TEACHER TALK REFLECTING PRAGMATIC AWARENESS: A LOOK AT EFL AND CONTENT-BASED CLASSROOM SETTINGS[1]

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Abstract

This paper approaches classroom interaction from a pragmatic perspective. More specifically, it concentrates on how pragmatic awareness is reflected in the use of modifying elements of talk by two teachers (both non-native speakers of English), and how their use of modifiers affects the ongoing interaction. The data come from two different classroom settings where English is either the object or the medium of study. The findings reveal an overall tendency towards directness in the teachers' performance that is affected in complex ways both by the institutional context and the teachers' status as nonnative speakers. The findings also suggest a need for future research to analyse classrooms as social contexts in their own right and with their own pragmatic constraints which may not correspond to those of everyday discourse in other settings.

Keywords: Pragmatic awareness, Classroom interaction, Teacher talk, Modifiers.

1. Introduction

This paper is an attempt to explore the notion of pragmatic awareness by analysing how it gets reflected through speakers' use of modifying elements of talk. In addition, the approach will be that of foreign language use since the data analysed comes from Finnish classroom settings where English is a foreign language for both the students and the teachers. The paper reports on a case study on teachers' ways of displaying pragmatic awareness through their language use and the interactional consequences that this has in two different classroom settings where English is either the object or the medium of study.

Pragmatics has been defined as a general functional perspective on language (e.g. Verschueren 1999: 11). From this it follows that all aspects of language use can be approached from a pragmatic viewpoint and interpreted as carriers or pragmatic meaning potential, or as signalling different degrees of pragmatic awareness. In spite of this, researchers have often singled out language choices that are particularly relevant for conveying pragmatic meanings. These include, among others, discourse/pragmatic particles, hedges, or choices of mood and modality, all of which modify the pragmatic impact of speakers' messages (e.g. Coates 1987; Holmes 1990; Östman 1995; Hyland 1996). In this

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[1] This paper has its origins in a paper presented at the 7th International Pragmatics Conference, Budapest, July 2000; I would like to thank the audience for their helpful comments. I am also grateful for the insightful comments of an anonymous reviewer.

paper, such choices are seen as indicators of pragmatic awareness because they reveal a great deal about the speaker's orientation to the interpersonal and social dimension of language.

Because this study looks at non-native speakers' performance, research on interlanguage pragmatics has particular relevance for it. As regards modifying elements, earlier research has indicated that while displaying pragmatic concerns through modifiers may take place almost automatically for native speakers of a language, making strategic use of modifiers is often much more difficult for foreign language speakers who easily appear overly direct (e.g. Trosborg 1987; García 1992; Cohen & Ohlstain 1993; Bergman & Kasper 1993; Nikula 1996; House 1996). Modifiers are thus not easily acquired, but rather than addressing acquisitional or developmental aspects of users' interlanguage, this study investigates how pragmatic aspects of language use are taken into account and put to use in two types of situations where English is used as a foreign language: Formal English language lessons and content and language integrated lessons where English is the medium of instruction in a non-language subject. More specifically, the focus is on teacher talk and the ways in which teachers' use of modifying elements serves as an indicator of pragmatic awareness.

Why the focus on teacher talk when it has been more usual to approach classroom data from the perspective of students and their L2 learning and use? Given the research findings that classroom interaction is typically dominated by teachers, in language classrooms as well as in other types of classrooms (e.g. Allwright 1999; Nystrand & Gamoran 2001), it is also of interest to pay attention to teachers' performance and the kinds of conditions it creates for foreign language use in classrooms. Kasper (1979), for example, argues that language learners' tendency to what she calls 'modality reduction' is teaching-induced, caused at least partly by the lack of systematic attention by teachers to modality and other relational aspects of language use. In a similar vein, Kramsch (1986: 369) argues that the teacher-controlled nature of classroom interaction makes it "hardly conducive to developing the interpersonal social skills that require interpretation and negotiation of intended meanings". Thus, even if it is nowadays usual for young students to be in contact with English through popular culture and media, classrooms still form important contexts for English language use. This paper aims to examine whether the above claims about the insufficient attention to pragmatic matters by teachers hold true in the classrooms studied and if so, what are its consequences for classroom interaction.

In addition to the focus on student rather than teacher performance, it has also been usual for interlanguage research to compare non-native speakers' performance with that of native speakers and to come up with illustrations of how the two differ (e.g. Trosborg 1987; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990; Bergman & Kasper 1993). As all the participants in the classrooms studied are non-native speakers of English, the question of how pragmatic matters become manifest in interaction have to be related to the situation itself rather than some norm external to it. Hence, rather than asking how the teachers' way of displaying pragmatic awareness through their use of modifiers compares to native speakers of English, the question to ask is how this affects the ongoing interaction? For example, does the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students get affected by the way teachers use modifiers?

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the focus on teacher talk in this paper should be seen as a matter of chosen perspective for discussion rather than a view on classroom discourse that would see teacher talk as somehow separate and autonomous from students'

contributions. As will become evident later on in the analysis section, teacher talk will always be considered in relation to students' contributions and the overall interactional context.

To sum up, rather than approaching the classroom contexts from a language acquisition point of view, this study focusses on the way in which teachers' use of modifiers reflects pragmatic awareness and the possible effects that this has on interaction.

2. Language classrooms and content and language integrated classrooms

The status of English in Finnish schools is strong. Studying foreign languages is compulsory, and for the great majority of students English is the first foreign language that they start studying at the age of nine. Ever since the communicative turn in language teaching, the aim of foreign language teaching in Finland has been to develop students' communicative competence. The same applies to all European countries as can be seen, for example, in the way the Council of Europe's common framework for language learning and teaching emphasises the importance of communicative competence (defined as consisting of sociolinguistic, linguistic and pragmatic components) as a major element in any language learning and teaching (Framework 1996).

In addition to its influence on traditional language classrooms, the focus on communicative competence and meaningful language use has also brought about new ways of teaching languages in schools. It has, for example, become increasingly common for Finnish students to be involved in forms of content and language integrated learning (Swain 1996; Nikula & Marsh 1997; Zuengler & Brinton 1997). Content and language integrated learning (henceforth abbreviated as CLIL) does not refer to any clearly defined model of teaching. Rather, it is an umbrella term to describe different ways in which schools choose to use some language other than the students' native language (usually English) as the medium of instruction.

The actual forms of CLIL education, i.e. integration of language and content, range from immersion-type programmes where students receive the majority of their teaching through a foreign language to situations where the use of a foreign language is restricted to particular subjects, particular groups of students, or to teaching of particular themes through a foreign language (see e.g. Krueger & Ryan 1993; Snow & Brinton 1997; Fruhauf et al. 1996; Takala et al. 1998). One of the arguments of those in favour of the integration of content and language is that when language is the medium of instruction rather than the object of study, learners acquire it in a naturalistic way and learn to communicate in that language better than if they only received formal language teaching. From a pragmatic point of view, then, the argument seems to be that learners have a greater chance to achieve pragmatic proficiency when the foreign language is used as the medium of study.

In the Finnish context, being involved both in English language teaching and CLIL education has rapidly become a part of everyday life for a growing number of students, but we still know very little about classroom interaction in these contexts and about how they compare with each other in terms of local practices of using English. This study is the beginning of an ongoing research exploring Finnish EFL and CLIL classroom contexts from a pragmatic perspective in order to better understand what characterizes language use in these settings.

3. Pragmatic awareness

3.1. *Matters of definition*

The term pragmatic awareness can be problematic; even if it is widely used in research literature (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991; Tomlinson 1994; House 1996; Overstreet & Yule 1999; Clennell 1999), it is rarely explicitly defined. Furthermore, especially in the second language learning research context, the term often carries prescriptive overtones in that pragmatic awareness is seen as a desirable learning target, i.e. learners need to be made aware of pragmatic aspects of communication. As this paper focuses on adults using English in their professional environment, the prescriptive sense is somewhat awkward. As foreign and second language speakers in general, the teachers in the present study surely possess what Blum-Kulka (1991: 255) calls a general pragmatic knowledge base in their native language. The issue then, rather than the teacher's need to acquire pragmatic awareness, is how it gets displayed in their language use in classrooms.

Another problem in defining pragmatic awareness is the question of how to delineate pragmatic awareness from language awareness in general. Even though drawing strict boundaries is difficult, I wish to make a distinction between the two. In this paper, language awareness is seen as relating to language users showing awareness of aspects of the code itself (e.g. "I can't understand what *perish* means"); in Verschueren's (2000: 441) words, this means messages that are referring to the code, "found whenever a word is 'mentioned' rather than 'used'". Very likely, indicators of language awareness in this sense can easily be found in language classrooms, given their very nature as settings for language-specific activities. In content-based classrooms, (at least explicit) indicators of language awareness may not be as prevalent, bearing in mind the common contention that CLIL education is, in the first place, dedicated to the study of the subject matter, albeit through a foreign language.

Terminological confusion may also arise from the fact that the terms pragmatic awareness and metapragmatic awareness are often used without defining them, or that they are used interchangeably to refer to speakers' perceptions of those aspects of language that have interpersonal and social functions (cf. House 1996; Clennell1999). In this paper, the term pragmatic awareness is understood as a reference to features of language and interaction with which language users orient to aspects of language use that pertain to its social and interpersonal functioning. To an extent, this overlaps with what Verschueren (2000) calls metapragmatic awareness, especially as regards attention to such speakers' choices as, for example, pragmatic markers, modal verbs or hedges as indicators of (meta)pragmatic awareness. However, for Verschueren (2000), in line with Silverstein (1993), metapragmatic awareness is a notion referring to the study of the reflexive and metalinguistic dimension of language use. This view is much broader than, but including, what are considered as linguistic realizations of pragmatic awareness in this paper in that taking the notion of metapragmatic awareness to its extreme, it can encompass practically everything in language use. This is because, as Verschueren (1995: 367) points out, reflexive awareness is so central in language use that actually all language use can be seen as self-referential to a degree. Therefore, I wish to preserve the term metapragmatic awareness as a broader notion referring to the pervasively reflexive nature of language use, and use the term pragmatic awareness in a sense that is more geared towards language users

conveying functions that are related to social and interpersonal dimensions of language, expressed through both linguistic and interactional choices. This means that when considering language classrooms and CLIL classrooms, features such as the following can be seen as indicators of pragmatic awareness: Participants' attention to appropriateness of language use and various features oriented to the interpersonal level of language (manifested e.g. in the use of modifying strategies).

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the concept pragmatic awareness does not refer to speakers' conscious deliberations about the social and interpersonal consequences of their language choices. Rather than an attempt to see 'see' insider speakers' heads, the concept is thus a research tool for an analyst who approaches language use with the assumption that pragmatic processes, whether conscious or not, can leave identifiable linguistic and interactional traces.

3.2. *The focus on modifiers*

As pointed out in the introduction, all aspects of language use can be looked at from a pragmatic perspective and studied in terms of what they reveal about speakers' pragmatic awareness. However, for practical purposes it is useful to narrow down the scope of analysis because it would be a daunting task research-wise to try and account for all language choices. For this reason, this paper focusses on the use of modifying elements in language use as indicators of pragmatic awareness. Modifying elements, or modifiers, is here an overall term for linguistic choices which research has shown to be particularly significant carriers of pragmatic meanings. Such devices have variously been referred to as hedges, pragmatic particles, modal markers, markers of evidentiality or affect (e.g. Coates 1987; Biber & Finegan 1989; Holmes 1990; Nikula 1996; Hyland 1996). Usually, they have been interpreted as serving the function of either mitigating or emphasizing the impact of speakers' messages and thereby playing a crucial role in conveying interpersonal meanings.[2]

Verbal means of modification can be viewed as forming a continuum from more explicit to more implicit choices. Implicitness is here understood in line with Östman's (1981,1986) suggestion that if a speaker can be held responsible for what s/he has said then s/he has said it explicitly, whereas an implicit linguistic choice is one that the speaker in principle can deny that s/he has made. As regards modifying devices, by using expressions such as *I suppose* or *I'm sure*, for example, speakers express degrees of certainty towards the message more explicitly than by using an expression such as *you know,* the meaning of which remains more ambivalent and negotiable (see also Nikula 1996: 50-53). Pragmatic particles like *I mean*, *you know* and *well* in English (see e.g. Östman 1981; Schourup 2002) are thus typical examples of implicit verbal means of modification.

While the use of modifiers forms the main concern in this paper, other linguistic choices that co-occur with them and that have potential for affecting the interpersonal impact of language use will also be taken into account. These include, for example, modal verbs and pronouns, and choices of tense and mood.

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[2] Note that this paper only concentrates on verbal means of modification, excluding, for example, matters of prosody and non-verbal behaviour which can also carry pragmatic meanings.

4. Data and methods of analysis

As visualized in Table 1, the data for the study consist of video-recordings of two 45-minute school lessons in Finnish comprehensive school: One English language lesson and one CLIL lesson where maths is being taught through English. The students in the English lesson are 13-year-old 7th graders of comprehensive school. This is a small group of seven students; their teacher is female. The students in the maths lesson are 11-year-old 5th graders of comprehensive school. This is a bigger group with twenty students, their teacher is male. It is worth pointing out that the maths teacher is not a language teacher but a subject teacher teaching his subject through the medium of English. There is a two years' age difference between the groups but their knowledge of English is comparable in the sense that both groups have received formal instruction of English equally long, the year of the recording being in both cases the students' third year of studying English.

Recording	Grade	Year of learning English	Students	Teacher
EFL lesson	7th	3rd	7	female
CLIL lesson (maths)	5th	3rd	20	male

Table 1. An overview of the data

It is clear that no generalizations about classroom interaction can be drawn based on two lessons only and this is not even the purpose of the present study. Rather, the study is a first step in a series of studies that will be exploring interaction in EFL and CLIL classrooms from a pragmatic perspective and in that role, it can reveal points of interest worthy of further analysis.

Furthermore, as Flyvbjerg (2001: 82) puts it, the advantage of small-scale studies is that "they can ´close in´ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice" and thus help in gaining an understanding of issues that have not been extensively studied before, pragmatic aspects of classroom interaction being a case in point.

As the study is theoretically rooted in pragmatics, a crucial assumption that guides the analysis is that language use fulfils functions others than merely transmitting information from one participant to another. Language use is, first and foremost, a social event which means that linguistic and interactional choices contribute to and construct the relationship between the participants. This is the perspective, then, from which the use of modifiers as indicators of pragmatic awareness will be approached in this study, and it is obvious that it requires close attention to both linguistic and interactional detail and the overall context of the situation. A qualitative research approach to the data is thus called for, and the one used in this study is exemplified by a sample analysis of example 1 below (T= teacher, LM = a male student).[3]

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[3] The transcription conventions can be found in the appendix.

(1)

1	T	so **let´s try** to underline these things, or these sentences, I have one mistake here
2	T	*pikkusiskoni eivät halunneet halunneet,* so how do you say *siellä*
		'my little sisters didn't want want' 'there
3	T	*tapahtui jotakin kummallista*
		happened something strange'
4	LM1	something strange happened there=
5	T	=yeah\ so [**please**] underline in
6	LM4	[hmh]
7	T	your textbook, ***alleviivataan*** *nää* **muutamat** *kohdat,*
		let us underline these **few** lines
8	LM2	*voinko mää alleviivata kuulakärkikynällä*=
		'can I use a pen for underlining'
9	T	=something strange happened that night, that's right
10	LM2	*voinko*
		'can I'
11	T	yeah you can do it

In terms of the focus of this paper, there are several points of interest in this extract. First, on line 1, the teacher chooses to address the students with the inclusive we-form (*let's*) rather than with a bare imperative form. This, together with the verb *try* on line 1 can be interpreted as a modifying strategy on her part. Second, on line 5 the teacher uses an explicit politeness marker *please* to modify her instruction. Third, on line 7 when she makes a code-switch from English to Finnish, she again uses the first person plural form of the verb (*alleviivataan* 'let us underline'), including also herself into the activity rather than just directing the students; this can be seen as a strategy of positive politeness. Fourth, her use of the expression *muutamat* ('a few') further lessens the imposition by implying that the students are not asked to do very much.

Both the EFL and CLIL classroom transcripts have been analysed along these lines in order to consider teacher talk both in terms of whether it entails signals of pragmatic awareness and in terms of its interplay with students' contributions.

5. Use of modifiers reflecting pragmatic awareness: The language teacher

The findings reveal many differences between the two classrooms in terms of the teachers' way of expressing pragmatic functions in general and their way of using modifying elements in particular. Considering first the English lesson, the overall finding is that the teacher never deals with pragmatic matters of language use explicitly in the sense that she would provide her students with some explicit information about how pragmatic considerations might influence the use of English. The teacher thus does not invite her students to consider English from the viewpoint of its social or interpersonal dimensions. Instead, English becomes constructed as an object of scrutiny by the way much of classroom time is dedicated either to discussion of grammatical aspects of the language or to drill-like practising of these. That is, the teacher pays a lot of attention to English as a code or a system. It is noteworthy, moreover, that such 'talk about grammar' is usually conducted in Finnish rather than in English, as shown by example 2:

(2)

1	T	=*elikkä menneestä ajasta te käytätte* [*imperfektiä*] *tässä se on*
		'so about past time you use past tense here it is'
2	LM2	[(- -)]
3	T	*drove/, ja tulevasta* [*ajasta preesensiä drive ja sitte*]
		'drove and about future time present tense and then'
4	LM1	[*emmää tiiä ai*]
		'I-dunno oh'
5	T	*futuuri tehdään will* [*apuverbillä,*] *mä en tiedä onks*
		'future is made with auxiliary will I don't know whether'
6	LM2	[uh]
7	T	*teillä sitä vielä ollu, no sitte täällä* [*sanotaan vielä*] *että*
		'you have had it yet well then it says here also that '
8	LM2	[*kameralle tuli*]
		'got it by the camera'
9	T	*on olemassa* [*säännöllisiä*] [*ja epäsäännöllisiä*] *verbejä*
		there are regular and irregular verbs
10	LM1	[*aijaa*]
		'oh yeah'

What is also evident in example 2 is that the teacher's talk about grammatical features of English contains no modifying elements or other clearly interpersonally focussed features, with the exception of *mä en tiedä onks teillä vielä sitä ollu* on lines 5-7 ('I don't know whether you've had it yet'), with which the teacher signals explicitly her uncertainty about whether or not the students have background knowledge on the topic. This way, she frames the preceding description of future verb forms as something that the students need not be familiar with as yet, thereby implying that this information is of less importance than that on how to form present and past tense forms. Pragmatically, the scarcity of modifying elements in example 2 has the effect of contributing to an impression that what is taking place is a one-way delivery of grammatical facts to the students. In other words, the teacher's authoritative role is reflected not only through the acts she is performing (i.e. giving instructions) but also through the choice of direct strategies for doing this.

Not only talk about grammar is conducted in Finnish during the EFL lesson. Rather surprisingly, Finnish is used throughout the lesson for most activities, for example when the teacher is checking the students' homework, or when she is involved in classroom management and discipline. Allwright (1999: 319) points out that in language classrooms, the target language has a double role of being both the medium of instruction and the object of study. In this classroom, however, this double role is not as evident since the prevalence of Finnish in most classroom practices constructs the role of English as an object of study rather than a tool for communication.

The rare use of modifiers by the teacher when she speaks English seems to be partly dependent on the kind of talk being conducted: When English is used in this classroom, it is usually in the form of materials-dependent talk. For example, discussions about chapters in the textbook are conducted in English. In example 3, such textbook-focussed discussion consists of the teacher asking her students display questions about the text. What this results in is a stretch of questions and answers, often in the form of complete sentences that resemble the written forms in the book. Note, for example, how the teacher on lines 3 and 8 reacts to her students' contributions by suggesting more verbatim formulations from the textbook (i.e. *to the movies* rather than *at the movies*, *loud barking and growling* rather than

barking). Furthermore, such textbook dependent talk leaves little room for either the students or the teachers to express their personal views and opinions and hence little chance to practice more 'real-life' interaction where negotiations of interpersonal meanings constantly occur instead of interview-like question-answer sequences.

(3)

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1    T      =and why weren´t Bill´s family at home on Friday evening\
2    LM1    they were at, the movies=
3    T       =yeah they went to the movies, that´s right\
4    LM1    all right=
5    T      =to the cinema, and how did they know that something was wrong
6           when they came home/
7    LM4    they heard barking,
8    T      yes, loud barking, and growling, in the barn, an:d, how did Rusty
9           chase the coyote away, Rusty is the cat,
10   LM3    [he]slashed the: eiku she[(, )][ slashed            ]
                                 I mean
11   LM     [uh]                 [he ]
12   LM                          [ he]
13   LM                          [((laughs))voihan se olla he]
                                      but it might be 'he'
14   LM3    the over the nose,
15   T      very good, with his claws, yes
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Another reason why textbook-centred discussions such as the one in example 3 are odd pragmatically is the way they do not centre around the participants themselves, i.e. students and the teacher, but around the characters described in the text. This shifts the immediate "I-you-here-now"-deictic centre that is typical of everyday talk (see e.g. Auer 1988: 277; Caffi & Janney 1994: 366) to a more distant "s/he-they-there-then" dimension. This is another feature contributing to the feel of detachment rather than involvement in such discussions in addition to the written language bias. In example 3, for instance, the students and the teacher talk about "Bill, his family and Rusty the cat" rather than about the students themselves or about their personal views or feelings about the characters in the story. This is one of the reasons why there is also little need for speakers to modify the impact of their messages for interpersonal purposes.

Apart from English being used in textbook-related discussions, there are not very many occasions where the teacher would genuinely *communicate in* rather than *talk about* English with her students. When such occasions occur, however, her use of modifying elements does not become much more frequent than in the textbook-dependent talk. In fact, the teacher often adopts quite direct strategies as illustrated by example 4 below where she wishes to prevent the boys (LM3, LM2 and LM4) from answering and let room for one of the girls to make a contribution and where she uses bare imperative forms with no modifiers attached (line 5):

(4)

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1    T      and then we´ve got,  number four,  [milloin tulitte takaisin  ]
                                                 'when did you get back'
2    LM3                                        [when did you get     ] [back home  ]
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3       LM2                                                              [ back home ]
4       LM4     [when did you   get back home]
5       T       [   when did you get back home], mm-m/, now boys don´t answer I want to ask s- one of
6               the girls, the next one
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Example 5 below is an illustration of one of the rare occasions where the teacher uses modifying expressions when speaking English. She softens her message with the conventionally polite expression *please*, and with the parenthetic verb *I think* and the modal *might* (lines 3-5), both examples of modifying devices that abound in conversational language outside classrooms (e.g. Holmes 1990; Coates 1987; Nikula 1996). On lines 1 and 3, she also uses inclusive *we* which can be seen as a solidarity marker. It is noteworthy that in this extract, the teacher uses English to give students instructions about the classroom proceedings rather than to talk about a textbook chapter. It is thus more interpersonally oriented and perhaps therefore also contains more modifying elements. Such exchanges are, however, quite rare during the lesson.

(5)

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1       T       okay, do you remember the sto:ry/ [we read last time, a dog´s best friend,]
2       LF2                                       [(- - - Finnish) ((laughs))                ]
3       T       [because it´s already a week ago I thought] we might
4       LL      [    (- - -)                               ]
5       T       listen to it once again, [                 ] so please take these books again
6       LM2                              [missä me ollaan]
                                         ' where are we'
7       T       and this is page forty-six
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One explanation for the teacher very rarely resorting to modifying expressions when speaking English is the classroom context with its asymmetrical power relationship. In classroom settings, teachers are in the position of institutional power and it can be argued that this gets partly expressed through the use of direct strategies. In other words, even if the use of modifiers is a usual way to display pragmatic awareness for interpersonal purposes in, say, casual face-to-face encounters, it may be that directness is in accordance with the pragmatic conventions of a classroom context. Yet, from the students' perspective, the fact remains that the EFL teacher's choice of rather direct strategies offers them very few opportunities to make their own observations about the various resources with which speakers of English may modify the impact of their messages.

It seems, however, that the asymmetrical power relationship is not the only explanation for the teacher's directness given the finding that she quite often shows pragmatic sensitivity through her use of modifying devices when speaking Finnish. Moreover, her use of modifiers in Finnish seems to be connected to the type of talk conducted, i.e. it is context-specific. When involved in talk about grammar (as in example 2 above), she uses very few modifying elements also in Finnish, but is likely to use them more with more interpersonally oriented talk.

Example 6 is illuminating for two reasons. First, it serves as an example of the teacher using English and Finnish for different pragmatic purposes: English for exercise talk and Finnish for disciplinary comments. Second, it shows how the teacher is more likely to use modifying expressions when speaking Finnish. From line 1 to10, the teacher speaks

English when directing the students' attention to the homework she wants to go over and check with them. On line 11, a student admits to not having done the homework. This leads to disciplinary comments by the teacher from line 12 onwards, expressed in Finnish. In other words, when she moves from routine-like exercise talk to criticising student behaviour which demands more interpersonal work, she also switches from English to Finnish. When speaking Finnish, she makes use of modifying elements to emphasize her irritation: She begins her turn by *tota noin* which is difficult to translate exactly into English (roughly 'well well') but which in this context, in addition to marking the language shift, also seems to convey that something important, potentially negative, is to follow. This marker co-occurs with the clitic *-s* which is a common device in Finnish to modify the impact of directives and questions. According to Hakulinen et al. (forthcoming), the clitic *-s* typically occurs in routine-like or minor requests or proposals and it can serve many different functions. In this particular example, its function remains ambivalent. On the one hand, *-s* adds a sense of informality to the question and hence reduces its seriousness. On the other hand, it is used here by a speaker in an authoritative position, and in such contexts it can also acquire commanding overtones (Hakulinen et al, forthcoming). Such ambivalence is usual for implicit modifiers, and it can in fact be seen as a useful resource for speakers especially in moments of potential face threat.

Impersonalization is another strategy that speakers of Finnish often use as a negative politeness strategy to de-emphasize both the speaker's and the addressee's personal involvement in the matter (e.g. Hakulinen 1987). On line 14, the teacher uses an impersonal form with a zero subject to tell off her students (*ku ei läksyjä voida tehä* 'since (zero subject) can't do homework'). This is less face-threatening than expressing the reprimand with the second person verb form (i.e. 'since *you* can't do *your* homework'). In other words, the teacher's Finnish shows many signs of her modifying the pragmatic impact of her messages, both to attenuate and to emphasize her messages.

(6)

1	LM4	*siis mikä sivu*
		'which page exactly'
2	T	=it says, fifty and fifty-one.
3	LF1	*ne alkaa tässä*
		'they start in here'
4	T	[it´s right over there]
5	LM2	[*viiskyt viiskytyks*]
		'fifty fifty one'
6	LM	[*jaa*] you got trouble/
		'oh yeah'
7	T	aha:.
8	LM2	*mä oon tehny kaks,*
		'I have done two'
9	LM1	*määkin oon tehny kaks,*
		'I have also done two'
10	T	you did one and two, °you´ve got [o:ne and two°]
11	LM4	[*mä en oo käyny*] *ees tällä sivulla,*
		' I haven't even been to this page'
12	T	**tota noin,** *moneltas te pääsette koulusta*
		'well well at what time + **clitic -s** do you finish school today'
13		*mä annan teille vanhanaikasta laiskanläksyä hilkkari vie*

		I'll give you old-fashioned detention for goodness' sake
14		[*ku ei:*] *läksyjä voida tehä* kotona.
		'since (zero subject) can't do homework at home'
15	LF2	[*kolmelta*]
		'at three'
16	T	*kolmelta oikein hyvä, tuutte kolmelta tänne/, jotka ei oo tehny*
		'at three very good you come here at three those who have not done (the exercise)'

Another common way in which the teacher plays down her requests and suggestions when speaking Finnish is the frequent use of the modifying adverb *vähän* ('a little/bit'), either on its own or together with other modifiers. In example 7, the teacher first uses the adverb in combination with a conditional verb form (line 1) to attenuate a request, and again on line 11 where the adverb and conditional verb form are accompanied by the verb *koittaa* ('to try') which also lessens the forcefulness of the message by creating an impression of optionality, in that sense serving as a politeness device (cf. Brown and Levinson's 1987 negative politeness strategy 'give options').

(7)

1	T	*te **voisitte vähän** kattoo sitä: Queenie ja Rusty kappaletta,*
		'you **could a little** look at that Queenie and Rusty chapter'
2		*niitä sanoja sieltä*
		'the words from there'
3	LF3	*mää katoin jo kotona*
		'I looked already at home'
4	T	mm-h/
5	LF3	*mää katoin kotona* [*jo*]
		'I looked at home already'
6	T	[*a:ha/*] *no hyvä,*
		'okay well good'
7	LF2	*siis mitkä kaks*
		'I mean which two'
8	T	Queenie ja Rusty, [the dog´s]best friend,
9	LF	[*niin tää*]
		' right this'
10	LF2	*mikä sivu*
		'which page'
11	T	*(- -) **voisitte vähän koittaa vähän** näitä sanoja painaa mieleen.*
		'you **could a little try a little** stick these words in your mind'

The fact that the teacher's talk in Finnish shows sensitivity to pragmatic matters such as the wish to signal politeness or a sense of informality puts her use of more direct strategies when using English into new light. Even though her institutionally more powerful role as a teacher can be one reason for directness, the teacher's status as a non-native speaker also seems to be involved given her different strategies in English and Finnish. In other words, this finding seems to corroborate the conclusions arrived at in earlier pragmatic research that while pragmatic sensitivity and interpersonal concerns can be highly automatized in mother-tongue interaction, their appropriate use in a foreign language is a more problematic issue, even for someone who knows the target language well. But as the institutional factors also remain, the situation as a whole thus looks quite complex when looked at from a pragmatic perspective. It could be argued that in this classroom there are

coexisting 'pragmatic worlds', depending on the language used, and that interpersonal matters have a different role in each.

To sum up, the type of L2 interaction in this particular EFL classroom is very much materials-dependent and the message conveyed implicitly throughout the lesson is that what is at issue here is English as an object of analytic scrutiny rather than as a means of interaction. Although judgement obviously cannot be passed on all foreign language classrooms on the basis of one recording, it does present an interesting picture of classroom interaction that pragmatic matters are at issue only when the teacher is using Finnish. In other words, there is a need to reconsider the very nature of interaction in language classrooms if we want to take seriously the contention that foreign language teaching should provide opportunities to learn not only structural but also pragmatic skills. It is quite usual that in language classrooms the emphasis is put on students' grammatical skills in the target language, but as Bardovi-Harlig (2001: 26) points out, "emphasis on microlevel grammatical accuracy in the foreign language classroom may be at the expense of macrolevel pragmatic appropriateness". As shown above, the present findings support this argument.

6. Use of modifiers reflecting pragmatic awareness: The maths teacher

An analysis of the CLIL lesson, i.e. a maths lesson where English is the medium of instruction, reveals the same as in the EFL classroom: The teacher never brings pragmatic matters of language use to his students' attention by raising issues related to matters of usage in discussion. When the language becomes a focus during the lesson, it is in terms of its linguistic and semantic features rather than in terms of pragmatics. Usually this means that the language only becomes an issue when the students are uncertain about how certain things are expressed in English and the teacher provides them with lexical information. This is illustrated in example 8 where the teacher on line 5 corrects the student's erroneous word choice *harp* (from Finnish *harppi* 'compass'):

(8)

1	T	let's give some time for others too ((pause)) OKAY, any results, Henna
2	LF3	mm the round things you can measure with your harp
3	T	mhm/
4	LF3	**your harp**
5	T	**you mean compass,** so what would you do

A considerable difference between the two lessons is that unlike in the EFL classroom, English is used throughout the CLIL lesson and Finnish not at all, except on a couple of occasions in which it is used by the students. In terms of exposure to the English language, the students in the CLIL context thus seem to be in a better position than the students in the language classroom, which is of course one of the rationales for introducing CLIL instruction in the first place (see e.g. Nikula & Marsh 1997). However, the students are almost completely confined to the role of listeners rather than active users of English as teacher monologue prevails, and there are much fewer contributions by the students than in the EFL classroom. Moreover, these are often in the form of one-word answers to the questions posed by the teacher, as illustrated by example 9 where students' answers on lines

3 and 7 are minimal.

(9)

```
1      T        yes, it's dividing by ten or this, this result ((points on board)) so if you take one
2               zero off, and watch these, are they correct/,  Irma
3      LF2      three kilometres ((points with her finger))
4      T        yes this ONE ((points on board)) it says it goes sixty kilometres in two
5               minutes but, only three kilometres in in one minute ((pause)) so there's
6               something wrong with them which- which is correct, Pilvi
7      LF3      six
8      T        yes six, and the last one
```

Minimal answers by students and their role mainly as listeners is not something specific to this CLIL setting only. On the contrary, similar observations have also been made concerning native English schoolchildren in classrooms where monologic discourse patterns prevail (e.g. Lemke 1990; Nystrand & Gamoran 2001). What the students' rather minimal participation in the CLIL classroom suggests, however, is that the choice of a foreign language as the medium of instruction does not as such, automatically, lead to a better chance for the learners to be actively involved in using the foreign language. What are needed, in addition, are classroom activities that would encourage student participation.

The instruction in the CLIL classroom is thus largely dominated by the teacher and based on recitation. Yet the fact that English is used throughout the lesson brings about a sense of more 'genuine', even if not extensive, communication taking place in English between the teacher and the students than in the EFL classroom where the participants readily switch into Finnish. As example 10 below shows, even though the exchanges between the teacher and his students may be quite simple language-wise, they still represent actual meaning-negotiation taking place in English with no intervals in Finnish. On lines 2 and 6, the students directly appeal to the teacher by his first name, yet this Finnish expression does not trigger a code shift into Finnish. The example also indicates that the students are performing a wider range of functions in English in this classroom than in the EFL classroom. While the students' contributions in English in the latter tend to be verbatim citations from either the textbook or exercises as answers to the teacher's display questions, this small extract shows the CLIL students both asking a genuine question for information (on line 2) and making a suggestion (on line 9).

(10)

```
1 T        and when you have drawn them, MEASURE them WAIT- wait a second, I give you, a hint
2 LM2      Esko are we going to (draw) with this white
3 T        yes the white is good ((pause)) if you have to measure for example THIS, big pencil on the board
4          on the blackboard how - where would you (-) and what would you measure, how would you do
5          it
6 LM3      Esko/
7 T        if I just say measure the pencil with your ruler what would you do, this one here with this ruler
8          ((pause)) what would you do then
9 LM3      I could do the three things
10 T       do just ONE first, and look here what Mikko is doing
```

As regards the teacher's use of modifiers, the findings suggest that despite the fact that he speaks English during the lesson considerably more than the English teacher, modifying elements are not very abundant in his talk, either. Example 10 above, for instance, shows his preference for unqualified imperatives (e.g. *measure* and *wait* on line 1, *do* and *look* on line 10).

Example 11 serves as a further illustration of the teacher's direct strategies. Firstly, on line 3 the teacher reacts to the student's suggestion without in any way modifying it, just stating *we don't have any string here*, beginning his turn before the student has had time to finish his, which adds to the overtones of contradiction. Moreover, all the directives (on lines 3, 5 and 7) are bare imperatives with no softeners attached. Similarly, his prompt to the student to explain more on line 8 appears quite curt (*then what*), especially as it is said with falling intonation. Whether intentional or not, such directness on the teacher's part helps reinforce a sense of asymmetry between the participants. The level of directness thus has interpersonal consequences and it can either help create or reduce the sense of distance between the participants.

(11)

1	T	there is one THING, with a compass, Ossi
2	LM1	no I- yes I would have that string and=
3	T	**=we don't have any string here**, can you SHOW us, how to do it ((pause)) **use** THIS one\
4	LM1	okay
5	T	**pick** one round thing on the blackboard
6		((student walks to the blackboard))
7	T	**tell** us the idea ((helps student in his drawing)) okay and THEN, **then what**\
8	LM1	you have the string and there's this one (- -)

Example 12, on its part, is an illustration of the rare cases when the teacher does use modifying elements and politeness markers in his talk. On line 3, he expresses his request to the student in a polite way by using the word *please* and by using the conditional form in the ensuing question (lines 5-6), and also by expressing on line 8 that the student's answer is not exactly correct by his use of *quite*.

(12)

1	T	can you measure it
2	LM1	yes
3	T	so yes **please** do
4		((P continues measuring))
5	T	what's the number there, that **would** be (- -) ((corrects student's drawing)) IS it okay, CAN you
6		do it like that, what **would** you change, Kaisa ((pause)) or is it good
7	LF2	yes
8	T	it's **quite** good yes, BUT if you want to be exact, this LINE ((points on board)) is not, as long as the pencil

As with the EFL data, there are at least two ways to interpret the teacher's tendency towards directness in his talk. One of them is to see the institutional setting with its asymmetric teacher-student relationship as an explanation: There is not as much need for interactional work between the teacher and the students as in more equal and jointly negotiated encounters. It is, in fact, quite common for teachers to talk *to* their students

rather than *with* them. Christoph and Nystrand (2001) describe such tendency as the rarity of dialogic interaction in classrooms. Given this, the CLIL teacher's opting for direct strategies may reflect his choice to act in accordance with his institutionally defined, more powerful role as a teacher.

The other possibility is that the teachers' status as a nonnative speaker plays a role in his directness. Unfortunately the present data contain no material from the CLIL teacher's lessons in Finnish so it is not possible to make comparisons. However, bearing in mind that the EFL teacher used modifiers differently in English and Finnish, it is probable that the linguistic status also plays a role. This assumption is supported by the finding that the CLIL teacher only seems to have at his disposal a very narrow repertoire of expressions to modify his talk. When considering the use of modal verbs, for example, the teacher mostly uses the verb *can* and always in a way that includes its more transparent sense 'ability' rather than conveying attitudinal meanings such as 'potentiality'. Example 13 below illustrates this: *Can* on line 2 is unambiguously used in the sense of 'are you able to' but also in its other uses (on lines 3, 6 and 11) this reading is relevant even if the use of the modal also renders the instructions more indirect than the use of bare imperatives.

(13)

```
1  LM3  you get that reminder [so ]
2  T                          [we] don't need it we can, say it exactly, cos fifteen
3        kilometres ((writes on board)) divided by ten ((pause)) can you GUESS what is
4        the result of this, Ossi
5  LM4  one point five
6  T     that's correct ((writes on board)) can you guess THIS, one hundred and twenty three kilometres
7        divided by one hundred, Iiro
8  LM2  it's one point two three
9  T     THIS is the last one ((writes on board)) if it's divided by one hundred
10 LM3  zero point three six
11 T     yeah can you describe what's happening there, what's the rule
```

There are also occasions when other linguistic features in the teacher's talk in addition to the small number of modifiers point towards shortcomings in target language fluency. In example 14, for instance, the teacher produces rather brief, telegram-like stretches of talk in his turns that lack any metalinguistic or metapragmatic elements and that are separated by many pauses which could be interpreted as evidence of his searching for adequate expressions. Moreover, in this example the teacher also very often uses the general expression *thing* to refer to different referents. On line 3, the word *thing* is used to refer to a picture of a pencil on the blackboard, on line 5 to a type of measuring device, on line 6 to a concept or principle and on line 7 to dimensions.

(14)

```
1    T     does it go that way, you need ANOTHER thirteen centimetres there
2    LF1   you have to do it, (from) outside
3    T     yes it's a ROUND thing, this dimension is thirteen centimetres and of course
4          this too but how can you be sure about this here, you should put your ruler
5          AROUND it but, you can't do it you need ANOTHER, THING, you will learn,
6          some day, how to do it, but not today, you need to just know this, thing ((pause))
7          but LET'S look at the box ((pause)) of course- what things can you measure from
```

8   it if you have a box

Examples 13 and 14 and other similar situations recall Harder's (1980) contention that speaking a foreign language may lead to what he calls 'reduced personality', i.e. speakers' inability to use language in its full potential to express all the nuances of their personality. In Nikula & Marsh's (1997: 54) study, Finnish CLIL teachers often commented on their difficulty of expressing themselves fully in a foreign language. The question of CLIL teachers' language proficiency is beyond the scope of this paper, but it would be important for schools planning to give instruction through a foreign language to be aware of the impact that the use of foreign language may have on the quality of teachers' performance.

The analysis of the CLIL classroom data from a pragmatic perspective has thus made evident the complexity of the situation and the possibilities for interpreting the teacher's rare use of modifying elements both as a reflection of his institutional role and the fact that he is a non-native speaker of the language. Most probably, both factors are in operation simultaneously and as the examples above have shown, they are usually hard to force apart. Whatever the source of indirectness, however, it is important to notice that it has interactional consequences. The above analysis has shown, for example, that the teachers' direct strategies help reinforce the power difference between the participants and it is fair to ask what this means in terms of students' developing pragmatic proficiency: Do classrooms only provide them opportunities to receive practice in unequal encounters? In other words, the findings also suggest that the whole notion of pragmatic proficiency is complex and context-dependent and this is something every school implementing either EFL or CLIL education as a way to improve students' communicative and pragmatic skills ought to be aware of.

7. Conclusion

In a recent article, Kasper and Rose (2001: 4) emphasize the need for classroom research to examine what opportunities for developing L2 pragmatic ability are offered in language classrooms. This paper has touched upon this question by focussing on two types of contexts for learning English, EFL and CLIL classrooms, with special emphasis on the ways in which teachers' ways of using modifiers reflect pragmatic awareness. The results indicated that the teachers in this study never brought pragmatic aspects of language use explicitly in focus, either in the EFL or the CLIL classroom, nor are there very many opportunities for students to acquire modified ways of talking as the teachers in both settings favoured, on the whole, very direct strategies. It was argued above that even if the teachers' status as non-native speakers can partly explain such directness, their way of using modifying elements can also be interpreted as a reflection of the asymmetrical institutional context in which the teacher, being in the position of authority, has less need for interactional work than would be the case in other types of situations. This means that even if speakers frequently use modifiers to signal pragmatic meanings in encounters outside the classroom, the scarce use of modifiers might well be an important pragmatic principle of classroom interaction rather than an interactional problem. In other words, the relationship between interaction in classrooms and in settings outside classrooms is less straightforward than might seem at first glance.

Consequently, classrooms need to be studied as social contexts in their own right to gain a better understanding of the features of language and interaction that have pragmatic significance in them. In this light, Bardovi-Harlig's (2001: 30) suggestion that "providing authentic, representative language is a basic responsibility of classroom instruction" leads to the question: Authentic and representative in which sense? If it turns out that classrooms as institutional contexts operate under their own pragmatic principles – and we need more research on this – it means that the divide between classroom contexts and "real life" encounters remain as large as ever, and we are faced with the question on the extent to which classroom contexts can be arenas for acquiring pragmatic skills also applicable to other situations. Therefore, in addition to needing research on how instruction influences learners' acquisition of L2 pragmatics, as suggested by Kasper (2001: 33), we also need to investigate and problematize the very *nature* of L2 pragmatics in classroom settings.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions

[ ]	overlapping speech
,	a short pause, indicating intonation unit boundaries
((pause))	an untimed long pause, more than two seconds
text=	
=text	latching speech
CAPITALS	prominent speech
exte:nsion	noticeable extension of the sound or syllable with the colon
cut off wo-	cut off word or truncated speech
°high circles°	soft speech
/	rising intonation
\	falling intonation
((laughs))	transcriber's comments
(word)	unclear word(s)
(-)	incomprehensible item, probably one word only
(- -)	incomprehensible item of phrase length
(- - -)	incomprehensible item beyond phrase length

Symbols to identify who is speaking

T	teacher
LM1	identified male learner, using numbers (M1, M2, etc.)
LF1	identified female learner, using numbers (F1, F2 etc.)
LM	unidentified male learner
LF	unidentified female learner