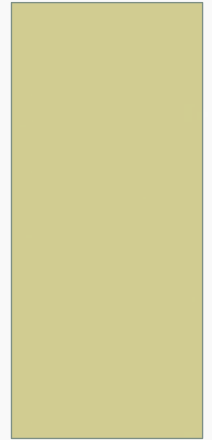


ASSESSING THE PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF ESL LEARNERS IN SPEAKING AT B2-C2 LEVELS

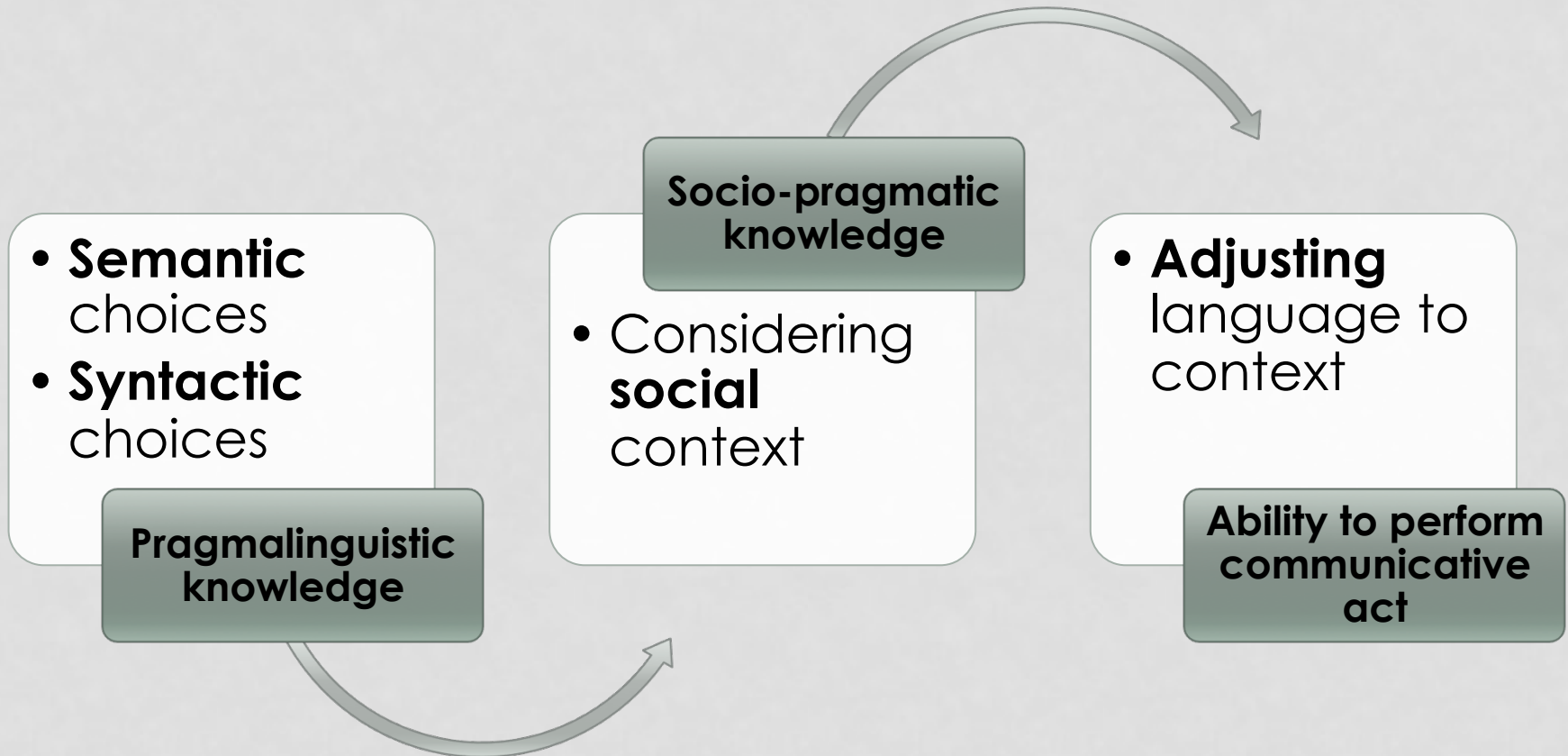
EDIT WILLCOX-FICZERE
CRELLA, UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

EALTA, DUBLIN 2019



PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

(e.g. Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983; Canale, 1983)



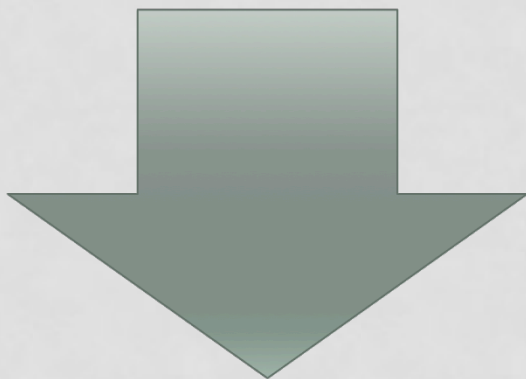
ASSESSING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Speech Act Theory

(Austin, 1962)

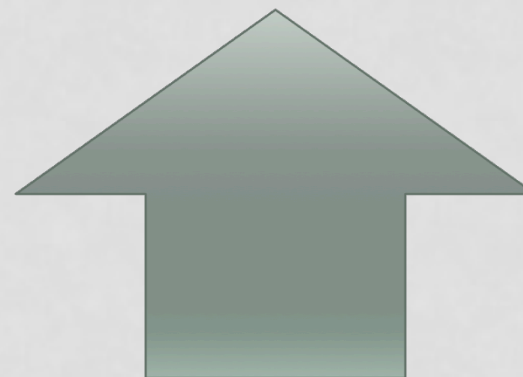
+ DCTs

Focus on individual + isolated utterances
(e.g. Roever, 2011)??



CA + role-plays

Communicative act co-constructed + interaction
(e.g. Ikeda, 2017)



PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN PRACTICE

utterance

'Give it to him Chris. Let him have it.'



interpretation of intention
individual intention



context

Derek Bentley case, 1953

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ◆ **Task format:** What features of pragmatic competence, *in terms of sequential organisation and pragmalinguistic devices*, are elicited by dialogic tasks?
- ◆ **Proficiency:** To what extent and in what ways are these pragmatic features utilised differently by B2-C2 level learners?
- ◆ **Proficiency:** To what extent do B2-C2 learners adjust linguistic choices to the given context?

METHODOLOGY

Research instrument

Two dialogic tasks.

Video recorded / transcribed (*Heritage, 1984*).

Semi-structured interviews

Learners' perceptions of task situations

Analysis

QUALITATIVE:

CA (*Schegloff, 2007*) – pre-/post-expansion

QUANTITATIVE:

Syntactic forms (*Barron, 2003*)

Lexical/phrasal modification from CCSARP (*Blum-Kulka et. al., 1989*)

PARTICIPANTS

	Participants
Number	30
Occupation	University students
Nationalities	ARABIC (e.g. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) EUROPEAN (e.g. Italy, Slovakia) ASIAN (e.g. Japan, China)
Ages	20-35
Gender	15 males + 15 females
Proficiency	10 B2 / 10 C1 / 10 C2 (IELTS 5.5-9)

TASKS

	Tasks
Dialogic Task 1	request - professor (S<H)
Dialogic Task 2	request – flatmate (S=H)

TASK: YOU ARE SHARING A FLAT WITH ANOTHER STUDENT, JANET. SHE IS VERY UNTIDY AND NEVER CLEANS ANY OF THE COMMUNAL AREAS. THIS HAS BEEN BOTHERING YOU FOR MONTHS. ASK HER TO DO MORE CLEANING.

B2

- **S3:** Excuse me. Do you do this (.) the same at home?^{???}
- **I:** I'm sorry?^{???}
- **S3:** I mean that you don't clean everything. (0.2) For example, if you're in the kitchen (0.1) and there's like (.) dirty plates and so on. **Why you don't clean?**
Problem statement

C1

Projecting upcoming request

- **S16:** Janet, I need to speak with you.
- **I:** Right?
- **S16:** Erm this is something has been bothering me (.) for some time.
- **I:** Mmm.
- **S16:** Erm, erm (0.1) I need to talk to you about the kitchen.
- **I:** Oka::y?
- **S16:** Erm (0.1) you don't really clean it well. You keep (.) you keep the dirty plates (.) the::re. The foo::d (0.1) on top of them (0.1) it dries. **You should at least wash it** with water a::nd so: it doesn't (.) so if someone wants to use the place it doesn't (.) it becomes easier to clean (.) them.

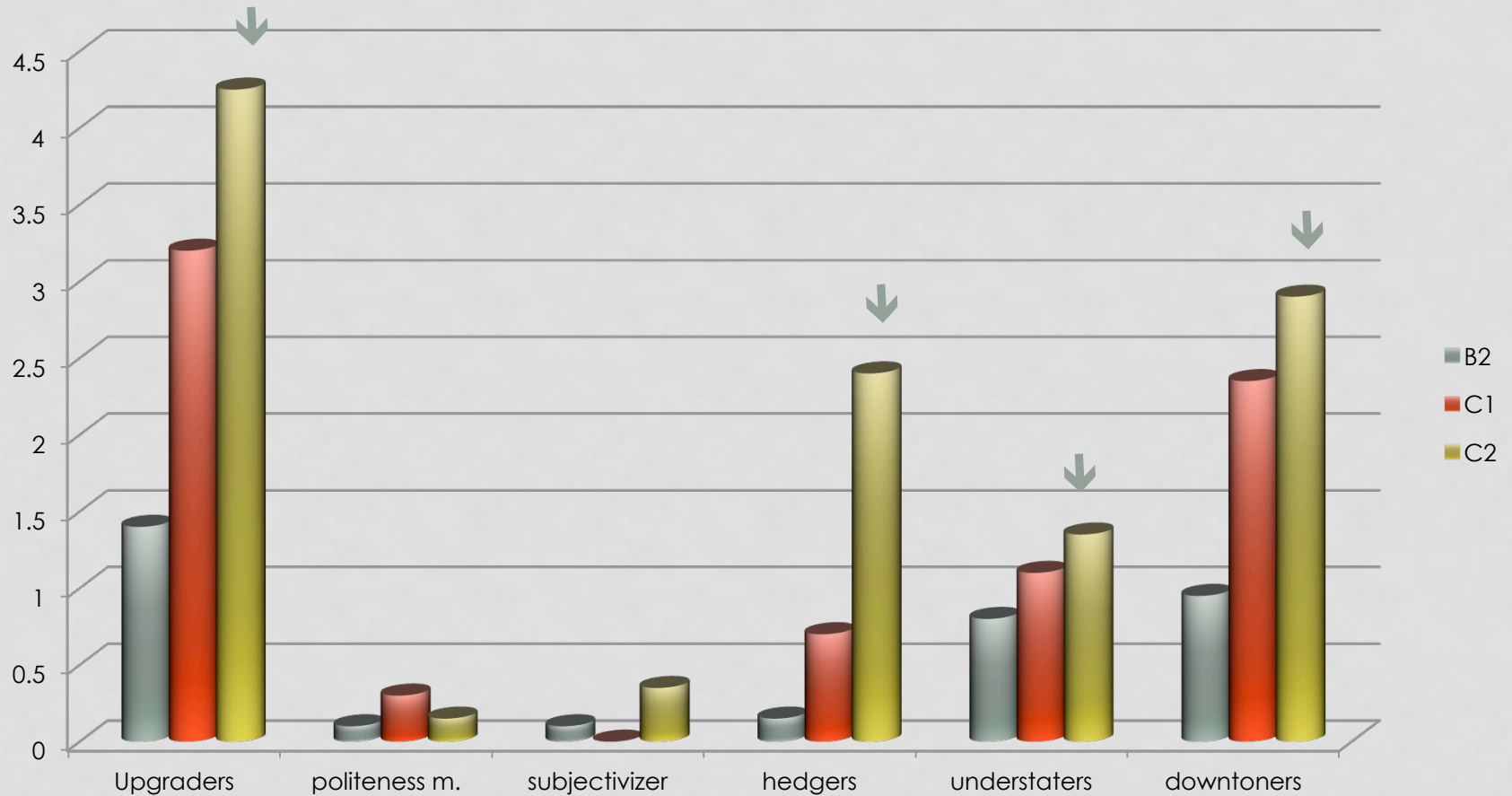
Problem statement

C2

Projecting upcoming request

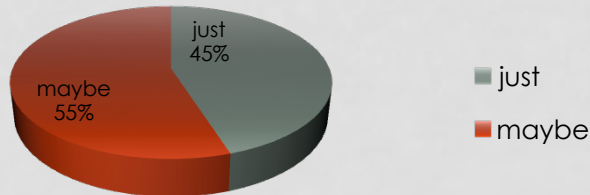
- **S22:** So: Janet.
- **I:** Yeah? *Account*
- **S22:** We've been living together since erm a couple of months now and erm I've started to notice that (0.1) ou::r bathroom, as well as the kitchen, =
- **I:** Mmm. *Problem statement*
- **S22:** =have been kind of (.) left untidy after you've used them, which I've picked up the (.) and cleaned them for now, which is okay
- **I:** yes?
- **S22:** because we both come from different backgrounds and different (0.1) I guess we're raised differently, but in the future I'd like to, if it continues, (0.1) I guess erm (0.1) the accommodation o::r
- **I:** yes.
- **S22:** living conditions (.) >I'd like you to< (.) how about a little more (.) or **even institute a plan** in when and where somebody should e::rm=
- **I:** mmm
- **S22:** =clean the communal areas?

Number of lexical/phrasal modifiers in speech *(frequency per person per task)*

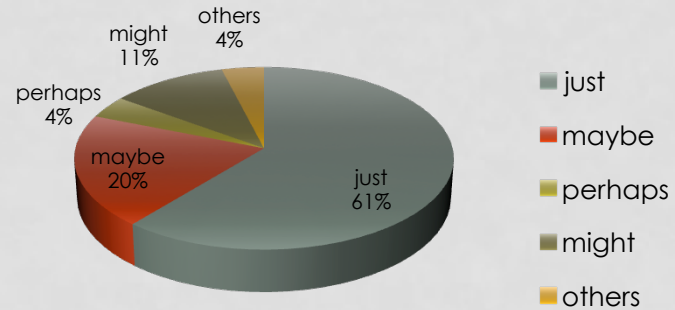


Range of downtoners

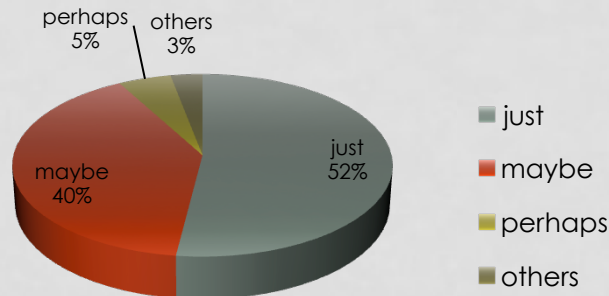
Downtoners / B2



Downtoners / C1

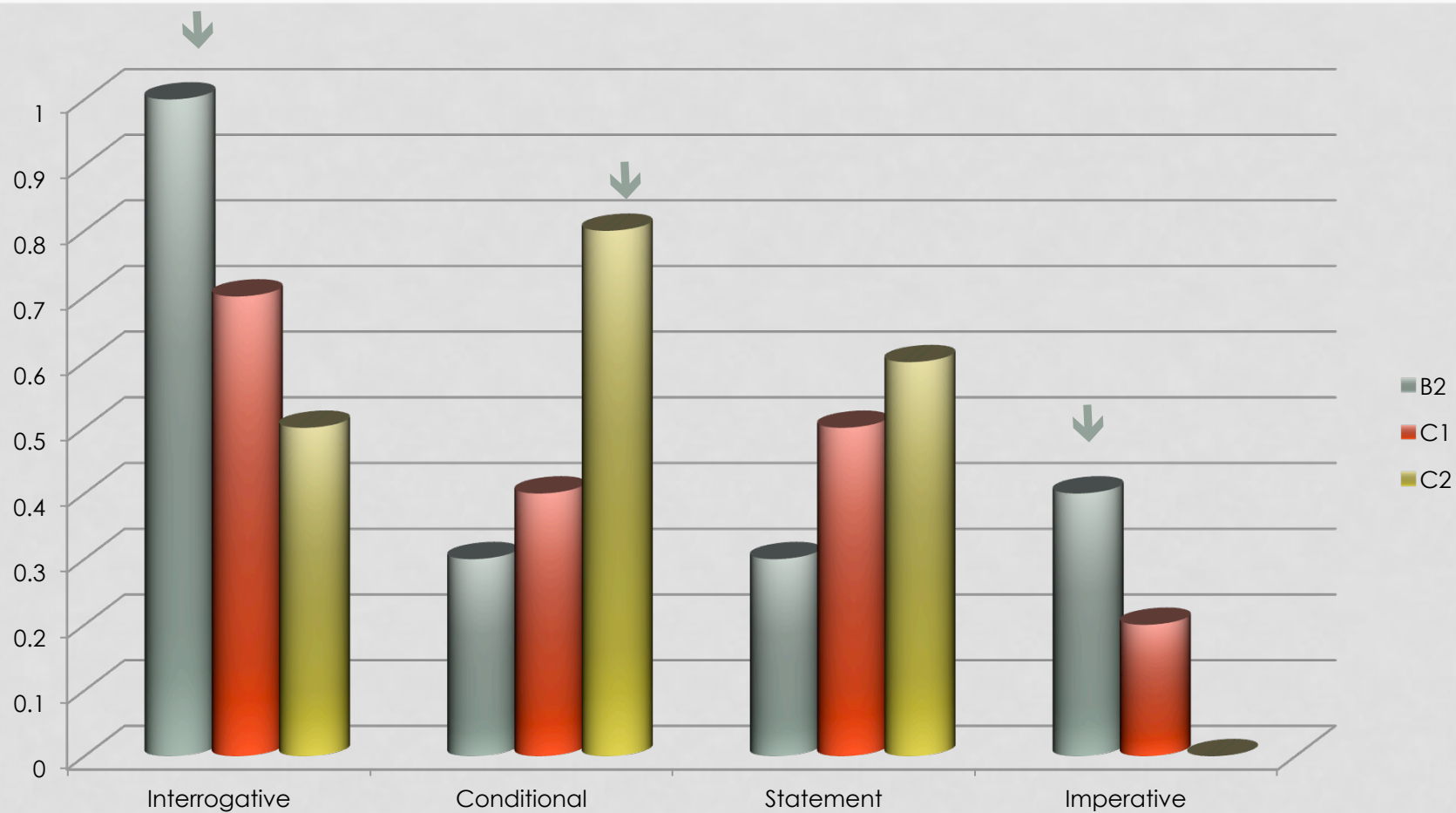


Downtoners / C2



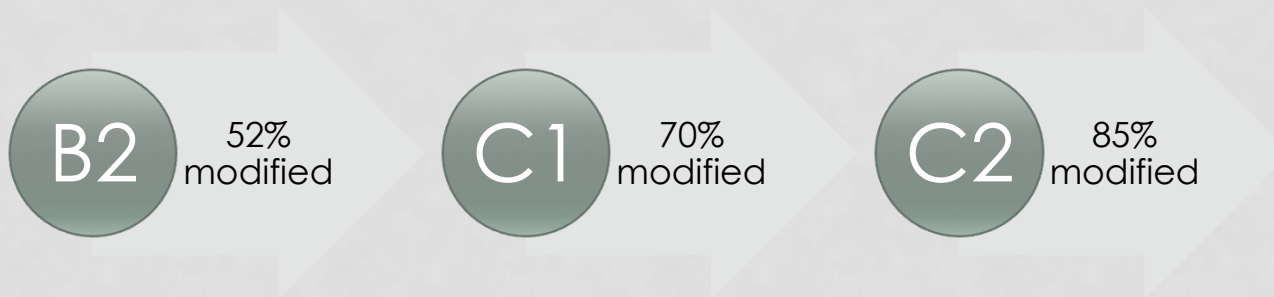
Syntactic variation in formulating main requests

(frequency per person)



Linguistic competence?

	B2	C1	C2
Interrogative	<i>Can you...?</i>	<i>Can you please...?</i>	<i>Can you perhaps...?</i>
Conditional	<i>I'm wondering if...</i>	<i>I was wondering if...</i>	<i>I've been wondering whether...</i>
statement	<i>I need...</i>	<i>I just need to...</i>	<i>I actually need...</i>

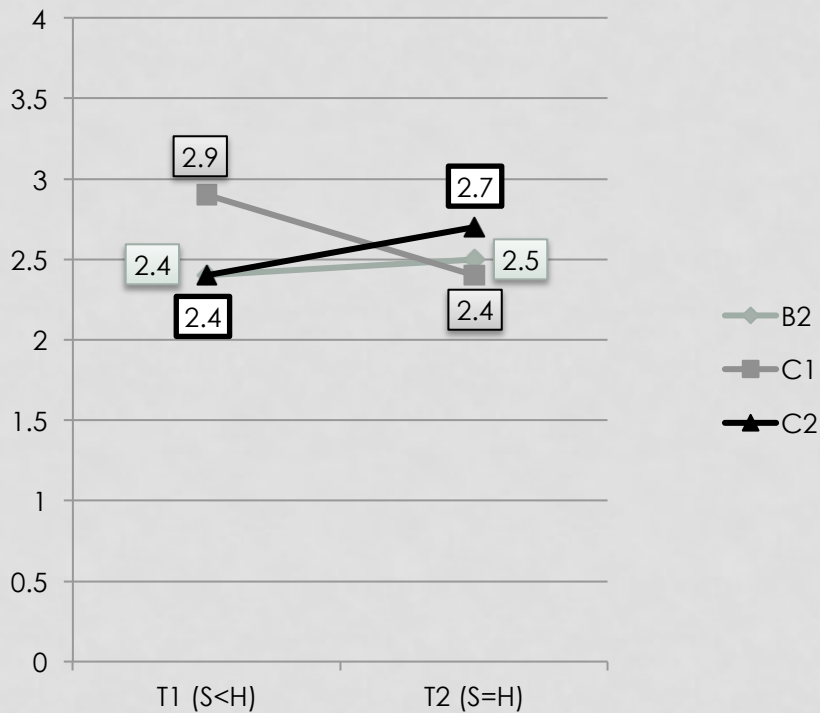


Adjusting language according to **context?**

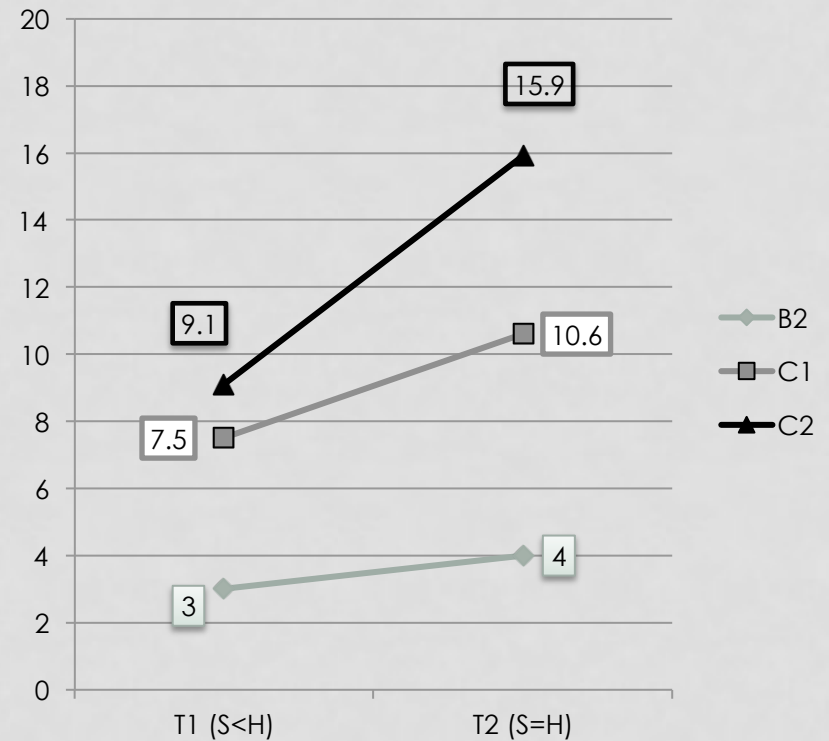
	D5 (S<H)	D6 (S=H)
B2		
S4	<i>can I ask you</i> < for reason? Why you give such a low mark?	> <i>Can you <u>help</u> me</i> to < like (.) clean (.) a little bit?
S10	<i>::, if you don't mind (0.2) I will (.) I will ask you to (0.1) explain it to me more.</i>	<i>if you don't mind, I'll ask you to be a little bit more tidy and clean.</i>
C1		
S11	<i>So:: would it be possible to (.) to check my mark again?</i>	<i>I think you should be a bit a bit <u>teamworker</u>.</i>
S15	<i>So can you <u>please</u> clarify it for me?</i>	<i>Janet, I I have this idea (.) about the:: (.) cleaning in our house. Erm (.) <u>can we</u> organise a rota? So we clean things in turn</i>
C2		
S25	<i>for a:::nd we::ll if you could <u>just</u> explain why my mark is so low?</i>	<i>maybe if we could all (.) work a bit better o::n keeping the house tidy that'll be <u>that'd be great</u></i>
S23	<i>A:::nd I was going through it (.) a:::nd I <u>just wanted</u> your feedback (.) erm on it (.) because</i>	<i>we <u>just wanted to</u> (.) make sure it's <u>clean</u> and everyone does their bit.</i>

ADJUSTING LANGUAGE TO WHAT ONE WANTS TO ACHIEVE?

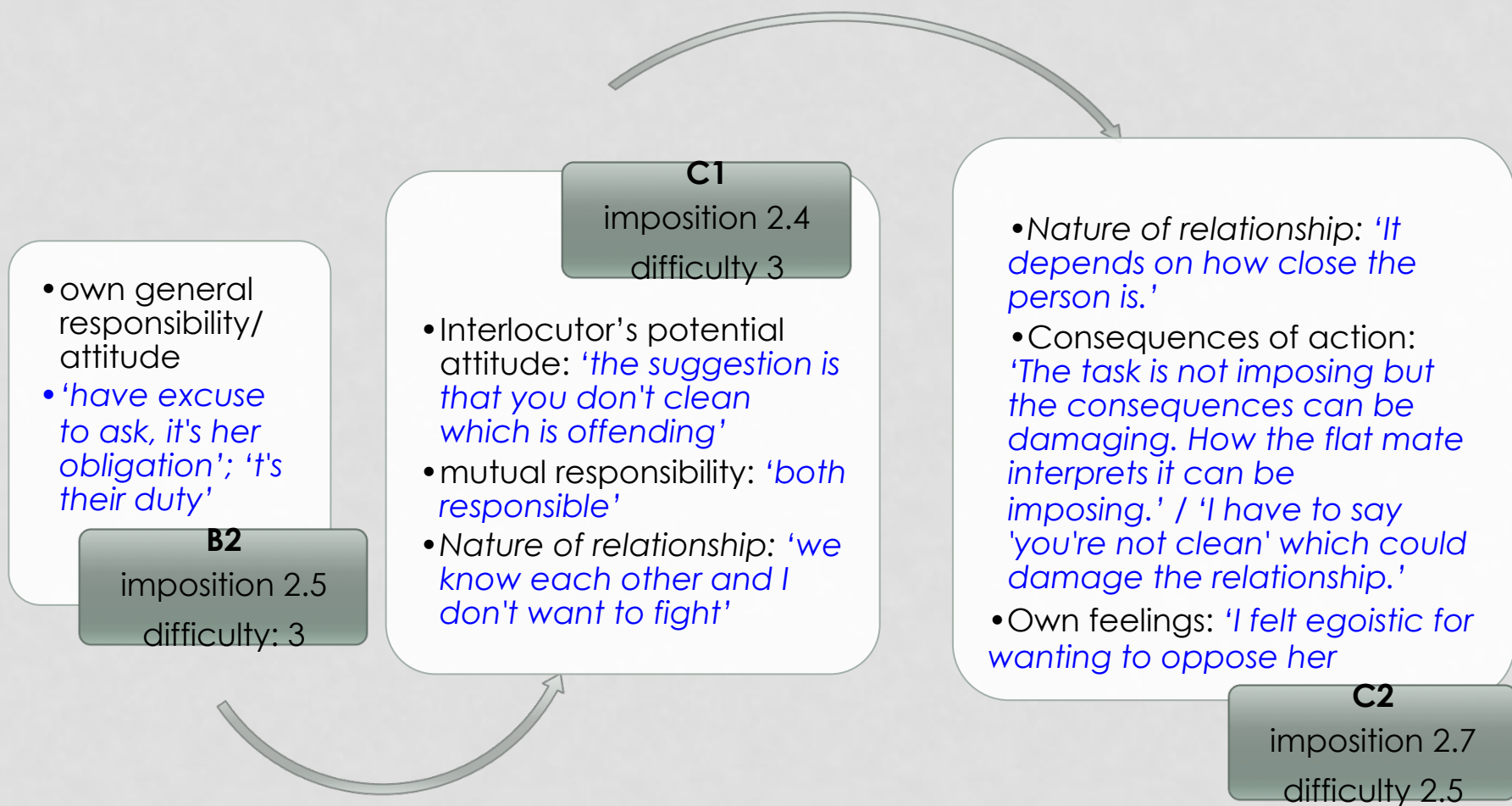
Imposition



Lexical/phrasal modifiers



WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT T2



OVERALL:

Task format: *dialogic tasks; variables in context (p+i)*

Proficiency: *sequential org. + linguistic devices + adjusting lang.*

B2:

1. Some **sequential organisation**
2. Limited number and range of **pragmalinguistic** devices
3. Some **adjustment** of language to context

C1:

1. Good **sequential organisation**
2. A good number and range of **pragmalinguistic** devices
3. Language **adjusted** generally well to context.

C2:

1. Very good **sequential organisation**
2. Very good number and range of **pragmalinguistic** devices
3. Language **adjusted** well to context.

...

- ‘Making learners **aware** of the underlying behaviour behind language will help them to develop their own “personality” in an L2...’ (**Thomas 1983:98**)



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THANK YOU!

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