que ir pra lá agora e tá muito suja,  
**tem como** você dar uma **ajudinha** lá? *Our classroom is filthy and we have to go there now and it is very dirty would it be possible for you to give a little help there?*

**C:** Tem. *Yes*

**B3:** Dar uma **limpadinha**? *Tidy it a bit?*

**C:** Tem, humhum. *Yes uhu uhu*

**B3:** Então tá bom, *lovely*

obrigada. *Thank you*

**C:** De nada. *Not at all.*

Amongst learners, the understater appears at Levels 3 and 4, but the unmarked modal verb 'ter como' does not figure amongst learners' profiles. As in Situation 1, a lack of routine formulae for requests can be observed even in the advanced level, a finding which has been documented in the literature (cf. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993).

However, advanced learners produce the conventionalised expression 'será que' in this situation, suggesting an awareness that this requestive situation involves the use of routinized expressions. Difficulties with the unmarked expression 'ter como' which functions as a modal verb might lie in the lack of transparency between the form and its pragmatic function (i.e. form-force mapping, cf. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). Also, in terms of linguistic form, 'será que' is a frozen expression, whereas 'ter como' requires the conjugation of the verb with a fixed preposition. So, linguistically the production of 'ter como' can be considered more demanding. Moreover, as shown in the example above, it might be that its translation into learners' L1s was not as direct as other less specific to Brazilian Portuguese pragmalinguistic requestive forms (cf. example in Situation 1 learner E15 above). More about the processing by learners of specific pragmalinguistic conventions in Brazilian Portuguese will be said below.

A more general developmental profile which can be observed both in Situations 1 and 2 is concerned with the increase of mitigating modality markers with proficiency level, a result which has been largely reported in the literature (e.g. Kasper and Dahl,



1991, Trosborg, in Kasper and Rose, 1999 and Warga, 2002 in the literature review). However, it is not clear whether the expansion of linguistic means (lexical and syntactic resources) also reflects an expansion of pragmatic knowledge (cf. literature review).

**Figure 35.** Situation 2. Averages of frequencies of internal modifications of the head act by proficiency level and in the control group.

	Proficiency Levels					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Int. Modif						
Plt. Mrker	0.6	0.6	0.25	0	0	0.14
Understr	0	0	0.25	0.5	0	0.85
Downtoner	0	0	0.25	0	0	0
Cajoler	0	0	0	0	0	0.14
Hedge	0	0	0.25	0	0	0.14
Un Modal	0	0	0	0	0	0.85
Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0.28
Conditio	0	0.12	0	0.5	1	0
Emb+sq	0	0	0	0	0.3	0.28
Emb+ccl	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emb+sub	0	0	0	0	0.3	0
Aspect	0	0	0	0	0	0
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appealer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interrogat	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 mking	0.6	0.5	0.25	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Int.Modif= Internal modifications

Plt. Mrker= politeness marker

Understr= Understater

Un modal= unmarked modal

Emb+sq= Embedding + será que

Emb+ccl= Embedding+ conditional

clause Emb+sub= Embedding+subjunctive

Interrogat= Interrogative

0 mking= zero marking

### Situation 3: 'bursary request'

Figure 36 below shows the absence of modality markers at Level 1, in a manner similar to situation 1. Intermediate learners (Level 3) show a significantly diversified profile, with the production of both lexical/phrasal and syntactic mitigators. However, the choice of mitigators differs from the control group, suggesting that learners at this proficiency level had the linguistic means available to them but did not know their distribution (pragmalinguistic knowledge). Level 5, in contrast, exhibits a more target-like profile of internal modifiers, which could suggest that knowledge of function of

forms and their distribution does not increase at the same pace as the knowledge of linguistic means.

**Figure 36.** Situation 3. Averages of frequencies of internal modifications of the head act by proficiency level and in the control group.

Int. Modif	Proficiency levels					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Plt. Mrker	0	0	0	0	0.25	0.14
Understr	0	0	0.25	0	0	0
Downtoner	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cajoler	0	0	0.25	0	0.25	0.42
Hedge	0	0	0	0	0	0
Un Modal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tense	0	0	0.25	0	0	0
Conditio	0	0.6	0	1	0.75	1
Emb+sq	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emb+ccl	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.75	0.57
Emb+sub	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aspect	0	0	0.25	0	0	0.14
Negation	0	0	0.25	0	0	0
Appealer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interrogat	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 mking	1	0.25	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1.1	2	1	2	2.28

## 5. Alerters

In the taxonomy used by Blum-Kulka et al. alerters consist of attention getters. However, as discussed above, this conception is distinct from attention getters in Trosborg's model (see above). Alerters comprise the use of address forms and greetings (e.g. vocatives and titles – cf. also methodological discussion chapter). In this sense, this category is concerned with opening elements in the speech act.

### Situation 1 'car loan request'

Amongst alerters, high frequencies of the vocative can be observed in the Control Group. Vocatives, in the form of the person's name, are used either on their own or in combination with greetings or attention-getters (cf. Figure 37). The importance of the use of the vocative is recognized by learners of all proficiency levels as frequencies in Figure 37 show. However, similarly to the profile of internal modifications, learners,



regardless of their proficiency level, learners exhibit different distribution of combinations of alerters and in general, learner's profile shows fewer frequencies of alerters. For instance, learners do not produce vocatives only, which is one of the preferred forms of alerters in the Control Group. At Level 5, learners overproduce attention-getters in combinations with greetings and vocatives.

**Figure 37.** Situation 1. Averages of frequencies of alerters by proficiency level and in the control group.

Alerters	Proficiency level					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Vocative	0	0	0	0	0	0.28
Greeting	0	0.25	0.25	0	0.25	0.14
Att.Getter	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voc+Gree	1	0.6	0.25	0.5	0	0.28
Voc+AttG	0		0	0	0	0
Gree+Att	0	0.12	0.25	0	0.25	0
Gree+Intro	0	0	0	0	0	0
V+Gr+Att	0	0	0	0.5	2	0.28
V+Gr+Intro	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Situation 2 'cleaning'

Situation 2 (cf. Figure 38) shows in the Control Group the same preference for the use of the vocative as an alerter, but this time, in combination with greetings. The type of vocative used by the control group is, as in Situation 1, the name of the person. A similar pattern to Situation 1 can be observed amongst learners, who have access to the same range of alerters as native speakers. However, their implementation differs from that of native speakers. In Level 1, for instance, there are no vocatives in this situation. In Level 5 (cf. example below), vocatives only appear in combination with greetings and introduction, a combination type of alerters which does not figure in the control group.

Example:

**Learners Level 5**

**E13 –**

E: Oi

você trabalha aqui? *Hi do you work here?*

C: Sim. *Yes*

E: Qual o seu nome? *What is your name?*

C: Lourdes *Lourdes*

E: Prazer Lourdes, meu nome é Aaron *Nice to meet you Lourdes my name is Aaron*

The advanced learner above shows awareness of the importance of using the person's name in the requestive interaction, but chooses to introduce himself as well, which differs from the kind of 'script' followed by native speakers in this situation, where the introduction is not required. Also, similarly to Situation 1, advanced learners overproduce attention-getters. As in the case of internal modifications of the requestive act in general, it is difficult to establish a developmental pattern, beyond the fact that the use of alerters tends to become more diversified as proficiency increases. Still, learners show not only different combinations of alerters from native speakers, but also the way learners implement alerters differs from native speakers. In the case of vocatives, for instance, native speakers use the name of the person through out, whereas learners profile of the vocatives varies from the name of the person to the use of different titles as the examples show:

#### **Learners Level 2**

**E4 –**

E: Oi moça *Hi lady*

#### **Learners Level 4**

**E 21 –**

E: Boa tarde senhora Lourdes. *Good afternoon 'senhora' Lourdes*

All the titles above belong to the range of address forms in Brazilian Portuguese. Their use by learners shows an awareness of their importance as types of openings in the target language. Their inappropriateness, however, reflects a lack of knowledge of sociopragmatic norms, that is the mapping of forms to situations and addressees. It could be argued that this particular kind of knowledge is difficult to acquire. On the one hand, in order for it to be learned from the input available to learners, it demands especial attention to particular interactions, given the high variability in terms of situations and addressees. For the same reason, the teaching of the use of alerters is, on the other hand, difficult in pedagogical terms.



**Figure 38.** Situation 2. Averages of frequencies of alerters by proficiency level and in the control group.

Alerters	Proficiency level					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Vocative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greeting	0.3	0.5	0	0	0	0.14
Att.Getter	0	0	0.25	0	0.25	0
Voc+Gree	0	0	0.25	1	0	0.57
Voc+AttG	0	0.12	0	0	0	0.14
Gree+Att	0	0.12	0.5	0	0.25	0
Gree+Intro	0	0	0	0	0	0
V+Gr+Att	0	0	0	1	0	0.14
V+Gr+Intro	0	0	0	0	0.25	0

### Situation 3 'bursary request'

In this situation, the presence of the type of alerter combination vocative plus greeting plus introduction shows high frequencies in the control group (cf. Figure 39). Greeting plus introduction only also scores high as does vocative plus greeting plus attention-getter. The presence of greetings plus introduction at Level 1 suggests a pattern of situational variation. Still, it is difficult to suggest any developmental pattern, since this more target-like combination of alerters only appears amongst absolute beginners and advanced learners (Level 5). As in Situations 1 and 2, a characteristic of the profile of alerters in the Control Group is the use of vocatives. These do not figure at all amongst learners in this situation.

It is necessary to ask to what extent and how differences in the implementation of alerters by learners', when compared with native speakers, affect how interlocutors react to learners' requests? Alerters, either as part of openings of conversations or as signals for new information, play a key role in the way interlocutors will place their bias towards the request. In this sense, Kasper argues that "a high interactional value can be assigned to alerters, since they mark the place where the relationship with the interlocutor is established, defined and redefined" (Kasper, 1981: 274 in Warga, 2002: 123, my translation). This "high interactional value" could be extended to particularly conventionalised expressions in the target language, the lack of which can be said to send signals to native speaker interlocutors that he/she might have to invest more effort in the interactions.

**Figure 39.** Situation 3. Averages of frequencies of alerters by proficiency level and in the control group.

Alerters	Proficiency level					Ctrl Group
	1	2	3	4	5	
Vocative	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greeting	0.3	0.6	1	1	0.5	0
Att.Getter	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voc+Gree	0	0	0	0	0	0.14
Voc+AttG	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gree+Att	0	0.25	0	0	0.25	0
Gree+Intro	0.3	0	0	0	0.25	0.28
V+Gr+Att	0	0	0	0	0	0.28
V+Gr+Intro	0	0	0	0	0	0.28

#### 5.4 Summary

As widely documented in the literature, findings of this study also show that learners have access to the same range of request realization strategies as native speakers. In addition, there is in general a preference for preparatory strategies, both by learners and native speakers. However, learners' distributions of types of strategies across situations seem to be learner- or culture-specific (cf. also Warga, 2002). As far as internal and external modifications are concerned, a similar pattern has been reported in the literature: learners show the same variety of external and internal modality markers, but frequencies, types and distribution of both internal and external modification are, again, learner specific. For example, learners overuse politeness markers (*por favor – please*) in Situations 2 and 3. Whereas in Situation 2 politeness markers cannot be found amongst advanced learners, which suggests a developmental pattern, in Situation 3 advanced learners are the only learners to (over)produce them (compare Figures 36 and 37).

Studies diverge over frequencies of external markers (adjuncts): some studies show an overproduction of adjuncts by learners (e.g. Faerch and Kasper, 1989, Hassal, 2001, Warga, 2002), others report an underproduction of supportive moves (e.g. Trosborg, 1995, Hill, 1997). Results of this study are in line with the latter. Findings here also confirm results of most studies in the literature which show that learners produce, in general, fewer internal modality markers than native speakers. However,



production of modality markers increases with proficiency level. This study also confirms a pattern of internal modifications often reported in the literature (e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993): learners, including the advanced ones, did not have access to more routinized forms of requests. Despite using the same preparatory request strategies as native speakers, learners at all proficiency levels lacked conventionalised forms to implement them. Linguistic difficulties, such as morphological factors in the case of the expression “ter como” (would it be possible), pragmalinguistic difficulties (mapping of pragmatic force and form) and sociopragmatic issues (purposeful loyalty to L1 pragmatic conventions) have been discussed in this context.

The lack of heavily conventionalised forms in the target language adds uncertainty to the request. Situation 2 (‘cleaning’), which, due to the high social distance, can be considered to be more ‘stable’ (see above) shows fewer supportive moves and also fewer internal modifications than the other situations in the control group. However, most requesters follow a routinized ‘script’ with the use of conventionalized forms (alerters and unmarked modal verb), which are essential in determining both pragmatic force and clarity of the request. This means that in the absence of this ‘script’ in interactions with learners, their native speaker interlocutors will be confronted with pragmatic ‘overload’, caused by over-politeness with the use of non-conventionalised material. This can, in turn, demand more effort from native speakers. Processing effort will be one of the issues discussed below in relation to perception of pragmatic conventions in the input.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Concluding Discussion: A Three-Dimensional Framework of Pragmatic Development in Second Language Acquisition**

#### **6.1 Introductory observations**

This section sets out to discuss the production of what may be termed ‘routinized material’ by learners. The term ‘routinized material’ is taken here to refer to pragmatic conventions in the target language. Examples of such conventions include *modal verbs*, *attention-getters*, *address forms*, *diminutives* (or *under-staters*). The production of conventionalised materials or lack thereof represents a salient pattern in the analysis of the development of pragmatic abilities in Brazilian Portuguese, discussed in the data analysis above.

Some findings in ILP studies suggest that beginners rely on formulaic and routinized forms (cf. Schmidt, 1983, Achiba, 2003). It is not clear in these studies, however, if beginners’ routinized formulae match with conventional material in the target language. For instance, Warga (2002: 215) found that learners’ routinized material differed from pragmatic conventions in the target language.

It is also noteworthy that several ILP studies reveal that learners encounter difficulties in the production of conventional expressions (see literature review). The example of “tem como” in Brazilian Portuguese is a case in point. This pattern in the literature makes it important to highlight these difficulties. Moreover, it is centrally relevant in this study, concerned as it is with the development of pragmatic abilities across levels of proficiency in second language acquisition, to trace the form of such difficulties across levels of development.

This chapter is concerned with a critical analysis of the patterns which emerged in the data analysis informed by the modified taxonomies of Trosborg and Blum-Kulka. However, while this analysis provided a description of frequencies of features in the data, the current chapter follows two aims: on the one hand, it sets out to offer an explanation for the patterns in the data by discussing them on the light of concepts proposed by the theories critically examined in the theoretical framework chapter of this



thesis (Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, Bialystok's control of processing and Sperber and Wilson's concept of relevance). Too often in the past in ILP studies, such integrative theoretical accounts have eluded data analyses. This chapter establishes some conclusions as a contribution to a theory of pragmatic development in SLA and issues some pointers for future research projects.

This concluding chapter investigates some patterns in the data which have only partially been captured by the data analysis above by means of a thoroughgoing discussion based on a complex and yet fundamentally coherent theoretical framework. For example, while the Data Analysis above provided the number of frequencies of discourse moves and acts, it did not focus on the sequence or distribution of these moves and acts in the interaction. The instruments of data analysis were indeed well designed to capture discrete manifestations of pragmatic interaction but less well designed to capture the less discrete, overlapping and contextually rich texture of interactions over time and in time and place. Thus, the second aim of this concluding chapter is to discuss frequencies of moves and acts in terms of their function in the negotiation of the requestive goal. This is a necessary contextual account of pragmatic development. For this purpose, reference will be made to the "negotiation of meaning" account presented in the methodological discussion. Without this second aim, the analysis of data might appear plausible as an account of discrete forms but insensitive to pragmatics as interactional transaction.

## **6.2 A new theoretical framework: Noticing, Relevance, Analysis and Control**

In the analysis of the requestive acts using Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s taxonomy (1989, cf. methodological discussion), findings could be seen to have generally been related to sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic issues (see above and literature review). For instance, the lack of conventionalized forms in the target language has been explained by learner difficulties with the *mapping of forms to pragmatic functions* (the pragmalinguistic account). At least three dimensions need to be conceptualised here:

1. an account of the cognitive processes of noticing, attention and context-formation;
2. an account of the communicative processes of the negotiation of meaning where meaning is negotiated when contextually relevant;

### 3. a developmental account of the acquisition of pragmatic abilities.

It has been often argued in the literature that research on the learning of pragmatic abilities in a second language has tended to lack a more substantial explanatory framework which would incorporate theoretical models of both second language acquisition and pragmatics as constitutive elements of Interlanguage Pragmatics (cf. theoretical framework). This chapter will therefore discuss findings of the analysis above with the use of the taxonomy of Blum-Kulka *et al.* in the extended light of concepts proposed by theories of the learning of pragmatics in a second language, namely Schmidt's noticing hypothesis and Bialystok's two-dimensional model (1993).

Here, concepts such as noticing, analysis of knowledge and control of processing are central. Moreover, this discussion of the findings will be complemented by insights offered by notions developed within Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, cf. theoretical framework). Notions such as relevance, manifestness and cognitive context will provide a framework which accounts for both the communicative and cognitive aspects of the patterns in the data. This means that external contexts are clearly not enough to guarantee the development of pragmatic abilities if culturally encoded interactions are not noticed or capable of analysis.

The discussion below will make constant reference to notions which have been critically examined in the theoretical framework, so instead of reconstructing the theories, knowledge of them will be presupposed.

### **6.3 Conventionalised forms in the Brazilian Portuguese of non-native speakers: patterns in the data**

One of the salient patterns in the requestive situations is concerned with learners' production of routinized expressions in the target language. As discussed above, there is in general a lack of conventionalised expressions in learners' production of requests, regardless of proficiency level. This is all the more striking since such expressions are common in the input.

For instance, in Situation 2, it is noteworthy that learners at all proficiency levels do not produce the unmarked modal verb "ter como". Also, they produce few



understaters (diminutives e.g. “favorzinho”) to mitigate the impositional force of the request, when diminutives clearly play a key role as downgraders for the control group of native speakers in this situation. Furthermore, failure to comply with pragmalinguistic conventions in the target language will arguably demand more from the native speaker interlocutor, who will have to invest more effort to overcome the uncertainty posed by the lack of a routinized ‘script’. Without routine expressions, requests become arguably ‘fuzzy’: force of imposition and politeness values need to be reassessed by interlocutors and this takes (transactional) time and (pragmatic) effort.

A number of factors have been considered to explain this particular learner behaviour (cf. the data analysis). For instance, it should be recalled that lack of linguistic resources in beginners as well as difficulties with pragmalinguistic and/or sociopragmatic knowledge have been discussed in the literature as possible explanations for the absence of routinized material at beginner’s level. L1 Transfer, that is, learners applying L1 pragmatic norms to the L2 has also been considered as an impediment for learners’ use of routine expressions in the L2 (cf. Warga, 2002 and literature review). In addition, purposeful loyalty to L1 conventions, that is a deliberate option not to conform with the L2 pragmatic conventions could explain the differences between native speakers’ and learners’ use of routine expressions. Although it is very difficult to pinpoint with certainty the factors which determine pragmatic behaviour (cf. also Warga, 2002), this should not prevent ILP studies from investigating possible variables and contexts which play a role in learners’ pragmatic behaviour. In this sense, research in ILP must incorporate learning issues such as processing and perception of input.

In view of the findings of the data analysis and theoretical shortcomings highlighted in existing studies of pragmatic development in SLA studies, this chapter will look at these learning issues, discussing its findings in the light of theories of learning in SLA (Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis and Bialystok’s two-dimensional model, 1993) and with the consideration of a cognitively enriched theory of pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, cf. theoretical framework).

Admittedly, there are studies which touch on the work of Bialystok (cf. Hassal, 2001 in the literature review) but do not really offer a thoroughgoing account of the learning of pragmatic abilities in SLA over proficiency levels. By contrast, this thesis seeks to align the theoretical insights of Bialystok, Schmidt and Sperber and Wilson to

precisely such a thoroughgoing investigation of the development of pragmatic abilities in SLA from both a linguistic perspective and also from the perspective of theories of learning and recent insights in RT. In summary, the data analysis set out above reveals *four* salient patterns related to the production of routinized material by learners. It is worth recalling them here:

1. the underproduction of routinized material by learners irrespective of proficiency level;
2. the overproduction of some specific routinized material by advanced learners;
3. difficulties in matching routinized material to requestive situations;
4. variations in matching routinized expressions to situations.

### *6.3.1 Underproduction of routinized material by learners irrespective of proficiency level*

It emerges from the data above that learners (including advanced learners) either produce very little routinized material or, in the case of beginners, produce no routinized material whatsoever. For example, absolute beginners, irrespective of the situation and therefore level of imposition, do not produce attention getters (e.g. 'olha só' *look*). Advanced learners also produce very low frequencies of diminutives in situation 2 – even when they are clearly part of a routinized 'script' ('limpadinha' *tidy a bit*; 'rapidinho' *a bit quickly*).

It should be recalled that the function of routinized material is to create a stabilised, predictable framework for the interlocutors. If learners, as *requesters*, do not produce routinized material or, in another discourse, if they do not contribute to a stable transaction, then they must compensate for this underproduction with non-conventional material. As Kasper (1997 in Warga 2002: 215) argues, this compensatory strategy or pattern 'costs more' in terms of the planning of the request and that means processing effort. Moreover, the same lack of routinized material has an impact on the *requestee* as interlocutor. If routines create stability (a clear sense of where the transaction is heading), then it is likely that the lack of pragmatic routines will have an impact of some kind of on the interlocutor with uncertainty as a result of the weakening of the pragmatic framework. It has been demonstrated above that the data conform to this lack of pragmatic routines.



The task now is therefore to account theoretically for the lack of routinized expressions/pragmatic conventions in learners of Brazilian Portuguese as a second language. To do so, as stated above, this discussion will have to relate to the conceptual framework explored in the theoretical framework. Key ideas here will be placed in the context of the development of pragmatic abilities in time and over time. The key conceptual points of reference are:

1. perception of the input ('noticing', 'manifestness');
2. processing abilities ('control', 'cognitive effort');
3. representational abilities ('analysis of knowledge');
4. communicative-cognitive abilities ('relevance', 'shared cognitive environments').

### *6.3.2 Perception of the input ('noticing', 'manifestness') and the underproduction of routinized material*

Schmidt claims that noticing is a necessary condition for the learning of a second language (cf. Theoretical Framework). The concept of noticing relates to the *allocation of attention* to some stimulus as a pre-requisite for learning. 'Attention' is a necessary condition for learning, but this does not mean attention to input in general, rather to linguistic forms, functional meanings and relevant contextual features. For the learning related to the use of routinized material across situations, learners would have to notice them as contextual features in the input available. However, how does this selection occur? Why is it that learners seem to notice some features in the input but not others? For instance, the same learners at Level 1 seem to have noticed vocatives as features with a particular pragmatic function in Situation 1 ('Car loan request'), but not attention getters ('olha só' *look*). Key questions must address the way in which such noticing is constrained.

An appropriate contribution can be made here by insights in Relevance Theory (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 1995 in the theoretical framework chapter). Arguably, the principle of relevance as conceptualised in Relevance Theory works as a constraint for noticing.

For instance, if the acquisition of pragmatic competence is a question of selecting information amidst an input of grammatical, textual, discoursal and social

factors, then concepts in RT such as relevance and the notions of 'manifestness' and 'cognitive context' have a clear contribution to make.

As has been claimed elsewhere (cf. Carroll, 2001, de Paiva and Foster-Cohen, 2004), it is the principle of relevance, as *the equation between the actual processing effort of a receiver and the contextual effect on a receiver*, which will determine what is attended to and therefore what is noticed.

Relevance is a principle which plays a role both in cognition and in communication. The cognitive principle of relevance states that the requirement for maximal relevance triggers the search for the relevant information. The communicative principle of relevance states that "every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 612). The presumption of optimal relevance implies maximum effect and minimum effort. Most importantly here is that the presumption of optimal relevance is constrained by the speakers' cognitive abilities and preferences. So, according to Wilson and Sperber (2004: 612):

The ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience if: a. it is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort; b. it is the most relevant one compatible with communicator's abilities and preferences.

As Moeschler (2004: 55) argues in his study of misunderstandings in intercultural encounters, this explains why interlocutors will look for a relevant interpretation, even if this process is more arduous because of the communicator's abilities and preferences.

The notion of the speaker's cognitive (and communicative!) abilities and preferences is related to the concept of manifestness in RT. According to RT, what can be 'manifest' to the speaker/hearer is what he is capable of representing at a particular moment. When a learner attempts to process an utterance in the new language, assumptions that have been accessed frequently before (notably in a first-language context of interaction expectations), and are therefore part of his abilities and preferences, come into the cognitive context very quickly (are easily manifest).



A typical example in second language pragmatics would be when a second-language learner seeks to transfer pragmatic codes and conventions of politeness from a first-language learning context into a displaced (second language) context. In the data sets presented here, since learners had different cultural backgrounds, this can only be hypothesised, as for instance, in the case of the overuse of politeness markers ('please').

In the same way, it could be hypothesised that the frequent use of I- attention getters in some requestive situations, as part of the particular conventional/conversational way of conveying illocutionary force in requests in Brazilian Portuguese, does not necessarily match with their use in their first languages. This would mean that learners would have to know that attention getters are part of the conventional means, notwithstanding processing effort, to mitigate the force of a request in the context of Brazilian Portuguese. In other words, this culturally-bound assumption would have to be part of the set of assumptions the speaker brings to the interpretation of any ostensive communication, that is assumptions which are manifest to the learner as part of the learner's cognitive context.

Fetzer (2002: 400) discusses intercultural communication in terms of not only the use of non-native languages, but also of non-native speakers' (learners') construction of sociocultural contexts. She argues that instead of constructing intercultural contexts, interactants reconstruct their native sociocultural contexts. This would mean in RT terms, that culturally-bound assumptions concerned with the second language would tend not to be manifest to learners, therefore would not be part of their cognitive context.

The notion of internal context in RT enriches the conventional notion of external context, with stronger cognitive claim for pragmatics, namely a shift from a view where social and cultural aspects of interactions represent central constraints to a more agent-based perspective with a clear emphasis on the individual's internal context. In this way, it can show how (internal) context is utilized by learners in the process-like contingencies of communicative interaction. It seems that learners at less advanced levels were not able to access the set of assumptions concerned with the pragmatic functions of attention getters in Portuguese.

### 6.3.3 The lack of I-attention getters in less advanced levels in situation 1

Attention-getters figure in the two coding categories (Trosborg's discourse moves and Blum-Kulka et al.'s taxonomy for the coding of speech acts (CCSARP), cf. methodological discussion). In the CCSARP attention getters are part of *alerters* and considered to be an opening element. As such, attention getters can, because of their position right at the beginning of the interaction, predispose the interlocutor towards the interaction; they are a routine interactional instrument.

Moreover, attention getters can be seen as 'interpersonal markers' which trigger the process of inferencing by the interlocutor (cf. Fetzer, 2002: 408). As Warga (2002: 215) points out, failure to produce routine expressions means that learners have to compensate with the production of non-conventionalised material which arguably demands more in terms of their planning than routinized material (cf. also Kasper, 1997 in Warga 2002: 215). Under-use of attention getters as a category of routinized expressions will induce compensatory moves elsewhere. These can considerably increase processing effort (the attention of the interlocutor can only be 'got', as it were, by less routinized and more dispersed forms).

It should be recalled here that according to Trosborg's discourse coding categories, I-Attention Getters (e.g. 'Look ...') are non-topic carrying initiation moves, whose function in the interactional discourse is to frame and focus a following new move. Since these moves are not concerned with the 'informative content' of the request, they could be seen as playing a less vital role for the achievement of the communicative goal than topic-carrying acts, which convey the information. Also, I-Attention Getters could be seen in pragmatic terms as particularly demanding, given that their function in discourse is not transparent.

#### **EXAMPLE**

##### **Situation 1: 'car loan'**

##### **Portuguese level: Advanced**

E15: Olha

*look* [**I (Attention-getter)**]

você sabe que eu tou me mudando né?



*You know that I'm moving don't you? [I (Propose)]*

S: Hum

*hum [F (Acknowledge)]*

E: E tem um monte de coisas que já não consigo mais carregar.

*And there are lots of things that I can't carry anymore [F(Com)]*

S: Hum

*hum [F (Acknowledge)]*

The absence of I moves-attention getters in less advanced levels in Situation 1 suggests that there is a clearly discernible gap between the available input (cf. Control Group) and the use/activation of that input by initial learners. As mentioned before, I-Attention getters arguably do not demand much from learners in terms of their linguistic complexity. So, learners at beginners and intermediate levels should not have difficulties with them as linguistic forms.

Learners, even absolute beginners, use complex syntactic structures in their requests (e.g. embedding with conditional clause). In addition, learners can be assumed to have attention getters as a pragmatic resource in their L1 ('Schauen Sie'; 'Ecoutez'; 'Mira'). In this context, Bialystok argues that adults have part of the work largely accomplished in terms of learning pragmatic abilities in a second language (cf. theoretical framework). Their task would consist of the construction of symbolic representations whereby forms are mapped to social contexts. This lends support to some of the findings of this study, for example to the fact that learners have access to the same range of request realization strategies as well as supportive moves as native speakers.

Bialystok's claim can also explain the difficulties learners show with the distribution of both strategies and external and internal modifications, including attention getters, across the different requestive situations. In Bialystok's model, lack of routine expressions in learners' production, such as attention getters, could be explained as either difficulties with analysis of knowledge or problems with control of processing. If, as Bialystok argues, for the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language, a symbolic level of representation has to be constructed by adult learners, with the mapping of already existing forms to situational contexts, how is this learning going to take place? What will constrain the mapping of forms to social contexts by learners?

In order to examine these questions, further RT concepts can be meaningfully discussed – such as the distinction between explicature and implicature. According to Moeschler (2004: 57):

An explicature results from the enrichment of the logical form, that is, the propositional form of the utterance. A propositional form is a complete proposition, in which referents are attributed to referential expressions, and the sentence is disambiguated.

This definition corresponds to the basic explicature (cf. Wilson and Sperber, 2004). Moeschler further notes:

The explicit part of the intended meaning can be completed by higher level explicatures which specify the illocutionary force of the utterance and the propositional attitude of the utterance. (Moeschler, 2004: 57)

Implicatures would need further contextual information to be recovered, with the construction of implicated premises and conclusions (cf. Moeschler, 2004: 58).

The idea in RT that a speaker, in order to recover/access the intended meaning of an utterance, goes through several sub-tasks in the overall comprehension/production process (cf. Moeschler, 2004: 58) might be crucial for the understanding of the development of pragmatic abilities in a second language in general and of the use of attention getters in particular. According to the definitions of explicatures and implicatures, Wilson and Serber (2004: 615) describe the procedure of interpretation of an utterance as follows:

**Sub-tasks in the overall comprehension process**

- a. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (**EXPLICATURES**) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
- b. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumption (**IMPLICATED PREMISES**)



- c. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (IMPLICATED CONCLUSIONS).

Now, according to the principle of relevance, speakers would follow the “path of least effort” in the overall comprehension/production procedure as described by Wilson and Sperber (Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 613):

- a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypothesis (disambiguation, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc) in order of accessibility.
- b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.

Having these theoretical tools as a background, it will be contended here that learners at low levels stop processing after the construction of explicatures, that is after constructing hypothesis about explicit content. Attention getters, as non-topic-carrying discourse moves, can be seen as not being a feature concerned with the construction of explicit content. Rather, their use implies access to the level of implicatures. Moeschler (2004: 63) argues, in his investigation of misunderstandings in intercultural communication, that “*explicatures*, not implicatures, are the key level for communication in general and for intercultural communication in particular.”

It is further argued here that Moeschler’s claim is in line with studies in ILP which contend that learners tend to opt for propositional explicitness to the detriment of pragmatic conventions. However, this point can and should be taken further: there is a developmental pattern according to which low proficient learners tend to rely more on explicatures for their communication than the more proficient learners. In this way, advanced learners would be able, if they believe they are important for the negotiation of the requests, to use attention getters. In other words, whereas low proficiency learners seem to stop processing after they build hypothesis about the explicit content, advanced learners seem to be in the position to engage in further processing, accessing higher levels of communication.

What does it mean to be able to access higher levels of communication? On the one hand, it means, as previously stated, access to an implicated premise and to an implicated conclusion. On the other hand, this also implies access to more complex

contextual information. Ryder and Leinonen (2003: 402), in their study of use of context in question answering by 3, 4, and 5 year-old children, argue that within a RT framework different degrees of (contextual) processing are required for accessing explicatures and implicatures. In this way, they argue that

[T]he contextual operations involved in working out explicatures are less taxing in terms of the type of context utilized and the level of processing required than the operations involved in working out implicatures.

The recovery of implicatures is said to involve the use of a more sophisticated context, including assumptions about world knowledge, which in intercultural communication play a central role. The presence of attention-getters as the framing discourse acts at advanced levels only suggests that whereas low proficient learners did not show the ability to process further contextual information beyond the level of the explicatures, that is the construction of hypothesis about explicit content, advanced learners were able to access assumptions concerned with the particular ways in which requests are negotiated in Brazilian Portuguese. In this way, conventionalised expressions such as attention getters were part of the contextual information available to advanced learners. In RT terms, these pragmatic features were manifest to them as part of their (cognitive) context. As Ryder and Leinonen (2003: 399) argue:

[D]evelopmental process can be said to involve an increasing ability to efficiently manipulate contextual information, from a number of different sources, in a way that results in an efficient recovery of the intended meaning.

It is important to note that this developmental process is not a linear gradual cumulative one, but is dependent on a range of dynamic factors in the complexity of interaction.

#### ***6.3.4 Overproduction of routinized material by advanced learners***

##### ***6.3.4.1 The overuse of I-Attention-getters by learners at level 5***

The use of framing discourse acts (attention getters) by advanced learners suggests that learners not only noticed their presence in the input available *but also processed their*



*manifestness*. What does it mean in developmental terms? It will be contended that advanced learners can make a “better” use of the contextual information available to them. By contrast, at initial levels there is a trade-off between language form and pragmatic function or between conveying the message (informative content) and conveying pragmatic force. In this sense, linguistic forms seem to appear before the learning of their appropriate use (pragmalinguistic knowledge).

For more advanced learners, the use of attention getters requires increased contextual/pragmatic processing. Pragmatic processing does not tend to conform to the effort/effect trade-off as conceived by Sperber and Wilson. It may hold for L1 contexts but for SLA settings relevance can be said to be a more gradually emergent manifestation.

Also, the production of attention-getters is actually more demanding in terms of control of processing (Bialystok). It could be also argued that the (over)use of these framing discourse acts reflects an attempt to relate form to context as part of what Bialystok calls the construction of pragmatic knowledge by the building of a symbolic representational level. In relevance theoretical terms, this represents an increase in effort. There seems to be a stage of advanced proficiency where the use of resources actually requires greater hearer effort.

Bialystok argues that advanced learners make an effort to relate to an external context (conversational styles in a different culture), whereas beginners could not step outside their internal/cognitive context. In RT terms, the “outside context” as cultural specific pragmatics could not be ‘manifest’ to beginners.

The use of attention getters changes the propositional content. For instance, when one compares examples E1 and E15 above then one can see that in example 15 the use of attention getter “*olha só - look*” not only changes the level of imposition, politeness, it also changes the object of the request. In changing the object of the request by pragmatic means, the use of the attention getter in the above example makes strong claims. Firstly, the speaker makes strong pragmatic claims about herself, about her linguistic competence, confidence or certainty about the imposition of attention getters. Secondly, strong claims are made on the interlocutor in terms of the assumption that the addressee is willing or not to accept the imposition. In this sense, and contrary

to Sperber and Wilson, it is not explicitness which is the measure of strong communication but instead the claims made on the interaction. These claims are fundamentally pragmatic in character. The pragmatics of the interactions cannot be fully discussed without the consideration of the discourse moves in subsequent discourse. Hence the focus on pragmatic development across various contexts.

#### **6.4 Developmental Patterns: subsequent discourse and feedback (discourse moves and acts)**

This section will discuss results of the analysis taking into account discourse moves and acts in the interaction. For this purpose it will look into the sequence of the moves and acts in interactions across situations and proficiency levels. Here, modifications of the speech act will be seen as categories proposed by the 'negotiation of meaning' account in SLA (cf. Long and Pica in the literature review and methodological discussion chapters).

Categories such as recasts, repetitions (also reiterations cf. Achiba 2003 in the literature review), clarification requests and confirmation checks have been called modified input from a native speaker to a learner (non native speaker) as a result of negotiated interaction (cf. Long, 1996: 441). The advantage of these categories proposed by the 'negotiation of meaning' account is that they go beyond discrete *manifestations such as underproduction/overproduction to look at the ongoing transaction over a sequence of pragmatic talk*. The aim here is twofold: on the one hand, it seeks to look at the kind of input available to learners in different situations and proficiency levels. Also, how learners react to this input as proficiency increases. This will provide a developmental and situational profile of input in interaction.

On the other hand, discussion of modified input will include the view on modified input as providing negative data (also negative feedback or corrective feedback, cf. Schachter, 1991: 90 in the literature review chapter). The aim here will be to investigate both the availability and the kind of feedback to learners. If there is negative feedback, what forms does it assume? Is it implicit or explicit? Does it relate to forms and functional meanings or does it also relate to pragmatic functions? These questions will be answered by situations and proficiency levels and they will be



discussed with reference to the accounts and theories of feedback in SLA which have been critically examined in the literature review and methodology chapters.

#### *6.4.1 Modifications of the request in terms of discourse moves and acts: discourse and subsequent discourse*

##### **a. Shared 'scripts' across situations: Sequence of discourse moves and acts**

The sequence of discourse moves and acts in the requestive situations provides a 'script' according to which the interaction develops. This 'script' adopts different forms in each situation, but arguably maintains a common core. Basically, scripts start with summons (openings, cf. methodological discussion chapter), followed by an I-move propose (the request proper). The interlocutor will then negotiate the time and other conditions with either R/I or F/I moves before agreeing on the requested action. The interaction finishes, then, with a ritual closing act, performed with Follow up (F-) moves.

##### **Example: Situation 1 'car loan request'**

Learners – Level 5

E=learner

S= native speaker

E14: Oi tudo bem? [I (Summons)] *Hi How are you?*

S: Tudo bom? (R/I (Summons)] *How are you?*

E: Eh eu me vou mudar esse fim de semana [I (Inf)] *I am going to move house this weekend*

queria saber se você me pode emprestar seu carro para mudar as minhas coisas e se me pode ajudar ... [I (Propose)] *I would like to know if you can lend me your car to move my things and if you can help me*

S: Eu acho que sim, [R (Qualify)] *I think so*

que dia você precisa do carro? [F/I (Inquire)] *when do you need the car?*

E: Ahn Sábado, Sábado seria bom. [R (Reply)] *Ahn Saturday, Saturday would be fine*

S: À tarde, de manhã ... [F/I (Inquire)] *In the afternoon, in the morning...*

E: Melhor quando você não precisa do carro, eu posso mudar quando quiser [mais fácil] [R (Reply)] *Better when you don't need the car I can move whenever I want it's easier*

S: [Tá], eu acho que posso te emprestar a tarde [F (Qualify)] *Fine I think I can lend it to you in the afternoon*  
 mas você toma  
 você vai carregar o que dentro do carro? [I (Inquire)] *But you take what are going to carry in the car?*

E: Só algumas caixas, não muito, não muitas coisas. [R (reply)] *Only some boxes not much not too many things*

S: Tá você toma cuidado? [F/I (Propose)] *Fine do you take care?*

E: Sim, vou dirigir com cuidado, tudo bem. [R (Confirm)] *Yes I will drive carefully*

S: Tá bom, então você passa na minha casa Sábado de manhã e pega a chave lá comigo, tá bom? [F/I (Propose)]  
*Fine so you come along to my place on Saturday in the morning and get the key with me, alright?*

E: Tá, [R (Conf)] *Fine*  
 obrigado. [F Close] *Thanks*

S: Nada. [R (Accept)] *Not at all*

The amount of negotiation, here meaning the conditions for compliance, is arguably determined by the requestee, who will feel more or less obliged to comply with the request, depending on his/her relationship with the requester (social distance, power relations) and the object of the request (cf. external contextual variables). Thus, 'scripts' will show some variation across situations.

In Situation 1, as the example above shows, the owner of the car (student native speaker) wants to make sure that the time suits him and that his car will suffer no damage. For this purpose he performs a number of Propose and Inquire acts, which in turn demand Confirm, Accept and Reply acts from the requesters (learners).

In Situation 2 ('cleaning request'), only the time for the cleaning is negotiated before compliance, but even this condition is not always part of the script (departures from scripts will be discussed below). Sometimes the cleaning lady simply agrees to clean the room, confirming (R- Confirm) the proposed (I-propose) request.

Example: Situation 2 'cleaning request'





e me gostaria saber se é possível ahh ter uma bolsa ehn para ajudar os alunos que não têm bastante dinheiro. (I- Propose) *and I would like to know if it is possible to have a grant to help students who do not have much money*

F: A PUC tem umas bolsas de estudo para os alunos mais carentes então pede que você mostre a documentação, tipo assim, renda sua se você trabalha ... (R- reply) *PUC have grants for the least wealth students so [they] ask you to show the documentation, such as, salary if you work...*

E: Humhum. (F- Acknowledge) *Humhum*

F: Ou de seus pais. (F- Comment) *or from your parents*

E: Ok. (F- Acknowledge) *Ok*

F: Ahh as despesas se você tem, se você paga aluguel e você trazendo essa documentação, a PUC, então a direção vai analisar o seu caso, ver se você tem direito a essa bolsa. (F- Comment) *The expenses you have if you pay rent and if you bring the documentation PUC the direction will analyse your case if you have a case for the grant*

E: E, quando vou devo saber se ahh ... (I- Inquire) *And when will I know if ahh..*

F: É, você trazendo a documentação ... (R- reply) *Well if you bring the documentation...*

E: Humhum. (F- Acknowledge) *Humhum*

F: Aí eles marcam uma data pra você voltar. (F- Comment) *then they will give you a date when you can return*

E: Tá. (F- Acknowledge) *Right*

F: Pra saber a resposta, (F- Comment) *to know the result right? certo? (F/I return)*

E: Obrigada. (F- Close) *Thank you*

F: Nada. (F- accept) *No problem*

Considering the sequence of moves and acts as part of the 'script' of this situation, it is noteworthy that right at the beginning of the interaction the requester's I-Propose is followed by the requestee's R-Reply, instead of a R-Accept or R-Reject (yes/no answer) which is predicted by the taxonomy. However, this deviation of the taxonomy is considered to be part of the 'script', rather than a departure from it. It is clear that the



native speaker wants to respond to the learner's request, in the form of an I-Propose, with neither yes nor no but with the conditions for an yes or no.

Deviations from the 'script', now in the sense of departures from the 'script', consist of sequences of discourse moves and acts which either indicate a breakdown of the communication or the need for some kind of repair to keep the conversation going until compliance with the request is achieved.

#### b. Departure from 'scripts'

Some departures from the 'scripts' as defined above have been observed across situations and across proficiency levels. This section will examine possible constraints, such as linguistic resources, external contextual variables (e.g. degree of imposition of situations), internal contextual variables (cognitive processing, perception of external contextual variables) which could be affecting learners' performance in terms of the sequence of discourse moves.

#### Across proficiency levels

Interactions with beginners show that several R/I Return, Loop, F/I Reformulate discourse moves are necessary before a R-move is offered.

#### Example: Situation 1 'car loan request'

E1    E=learner          S=native speaker

Learners – Level 1

E: Você me ajuda na quinta feira por mais ou menos uma hora? *You help me on Thursday for about an hour?* [Follow up/Initiation move propose]

S: Você quer o carro emprestado? *Do you want to borrow the car?* [R/I Loop]

E: (laughs showing incomprehension) [NV - R (React)]

S: Você quer o carro, você quer o carro, pra fazer a mudança? Emprestado? Você quer pegar meu carro? *Do you want the car do you want the car to do the house move?*

*Borrow it? Do you want to get my car?* [F/I move reformulate]

E: Sim. *Yes* [Response move confirm]

S: Te empresto. *I will lend it to you* [Follow up move (Agree)]

The example above illustrates how absolute beginners can use elliptical goal statements but have problems with interaction (for similar results cf. Hassal, 1997 in Kasper and Rose, 2002: 24). Native speaker interlocutors need to repair the communication which had broken down, with several recasts (expanded repetitions) and reformulate moves. It is clear that lack of linguistic resources (lexical problems) creates a comprehension problem, preventing the learner from pursuing his communicative goal. In this context, the interaction between beginners and native speakers involves negotiation of meaning (cf. Long, 1996: 441 as discussed in preceding chapters), where the missing lexical item “emprestar” becomes salient through repetition and paraphrasing. In pragmatic terms, there is not, however, much negotiation of the goal. The native speaker complies with the request as soon as the communication is re-established. In this sense, he cuts the negotiation short, anticipating that too much effort would have to be made for too little impact.

As proficiency increases, requests for clarification and repetitions decrease (cf. for similar findings Achiba, 2003: 172-173), with the interactions becoming much more target-like. It is noteworthy that request for clarification and (expanded) repetitions are not present in the control group in any of the situations (cf. R/I moves Repeat and Loop in the figures in the analysis of discourse moves and acts above). Most importantly, R/I moves Repeat change their function with an increase of proficiency. Whereas they would consist of clarification requests in beginners’ interactions, R/I (or F/I) moves in advanced levels, as the example below shows, consist of back channel responses, more frequent in interactions between native speakers.

Example: Situation 1

Learners – level 3

E=Learner

S=Native speaker

E16

S: Tá eu acho que sim, [R (Qualify)] *right I think so*

que horas você precisa do carro? [I (Inquire)] *at what time do you need the car?*

E: Eu preciso do carro oito da manhã. [R (Reply)] *I need the car at eight am*

S: Oito da manhã? [F/I (Return)] *eight am?*

Tá bom [F (Acknowledge)] *Fine*



The example above also illustrates another developmental pattern in the sequence of discourse moves and acts. As mentioned above, in interactions with beginners, the negotiation of the requestive goal is kept to a minimum by the native speaker. In contrast, with increase in proficiency, much more negotiation of the request can be observed. Native speakers in all situations impose conditions and negotiate them along the interaction, before complying with the request. It seems then that there is a trade off between the negotiation of the goal and negotiation of meaning. Native speakers arguably perceive advanced learners as capable of concentrating on the transaction of the request but not beginners. It seems that modified input from native speakers to non-native speakers is not limited to grammatical and lexical features, but rather native speakers also accommodate their contributions in pragmatic terms.

Apart from communication breakdowns, another trigger for repetitions, recasts and clarification requests in the form of R/I and F/I moves amongst beginners is poor alignment of moves by learners, as the following example shows:

Example:

Learners – Level 1

E= learner

S= native speaker

S: [Quando] *When?* [F/I (Inquire)]

E: *Isto é muito importante para mim. This is very important for me* [F (Com)]

Poor alignment of responses has already been reported in the literature (cf. Kasper and Rose, 2002: 25), even amongst advanced learners. Similarly, in the data presented in this study, problems with alignment of discourse moves appear at all levels and in all situations. In Situation 1, level 5, for instance, the example below shows that learner's F-Moves Evaluate actually interrupt the interlocutor's move, introducing 'noise' in the conversation:

Example:

Learners – Level 5

E=Learner

S= native speaker

E15

S: *Qualquer dia do final de semana, Sábado ou Domingo? Any day in the weekend, Saturday or Sunday?* [F/I (Inquire)]

E: *É, qualquer dia [serve]. Yes any day is fine* [R (Reply)]

**S: Tá, ok [F (Acknowledge)]**

**eu acho que Sábado a tarde ele tá disponível, [eu acho que você pode usar] *I think that on Saturday evening I won't need it [I think you can use it] [F (Agree)]***

**E: [Ah ótimo]. *Ah great [F (Evaluate)]***

**S: [Aí]. *So***

**E: [Ah muito legal]. *Ah this is really great [F (Evaluate)]***

**S: Conforme for você me liga na Sexta-feira pra confirmar. *Depending on what happens you call me on Friday to confirm [F/I (Propose)]***

**Kasper and Rose (2002: 25) argue that poor alignment might be a problem of control of processing, following Bialystok's model. They further argue that pragmatic awareness and control of processing seem to be unrelated dimensions. The opposite view is taken here: pragmatic awareness might be the trigger for processing. In the case of beginners, language comprehension problems might be interfering with the management of the conversation in terms of discourse moves. However, the same does not apply for advanced learners, who show no difficulties with understanding. It could be argued that what constrains the management of the interaction (i.e. sequence of discourse moves), besides the amount of linguistic resources, is the 'overprocessing' of expectations posed by the interaction. Learners seem to have an awareness of the pragmatic demands for the achievement of their requestive goal, investing more effort than should be necessary, which results in achieving lower contextual effects.**

### **6.5 Feedback (R/I, F/I moves and acts)**

**This section will discuss the availability of feedback in the requestive interactions. For this purpose, it will look at how feedback figures in the conversations and how learners react to it. Feedback in discourse is defined by Trosborg (1995: 181) as mainly comprising "acts of acknowledgement and supplementary comments". In the context of Trosborg's taxonomy of discourse moves and acts, feedback in discourse comprises, more specifically, F-moves Acknowledge and F-moves Comment. This kind of feedback will be redefined here as *forward-looking moves*, in the sense that F-moves Acknowledge and F-Comment are crucial to keep the conversation going. They signal to the interlocutor that the previous discourse move has been understood, accepted and**



show, in this way, a commitment in the development of the conversation. As seen in the analysis of the discourse moves and acts above, F-moves produced by learners increase with proficiency level. Learners show an awareness of the importance of Follow up moves for the flow of the conversation until compliance with the request is achieved.

There are, however, other kinds of Follow up moves (e.g. F-Reformulate, F-Repeat) which, instead of feeding the conversation forwards, break it, demanding some kind of repair before the conversation can proceed further. These Follow up moves, together with R/I moves, refer to a previous move, to which participants in the interaction need to refer back. Thus, for the purpose of this discussion, feedback will encompass only acts (or functions) of Follow up and Response/Initiation moves (e.g. Repeat, Loop) which arguably break the flow of the conversation. These moves and acts represent in the 'negotiation of meaning' account requests for clarification, recasts, expanded or exact repetitions, confirmation checks or indications of communication breakdown (cf. above).

#### *6.5.1 Feedback and situational variation*

In Situations 2 and 3, where the social distance (status/power) is greater than in Situation 1, less feedback (as defined above) can be observed. In Situation 2 for instance, the example below shows that the native speaker, faced with a (in)comprehension problem, invests little effort to try to solve the breakdown in communication.

Learners – Level 2

E=Learner    C=native speaker

**E6 –**

E: (xxx) por favor queria saber por que a aula não está muita limpia, você não foi na aula? (I- Inquire) *Please I would like to know why the class is not very clean you didn't go to the class?*

C: Não entendi. (R- Loop) *I didn't understand*

E: Ach! queria saber por que a aula não está limpia você não foi para limpia aula hoje? (F/I – Repeat) *ach I would like to know why the class is not clean you didn't go to the class?*

C: (Longo silêncio indicando que não entendeu) posso limpar. (R- Confirm)  
(Long silence indicating she did not understand the previous move) *I can clean it.*  
E: Ok. (F- Acknowledge) *Ok*

At the end of the interaction, the cleaning lady (C) indicates she did not understand the learner's F/I Repeat move. However, she complies with the request with a R-Confirm move. As mentioned before, this situation presents a very 'stable' script. The example above depicts a departure from the 'script', in the sense that the requester (learner) performs the request with an I-Inquire move, instead of using an I-Propose move expected as part of the 'script' of this situation. Feedback provided by the native speaker is limited to making explicit the misunderstanding. It does not give any indication as to what could have been the source of the misunderstanding, since the native speaker's R/I loop move does not point to any feature of the learner's discourse move in particular. The learner's subsequent move is an almost exact repetition of his/her previous move. This kind of limited and vague feedback also appears in Situation 3, where miscommunications are not fully negotiated, rather participants allow the communication to proceed with an imperfect consensus. This means that in Situations 2 and 3 native speakers are not prepared to accommodate their speech to learners. On the other hand, learners in these situations are prepared to accept that misunderstandings will not be solved.

This pattern suggests that effort decreases as social distance increases (see Situations 2 and 3). In other words, NNSs tend to suppress requestive effort with NS in interactions where social distance is a significant factor. The data analysis in relation to Situations 2 and 3 confirms this. One reason for this pattern might reside in the fact that in formal situations where greater social distance is a factor excessive processing effort is required vis-à-vis pragmatic effect.

### ***6.5.2 Feedback and proficiency level variation***

As indicated in the analysis of discourse moves and acts, moves such as R/I Loop, R/I Return and F/I Reformulate, which indicate the need for request for clarification and expanded repetitions by native speakers, decrease as proficiency increases. In interaction with beginners, as the example E1 (Level 1 Situation 1) above shows, the



native speaker typically does the repair work, with R/I loop and F/I reformulate discourse moves. As predicted in the negotiation of meaning account, in his request for clarification and expanded repetitions, the native speaker provides modified input, offering feedback to the learner in lexical and arguably syntactical terms as well. In the example below, the native speaker gives clear feedback to the learner about the inappropriateness of the learner's choice of the lexical item "dar" (*to give*):

**Example:**

**Learners – Level 3**

**E=learners**

**S=Native**

**speaker**

**E:** Eu estou mudando de casa e como você sabe eu não tenho carro e eu tenho muitas coisas para mudar ( I – Inf) *I am moving home and as you know I don't have a car and I have lots of things to move*

e eu estava pensando que talvez você me pode me pode dar um jeito me dar o carro seu carro para um dia para para mudar minhas coisas. (I – Propose) *and I was wondering that maybe you can you can find a way to give me the car*

**S:** Dar o carro ou emprestar? ( R/I – Inquire) *give it or lend it?*

**E:** Emprestar só dar por um dia só empresta. (R- Reply) *lend it give only for one day only lend it*

**S:** Tá bom eu empresto ( F – Agree) *ok I lend it to you*

The learner's subsequent move after the feedback, when he makes explicit the meaning of "to lend", shows that the feedback was understood as a correction, which was incorporated in the learner's subsequent discourse move. For the 'negotiation of meaning' account, modified input in the form of repetitions and clarification requests is seen as feedback for grammatical and lexical knowledge. Furthermore, modified input is supposed to facilitate learning (cf. literature review), making features salient. Saliency of features is also supposed to facilitate noticing. According to Schmidt, salient features would be more easily noticed by learners (see Schmidt above in this chapter). Carroll (1999) criticises this mechanic view of the perception of input, arguing that saliency cannot be placed externally, but is part of the individual's cognitive representations. Whether or not the feedback above provided by the NS was of any significance for the learner can only be assessed with consideration of concepts such as manifestness,

relevance and cognitive context. In terms of pragmatics, feedback appears in the data in a less explicit way than the feedback described above.

### 6.5.3 Negotiation of meaning, feedback and pragmatics

Feedback on a pragmatic level appears in the data in the form, for example, of reformulations by native speakers of learners' request strategies. In other words, NSs repeat learner's request but changes the level of directness of the request realization strategy, as in the example below, where the NS changes the request strategy from a hint used by the learner to a more direct expression of wishes and desires.

**Example:**

**Situation 1**

**Learners Level 1**

**E=learner**

**S=native speaker**

**E:** Você me ajuda na quinta feira por mais ou menos uma hora? *You help me on Thursday for about an hour?* [Follow up/Initiation move propose]

**S:** Você quer o carro emprestado? *Do you want to borrow the car?* [R/I Loop]

**E:** (laughs showing incomprehension) [NV - R (React)]

The learner does not understand the NS's reformulation of his/her request due to the lack of linguistic resources, so that the NS needs to perform a series of repetitions and recasts until the learner confirms the request.

Another kind of reformulation of learners' realization strategies by the NS interlocutor is concerned with changes from a direct strategy (e.g. mood derivable "você me deu o carro ahn por me ajudar por ahn mudar meus coisas? *Did you give me the car to help me to move my things?*) to a more indirect strategy (Você tá precisando do meu carro? *Do you need my car?*). In both cases, learners' reactions to native speakers' feedback in the sequence of discourse is limited to confirming the reformulation of the request.

Unlike in the example above (Learners level 3), where the learner makes explicit reference to the NS's feedback, the feedback concerned with reformulation of request strategies seems to be interpreted as a request for confirmation. In some cases, even after the reformulation of the strategy by the NS, learners do not incorporate them in their subsequent discourse moves. On the contrary, the learner who used a mood



derivable strategy, performs, after the NS's feedback, a subsequent request with the same mood derivable realization strategy.

In the context of the perception of feedback by learners, Carroll (2001, see also literature review chapter) argues that perception of feedback is dependent on it being relevant, according to the Relevance principle in RT (see above, this chapter). This means the interpretation of feedback has to achieve the most contextual effects with the least processing effort. In order for NSs' feedback regarding realization strategies and levels of directness to be interpreted by learners as negative feedback, learners would have to step outside the immediate context of the transaction of the request and interpret NS's reformulation as metalinguistic information. The immediate context, which is easily manifest to learners and therefore the most relevant one is concerned with the negotiation of the request and the conditions to achieve the requestive goal. Learners do not interpret feedback as metalinguistic information because it is an interpretation which lacks contextual effects. The lack of contextual effect is defined in terms of (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 143):

1. The assumption is utterly unrelated to the context.
2. The assumption is already present in the context and its strength is unaffected by the newly presented information.
3. The assumption is inconsistent with the context and too weak to change the context.

The interpretation of feedback as metalinguistic information, because it involves more effort for little contextual effect, would be of last resort for learners. There is no guarantee that feedback will be interpreted as such. It depends foremost on the learners' inferencing capacities. Carroll also argues that the more explicit the feedback the more relevant it will be for learners. Explicit feedback in pragmatic terms is rare, there is none in the data presented here. This raises pedagogical issues, making a case for the explicit teaching of pragmatic abilities in second language classes (see Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993 and Warga, 2002 in the literature review chapter). However, explicitness alone – surely a speaker-centred, NS-centred description – does not guarantee learning of successful negotiation of meaning. What control, manifestness and noticing bring into consideration is the hearer perspective, the listener perspective *in interaction*. In other words, the negotiation of meaning offers only a weak account of

interaction. Only by extending this account to the pragmatic unfolding of communication, can interaction NS-NNS in contexts, be fully explored. Noticing, control and manifestness offer a far more comprehensive account of cognition in the learning of pragmatics, for they place learning in the learner and also between the NNSs and the input.

## **6.6 Summary**

This chapter set out to discuss the results of the data analysis in the light of a proposal for an integrated theory of pragmatic development in SLA studies. The theoretical components discussed in the preceding chapters, although concerned with general second language acquisition issues, have been put forward to explicitly explain the learning of pragmatics in a second language. In addition, as part of a complex, but necessary theoretical framework, the accounts above for the learning of pragmatics in a second language have been enriched by insights provided by an integrated cognitive-communicative theory of pragmatics, namely Relevance Theory.

Moreover, to do justice to the interactional character of the data, the second part of this chapter discussed the results of the data analysis chapter taking into account discourse in interaction, that is sequence of discourse moves as well as NSs' and learners' contributions to the requestive situations. For this purpose, the negotiation of meaning account in second language acquisition research and its notion of feedback has been brought into a discussion of the results.

The most salient feature of the results of the analysis of the requestive situations is concerned with the production or lack of production of conventionalised pragmatic material in Brazilian Portuguese across proficiency levels. In this context, the discussion has focused on unmarked modal verbs (e.g. "ter como" *can*), diminutives ("limpadinha", "ajudinha" *a little hand*) and above all on the use of attention-getters ("olha", "olha só" *look*) by learners. The question which arises is why is it that learners at all proficiency levels, despite being intensely exposed to these pragmatic routine features in Brazilian Portuguese either do not produce them at all or have difficulties in manipulating them in interactions with native speakers?



In order to answer this question, cognitive and also communicative aspects of learners' interactions have been considered. Learners might have noticed the presence of routinized material such as attention-getters in native speakers' requests but were not able to include them in their own requests. It was argued that processing issues have prevented learners from better manipulating conventionalized pragmatic resources in Portuguese. Here, Bialystok's control of processing and analysis of knowledge are used to conceptualise this learning difficulty. In the context of development, beginners' total lack of attention getters could be explained in terms of problems with automatization and/or the mapping of pragmatic features to L2 social situations. However, to offer a more differentiated picture of learners' difficulties with conventionalized pragmatic material, concepts from Relevance Theory such as manifestness, relevance, context and the distinction between explicature and implicature have been taken into account. Here, some claims have been made:

First, that beginners tend to rely on the propositional content of their requests. Thus, they stop processing at the level of explicatures. Attention-getters, as non-topic carrying discourse features are considered to be irrelevant, in the sense that too much effort would have to be spent. Propositional explicitness is given priority to the detriment of pragmatic conventions.

Second, advanced learners, who overproduce attention-getters, seem to be engaged in further processing. This means they can access higher levels of communication (implicated premises and conclusions), which in turn suggests advanced learners were able to process further contextual information. It is argued that the learning of pragmatic abilities in a second language is constrained by the ability to make better use of (internal and external) contextual information.

Finally, the overproduction of attention-getters by advanced learners represents an increase in effort which does not conform to the relevance-theoretical principle of least effort/greatest effect. This suggests a stage in pragmatic development where learners have an acute awareness of the 'untranslatability' of pragmatic codes from their L1s to the target language. As a result, there is an overprocessing which generates 'noise' in the interaction and which, in turn, demands more effort from native speakers' interlocutors.

The second part of this chapter was concerned with discourse and subsequent discourse. In other words, it sought to discuss discourse moves in interaction, their position and the kinds of moves they originate as subsequent discourse. In this context, it was argued that negotiation of the requestive goal increases with proficiency level. NSs accommodate their contributions, imposing more conditions before complying with the request when interacting with more advanced learners. On the other hand, there is more negotiation of meaning, with recasts, reformulations and repetitions by NSs interacting with beginners. This suggests that there is then *a trade off between the negotiation of the goal and the negotiation of the meaning*, with NSs accommodating their discourse both in grammatical and lexical as well as in pragmatic terms. Another constraint for the negotiation of the requestive goal is social distance as an external variable. The greater the social distance the less negotiation there will be.

Another significant finding in the context of subsequent discourse is concerned with poor alignment of discourse moves at all proficiency levels and in all requestive situations. In the case of beginners, poor alignment could be related to low proficiency level and problems with comprehension. However, amongst advanced learners poor alignment of moves could be due to an overprocessing. Awareness of the pragmatic demands for the achievement of the communicative goal could be making learners invest more effort with little contextual effect.

The final part of this section discussed the presence and perception of feedback by learners. Feedback as requests for clarification, recasts, expanded or exact repetitions, confirmation checks is less present in interactions where the social distance is great. NSs in these situations tend not to accommodate their speech to learners, who in turn, invest less effort in the pursuit of the requestive goal. Social distance seems to act as a constraint for the negotiation of the requestive goal.

Learners will only perceive feedback by NSs as negative feedback, that is as a correction, if they step outside the immediate context of the interaction (the transaction of the request) and interpret the feedback as metalinguistic information. This is a last resort interpretation, since it requires too much effort for too little effect in the context of the negotiation of the request. In communicative and also cognitive terms, this interpretation of feedback is irrelevant. Finally, the absence of explicit feedback for



**pragmatics arguably raises pedagogical issues, making a case for the teaching of pragmatic abilities in a second language.**

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